

Gilsland Village Magazine

THE UPPER IRTHING PRISM PROJECT

*By Gillian Murray Dinsmore, Conservation Officer, Eden Rivers Trust
(PRISM Project)*



A new Defra-funded landscape recovery project is taking shape in the Upper Irthing to restore lost and depleted habitats and species. Called PRISM, which stands for the project's five focus areas – Peatland, Rivers, Invasives, Species recovery and Meadows, the aim is to tackle issues such as climate change, wildfire prevention and water management by creating a mosaic of interconnecting habitats so that wildlife and people can thrive. The project covers around 10,000 hectares across Spadeadam, Humble Hill and Wark forests. A wide range of habitats are found here - rivers, blanket bog, fen, farmland and commercial forestry - along with species such as Water shrew, Otter, Adder, Goshawk, Osprey, Small pearl-bordered fritillary and Common twyblade.

Covering this wild and varied landscape calls for a team approach, with project lead, Forestry England, and partners Eden Rivers Trust, Natural England and Northumberland Wildlife Trust all working with local stakeholders and landowners to deliver landscape-scale habitat improvements whilst maintaining the productive land used for agriculture and commercial forestry. Currently in the development phase, the team have already started building relationships with local stakeholders and landowners, deployed rafts to monitor the presence of invasive, non-native American mink, walked miles along becks to survey habitat suitability as potential homes for Water vole, conducted water sampling to look for signs of endangered White-clawed crayfish and started signing up volunteers to help expand our knowledge.

Help us understand more about the wild and wonderful Upper Irthing! You can volunteer now to help with Mink raft monitoring and from spring there will be opportunities to help with surveys for Water voles, Otter, birds, butterflies and habitats. Find out more about volunteering with the project on the Upper Irthing volunteer page on the Eden Rivers Trust website: <https://www.edenriverstrust.org.uk/volunteer-in-the-upper-irthing>

A GUIDE TO BLUEBELLS

By Stuart Colgate – Ecological Surveyor

Spring has well and truly arrived when bluebells are in flower; their sight and smell being evocative of the season. The UK is home to a single species of native British bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and accounts for 50% of the world population of this species. Its preferred habitats are long-established woodlands, shaded hedgerows and banks, and in wetter areas such as ours, is found in some meadows. Its dark violet-blue flowers dangle down from one side of a delicate, curved flowering stem which arises from amongst narrow strap-like leaves (7-15mm wide).

Bluebells however, are not always what they might appear at first glance! The Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*), native to both Spain and Portugal has found its way into the British countryside after its introduction a few centuries ago. The Spanish bluebell is not too difficult to identify. It is a sturdy plant with leaves that are 15-30mm wide with its flowers arranged all around the upright stem. Its flowers are a pale blue and they usually open widely into the shape of a bell, whereas those of the UK species are tubular with the tips of the tepals (where the petals and sepals of a flower look the same) curved back onto themselves. If you want to see other differences between the British and the Spanish bluebell, take a closer look at an individual flower. Compare the colour of the anthers

(pollen producing structures), using the table below. If you have a hand lens or magnifying glass, use it to get a close-up view.

So far, so good? However, it is not quite as straightforward as this; the two species described are able to cross-pollinate leading to the production of viable seeds which are able to grow into hybrid plants. Unlike many hybrids which are sterile, the hybrid bluebells can also produce viable seeds! Not only are they able to crossbreed with the parent species (UK Bluebell or Spanish bluebell) but also with other hybrid bluebells. The latter point means they can produce seeds even when neither parent is present. Although beyond the scope of this article, this does have negative impacts on the potential survival of the native bluebell in the UK.

Since the hybrid bluebell (*Hyacinthoides x massartiana*) can crossbreed with other hybrids causing greater variation in structure; it makes identification between the 3 types a little more challenging. However, certain characters such as flowers arising from all around the upright stem and grey or blueish anthers, can be used to differentiate between native UK Bluebell and the hybrid. To see the more subtle differences between Spanish and hybrid take a look at the table below.

British Bluebell	Hybrid Bluebell	Spanish Bluebell
Flowers tubular – narrow opening	Flowers tubular to bell-shaped – opening wider than British bluebell	Flowers bell-shaped - wide opening
Tepal tips strongly recurved (curved back)	Tepal tips slightly curved back or straight	Tepal tips more-or-less straight
Flowers dangle downwards from one side of curved flowering stem	Flowers attached all around upright flowering stem	Flowers attached all around upright flowering stem
Leaves 7-15mm wide	Leaves 10-30mm wide	Leaves 15-30mm wide
Anthers are white or cream	Anthers are pale grey – blue, but sometimes white	Anthers are blue
Strong, sweet smell	Generally no smell, but sometimes very faint	No smell

Please note that the native British Bluebell is protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and should not be dug up without the landowner's permission.

SPOOKY AND GENUINE HISTORY

By Wendy Bond

The Haltwhistle History Group thoroughly enjoyed the tours of the Station yard, buildings and Stationmaster's garden given by Harold Bowron in March - designed to fascinate both railway buffs and the natives who remember the people Harold worked alongside. All alike were amazed at the glimpse we got of the amount of the town's business that went through the station and the number of people employed there to make sure all went smoothly. What a thriving town this was. If you missed it, look for Harold on YouTube.

In April we go back into the Community Room at the Hospital for a talk by another local expert about times much further back in the town's history: David Taylor will delight us with tales of the long and varied, often violent, history of the Centre of Britain Hotel. Come with us into the medieval period that literally put the town on the map. All welcome - the meeting starts at 10.30 and is free, but donations are always welcomed!

CHURCH SERVICES

Gilsland Methodist <i>Services start at 10.30 unless stated</i> April 6th Holy communion with Tokumbo Asogbon April 20th Morning Service with Mrs. Mary Pattinson	St. Mary Magdalene <i>Services start at 9.30 unless stated</i> April 13th (10am) Benefice Holy Communion at Lanercost Priory April 20th Easter Sunday Holy Communion
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BIN DAYS

<u>Northumberland County Council</u> General waste: 10th & 25th Recycling: 3rd & 17th www.northumberland.gov.uk/waste <u>Haltwhistle household recycling</u> Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday 8am - 6pm	<u>Cumberland Council</u> Refuse and garden: 14th & 28th Recycling: 7th & 21st www.carlisle.gov.uk/residents/bins-and-recycling <u>Brampton household recycling</u> 10am to 6pm, every day except Tuesday
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WEEKLY EVENTS

Mondays

- Community Coffee Morning | Village Hall | 10.30am - 12.30pm
- Youth club | Village Hall | 6.00pm - 7.30pm

Tuesdays

- Yoga | Haltwhistle Leisure Centre | 10.30am - 11.30am
- G&G Knitting Group | House of Meg | 1pm - 3pm
- Outreach Post Office | Village Hall | 1pm - 4pm
- Drama group | Village Hall | 7.00pm

Wednesdays

- Craft Group | Village Hall | 1pm - 4pm

Thursdays

- Outreach Post Office | Village Hall | 9.30am - 12.30pm
- Coffee Break | Methodist Chapel | 10.30am - 12 noon

Fridays

- Outreach Post Office | Village Hall | 9.30am - 12.30pm
- Yoga | Haltwhistle Leisure Centre | 7.15pm - 8.15pm

Saturdays

- Hatha Flow Yoga | Green Croft Arts | 9am - 10am

DIARY DATES

1st, 7.30pm | Gilsland Village Hall | WI

7th, morning | Gilsland Village Hall | Rington's Van

8th, 7pm | Gilsland Village Hall | Dominoes

10th, 10.30am | Greenhead Village Hall | Coffee morning to celebrate 110 years of the WI with archive photos

12th, 7pm | Wark Town Hall | Ian K Brown music

13th, 10am to 1pm | Greenhead Village Hall | Hadrian's Wall Farmers' Market

13th, afternoon | Gilsland Village Hall | St Mary Magdalene reception

19th, 10am to 11.30am | Gilsland Village Hall | Saturday Somatics

26th, 10am to 11.30am | Gilsland Village Hall | Saturday Somatics

26th, 10.30 - 12.30 | 20 Irthing Park, Gilsland | Macmillan Plant Sale

NEW BUS SERVICE FOR GILSLAND

Arrangements have been completed for a new bus service to connect Gilsland to Brampton for the Farmers' Market on the last Saturday of the month starting this April and, initially, running until October. The service has been generously funded by the Hodgson Trust. The fare prices are as follows: Students attending school, £2 return; Adults, £5 return; No charge to those with a valid NOW Card.

DISRUPTION TO POST OFFICE SERVICE

Due to lack of staff cover, Newton Post Office have been unable to provide the Outreach service on a couple of occasions recently. The Village Hall try to notify everyone of these changes to services as soon as we find out and hope that inconvenience was kept to a minimum. We do apologise for any disruption caused but these are circumstances beyond the control of the Village Hall.

HADRIAN'S WALL FARMERS MARKET

Hadrian's Wall Farmers Market on Sunday 13th April from 10am to 2pm at Greenhead Village Hall. Plants and crafts, food and drink, all from local producers. Homemade refreshments while you shop.

GILSLAND DOMINOES DRIVE

Gilsland Dominoes will be on Tuesday 8th April. in the Village Hall starting at 7.pm sharp. £3 per session which includes a supper half way through. We also have a Raffle at the end. Everyone is welcome whatever your level of playing. The group is really friendly and supportive so come along and enjoy the evening.

GILSLAND WI APRIL MEETING

Our April meeting will be Tuesday 1st April 7.30pm in the Village Hall. The speaker this month will be Richard MacDonald who will be showing us a film on the Thirlwall District which also includes Gilsland. The cost for guests will be £3 which will include refreshments. If anyone is planning to attend, could you please phone Doreen Gutteridge on 016977 47036 to let me know for catering purposes.

BULLETIN BOARD

GILSLAND COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING

The Community Coffee Morning is open every Monday 10.30 to 12.00 in the Village Hall. However, due to lack of volunteers we will no longer be opening on Bank Holiday Mondays as we have done before. This means there will not be a coffee morning on Easter Monday.

ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH GILSLAND

Our Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held at Gilsland Village Hall on 29th April 2025 anyone within the Ecclesiastical Parish of Gilsland is welcome to attend. Please come and join us whether you visit the church or just want to know what goes on do come along. Refreshments on arrival from 6.50pm and meeting starts 7pm.

THE NEW HADRIAN SINGERS

The community choir, open to all, has been working on a great mixture of songs for our part in the free programme of Song provided in Newcastle on 29th March and delivered by choirs from all over the north east. We will have joined with the other four choirs led by Lindsay Hannon to form the Shindig Choir, so we will have made a lot of noise! Then it's back to work in April, learning more - old favourites and astonishing new ones - you should hear the one about the miner's wife! We meet usually on Friday evenings from 7 to 8.30, in the community room at the Haltwhistle hospital. All welcome, no auditions, first session free. It's wonderful medicine!

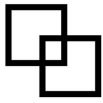
THE POETRY DROP-IN

We'll be meeting in the Greenhead village hall from 1.30 to 3 on Wednesday, 2nd April. The theme this month is Sleep and Dreams. It's informal, and purely for enjoyment of the words, rhythms and ideas people have been making into poems across the centuries - all welcome.

MACMILLAN PLANT SALE

Our annual Macmillan plant sale is on April 26th this year at 20 Irthing Park Gilsland from 10.30 to 12.30ish. Last year we raised over £1000 and we are hoping to do well again this year. If you have any spare plants in your garden we would be delighted to have them for the sale.

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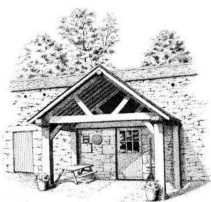
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Mike Mitchelson

Cumbria County Councillor

Mike Mitchelson, 0169772871

Northumberland County Councillor

Alan Sharp, Office: 01434693693, Home: 01434320167, Mobile: 07759665200

Thirlwall Parish Council

Chair: Sue Seymour 07935259416, sue@mosspectral.com

Vice Chair: Judith Armstrong

Clerk: clerk@thirlwallparishcouncil.org

Councillors: Emma Guerrero, David Keen, Owen Wilkins

Waterhead Parish Council

Chair: David Rackstraw

Vice Chair: Jovan Nicholson

Clerk: Sue Hatt:

waterheadpc@gmail.com

Councillors: John Woodmass-Calvert

Upper Denton Parish Council

Chair: Dan Newrick

Vice Chair: Tim Gordon

Clerk: Sue Hatt:

upperdentonpc@gmail.com

Councillors: Mike Harris

Knitting Group: Brenda Smith, 47361

Community Coffee Morning: Doreen Gutteridge, 47036

Craft Group: Sue Maughan, 47607

Dominos: Doreen Gutteridge, 47036

Folk Club Brampton: Katy, 01228 674209

Gilsland Parish Church: Alison Higgs, 47409; Rev'd Angela Hughes, 2478

Gilsland School: 47302

Greenhead School: 47347

Gilsland Show secretary: Vicky Baty, 01228 675368

Karate: Ross Cruden, 47116

Methodist Church: Melvyn Whatmough, 47524

Over 60s: Sheila Rooney, 47015

Tourism Partnership: Catherine Jarvis, 07759 020 885

Village Hall Committee & Bookings:

gilslandhallcommittee@gmail.com

Village Hall: 01697 543229

WI: Doreen Gutteridge, 47036

Youth Club: Clare Hawkins, 47371

Submissions

The magazine is always looking for submissions! The deadline for submissions is the 20th of the month. Submissions may be edited.

Digital copies

Digital copies of the magazine will be available from the 1st of the month at gilslandvillagemagazine.co.uk. You can sign up to get an email alert when the issue is published on the Contact page of the website.

Credits

Thanks to the contributors and advertisers featured in this edition. This publication couldn't be produced and delivered without the help of volunteers. The magazine is edited by Sue Maughan, Chris Cantrill, Owen Wilkins and Liam McNulty.

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