
OCTOBER '26

Gilsland Village Magazine

CLIMATE CHANGE IS IMPACTING HOW WE STUDY HISTORY

By Franki Gillis, Geoarchaeologist, Roman Army Museum and Magna Fort



Hadrian's Wall offers a wealth of knowledge about the people who used to live on this land. Our deep understanding of this landscape during Roman times is partially due to the unique ecosystem which allows the preservation of organic artifacts, such as leather and wood. These artifacts provide an otherwise unforeseen look into the private lives of those living along the Wall. Prior to the discovery of Vindolanda's vast shoe collection, it was believed by scholars that Hadrian's Wall was purely a military landscape, and therefore women and children were not present in this area; but the shoes told a different story, with small children's shoes and finely decorated women's shoes being found in significant quantities.

Many of these finds are preserved in anaerobic (very low oxygen) soil environments which dramatically slows the degradation of organic artifacts. Unfortunately, climate change is impacting this preservation landscape and causing this vital history to be lost right before our eyes. Studies have shown that microscopic degradation of the Vindolanda leather began in the mid-1990s but has only become visible to the naked eye in the past few years. As such, the Vindolanda Trust is researching this phenomenon and trying to devise methods of mitigating the impact of climate change. In 2022, a series of weather stations and environmental probe arrays were installed at both Vindolanda and Magna. These instruments take measurements every fifteen minutes, every day. This data shows that the preservation environment is switching to aerobic (oxygenated) quite frequently – each time the organic artifacts are exposed to oxygen, they degrade a bit further. While we, unfortunately, cannot undo any damage that has already been done, this research will help guide the Trust's future excavation areas and techniques. Mitigation is an even trickier task; currently, the Trust plans to restore the peatland at Magna in the hope that a healthy bog will prolong the life of the organic material within the fort. All this works towards the overarching goal of preserving the heritage of Hadrian's Wall for future generations.

You can read more about the work going on at Magna Fort at <https://romanarmymuseum.com/magnafort/>

2026 LEEK SHOW REPORT

By Martin Armstrong

The Bridge Inn Leek Show was another big success. Huge congratulations go to the winner Kevin Hind. Close second and most improved leeks went to Jill Murray and third and best leek went to Adam Jackson. Well done everyone!

A big thank-you to the rest of the club members for showing and supporting the club. And thanks to everyone who bought raffle tickets and congratulations to the raffle winners.

We had 26 members this year and it looks like we have another 4 joining us for next year's show. If anyone would like to join the leek club, just pop into the Bridge and let them know.

GILSLAND MOVIE NIGHTS AT THE VILLAGE HALL

By Clare Hawkins

After the success of our first showing in September we are looking forward to this month's movie, 'Belfast' on Saturday 24th October at 7pm. Tickets will be available online soon, from Andi at House of Meg and a limited number on the door and cost £5.

This month we will have a pre-movie social with drinks and nibbles for sale from 6pm. So you can drop by, meet old friends, make new friends and get ready for an entertaining night. We will also have the raffle for the gold and silver tickets. The gold ticket entitles the winner free entry to the next movie with a free drink for two people. The silver ticket entitles the winner to one free entry to the next movie. Tickets cost £1 and are available every movie night.

AN UPDATE FROM GILSLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Nicola Atkinson, Head Teacher

It's been lovely to see our children enjoying their new play equipment this week. Unfortunately though, staff have had to remove dog poo on more than one occasion this week. Please can people refrain from allowing their dogs on the school premises.

Our Harvest Festival will be on Friday 16 th October. Once again, we will be collecting donations for Brampton Food bank. Any donations would be greatly received and can be dropped at the school office.

Chloe from Network Rail, visited our school to teach the children about railway safety. We learned why railways can be so dangerous and, most importantly, how to keep themselves and others safe near railway lines and level crossings. Staff were shocked at how many near misses there have been in and around the Gilsland area.



THE UPPER DENTON CROSSING: AN ACCIDENT BLACKSPOT

By Andrew Davis

We recently moved to Upper Denton, which, as readers will know, is cut in half by the railway line and a hand operated level crossing. With an interest in history and knowing that the house dated to around 1800, I started to research its past. I had no idea it would turn out to be so dark.

So we come to the early hours of 5th July 1872 and a collision between a mineral train and ballast train at Sheath Bank Cutting, a double curve with limited visibility. The incident resulted in multiple deaths and was the subject of an inquiry at the Howard Arms in Brampton. This was well reported in the local press and from those archives I've found some fascinating details.

The ballast train was travelling from Low Row on the main line - west of Upper Denton it shunted onto a side line and waited for two mineral trains to pass. Despite knowing that a third mineral train was due, it then reversed up the main line, van first. At the crossing, keeper Elizabeth Stobbart saw the ballast train on the wrong line going "faster than a man can run" and, hearing the third mineral train approaching, immediately put up her signal. But it was too late - the two crashed head-on.

The guard saw the mineral train approaching and jumped from the van followed by three of the seven other occupants - two survived but the body of George Bell was later found dead at the side of the line. Three of the men that remained in the van at the point of impact were killed: William Skelton, George Harrington & Robert Hodspith. The fourth was pulled clear with a broken arm. Witness, Joseph Hutchinson, was staying at Mrs Armstrong's Inn, the Hare & Hounds and heard the crash and the blowing of steam before rushing to the incident. Due to their very poor state, the bodies had to be removed to the inn in quilts and blankets.

The inquiry blamed the crew of the mineral train who passed a warning board with no reduction of speed. The company provided the coffins for the victims and paid out a total of £16 in compensation to the widows and relatives - about £2,500 in modern terms.

This was not an isolated tragedy: crossing keeper Thomas Thompson was killed at the same spot in 1862, a traveller named Henry Williams in 1877, and as late as 1970 a car became stuck on the crossing, causing a derailment.

If anyone has further information on these incidents, the specific location of the Upper Denton crossing or any original survey maps of the line, please contact me on taliesin44@hotmail.com

GILSLAND CHURCHYARD NEEDS YOU

By Alison Higgs, Church Warden

Gilsland churchyard is there for everyone who lives in the parish of Gilsland. The members of St Mary Magdalene strive to keep it well maintained so that everyone who comes to visit the graves of loved ones may find a pleasant, well loved place. However, maintaining and insuring the graveyard is expensive: grass cutting alone costs over £1000 a year. Unlike a municipal cemetery, which is paid for out of rates, the cost of maintaining churchyards is borne by those who give money to the church, in the case of St Mary Magdalene, a tiny number. We are fortunate to now receive a small grant from Thirlwall PC but that still leaves over £800 for the church members and friends to find.

This is your churchyard. Please consider helping to pay for maintaining it to the standard you would wish by donating money for its upkeep.

- By BACS to Parochial Church Council of Gilsland sort code 16-52-21 account number 53305944
- By cheque to the same account via 4 Stanley Crescent
- Or via our giving page, by scanning the QR code, where you can make a one-off donation or arrange a regular monthly or annual gift.

Please help if you can. Your churchyard needs you.



SCAN ME

BULLETIN BOARD

The members of Gilsland church would like to thank the volunteers from RAF Spadeadam for their sterling work clearing this year's vegetation from the wild area of the churchyard ready for a wonderful display of wildflowers next year. If you would like to get involved with managing this part of the churchyard for wildlife, please contact Alison Higgs: alison.marymag@gmail.com

Remembering Everyone knows the whole country pauses to remember those members of the armed services who were lost serving our country but at St Mary Magdalene there is a special time to remember all our loved ones who have died. On Sunday November 1st at 2.30, Carlisle Taize Choir will fill the church with beautiful, peaceful music to help in this time of remembrance. Come and light a candle for those you have loved and enjoy the serenity of this peaceful place. Everyone is welcome.

Gilsland Dominoes Drive is on 13th Oct at 7pm sharp. The cost is £3.50 which includes a supper half way through. We also have a 50p raffle and prizes. Everyone is welcome whatever your level of playing.

The Poetry Drop-in this month will be held in the Old Booking Hall at Haltwhistle Station where we will present a Programme of 28 Poems of the railways! 3 pm on Wed 7th Oct. All are welcome! We are dedicating the event to the memory of a great friend of the Tyne Valley Line and a lover of Poetry and all things to do with Trains & Railways, Robert Forsythe

The Haltwhistle History Group in the Hospital Community Room will hear from Julie Gibbon on the History of the Haltwhistle Partnership of the 11 parishes, how & why it began and what it has achieved over the decades.

The Hadrian Singers will be meeting as usual now on Fridays in the Community Room at the hospital at 7pm with great songs of every kind to enjoy. All welcome.

Hadrian's Wall Farmers Market on Sunday 11th October from 10am to 1.30pm at Greenhead Village Hall. Your monthly chance to get local products direct. Stock up on meat, baking, preserves and drinks, and browse the crafts. Delicious homemade refreshments.

The 38th Annual Haltwhistle Arts and Crafts Fair is the longest running and one of the largest in Tynedale and is held at a time when people are beginning to think about Christmas presents. It particularly gives local people a chance to see the creative talent that they have on their doorstep. The event takes place on Saturday 7th November, between 10am and 4m at the Masonic Hall in Haltwhistle.

WEEKLY EVENTS

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

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

CHURCH SERVICES

Gilsland Methodist

Services start at 10.30 unless stated

October 4th | Songs of Praise

October 18th | Holy Communion

St. Mary Magdalene

Services start at 9.30 unless stated

11th October | Morning Worship

25th October | Harvest Thanksgiving
with Holy Communion

1st November 2.30pm |

In Memoriam (with songs from Taizé)

BIN DAYS

Northumberland County Council

General waste: 8th & 22nd

Recycling: 1st & 15th

www.northumberland.gov.uk/waste

Haltwhistle household recycling

Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday

8am - 6pm

Cumberland Council

Refuse & garden: 12th & 26th

Recycling: 5th & 19th

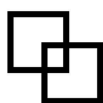
www.cumberland.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-street-cleaning/waste-collections

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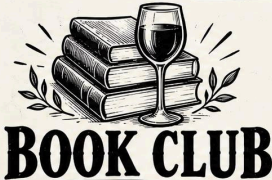


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OCTOBER



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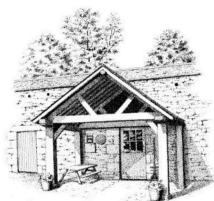
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Sunday 04 October 19.30 – 21.30
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£15.00 / £10.00



Sunday 11 October 18.00 – 20.00
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Friday 20 November 19.30 – 21.30
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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: Owen Wilkins

Clerk: clerk@thirlwallparishcouncil.org

Councillors: Emma Guerrero

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

Clerk: Sue Hatt:

upperdentonpc@gmail.com

Councillors: Mike Harris

Knitting Group: Brenda Smith, 47361

Craft Group: Sue Maughan, 47607

Dominos: Doreen Gutteridge, 47036

Folk Club Brampton: Katy, 01228 674209

Gilsland Parish Church: Alison Higgs, 47409; Rev Ben Phillips, 07936 099123 or ben@lanercoast.net

Gilsland School: 47302

Greenhead School: 47347

Gilsland Show secretary: Vicky Baty, 01228 675368

Methodist Church: Melvyn

Whatmough, 47524

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 Chris Cantrill, Owen Wilkins, Malcolm Redman and Liam McNulty.

Advertising

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