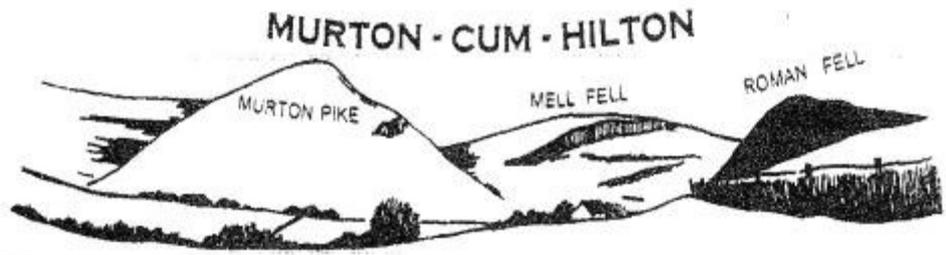


The Villager 56

A newsletter for the community of Murton and Hilton
May 2014



Editorial

Hello and welcome to the latest Villager. In this spring edition we have concentrated on the recent discussions at the Annual Parish Meeting which took the management of our village greens as its topic for the year.

We had a well attended meeting and a very informative presentation from Amanda from the CALC & the Open Spaces project. Amanda was able to give us the facts surrounding the registration of greens and the legislation governing their use and management and some of the do's and don'ts of green management. After a question and answer session we closed the meeting with a consensus that what is needed is a short management plan for each of our village greens. We will discuss this further at the next PC meeting on 6th May—I hope this reaches you in time!

We are also developing a set of keen travel writers in our midst—this edition we have two tales, one from Europe and another from the far-east. This is all great stuff and in a noble tradition for the Villager—please keep them coming!

We've found a little space for some of the usual information as well, with recipes and gardening hints as well as an update from the Institute. What's happening there is an open secret as we are embargoed until June 3rd from any public announcement—this is due to the forthcoming elections and is part of the normal purdah arrangements. We wouldn't want politicians stealing credit for all our own hard work now would we?

The swallows are back—but only a few!

Frank Price, Editor
Ivy House, Hilton



News from the Institute

An update on goings on from John Sibson

RECENT FUN EVENINGS

There was great fun, quick wit and repartee yet again at the biennial Quiz Night in the Institute on 5th April. The noise level as always went up as the quantity of “bring your own” went down. Some 50 people attended and there were new rounds to test the encyclopaedic knowledge of the community residents including many four letter words. The lucky(?) winners of the Easter baskets were greeted with shouts of “Eggheads” (above the usual din) but all in good heart. We were all very pleased for them. There was suggestion that we do Quiz nights more often, but we think its value is in its restriction to twice a year. Where else can you have a night like that for £3 each?

Thanks to Frank and Jules for the film nights that we have had. Attendance at these is gradually increasing as the word about how good it is to see all the top films in the comfort (?) of our own Institute. The room even got a little warm at the last one, but the chairs didn’t – they never do.

Feedback on “The Great Gatsby” was mixed. A lot felt that the story would have been enhanced by knowing more about Gatsby himself – little seemed to come through about that but it was a fun film nevertheless. “Lincoln” though went down very well in spite of the criticism beforehand that there was too much dialogue and too little action. All seemed to agree that it was a good and thought provoking film. Again where else can you get a night out like that for £4.50 each?

All good fun, and as we now anticipate having new facilities in the not too distant future, please can everyone give thought to what new activities we may try to promote in this sociability vein – music nights – how many of our younger residents now play instruments and would like to get together to entertain? And so on – we have potential flower arrangement teachers in our midst, photographers and even art - who knows what talents are hiding in the parish? Please can we have ideas over the next few months while the construction activities proceed?

LAUNCH OF FELLSIDE MINING BOOK BY MR IAN TYLER.

To be part of the launch of a new book on the mines of the Fellside - “Cross Fell and the Mines of the Cumbrian Pennines” - some ten people joined Mr. Ian Tyler on a walk up to the White Mines in Gasdale in the bitter cold on Saturday 12th April.

Throughout the walk, Mr Tyler explained the history of the mines in the area and pointed out the various landform features in Gasdale that are there as a result of lead mining activity.

Mr. Tyler is not a shrinking violet, and his explanations were given with great gusto and enthusiasm for the history and

working conditions of the miners in the area.

There were various points of particular interest in the White Mines vicinity. The track up to the mines is interesting in itself where the ruts where the horses pulled the sledges of ore down from the fell remain clearly visible.

At the mine site Mr. Tyler pointed out the bothy where the miners stayed and worked, and the remains of the dressing floors. He showed us a rock where the places where the blacksmith tested is sharpening of the drilling bits can still be plainly seen, and the beautiful stone work on the main adit level (tunnel) into the mine. Mr. Tyler found samples of the lead ore in the tips, as well as samples of baryte – barium sulphate, known locally as “brytus”, and possible samples of the much less common Witherite which is barium carbonate and is found in this area.

We all walked to the land above the mine and looked at the dams which were filled with water used for “hushing” – a periodic flooding of the fellside below to expose the lead ore. Many of us will have walked that fell but how many will have known these dams were there?

From the hill Mr. Tyler pointed out the hushing activity of the Murton Pike side of the valley and how the lead veins as the lead deposits are called were continued through the Pike to the other side where the remains of the Bluebell mines are still visible.

The party then returned to the car park, and some went back to the Institute where Mr. Tyler had copies of his new book and was signing and selling that and many other of his books on the history of mining in the whole of Cumbria.

The book itself is a weighty one – a veritable tome and a testament to the large amount of work Mr. Tyler has put in over a long period to research this relatively unknown corner of the mining history of our country. Much research has been done over the years into the Lake District, the mines of Alston and Weardale, and those of the Peak District, but very little has ever been written of our Fellside area of the Pennines. Mr. Tyler writes both comprehensively and with humour of many stories told to him from this and other parts of the Fellside. The book covers a large area with many photographs but local to us the main interest is from Silverband, the Dufton Mines, White Mines, Scordale Mines, and of particular interest are the rarely explored mines of Long Fell and Hayber Gill.

The book should be of great interest to anyone especially the older residents of the area and those who walk these fells. Mr. Tyler expresses his thanks in the book to the many older residents who have contributed their anecdotes, knowledge from their families and photographs of the mines.

A book worth having.

Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Village Greens

The Annual Parish meeting took place on March 31st and was well attended by residents from across the Parish. Each year the Parish Meeting is held on set topic—this year the use and care of our village greens was chosen as a result of discussions in the community as to what would be thought as a suitable issue to discuss.

To help us along in our discussion the Parish Council invited Amanda McCleery from the Cumbria Association of Local Councils. Amanda had previously been involved in parish council training on protection and management of open spaces. Here are the notes of the meeting.

The definition of a village green (VG) is: “A town or village green is an area of land where local people indulge in sports and pastimes as of right.” They are usually in or on the edges of settlements and have a recreational use. Common Land is usually larger spaces, on the edges of settlements, extend over moors and fells and have an agricultural use. Confusion can arise where there are ‘rights of common’ on a VG. These rights are attached to certain properties and the right is clearly stated, ie what sort of stock and how many animals can be grazed on the land.

The Commons Registration Authority compiles two Registers. The Town and Village Greens Register holds the details of who owns what and where (ie boundaries) and rights of common (eg type and number of animals that can be grazed) for individual registered greens. The Commons Register holds similar details but for individual registered common land instead. This information is held by Cumbria County Council.

There are therefore three stakeholders in a VG: the community, the owner and those with rights of common. In the Murton Parish the owner of the VG's is the Parish Council and there are two groups of Commoners – Hilton and Murton.

The Enclosures Act in 1857 makes it a criminal offence to tamper with VG's and the Commons Act 1876 describes offences as a ‘public nuisance’. Common questions which arise include:

- * Can someone camp on VG? No, as it may prevent other users enjoying recreation.
- * Can horses be exercised on VG – yes but not if the VG is damaged or injured
- * Can VG be resurfaced or tarmacked? No, as its classed as ‘injuring’ VG.
- * Can VG be walled or fenced? No, as this is classed as enclosure, but temporary fencing may be permissible in certain circumstances (eg grazing) if the owner, people with rights of common and users all agree.
- * Can you drive on VG? No, only emergency vehicles are allowed.
- * Can you park on VG? No, as it interrupts the recreational use of the VG.
- * Can you put a track or access across VG? No, occasional driving across VG may be permissible in certain circumstances where the access predates the registration of the VG.

Cases such as these have been brought to criminal court under the Enclosures Act.

There are various aspects of involvement in VG issues: Highways, local government, SSIs, Heritage groups, tree preservation orders, listed buildings, Local & Neighbourhood Plans, owners’ responsibilities and rights. Under the Open Spaces Act (1906) the owner has the power to maintain the green but does not have an obligation to do so.

Several communities in Cumbria have worked with some of these organisations and issues and have developed Open Space Management Plans to improve and enhance their VGs. The groups have found it challenging but it can lead to stronger communities and CALC would encourage, and support, this initiative in Murton. It is worth contacting other communities (eg. Threlkeld) to find out how they have got on with village green management plans.

There were a number of questions raised and resulting discussion. Here is a summary.

Are utilities exempt from this legislation? Amanda hadn't come across any mention of this but they seem to have exemptions relating to underground work.

With regards to parking on VG, does not the Road Traffic Act post date the VG legislation? No, there had been

Notes of the Annual Parish Meeting on Village Greens

an amendment to the Commons Act in 2006 which reinforced the 19th Century legislation. Amanda has always understood that 19th century legislation takes precedent over the newer Road Traffic Act.

Some pastimes might damage VG's are these permitted? The DEFRA factsheet is useful here re relating to activities which would prevent other people using the VG for their activities, eg horses churning up wet ground.

What if dog fouling was a problem? An Open Space Management Plan would help the community decide how they would deal with this issue.

Can the Middle Green in Murton be mowed? It was noted that several parishioners in Hilton and Murton looked after patches of VG outside their houses but the Middle Green was untidy now. The PC has no objection to it being mowed and the Commoners rarely use it for grazing. The costs could not be covered by the PC. How this could be maintained in the future and made fit for use by children would also be part of the Management Plan.

What is the status of the bollards by Middle Green? These were put up to prevent further damage to the VG caused by vehicles parking on the green. The area where vehicles park is still VG, but has not been tarmacked, merely worn away.

Amanda was thanked for her explanation of the background and use of VGs. It was agreed that there would be an item on the agenda of the next PC meeting relating to the setting up of a group to investigate and develop a Management Plan for Murton. It was agreed that information about VGs would be circulated to each household and this edition of *the Villager* .

There are a number of helpful documents available on websites and in hard copy

DEFRA have produced a useful Q&A document which is available here:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/rural/documents/protected/common-land/tvgprotect-faq.pdf>

Our Green Space is a Cumbria based project set up to protect, enhance and celebrate public green spaces. There are many helpful document on their website and Amanda circulated a few copies of the documents at the meeting.

<http://www.ourgreenspace.org.uk/ogs-documents/view-category>

This website also contains some useful information on the ways in which communities have come together to find agreed ways of managing their VG's. We should aim to draw on these experiences when we meet up to agree management plans for each of our greens.

We agreed to start this process at the next PC meeting in May. Anne Green, one of the Parish Councillors from Hilton has offered to facilitate this process on behalf of us all. As a starting point the following pages reproduce the note previously agreed by the PC for the use of VG's in the Parish and the VG maps from the registry. The aim of the development process for the management plans is to come up with a consensus view on how each of the VG areas can be best managed for the good of all stakeholders .

Date of next meetings: Annual Meeting of Murton Parish Council – Tuesday 6 May at 7.30pm, followed by Ordinary Meeting of Murton Parish Council.

Text of the existing VG management notes from the Parish Council

1. The need for Notes of Guidance

Any decisions affecting Parish Council occupied land must recognise the rights of Commoners, Inhabitants and Visitors when Parish Council guidance is sought for permanent or temporary change of use of this land. It is considered essential that such decisions are consistent and balanced, recognising the needs of working villages and the general desire to maintain their attractive appearance.

2. Land occupied by the Parish Council

This land comprises:

- a. The village greens of Murton and Hilton were registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 as Register Unit VG7 and VG8 respectively. Several Commoners have Common Rights for the grazing of sheep/and or horses. Inhabitants of Murton and Hilton also have a right of 'exercise and recreation' on these Village Greens (Commons Registration Act 1965 Section 22(1)).
- b. Other wastelands of the manor within the Parish not registered as Village Greens and not subject to Common Rights, but which are occupied by the Parish Council.

3. Detailed Guidance

These paragraphs cover specific areas of concern:

3.1 Parking on Village Greens and Wastelands

Parking on Village Greens and Wastelands, within 15 yards of a public road, would not be objected to by the Parish Council provided that:

- a. It is impracticable to park the vehicle on the resident's own property.
- b. Parish Council guidance has been sought in the case of regular overnight parking.
- c. The vehicle causes no obstruction and damage to the land surface is minimised.

Overnight parking in tents and caravans is NOT PERMITTED without consulting the Parish Council.

3.2 Storage of materials on Village Greens and Wastelands

Storage of materials on Village Greens and Wastelands would not be objected to by the Parish Council as a SHORT TERM expedient only, ie a few hours. It must not cause an obstruction or damage the land surface. The Parish Council should be approached for longer term storage.

3.3 Damage to Village Greens and Wastelands

Includes spillage of damaging materials and liquids. The lighting of bonfires on Village Greens and Wastelands is not permitted, except in the case of Bonfire Night fires, at the traditional sites in Murton and Hilton. It is expected that Bonfire Night organisers will ensure that the site is cleared of debris as soon as it is practicable after the event.

3.4 Driveways across Village Greens and Wastelands

The establishment of permanent driveways across Village Greens and Wastelands must be authorised in writing by the Parish Council who will ensure that:

- a. There is no alternative access available.
- b. The Commoners have no objections to the proposal.
- c. The route is chosen to minimise damage, to have minimal effect on Common Rights and the appearance of the Greens.
- d. Any arrangement is consistent with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Parish Council must be consulted about the type of driveway surface to be used.

3.5 Grass Cutting

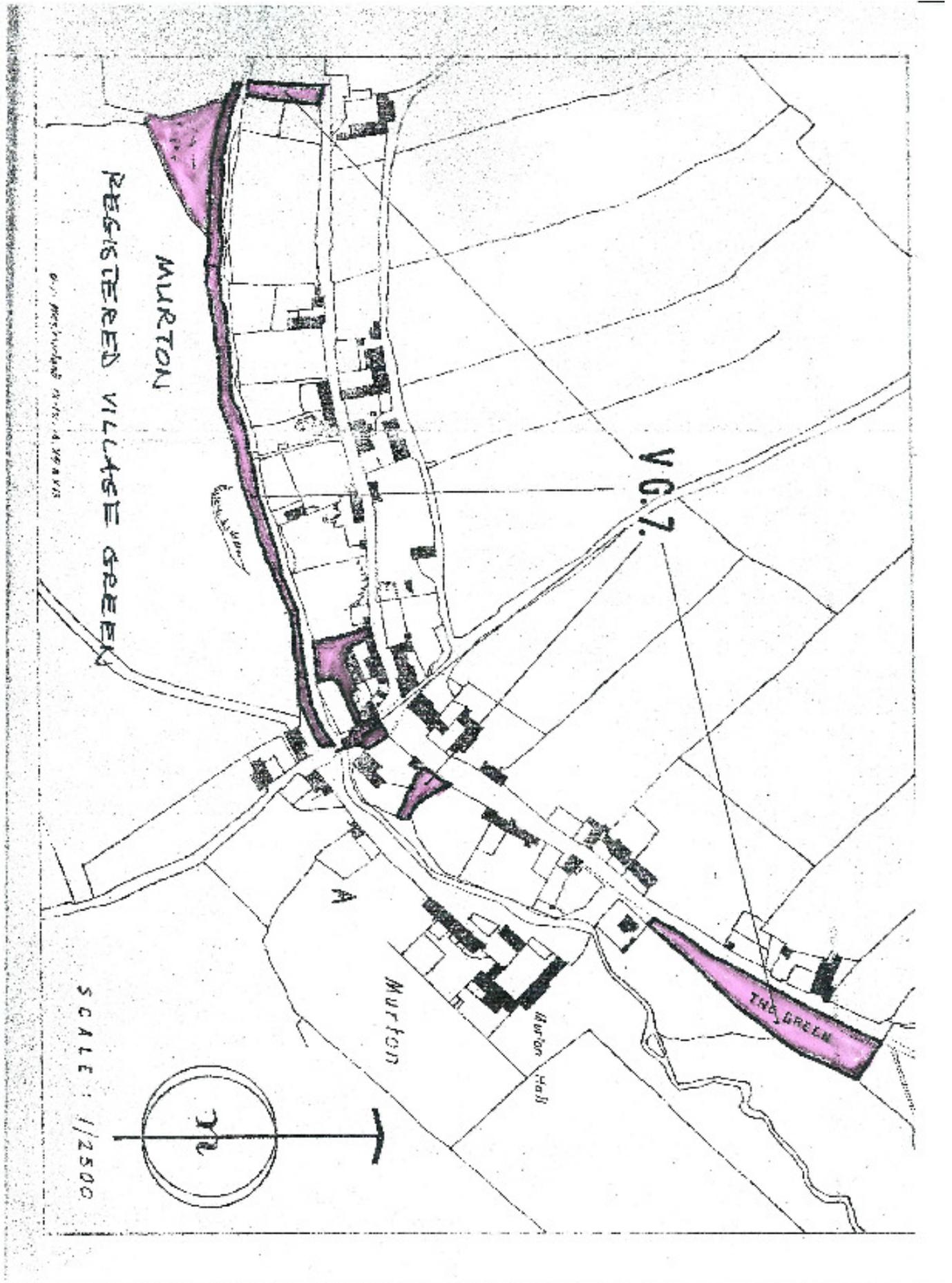
The regular mowing of grass on Village Greens in front of resident's property requires the formal approval of the appropriate Commoners' meeting, since it affects grazing rights.

Subject to this proviso the Parish Council would not object in principle to the mowing of grass on Parish Council occupied land.

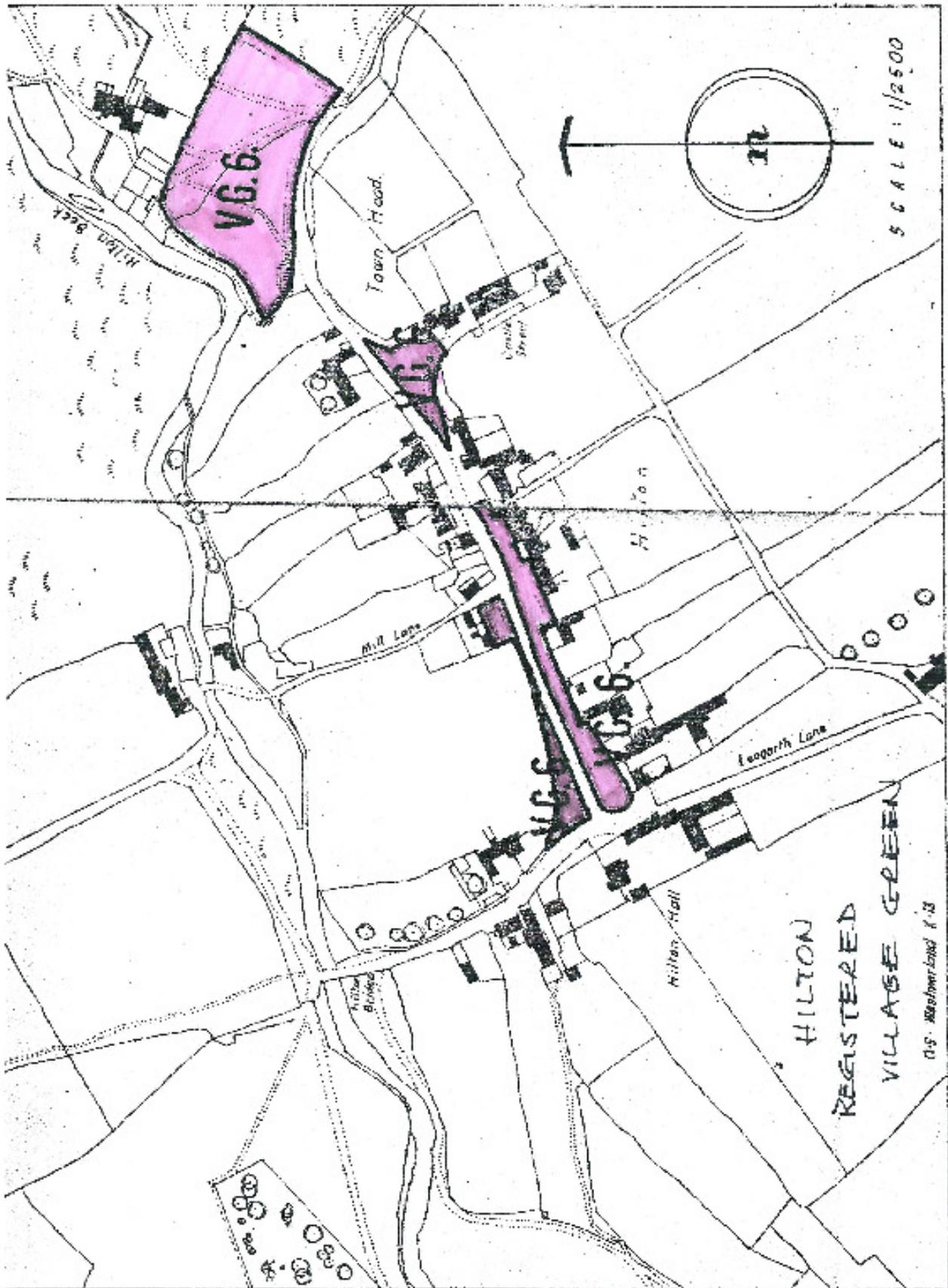
4. General

The Parish Council is prepared to amend this guidance in the light of experience. Parishioners and visitors are encouraged to propose changes via any Parish Councillor or by writing to the Clerk.

Reproduction of the Village Green register map—Murton



Reproduction of the Village Green register map—Hilton



Phileas Foggy goes to Mulhouse & Milan—Mr & Mrs Foggy are at it again

Mr Foggy announced that the next family holiday would be to Mulhouse. Mrs Foggy wondered why she would want to go to somewhere she had never heard of but Mr Foggy explained that Mulhouse (in France) has the

Milan is a major world fashion centre with many expensive looking designer shops. Mr Foggy hung onto his wallet. The cathedral, “the Duomo” is magnificent being built from white marble. For a small fee (senior reductions!) they took the lift to the roof of the Duomo for a panoramic view of Milan out to the snow covered Alps.



The Foggys completed their tour of museums with the Museo della Scienza e della Tecnologia which includes many of Leonardo da Vinci’s inventions. They travelled on Milan’s buses, trolleybuses and ancient trams using their 4.5 Euro day ticket.

Mr & Mrs Foggy took the short train ride to Lake Como and the funicular railway up to Brunate. Unfortunately Brunate was in cloud and only brief glimpses of the lake could be seen through the mist.

biggest Car Museum in the world (le Cité de l’Automobile). The Schlumpf brothers had secretly collected classic cars between 1945 and 1980 when they went bankrupt and the collection became a National Museum. If Mrs Foggy didn’t want to look at cars there was also an exciting Wallpaper Museum in Mulhouse.

Mr & Mrs Foggy flew Easyjet from Manchester to Mulhouse-Basel (£32.50 each, no frills, hand luggage only, no priority booking, no options). Hotels were booked through the website

www.venere.com

After making a mental note to return to Mulhouse to visit the French National Railway Museum and the Museum of Electricity (and possibly the Wallpaper Museum) Mr & Mrs Foggy took the train through Switzerland to Milan via the St Gothard Pass (£25 each booked through uk.voyages-sncf.com).

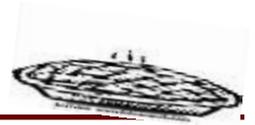
The return flight from Milan was via Ryanair (£19 each (really!), no frills, no options etc.).

Mrs Foggy is worried. Mr Foggy is now reading about a Zeppelin Museum in Germany.....



Mrs Pinafore's Cookery Corner

Following the success of recent recipes, Mrs Pinafore has agreed to write a regular column



The recipe for this edition is brought to you courtesy of Jackie Watkinson, via the Fellsiders. At their February meeting, Jackie demonstrated how to prepare a number of vegetarian recipes; spicy sausage ragout, lentil sauce and chestnut a la Bourguignonne. We had a vote at the end of the evening and the chestnut dish won the tastiest dish award. So here it is.

Mrs W's Chestnut a la Bourguignonne

Ingredients

250 g shallots, peeled
1 tbsp olive oil
250 g baby chestnut mushrooms
250 g carrots, peeled and sliced
1 celery heart, sliced
2 tsp Dijon mustard
4 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
250 g pack of cooked and peeled whole chestnuts
300 ml red wine
300 ml vegetable stock
2 bay leaves
Sprig of rosemary
2 tbsp soy sauce

Method

Fry the shallots in the olive oil in a large pan on a low heat until they are slightly brown in places. Add the mushrooms, carrots and celery, stir and cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in the mustard, garlic, chestnuts, wine, stock and herbs. Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for 20 – 25 mins until the vegetables are tender. Then add the soy sauce and turn up the heat and let the mixture bubble hard for 5 minutes or so until the liquid has reduced and thickened a bit. For a slightly thicker sauce, add a spoonful of flour to the

mixture before the stock and stir in well. You'll need to stir this regularly to avoid sticking. Serve with pasta, rice or a baked potato and a crisp green vegetable. Or maybe, for the obligate carnivores, a lamb chop!

As we approach the end of the rhubarb season, here's a rhubarb recipe with a difference. You could also add ginger or ground cardamom to stewed rhubarb to add a bit of spice... Please send any of your favourite recipes to the editor. Happy cooking!

Mrs P's Magic Rhubarb Pudding

Ingredients

800 g rhubarb, trimmed and chopped in 2.5 cm pieces
Juice and zest of 2 oranges
220 g caster sugar
75 g butter
3 eggs, separated
75 g self-raising flour
200 ml milk

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180C/350F/GM 4. Grease a 2 litre oven dish. Mix the rhubarb with the orange juice and 3 tbsp of sugar. Simmer for 5 mins. Drain and reserve the juice. Spread the rhubarb into the dish. Beat together the butter, rest of the sugar and orange zest until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks one at a time, beating well after each. Mix in the flour until just combined. Measure 150 ml of the juice and add this to the batter gradually, mixing gently. Whip the egg whites to soft peaks and fold into the mixture. Spread the batter over the rhubarb and bake for 40 mins.

What's on at the Institute

Saturday May 10th, 2.00-4.00—**Cup Cake Tea Party**

This to be in aid of Hospice at Home

Saturday 7th June, 10.00-12.00—**Coffee and Craic**

In aid of Institute funds

21st - 22nd June 1.00-5.00 each afternoon—**Garden Trail** through Hilton and Murton, refreshments and trail maps available at the Institute

Saturday 19th July—Summer BBQ, times TBA

Also to be arranged is a spring clean day to spruce up the Institute prior to the Garden Trail weekend together with a litter pick of verges and lanes.

With thanks to

The Villager is sponsored by a generous donation from Olive Ogilvie.

The Villager would not happen without your help and support and all donations, items and anecdotes are really welcome - especially if they have a photo attached. A big thank you to this month's contributors not acknowledged elsewhere: Frances & John Sib-

son, Gabriel Reid, Alan Ormrod, John and Carolyn Sykes, Richard & Anne King, Tina Wragg & Jules Price. Please keep the ideas flowing and pass through your pictures, news and comments for publication.

The next edition will be out in August so all copy for number 57 please by August 1st.

Frank Price, Ivy House, Hilton.

Tel: 54013 PLEASE NOTE the change in email address

thevillager@murton.org.uk

www.murton.org.uk

@murtonvillager

In Memoriam

To coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I, it is proposed to publish a booklet that will include details of those whose names are commemorated on the war memorial in the cemetery. Nine from the parish died during World War I and four in World War II. It will be on sale later in the year.

Further information will be given in the next issue of The Villager and also in a forthcoming Heart of Eden newsletter.

St John's Church

News from Gabriel Reid, Churchwarden



Messy Church was held in the Institute on Good Friday and was attended by 13 children. The results of their handiwork decorated the Church for Easter Day with an Easter Garden in the porch. The Patronal Festival will be celebrated with a service on 22nd June at 6.30. This will be part of the Open Gardens week-end and the church will be specially decorated. The service will be followed by refreshments in the Institute. Faculty Notices (planning permission) regarding the proposed installation of the Walker organ at the back of the church have been displayed on the church door and the outside noticeboard giving details of where to send any objections people might have. Since the November meeting photographs of the organ have been on display in church. This is the stage that has been reached in the process which has been followed since the idea was first proposed.

We are planning on spending some of the £1,000 which was so generously donated, on lighting along the path and over the gate. Repairs to the church have begun—very many thanks to Rosemary Mandale for organising this. From May till October services on the second Sunday of the month will be Evensong at 6.30. Other services are: 1st and 3rd Sundays 9.15 Holy Communion, 5th Sunday 9.15 Mattins. On June 29th (5th Sunday) the service will be at Holy Communion 10.30 and the congregation from St. Lawrence's will be joining us.

Hospice at Home Carlisle and North Lakeland: Emily's 10K swimathon

On Saturday May 17th, Emily Middleton is planning to complete a swim of 10 kilometres (that's 400 lengths) in Appleby pool in aid of Hospice at Home Carlisle and North Lakeland. Her stepfather, Irving Shuttleworth, died of cancer in November 2013 at home where he was comfortable and where everything around him was familiar.

Hospice at Home had spent hours at the house, mainly at night, giving comfort, nursing care and always the listening ear. Hospice at Home was set up in this area by Pauline Coulthwaite (or Dr Pauline as she was affectionately called) and in the main, its funding relies on donations made by the public. There are so many families who have been helped by Hospice at Home, and I am looking for people, whether affected by cancer in the family or not, to help on the 17th in the afternoon by spending half an hour adjudicating (which would involve pushing a button to count another length) or even by taking the plunge for a couple of lengths and swimming alongside Emily - just for moral support.

There will be collecting boxes in the town...look out for the label: Hospice at Home, Emily's 10K Swimathon, if you would like to put in a donation. There is also the link on the internet: www.justgiving.com/emily-middleton2014 if you would like to donate online. Emily's aim is to raise £2,500, and she has already been promised over £1,000. If you would like to adjudicate or swim with Emily, please ring me on 51016 and I will work out a timetable.

Thanking you in advance for your support, Patricia Shuttleworth

Burma by Bike—Richard and Anne King take an Exodus trip to the far east

Once our children left home, Anne & I decided to take the opportunity to see the world by having one long-haul holiday each year. We decided to make these “activity holidays” to help us keep fit, and to get closer to the people whose countries we visited. This year’s trip was Burma by Bike.

The worst part of these trips are the start & finish, in this case an 18 hour flight from Heathrow to Yangon (Rangoon) via Kuala Lumpur. We left Heathrow on a Saturday morning & arrived in Yangon Sunday lunchtime. We met our fellow travellers and were a little fearful that they all appeared younger & fitter than us. One was a Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist & Olympic semi-finalist (110 metres hurdles)! We started with a walking tour of Yangon, visiting the bar of the Strand Hotel (a wonderful relic of the colonial era) & watching the sun set over the river Irrawaddy. First impressions of Yangon were favourable – busy, but clean, safe & friendly.

The following day we took an internal flight to Heho and then drove the short distance to Inle lake, where we



met our bikes & support team. The bikes were modern (updated versions of the Treks we have in Hilton) & the support staff very friendly & helpful. Our bikes were stripped down and refurbished for us every evening. Our leader would cycle at the front (unless our hurdler was feeling competitive) & the rest of us rode at our own pace, with the deputy leader at the rear. A truck followed us, to help in the case of mechanical breakdown, or to take the bikes if someone was suffering. Our minibus was on hand to provide snack stops. Days varied, but generally we would cycle for around 30 to 40 miles, from 7.30 until lunch time, & then spend the afternoon travelling in our minibus, visiting pagodas.

Inle Lake is over 3000 feet high, and said to be 14 miles long & 7 miles wide (average depth of 5 metres!). However, it is hard to see where the lake ends and the sur-

rounding marshes begin. The edges of the lake are populated by stilt house villages and floating gardens. We spent 2 days cycling around the lake, & travelling around the villages. The locals make a subsistence living from fishing, farming & handicrafts &, of course, there are pagodas. One highlight was seeing fishermen “leg rowing”. They use a pole (similar to a punt) but wrap it round one leg to keep both hands free for fishing!

We then cycled across the Shan Highlands to Pindaya, famous for caves with more than 8000 Buddha images within the limestone tunnels & chambers. As we cycled, we began to appreciate the landscape – beautiful in itself – but strange to us. We might expect a Lakeland or dales view to be scattered with white-washed farms. Wherever you look in Burma there is another gold pagoda.

Our trip then took us to Mandalay (the export rum is recommended, & at £1.50 a bottle, affordable), & Monywa. In the surrounding countryside we saw the world’s largest reclining Buddha (100 metres long & 27 metres high) & the largest standing Buddha. We then cycled to Pakkoku & went down the Irrawaddy by boat to Bagan, as our bikes followed by road.

We enjoyed every moment of our fascinating journey. Burma (or I should say Myanmar) is only just opening up to tourism. Your mobile phone will not work & wifi



access is temperamental. There are only a very few ATMs & it is essential that you take brand new US dollars with you. However, the people are very friendly and helpful. A detailed knowledge of Premier League soccer will find you surrounded by Burmese of all ages! We decided to break our return journey at Kuala Lumpur and take the 60 minute flight to Lankawi to spend time lazing on the beach, bird-watching & exploring the mangrove swamps.

Tales from the potting shed



Our regular column from Tina Wragg featuring topical ideas for your garden...

I have been browsing through several garden magazines and publications over the past few weeks and many have been discussing suitable plants for shady areas in the garden.

Shade is often seen as a challenging situation, because we cannot grow the plants that immediately spring to mind. To many a garden means grass and brightly coloured flowers. Shade means foliage, texture and more subtle blooms. In truth the palette of plants for shade is rich and exciting. Some of our most beautiful shrubs and perennials thrive in shade, rewarding with year round interest.

All pieris are good shrubs for shade especially in pots. Pieris japonica "Little Heath" is a bushy compact shrub with small narrow leaves of soft green and white, whose new growth is delicate and bronze pink.

Purple and yellow foliage shrubs lose colour in shade. However that is not always a bad thing. *Choisya ternata* "Sundance" is brashy gold in full sun but in shade it becomes lime green, a real shaft of sunlight in the shadows and a great contrast to dark green. "Sundance" makes a wonderful planting partner for the bold, dark green leaves of *Viburnum davidii*.

Evergreen euonymous will grow happily in sun or shade. I have both *Euonymus fortunei* "Emerald Gaiety" and "Silver Queen" in the garden and they really put up with the extremes of weather. Hostas are a wonderful foliage plant to use in shady areas. The blue leaved varieties such as "Halcyon" and "Haspen Blue" are reasonably mollusc resistant.

Of course a shady space wouldn't be complete without a fern or two. A delightful evergreen fern is *Polystichum setiferum* "Herrenhausen", with intricate fronds of grace and texture.

We must not forget the many varieties of bulbs and perennials that prosper in the shade. Snowdrops, cyclamen and wood anemones, followed by dog's tooth violet, bluebells and narcissus "Camelot". In early summer the creamy white flowers of angelica contrast with the textural leaves of *Rodgersia* and *Astrantia major* "Shaggy" and of course the good old favourite *Alchemilla mollis*, ladies mantle. In late summer astilbes put on a wonderful show in more damper areas of the shady garden. I particularly like the effect of lily turf in the late summer borders as the spikes of purple blooms contrast well with the hot reds and oranges of dahlias and crocosmias.

John & Carolyn's 40th Wedding Anniversary



John & Carolyn Sykes invite you to drinks and nibbles at Town Head Cottage, Hilton on Sunday May 4th 2014 between 2.00 and 5.00 pm.

No presents please.

Things to do in May

- * Cut back Forsythia and Winter flowering Jasmine
- * Divide early perennials such as primulas. Tease clumps apart into individual plants and plant out into freshly turned over soil
- * Plant out sweet peas and make sure there are training supports
- * Thin out hardy annuals in their seed trays, refirm the soil and gently water in.
- * Check your dahlias and prepare their bed for planting out at the end of May