

Farlam Parish Village News

Summer Edition June to August 2026



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Parish newsletter. Our cover photo was provided by Miss Clara Freer.

Contents include news that the Belted Will is under new ownership, the categories for the annual flower show to be held in August, a list of 100 Plus Club prizewinners, a WI Spring update, dates of Church services and news from our highly regarded primary school.

There has been a lot of activity taking place on the Campaign for the Lord Carlisle Heritage Trail. Campaigners are producing their own monthly newsletter and have set up a website and Facebook page. Cumberland Councillor Roger Dobson discusses the issue and his recent actions.

Also included is a summary of the main items discussed at the Parish Council meeting held in January and Farlam Parish Trust have provided an update on future funding availability.

Farlam's resident bloodhounds had a successful outing to Crufts and while helping out during the recent refurbishment of Tullie House museum, Clara Freer chanced across a box marked Farlam which contained details of the 1991 archeological dig of the medieval church in the lower churchyard. Clara has provided some notes about the dig.

Our M.P. Julie Minns has also written about her work and explains how she engages with constituents including those in rural communities and raises issues on our behalf in Parliament.

Advertising in our Village Newsletter

If you would like to advertise or sponsor an issue, please email:

farlamvillagenews@gmail.com

Revenue raised helps reduce our print costs.

The newsletter is delivered to over 350 homes in the Parish and is published online at:

farlamparishchurch.co.uk

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Parish Council Activity

The Parish Council met on 14th January and again on 11th March 2026. Only the minutes of the January meeting are on their website farlampc.gov.uk. The main items discussed in January were the need to tackle speeding vehicles particularly those travelling though Coalfell and future locations for grit bins. The Clerk's wages and payments to HMRC and the company hosting the council's website were approved. The council now appears to bank with Unity Trust Bank following the unexpected closure of their account with HSBC. The balance held with Unity Trust Bank was £15,332.86 as at 28th January 2026. Quotes for new equipment for the play area were still awaited and installation of the Speed Indicator Device near the school still needed to be sorted out. The January meeting concluded with another closed session discussion of legal issues relating to the play area site.

Success at Crufts

In March, Maud and Fryony had their annual trip to Crufts, after a quick bath (a paddle in the local rivers) they were ready for their big day out. Maud had a busy time at Discover Dogs where she and Clara Freer spent the day meeting the public and letting them know all about Bloodhounds.



Stickers and slobber were shared with those who wanted to learn about what it's like to live with such a special but vulnerable breed.

In the show ring Fryony won the Good Citizenship Class (she attends classes once a week to learn how to do trick practice for the awards and have fun socialising with other dogs).

She also won the special working trials hound class. While waiting for her wins she had fun greeting the public and posing just long enough to get her picture in to the papers.



Update from Hallbankgate Village Hall

The hall is well used by people making use of our facilities for Badminton, Pickleball, WI, Yoga teaching, Tai Chi, Music groups, Birthday parties and training courses! We closed for a weekend in April to complete some works to the main hall floor and it looks great! We are so very lucky to have a great committee who gave up their weekends to complete this work. THANK YOU!

The categories for the flower show in August are published in the newsletter including some more children's classes (by request!). We are always open to feedback so please do let us know if you think we can add something in next year!

Call Lea-Anne on 07412158502 or email - hbgvillagehall@outlook.com for hall booking enquiries and don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram & TikTok!!!

Dates for your diary; 15th Aug 2026 - Flower Show; 13th Nov 2026 - Torchlight Procession; and 14th & 15th Nov 2026 - Craft Fair

Church Matters: Three Rivers Mission Community Team Ministry

Team Rector: Vacant

Church Wardens of St. Thomas à Becket Church (Farlam Church in Kirkhouse) are Gerry Bolton (Mob. 07578 404500 Email: gabolton@hotmail.co.uk) and Christine Mineham.

Forthcoming Services at Farlam Church

Sunday	7th June at 11:00am	Lay Led Morning Prayer
Sunday	21st June at 11:00am	Holy Communion Rev'd Allison Lee
Sunday	5th July at 11:00am	Lay Led Morning Prayer
Sunday	19th July at 11.00am	Holy Communion Rev'd Allison Lee
Sunday	2nd August at 11:00am	Lay Led Morning Prayer
Sunday	16th August at 11:00am	Holy Communion Rev's Issac Lawrence



Services at **Farlam Church** usually take place on the first and third Sundays of the month. All are welcome to join us. When there is no service at Farlam we encourage people to worship at Talkin Church where services are usually held each Sunday at 9:15am.

For more information visit our website farlamparishchurch.co.uk or check out events at Farlam and Talkin churches on www.achurchnearyou.com.

Farlam Church usually has a simple 20 minute service of Morning prayer (using the book of Common Prayer) at 9:00am each Monday.

Church News

The Rev'd Elizabeth Gough conducted the funeral service for well known local farmer Len Smith on 9th March prior to a family burial. Donations given by those present were split between Cancer Research UK (£535.25) and British Heart Foundation (£535.00).

We are now in Trinitytide or the 'green season' symbolised by the colour of the alter cloth signifying hope and peace.

The Annual Parochial Church Council meeting took place on 19th April at which the existing two churchwardens were re-elected and membership of the PCC agreed.

Discussion took place around future proposals for worship following the departure of Rev'd Johnsen, and building maintenance works required to keep the church in good shape. Replacement hopper windows are awaiting installation and a new window is planned for installation above the doorway of the vestry. Lime plaster has been removed from the wall on the left of the main entrance and also in the vestry. This is to help let the stonework breathe and reduce damp. New cast iron hoppers are also scheduled to be fitted to the gutters once a funding contribution has been agreed by the Diocese Advisory Committee.

Volunteers have been keeping the verges along the main path trimmed and the grass around the War Memorial and north and west walls tidy. A gardener has been hired to cut in pathways to allow people to access graves across the churchyard.

Dear Parishioners,

John Paul Sartre taught that the human condition is one of anguish, abandonment and despair. When one comes to the belief that there is no God we feel abandoned, we anguish that our life is meaningless and we despair that nothing we ever do will have any lasting worth. I loved reading the work of Sartre as a teenager but his teaching had the opposite effect to his intention. Where he clearly outlined the consequences of there being no God I redoubled my effort to discover the true God.

Although many might never have heard of existentialism, its outworkings are significant in modern society; huge amounts of people find that their lives are pointless and that their actions are meaningless. There are many depressed, hopeless isolated and lonely people amongst us. Teenagers have been taught that their lives are a meaningless result of clashing chemicals and it effects their morals, their choices, and their ambitions.

But the atheists are wrong.

There is a God, we are his creation, he has a plan for us and for the world. Even more importantly our Creator God loves us, he wants us to return to him, he is willing to forgive us and he has shown us the best way to live. As created beings our greatest happiness can be found by being one with our creator; loving him and being loved by him; living as he intended.

If you would like to understand this I encourage you to read a gospel, come to a church service, sign up for an Alpha or Christianity Explored course. Use your time to find the meaning of life. The answers are available they just take some effort and courage to find. May God bless you in your search.

Ben Phillips,
Vicar, Rural Dean & Mission Community Leader of the Brampton Deanery

Farlam 100 Plus Club Prize Winners

The 100 Plus Club exists to raise funds to help maintain Farlam Church and the graveyard. Over 100 members take part in the monthly draw. Additional members are always welcome to join. More members increases the amount available to maintain the church building and the graveyards and also increases the prize pot for the bumper Christmas draw.

After some postage costs and the prize money have been deducted, the remaining amount goes towards maintaining the church building and grounds. In 2025 £700.00 was paid out in prize money and £573.00 put towards maintenance costs.

For further information contact Ann Freer on 016977 46933 or email bgfreer@mac.com. Alternatively download the membership form at farlamparishchurch.co.uk and send it to Ann Freer by email. A big thank you to existing members for their continued support.

	April	May	June
1st prize £25.00	Brian Watson	Peter Arnt	Michael Davidson
2nd prize £15.00	Gordon Stewart	Bob Hope	Pam Robertson
3rd prize £10.00	Vivian Smith	Ian How	Nicola Potts

Hallbankgate Village School News



We can't quite believe that there is only one more half term left of this academic year, but, in the meantime, we have lots of wonderful learning to tell you about!

You may recall from previous editions that we have been working with Gareth and Bronwen Davies-Jones, a father and daughter musical duo, to write, learn and perform our very own song about local man, Thomas Edmondson. Edmondson, who created a rail ticketing system that has been used all over the world, was based at Brompton Station and revolutionised rail travel in the 1800s. This term, we have had the opportunity to perform our song at Carlisle Cathedral, where we received some fantastic feedback about our performance and conduct at the event; we represented our school extremely well! Since this performance, we are delighted to let you know that this project ('A song for Edmondson') has won a national community rail award and we have a very shiny trophy taking pride of place in our school entrance! After our official assembly, we were joined by BBC Radio Cumbria who recorded our song and asked us questions about our learning. It won't be around for long, but you can listen to the song and the interview here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002v265> . Please scroll to 23 minutes and 17 seconds to listen to part one.

We've also been working hard right across the curriculum, from writing wonderful, descriptive stories in literacy to learning all about the world around us in geography and science. In Early Years and Key Stage 1, we have been learning all about the world around us by exploring different climates such as hot and cold regions, rainforests and the continent of South America. We have enjoyed discovering how people, animals and plants adapt to different environments across the world, and comparing these places to what can be found a little closer to home. In science, we have been learning about life cycles and have particularly enjoyed finding out about butterflies. We are very excited to have caterpillars in our classroom and are looking forward to observing how they grow and change over time as they transform into butterflies. In our PSHE learning, we have been learning about how to keep our bodies healthy, including the importance of exercise, healthy eating and looking after ourselves. We have also been learning about how to stay safe online and what we can do if something online makes us feel worried or uncomfortable.

In Key Stage 2, we have been developing our understanding of the wider world through our geography and history learning. In geography, we have learned about settlements, including where they are built and why. Using relief maps and satellite images, we identified links between physical features and settlement locations, while also exploring different types of settlements. In history, we have started our unit on The Windrush Generation, learning about the history of Jamaica, Britain's colonisation of the island and the impact of the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition on modern Jamaican culture and communities. We plan on having steel drums in school before the end of term to help us understand more about the Caribbean culture, too!

We are delighted to invite all families and members of our community to our Summer Fete on Saturday 20th June, 12pm-3pm. It promises to be a fantastic day filled with fun, food, activities and entertainment for everyone to enjoy. There will be a variety of stalls, games and events taking place throughout the day, along with delicious food and refreshments. The fete is a wonderful opportunity for our school community to come together and celebrate the end of the school year. All money raised during the event will go towards supporting our Parent and

Friends Association (PFA). These funds help to provide valuable extra-curricular activities and experiences for all children across the school, enriching their learning and creating memorable opportunities throughout the year. We look forward to welcoming you all for what is sure to be a fun and successful day!

If you would like to find out more about our school, please visit www.hallbankgate.org.uk: our weekly newsletter is jam-packed with photographs and information about what we have been learning about.



Farlam Church Plant Sale

The church held a plant sale on Sunday 17th May following the service conducted by Rev'd Isaac Lawrence.

A total of £407.70 was raised from the sale of plants and tea/coffee and cake. There was a steady stream of parishioners coming into the church for much of the afternoon.

People sat together and chatted, scoffed the cakes and all seemed to have a fun filled afternoon judging from the frequent outbursts of laughter.



Cumberland Councillor Roger Dobson



The community response to the shocking destruction of the Lord Carlisle Railway formation and surrounding habitat at Midgeholme has been remarkable. By the third public meeting in a month, a fully constituted Campaign had been established, complete with a nine member committee dedicated to protecting the Lord Carlisle Railway route.

The group has been extremely active. Their website lchtrail.org is now live and well worth a visit. A residents' survey has attracted nearly 130 responses with a summary of results available online. More than 40 members have already joined the Campaign and paid their £5 subscription. Land ownership along the route has been mapped, and discussions are under way with landowners and with the RSPB. The committee is also engaging with residents living alongside the railway, who understandably have concerns about increased use leading to parking pressures and antisocial behaviour.

Gathering evidence of longstanding public use will be essential in establishing a Public Right of Way. If you have walked or ridden on the railway and would like to help, please download the **User Evidence Form** from the website. Hard copies are also available from the Hallbankgate Hub and Halton Lea Gate Post Office.

One early priority is to nominate the Lord Carlisle Railway as an **Asset of Community Value**. This would ensure that the kind of irresponsible disposal seen when Sustrans (now Walk Wheel Cycle Trust) sold the Midgeholme land could not be repeated, as any future sale would have to be offered to the community first. Farlam Parish Council is considering whether it may take the lead on this nomination.

As your Cumberland Councillor, I have been working closely with Planning Officers in response to events. A **Temporary Stop Notice** has been issued to prevent further damage at Midgeholme, and an **Enforcement Notice** is being prepared that will set out the remediation required. Unfortunately, Midgeholme is not an isolated case; I am dealing with a similar, though smaller scale, breach at Fenton. These incidents are placing significant pressure on Cumberland's Enforcement Team.

At the Council meeting on 12 May, I raised the situation at Midgeholme and the wider need to strengthen enforcement capacity. This meeting marked the start of the fifth and final year of the current Council. Elections for a new Council — and for the first Mayor of Cumbria — will take place on **7 May 2027**.

The new Mayor will lead the **Cumbria Combined Authority (CCA)**, bringing together Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness. The CCA formally came into being in March and, in my view, represents a welcome opportunity to secure substantial inward investment to address our failing infrastructure and to develop a more coherent regional economic strategy.

Farlam Trust Update

In 1994 Thompsons started quarrying in the Parish. The Murray family arranged for a grant to be paid by Thompsons to the Parish Council to compensate parishioners for issues caused by HGV traffic flow. The Parish Trust took over the management of the grant payments in 2012. Ashcourt, the current quarry operators, have so far not paid any grant to the Trust and are considering whether to continue with this compensation arrangement.

In 2016 the quarry had an expected lifespan of 10 to 12 years so Trustees devised a plan to continue supporting the community while increasingly using retained capital to leverage additional funding for projects from other sources. The Trust now looks at applications on their merit and how they benefit the community. Applications over £1000 ideally need match funding and those over £3000 must be match funded.

So far £204,000 has been received from the quarry. Initially the Parish Council directed this towards buildings, the village's infrastructure (e.g. the bus shelter, car parking, paving, fences, walls, the playground and more recently purchasing the playground land). Fund distribution has been spread across the community's organisations.

Parish institutions have been major beneficiaries. The Lacy Thompson Hall and its cottage have in the past received funding for improvements and maintenance but recent projects have been completed using match funding. Farlam Church has used grants to help with the cost of some repairs and until recently rental payments to the village hall for Christmas craft fairs. Hallbankgate Hub has received substantial donations and loans towards the initial purchase cost with ongoing smaller payments continuing.

Friends of Hallbankgate School have had support for their annual fete and trips for the children. In the past the print cost of free village newspaper was paid but now their grant meets 44% of the print costs with advertising revenue and Farlam Church covering the rest. Youth groups from tots to teens have received only a small share: this includes the Brownies and children's parties at the hall. The over 60's have also received proportionately less funding. Additionally, one off events and projects have been supported to celebrated key moments in our lives.

Trustees meet twice per year in March and September to consider applications. All enquiries to charles.raine@youngsrps.com. If the quarry funding fails to materialise this year then the Trustees will need to further consider how the reserves are distributed in the future.

All Change at the Belted Will

Stephen and Alyson have left the Belted Will and moved to Bewcastle after running the pub for many years. Our thanks go with them. New owners Gary and Andrea Marsden and their daughter Chloe hail from Barnsley. Gary was a driving instructor for 10 years while Andrea worked as a nurse for 40 years. Chloe is a chef. They all wanted to do something different with their lives and thought of running a B&B. Their search ended when they found the Belted Will.

They are settling in well, getting used to having sheep and cows as neighbours and have been made very welcome by locals. Chloe has an 18 month old daughter Lily.

Its steady as it goes for now with the gradual introduction of new meal choices, a Monday night pool league starting in summer and looking ahead theme nights and live music are on the horizon.

Further details can be found on the Belted Will Facebook page.



Farlam News 1890

Hospital Sunday

The Committee of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Hospital Charities Fund selected Sunday 11th May as the most suitable for the observance of Hospital Sunday. Collections taken at each service in Farlam Parish Church on that day were to be donated to the medical charities.

There was a special afternoon service at 2:30 in which the Christians of all denominations in the district were invited to take part. The Kirkhouse Brass Band were scheduled to lead a procession from Hallbankgate at 2:00 pm and also to accompany the congregation in the singing of the chants and hymns in church.

As things turned out 11th of May 1890 would not be easily forgotten. The hospital services were drowned out by the rain which poured down piteously. The Brass Band, led by the Vicar, resembled an apology for a procession given the continuous downpour, as they walked from Hallbankgate to the Church. There they were met by Mr Nightingale and the church officers: everyone dripping and disconsolate; the congregation was wet, the voices were wet, and the instruments were wet; only the sermon was dry. Everyone agreed that next year we must only agree to do so "weather permitting".

The collections amounted to £8 1s. 3d. In all 294 coins were collected comprising 3 sovereigns, 1 half sovereign, 3 half-crowns, 7 florins, 18 shillings, 48 sixpences, 27 threepennies, 127 pennies and 59 halfpennies.

The Flower and Poultry Show

This important fixture was held on the wettest of the many wet days of this season. The two large tents containing the exhibits were thoroughly drenched on the proceeding Friday night and this, added to the wretched condition of the ground, caused the spirits of the hard-working committee to fall to zero. However things brightened up a little and by 10 o'clock all exhibits were in place for judging.

This proceeded under difficulties as several heavy storms converted the tents into huge shower baths. The judges were Mr. E. Hutton, Leeds (Poultry), Mr. Jackson and Mr. McKay (Flowers), Mr. Barnfather (Butter).

Poultry was a good show but flowers etc. a small display with only 19 exhibitors in the Open and Close Classes, while Butter and Bread, though excellent in quality were in numbers of entries much below previous years. The new rule about the date of entry had no doubt something to do with this and it is hoped that in future years intending exhibitors will read their schedules

Shortly after 1 o'clock, Mr Charles Lacey Thompson, of Farlam Hall, in an apt and humorous speech declared the show open. "I have visited the 1st and 2nd prize Gardens" said he "and find them excellent, but I cannot refrain from saying that many cottage gardens are yet far from what they might be". We thank Mr. Thompson for this remark and hope that a vigorous contest next year will show revived interest in this competition.

Speaking of the Poultry Show Mr. Thompson said: "I have been told that the rearing of poultry is profitable but there are at Farlam Hall some fowls which look as if they wore trousers; and I can safely affirm that I have never seen an egg laid by them, so if you wish to make it profitable avoid that breed". (Laughter).

In spite of the unpromising weather numbers of people came flocking in. The Kirkhouse Brass Band and the Farlam Orchestra in turn tried to infuse a little harmony into the proceedings, but the latter was decidedly at a disadvantage: the canvas roof making the violins sound very thin and weak.

About tea-time a sharp shower came on which gave rise to a very amusing incident. A wooden erection had been built at one side of the marquee for refreshments. The tables were well filled with guests when down came the rain and penetrated the wooden roof causing a general stampede. One individual calmly finished his repast under an umbrella, unheeding the desolation round about. Towards evening the crowd increased and attention was concentrated on the music and dancing. Gate money exceeded £30, which considering the day was very satisfactory.



HALLBANKGATE FLOWER SHOW SCHEDULE 2026



Section 1 - Vegetables		Section 2 - Flowers		Section 3 - Baking & Preserves		Section 4 - Industrial & Crafts	
1	3 Long Potatoes	23	3 Sunflowers - cut	43	Jar of Jam Strawberry	67	Cross stitch Item
2	3 Round Potatoes	24	3 Phlox	44	Jar of Jam Raspberry	68	Patchwork Item
3	Collection of 3 different veg	25	6 Sweet Peas	45	Jar of Jam - Mixed Berries	69	Quilting Item
4	1 Cabbage	26	4 Nasturtium	46	Jar of Jam - Blackcurrant	70	Applique Item
5	2 Onions from seed	27	1 Single Rose	47	Jar of Lemon Curd	71	Crochet Item
6	2 Onions from sets	28	1 Lily Stem	48	Jar of Seville/Marmalade	72	Tapestry/needlepoint Item
7	4 Shallots	29	3 Dahlias	49	Jar of Chutney	73	Knitted Item
8	1 Turnip or Swede	30	1 Gladioli	50	Dish of Rum Butter	74	Home Sewn Item
9	1 Marrow or Squash	31	4 Marigolds	51	Savory Flan	75	Handmade Soft Toy
10	3 Beetroots	32	Vase of mixed flowers	52	4 Decorated Cupcakes	76	Hand-crafted wooden item
11	6 Pea pods	33	Foliage plant	53	4 Fruit Scones	77	Painting*
12	4 Runner beans	34	Flowering plant	54	4 Cheese Scones	78	Drawing*
13	1 Cucumber	35	Fuchsia	55	Lemon Meringue Pie	79	Photograph*
14	3 Carrots	36	3 stems - any variety	56	4 Squares of Gingerbread	80	Greetings Card
15	3 Bulbs of garlic	37	Flower arrangement - no bigger than 6inches square	57	4 Shortbread Biscuits	81	Upcycled/repurposed Item*
16	4 Tomatoes	38	Wreath of any flowers/foliage	58	4 Pieces Tray Bake - Any Variety	82	Handmade tool
17	3 Rhubarb sticks	39	Buttonhole/Corsage/Spray	59	Victoria Sponge with Jam Filling	83	Handmade ornament
18	3 Courgettes	40	Cactus	60	Cake of your Choice	84	Lego Model*
19	1 Broccoli	41	Succulent	61	1lb Loaf - White or Brown)	85	Garden on a tin lid*
20	1 Cauliflower	42	Chilli plant	62	Tea Bread Loaf	86	Wreath made from any materials (for flowers see class no 38)
21	1 Wonky veg			63	Homemade Beverage -Alcoholic		* For children, use children's entry section
22	Collection of 4 or more herbs			64	Homemade Beverage -Non-Alcoholic		
				65	Collection of 3 eggs		

Section 5 - Children's Classes			
ALL AGES			
87	Piece of writing	93	4 Homemade biscuits
88	Drawing or Painting	94	Photograph
89	Lego Model	95	Any home made item
90	Garden on a tin lid	96	Vegetable Model
91	Small Flower arrangement	97	Painted Pebble
92	Decorated Wooden Spoon	98	Decorated Cupcake/Cake

School Entry Section	
	Nursery, Reception, Years 1-6
100	An illustrated piece of work
(Each, year will be judged individually)	

SATURDAY 15TH AUGUST 2026

HALLBANKGATE VILLAGE HALL

ENTRIES TO BE SUBMITTED 10AM-11.30AM

ENTRIES 30P EACH - CHILDRENS CLASSES FREE

SHOW OPENS FOR VIEWING 2.30PM

ADMISSION ADULT £2.50 / CHILDREN 50P

INCLUDES TEA & CAKE

RAFFLE TICKETS £1 PER STRIP

Hallbankgate Women's Institute

Spring Update

It's hard to believe we're already almost halfway through the year. Time really does fly when you're part of a busy, thriving WI. Spring has been full of activity for our Hallbankgate group, and we've also been putting the finishing touches on our programme for 2026/27. Here's a look back at what we've been up to:



February – Bring & Buy success

February brought our much loved annual Bring & Buy sale. This event is a vital fundraiser for our small WI, and once again our members and community showed their generosity. The money raised helps us keep our WI running smoothly, bring in inspiring speakers, and support local businesses and charities. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed.

March – Learning about local impact

In March, we welcomed Brenda from Carlisle Foodbank, who gave a fascinating and eyeopening talk about the essential work carried out by their staff and volunteers. It was inspiring to hear how the foodbank supports individuals and families across our community, and how carefully the whole operation is run. Members also brought along food donations, which were gratefully received and will make a real difference.

April – AGM and new beginnings

April is always a busy month for us as we hold our Annual General Meeting. This is when we renew our subscriptions, reflect on the past year, and reveal our new programme of speakers. Because the AGM is full of important business, we don't host a speaker in April - but that didn't stop us enjoying plenty of conversation, laughter, and of course, a delicious supper together. There's a real sense of excitement building for the year ahead.

Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to the rest of the year, we're grateful for the friendship, enthusiasm, and community spirit that make Hallbankgate WI such a special place to belong. Thank you to every member who contributes their time, ideas, and good humour. We can't wait to share more inspiring speakers, enjoyable activities, and memorable moments together as the seasons unfold.

Upcoming speakers include:

 Date	 Speaker	 Topic
May 28 th	Malcolm and John	The importance of organ donors
June 25 th	No speaker as we have our	Summer meal out
July 23 rd	Dee	Bystanders can be lifesavers
August 27 th	Amanda	Craft session – pipe cleaner flowers

Please contact us for a full year's programme

Join Us!

We are always looking to welcome new ladies so if you are new to the area and are looking to make new friends or if you have been here for a while and looking for warmth and connection please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Warm wishes, Alison Cheetham, President, Hallbankgate WI

Julie Minns MP

Since the 2024 General Election, many more rural areas are represented by Labour MPs. Boundary changes brought a large rural slice of the old Penrith and the Border seat within Carlisle constituency, and I have very much enjoyed visiting the many communities across the area over the past two years.

It's a privilege for me to represent communities like Farlam and I've made a point of meeting local residents and raising issues on your behalf. For instance, when the Government recently announced energy pricing reform and support for households, I asked Chancellor Rachel Reeves what this would mean for off-grid rural households who have been hit particularly hard by the rise in heating oil, which isn't covered by Ofgem's price cap.

And I was pleased that she was quick to announce a £53million support package for vulnerable, low-income rural households facing higher heating oil bills following the price shock caused by the Iran war. We are also increasing grants under the Boiler Upgrade Scheme from £7,500 to £9,000 to help off-grid homes switch to electric heat pumps.

We are making wide-ranging reforms to support food production, protect farmers in trade deals and boost profitability throughout the food supply chain, and we have launched a Rural Crime Strategy to combat the 32 per cent rise in countryside offences since 2011. And the Government did listen to the voices of rural Labour MPs like me, who privately raised concerns about the proposed reforms to Agricultural Property Relief, which have been modified to protect smaller family farms.

Many of the challenges faced by rural communities are similar to those faced by urban areas – crumbling public services for example – but often problems such as fuel poverty and child poverty are less visible in the countryside. That's why I was thrilled that Hallbankgate Village School was one of the first in the country to benefit from the Best Start rollout of free breakfast clubs in primary schools, to ensure every child starts the day ready to learn.

Education is a priority for the Government, and we recently made a major funding announcement on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Cumbrian local authorities will receive £3.3million to set up an 'Experts at Hand' service to provide children with early support and fast access to professionals such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and educational psychologists.

There's more I could mention. We have extended the fuel duty freeze until December 31st, which has the biggest impact in rural areas where, for obvious reasons, people are more dependent on their cars. And we are cracking down on rip-off vet bills with the biggest reforms to the vet sector in 60 years. One last thing. You may have heard that the Government is consulting on how to bring in an effective ban on trail hunting. If you have views on this, please share them at <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/defra/trail-hunting-consultation/>

Enjoy the summer.



Notes taken from the 1992 Excavation Report on the Medieval Church of St. Thomas à Becket in Kirkhouse

Clara Freer chanced across a box relating to the excavation while helping out recently with the re-organisation taking place at Tulle House. The church that we see today on a hill top above the medieval graveyard was built in 1859-60 by Anthony Slavin.

In Howard's End by E. M. Forster there is an apt passage:

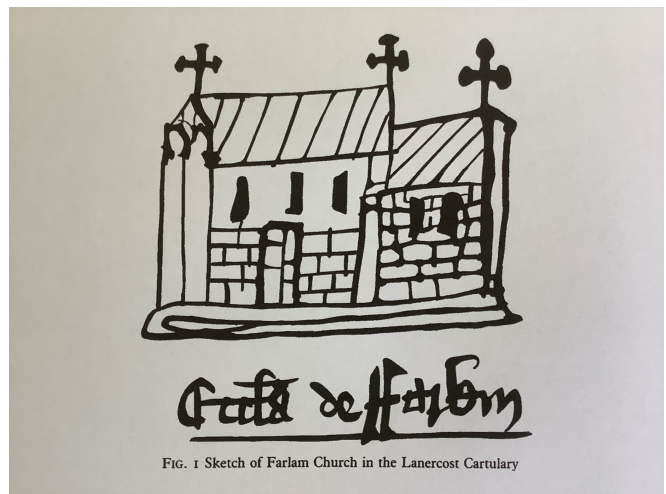
"The church itself stood in the village once. But it there attracted so many worshipers that the Devil, in a pet, snatched it from its foundations and poised it on an inconvenient knoll three quarters of a mile away".

A survey of the graveyard was made in 1990 but follow up searches failed to find any documentary evidence of the original church and any subsequent alterations.

The site however goes back to 1170's when it is first mentioned in the Lanercost Cartulary as a gift from Walter of Windsor.

It is unlikely to have been built until after 1173 when St. Thomas à Becket was canonised.

This sketch of the old church taken from the Cartulary is thought to date from the late 14th C. It depicts a simple two-celled church with 3 nave windows, 2 chancel windows and a south door.

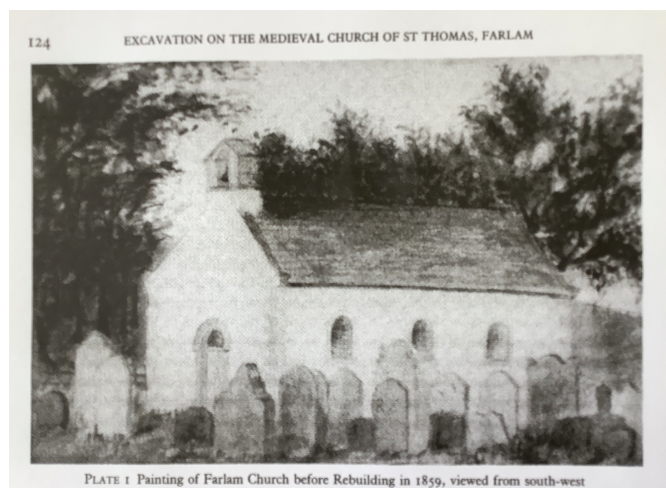


A 19th C. watercolour depicts the church before it was demolished. Here we see a simple rectangular shape with a west facing door and 18th C. windows.

The layout of the graveyard set out in the 1st edition of the Ordinance Survey of Cumberland shows the outline and position of the old church which is reached through a gated pathway from the road at Kirkhouse. This lends support for the accuracy of the 19th C. painting.

The dig was carried out in May 1991 with the aim of clarifying whether the medieval church was a two cell building as shown in the sketch (i.e. nave and chancel) or a single cell building as shown in the 19th C. watercolour. A two cell structure was the norm for small churches of this period in north Cumbria and single cell churches were rare. A narrower chancel at the eastern end was the norm.

The dig would also reveal if the medieval church had been significantly altered over the years or even replaced by another church before the present church was built in 1860. A secondary aim to discover medieval grave slabs was unsuccessful.



7 trenches were dug in the lower graveyard and in the area where the medieval church sat.

A series of cobble stone and mortar foundations were found. Some of the walls were still in place and others showed signs of demolition and removal of the stone, possibly taken away for use elsewhere as the new church was built with freshly quarried stone.

The 7 trench dig confirmed that prior to demolition in 1859 the church was a simple rectangular shape (i.e. single cell) measuring 17.4m by 7.7m. All the excavated trenches were similar in character suggesting that they dated from the same period.

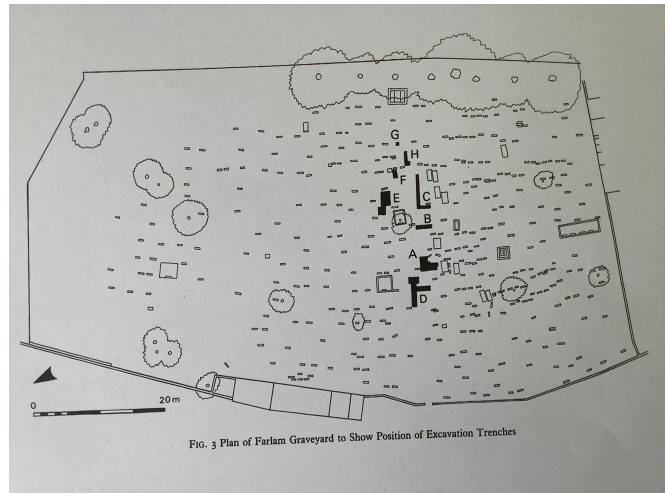


FIG. 3 Plan of Farlam Graveyard to Show Position of Excavation Trenches



PLATE 2 Foundations of north wall, from the west (Scale 50 cm)

As the dig progressed questions about the overall shape of the old church remained. However the discovery of a small chancel measuring 4.5m wide and 2.5m out from the eastern wall suggests that the water colour painting does not represent the medieval plan and the location of the gravestones in the painting suggests that the chancel had gone out of use sometime before the 1830's.

However a number of questions were thrown up by aspects of the east wall, the chancel and the relationship of nearby trenches that suggest other options for the overall structure are possible but this would require further substantial excavation to resolve. This is unlikely however given the extent of the lower graveyard.

There were very few loose finds; some bits of medieval pottery, a fragment of medieval window glass and associated lead comes used to hold pieces of glass window together, some parts of thick yellow sandstone roof tiles and a number of sheep bones (metatarsals) which has been worked into pins and had been used to

hold the sandstone roof tiles in place. No medieval carvings were found.

Clara's notes for the article have been supplemented by the Editor using the original 1992 report produced by Ian Caruana, who led the dig. Ian is a prominent UK archeologist, who worked for Carlisle Archeological Unit for many years and is a leading authority on the Roman frontier and medieval Carlisle.

The full report can be found by searching for Farlam on this website archeologydataservice.ac.uk

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