



# *Craic*

The Magazine for  
Great Salkeld & area

Issue 7      Autumn 2012

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## To all our readers

## Editorial

In spite of the unseasonable weather, the local summer events were very successful. I was impressed with the Garden Walks and especially the afternoon tea hosted by Liz and Philip Cranston.

The Jubilee celebration events were a fitting opportunity to unveil the Jubilee Shelter, built by Mike Carrick and volunteers. With all the rain we have had, I am certain it has become a welcome haven for those waiting for a lift.

The Great Salkeld & Area Calendar will be launched this autumn in plenty of time for Christmas purchases. A splendid effort has been made by Fiona Exon designing the calendar and providing all but one of the photographs from her personal portfolio and in finding a suitable printer. You can use the order form to buy your copy/ies or see the Great Salkeld website for the Calendar web page: <http://great-salkeld.net/%20great-salkeld-and-area-calendar-2013>. Calendars will also be available at Café Crack on Tuesdays, 10.30-12.00 noon, Great Salkeld Village Hall.

We are continuing with serial articles published in past issues of Craic and, though we have ideas for future editions, we would welcome suggestions from you, our readers, for publication. Please contact me at: [fjhope1@gmail.com](mailto:fjhope1@gmail.com), Tel: 01768 898954, or write to me at: 3 Farleigh Court, North Dykes, Great Salkeld, Penrith, CA11 9ND.

Let's all trust that, after such a dull, wet summer, we can look forward to a rain-free September and a golden October! ■

*Frank Hope, Editor*

**CONTRIBUTIONS:** Please send your news to [copy@great-salkeld.net](mailto:copy@great-salkeld.net). We welcome Readers' Views on articles which are published and invite our readers to suggest topics for inclusion in future issues. News and Events are also included on the Village Website: [www.great-salkeld.net](http://www.great-salkeld.net) The website contains the Diary of Village Events, which is frequently updated. Email Linda Jervis on [diary@great-salkeld.net](mailto:diary@great-salkeld.net) for diary inclusion. We won't always have space to include every article or item in the current Craic; some items will be held over to subsequent issues, while some items will go onto the village website.

Cover image of Summer Meadow above Salkeld Dykes and Editorial page image of a yellow flower by Fiona Exon.

### ADVERTISE in CRAIC

Advert rates per issue are: 1/4 page £15, 1/2 page £25, Full page £50. Single A5 flier inserts £20. Contact us: [copy@great-salkeld.net](mailto:copy@great-salkeld.net)

*(Photo by Fiona Exon)*

# “ In conversation with... ”

## **Dan Metcalfe, Motocross enthusiast**

### **How long have you lived in the village?**

I have lived here all my life. Initially I lived in Corney House, which was a council house. My grandparents farmed at Town Head and we moved there when I was 7, when my father took over the farm. My parents had met at Great Salkeld School, when my mother came to live in Ivy Cottage. Her mother came to be the cook to Col. Thompson, at Nunwick Hall.

### **Did you have a favourite place growing up in Great Salkeld?**

Many, but especially a field just off Pillar Hill called “Bunny Wood”. It looks down over the river towards Eden Lacy. I played there for hours as a child, playing “armies” with friends from the village. Making dens in Beckbank Woods was also a favourite pastime.

### **What did you do after leaving school?**

Initially I worked on the farm and did an agricultural course at Newton Rigg. Then I was a driver for Bells Bakery in Lazonby and I worked for a time at Magnet and Southern Joinery, in Penrith. After the children were born, I bought the local milk round and had that for 16 years. It involved early starts but meant I would be home just after lunch and able to watch the kids play sports or tinker with our motorbikes. I even refereed sports matches for the school. Now, I am a transport driver for Stobart Rail. I have also been a retained firefighter at Lazonby for 17 years.

### **How did you become interested in motorcycles and motocross?**

My brothers and I grew up being interested in bikes and we used to go to watch scrambling

with our parents. I got my first bike, an old road bike, for Christmas, when I was 13. It was a Francis Burnett 197, which I



customised and used to ride around the farm on. With my friend, Nick Weston, we built a jumps course. I remember shooting over it and catching sight of the church tower in mid-air before landing, luckily for me in one piece. Unfortunately, the bike landed in two pieces and that was the end for my first bike.

I started trials riding as a teenager with friends and we used to practice at each other's farms. I used to ride a lot at a friend's farm near Melmerby, where I first met my wife Ruth, his sister! I have always had a competitive spirit and competed steadily over the years in Cumbria and the North East. As funds allowed, I steadily improved and upgraded bikes with my brother and friends and went on to become the North of England schoolboy champion at 15. I belonged to the Westmorland Motorcycle Club for over 20 years. Even while married I had a bike of some sorts, and still do, but I competed less. Luckily the children became interested and we were able to enjoy the sport as a family. I can clearly remember Eric Owen and myself building my son Ben's first bike, when he was 8. We used an old frame and engine Eric had, which we put together between us.

As motocross became more popular, my brother Tim started going to meetings and competing. Then our children, Ben, Dean and eventually Jack became more interested and we started practising in one of our fields with a basic track and jumps. There were no local events and we had to travel south of the county and over to the North East to compete.

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# Damson Pudding

from Jo Thompson

**Serves 8.**

## Ingredients:

- 1kg/2.2lb damsons, fresh or frozen
- 300g/10.5oz golden caster sugar, use more or less according to taste
- 284ml/½ pint (med tub) double cream
- 500g/ 17.5oz Greek yoghurt
- 8-10 good size bought meringues

## Method :

- ✓ Stew the damsons gently with a little of the sugar, but no extra water, until soft.
- ✓ Add further sugar to sweeten according to taste.
- ✓ Cool the damsons and remove the stones.

- ✓ Lightly whip the double cream and fold into the Greek yoghurt.
- ✓ Break the meringues into chunky pieces.
- ✓ Into one large glass bowl place a layer of damsons, then a layer of meringue pieces followed by a layer of the cream and yoghurt mixture. Repeat this with as many layers as there are room for and finish with a layer of the cream and yoghurt mixture.
- ✓ Chill and before serving sprinkle on some toasted almonds or chocolate.

All the preparation can be done in advance but this is best assembled closer to eating as the meringues will soften. However, it still tastes good the following day. ■

<<< By then we had joined the Northern Youth Motocross Club and it was suggested that we make our field into a proper track, which we eventually did. We now hold 7 events there a year. But all the rules and safety regulations make it a far cry from the field we started practising in over 17 years ago! All our three boys were successful riders and we had wonderful days and weekends out as a family, meeting and making some wonderful friends. Our daughter, Haley, even met and married a lad that competed against Ben and was twice British champion. They now live in Australia, where he rides professionally.



## Are you all still involved in the sport?

I am currently chairman of the Northern Youth Motocross Club, but the boys have steadily given up due to work and other interests. Ben has moved on to car trials, whilst Dean and Jack are keen cricketers.

## There must have been many, but what is your most memorable moment in the sport?

That was probably winning the North of England schoolboy championship.

## It can be a dangerous sport. Have you had any injuries?

Luckily, I've just had minor sprains and plenty of bruises. It's been the same for Ben and Jack, though Dean suffered a nasty shoulder injury a few years ago.

## Do you have a dream bike?

It would have to be a Harley Davidson Cruiser. I still have a road bike but it rarely gets an outing, other than to the fire station once a week! ■

*Photographs of Dan at the village track and a recent Motocross event by Fiona Exon*

# Putting the Garden to Bed in Autumn

by Ron Davies, retired head gardener, Winderwath estate, Temple Sowerby

**I**t is time to plant your bulbs. It can be great fun planning and imagining the display to follow. There are so many varieties and species to choose from. Try something different:

**Eranthis** (Winter aconite) flourishes in the shade of deciduous trees; Crocus will grow almost anywhere and is never a nuisance;

**Narcissus** (Daffodil) looks great, naturalising in grass; **Ornithogalum nutans** (Star-of-Bethlehem), with its white starry flowers, is super.

Pot up window boxes, containers and barrels with bulbs. You have the advantage of portability and once they have flowered they can be planted in the garden.



Grow **Hyacinth** bulbs for Christmas. Make sure you obtain special bulbs suitable for forcing and then plant them in a container – wooden tomato boxes are ideal. Plant them with the tips of the bulbs just showing. Keep

in a cool, dark place such as a cold cellar or apple store for at least 6 weeks. This period of darkness and chilling is essential. When the bulbs have shoots about 2.5cm (1in.) long, pot into individual bowls and grow them on in gentle heat. After flowering, forced hyacinths can be planted in the garden.

Clear away summer bedding plants and put on the compost heap. Fork the soil, removing perennial weeds, ready for the next planting. Lift

**Dahlia** tubers, wash them and place in a cool, dry place. My friend excels at growing these plants by just throwing them under the greenhouse bench for the winter period!



Do not prune tenderish plants as the summer growth can help protect them through the cold months. Do prune fruit bushes such as currants and gooseberries.

Old raspberry canes need cutting to the ground after fruiting and young canes need supporting.

Collect leaves, the smaller ones such as Beech, Oak and Prunus are ideal for leaf mould.

Put them in an open bin and leave for a couple of years. Alternatively, put the leaves into large plastic sacks with a handful of “Garrota” and make slits in the bags. You should have good compost within six months. I personally prefer the first method.

Take hardwood cuttings. Make a slit trench some 20cm (8in.) deep with sharp sand at the base. Insert cuttings with 5cm to 8cm (2in. to 3in.) showing and forget about them for a year. Then gently test for roots. ■



I have done my best to cover a very large subject in a small article. Should you have any queries I shall be pleased to try and answer them at [rondavies2@aol.com](mailto:rondavies2@aol.com)

*Photographs with Creative Commons License*

The “Luck” of Burrell Green is a brass dish, which is heavily embossed. It is circular in shape and is 41.3cm (16¼ inches) in diameter and 3.8cm (1½ inches) deep. It has been dated to 1417 and may be of German origin, probably being used as an offertory plate at some time.

It used to bear two inscriptions. One, in Old English around the central ornamentation, said:

HAIL MARY,  
MOTHER OF JESUS,  
SAVIOUR OF MAN

Upon the outer circle, in more modern script, the inscription reads:

IF THIS DISH BE SOLD OR GI'EN  
FAREWELL THE LUCK OF  
BURRELL GREEN

I said “used to bear” because, unfortunately, in the 19th century, a housekeeper at Burrell Green is said to have polished the dish daily, as it tarnishes easily. She did not believe in metal polish but instead used pumice stone! As a result, hardly anything of the inscriptions can now be seen. Moreover, she cleaned the dish so vehemently that 3 or 4 specks of daylight may now be seen through the dish, where she has worn it down. It now gets cleaned annually with a very soft cloth!

How did this antique metal dish ever come to reside at Burrell Green? There are several versions of this story but in November 2001, on the “Making History” programme, broadcast on BBC Radio 4, the following version was given.



There was a marriage between a farmer's girl of Burrell Green and the local warlord character called the King of Mardale (Mardale village is now underwater, beneath Haweswater Reservoir). On the day of the wedding the servants went to the well, where they met Hobgoblins - so it was obviously a rougher area than Edenhall, where they had fairies! The Hobgoblins said, “If you bring us wine and food, we will bless this wedding”. The servants provided the Hobgoblins with food and wine and in return the Hobgoblins left the brass dish.

And so the legend of “The Luck of Burrell Green” continues on. Since living at Burrell Green we have had enquiries about the “Luck” from Tasmania and America; 2 radio interviews for BBC Radio Cumbria; the “Making History” programme for BBC Radio 4; and quite a number of interested historians carrying out research. The latest book to cover the story is a Penguin tome entitled, “The Lore of the Land – A Guide to England's Legends”.■

*Photograph by Fiona Exon*

# Pennine Perambulations - Walk 7. By Colin Barnfield, Lazonby



**LENGTH:** 6.5km (4 miles); Option: 4.5km (2¾ miles);

**GRADE:** Easy walking, some uphill, and 17 stiles;

**MAP:** OS Explorer Series, No.OL5 (NE Lakes) and No.OL31 (N. Pennines);

**START:** Renwick Methodist Church, GR 5967 4355;

**PUBS and VILLAGE SHOP:** Kirkoswald;

**FOOTWEAR:** Good walking boots recommended.



**1** Head west along the road on the north side of the Methodist Church. After 28m (30yds) the road bends to the right and changes to a farm track. The track then bends SW, downhill, for 100m (108yds) to a T-junction. Turn right, downhill and after 60m (56yds) cross a footbridge over Harberry Beck, at a ford.

**2** IGNORE the track (Red Road) on the left and continue straight ahead, uphill, for 0.6km (650yds) to the Renwick - Croglin road. Turn right for 185m (200yds) to a field gate and fingerpost to Scale Houses, on the left.

**3** Follow the farm track, uphill, for 110m (120yds) as far as a field gate. Leave the track and bear left across open field to a stile in a stone wall. Continue ahead to a stile in the field corner.

**4** Keep to the wall/fence on the left for 130m (140yds) to reach a stile on the right into another field. Continue in the same direction across this field, climbing gradually to a stile in a stone wall.

**5** Bear diagonally, uphill, across the next field to the field corner, where a gate leads to a farm track. Turn left towards Scale Houses for 120m (130yds) to a stile in the fence on the right. If this stile is broken, continue for another 55m (60yds) to a field gate and return to the stile. Over the stile bear right (east), across open field to a stile in a stone wall.



**6** Continue ahead to another stile in a stone wall. Gradually descend across the hillside to a field gate in a stone wall at the bottom. Walk ahead through the field towards the derelict farm at Dryah, on the left. IGNORE older maps, which show the path going behind the old farmhouse. Continue to a field gate in a stone wall and across the next field to a stile in a fence.



- 7** Cross the next field to a gap in a stone wall. Cross another field to a gate in a stone wall leading to a farm track with a stone wall on the left. Walk along the track for 92m (100yds) to a shallow ford across a beck (no footbridge). Continue for 46m (50yds) beyond the ford to a stile in a stone wall on the left.
- 8** Cross the stile and follow the stone wall on the left to a marker post and stile in the field corner. Over the stile turn right, uphill, along the wall to a field gate. Turn left along a farm track to another gate. Continue for 65m (70yds) to a T-junction with a byway going up and down the hillside.
- 9** **OPTION:** Turn right, down the byway, back to Renwick. Total distance 4.5km (2¾ miles);
- OR: Cross over the byway to a fingerpost to Haresceugh and a stile into a field. Walk uphill, beside a wall on the left, to a ladder stile. Bear right for 23m (25yds) to a fence on the left. Walk along the fence for 75m (81yds), descending to a stile in another fence.
- 10** Walk ahead, at the edge of the field, towards Outhwaite, for 200m (216yds) to a stile and gate. Cross over a small beck (no footbridge) to a stone stile on the left. Turn right, along the wall, which soon changes to a fence.
- 11** Keeping to the fence, with woodland on the hillside to the left, walk for 275m (300yds) to a stile. Over the stile walk 50m (54yds) along the fence to a fingerpost and stile in a stone wall on the right. Descend the bank to the corner of a barn and turn left through a farmyard at Outhwaite.
- 12** At the junction with the road turn left, following the fingerpost to Haresceugh and Busk. Go past the farmhouse, through a gate into a small farmyard and out through a second gate on to a farm track leading downhill. After 125m (135yds) the track bends right, gradually descending across the hillside to Raven Beck.
- 13** From the bend, walk 0.4km (432yds) to a small ford (no footbridge). Walk 200m (216yds) to a field gate and continue through woodland for another 200m (216yds) to a gate onto the Renwick – Haresceugh road at Raven Bridge. At the road, immediately go through a kissing gate on the right, leading back to Renwick.
- 14** From the kissing gate walk uphill into the field. Bear left to a gate in the opposite corner of the field, with woodland to the right. Go up the hillside to another field gate at the top right corner, which leads on to a road. Follow the road back through Renwick village to the Methodist Church. ■



*Photographs by Colin Barnfield*

Donald Grant MacLennan, had a really big adventure in 2011. In Craic 6 we began our serialisation of his journey. Here is Part 2. Donald's full online blog can be found here: <http://blog.travelpod.com/travel-blog-entries/dgm2oz/1/1301255355/tpod.html#ixzz1kmWnvRSW>

## Part 2 – PAKISTAN to VIETNAM

In Pakistan, because of the state of unrest, it was deemed necessary by the authorities that they needed an armed guard to escort them through the country.



*"...the negative side is that we can't stop and visit anywhere... and it is (as high a temperature as) 52C degrees."*

Staying in hotels, rather than camping, the travellers were restricted, but safe. However, in Lahore, they were allowed to explore the city a little.



After a long border procedure, they left Lahore and entered India to start a 5-day stay in Amritsar. Here, Don visited The Golden Temple, travelling by the quirky 'tuc tucs', so characteristic of India.



From Amritsar they headed to the Indian-Tibetan border town of McLeod Ganj.

*"McLeod Ganj's claim to fame is that it offered sanctuary to the Dalai Lama and his exiled administration".*

They visited a Buddhist temple, arriving in time to see the monks and followers at prayer. Next they visited New Delhi, Jaipur and Agra.



Then on to Varanasi, where Don enjoyed an evening trip to the River Ganges, before heading to the Nepal border. As they crossed into Nepal;

*"Gone was the roadside squalor that was India; all the fields also appeared much cleaner and better organised."*



In the Chitwan National Park, Nepal, Don went on an elephant safari, which took him through the forest.



By day 88 they had reached Pokhara, in central Nepal, and by day 102 they arrived in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

Three of the group, including Don, took a 10-day trek to Annapurna base camp, in the Himalayas walking between 3 and 6 hours each day.



After a few days of rest, following their Himalayan trek, Don and a few others in the group took a two day white water rafting expedition on the River Seti. >>



After flying from Kathmandu to Bangkok, capital of Thailand, the first evening was spent exploring the crowded streets and stalls.



There were more Buddhist temples to see during their stay there, as well as The Grand Palace.



From Bangkok the group travelled on to Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. They visited Tonle Sap Lake;

*"We took a boat trip around the 'floating village' to see how the other half lives."*



They also visited, the three main *Wats* (Temples) in Angkor.



Don wasn't well as he had a chest infection, so reluctantly stayed in his room more than he liked.

After a short stay in Phnom Penh, they crossed into Vietnam and headed for Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. ■

In Part 3 (Craic 8), the final part of our journey with Don, we will follow him from Vietnam, back into Thailand and on to Malaysia and Indonesia, before arriving in Australia. You can follow in detail Don's trip on his own website here:

<http://blog.travelpod.com/travel-blog-entries/dgm2oz/1/1301255355/tpod.html>.

## Reminiscences of the Rev. Vernon Clarke PART II (1919 - 2009)

by Neil Wales

Some four or five years ago I spent several hours sitting with Vernon listening to him talk, particularly about his childhood and upbringing. Those of you who knew Vernon may be able to imagine him recollecting what follows.



**Neil Wales, 2012**

(Family tree: see Part I in Craic 6, Summer 2012)

Louisa Bailey (1858-1944), my maternal grandmother, married John Sherburn (1852-1926) in 1883. They lived in a prosperous area of Hull called "The Park", until 1904. They had the most beautiful paintings and furniture; paintings by Herring of horses and cattle and paintings by Lely and Kneller, 17th century painters from the Charles II period. One wonders how they got hold of these paintings. Family legend has it that he was given them by grateful patients, when he was a surgeon in Hull. My mother, Maud Sherburn (1884-1934), was their first child.

Just before they left this house, William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, came to Hull to lead a mission and stayed at their house, using it as his headquarters. He had an upstairs bedroom and another room next to it to use as an office. He was very autocratic and rarely seen, other than when they went with him to meetings in Hull. I have a photograph of him standing on the City Hall steps in Hull, waving his hat in the air with my grandfather, John Sherburn, standing beside him. On the last evening, he sent a message with one of his minions to the family downstairs saying that, "The General will dine with the family tonight". During the

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# Village Calendar 2013 - an ideal gift!



## The Great Salkeld Calendar 2013

We're very pleased to announce that Craic magazine will be producing the village calendar for 2013. This limited edition colour calendar (32cm deep x 12cm wide, (12.5in x 4¾in) is supplied with an envelope for easy posting. Each month's colour image is a postcard that you can remove and use. The photographs are scenes in and around Great Salkeld in all seasons and taken by a local photographer.

The calendars are £6 each or £5 each for 3 or more. To make sure of your copy/ies you can use the order form inserted in this issue of Craic or contact: Mrs Mary Patmore, 2 Grayson, Great Salkeld CA11 9LL. T: 01768 897074 or email [copy@great-salkeld.net](mailto:copy@great-salkeld.net). They will also be available to purchase at Cafe Crack (10am - 12noon) on Tuesdays at the Village Hall. ■

<<< *Rev. Vernon Clarke continued.....*

course of the meal he tried to get my mother, Maud, who was then unattached, to join the Salvation Army. My grandfather said "No. Certainly not".

Shortly after that my grandfather received a message from London to say that the King, Edward VII, was prepared to Knight him and so he became Sir John Sherburn. In 1904 they moved from Hull into a beautiful house, "Brantinghamthorpe" ("The Thorpe"), in Brantingham, just north of the River Humber, in the foothills of the Yorkshire Wolds. I lived with my parents about a mile and a half away at Elloughton, just west of Hull. I remember "The Thorpe" vividly. It was of Jacobean origin and had been added to by Christopher Sykes (MP, 1865-1892), who used to entertain the Royals there in the 1870s and 1880s. These included Edward VII, when he was Prince of Wales, and Princess Alexandra, the daughter of the King of Denmark. She was very beautiful but difficult because she was almost stone deaf from a very early age. She had no idea of time and was never punctual. They used to come to stay at "The Thorpe" for the Doncaster Races. Christopher Sykes used to organise carriages to transport his guests from Brough Station; German Princelings

such as the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and various Prussians, who were all related in some way to Queen Victoria. The entrance to "The Thorpe" was beautiful. There was a Lodge at the entrance and a driveway through a long park leading up to the house. The park and the Lodge no longer exist as the A63 extension to the M62 motorway now goes through it to the centre of Hull.

John Sherburn, my maternal grandfather, died aged 74, when I was eight years old. He was kind to me and called me, "Dear boy". Like many people in those days, he had a white beard and was rather shaky on his feet, so much so that my grandmother, Louisa, had to support him. He seemed very old to me and made me lie on the floor to measure me foot by foot to see whether I had grown from one week to the next. They had wonderful cars, a Humber and a Rover, I think. I remember his funeral. Everyone walked behind the horse and cart for a mile and a half down to the Church. The ladies were wearing old fashioned deep mourning, long black dresses down to the ground and large black veils. ■

**Part 3 of the Reminiscences of the Rev. Vernon Clarke will be in Craic 8.**

*Photograph by Ian Atkinson*



# The Westmorland Damson

by Richard Wood



You may know the County of Kent as the “Garden of England” and a major fruit producing area, but Cumbria, especially the old county of Westmorland, can hold its head high as a major damson producer. More specifically, the Winster and Lyth Valleys south of Windermere town and the area around Witherslack, north of Grange-over-Sands, have been and still are the main areas for damson orchards.

In the past, prior to the Second World War, damson production was an important industry, with the produce being sent away for jam production or being sold on the streets of Kendal in September and October. But, as a result of the war, labour for maintenance of the orchards and for fruit picking was in short supply and the orchards were allowed to go unheeded. In days gone by, during the blossoming of the orchards in April and May, coach loads of visitors from the industrial towns of Lancashire, Yorkshire and Northumberland would tour the valleys just to see the glorious sight of the frothy, white damson blossom.

But all is not lost. In 1996 a concerted effort was started to revive the orchards and bring back the demand for the Westmorland damson. As a result, the “Westmorland Damson Association” was formed. It has raised an interest in damsons again by encouraging the sale of damson suckers for gardeners and fruit growers to plant; producing an excellent recipe book “A Taste of Damsons – From Jelly to Gin” by Victoria

Barratt; promoting damson usage in products such as jams, jellies, bread, cheese, pies, pâtés, cakes, ice-creams, wine and liqueurs; and advocating the use of damson wood from old trees or prunings for wood turning to produce egg cups, bowls, etc. Last but not least, an excellent and fun annual fair called “Damson Day” is held in the Lyth Valley each April, when all the damson products are on show and for sale – 13 April, 2013 is the next one!

But what is the damson, apart from being one of the most gorgeous of fruits with its rich colour and intense “clarety” flavour? It is a member of the rose family, which includes roses, apples, plums, cherries, almonds, hawthorns, etc. The damson or damask plum (*Prunus domestica* sub-species ‘insititia’) is closely related to the bullace of British hedgerows. Originating from Damascus in Syria, it was probably introduced to this country by the Romans. It is a very hardy, medium sized tree, easily cultivated but preferring ground containing lime. It is quick growing and requires little pruning or maintenance. Its one Achilles heel, like most spring flowering fruit in the north, is its susceptibility to late frosts and the resultant killing of the blossom - like this year! Apart from the Westmorland damson there are other varieties such as Merryweather, Bradley’s King, Shropshire Prune and Farleigh Prolific.

So get out your spade, select a site, order a sucker from the Westmorland Damson Association and have damsons and heaven for evermore! ■

For more information: Helen Smith ,  
Secretary, The Westmorland Damson  
Association, Lilac Yaks, Cartmel Fell,  
Windermere, Cumbria, LA23 3PD. Tel:  
015395 68698 [info@lythdamsons.org.uk](mailto:info@lythdamsons.org.uk)  
For frozen damsons: Anne Wilson Tel:  
015395 68270.

*Photograph with Creative Commons License*

## The Story of Lazonby Bridge

A very early bridge over the River Eden at Lazonby is recorded in 1359 and 1374, when bequests were left in wills for its maintenance. However, this is likely to have been a wooden structure, which would have been quickly destroyed by high waters.

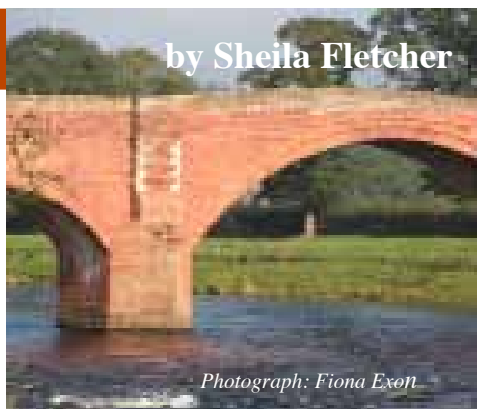
The present stone bridge was completed in 1762 to replace a former wath or ford across the river. In documents of the time it was called Kirkoswald Bridge, but has since been called Eden Bridge as well as Lazonby Bridge. It features in many photographs of the Eden Valley and is a beautiful structure, though sometimes hazardous to negotiate.

The first building scheme, in 1739, noted that 14 people had drowned while trying to cross the river, which could, at times, be raging with floodwater. This scheme failed to have sufficient support. The second scheme, in 1760, was promoted by local landowners and businessmen who saw the importance of a strong, permanent river crossing at this strategic place for those travelling from Penrith and beyond to the Pennine Hills and on to Newcastle.

The building work was carried out by Mr Kipling and Mr Petty of Bowes, near Barnard Castle, Durham County, with subscriptions raised for the expected cost of £700. Many prominent people were among the list of subscribers, including Mr Sanderson of Armathwaite Castle, Mr Bell of Woodend, Lazonby, Rev. Hodgson of Brough, Rev. John Brown of Lazonby, William Dalston of Acorn Bank; even the gardener at The College, Kirkoswald gave 2s6d. Over 74 people, not all local, gave something towards the cost. Unforeseen costs led to the builders requesting a further £260 so more funds had to be raised.

It is said that the wooden framework constructed to support the stonework, was washed away one weekend while the workmen were absent and, consequently, one arch of the bridge is short of stone. However, the work on the bridge was triumphantly signed off by two Justices of the Peace and the date of completion, 1762, engraved on the parapet.

by Sheila Fletcher



The bridge has continued to be well-maintained as it is such an important river crossing. The Langwathby and Armathwaite Bridges, up- and down-river, make a long detour for travellers.

The angle and size of the bridge has caused controversy as it has had to carry more and more traffic, often much larger than in horse and cart days. Accidents have been frequent - the earliest recorded was in 1882, when a horse and cart returning from the Auction Mart in Lazonby to Kirkoswald tipped over the bridge and a second horse and rider followed. Fortunately, neither men nor animals were seriously hurt.

In 1911 a series of questions were asked as to whether the bridge could be widened or moved to a different position. Nothing came of these petitions and the bridge has remained the same as when it was built. Some councillors at the time suggested that the more difficulty in crossing the bridge, the more slow and careful traffic would be.

Car and wagon scrapes and collisions have frequently caused damage to the stone structure and repairs are obvious in the new stonework. Recent moves have been made by both Lazonby and Kirkoswald Parish Councils to have permanent traffic lights installed but local opinion is divided.

Such a beautiful and elegant structure surely has many admirers and its usefulness to all local people for 250 years repays the care taken over its building and maintenance. ■



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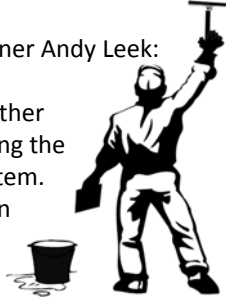
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