

December 2024 | Issue 16

Village POST

Connecting Bridekirk, Dovenby, Gilcrux and Tallentire

**We know
the area, the people,
the news.
We strive to support
the community and
celebrate the joys of
village life!**

**Merry Christmas to all our readers
from Teddy and the
Village Post team**

WELCOME
TO EDITION 16

Village ^{P O S T}

Contents



MERRY
Christmas
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Meredyth meets Joan Gardening	3
Gilcruix news	4
Debbie's local history story	5
Bridekirk Dovenby School	6/7
Merveilleux Marvejols	8/9
Cookery with Annette	10/11
Jackie's nutrition	13
Church news	14
Useful numbers	15-17
Teddy's Xmas dog blog	18
Clean sweep for Joanna and Grace	19
	20

From the team at Village Post!

Marjory Thompson Village Post editor
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Our front page Christmas star is Teddy Edward, our dog blogger whose article is THE favourite in every edition. Teddy from Tallentire sends you Christmas cheer and more doggy chat on page 19.



Village Post is written FOR and BY local residents. It is delivered free through your door six times a year and aims to be the 'Go To' place for local and community information.

Dates for delivery of your 2025 editions are:

February	27 Jan-2 Feb
April	28 March-1 April
June	27 May-2 June
August	29 July-3 Aug
October	26-30 Sep
December	28 Nov-1 Dec

We know the area, the people, the news.
We strive to support the community and celebrate the joys of village life!

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MEREDYTH meets **Artist Joan Prickett**

I've known Joan for many years but only vaguely knew her history, so I'm delighted to share my friend with you. Joan was born in Liverpool with a younger and older brother. Her parents were hard working but short of cash. Her mother was strong but caring who worked nights - 12 hour shifts, three hours bus travel, four nights a week. A great example to her daughter.

Joan went to Helsby Grammar School in Cheshire where she was popular and a form captain. She left home at 16 and worked as a cadet nurse before training and qualifying as an SRN. Everything was thrown at these student nurses, but mainly sluices and rear anatomy!

At the same time she was reading Dostoevsky and John Paul Sartre to stimulate her brain. Her social life was lively and one time, on an arranged date with someone else, she met her future husband Andy. He was an architect student, and that was it! The gazumped date never spoke to either of them again!

In 1970 they were married and moved to Ayrshire, Scotland. Joan then worked as an A&E nurse at an explosives factory that manufactured nitro-glycerine.

Moving on to train as a midwife she was amazed at the collective ignorance of most mothers in 1972!

Joan then trained as a health visitor in Glasgow. She was the youngest in the group. One work placement was at the infamous Black Street VD clinic (wonderful Billy Connolly account of that) and she had some colourful comments thrown at her as she arrived for work!

There were some really poor people in dreadful housing in Ferguslie Park, Paisley - the worst estate in Europe. Police patrolled in vans for their personal safety at the time.

On one occasion she encountered 11 children in a two roomed flat with lean-to kitchen.

Following qualifying, she and Andy moved to the Lake District. They bought their present home - a disused barn - in 1975 and meanwhile lived briefly in a council house in Workington.

In 1977 they moved to live in the partially renovated barn with son Shaun and baby Eve. The barn was freezing cold with only a cold tap in the yard!

Needing the income, Joan returned to work as a health visitor as soon as Eve was old enough for nursery school. Joan also worked as a volunteer counsellor.



Being a working mother was not without unhelpful comments from non-working mothers who did not approve that Joan worked!

During one working day a huge articulated lorry took a bend too quickly, jack-knifed and went head on into Joan. The trauma from the steering wheel hugely affected her face and she had five months off work. An enormous shock! Joan now realises she was suffering with PTSD, but it was little understood at the time.

Following the trauma of her accident Joan realised she needed a change of direction. She continued training as a therapeutic counsellor, trained as a teacher in adult education, got a job at West Cumbria College teaching and running the counselling service for students. Joan loved it and often wonders what happened to those that she helped.

Joan then worked independently as a counsellor and therapist for two decades before a rock climbing accident left her with fractures in both ankles and renal damage requiring extensive surgery. She was effectively immobilised for many months and started painting during that time as she could do little else!

Very soon art went on to become a central part of her life. She went to Leith School of Art at Edinburgh and, since then, she has had work exhibited in various places including London, Edinburgh, Birkenhead, Newcastle and Cumbria.

She is an elected member of Lake Artists Society. Currently she has been shortlisted for the New Light Art Prize and has a painting on show at the Mercer Gallery in Harrogate. She has been invited to exhibit in Maryport next year at the Shipping Brow Gallery from May 6-June 15 and will take part in Lake Artists summer show in Grasmere.

The measure of my friend is that when she had a mild stroke recently affecting her left hand, she started sketching with her left hand until it was OK!

An awesome lady with a huge heart, great talent and a wonderful friend, mother and grandmother

Proud to have you as my friend Joan!





GARDENING WITH MEREDYTH

DECEMBER

A priority is to feed the birds in this cold weather. Prevent ponds and birdbaths from icing over. Repair lawns, sheds and fences when possible. Prune woody ornamental plants, fruit trees and bushes, and both ornamental and grapevines. Reduce watering of plants under cover to prevent rotting but keep an eye on house plants. Lift and heel celery and earth up tall Brussel sprouts for support. Spray fruit trees and roses with plant oil winter wash to reduce disease. Check again that any vulnerable plants are protected and ensure outside taps are either turned off or well insulated. Prune tall bushes to guard against wind damage. Sow pelargonium seeds under cover
In bloom: viburnum fragrans, crab-apple, winter jasmine, firethorn and cyclamen



With thanks to RHS Gardening Year and Gardeners' Year Calendar

JANUARY

Continue to protect vulnerable plants. Hoe any germinating weeds. Brush any snow off trees, shrubs and hedgerows. Prune wisteria and other vigorous climbers. Take hardwood cuttings from trees and shrubs. Take root cuttings from perennials and, if you have the space, start to sow early vegetable crops under cover. Chit early potatoes. Force rhubarb. Prune any grapevines and check all outside taps for adequate insulation. Finally clean all pots and seed trays for spring sowing and send your lawnmower off for servicing before it's needed!

In bloom: Christmas rose, snowdrops, strawberry tree, mimosa and winter jasmine

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Gilcrux Village Hall & Educational Trust news



Gilcrux Village Hall & Educational Trust

Christmas Lottery 2024

Raising funds for St Mary's our beautiful parish church
£10.00 per ticket with 50% going to St Mary's and 50% in the prize fund

The winners will be drawn on 22nd December during our mince pies and mulled wine event

The more tickets sold the higher the prize fund!

You can pop your entry through my door, Manor Barn, with your name and address or Catherine at the Post Office will also collect

Merry Christmas

"Be in it to win it"

We have had a busy few months at Gilcrux Village Hall on the very necessary repairs to our heating system and solar array inverters. However we now have a toasty warm venue for all to enjoy for both corporate and private celebrations.

We have hosted many such events in the last few months and our very popular Lunch Club is going from strength to strength now having 50+ members. It is a joy to host, however we are always looking for volunteers to help out. So if this is something that might interest you please let me know. It's a very sociable fun few hours though does involve a bit of washing up! It's a great way to make new friends and meet neighbours. GVH&ET are actively seeking new members to join us whether as a committee trustee or volunteer. Any offer of help would be appreciated, from doing the occasional odd job such as painting or small repairs, tidying the exterior of the premises or helping out with various social events. Please get in touch with myself or any committee member if you would like to have a chat.

Over 40 children joined our Halloween Party - in various spooky guises. Many thanks to Joan Kearton, Nikki Clark (fabulous face painting!), Lorraine Faulder and Julie Parnaby for all their help, it was a fun couple of hours and - yes - we sent all of the children home full of sugar!

On December 22 we invite you to join us at 2pm for 'Mince Pies & Mulled Wine' (as well as tea, coffee and biscuits). A chance to catch up with friends and neighbours with everyone welcome. Money raised will be split with St Mary's for which we will also be running our annual fund raising of the village Christmas lottery. Please see the poster on the left for all the details

That's all our news, so have a fabulous Christmas and a happy, healthy 2025.

Helen Johnston, Chair helj@talktalk.net or 016973 21895 or 07866 029885

Educational Grants available

Did you know that the Gilcrux Village Hall & Educational Trust offer modest Educational Grants of up to £200?

The Trust has supported a wide range of requests for help over the years including the purchase of essential supplies for university students and a local artist, and recently contributed to the fundraising efforts of a young student who went to Ecuador to do voluntary work.

The Committee has also been very quick to respond to local welfare needs when asked. Filling out an application form is easy. Simply contact Helen Johnston (helj@talktalk.net) for a form, add your details and give a brief description of why you are applying for a Grant and what you think the costs will be. Return the Form to Helen and the Trust will let you know their decision as soon as possible.

Please note that Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Committee Members and are available to those living in Bullgill, Gilcrux and Greengill. Information will be treated as confidential and with respect.

Parish Council plea!



Gilcrux Parish Council would like to hear from you if you are a proactive person who would like to join our small, friendly parish council.

Come and get involved, make a difference. Please email our clerk, Trevor Gear, if you are interested.

gilcruxparish@hotmail.com



Fabulous turnout at first coffee morning

The Gilcrux & District Social Fund held their inaugural coffee morning in October in the Mason's Arms pub where Hal and Andy provided a welcome as warm as their complementary tea and coffee.

Publicity for this one had been intentionally low-key as we wanted to feel our way at first so we are surprised and delighted when 33 people joined us to enjoy refreshments, homemade cake and an opportunity to meet with each other.

The atmosphere was one of buzzing conversation with neighbours re-connecting, sometimes after many years and new friendships being formed.

There was lively discussion and 'do you remember when?' was a frequent refrain.

We based this, and will base future coffee mornings, around the core themes of promoting friendships and a sense of community plus helping to combat possible loneliness and isolation.

In the future we may progress to having an occasional speaker or perhaps a quiz or demonstration, but all topics will be decided by the coffee morning attendees as we go along.

Our drop-in event was as relaxed and friendly as we had hoped. We witnessed many small acts of kindness with neighbour helping neighbour to get there - sometimes by encouragement or gentle persuasion and sometimes by offering transport.

The next coffee morning will again be held in

The Mason's Arms on Thursday December 19 from 10am till 12 noon where everyone will be welcomed by a log fire, a cuppa and big smiles.



Mason's Arms Christmas fair on 7th December
12-4pm
Beautiful Handmade gifts made right here in Gilcrux
Homemade cakes and coffee
Raffle, Tombola
Donations go to Gilcrux Social Fund

Debbie (aka Bee)
 shares the stories revealed
 during her research into the
 history of Bridekirk and
 Gilcrux parishes



The non fiction navigator ...

Dear Reader,

In the last issue of Village Post, I touched on Calder Abbey and Holm Cultram Abbey, both of which held land in Gilcrux. Well, that line of research inspired me to write a short fictional story based on the life of Beatrice de Molle. Beatrice was a landowner we know almost nothing about, except that she gave the monks of Calder Abbey land in Little Gilcrux and the fourth part of the mill in Great Gilcrux.

I gifted the story to our friend in Gilcrux, T.M. on the occasion of her 60th birthday (and hope to write more soon).

Many thanks, incidentally, to parishioner J.J. who loaned me some interesting research material.

This time around, wrap up warm and join me on a journey to 18th century Dovenby and beyond.

What follows is the result of research and letters held by Cumbria Archives in Carlisle and Whitehaven, and material from the National Archives, the British Newspaper Archives, the British Library and numerous genealogical sources. It is part one of a story that weaves together fact and supposition, where history and imagination converge.

This story is in memory of our friend, Clark Porteous Archer, who died Thursday November 16, 2023.

Dovenby. Life centres around agriculture. Communal events link to the agricultural calendar, with gatherings for markets and fairs - the social backbone. Neighbouring villages, stone cottages, farmsteads, mills and churches anchor the community, embodying the resilience of the local population and their connection to the land.

Storm, rain and then December 1739 settles over Dovenby like a shadow, chilling the village with a frost so deep it hardens the land to stone. Families layer themselves in wool and linen, rationing their remaining stores of grain, dried meat, potatoes. Dovenby folk have endured long winters before, but none like this. Frozen beckons and rivers, and there's mayhem at the ports. Stone walls sparkle with hoarfrost, cattle grow thin on scant feed, smoke rises in thin columns, feeble protection against the sharp bite of the cold. Talk among the villagers is quiet. Everyone is worried about dwindling stores, hungry mouths. People are dying of famine, of fever. With each morning, even the earth holds her breath, waiting for warmth that might not return. There are English, Irish, Scots in Dovenby, in all the villages, has been for as long as anyone can remember. Family and trade connections across the county run deep, a unique border culture. Older folk remember the Union of England and Scotland in 1707 ending years of conflict.

"This blasted weather 'll be the death of us all," says one man to his son. "Sure, we'd warmer winters in Antrim than this wicked cold! Nothin' but ice on the ground and a wind sharper than a blade. We're like to be frozen clean through by the time spring shows her face."

continued on page 7>>>

Reclaim our pathways

Who is up for joining us for a group survey of two of the pathways (one in Tallentire, one in Gilcrux) in the new year? Dates TBC.

Please text 07359 011144 or email wearecuriouscumbria@gmail.com



Podcast and Print: A Perfect Parish Pairing

We are Curious Cumbria is now exclusively a podcast, and we're back in February next year excited to be bringing you one podcast each month.

Our tagline is: "A community group in Cumbria exploring the connections between people, place and nature over the passage of time." This is from feedback: "your tagline captures the essence of the podcast ... broad enough to cover history, current events and the natural world while emphasising the community connection."

We are Curious are thrilled to form a partnership with *Village Post* as a regular (monthly) feature, expanding on your printed publication.

We'll be talking with Marjory, other members of the VP team and, of course, to you - our wonderful community.

Best of all, our equipment is mobile, so we can come to you. So, what would you like to talk about?

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let's get to work

... and a journey to 18th century Dovenby

The Great Frost lingers, gnawing at the land and any hope that dared to survive winter. And the latest news from Ireland feels like ice in the bones of Dovenby folk. The frost has clawed across the Irish fields, the stories from across the sea cut through the village like the bitter wind. Crops dead in the ground, cattle keeled over, abandoned crofts left to the silence, and bodies - the dead - piling up like cordwood. The stench of it is said to travel on the gales and folk shudder at the rumours that horror will come for them, too. It's not as if Cumberland can afford to give up much more.

"Humphrey Archer," says John, pulling his cloak tighter, as they huddle against the wind that bites through every layer they wear. "His sister's had her babby."

His companion grunts, shifting his weight in the frozen mud. His breath hangs between them, half-frozen. "Oh aye."

"Thomas, she's named him."

A pause. The cold stretches between them like the endless fields of frost, so thick that even words seem to freeze in the air.

"And?"

John nods toward Dovenby Hall, its shape just visible. "He's a Lamplugh."

A silent understanding settles between John and his companion, thick as fog, heavy as the weight of local allegiances grown brittle with the cold. In other years, there might be murmurs of pride or envy of kin and clan. But in this frozen spring, the name Lamplugh feels like a warning, a reminder that in Dovenby Hall and others like it, bloodlines and loyalties run cold and deep. There will be no room for a bastard child in that dwelling.

.....

May, 1746. Members of the Cumberland Militia, initially raised by a ballot system from a list compiled annually to draft able-bodied men, come from farming backgrounds. Most find their military duty challenging, for it interrupts their agricultural work. Still, men of different social classes interact and train together, and in Dovenby as elsewhere, when the men come home, there's a camaraderie and sense of responsibility. Up in the Highlands, the Battle of Culloden was a brutal, decisive defeat for the Jacobites. The British Government has banned Highland dress and cultural practices to suppress further rebellion. Just the year before, Bonnie Prince Charlie had landed in Scotland, gathering Highland clans, gaining support. That uprising saw notable victories, including the Battle of Prestonpans, where the Jacobite forces defeated the British army. The Jacobites had even advanced into England, capturing Carlisle in November 1745. The Cumberland Militia aren't as formally organised or well-armed as the British Army regulars, but they'd mobilised quickly to support the government's efforts to repel the Jacobite threat. Cumberland, as with other counties, fears future threats.

.....

These days, young Thomas Lamplugh lives in Coniston, has done since he was tiny. Now, at nine years of age, he's off to Witherslack near Kendal. He will begin what is called a classical education, under the care of the Reverend Mr. Hunter.

"Now, I'm told you've the wrong name, Thomas," says Jane. She is the housekeeper where Thomas lives in Coniston, and has been his very dear friend these past years. "From now on," she says, "you're to be Master Hervey. Thomas Hervey."

"But, my name is Lamplugh, Jane."

"No, Thomas. No, it is not. You forget that name, now. Promise me you will."

In Dovenby, night falls. Humphrey Archer's mother banks the fire, and Humphrey presses his hands into the table. His mind is on his young nephew so far away. Or is it that he despises the gentry that put him there?

"He's had one visit from his father in all those years. One."

"But the lad's getting an education, Humphrey. He'll want for nothing."

Her words hang in the air as the door slams behind her son.

.....

April 1777. Britain continues to fight the American Revolutionary War. It had begun with rising tensions between the 13 American colonies and Britain, fuelled by issues like taxation without representation. News of the conflict reaches even the remotest areas. There are young men from Dovenby and Cockermonth, motivated by adventure and income, who are fighting overseas. But the war is a distant concern for most, focused as they are on the demands of daily life.

At the ancient church of St Bride in Bridekirk, William Archer, a grazier and a Captain in the Militia, marries Mary Hodgson from Bothel. William's family has lived in Dovenby and Dearham for an age. Everybody knows everybody. Across the way from the church, at Wood Hall, there's new woodland - six and three-quarter acres of oak, cypress, ash, elm and birch. William's hand rests on the worn brass hilt of his sword. Today, he is husband, captain and grazier, but in his heart, he longs to be more.

The next afternoon, William walks from Dovenby to Bridekirk, to the edge of the woodland. The land for sale had drawn his attention ever since he first heard of it. With its trees, every one of them marked and numbered, and its promise of timber and game, it is an ideal spot for expansion. Yet William knows the cost is more than he can afford. As he stands there, lost in the thought of what might be, the figure of the land agent appears from the shadow of a mighty oak.

"Yours for the right price, Will," the agent says, his voice low, but laced with the weight of knowing exactly what the grazier can afford. William meets the man's gaze, his face unreadable. "Aye," he says slowly, "but the price will take more than coin. It'll take time... and a leap of faith."

The agent nods, eyeing him with a practiced look. "Faith alone won't get you six acres, lad. But for the right price, faith can make a man see what he can do with it."

William stands still for a moment, considers the offer. He thinks about the weight of his new marriage and the hopes of building something that will last, not just for him but for the woman now walking beside him down the path of life.

"Aye, but if I can't raise it, then it is no more than a dream."

.....

February 1781. William, on inheriting the public house on the main road in Dovenby that his grandfather William ran 30 years ago is about to re-open the old place as an inn. It will be called, he decides, The Hairy Cap.

William is no longer a Captain in the Cumberland Militia, but he knows many that are. These lads get billeted in public houses, far away from home, to avoid having to deal with people they know. The Hairy Cap will put up visiting militia. William, missing the camaraderie of the militia, sees his enterprise as a kind of sporting club.

His friends, local folk, and the tinkers, beggars and such like gentry, will have separate premises, 520 yards from the headquarters, at Dovenby Beck. William reads the words he has written. "Adjacent to a good corn mill, and adjoining to a schoolhouse, where there is a diligent master, with whom they may have an opportunity of hearing prayers twice a day."

.....

2023. So 240 years later I'm working on an audio-visual exhibition together with my friend, Mark. We ask our friend Clark to read William's advertisement from the newspaper.

"On Tuesday 6th of March, 1781," Clark begins, "at six o'clock in the morning, the cellar doors will be let wide open. The barrels will be broached, the corks drawn, the hairy cap will be hung out. Not the sign of the hairy cap, but the real hairy cap..."

"He's an Archer," I say, "so you never know, Clark. You could be related."

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF VILLAGE POST



The Cumberland Militia flag



Governor's chat

Hello again! I've just been helping out at the Open morning for prospective parents. It's lovely to meet new people and to be able to show them what a wonderful school we have. It's been a busy term as usual with the Harvest Festival, the Macmillan cake sale, the Christmas Fayre, various sports, the new library area as well as all the other good work that goes on in school. At time of writing this, Ofsted have still not made their long-awaited visit but it WILL be this term!



Year 5 and 6 are very excited to be working on the School Panto to be performed at the Carnegie Theatre in Workington on December 12 and there will be a full report in the next issue. I know this will become a treasured memory for them. Here's wishing all a Merry Christmas!

Silvana Hewitt

The School Council organised an amazing cake sale and coffee morning to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Research. Children, teachers and teaching assistants brought in cakes and other sweet treats.

(Mrs Fish told us that anyone with an allergy would be having a chat with their class teacher before eating their sweet treat).

There were so many delicious cakes to choose from and we raised £261. The extra cakes were taken to Hames Hall which is our local care home. They were very well received!



P5's visit to Christ Church to experience the Life Exhibition

National Poetry Day

To celebrate this event in October, the children of Bridekirk Dovenby School wrote their own poems to perform in class. The theme of the poetry this year was 'Counting'. Three winners were chosen across the school and a special assembly was held so they could read their winning poems to all the children.

The winners were Oakley (year 1), Alma (year 3) and Tommy (year 5).

How to breathe underwater by Tommy

*One of dad's smelly socks
Two feathers from a goose flock
Three stars from outer space
Four noses from a human face
Five leaves from an old oak tree
Six men whose name is Lee
Seven years of good luck
Eight pages from a maths book
Nine bullets from a Nerf gun
Ten barrels of the finest rum
Mix it all in a witch's pot, close
your eyes and drink the lot!*

Activities in our school

Cross Country

In October all the children in Years 3 and Year 4 as well as a team from Years 5 and 6 went to Cockermonth School for a cross-country competition.

It was very muddy but, with so many children involved, it was an outstanding achievement for our school to have students finishing in the top 4 in every single category!

In the Year 3 and 4 girls' race, Martha won 1st place and Chloe came in 2nd. In the Year 3 and 4 boys' race, Bobbie won 4th place.

In the Year 5 and 6 boys' race, Freddie (Bobbie's brother) won 3rd place. Ruth was very proud to win 4th place in the Year 5 and 6 girls' race!

Swimming

P5 went swimming at Cockermonth Leisure Centre.

We loved going on the bus as we all laughed and had lots of fun.

We took a refreshing, healthy snack with us.

We were all given a certificate at the end to show what we can do.

More on extra activities in the next magazine!



(L to R): Oscar, Olivia, Eadie, Dinah, Max, Cameron, Harry, Anna-Marie, Gabriella, Harriet and Ruth.



Presenting our Newshounds

We are thrilled to present our latest team of Bridekirk Dovenby School newshounds. This smiling squad are responsible for finding all the news stories in the school, writing articles or poems and generally doing the work of reporters to highlight the wonderful things going on in their busy and happy school.

Teaching Assistant celebrations!

On Teaching Assistant Day we gave ALL our wonderful TAs a big round of applause for all the hard work they do for us.

Thank you TAs!

What made this a bitter-sweet day was that Ms Kelly Marr, the PE and Primary 5 TA was leaving.

Mrs Fish said that it was a new chapter of her life so we should be happy for her, though we are sad to see her leave. Miss Marr was given a suitcase and a book full of memories for her goodbye present.

She is going to work on the Carlisle to Barrow train so if you go on that train, you might see her!

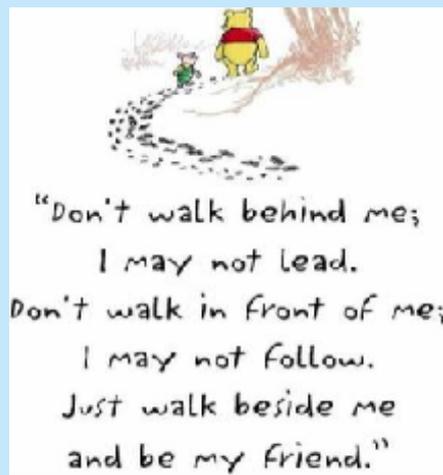


World Mental Health Day support

In our school we are aware of how our mental health can affect the way we learn and how we feel about ourselves and others.

On October 10 we all wore yellow to show our support for World Mental Health Day.

We looked at a website called Kooth that anyone can go on at any time. On this website, you can speak to somebody about how you're feeling. There are tips and activities that you can complete if you want to. It is completely private so only you will see your page.



Harvest Festival at St Bridget's Church

For Harvest Festival this year, the school collected food items to donate to the North Lakes Foodbank.

The celebration was led by Rev Roy Anetts, who is also a Governor at Bridekirk Dovenby School. The church was filled with

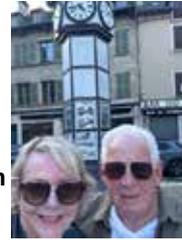


children, staff and parents and the pupils sang with gusto, clearly enjoying the event. A very generous amount of food was donated to this worthwhile local charity and the message of sharing and giving was clearly evident.



Merveilleux Marvejols

by John and Marjory Thompson of Tallentire



When you're tootling around France in your campervan it's just wonderful to go where you want, when you want.

So on our 3,000 mile trip in September/October we decided to pay an overnight visit to Cockermouth's twin town Marvejols. Very glad we did, it's just lovely and the people are very friendly.

It's the 41st anniversary this year and we visited just a few weeks before a group from Cockermouth arrived to enjoy a full programme organised by the Marvejolais and the hospitality of French families.

Where is it?

Marvejols is a small town in the Lozere district of southern France with a wonderful medieval centre. We drove there via the stunning Cevennes National Park and were thrilled to be met by a Cockermouth roundabout with red telephone box and a sign showing the distance to Cockermouth (as well as a display of daffodils every year).

More than 12,000 people from Cockermouth and Marvejols have taken part in more than 200 group exchanges - schools, choirs, sports groups, farmers and musicians.

A major achievement since 1983 when town councillors Jim Hully, George Graham and council clerk David Bertam led a delegation to explore twinning with the Maire Jean-Pierre Nogaret. They were warmly welcomed and, over 40 years later, many firm friendships have been established. We were able to park overnight in a new car park just outside the old town and enjoyed pastis in the local bars as well as the usual baguettes and croissants from the local boulangerie in the morning.

Did you know?

The erotic French movie 'Betty Blue' was partly shot in Marvejols

The famous French rock band Subway is made up of four women from Marvejols



Porte Sobeyran - one of three



Place Henri Cordesse, market place



13th century Notre-Dame de la Carce



Europe Prize ... a double first!

In 2002 both towns were awarded the coveted Europe Prize - the first joint award for twin towns.

More than 100 students from Cockermouth School have benefitted from the resulting Europe Prize scholarship fund set up by the Town Council allowing them to further their studies in Europe. Each year the anniversary of the twinning is celebrated by a party from each town visiting on alternate years. Marvejols is also twinned with Colombo, Sri Lanka.



The beast of Gevaudan



Two bronze sculptures sit at the two entrances to old town - one of Henry IV of France, who rebuilt the town after religious wars, the other of a mythical beast which brutally killed 120 people back in the 1760s.



D'ici et d'ailleurs From near and far

In the centre of Marvejols we found a wonderful photographic study of local people taken outside an ancient door.

Entitled *D'ici et d'ailleurs* it is a collaboration with Marvejols cinema Le Trianon, artist/architect Sara Harakat and photographer Teja. An Afghan box camera was built with the help of an Afghan refugee family living in Marvejols. Placed in the centre of the town, it captured more than 100 portraits reflecting the diversity and cultural richness of the local population.



One shepherdess, who survived after her flock surrounded her, described it not as a mere wolf but a huge beast. Louis XV sent out Royal hunters to kill the beast. A large wolf was shot and taken back to Versailles. But later the attacks started again and a local hunter Jean Chastel shot a huge beast. An autopsy revealed human remains inside and the animal had no wolf characteristics. The attacks ended. Over 100 wolves live in a semi natural state in the hills above Marvejols in the Wolf Park of Gevaudan.



MAIRIE DE MARVEJOLS



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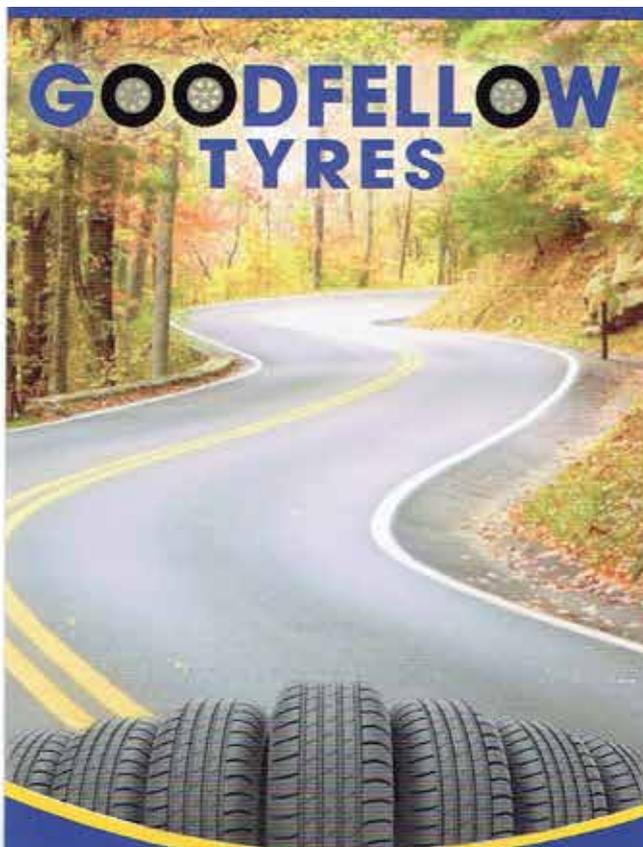
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Home grown cooking with Annette

Seasonal delights

ANNETTE GIBBONS is well known for her wonderful cooking. A former Cumbria Woman of the Year, she hosted her own Border TV series "Home Grown". Annette has taught nutrition and cooking, run her own cookery school and organised 'Cumbria on a Plate' gourmet tours.

Having returned from an autumn break I was astonished and pleased to find that I was able to pick plump tomatoes and ripe red peppers from the greenhouse ... in November!

Needless to say my kind neighbour had kept an eye out for me. Putting them to good use was my first quest and, for a quick and easy supper, I made the following in my air fryer. If you're cooking for the family use your main oven. I've used the wonderful Cumberland Mustard which has been a favourite of mine for decades (they've been producing delicious mustards near Alston since the 1980s.) For a vegetarian alternative use thick slices of halloumi in place of the chicken.

Easy bake chicken thighs on a bed of seasonal veg (for four)

8 free range chicken thighs bone in, skin on (or halloumi)
1 large onion, chopped
3 sticks celery (I used midrib of chard from the garden) sliced
4 cloves garlic peeled and left whole (more if desired)
2 large carrots chopped.

Use whatever vegetables you have to hand that will roast

Olive oil - ground black pepper and sea salt

2 tablespoon Cumberland honey mustard

2 tablespoons sour cream/crème fraîche

Place the chopped veggies in a roasting tin with enough olive oil to coat them lightly. Snuggle the chicken thighs on top, season the dish and place in a preheated oven no 5, 190C. After 15 minutes turn the thighs over. Return to the oven for another 10 minutes. Mix the mustard and cream together. Loosen with a tablespoon of water if necessary. Add to the vegetables to make a delicious sauce. Turn the thighs to skin side up and return to the oven for 5 minutes to crisp the chicken skin. Serve with a steamed green vegetable and crusty bread to mop up the juices.



Moist Christmas mincemeat

If you're snowed under with windfall apples at the moment this is a delicious mincemeat that you can make easily and place in a sterile jar to give as a present or use for Christmas pastries.

450g/1 lb apples cored

450g/1 lb cherries

225g/8 oz moist brown sugar

1 lemon

450g/1 lb raisins

225g/8 oz butter

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Mince or finely chop together the apples, raisins and cherries, add cinnamon, lemon rind and juice with sugar. Melt the butter and stir well altogether.

Place in a clean hot jar and place lid on firmly.



Red chilli and garlic jelly

This is such a rich, delicious jelly useful as an accompaniment to cold meats, felafuls, -cheeses or stirred to enrich gravies and soups. I use it all year long and this year's apple crop is heavy so I shall be able to make lots!

Take 2kg apples, cookers, crab apples or a mixture. Wash them well, no need to peel or core. Just cut them up into chunks and place them in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Simmer until soft. Add 175ml cider vinegar and boil for five minutes. I usually do this one day and let it drip through an old (clean) tea towel overnight, collecting the juice in a big jug.

Keep the jelly clear

Don't be tempted to squeeze the bag of pulp as this can make the jelly cloudy.

Measure the juice (2kg apples will yield about one litre of juice) and, for every 570ml, weigh out 450g sugar. Pour the juice into a large, heavy-based, stainless steel pan and add the sugar. Stir over a gentle heat to dissolve the sugar completely.

Add five red chillies that have been sliced, six cloves garlic sliced and now raise the heat and boil vigorously for about 15 minutes. Pull the pan off the heat and test for setting point. Take a cold saucer from the fridge and place a teaspoonful of the juice on it.

When cool, it should wrinkle when you push it with your finger. You could also use a jam thermometer. When it reaches 104-105°C, the mixture will set.

Leave to stand for at least 30 minutes, then stir once more to ensure the chillies are distributed evenly.

Taste to check it's spicy enough - you can add a few more chillies at this stage, but remember that it will get hotter during storage.

Pour the jelly into dry, warm, sterilised jars (you can sterilise them in a very hot dishwasher, or boil them in a pan of water for 10 minutes).

Put lids on and label. Stand back and enjoy the wonderful colour. Store in a dark place for a couple of weeks before using.



Satisfaction guaranteed

I used to eat all day long but was still always hungry!

Eating more didn't help. I'd get a physically full sensation; stuffed, pugged, bloat-a-tums, then be hungry again two hours later.

All the volume didn't satisfy my nutritional needs, leaving me constantly craving food.

What was I doing wrong?

I was eating far too much processed carbohydrate including cereal, sandwiches, pasta and lots of biscuits and snacks!! But not enough of what my body actually needed - protein, good fats, vitamins and minerals.

We've been told to regard fats as the enemy but

Jackie Wilkinson
Village Post
nutritionist



good fats like olive oil, butter, meat, fish and nuts, are essential to life.

(Seed oils - called vegetable oil - are unhealthy so avoid those.)

Eating that way upset my blood sugar and made me over-weight, so I went on a diet. Diets restrict what you eat. The more you deprive yourself, the greater the cravings. Oh dear!

Cereal is a classic example of

'soon to be sugar'

(see *Dr David Unwin's infographics*

<https://phcuk.org/sugar/>).

The more you eat, the greater the blood-sugar disruption and the greater the hunger later. Processed foods are often moreish (addictive).

They lack the goodness of natural food, leading to our over-fed but under-nourished population, with deficiencies in key vitamins and minerals common world-wide.

The secret to being healthy, happy and the right weight, is to eat high nutrition, natural, satisfying foods.

You won't need as much! Satisfaction is a different sensation from 'stuffed'.

Protein is the most satiating, so include some with each meal. Breakfast is often the worst meal of the day - try having eggs.

We're all different so I test clients' metabolic type.

Experiment for yourself and notice how you feel.

TOP TIP

For satisfaction, don't eat more, eat better.

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Rev Roy's Christmas Ramblings

I've always enjoyed Christmas and the run up to it. Advent, as we call it in the church. As a child we had certain traditions in our home. In the month preceding Christmas my Mother would be busy making puddings and cakes, none were shop bought!

Then, two weeks before Christmas, we would put up the decorations, most of which were hand-made and some were brought out each year. Even though they became a little tired, they were part of our Christmas and our memories.

We would enjoy singing carols at school and church and watching seasonal programmes on the television.



Rev Roy with the aptly named rambling rector rose

Christmas morning was particularly special. My two brothers and me would wake up early, after Santa had been. The first thing we would do was investigate our Christmas stockings. Dad's football socks would be hanging on the end of our beds. Inside there would always be an orange, an apple, a bar of chocolate, some nuts and a brand-new shiny penny.

Then after breakfast we would open our presents. The main part of the day would always be our Christmas dinner. My mother would have slaved over it for hours, but she always seemed to enjoy seeing us boys tuck into our wonderful feast.

We probably all have memories of Christmas, hopefully happy memories, but there will be those among us who do not or cannot share happy memories at this time of year.

Let us think of others at this time, and where possible share our happiness, love and hope with those less fortunate than ourselves. Let us give time and generosity to the local community to

envelop those who may otherwise fall through the gaps this Christmas. Perhaps you could do something simple - like have a clear out of toys and other gifts that the charity shops so desperately need before Christmas, or just call round to someone on their own and give them a small piece of your time? I pray this Christmas that you may give time for celebration and a time for joy, give time to remember all that we have been grateful for in our lives, to give time to those able to gather with you in person and find ways to greet and love those whom we are not able to physically meet and let those much loved traditions continue.

Let us let go of expectations and the time to hold on to hope, peace and love. So, whatever our faith and traditions, as we draw 2024 to close - may we all be nourished and sustained by hope, peace, and love. Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Reverend Roy

For most people, Christmas is a time for celebration, a time for gathering and sharing, a time of giving and receiving.

As we prepare for the season let us think ECO and consider our impact on the environment. Each year large quantities of food are wasted and thrown away.

As you prepare for Christmas, plan your meals before hand, purchasing only the amount of food you know your family and friends will eat.



Think ahead and consider how any leftovers can be used up at the next meal or the following day.

As you shop, think British. Try to buy only food grown and produced in Britain - cutting down the air miles and CO2 emissions used in transporting food from abroad.

Better still buy locally produced food, reducing the CO2 emission level even further.

Above all, whatever you decide to eat this Christmas, we pray that you remember the reason for the season and enjoy your time together.

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ST. BRIDGET'S, BRIDEKIRK

People of hope and love

Christmas is almost upon us...

December can feel like chaos – lots of social events, services, Christmas presents to buy, never-ending to-do lists and the pressure to create the perfect Christmas. But in the midst of this chaos, our churches can offer an opportunity to find peace during this busy time.

The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024, *Follow the Stars: Calm and Bright*, draws on the world-famous carol, Silent Night:

"Silent Night! Holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright..."

One of the reasons that this carol is so universally loved is the way it invites us into the still centre of the Christmas story, to contemplate Mary holding the new-born Jesus, the Light of the World.

So, we invite you to come and join us at St. Bridget's Church and experience some calm. In the midst of this bright and busy season, we look forward to welcoming you soon.

Revd Christina Brentnall

Services at St. Bridget's Church, Bridekirk

Children's Church will be available during the 2.15pm services

December

- 1st Holy Communion (11am)
- 8th Morning Worship (11am)
- 15th Holy Communion (11am)
- 15th Carol Service (6.30pm)
- 22nd Morning Worship (11am)
- 24th Christmas Eve Crib Service (4pm)
- 24th Christmas Eucharist (8pm)
- 29: ****No services at Bridekirk****



29: joint service of Holy Communion at All Saints Church, Cockermouth (10am)

January

- 5: Holy Communion (11am)
- 12: Morning Worship (11am)
- 19: Holy Communion (11am)
- 26: Morning Worship (11am)

St. Aidan's All Age
also meets at 3pm
every Sunday at
Bridekirk
(except
29 December)

Hot news from St. Bridget's

Our heartfelt thanks for the amazing financial gifts towards the new boilers for the church.

We have been blown away by the generosity of many in our local villages.

We are pleased to say that the church will be warm again very soon.

We can't thank you enough for your support!

Thank you!

**Bridekirk District
Church Council**

Find us on:-

Facebook

www.facebook.com/stbridgetsbridekirk

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www.instagram.com/stbridgetsbridekirk/

email

bridekirk_church@grasmoormc.church

JUMP YOUTH GROUP

JESUS USE MY POTENTIAL

JUMP Youth Group meets 7-8.30pm on Sunday evenings in the Church Rooms at Christ Church, on South Street, in Cockermouth. If you are aged 11-18 years, do come and join us anytime.

For more information, email jumpyouthgroup@gmail.com or contact Christina on 01900 824526.

You can keep in touch with what is happening here: <https://cockermouthareachurches.church/jump/>

DATE	ACTIVITY / TOPIC
01 Dec. 24 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Talents
15 Dec. 24 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth ***Christmas Party***
05 Jan. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Pearl of Great Price
19 Jan. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Lost Sheep
2 Feb. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Great Banquet
16 Feb. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth ***Party and games night***
02 Mar. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Sower
16 Mar. 25 7.00-8.30pm	Christ Church rooms, Cockermouth Activity & Bible Based- Parable of the Prodigal Son

BRIDEKIRK FRIENDSHIP GROUP



St Bridget's Church room, Bridekirk

10:30 - 12:00



We offer a warm and friendly place for people who are in need of friendship to meet others for a chat over a cup of tea, coffee and home baked cakes each Monday morning.

Why not drop in anytime in the morning, for as long or as little time as you feel comfortable. You will always find a warm welcome from our volunteers.

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EVERY MONDAY
MORNING

FOR MORE INFORMATION

bridekirk_church@grasmoormc.church
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Are you feeling lonely or isolated?

Why not come along and meet the team. We love to meet new people.



Baby & Toddler Club



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People of hope and love

You're Invited!

Day - Every Thursday
Time - 1-3pm
Place - St Bridget's Church, Bridekirk.

EVERYONE WELCOME

An opportunity to share time and a chat with other families whilst the children play together.

 stbridgetsbridekirk

 stbridgetsbridekirk

 <https://cockermouthareachurches.church/st-bridgets-bridekirk/>

Join our team!

Perhaps you would like to volunteer to join our helper rota?
For more information contact us :
 bridekirk_church@grasmoormc.church



Church news ... church news ... church news

17

USEFUL NUMBERS— — — — —

Medical and Support Services

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Cumberland Infirmary (Carlisle)	01228 523444
Workington Community Hospital	01900 705000

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St Helen's Dental	01900 826210
Goodwins Dental Care	01900 823467

Pharmacies

Allisons	01900 822292
Boots (C/mouth)	01900 823160
Boots (Aspatria)	01697 320236

Vets

Millcroft (Cockermouth)	01900 826666
Millcroft (Wigton)	01697 323898

Other

Non Emergency Police	101
Electricity power cut query	105
United Utilities	0345 672 3723
Samaritans	116 123 (free)
Domestic Violence Support	07712 117 986
RSPCA	01946 693585
Age UK (West Cumbria)	01229 779711
Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG)	07852 599794
Citizens' Advice Bureau	01900 604735
Cumberland Council	0300 373 3730
Cockermouth Library	01900 822634
Aspatria Library	07557 499129



Isel and Bridekirk Parishes First Responders 150 Club Draw

October 2024

- 1 N Pilling
- 2 B Thompson
- 3 H Slater
- 4 J Bowe

The First Responders offer an invaluable service to the parishes of Isel, Bridekirk and Setmurthy. They are all trained in life support and give their time freely, bringing their skill and equipment to an emergency in those vital first few minutes. The "150 club" is a main source of income to provide these volunteers with training and equipment.

If you would like to join the "150 club", or know someone who would, contact Moira Purvis on 01697320534 or email moirapurvis@hotmail.com



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By popular demand ...



Teddy's dog blog

YOUR bed, MY rules

Hello Humans and Doggy Dudes!

Teddy Edward, your Rover reporter for the *Village Post* is back on his laptop.

Our wonderful Editor told me that this is the Christmas issue. So as you can see, I have dressed up for the occasion in my cosy Christmas jumper. We all must make a bit of an effort now and again, mustn't we? Please feel free to send me some pictures of you all in your finery - you simply can't beat keeping bang up to date with all the latest doggy fashions and trends. Since the last issue, my Pawrents have been away on holiday for a week, so I got to stay with my Uncle and Auntie, along with numerous visits from the half pint humans.

I must say that it proved to be absolutely splendid accommodation - in fact so good, I actually can't wait



Xmas jumpers rock!

to go and stay again. I even managed to train my hosts to make me a full English breakfast and deliver it to my bed. Excellent work, and the very least I deserve. I do recall that the first night was a bit of a challenge, as there wasn't quite enough room in the bed for both the humans and me.

As my picture above says: YOUR bed, MY rules!!! After a couple of minutes planning, I decided some alternative arrangements were called for. A quick starfish impression to get my tail beautifully positioned in order to cause maximum irritation through gentle swishing very quickly resulted in a shriek from my Auntie saying "Oh Teddy....no!!!!". Uncle and I were then banished to the spare room for the rest of the week. What a result!

Teddy 1 Humans 0, yet again.

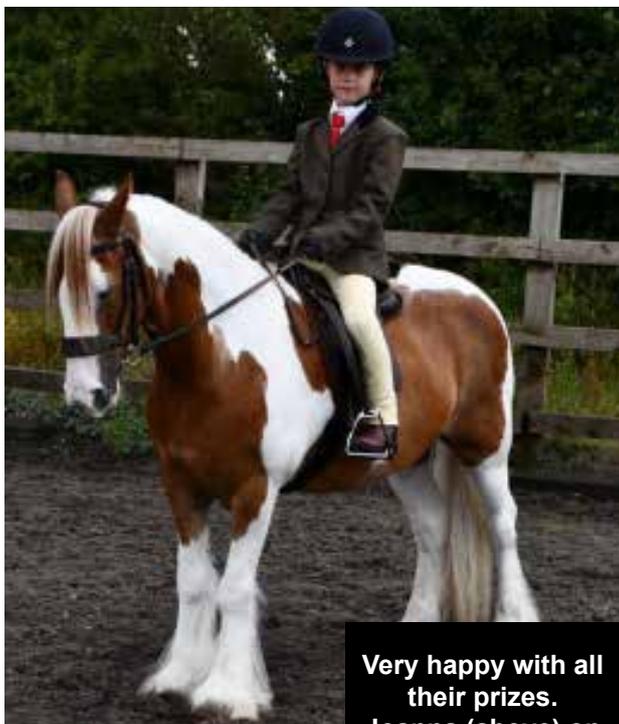
These dark nights are a bit of a pain, aren't they? I've been fitted with a flashing light on my collar to help slow down all the traffic and keep Daddy on the pavement. I've also got a Hi-Viz coat, so don't worry if you see something that looks like a curly red head pretending to be the Police walking about, worry not, it's only me.

I'm sure I spotted a human version in the Village the other day. I wonder where they were off to....? See you on my rounds, have a very Merry Christmas, and don't forget to Scoop the Poop!

Love, *Teddy Edward,*
your Rover Reporter



**Mungo Teddy on his holiday singing
"In the Summertime"**



Very happy with all their prizes.
 Joanna (above) on Poppy and Grace (left) on Thunder



The Litt sisters from Greengill Farm take part in monthly ESAH shows in Carlisle. At the 2024 awards on November 9, Joanna (9) won both overall junior in hand and overall junior ridden winner titles. She also won a hoody and huge horse head for overall combined points for in hand and ridden (and a sweet hamper at the bingo!!!!) Grace (3) won best newcomer title. She also was runner-up for junior ridden (only beaten by her big sister!)



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