

THE MELLING CHRONICLE

Coppicing Woodland

Updated Scams Information

Civic Leaders Briefing on Covid-19 Response

Departures, Arrivals And Those That Pass In The Night

The Melling Chronicle

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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

7 MAY 2020, 6PM

Due to the Covid 19 virus the Annual Parish Council Meeting will be held remotely. If any parishioner would like to join the meeting by video communication please contact the clerk:

mellingwithwraytonpc@gmail.com

The Agenda will be posted on www.mellingwithwrayton.net

**All other events
CANCELLED
until further notice**

MELLING CHRONICLE

The Chronicle is available in PDF format at www.mellingwithwrayton.net

Please send items for the Melling Chronicle to the editor: mellingchronicle@yahoo.co.uk

Please supply text as a Word document or by email. Photographs are always welcome at a high resolution. If you have an interesting, relevant, high resolution image for the front or back cover, please send it in for consideration.

The Melling Chronicle is a forum open to everyone in the village. All news and views are welcome, but the Editor reserves the right to edit text if necessary.

Deadline for any contribution is the 20th of the preceeding month.

The Melling Chronicle is published monthly except for January and August.

ADVERTISING

Please contact: The Parish Clerk mellingwithwraytonpc@gmail.com

Charges for 10 editions/Full Page £70.00/Half page £40.00/Quarter page £25.00

Single entry: By negotiation

Please note that anyone submitting an article, notice, letter or advertisement for inclusion in the Melling Chronicle is responsible for the content (including factual accuracy) this rests solely with the originating individual or organisation.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

WORK ON THE GRASS BANK ON THE A683 OPPOSITE TOWN END

The parish lengthsman has now carried out the major part of the work involved in improving drainage on and from this grass bank, laying down gravel along the lower part, and preparing and seeding the upper part with a view to creating a wildflower patch.

DRAINAGE

Many field drains on the site were found to be broken and/or blocked, leading to water egress onto the pavement and roadway. (It has been suggested that some of this damage dates back to circa 1980, when mains gas was brought to Melling.)

The drain has been traced down to the pavement and cleared and rodded, so that it runs freely. Manholes have been created, to provide for maintenance of the drain in the future. A manhole will be built when materials are available.

A secondary drain has been laid alongside the pavement, following and joining the main drain. To protect the drain and assist with drainage, hardcore has been added and levelled.

A plan of these drains has been made for future reference.

APPEARANCE

On the lower level, alongside the pavement, the soil has been reinstated and reseeded with grass seed.

On the higher level, alongside the hedge, scrub trees have been removed and the area sown with wildflower seed. With luck, these should show up this year!

MELLING GREEN

A silver birch tree has been removed from the grass bank, and replanted on Melling Green, to replace the one that blew down a couple of years ago. It has already started to sprout.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

The lengthsman has also mended the grid opposite the Village Hall, and removed a large amount of stone and rubbish from ditches around the village. (Necessary repairs and replacements of culvert infrastructure on the A683 and on Lodge Lane have to be carried out by Lancashire Highways.) The lengthsman is also spraying weeds on pavements around the parish.

The parish lengthsman has an ongoing contract with the parish council for a specified number of hours. Additional work, such as that on the A683 grass bank, is authorised by the parish council, and paid for out of the parish precept.

David Nott, Chair, Melling-with-Wrayton Parish Council



Melling Moor, courtesy of Rob Burke

CIVIC LEADERS BRIEFING ON CITY COUNCIL COVID-19 RESPONSE

WELCOME TO OUR FOURTH UPDATE EMAIL FOR CIVIC LEADERS ACROSS THE DISTRICT.

Talking with city council officers and listening to a variety of community meetings this week, it seems like we've reached a bit of a new "normal". New work rhythms are in place and some activities that we'd stopped in the first response to the pandemic are now returning.

The government has announced this week that the current physical distancing measures will remain in place for at least another three weeks. This will inevitably lead to a greater call on support services.

As of this week, the city council has begun sending an electronic newsletter to residents to share information about the local pandemic response. You can sign up for the newsletter at:

www.lancaster.gov.uk/coronavirus-newsletter

VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Work has continued through the week with Hope Church and the Lancaster District CVS on the development of our new shared platform, the Lancaster District Volunteer Hub. This platform will hopefully bring together what are currently a number of separate resources, to make it easier for residents who need help and those who are supporting them to find the help they need. Look out for the launch next week.

The City Council continues to work with councillors, health and community partners to build a list of vulnerable people across the district, in addition to the NHS defined shielded/extremely vulnerable list.

Officers are calling through this list to check whether people need anything, as well as offering a variety of call back options. Increasingly officers are finding that people who initially were fine, are now needing help. If you would like to add anyone to this list, please email customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk.

BEREAVEMENT

There have been a lot of questions about bereavement support on calls across this week and last. If you are supporting someone through a bereavement, there are a number of local groups who may be able to offer assistance:

Simon Stewart at the Cornerstone email: simoncornerstonecafe@gmail.com or phone 01524 840027
Cancer Care via their helpline 033301 50628 or text 07860018278

FOOD

This week the Foodhub has distributed 1400 boxes of food, where 1 box is food for 1 person for 7 days. The Emergency Foodhub is currently well-resourced in terms of both food and volunteers, with the city council buying in additional food.

Councillors will be able to make referrals through this service, in addition to MPs who have previously been able to do this. If you would like to be able to refer residents to this scheme, please email lancasterdistrictcovid19@gmail.com with your name and contact details. Your response will include information on how to make a referral. The website has recently been updated and a significant number of additional referral points are now listed.

Eggcup is working to support food clubs across the district, as well as working with Lancaster and Morecambe College to produce meals. To learn more about Eggcup's work or to get in touch www.eggcup.org/

HOMELESSNESS

The housing team continues to work hard to support all our newly housed residents. The city council is keen that we find ways to support our newly housed residents to stay housed once the crisis passes. Cllr Caroline Jackson, Cabinet Member for Housing & Homelessness, is looking to convene meetings with individuals and groups who might be interested in working towards long term support for these residents. We know this will be a challenge, and we would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with others in the sector. If you'd like to be invited to these meetings, please email cjackson@lancaster.gov.uk.

The team is also supporting an increasing number of people who are newly homeless due to domestic violence, both survivors and perpetrators. Refuge is still operating its 24/7 support line for domestic violence survivors 0808 2000 247 or online www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

SHIELDED/EXTREMELY VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Where the council has their details, council officers have been making daily welfare calls. Where we haven't been able to make contact, officers have been making welfare visits and if no contact has been made in person or by speaking to neighbours then we make a referral to the police to follow up.

Membership of the extremely vulnerable group is based on underlying medical conditions. Everyone in this group should have been contacted by the NHS by this point. For more information about who is in the extremely vulnerable group is available at www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable, people who believe they should be on this list and aren't should contact their GP.

COUNCIL TAX PAYMENTS

If residents are concerned about not being able to pay council tax, please ask them to get in touch with the customer services centre 01524 582000 or customerservices@lancaster.gov.uk. As was previously the case, residents in receipt of Universal Credit, are also likely to be eligible for full council tax support.

We know many residents will be worried about paying council tax. Those who qualify for Universal Credit will be able to access the existing council tax support scheme. Those who aren't eligible for Universal Credit should also contact customer services to discuss the support available.

STAY HOME, SAVE LIVES

The most important thing that everyone can do, is to follow the advice about handwashing, social distancing and self-isolation. Please don't put yourself, and therefore everyone, at additional risk.

We also recognise that many of us are facing additional challenges as we seek to support others and that while there are a lot of meetings going on, most of these are task-focused. To create some space to reflect on our own well-being, Cllr Alistair Sinclair, Cabinet Member for Communities and Social Justice, is also convening a fortnightly well-being group, for us to think about the well-being of ourselves and others more broadly. If you'd like to be part of these meetings, please email asinclair@lancaster.gov.uk

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATION SUPPORT

The city council has established a business support team, which can be contacted on econdev@lancaster.gov.uk or 01524 582000.

BUSINESS SUPPORT GRANTS

The City Council has now paid out more than £17million to 1508 businesses, across the small business & leisure, tourism & hospitality grants. However, we believe another approximately 1500 businesses may be eligible. We have had some feedback that there is confusion about whether these payments are grants or loans. Please confirm with people that these are grants.

Eligible businesses who apply online & provide all the necessary information are being paid in approx 72 hours (allowing for bank delays over the weekend). Online forms for both grant categories are available via www.lancaster.gov.uk/coronavirus

BUSINESS RATES NOTICES

We know some businesses will have received out of date rates notices, as notices were in train before the budget and the various announcements on rates relief.

The City Council is working hard to reissue bills and will endeavour to have new bills sent by April 30th. If a business feels that they qualify for one of the new categories of rent relief, they do not need to do anything right now, and should not make any rates payment in April. The City Council is working through cancelling all direct debits for those we think qualify and will not pursue recovery during April.

If by the end of April, a business has not received an amended bill, this means the City Council thinks the existing notice is correct. If any business believes they have been incorrectly assessed, they should contact the city council at that point on econdev@lancaster.gov.uk or 01524 582000.

RENT SUSPENSION FOR CITY COUNCIL SMALL BUSINESS & COMMUNITY TENANTS

We have decided to suspend rent collection from our own small business and community tenants.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION SUPPORT

Many of you will be aware that Lancaster CVS established an Urgent Response Fund to support community organisations responding to the coronavirus crisis around Morecambe Bay. The fund has now opened to make grants and if you know of community organisations (including new ones) who could use financial support, they can apply for funds via www.lancastercvs.org.uk/funding/coronavirus/. If you'd like to promote the fund for donations, the website is www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/coronavirus.

Several national bodies have also opened up specific funds to support organisations in particular sectors:

Arts Council England: www.artscouncil.org.uk/

Sport England <https://www.sportengland.org/>

Lancaster District CVS is producing a regular newsletter that consolidates support available to community organisations. Community organisations can sign up for that newsletter at www.tinyurl.com/CVSLancaster.

KEEPING OUR VITAL SERVICES GOING

The city council has wholly restructured to meet this crisis. Every function within the council has been categorised as tier 1, tier 2 or tier 3. Tier 1 services are those we expect to have additional need through this emergency - like customer services. Tier 2 services are those which need to continue - like bin collection. Tier 3 services are those which we have closed or will close, as pressures increase. Staff from tier 3 services will be reallocated to tier 1 and 2 services.

Each day we review our capacity to maintain city council operations. At the moment, Tier 2 services are continuing as usual, however, as the number of staff sick or self-isolating increases that may change. Several other councils in Lancashire have already started reducing recycling services. The City Council is working towards adding information about which services are closed and which are continuing to its website.

A recurring concern this week has been fly-tipping. The City Council's teams continue to respond to reports of fly-tipping, we are also continuing discussions with the County Council about the possibility of it re-opening household waste recycling centres.

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who continues to work so hard in these strange circumstances. I know many of you are driven by a commitment to looking after your neighbours and community, but I do also want to urge you to make sure you are taking care of yourselves.

Take care & stay safe

*Dr Erica Lewis
City Councillor for John O'Gaunt Ward
Leader, Lancaster City Council*

UPDATED SCAMS INFORMATION - TRADING STANDARDS

GOOD MORNING COMMUNITY,
FAITH AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS,

We would like to share with you some updated information from trading standards on current scams.



Anyone can be vulnerable to a scam if caught off guard at a vulnerable moment/ distracted and with so many residents isolating without the usual social contacts and sources of advice, it's important to share the latest variations of scams that are doing the rounds as widely as possible. Trading standards also have a free online friends against scams learning course which can be viewed at the link:www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/training/friends-elearning. Anyone can complete this online course to gain more awareness in taking a stand against scams and please share with anyone who may be interested in this.

A full version of "Consumer Alert - April 2020 - For vulnerable residents" can be viewed on the website, www.mellingwithwrayton.net

*Kind regards,
Molly Balderson
Community Connector Team
Communities and the Environment
Lancaster City Council*



Keep in touch with the latest goings on by joining the new Melling with Wrayton Community Group on Facebook. All welcome!

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**Parish Priest: Canon Luiz Ruscillo
Tel: 01524 21246**

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday Vigil Mass at 6.00pm - *Our Lady's, Caton*

Sunday Morning Mass at 9.00am - *St Joseph's Kirkby Lonsdale*

Sunday Morning Mass at 11.00 a.m. *St Mary's Hornby*

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament - Fridays from 5-6pm - St Mary's - a hymn, a short reading and a peaceful silence in the presence of God.

Details of weekday Mass times, and other services and parish news can be found in the weekly Parish Newsletter displayed in St Mary's porch.

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The Chronicle is distributed round Melling, Wrayton and Wennington, therefore an advert placed will reach a lot of local people who are looking to support local businesses.

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DEPARTURES, ARRIVALS AND THOSE THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT: MELLING MIGRATIONS

Migration is a serious business, animals, humans and birds all travel long distances in the expectation of abundant food and the hope of raising a family. For all those that attempt long distance migration the risks are high and the dangers many. It is a rather ambiguous word, 'migration', it has both negative and positive connotations, gives no clue about the traveller intent, the journey undertaken or the length of stay at the destination. But in relation to the birds, perhaps a more welcoming expression would be 'homecoming'.

Driving from Hornby during the winter you may have noticed a group of swans in the valley fields. They shone like gleaming white pearls against the dark skies, the green carpet they grazed and backdrop of the fells in the distance, truly breath-taking on some days. I confess, while I enjoyed seeing them, I gave them little thought. In March, I noticed the majority had gone and on speaking with Stuart Piner, I was informed that they were Whooper Swans and the Lune Valley their winter home. They had migrated to Eurasian boreal regions and Iceland, their summer breeding home. Coming in at about 10kg, with a wingspan of 2.5m they are large and a hefty weight to fly at an altitude of 8,000m and speeds of 55mph! Individuals can be recognised by their bill pattern, which all differ, half of the beak is orangey-yellow (at the base), while the tip is black. Apparently they tend to swim a lot (for swans) and carry themselves more elegantly than other swans with straightened and upright necks Their name comes from the loud recurring whooping sound, similar to a car horn, trumpet, or a distant bell, depended on one's musical taste!



Whooper Swan



Mute Swan



Bewick Swan

While our Whoopers have departed, we have much to look forward to arriving. Last year, the House Martins I share my home with arrived on the 27th of April. They duly repaired their home, constructed of over 1,000 beak-sized pellets of mud, and fledged two sets of young. The winter home of the House Martin is poorly understood, but signs point towards North and West Africa (sampling from feathers, which they fully moult each year)². We are still in the arrivals lounge...

As we wait for those that swoop in from high and far distances, others are have already arrived, including ground nesting birds. These ‘homecomers’ have less lofty ambitions. They are waders such as Curlews and Redshank, arriving from estuaries and the coastline, and our ‘farmland birds’, such as lapwing, which are both resident and migrate depended on the weather. Wonderfully they view our local countryside as their summer home.

Curlews: with their distinctive, high-pitched and rather mournful song are partner and site-faithful. They live for 20-30 years, so if you grew up locally, perhaps you were captivated by a single Curlew’s call as a child and perhaps they too watched you grow? They are an iconic countryside bird, and have been celebrated in art, poetry and literature throughout the ages. However, nesting on the ground does present obvious risks and while they do have some defences, such as a well camouflaged nests, they are in very serious decline across all their global breeding ranges. Consequently they have the unenviable status of being near threatened (IUCN)². We are lucky, in Northern England and Scotland we still hear and see them, let’s hope they raise their families and continue to come home each summer.



But let’s end on a positive note... We have departures and arrivals, but what of those that pass us by? Stuart Piner our local ornithologist has been recording the sounds of the night. Wow, what a marvel and eye opener! I am relieved to report, there are Curlews calling at night, along with Woodcock, Coot and Moorhen, Water Rail, Wigeon, Teal, a couple of Redshank, three owl species, including a noisy Barn Owl, and most exciting the flocks of Common Scoter.

Common Scoter: a dark, rather dumpy, diving seaduck. Sadly, they do not have a following of artists, revering the beauty of their call, poise and elegance as Curlew do. But they are none the less enigmatic, living far out at sea, braving all weathers with little known about their travels. Apparently the UK is the winter home



News From Melling And Wrayton

for about 37 thousand. Like so many birds, they too are in decline and red listed, but thanks to Stuart and the night watch, there is now a clearer picture of their migration, so they have become a little less mysterious³.

If you are interested in the wonders of bird migration the web has lots of places to find out what is happening and where. Try the British Trust for Ornithology and BirdGuides.

Enjoy the beautiful spring and look out for our ‘homecomers’.

1. Hobson, K., et.al. 2012 “Solving a Migration Riddle Using Isoscapes: HouseMartins from a Dutch Village Winter over West Africa”. PLoS ONE. Volume 7 (9). <https://core.ac.uk/reader/38676443>

2. IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature: <https://www.iucn.org/>

3. Read about the 2020 night recordings of migrating Common Scoter: <https://www.birdguides.com/news/massive-common-scooter-movement-takes-place/>

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My thanks to Stuart Piner and his family for their help in writing this short piece.

Kathryn James, April 2020



Ingleborough from Melling Moor, courtesy of Rob Burke



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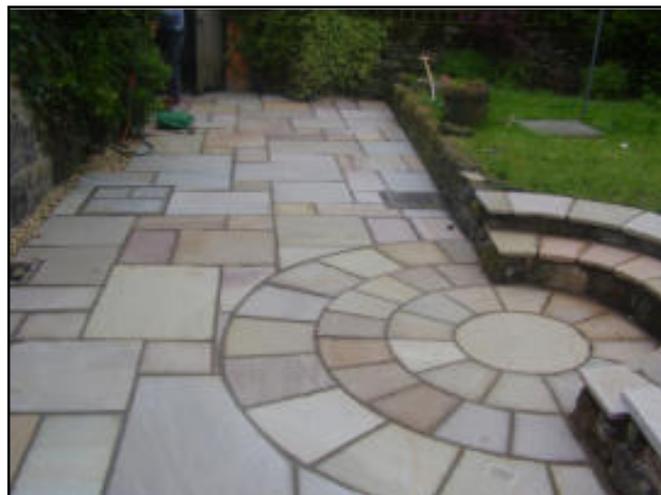
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COPPICING WOODLAND



Wood Anemone and Marsh Marigolds in open space

No woodland in England is entirely natural, all have been managed by human hand with their composition and condition having been dictated by the actions of the woodman over many years, sometimes for millenia. The derivation of the word woodman is not as one might think from the male gender, but rather is from the Latin 'manus' meaning hand, thus the woodsman is literally the 'hand of the woods', and not exclusively male.

Given that trees take so long to grow relative to our sense of passing time, it is often a surprise or indeed a shock to many to see an area of them felled, but it should be remembered that trees of all shapes and sizes are a timber crop, albeit with a much longer life cycle than a field of barley.

Woodlands were always extremely important to rural life, but the active management of woodlands declined exponentially in this country after the first half of the twentieth century. This decline was driven chiefly by economics - woodland products are generally of low value but need a high labour input to retrieve them. It does not pay well to work the woods. The emphasis of timber production was transferred to mechanised forestry after the Second World War, chiefly monocultures of spruce and larch in large plantations, and many leafy woods were left largely abandoned to gamekeepers for pheasant habitat.

Many broadleaf woodlands were managed as coppice, and some still are. Coppicing is the regular felling of the same tree, which regenerates from the beginning of each coppicing cycle, when it is cut near to the ground and is allowed to grow again with multiple stems to a desired height depending on tree species and intended use of the timber, before being coppiced once again. The cut stump is known as the coppice 'stool', and this method of management can elongate a tree's life to over 1,000 years by repeatedly rejuvenating it. You will often see areas of coppice within woodlands that have been allowed to become 'overstood', where tree stems have been allowed to grow too large from the coppice stool. This can result in the death of the plant as the individual stems get too large and split away from the base, killing the stem and the stool.

Coppice is often grown as 'coppice with standards', where the standards are much larger trees spaced out and allowed to grow to full height, with the smaller coppiced species grown in the wide spaces between them. Just about all deciduous hardwood tree species can be coppiced, from slow-growing oaks to smaller species such as hazel. Sweet chestnut is popular in the south of the country, one of our local coppice species is alder. Different species produce different coppice products for a range of purposes.

The uses of coppice products are large and varied, and every town and village in the past would have benefitted from and used the crops that the woodsman would have supplied - bean poles, woven fencing, pea sticks, roof shingles, plaster laths, thatching spars, kindling, firewood and charcoal. These products today are generally supplied into the UK from abroad (including firewood and kindling) as the return from labour in the modern era simply will not pay for the time and effort required to get them to market. You and I are simply not prepared to pay the price for local woodland products, perhaps with the exception of local firewood (which is in fact often just a by-product of tree surgery), and so woodland management as a whole has generally declined all across the UK and is now chiefly supported by interested private individuals, woodland charities and by government grant via the Forestry Commission.



Coppice stool in the Wild Garlic with standard and uncoppiced trees behind it

The action of coppicing woodland can have enormous benefits for the woodland flora and fauna. Overstood coppice shades out the woodland floor, thereby suppressing the understorey plant growth and pushing out the opportunity for insect and bird life to flourish. An area of coppice cleared in any one year, to a minimum of around one third of an acre, will open the tree canopy above, allowing sunlight in to encourage both the regrowth from the coppice stools and also the plants and flowers dormant in the woodland soil. These are the species that live at the woodland edge. The plants in turn attract insects and birds, as well as bats and other mammals, reinforcing the biodiversity of managed woodland habitat. Woodland edge in the countryside is too often simply a monoculture of grass for the production of beef, milk or lamb therefore freshly opened coppice areas within woodland are extremely important for those species which require and only thrive in an open scrub habitat.

There are areas of coppice which you will see in the local area if you cast your eye about when taking some exercise, most of which are overstood and unmanaged. My own recent activity has been to bring back into management our coppice woodland which, by counting the tree rings, had not been touched since around 1976. The results are already evident in the proliferation of wood anemone, marsh marigold and the earlier flowering of bluebells and wild garlic in the coppiced area. The standard oaks now have some space to regrow their lower branches, most of which had died due to the lack of sunlight from the overstood alder coppice that had surrounded them, the birds and bats seem to enjoy the opportunity for feeding, and this is not to mention the production of a good volume of firewood, kindling, bean poles and perhaps some charcoal in the summer.

There is a new era of tree planting now happening across the country in response to climate change. This planting will change the composition of our local landscape from in some of the high valleys up to the upland fells over the next few years, keep a look out for the tree tubes at first.

At home, might we begin to ask retailers where our bamboo bean poles are grown, or in which hemisphere our barbecue charcoal is produced (and from what species of wood), and whether the crated firewood delivered onto the drive by pallet carrier has been produced within 30 miles, or is it in fact from the other side of Europe? It could be time for us to be looking a little closer to home for the products we require, and to appreciate the woodlands as a crop source with multiple sustainable benefits. We might see the wood for the trees by looking to the woodsman.

Patrick Holmes, Greetlands, Wrayton, April 2020

SIR HENRY CLAYTON DARLINGTON (1877-1959)

Sir Henry Clayton Darlington was from 1928 to 1946 the fourteenth owner and occupier of Melling Hall. Before and after World War 1, he practised as a solicitor in Parbold, Wigan. From 1914-18, his war service as Brigadier General took him to Egypt, Gallipoli and France, where he received an award for gallantry. He was knighted in 1925.



His direct ancestors can be traced back to the early 1700s in Cheshire, and from the early 1800s in Lancashire, where his grandfather Ralph Darlington (1823-1890) was three times Mayor, and then Town Clerk, of Wigan. His father Henry Darlington (1852-1904), head of Messrs Darlington & Sons, Solicitors in Parbold, Wigan, was killed in a shooting accident on 22 August 1904. The amalgamated law firm of Peace and Darlington, of Liverpool and Wigan, was formed in January 1905.

To read the full article, go to www.mellingwithwrayton.net, the history page.

THE ROTARY CLUB OF LUNESDALE

Dear Readers, just like every other organisation **Rotary** monthly meetings and all events are on hold until the Coronavirus is over. However it is so uplifting and heartening to see the many ways in which people are helping each other to overcome the problems we are faced with. We must count our blessings every day which includes the dedicated NHS staff we have in our country.

I hope you enjoy my poem inspired by something my daughter(a nurse) said to me.

*Keep well, keep safe and stay positive.
Lilian*

Silence
It is all around us
The silence.
No planes, no trains, no cars.
We do not rush
There is time to stand
Time to look.
Look above and see the sky
It might be grey
It might be blue
But it covers me and you.
There is so much to be thankful for.
It is kindness that shares
The silence all around us.

ANDREW WHITAKER

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Lune Valley from above Melling Green



Melling from Arkholme



All pictures courtesy of Rob Burke

Ingleborough from Wrayton