



Ravenglass Village Forum

April 2002

No 3

The Chairman reports

Ann Edwards reviews the Forum's work during the past year

It is now nearly a year since my last report on the progress made by the Ravenglass Village Forum. The Committee has continued to work with many agencies, not the least the Lake District National Park. Many thanks to Andrew Lowe, the LDNPA Buildings Conservation Officer, for all his help and support.

I hope that this report shows that we have continued to make good progress. Sometimes things take longer than we would wish, but nowadays there are many regulations to be complied with.

At that time of the last report work had not begun on the Millennium Garden, although plans were well in hand for the National Park Estate Team to begin the conversion of this derelict piece of land into a quiet haven from which to view the estuary. As most of you are aware, the work was carried out as planned with cobbles and sandstone slabs and the centrepiece is the cobbled mosaic created from a design by the village children and interpreted by a well-known northern artist. A small amount of planting was incorporated along the sea wall and the finishing touch was the inclusion of two of the village seats. One of these seats is dedicated to the memory of Pam Conroy and the other to the Ravenglass Charter Fair.

The garden was officially opened in September 2001 by Eric Robson and was well attended by members of the parish, including of course Max Meadowvole! To enliven the proceedings the Millom Town Band provided entertainment. Afterwards we all retired for refreshments in the Parish Hall ably prepared by the members of the Women's Institute.

Despite considerable flooding in the winter months the Garden generally stood up to the elements. The drainage outlets incorporated into the site did their job well. Some of the planting was disturbed on one occasion, but hopefully next winter when the plants have become more established, they should be less prone to disruption. One area of planting needs some edging to hold back the soil and this is in hand. My thanks go out to those people who, after the danger of high tides had passed, got their brooms out and swept up the residue left by the tide. Fortunately the flooding problem is something that only happens in the winter months when nobody would wish to sit out, even in this secluded corner of Ravenglass.

After all the work and consultation with the lighting engineers the new street lights were installed down the remainder of Main Street. These seem to have been generally well received by residents and visitors alike. The street lights and the seats in the Millennium Garden and on the village green now give a more coordinated look to these parts of our village.

For 2001 the Forum produced a Local Information Leaflet entitled *A Quick Look at Ravenglass* with financial assistance from Copeland Borough Council. This leaflet contained a wealth of useful local information including walks, a smattering of history of the village and useful telephone numbers. Peter van Zeller carried out much of the research for this leaflet and Val Holmes provided the illustrations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank both of these gentlemen for their efforts. The feedback on this leaflet has been most encouraging and a small print run for 2002 has already been distributed. We hope to continue production as local attractions are now asking for more copies.

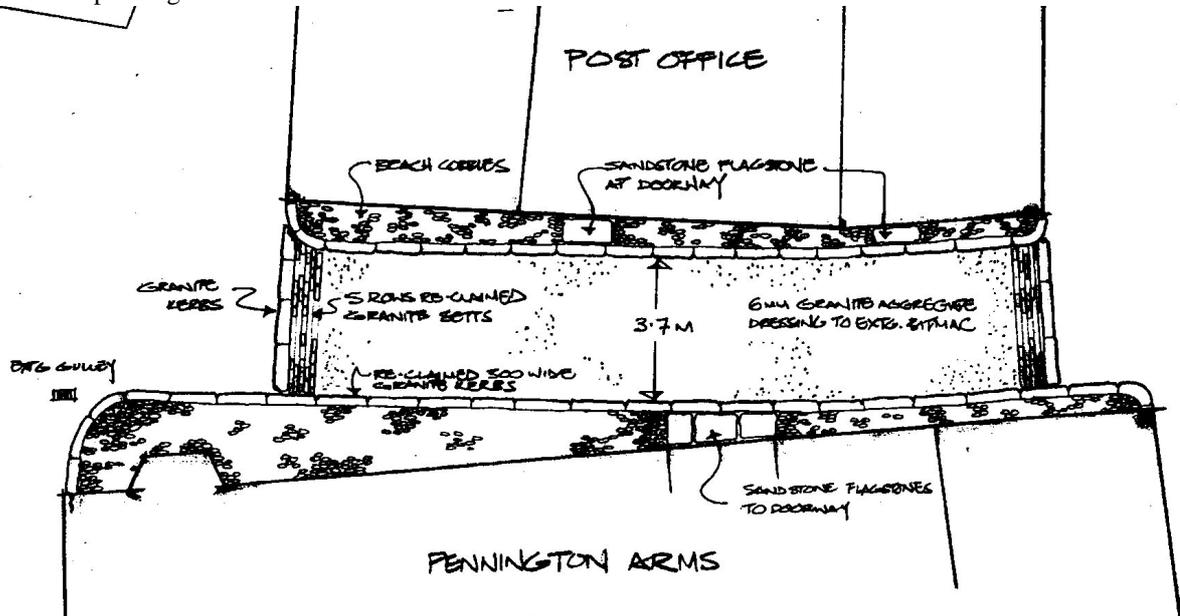
The next project will hopefully be commencing shortly. The Forum, in conjunction with the National Park and Highways Authority, is in the process of installing traffic calming measures that will blend in with the existing character of the village. Last year a strip of setts was installed at the entrance to the Main Street. Shortly two further rumble strips will be installed in the narrow section by the Post Office. Cobbles and sandstone slabs will then be laid down either side of the highway, the edge of which will be marked with granite kerbs. This should have the desired effect of slowing down traffic in this area of the village.

To further help the traffic problems in Main Street it is planned to put new improved signing at the Neb opposite the Holly House. This could well be incorporated into an attractive stone feature.

On behalf of the Ravenglass Village Forum I would like to thank all those involved in the various projects to rejuvenate the village. I would also like to thank the committee members for their efforts during the past twelve months and those who have supported us along the way.

What next?

The Millennium Garden is open and we have our new street lights. The next big item on the agenda is the traffic calming to be done in the narrow part of Main Street between the **Pennington Arms and the Post Office**. The plan below is copied from an original by Chris Greenwood and Andy Lowe of the National Park Authority. It shows how the carriageway will be defined by flush granite kerbs and drivers will be reminded to slow down by granite setts spanning the width of the road at either end of the narrows.



We plan to do as much as possible by the use of natural materials, rather than urban-style signs and road markings, to warn drivers that they are now entering an area in which they must beware of pedestrians, especially old people who cannot move fast and young children who may emerge from the Post Office without looking. Sandstone flags will be laid at doorways to provide a firm footing. The cobbled verges should not be an inconvenience, because most residents habitually walk in the roadway, but they will be strong enough to bear the weight of any vehicles, particularly emergency vehicles, that may need to run onto them.

Karl Melville, the Maintenance Engineer of Capita dbs, has given the plans technical approval and costed the work at just over £13K ex VAT, which includes use of materials that Capita now holds in store. That represents a contribution by Capita dbs and Cumbria County Council of £6-7K worth of materials.

Road safety work is also needed on the blind bend under the **main line railway bridge**. A bid for funds by Mr Melville is still awaiting approval by the County Council. Meanwhile Capita dbs has received funds for signage and road markings, so there is now a hope that measures may be taken to improve safety of the road between Walls Drive and the Ratty's main entrance.

When Capita dbs starts work on the Pennington Arms – Post Office scheme, it will also mark out the boundary of the carriageway in the rest of Main Street down towards the floodgate. Flush granite kerbs can then be laid as funds allow. Either side of the carriageway work can then start on restoring cobbled frontages, but that work will not be done all at once. Progress with the cobbling will depend on agreement with the owners of properties, including what they are prepared to pay themselves towards the enhancement of the appearance and value of their houses. No, it won't be done for free. The National Park cannot be that generous.

We are still waiting for the National Park to produce its plans for revamping the **main car park**. Last year Paul Tiplady, the Authority's chief executive, warned us not to expect a quick fix. The National Park has to produce a good scheme that will satisfy everybody: local residents, adjoining landowners and not least our visitors, who will be encouraged to use the car park as their main arrival point, relax after their journey and consult improved information signs about the delights of Ravenglass.

The rather stark new fence around the garden of the Ratty Arms was needed to give Gordon and Bev some privacy when the old hedge was grubbed out. Yes, we are assured that it will soon be stained in a more sympathetic colour and the verge, which the National Park owns, will be planted with a mixture of native hedging that will mask it in due course.

We need better direction signs to encourage visiting drivers to aim for the main car park rather than Main Street. Plans are afoot to build an attractive stone feature on **the Neb** opposite Holly House, which can carry new signs. Yes, the architect knows that there is a water main underneath! We hope to show his sketches at the AGM on 21 May.

Notice of AGM

The second Annual General Meeting of Ravenglass Village Forum will be held on **Tuesday, 21 May 2002 at 7.30 p.m.** in Muncaster Parish Hall.

Provisional agenda

Welcome.

To confirm the Minutes of the First General Meeting held on 15 May 2001.

Chairman's report.

Treasurer's report.

Examiner's statement on the accounts.

Elections for Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and six ordinary members of the Committee.

Any other relevant business.

The meeting will be opened for discussion after the formal business. The Committee has no formal resolutions to put to this meeting. Any resolutions from the floor must be proposed and seconded by members.

Membership

At our first General Meeting last year we were delighted to welcome over twenty new members. The present membership is 32 and we have plenty of room for more. The more the better!

You have to be a member to vote at the AGM or to stand for office. There are no other privileges but the number of our members is evidence of the village's support for the work we do. It gives us democratic legitimacy and increases our authority when we apply for grants and deal with the local authorities and agencies that supply the services on which we depend.

You can be a member if you broadly support our aims, you are aged at least 18 and you live in the village, which includes Raven Villa and as far up the road as The Grove. You pay nothing.

Second home owners can join too. The Forum's committee considered an enquiry from the owners of a holiday home at its meeting on 26 July 2001 and agreed that purchase of a property in Ravenglass village with a view to eventual full-time residence is evidence of sufficient commitment to the welfare of the village to satisfy Article 4.1 of the Constitution, even if they have to be part-time residents until they can move in permanently. However, those who rent or borrow the properties for holidays while the owners are not in residence are still excluded. (*Minute 20, 26 July 2002*)

If you are not yet a member and you wish to join, please ask the Editor for a registration form or fill one in when you arrive at the AGM. Time will be allowed for enrolment of new members before the formal meeting opens.

Thank you

During the last year we have received the following grants towards the Forum's work (roughly in order of receipt):

Copeland Borough Council: £500 for the *Quick Look at Ravenglass* leaflet.

Copeland Borough Council: Small Millennium Grants scheme.

Muncaster Parish Council: £100 towards the Millennium Garden.

Bassenthwaite: donation of £40 from visiting local history group.

Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust: £2,000 towards the cobble mosaic by Maggy Howarth in the Millennium Garden.

Friends of the Lake District: £2,000 towards the Millennium Garden.

Lake District National Park Authority: materials to the value of £6,000 and the labour of its Estate Management Team for the construction of the Millennium Garden.

Ravenglass Charter Fair Committee: £100 for general purposes and £50 towards the Millennium Garden opening ceremony.

Cumbria Community Foundation: £150 towards the Millennium Garden

BNFL Community Support: £100 towards the Millennium Garden.

Local businesses for £150 sponsorship of the Millennium Garden opening ceremony.

R&ER Preservation Society: £200 for cobbling in front of Heywood House.

Thanks also to the following, who gave us direct help in other ways:

Ravenglass WI for catering at the Millennium Garden opening ceremony.

Tesco, Whitehaven for vouchers to help the WI.

Eric Robson for opening the Garden.

Olivia and Lucy Inglis for their design for the new Ravenglass seats.

Alison Spurgeon Dickson and the Children's Design Workshop for their preliminary design for the cobble mosaic in the Millennium Garden.

Ravenglass Boating Association for their offer of a flagpole to be erected in the Millennium Garden later this year.

The Editor apologises for any inadvertent errors and omissions, about which he will no doubt hear in due course!

Designs wanted

What sort of a sign would *you* like to see at the entrance of the Millennium Garden? When we get our new flagpole, should we have our own Ravenglass flag? Sketches to the Editor, please, for the attention of the Committee.

The Cobble Mosaic

The photocopier may not do it justice, but this is Maggy Howarth's design for the Millennium Garden mosaic. All the elements come from the original design by the Children's Design Workshop: the anchor and the border of waves, the Viking ship and the castle (which can represent either Muncaster Castle or the Roman Fort – take your pick). On a good evening the setting sun is a marvellous sight from the Millennium Garden – or is it a rising sun, representing our hopes for the future of Ravenglass?

Maggy prefabricated the mosaic in her workshop and laid it on 27 June 2001 with the help of the National Park's Estate Management Team: Keith Holland, Dave Bulman, Terry Martin and Steve Bunting. *Design © Maggy Howarth.*



Seats and other things

Our first batch of six new Ravenglass seats, made by David Ogilvie of Kilmarnock, was installed last year. Two are in the Millennium Garden and the remainder now grace the Village Green. We need more. Would you like to sponsor one?

At last year's prices each seat costs just over £600 including VAT, delivery and a commemorative plaque. Ouch! However, elsewhere in the National Park groups and individuals can sponsor the National Park's traditional timber seats for about £400. With the help of Andy Lowe's Ravenglass budget, the Forum's Committee will now assist in placing orders for commemorative seats in return for a donation of at least £400 towards the cost.

If you are not that ambitious, the village does need a host of other items such as:

- Signs for the Millennium Garden in Main Street and on the sea wall
- Planters in locations to be agreed and planting in certain areas
- Murals and small sculptures
- Plaque to mark the site of the Old Market Cross
- A Ravenglass flag to fly on the pole that the RBA wishes to donate. Can anybody make one?

That is the Committee's wish list so far but we are open to suggestions. All offers and ideas to the Editor, please, for the attention of the Committee.

'A Quick Look at Ravenglass'

The little leaflet that the Forum published last year, with the help of a grant from Copeland Borough Council, seems to have been a success. Available from traders in the village and other outlets further away, it is often seen in the hands of visitors and shows them where to find our Millennium Garden, shops and pubs and the delightful walks to the Roman Bath House and along the beach. During the Foot and Mouth epidemic, when the footpaths were closed, an emergency edition was published without details of walks adjoining farmland, but guides to walks are reinstated in the latest edition.

Residents also tell us that they keep copies in the house for the use of visiting relatives and as a handy reference for local business telephone numbers.

The artist Val Holmes produced the attractive design. Peter van Zeller has handled the publication so far with Ian Hall's Valley Press, but now our friends at Muncaster Castle and the Ratty tell us that they can take many more copies than we have been printing for their own outlets and others that carry their literature.

Time to consider a bigger print run, then. We are following the matter up with a local printer, who has quoted for print runs of five to ten thousand, and we are looking for funding to enable this very successful leaflet to bring our village to an even wider readership.