

# *Whinstone Times*

*Community magazine for Embleton and Christon Bank*



*March/ April 2019*

*50p where sold*

*Edition No. 60*

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## Planning Applications

The Parish Council would like to make sure that all parishioners are aware of the current planning applications in the Parish so that they are able to review and comment on them. For a list of current planning applications please visit

[www.northumberlandparishes.uk/embleton](http://www.northumberlandparishes.uk/embleton) OR the Embleton

Parish Council Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/embletonparishcouncil/](http://www.facebook.com/embletonparishcouncil/)

These lists are updated weekly and all planning applications are discussed at the monthly Parish Council meetings.

## Editorial

Welcome to the 60<sup>th</sup> issue of the Whinstone Times. Our first issue with its black and white cover picture of Saddle Rock came out ten years ago in May 2009, and I am delighted to report that in the age of social media people still appreciate a truly local high quality magazine. Currently, every copy from No.35 onwards is available online in our archive which we will continue to provide as part of the Embleton Community Guide Web Site, for which the editorial team have also taken responsibility. The website address is :-

[www.embleton-northumberland.co.uk](http://www.embleton-northumberland.co.uk)

In this issue we also welcome two new members to the editorial team, Chris German and Tony Rochester both residents of Embleton. The popularity of this area as a tourist destination has soared in the last ten years and we have items that address this subject. Observant readers will also notice our new 'Farming News' section, which we hope you will enjoy. Congratulations to Stuart Imeson, Manager of Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Course who has just won the BIGGA Greenkeeping Project of the Year Award (See cover picture and article). This year, in addition to our annual Plant Sale on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May, we are holding a Giant Sunflower Competition for young people under twelve. Let's see if we can put the wind turbines in the shade!

The Whinstone Times welcomes both letters and articles from our readers and last months' nature notes stimulated considerable debate

**The deadline for the next edition is Monday 8th April.**

Please send articles, letters, advertising or any enquiries to the Editors, Whinstone Times at our **new email address** [whinstone.times@gmail.com](mailto:whinstone.times@gmail.com) or tel Jan Ainsley 01665 576019

Please send any items for 'What's On' to Shelagh Coxon tel 01665 576791

**Christmas Tree** Sincere apologies to Tom and Judy Turnbull. The Embleton village Christmas tree was donated by them, as it has been for the last twenty years, and was not supplied by the Parish council as reported in January/February edition of the Whinstone Times.

**The editors reserve the right to edit or reject material. The views expressed are those of the contributors**

## Letters to the Editor

### An Open Letter

Walking Beadnell beach, Embleton beach and driving the local roads over Christmas has raised a question in my mind. Should we have a plan, is there already adequate preparation for the future of this area? What can we do to ensure residents and visitors alike can continue to enjoy the coastline and countryside for years to come? Two events last night and early this morning reinforced my opinion that we need a plan B as the area becomes more and more popular. Last night on Beadnell beach we were all buzzed by a huge drone! As far as I know it was perfectly legal but I along with many others was unsettled by this object flying quite low above us for the pleasure of one drone pilot. Then this morning two jet skis were dragged down over Embleton beach from Dunstan Steads at 9am and proceeded to shatter the silence, not to mention appear on the famous sunrise over Dunstanburgh Castle photos! Why do we enjoy living here? Why do we enjoy a holiday here? Why do we have our static caravan or second home here? I suspect all for different reasons, the challenge for us is to anticipate and prepare for more drones, more jet skis, more cars, more mobile homes, more motor cyclists, and our brave pedestrians cyclists and horse riders. Is there a way that they can enjoy this unique setting as they do now or will its magic be gradually eroded like the dunes?

**The Ponderer (name supplied)**

### Dog fouling in Christon Bank

Thank you for highlighting the dog fouling issue in Christon Bank in the last edition of the Whinstone Times.

We are residents of Christon Bank and have dogs ourselves. We just want to say that not all dog owners are irresponsible. Some of us always pick up and we are increasingly picking up after other dogs/people, not only in the village but also on our beautiful beaches. As you say, persons walking dogs are often creatures of habit and follow the same route, which is why we think it's unlikely to be local people not picking up as they would be the ones most likely to tread in the mess on their regular walk, particularly given the dark nights.

The problem in Christon Bank does seem to be more prevalent after holiday makers have visited. We have seen holiday makers not picking up and although we could report it, the local dog warden can't keep watch in that place when the holiday makers have already left. Could local property owners perhaps leave more strongly worded messages in their holiday cottages to remind visitors to pick up? Perhaps leave some poop bags as part of a welcome pack? Visitors who are going home and don't have to use the same route don't care what they leave behind.

Message from dog owner to ALL dog owners - please pick up after your pet!! Many thanks and best wishes for a cleaner 2019!

**Sharon and Jenny**

## Shorebird site

In the wildlife column in the last copy of the Whinstone Times, it was suggested that no little tern eggs were hatched at the Long Nanny, and that perhaps no protection of the site was required. We'd ask anyone wishing to see the full report on the site to contact National Trust. In fact, there were 119 little tern eggs laid and 18 hatched, 3187 Arctic tern eggs were laid and at least 428 Arctic terns fledged, with a steady little tern productivity for the last two years. 11 pairs of ringed plover also nested at the site, with 5 birds successfully fledging. Unfortunately, no little terns successfully fledged, as Storm Hector resulted in an unusually high tide - in addition, joggers, walkers and dogs off lead close to the birds often meant that the birds were disturbed and there were many opportunities for predators to take advantage of this. These birds, unlike many other shorebirds across our wonderful coast, breed only on beaches in the UK (both sand and shingle) and therefore are particularly vulnerable to human disturbance. Without the hard work of our rangers and volunteers, there would be no monitoring of these results and it is highly likely our productivity would move from 433 fledged birds to zero.

Many of our shorebird species are threatened internationally and we should be proud that our amazing shorebird colonies can thrive on our crowded island. We love meeting visitors to the site and welcome thousands of people to the Long Nanny each year, sometimes with their four-legged friends on a lead.

Our visitors are both local and from far and wide, members and non-members who return year on year and really care about our shorebirds - why not make this summer your year to visit between May and July to see what all the fuss is about?

**Gwen Potter**

**Countryside Manager National Trust**

## Evie Rose Cowan

The whole community was shocked and saddened to hear that Evie Cowan had died on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the age of only fourteen and a half months. Our thoughts are with Andy and Hayley and their families and friends at this impossibly sad and difficult time.

## Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergencies - Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
Childline	0800 1111
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
NHS non-emergency care	111
Northumberland C. C. County Hall	0345 600 6400
NCC Councillor for Longhoughton Ward - Wendy Pattison	07779 983072
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	0344 811 8111
Samaritans	0845 790 9090
Silverline (advice for older people)	0800 470 8090
Traveline	0871 200 2233
C.A.B. Northumberland Adviceline Mon - Fri 9 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.	03444 111 444

### The Golden Guide for Over 50s is out again!

Copies are widely available and free by post Age UK Northumberland on  
01670 784800 and on line at [www.goldenguide.org.uk](http://www.goldenguide.org.uk)

## Community Information

### Parish Council Notes

January 2019

**An update of the Creighton Place Extension** was provided by Mr Mark Bridgeman. He explained that work would commence in February to plant a woodland barrier north of the current development, and to install a field drain. Three passing places would be constructed on the part of Station Road between Woodstead and the B1340. These will probably be made permanent. A borrow pit will be dug on the development site and construction is scheduled to start in April. Once the houses are built there will be woodland and shrub areas established in the field along with a wetland area. The initial planting will be carried out before the end of March, and then work will commence on the roads and sewers in April. All construction access will be via Station Road.

He also provided outline plans for seven build to rent Alms-house style homes together with one self build on a site to the rear of Christon Bank church.

**The installation of the defibrillator in the old telephone box in Christon Bank was imminent.** A training session in its use was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

**PC notices** Despite investigation there appeared to be no satisfactory solution to displaying PC notices without a new dedicated notice board being purchased, prices to be obtained.

**Assessing eligibility of buyers for affordable discount market value homes.** Northumberland County Council (NCC) has amended some of their processes as a result of the problems with the use of 7 Creighton Place as a letting. If the house is to be sold NCC would have to accept the valuation of RCIS to set the selling price. This may be more or less than originally paid by the owners.

**Christon Bank speed limit.** The 20mph speed limit experiment in Christon Bank has been cancelled and the 30mph limit restored.

**Dunstan Steads Road.** As a result of resident concerns the PC agreed to meet with NCC Highways Dept. personnel to investigate means of indicating that the road to Dunstan Steads does not lead to the Golf Course or Caravan Park. The imposition of a 30mph limit on the road would also be discussed.

**The proposed sale of the derelict Quarry House by NCC** means that the glass recycling area needs to be relocated to allow access to the site. At present the proposal is to re-site it just north of its current position on the

grass triangle opposite the current site. Some means of disguising the installation would be necessary. It was agreed that Councillors would give consideration to possible alternative sites but that the facility must be preserved.

**The Neighbourhood Plan** is open for public comment until February 27<sup>th</sup>. Comments received will be analysed by the Working Group and desirable changes made to the Plan. This will then be presented to the PC for permission to submit it to NCC for examination (see update later)

**The Embleton Joint Burial Committee (EJBC)** had received an offer of a grant of approximately £50,000 from NCC towards the restoration of Cemetery House. It still requires a loan of £25,000 from the Public Works Loan Board to complete the proposed work. An application for this loan by Embleton Parish Council (EPC) on behalf of the EJBC or an application for a loan of approximately £15,000 (Embleton's share of the £25,000 loan) as part of the loan, as appropriate, were approved by the PC.

**A request from the Trustees of the Creighton Memorial Hall for a donation** from the PC towards the restoration of the cupola on the Hall's roof was considered and an offer of £2,000 has been made.

**Planning** The PC considered the revision of both its Planning Application Procedure and its Risk Analysis and Councillors were asked to consider proposals before the next PC meeting.

The PC confirmed its support of Planning Application 18/04308/AGTFLX relating to the proposed change of use of agricultural buildings at Embleton Mill and offered no objections to 18/04286/FUL for change of agricultural land to parking area and garden at 44 Christon Bank Village.

**The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on February 25<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 in Christon Bank Methodist Church. All are welcome to attend**

## **Howick Film Nights Reminder:**

Held every two weeks on Fridays or Sundays in Howick Community Centre. No entry charge but small donations would be appreciated to cover our costs (£4 per head suggested). To be added to our circulation list for details of future events please contact John at E-mail [johnroper1@btinternet.com](mailto:johnroper1@btinternet.com) or tel 01665-576413

## County Councillor Wendy Pattison's report



[wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk) - Tel. 07779 983072

### **Christon Bank Traffic Management** - NCC Traffic

Managers are currently looking at three/ four options which they believe will be the best and the safest traffic system for the village. Once everything is drawn up they will be in a position to arrange a drop in session which will allow residents to comment. Managers will look carefully at all the comments and whichever option is chosen this scheme will be implemented as soon as possible.

**Work on bus stops:** Work will start at bus stops on the A1 north and southbound at North Charlton and Brownieside from 18 February 2019.. We have worked with school transport to ensure that after half term children will be escorted to the temporary bus stops from the drop off point at North Charlton.

**Start4Life campaign:** On Wednesday 6 February, Public Health England (PHE) launched its first ever Start4Life campaign offering parents support and advice, during what can be a confusing time, on introducing solid foods to their baby. For more information on Start4Life's weaning hub visit:

[www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning)

**We're on TV.** Northumberland County Council's housing services team was featured towards the end of the Wednesday, February 13th episode of a five-part TV series entitled The Empty Housing Scandal. The series was broadcast at 9.15 am on BBC1 and should now be available on i-Player

**Domestic Abuse Services in Northumberland** If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse:

- Call the 24/7 confidential domestic abuse phone line 01670 820199
- Email: [DASSN@placesforpeople.co.uk](mailto:DASSN@placesforpeople.co.uk)
- Visit : [livingplus.placesforpeople.co.uk/DASSN](http://livingplus.placesforpeople.co.uk/DASSN)

**Northumberland local plan** A planning document that will shape the future of Northumberland up to 2036 and beyond was agreed by the county council. The

plan sets out strategic planning policies and planning principles for the whole county, the general scale and distribution of new development, and the detail of where new homes, workplaces and facilities will be located.

Details of 23 public drop-in events at venues across Northumberland during February and March will be available online and in a leaflet delivered to homes and businesses in advance of the drop-in events. Your chance to have 'Your Say' and view and comment on the documents and also speak with staff will be Seahouses Sports and Community Centre on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March from 2 - 7pm.

Find out more about the local plan at [www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/localplan)

## Update on the Neighbourhood Plan

We are part way through the community consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan and are grateful to those of you who have already commented. It was good to see people at the community venues in the first week of consultation and hear so many positive responses and constructive comments. For those of you have not yet commented but wish to do so you still have until February 27<sup>th</sup> to make your comments. These can be sent by e mail to [embletonneighbourhood@yahoo.com](mailto:embletonneighbourhood@yahoo.com) or written responses can be put in the collection boxes in the Creighton Hall, The Parish Rooms and Christon Bank church hall.

**Drop-in sessions** Members of the planning team would like to invite you to attend drop-in sessions on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Christon Bank church hall between 10am and 12 noon or Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> Feb at the Creighton Hall between 5 and 7 pm. At these drop-ins members of the team will be available to answer any queries about the draft plan. During the drop-ins you will also be able to complete written comments for inclusion in the consultation. We look forward to seeing you there and to receiving as many opinions as possible in order to reflect the opinions of the whole community.

### **Advertising Rates for the Whinstone Times**

£15 to £40 depending on size with discounts for block bookings.

## Change of Name for Craster Arts Club

As the Craster Art Club relocated to Howick Village Hall a number of years ago, it was agreed by members that a name change was called for. We are now "Howick Artists", meeting every Monday morning from 9:45am until 12:15pm, with a monthly extended session in Howick Village Hall. Our friendly group work in a variety of media, and we offer advice and encouragement to each other. We arrange early Spring Bank Holiday and August Bank Holiday weekend exhibitions, and enjoy occasional workshops given by "visiting" artists.

You are very welcome to come along to one of our sessions and see if it is for you.

For more information please contact either Carole Robson at [cararobson@gmail.com](mailto:cararobson@gmail.com) or Marjorie Firth at [randmfirth@aol.com](mailto:randmfirth@aol.com)

## Trinity Tots Playgroup

Trinity Tots, Thursdays 12:30-2:30pm in the Embleton Parish Rooms, with activities, crafts, snacks, tea-&-cake, play for the children and chat for the parents and carers. We run every week, except Christmas. In the school summer holidays we meet in Embleton Play Park. Babies & children of all ages are welcome, including school-age children during the school holidays.

On Thursday 24th January we were pleased to celebrate Trinity Tots Playgroup's 2nd Birthday with a lovely party and some of the Tots even came in their best party outfits. We took the chance to reflect and feel proud that we have achieved 2 years of our volunteer-run, lovely, friendly, little playgroup and asset to our community. We appreciate all the help and support we receive, thank-you. We plan to run a Bingo night to raise funds so keep an eye out as any support will be gratefully received.

## Chairs for sale

Creighton Hall has some wooden chairs for sale at £1 each. Contact Shelagh Coxon 576791 after March 1<sup>st</sup> for details



## News from Embleton Primary School

**Triangle themed Maths Day:** For the NSPCC number day children, staff & parents all took part in triangle themed maths challenges.



Puffin Class learnt about Triominoes by cutting out small triangles and put them together using number bonds to 10 and also built triangle kits. Orca Class focused on the angles in triangles by completing a missing angles puzzle, playing a triangle knowledge quiz on

the iPads and completing various Tangram challenges. Meanwhile, Starfish Class created triangle pictures out of paper & plastic triangles, sang songs about triangles and enjoyed a teddy's bear picnic complete with triangle sandwiches, crisps, biscuits and cheese.

### **Chinese New Year:**

2019 is the year of the Pig and the children have been learning about and celebrating the Chinese New Year. Starfish Class created a Chinese restaurant in the classroom complete with a fully equipped kitchen and dining area whilst the Art Club created some cherry blossom pictures for a wall display. The staff and students all enjoyed a themed school lunch of Chicken Chow Mein with prawn crackers cooked by Mandy.



**Bags 2 School Collection:** Our next Bags to School Collection is scheduled for Thursday 28th March. This is a great fundraiser for the school so if you

have any good quality clothes, shoes, handbags, hats, linen, curtains or towels that you no longer require please pop them into a bin bag (or collection bag - available from the school office) and bring them along to school at 9am on 28th March.

**Skipping Workshop - Willowburn:** Our Year 4 children all took part in a skipping workshop at Willowburn in January. The event was a great opportunity for our children to keep fit and also meet children from other schools across the Alnwick Partnership. We encourage these occasions are looking forward to lots of other similar Partnership events in the coming year.

**Plans in 2019:** We have quite a few of events planned for 2019 including the Year 6 Residential weekend at High Borrans, the Easter and Summer Fairs, the Bishop of Newcastle coming along to Beach School, Glendale Countryside Day, Alnwick Police Station visit, World Book Day, Lifepath at Brinkburn Priory, Leavers Service at Newcastle Cathedral and our Sponsored Cancer Run at Newcastle Racecourse. Look out for our event dates in the next Whinstone Times.

## Mobile Library

In the last few weeks due to engine and weather problems, the library has not always come to Embleton. If you leave your phone number with Alnwick Library, they will phone you if it is not coming to save you shivering on Greyfields Estate. Alnwick Library tel: 01670 622156

## Creighton Hall User Groups contact details

**Carpet bowls** (Tues/Thurs) contact Bill MacDonald 01665 600830

**Line Dance**(Wed) contact Elizabeth Henderson 01665 576154

**Flower Club**(2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month contact Shelagh Coxon 01665 576791

**Snooker Club** contact Dougie Hogg 01665 575221

**Pilates** Tuesday mornings Contact Traci Robertson 07415254647.

**Badminton**( 3 Mondays per moth) contact Bobby Greenley 07834262911

**For any other information about the Hall contact**

**Shelagh Coxon 01665 576791**

## BIGGA Greenkeeping Project of the Year: National Success for Stuart Imeson



Stuart, General Manager and Head Greenkeeper at Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Course in Northumberland was tonight (22 January 2019) announced as the winner of the BIGGA Awards 2019 Greenkeeping Project of the Year sponsored by Baroness.

Incredibly successful Bunker Camps were a sell-out in 2018 as greenkeepers from across Europe came together to take part.

The camp sees volunteers head to the Dunstanburgh Castle Course to participate in the construction of revetted bunkers over a two-week period, with educational seminars and workshops taking place alongside the practical greenkeeping. More than 250 people have now been involved since the start of the bunker camp and education days.

BIGGA Chief Executive Officer Jim Croxton said: "Stuart is a fantastic example of the modern greenkeeper who is both highly trained and keen to communicate about the work he undertakes to further improve standards across the industry. He has a genuine passion for greenkeeping and to develop the course at Dunstanburgh Castle Golf Course.



Those with livestock have been busy, with cattle indoors needing feeding and regular bedding with straw. The heavy clay soil around here means these cattle are best kept indoors over winter rather than poaching and damaging fields. Sheep are being scanned to see

how many lambs they are carrying. Those with triplets, for example, will be kept separate and given extra feed. We have been finishing the winter ploughing. We do this to let the frosts kill the bugs and to break up the soil, ready for sowing crops this spring, in the same way that gardeners do. We have been blessed with a wonderful dry winter so far, I have never known it so dry at this time of year, and we don't want snow. It is a quiet time of year otherwise for arable farmers, but an important time to get caught up in the workshop - making repairs and replacing worn metal parts on the various tools such as the drill and plough, as well as washing, greasing and storing machinery away.

A huge amount of tree damage was caused by the high winds in September and early December. We have been clearing up a lot of fallen timber and had to call in the tree surgeon when we needed professional help to make trees safe or fell dangerous trees. A lot of the old hardwoods are sadly coming to the end of their lives, for example oaks planted over 200 years ago, at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. Trees face threats from disease, eg 'ash die back', as well as animals such as roe deer and grey squirrels. The invasive greys are devastating to young hardwoods, stripping bark, which the native red squirrels don't do. We are also 'beating up' some areas, that is replacing dead trees, and weeding around the small trees planted in the last couple of years. Time spent now in looking after them makes all the difference to help get the trees established. We have planted a number of Christmas trees, as Mark's

father did over the years, so that in 10 - 15 years we will still have sensible sized trees for our own use and to donate to local parishes.

This time of year you can really see the benefits of the wild bird strips around the edges of fields, which are alive with small birds such as yellowhammers. Like many local farmers we take part in one of the Government's 'Environmental Stewardship schemes' and receive payment to create these wild bird cover strips. We sow a mix of bird seeds which are so important when there is little feed around.



## Wildlife at Creighton Place

A Little Owl has made a number of appearances in the field north of Creighton Place in recent weeks and a Barn Owl has also been seen hunting in the same area several times. A pair of grey partridges were seen in the field yesterday (February 10) -- maybe the same pair that were in the field last summer? Three mallards have also been making frequent visits, and one or two hares are also being seen.

## Nature Notes      December/January      Peter Brown

The Quarry-watching Lockstones have seen a pair of goldeneye, an eye-catching little scoter (a sea duck) with a triangular head and yellow eye, and three shovellers, a duck with a spade-shaped bill. At Long Nanny, there was a



rare sighting of two shore larks, winter visitors from Scandinavia. They are also known as horned larks as in the breeding season the tufts on the side of their heads become raised and look like horns.

Snow came at last but not until the end of January with the worst right at the beginning of February - permafrost for days and even ice at the Skaith. Before that, the winter was mild with a wet December but many beautiful sunny days too. Snowdrops for many seemed to be a little late and rather sad but daffodils and even bluebell

shoots were appearing early. The weekend of the RSPB National Birdwatch was wet but that did not stop some great sightings. It was amazing for us to see, in just an hour, fifteen different species of birds. It was almost as if they knew it was census day, with the usual regulars and occasional visitors queuing up to make an appearance: a siskin, a nuthatch, a tree creeper a great spotted woodpecker. A rarer visitor must have known something was going on because at one point a sparrowhawk swooped in, much to the consternation of seven busy little fluff balls on sticks (no, I don't know the collective noun for long-tailed tits - a 'buddy'? (Suggestions please). It must have been a male hawk as it was small and grey. The female is brown and bigger, as in all birds of prey.



But a more amazing raptor has been visiting Christon Bank. Richard Higginbottom writes: 'We had a hen harrier sitting on our garden fence. I have seen two of these birds (a pair?) on and off for the past nine months to the north and east of Christon Bank, usually close to the Fallodon minor road.' This is tremendous news as there are possibly only 600-700 pairs in Britain; they were harried to the point of extinction and are only just recovering. If this they would both attend the young and an extraordinary sight is the transfer of food between the adults mid-air in a 'throw and catch' manoeuvre. A peregrine was also seen by a visiting bird watcher at the Newton pools. One estimate has the falcon diving at an incredible 240 miles per hour, making it surely the fastest creature on Earth, but our local one was too fast for its own good because it missed everything. Richard has also been delighted in watching brown hares 'boxing' in fields south of Brunton and he has counted as many as nine, though he has only seen one in the last few weeks. Road kill or myxamatosis, he wonders? There are rare cases of this disease affecting hares but the decline of up to

80% in numbers this century is thought to be mainly due to changes in farming methods. The boxing is initiated by the females to ward off the unnecessary advances of males.

We have been asked if we verify all sightings: impossible! We trust you! However, I was reminded of an excited little boy who came running up to me on the beach a few years ago shouting that he had seen a penguin...and there sure enough there was a penguin look-alike: a stranded razorbill. I would have checked that one! Sightings of any sort please to

[naturenotes.whinstonetimes@gmail.com](mailto:naturenotes.whinstonetimes@gmail.com)

## W T Stead and Safety at Sea

James Rose

Readers will know that Embleton's most famous son, the pioneering journalist W T Stead, born 170 years ago this July, was drowned when the *Titanic* sank in April 1912. Ironically, for a long time he had had a premonition that he might die by drowning and had campaigned for the proper provision of lifeboats on ships.

In 1886, he published a story called *How the Mail Steamer went down in Mid Atlantic by a Survivor*. The narrator calculates that there are only enough lifeboat places for 390 of over 900 passengers on his steamer out of Liverpool. When it runs into a large sailing vessel in the fog, it is holed below the water and soon lists heavily, making it impossible to launch boats from one side of the ship. Only a few boats get off properly: some are half full; others overloaded; and some are dropped into the sea, spilling all the passengers into the water. Seven hundred passengers on the sinking vessel are left to their fate.

By luck the narrator is saved to tell the tale. Stead's postscript is prescient and telling: 'This is exactly what *might* take place and what *will* take place if the liners are sent to sea short of boats.'

It is not clear if the authorities paid any attention to these warnings. In 1870, following the loss of the *Normandy* in a collision in fog in the Channel, questions were asked in the House about the number of lifeboats on passenger vessels but it was thought unsafe for extra boats to clutter the decks. Some regulations were changed but the number of lifeboats required was still linked

to the ship's tonnage and not to the number of passengers.

In 1898, 500 people died when *La Bourgogne*, the fastest ship on the Atlantic, sank in another collision in fog, and over 1500 went down with the *Titanic*, which had more lifeboat capacity than the regulations required - 20 lifeboats for 1178 of the 3,300 passengers. An eminent US Navy captain wrote: *The truth of the matter is that (if) any large passenger steamship sinks . . . more than half of her passengers are doomed to death . . . (the) owners are fully aware of the danger (but) they oppose any changes (to the law), because they believed that what the public wanted was comfort and speed above safety. A comparison with the resistance to car safety belts by manufacturers and the public is inescapable.*

The *Titanic* disaster did, however, change the public's mood and W T Stead was once again vindicated by history. Had he survived, I hope he would have been an honoured guest and contributor in London to the 1914 inaugural International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), whose regularly updated provisions continue to govern travel at sea.

References <https://www.attackingthediabol.co.uk/>  
<https://www.rina.org.uk/cgi-bin/showpage.fcgi>

## My 65 Year Duneland Crusade

William Sutherland

(Part 1 - part 2 to follow in the next edition)

The wonderful magic of Embleton's beaches and duneland brings back glowing memories of running barefoot amongst the flowers and butterflies 68 years ago when I was just 5 years old. On those long summer days we would run down the sea lane from our home at Dunstan Steads, taking our swimming things and those packets of sandwiches which would invariably taste crunchy with sand! As I grew older I realised that my father (Sir Ivan Sutherland) took his responsibilities as owner of all the coastal land between Craster and Beadnell very seriously. Even then the rapid growth in car ownership was bringing more and more day trippers - some days there were so many cars parked up the Steads' road that they even parked on our mown lawns! My father was determined to do what he could to limit the numbers and, in this way, preserve the natural beauty of the dunes and beaches. There were many requests for

him to open car parks for the beaches at Craster, Dunstan Steads. Embleton sea lane and Low Newton. After all he could have made a fortune from the parking fees. My father's answer to all these demands was - "if they want to enjoy the beaches they can walk!"

In 1961, as many in the village will know, my father was persuaded by local members of National Trust to give the Trust this coastal strip so they could use their special byelaws to manage and police this vulnerable area. This he did with every positive expectation but, sadly, events did not turn out as we had hoped. The Trust is a huge £500 million operation which has had many twists and U turns in its management policies over the years. At first they wanted to get rid of the bungalows and the golf course altogether, then they began a public campaign to get my father to build a tarmac road to enable cars to travel from Craster to the castle. What a tragedy that would have been if the Trust had succeeded. Embleton's relationship with the Trust is more important than ever but it remains an uneasy one.

In 1968 when I moved with my young family into the old Farm House at Low Newton we faced a chaotic traffic situation there as well as a difficult management challenge with the golf course at Embleton. At Low Newton there were no parking restrictions on the roadside - on busy days it was impossible to walk down the footpath. There was no control of cars going along the farm road behind the Ship to park on the dunes. The square was jammed with cars trying to turn around. There was no designated public car park.

It seemed to me then that Northumberland was miles behind the villages we had visited in Devon and Cornwall where cars had to be parked well away from the beaches and village centres. I began a campaign to persuade the village, the National Trust and the County Council to take pro-active steps to manage the parking situation properly and we provided land to make a designated car park for the bungalow owners and a public car park at the top of the hill. Ultimately I was successful but it was quite a battle at the time to change public opinion. Embleton still faces similar problems today - and they are only going to get worse.

## What's On in March

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>** Pancake Coffee Morning Parish Room 10-noon

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>** Embleton Womens' Club 2p.m. Parish Room

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup>** Craster W.I. Benefits of Yoga by Deb Swift

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup>** Embleton Flower Club demonstration 'Cate's Wedding Flowers'  
7.30p.m. Creighton Hall

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup>** 8pm Quiz in aid of Hedgehog Rescue Blink Bonny

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>** Embleton WI 'With the end in mind' Alan Haile 2p.m. Parish Room

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>** Embleton Mothers Union 2p.m. Parish Room

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup>** 'Music for a Spring Evening' with 'The Fiddling Three'-Alan  
Edwards, Stewart Hardy and Bryan Jackson 7.30p.m. Creighton Hall Tickets  
£10 at door. Details from Shelagh Coxon 576791

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>** 7.30 Cash Bingo in aid of Riding for the Disabled Blink Bonny

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup>** Craster History Society 'The making of Berwick Cockles' by  
Cameron Robertson. 7.15 Craster Mem Hall

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>** Seahouses Hist Soc. 'The Ford Estate at the time of The  
Waterfords' by Linda Bankier.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>** Bags to School Collection Embleton School 9a.m.

Towels, sheets, curtains etc. will now be accepted, but no duvets cushions or  
school uniforms Any queries contact Shelagh Coxon 576791 .

## What's On in April

**Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>** Embleton Womens Club

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup>** Craster W.I. Northumberland National Park Rescue Team with  
David Waters

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup>** Embleton Flower Club Practical evening and pooled supper.  
7.30p.m. Creighton Hall

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup>** 8pm Quiz in aid of Air Ambulance Blink Bonny

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>** Embleton W.I. 'The Edlingham Vicarage Burglary ' by John  
Yearnshire 2p.m. Parish Room

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>** Embleton Mothers Union

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup>** Craster Hist Soc 'The North Sunderland School Poll'  
by George Scott. 7.15p.m. Craster Mem. Hall

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** Seahouses Hist Soc 'Notable Northumbrians' Andy Griffin.



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