

# *Whinstone Times*

Community magazine for Embleton and Christon Bank



**May/June 2021**

**Edition No. 73**



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## **Editorial**

Welcome to the 73<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Whinstone Times.

The photos on the front cover, taken by Andy Cowan are of the two Exmoor ponies leaving the quarry, going through the village and arriving at their summer pasture, please see the Quarry article on page 8 for more details.

Following the easing of lockdown restrictions on 12<sup>th</sup> April the WT team welcome back our regular visitors and holiday makers to our villages and coastline. The opening of our hostelries, albeit with outside seating only at present, has been most welcome. We are also pleased to see the return of the chip van outside the Creighton Hall on Mondays and Thursdays. We are looking forward to the full easing of restrictions and life returning to normal.

Unless the rules are changed, we are planning to go ahead with our annual plant sale on Bank Holiday Monday the 31<sup>st</sup> of May, this time outside the Creighton Hall. There will also be a 'tabletop' sale so if you are interested in booking a space, please see the advert on page 13 for details.

We welcome letters, articles and any ideas for content and for fundraising from our readers. Please contact us at [whinstone.times@gmail.com](mailto:whinstone.times@gmail.com) or telephone Jan Ainsley, 01665 576019.

Due to the continuing restrictions, there are no entries for 'What's On' in this edition but, if you have anything planned for later in the year, please send the information to Shelagh Coxon, tel. 01665 576791. For the various clubs etc who use the Creighton Hall please use the named contacts on page 12.

**The deadline for material for the next edition is Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021.**

*N.B. The editors reserve the right to alter or reject material and the views expressed within these covers are solely those of the contributors.*

**Earlier editions of the Whinstone Times are available on the internet and can be found on the Embleton community website:**

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

## Parish Council Notes

Feb/March 2021

The Council continues to meet via Zoom and the April meeting will be the last meeting of the current Council. There will be no requirement to hold an election on May 6<sup>th</sup> as 10 parishioners have applied for the 10 vacancies. Current Councillors Vickie Fyffe and Chris German are standing down and will be replaced by Richard Manners and John Young.

The speed indicators have been installed at Christon Bank and the 30mph limit on the road to Dunstan Steads has also been implemented. The 20mph scheme outside the school is yet to be implemented and no date has been forthcoming from NCC as to when this may happen.

After much debate, the Council voted to approve the scheme from NCC to harden the verge at Dunstan Steads. This will replace the current grass verge between the private road and the existing parking area with hardstanding. The meeting noted that this would not increase the number of vehicles able to park at Dunstan Steads as the grass verge is already utilised and is churned up as a result. The meeting also agreed to ask for double yellow lines through the hamlet at Dunstan Steads and at a few places on Sea Lane to ensure access for farm traffic is maintained.

NCC granted permission for the overgrown trees at the top of Front Street to be removed/trimmed and this work has now been successfully completed.

The Council agreed to refresh the green at Christon Bank by replacing the broken noticeboard and dead tree. It was also agreed to assess the bench to see if it could be renovated and if not then it will be replaced.

A new dog bin is to be installed by the old dog kennels at the end of the track that leads from Station Rd to Christon Bank.

A review of the Embleton Conservation Area is to be undertaken by the AONB; this was last done in 2008. The Council agreed to ask whether areas of Christon Bank and Dunstan Steads could be included.

The Council reviewed the annual report from the Quarry Working Group and agreed to the programme of work scheduled for the coming year and to the proposal that dogs should remain on leads at all times in the northern half of the quarry (see quarry report for more details).

It was with regret that the Council accepted the resignation of Melissa Gilroy as Parish Clerk. She has been a major asset to the Council during her time as Clerk.

# Riding and Writing: spotlight on a home-grown talent- Interview by Sarah Coxon

They say that everyone has at least one book in them... but not many people actually have the determination to go ahead and write that book. I interviewed local resident Helen Wood on the completion of her first novel, '*Silver Spurs and a Twelve Pound Heart*'.

Helen has lived in this area all her life and her family are part of the Northumbrian woodwork. Introduced to the ponies at Fallodon Hall at an early age, it soon became clear that horses were always going to be a big part of her life. On leaving Duchess's High School Helen took a gap year, working first with Christine Bertram's Hunters and Point to Pointers



and then with the late Selby Friar and his Event horses. After studying at Northumbria University, Helen worked for a firm of Chartered Accountants in Berwick before moving to a business in Seahouses. Helen started her own bookkeeping business in 2009 and currently looks after the accounts of a saddle fitting company, a bakery and a garage. Obviously not

busy enough, Helen is also Assistant Secretary and Equine Secretary at Glendale Show and a Governor at Embleton Primary. Her writing started with a blog in 2016 and, although '*Jodhpurs on the School Run*' has taken something of a back seat for the past year, she's determined to blog more in the future. Helen lives with her partner Marcus and daughter Tabitha, who is most unsportingly, chronically allergic to horses.

## You've just finished your first novel. What made you move from blogging to writing Women's Fiction?

I've always wanted to write a book and the blog was just something to get me back into writing and find my style. I had an attempt at a novel about fifteen years ago and although I had some positive feedback, it was rejected by the three Literary Agents I sent it to. I think I knew it wasn't really good enough, so I stuck the manuscript in a drawer and forgot about it. I've read it since, and the Agents were right - it's rubbish! I thought that perhaps it was time to have another go when the first lockdown happened last spring.

## **So, Lockdown was actually a ‘good thing’ for you?**

Absolutely, it offered me the time to write. I spent every free moment I had in my conservatory with my laptop on my knee and the first draft was finished in under eight weeks. The editing and re-writing has taken considerably longer!

## **What's the book called and what is it about?**

The working title is '*Silver Spurs and a Twelve Pound Heart*' but that could very well change. It's a love story, set in an eventing yard in rural Northumberland. There are challenges and upsets along the way of course, with the competition side, actually competing the horses, featuring strongly as a sub-plot.

## **Did you find the process of writing a full novel challenging?**

Not really, I already had the story in my head and although at one point I thought it was going to be quite short, by the time I'd finished it was 97,000 words. You just disappear into this world you've created and let the characters lead you. It's very strange as the people in the book sometimes do things and say things that you aren't expecting, as if you're watching a film and you're just writing down what's happening.

## **What stage is the manuscript at now?**

It's currently with a proof-reader and I am battling to condense the story into a 500-word synopsis. Happily, I've been assured that every author struggles with this bit, it's so hard! There's also the blurb for the back of the book to be polished off and a one line 'elevator pitch' to nail. Once this admin is finished, I'll start submitting to Agents. I know this is the difficult bit, after all, JK Rowling's '*Harry Potter*' (you probably haven't heard of it) was rejected dozens of times. I really am my own worst critic, but this book is definitely a big improvement on my first attempt all those years ago.

## **Why did you choose to set the book in the world of professional horse training and competing?**



Because it's a world I know. I groomed for a professional event rider and competed my own horse, at a lower level. You have to understand every single part of the world you're writing about. Lack of accuracy is a serious pet hate of mine. Not long ago I read a book which referred to Frankie Dettori riding at Cheltenham. Cheltenham?! I nearly launched

the book across the lounge - Frankie Dettori is a flat jockey and Cheltenham is solely a jumping track! I lost faith in the book after that, still haven't finished it.

### **Did you still have to do research?**

Lots! Luckily I have friends who compete at British Eventing and are up to date with rules, media and the general logistics. I also have a friend who is a vet. She helped enormously with one very important scene in the book. I also had to canvas a lot of people to make sure the story actually held together.

### **Have all your family read the book?**

Marcus (my partner) read through one of the early first drafts. But, as there are some steamy scenes, I would much prefer the rest of my family to read it when it's finally in print and I'm safely hiding behind the sofa!

### **How did you find composing these 'steamy' scenes?**

Incredibly difficult. They have to be very carefully balanced to ensure the context is right. I really didn't want to include a sex scene unless it was significant to the plot.

**You've chosen a hugely popular genre, made even more so by the likes of Jilly Cooper, Fiona Walker and Tilly Bagshaw. Did you worry about possibly being judged alongside those household names?**

You know that never really occurred to me. I think you have to create your own niche with the world you create in your book. If you can draw the reader in and make them love the characters and the way they interact, you're on to a winner. I want my reader to *need* to finish the book, to miss the people they've been reading about and to think about my book long after having read it.

### **Now you've been well and truly bitten by the writing bug, what's next?**

I'm 105,000 words into the second book and have planned the third!

There are other ideas circulating for future books. I'd love to have a go at a crime thriller. I've had articles printed in Rural Life magazine and I would like to do more for them. I'd also like to give 'Jodhpurs on the School Run' some love but there are some lovely VAT returns to be submitted and, of course, horses to ride. My dream of writing full time is still a long way off...

## Embleton Quarry

The front cover shows our two resident Exmoor ponies (Tanzie and Suzie) moving from the quarry to their summer grazing site in the field to the south of the playpark. They have done a fantastic job in reducing the vegetation and ground nesting birds and wildflowers will benefit as a result. They will return to the quarry in the autumn.

The Parish Council agreed that dogs should remain on leads at all times in the northern half of the quarry (the paddock) to protect the wildflowers and ground nesting birds. This restriction is already in place when the ponies are present, to protect them.

The annual report was presented to the Parish Council which gave an overview of the work carried out in the past year and the plans for the coming year. Work last year was severely hampered by the Covid restrictions. However, we did manage to erect the fencing and introduce the ponies, repair the sump and carry out some general maintenance.

There are some major projects planned for the coming year, the majority of which will not start until the autumn. These fall under four main categories:

**Education** - A classroom area is to be created by the container to allow the school to hold outdoor lessons and a pond dipping platform constructed at the water's edge.

**Access for All** - Both entrances will be improved so as to allow better access for those with mobility issues and pushchairs etc. Some of the footpaths will be levelled to provide a more even surface to walk on and a limited number of seats will be constructed using materials from the quarry.

**Darks Skies** - The quarry is relatively free of light pollution and the sky at night is nearly as dark as that at Keilder. The quarry has now been awarded Dark Skies Designation Status, the first site on the Northumberland Coast to achieve this.

**Fencing** - Further fencing will be installed some 5m in from the water's edge to protect birds that nest there and for public safety.

We are always on the lookout for volunteers to help us maintain the quarry. If you are interested in joining us, please contact us via email: [embletonquarry@gmail.com](mailto:embletonquarry@gmail.com)



Barn Owl hunting  
for small mammals.

## Planting a Sapling in the Quarry

## Eleanor Wood

In March Arthur & I received permission from the Parish Council & Embleton Quarry Committee to plant a Field Maple sapling Arthur had ‘won’ from Northumbria County Council. We were guided (whilst adhering to social distance regulations) where would be an appropriate place to plant it by Kevin, from the Quarry Working Party.



We had a lovely afternoon digging, planting, discussing different types of trees, admiring the tree blossom, listening to the birds, & exploring nooks-&-crannies of the Quarry.

We hope to tend this tree and watch it grow, as Arthur grows too. We have also added our sapling to the Countryfile Plant Britain campaign total.

<https://www.plantbritain.co.uk/>

## Books by the Sea

## Tony Rochester

In our last edition we mentioned the little free libraries on Sea Lane and at Low Newton. There are others in There is now one outside the Parish Rooms in Embleton so why not take advantage of this by bringing a book you’ve read and borrow one you haven’t. You can do this as many times as you like. Or you could just donate books you have read.



## Job Vacancy

Embleton Parish Council has a vacancy for a Clerk. The post is part time and averages 8 hours per week. Working mainly from home the hours are flexible apart from attendance at the monthly Council meetings. Salary will be approximately £11.30 per hour and is dependent on experience and qualifications. Candidates should be IT literate and be able to store Council equipment and files securely at home. In addition, the Clerk is the Responsible Finance Officer for the Council and is responsible for all financial records and administration of all finances. If you’re interested in applying, please contact Terry Howells on 01665 576618.

# County Councillor Wendy Pattison's report

E-mail: [wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk)

Tel. 01665 579137 – 07979 067321 – 077799 83072

Facebook – Cllr Wendy Pattison



The pavement along Sunny Brae (Embleton) has been resurfaced, paid from my Members Scheme funding.

A grant from Natural England has been accepted to start work on the latest phase of the England Coast Path between Amble and Bamburgh. This is the latest phase of a government plan to create a continuous walking route around the entire coastline of England and Wales.

There are opportunities to volunteer at our Country Parks, Nature Reserves and other countryside sites. If you would like to help out or report wildlife sightings, please contact [Neil.Dawson@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Dawson@northumberland.gov.uk)

Following the consultations held earlier in the year NCC have agreed a new model for library services in the county to meet the current and future needs of residents. 5 hub libraries will be established in Berwick, Blyth, Cramlington, Hexham and Morpeth which will coordinate the provision of services in their area as well as offering the full range of IT services. Alnwick and the mobile library will continue as now.

Active Northumberland has launched a new online fitness experience which brings professional classes to your home. Classes include Yoga, Pilates, Les Mills Body Combat, Body Balance and Body Step, HIIT and Zumba. In order to access these classes please visit <https://bit.ly/ANactiveathome>

More than 300 homes across the county could be offered free energy efficiency improvements under a government grant scheme. To be eligible your home must have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of 'D' or less and you must own your home and have an income of less than £30,000 pa. Residents can apply by emailing [GreenHomesGrant@eonenergy.com](mailto:GreenHomesGrant@eonenergy.com) visiting [www.eonenergy.com/home-heating/green-homes-grant](http://www.eonenergy.com/home-heating/green-homes-grant) or calling EON customer services on 0333 202 480.

## Neighbourhood Plan

Karen Greenhoff

After an enforced covid break the long-awaited Embleton Neighbourhood Plan is finally able to be put forward for community approval. The overall vision of the Plan is to ensure that our parish will “continue to be a thriving and sustainable place to live, learn, work and visit”. Key objectives and policies aim to enhance and protect the environment by preserving local green spaces, landscapes, heritage assets and community facilities. The Neighbourhood Plan also provides guidance on the delivery of affordable homes and the requirement for any new houses to be for permanent occupancy only. A full copy of the Plan can be found on NCC web site at: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Planning/Neighbourhood.aspx#neighbourhoodplansinnorthumberland>

Following extensive local consultations and positive community feedback, the Plan has already been given full approval by Embleton Parish Council, NCC and an independent Examiner. This means that the Plan can now move to the final stage of public referendum. This community vote is due to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021. A majority vote to accept the Plan at this referendum would result in the key objectives being given full weight in the consideration of all future planning applications, protection of our local environment and community facilities.

You will be able to vote for or against the plan on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at the Creighton Hall. The Neighbourhood planning team very much hope that members of the community will come along and support this final consultation and ensure that local needs continue to be represented in future planning issues.

## Planning Applications

The Parish Council would like to make sure that all parishioners are aware of 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.

## **Embleton Cricket Club**

Fingers crossed the league will start on April 17th. To compete, we would love to see new players for this season (male, female, young, old).

Anyone interested in playing or helping please contact me, Raymond Carss on 07544914657 or 01665 576589.

## **Falodon Garden Open Weekend**

This year's event will be held on the weekend of Saturday/Sunday June 26/27 from 2-5pm. On Saturday we will be raising money in aid of National Garden Scheme charity. In 2019 this scheme donated £½m pounds to both Macmillan Cancer Support and Marie Curie and over £2m pounds to other charities. On Sunday we will be raising money for the British Red Cross. Entry is £5 per person, accompanied under 12's free and there is no need to book in advance Well behaved dogs are welcome on leads.



Teas on Saturday will be run by Embleton Church and on Sunday by Embleton School with profits going to the Church and School.

## **Howick Art Group**

Our local art group has been keeping in regular contact throughout the lockdowns by means of Zoom meetings and a weekly e-mail newsletter. This has been a great help in maintaining friendship and a source encouragement for members. A monthly project has also helped motivation as we have enjoyed sharing our images.

Our second on-line exhibition will be from the 27th of May until 30<sup>th</sup> of June. Please view our website at

<https://howickartgroupnorthumberland.com> and we hope you will enjoy our work, and maybe even purchase something. We will always welcome new members details of how to contact us can be found on our website.

## **Carole Robson**

# WHINSTONE TIMES

## PLANT AND TABLETOP SALE



MONDAY MAY 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 From 10.00am to 12.30pm  
CREIGHTON HALL, EMBLETON, NE66 3UP

CLEAR OUT YOUR CLUTTER AND RENT A TABLE OR STOCK UP  
ON PLANTS FOR YOUR GARDEN.

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS, CAKES AND A RAFFLE

COME ALONG AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY  
MAGAZINE

Tables cost £10, to book please contact Jan or Chris in advance.

To donate seedlings, plants, cakes or raffle prizes please contact Jan or Chris in advance or bring along on the day. For further information please contact Jan 01665 576019 or Chris 01665 571044

## Creighton Memorial Hall Update

Jean Lawrence

We have had instructions from ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) to inform us of permitted activities for Village Halls as they re-open as well as updated risk assessments for Trustees/Managers and Hirers. A limited number of activities will be allowed from 17th May, but it will not be until 21st June at the earliest that all activities get the go ahead and, even then, it will be subject to Covid figures coming down.



Community Groups will be eager to use the Hall again once restrictions are lifted but we ask everyone to respect the approach that the volunteer Trustees/Managers take to the reopening of the Creighton Hall. Village Halls are registered charities run by volunteers who will take a cautious approach to opening for the public again.

We can't wait to welcome everyone back to Creighton Hall to enjoy all the improvements that were completed just before the first lockdown - thanks to National Lottery and Northumberland Estates. 112 new comfy padded chairs were delivered a year ago with a grant from Northumberland County Council Community Chest and are unused. We are very grateful for this and also to Wendy Pattison for her support for the Hall. We have new LED lighting, a new ventilation system for the cooker (which came in at an eyewatering £7K), a new dishwasher and a new roof at the back.

Regular Clubs meet at the hall, please contact the individuals below for further information:

**Monday - Badminton from 6pm** - Bobby Greenley 07834262911.

**Tuesday Morning Pilates** - Tracie Robertson 07415254647.

**Tuesday & Thursday Carpet Bowls** - Bill McDonald 01665 600830.

**Wednesday Line Dance** - Elizabeth Henderson 01665 576154.

**The Snooker Club** - most weekday nights. Raymond Cars 01665 576489.

**Flower Club** - once a month on the second Monday. Shelagh Coxon 01665 576791.

**W.I – once a month on** the second Tuesday. Joan Little 01665 576788.

# Embleton School News

## Exciting News

Several children have joined us since the beginning of the year, and there are now over 50 children on the school roll. We are very excited to announce that the governors have applied for planning permission for an extension to the school to provide a new classroom space. This will allow us to continue to grow and ensure that the Orca class have their own classroom space, rather than having to section off part of the hall, as we are doing currently. It also involves a bit of internal remodelling - moving the office and main entrance to the opposite side of the school, with access straight from the street; and consequential moving of the staffroom and redoing the toilets. We are hopeful that we will receive the necessary funding for the extension and that work will be able to start in the Summer holidays. If you would like to see the plans you can view them on the Northumberland Planning Portal.



## Beach School

Current rulings allow us to return to Beach School, which we are delighted about!

## 100 Club

The winners for February and March were:

	February	March
1st Prize £50:	No 3 - Chris German	No 60 - Pete Goodfellow.
2nd Prize £25:	No 24 - Sara McGow	No 97 - Jayne Imeson.

The April draw will take place on Friday 30th April.

## Rates for Advertising in the Whinstone Times

The cost per issue is **£15** for a quarter page, **£30** for a half page and **£50** for a full page. A discount of 5% is applied for 3 editions and 10% for 6 editions. If you would like to place an advert, please contact us (details in the editorial).

## Farming News

**Lucia Bridgeman**

The last time we wrote the weather was extremely wet. Now, in these dry days we are busy getting crops into the ground and ‘stoning up’ gate ways and filling in ruts in tracks. Livestock and farm vehicles inevitably cause some damage over the years.

We have been experimenting this year, while establishing beans between Embleton and Christon Bank, using a variety of different methods and different machinery. This has ranged from the traditional method of ploughing in the autumn, to get the winter frost, with cultivating in the spring for a good seed bed, through to the other end of the scale which is drilling directly into the cover crops which grew over winter, with no ploughing involved. You may remember that we used our neighbour’s sheep to eat down the cover crops before drilling. The sheep eventually got used to the mustard and ate it down successfully.

During the last few months our local farmland bird expert, Gary Woodburn, who lives in the village, kindly came and carried out bird counts in some of our ‘wild bird cover plots’. These revealed a great variety and large number of farmland birds and shows how important environmental schemes are in the farming landscape, with hedgerows and particular plants that hold seed-heads over a period of time. Hundreds of linnets, goldfinch, chaffinch and reed buntings were noted by Gary, as well as really good numbers of yellowhammers. It has also been good to see an increasing number of native grey partridges, which are clearly recovering in this area, as they start to pair up for breeding. They are ground birds, found on arable land, with distinctive orange faces and fly with whirring wings. You are sure to have seen some if you are walking on the footpaths around the fields.



*'Everyone talks about the weather; no one does anything about it'.*

*Mark Twain*

Well, what else can you do but talk about it? And that's one of the things as a nation we do really well; that - and vaccines. So, at the risk of being boring and obvious – February was of a month of weather. The first week was amazingly wet ('I can't remember when it last rained for almost six days and nights without stopping'); the second week was blustery beyond belief ('the beastly Easterlies'); the next two weeks were simply sunny and mild ('The bulbs are all so early'. 'That's the earliest we've ever cut the grass'). March started cold ('There's snow on the Cheviots again') and turned Spring-like though windy, and there were still pockets of snow on the Cheviots until the end of the month. The rooks were rebuilding their nests, the great spotted woodpecker was making new holes very loudly, the wood pigeons were dancing on the lawn, and the hare had returned, right on cue, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

But the most exciting sighting was the humpbacked whale. The picture is Sarah Cowling's, taken off Dunstanburgh Castle. There have only been fifteen sightings of these huge creatures in the last fifteen years. Some people saw two, heading North. They can be sixty feet long with sixteen feet-long flippers and weigh up to forty tons. They have two blowholes, one for each lung and their extraordinary song can be heard up to twenty miles away – if you know how to listen!



From the largest creature seen in our area to one of the smallest: the dunnocks are busy again. An unassuming little bird, it was once known as the hedge sparrow until it was discovered to be no relation to any sparrow. They have a huge sexual appetite (surely the first time that has been said in any village publication!) as female will mate with more than one male, the male with two females, even pairs sharing each other with other pairs, all as an insurance policy to keep the line going...it's all happening here!

Speaking of which – and while we’re on the subject – Rita’s superb picture



is of two toads, those dry, rough-skinned (though not warty) frogs, not hitching a ride but mating in the quarry, the female much bigger than the male. And what a brilliant Latin name: *bufo bufo!* Well done Mr. Toad! Unusual Shirewater sightings: a kingfisher, two pairs of goosander (the male so handsome), a paddle of teal, and an entirely unsuitably dressed stoat, all in white ermine crossing the bridge over the burn on 17<sup>th</sup>

March. Further afield, rare sightings include a kestrel over the Emblestones, a buzzard over the dunes, deer on the second fairway, and a stranded guillemot, unable to take off from land, waddling from high water mark to the sea, looking so much like a penguin as it dodged walkers and their dogs. Linda saw a lizard scurrying through the dunes at the end of March and curiously a dead frog at low water mark, possibly dropped by a heron.

As April approached, the first bluebells had flowered, and the first swallows were sighted on 10<sup>th</sup> April . Nature is also unlocking.

## Useful Telephone Numbers

Emergencies - Police, Fire, Ambulance, Coastguard	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
Childline	0800 1111
Crime stoppers	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
Alnwick Medical Group	01665 656000
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	03444 111 444

## Space for Shorebirds

Katherine Dunsford NCC

The Northumberland coast is a truly special place, with long, sandy beaches, dynamic rocky shore and soaring sea cliffs drawing people from far and wide. Our wildlife shares the same opinion.

Space for Shorebirds is the name for Northumberland County Council's Coastal Mitigation Service. We are responsible for conserving shorebirds along the whole of the coastline from Seaton Sluice to Berwick upon Tweed, with our main objective being to reduce the impact of recreation upon our nationally and internationally important bird populations.



*A redshank feeding in a rockpool.*

There are currently two Wildlife Rangers employed through the service, who are here to talk to residents, visitors and of course dogs to share information and stories about the birds. We also monitor recreational activities along the coast and assess where this may be impacting wildlife.

It is vital that shorebirds eat as much food as they can to gain precious energy to help them survive. If they are constantly being disturbed, they are using up their energy by walking, or worse, flying away from danger. This reduces their time spent feeding and can significantly reduce their chances of survival. At high tide, their risk of being disturbed is increased further as they are pushed higher up the beach to find food when their usual feeding grounds are covered by the sea.

When on the coast, there are small things you can do to help protect shorebirds and ensure they can feed and rest undisturbed. Watch out for the birds as you enjoy your visit to the coast. When you do see the birds, please give them space.

- 1 **LOOK OUT FOR WILDLIFE**
- 2 **GIVE BIRDS SPACE ABOUT 40-50m**
- 3 **FOLLOW SIGNAGE AND REQUESTS BY RANGERS**
- 4 **WHEN CROSSING THE DUNES KEEP TO THE MAIN PATHS**

*Our guidance to help protect shorebirds on your visit to the coast.*

Dogs can help us to protect our shorebirds too! Just like us humans, it's



*Dog Ranger Rosie*

very important that dogs give shorebirds space, and never chase the birds. To encourage dogs to be good boys and girls on the beach, we are encouraging them to join our team of Dog Rangers by taking the pledge to help us protect coastal wildlife. Please see our website for more information if you are interested in joining.

In March and April, a large proportion of our shorebirds leave the coastline to travel to their

breeding grounds, whether that is the UK uplands in the case of curlew and lapwing, or as far as the High Arctic for turnstone and purple sandpiper. However, some birds stay on the Northumberland coast to breed, and one species that really needs our help are ringed plovers. They are territorial nesters, meaning that their nests (also known as scrapes) could appear at any location along the coast. Scrapes look exactly how they sound – a small hollow in the sand dug by the birds just big enough to hold up to four perfectly camouflaged eggs.

Throughout the summer, please look out for signage and areas of beach that are fenced off to give these birds a fighting chance of successfully rearing chicks.

For further information about Space for Shorebirds, please either visit our website at <http://spaceforshorebirds.co.uk/> or you can also follow us on social media for regular updates and photos of our stunning coastal wildlife: Facebook and Instagram @Spaceforshorebirds, and Twitter @ForShorebirds



*Adult ringed plover  
(Photo by Tom Cadwallender)*



*Oystercatcher feeding on a lugworm.*

If you see our Wildlife Rangers out and about, please say hello! We really hope you enjoy your visit to the coast, but please always remember to give Space for Shorebirds.



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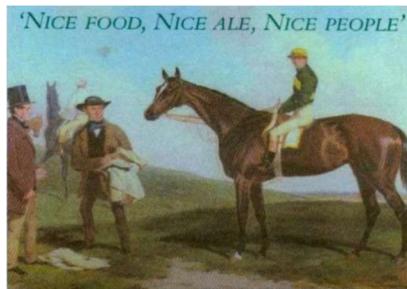
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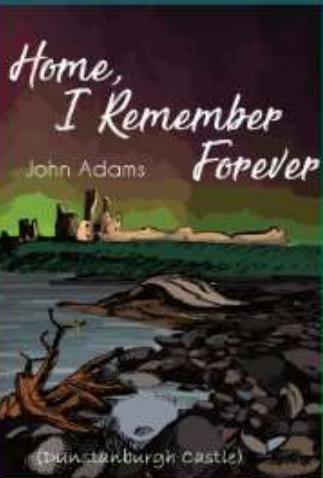
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