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Issue 101
January/February 2026

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- A - Z of Aging**
- Reader Offers**
- Tyne Valley in Winter**
- Coffee & Contemplation**
- BIG Competition Winners**
- Big Garden Birdwatch 2026**
- Challenges, Targets & Goals**
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- WIN - Ringtons Tea Hamper**
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Welcome to Issue 101, covering January and February 2026.

As a new year begins, there's always a sense of quiet possibility in the air. January invites us to pause, reflect on what the past year has taught us, and gently look ahead with renewed purpose. Whether you're setting fresh goals, refining old ones, or simply taking things one step at a time, we hope this issue offers inspiration, comfort, and a positive start to the year ahead.

We kick start the latest magazine with a fresh selection of seasonal articles from our superb team of writers. From setting challenges and targets (p36), to end-of-year reflection (p12), and the welcome return of the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch (p60), there truly is something for everyone to enjoy.

We also bring you three new ways to win, starting with a fabulous Ringtons Tea Hamper (below). There's also something a little different with a fully installed Parcel Box courtesy of our friends at Parcel Drop Box (p39), and finally

our Epiphany-themed Coffee Break Puzzle page (p56), giving you another chance to bag yourself a £10 Costa voucher. Answers to last issue's puzzle are now online at www.tynevalleyexpress.co.uk/puzzle

We also have the 10 lucky winners of our Big 100th raffle on page 10. Is your name on the list?

As we move forward into 2026, we'd like to thank you for continuing to support this magazine, the local businesses within it, and the community that makes the Tyne Valley such a special place to live. Here's to a year of small wins, shared moments, and steady progress... whatever that may look like for you.

Stephen and the TVE Team.

Stephen McHugh

Tel: 07884 340 451

Email: info@tynevalleyexpress.co.uk

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WINLATON MILL HALL

Monday: Pilates 10-11, Low impact movement 12-12.45, Yoga 6-7. Tuesday: Karate 5.30-7.30. Wednesday: Bootcamp 6-8. Thursday: Playgroup 10-11.30, Singing 7.30-10. Friday: Photography 1-3, Bootcamp 6-7, Folk 7.30-10. Saturday: Coffee morning 10.30-11.30. Winlaton Mill Village Hall dawn.bradley@live.com

FLOWER CLUB

Flower arranging demonstrations, practical workshops, talks take place first Tuesday of each month except August at 7.00pm in Winlaton Community Centre. Visitors welcome £6 including refreshments. Winlaton Community Centre. 01914132366

WOMEN'S WALKING FOOTBALL

Come and join us for a free, and friendly game of Women's Walking Football with Ben Clark. Takes place every Friday from 2-3pm at Winlaton Centre, North Street, Winlaton NE21 6BY. The Winlaton Centre 07949265987

BLAYDON CARPET BOWLS

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THE BLAYDON SHED

A relaxed friendly drop-in for all men 18+, chat or pursue hobbies. We are currently at Clasper House (Next to Skiff) on a Tuesday 11-2.30pm, and Blaydon Library every Thursday between 11-2.30pm. £1 a session, hot drinks and snacks free. infoblaydonshed@gmail.com

WINLATON EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service:

10:30am. Bible Study & Prayer Meeting: Tuesday 1.00pm. All warmly welcome. Please visit our website at www.winlatonevangelicalchurch.co.uk Next to Public Library NE21 6AS winlatonevangelical@gmail.com

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ST ANNE'S RC CHURCH

St. Anne's Sunday Mass 9.00am. For enquiries please email or contact 0191 4142654 St Anne's RC Church st.annewinlatonrc@gmail.com

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

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WINLATON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

No monthly meetings just at the moment but please follow us on our website and facebook pages. <http://www.winlatonlocalhistorysociety.org.uk>. Facebook – Winlaton Local History Society. Email: winlatonlocalhistorysociety@yahoo.com West End Club winlatonhistorysociety@yahoo.com

GATESHEAD LIBRARIES, ARTS & HERITAGE

Gateshead Arts Team delivers a wide range of friendly, creative workshops for all ages through our Gateshead Live programme and projects like Gateshead Art

Diamonds, which is for people of retirement age. For more details, please email ColleenDewing@gateshead.gov.uk. Gateshead Libraries

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If you run a local charity, group or a non-profit organisation, you can list it in our What's On diary completely free at: www.tynevalleyexpress.co.uk/whats-on/



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BORDER REIVER
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Coffee and Contemplation



At the time of writing, it is winter, an early afternoon that is cold and grey. The warmth of a coffee shop beckons, and it's the perfect time and place for contemplation.

The Odd Olive Eatery is relatively new in Ryton, but with multiple fantastic reviews from family members, I knew I just had to go. It's just before Christmas, that time of winding down from work and gearing up for the festivities. The tree inside is twinkling with lights, and a mix of soft tunes and Christmas staples plays overhead.

The Odd Olive's menu features a mix of all-day breakfast and lunch options. I'm more of a breakfast food person in cafes, and I go between the options of their pancakes and their avocado and poached eggs on sourdough. In the end, I go savoury over sweet for once. The freshness of the avocado paired with a hit of chili and chorizo is just what I needed for a winter's day. Although I will be back to try out the pancakes (and probably the rest of their menu too).

To satisfy the previous sweet craving, I head to the cake counter and, after a few moments of indecision, settle on a raspberry brownie. It is the perfect combination of gooey chocolate and a tangy hint of raspberry. And with a latte and a full stomach, I sit back and lose myself in coffee and contemplation.



It is a slow and breezy kind of day. The group of women at the tables by the window laugh, the couple two tables over debate over sharing their entire meal (food, pot of tea, and all). The teenager on the other side of the room scrolls on her phone between bites of cake. And the table opposite mine trades bites of sandwich between newspaper articles. Each person carries a story you'll never fully know, yet all of them share this moment with you.

It is nearing the end of the year, and I can't help but reflect on what's been and what is yet to come.

But let me tell you a story, you don't need to become a new person with the new year. You are your choices. You are a patchwork quilt of experiences and memories, and those can shift and change at any moment, not just because the calendar has flipped over.

I recently read an article that explains a theory on why life seems to go by so much quicker when you are older. It is proposed that as you get older, you have fewer new experiences – when you're small, you're learning how to walk, a new day at school, a new skill or thing, and it takes up so much of your life because you haven't lived that long yet. But when you're older, you fall into the monotony of it all, and experiences become innate instead of new. We cycle between home and work, we build routines and stick to them, and new experiences tend to fall into the background.

And in my opinion, those experiences don't need to be big at all to stick. I find that those small, glorious moments have a greater impact than what you initially expect. It's like a tiny, brief interaction with a stranger in a coffee shop that reminds you that you are surrounded by community and togetherness, and not quite as alone as one may think.

Although I don't like resolutions and the pressure to reach them by the end of the year, I want to break the monotony of life and find the quiet joy again. I think life is shaped partially by what you pursue and experience, but also by what you tolerate. And I don't want to tolerate monotony.

So, I'm hunting out those quiet moments more this year, I'm collecting them, appreciating them, and figuring out new steps along the way. I'm broadening my horizons to new experiences, new choices, and letting them pave the way. We'll see what it cultivates!

And as if knowing I've been in a contemplative mood, looking towards futures and possibilities, I later received this message in a fortune cookie on Christmas Eve: Your potential is only limited by your desires. And although that's a little cheesy, it's still, nevertheless true.



Check out The Odd Olive Eatery in Ryton, and if you know any other hidden gems or underdog businesses in the Tyne Valley area, let me know!



Katie Pharoah

Katie Pharoah
Writer for Tyne Valley Express
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What's On RYTON, CRAWCROOK & GREENSIDE

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CRAWCROOK SLIMMING WORLD

Come and join us in Emmaville Hall on Wednesday's at 9:00am, 10:30am, 5:00pm & 6:30pm. Emmaville Hall 07894 284343

RYTON METHODIST CHURCH

SUNDAY MORNING 10am. Contemporary service with children's group followed by Coffee. MONDAY EVENING Girl's Brigade. WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON Ladies Fellowship meeting with guest speakers. SATURDAY MORNING 10am – 12pm. 2nd Saturday of the month only. Coffee and cake, raising funds. Ryton Methodist Church 0191 4606411

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Crawcrook Park Pavilion ourvillagescag@gmail.com

CLARA VALE VILLAGE HALL

A warm and friendly village hall which offers many activities, groups, health and fitness classes. Hire the hall for parties and weddings. Hall hire from £11 per room per hour. For more information contact Joan at booking@claravale.org.uk / 07543281301 booking@claravale.org.uk

BRIGHTEN RYTON

Community group to support and preserve the work of individuals and groups of volunteers working in the Ryton and Stella ward to restore and maintain the environment including: litter-picking, flower-beds, cemetery, memorial gardens, and heritage sites. Facebook page – www.facebook.com/RytonCommunity. Ryton and Stella ward brighthenryton@gmail.com

YOGA CLASSES

Held at Stargate Community Centre every Thurs at 2pm until 3pm. A variety of Yoga including sound bath. Suiting all abilities seeking a more positive, happy, relaxed & confident part to your life. Give Carol a call for more information. Stargate Community Centre. 07895417870

SOUND REVOLUTION

Breathwork and sound healing. Spiritual event for wellbeing. Highly recommended! Ryton Community Centre 07543268926

TYNE PHYSIO PILATES

Mat-work Pilates classes and 1:1 Pilates sessions led by chartered physiotherapist. Classes suitable for all levels and abilities. Mondays 9.30am & 10.20am. Wednesdays 6.15pm & 7.15pm. Saturdays 8.00am. 1:1 sessions are available on request. Ryton Community Centre Tyne-physiopilates@outlook.com

RYTON SINGERS

Ladies choir, Pop, rock, gospel, musicals. Regular performances in the community. Lots of socialising and events too! Stargate Hall [facebook.com/rytonsingers](https://www.facebook.com/rytonsingers)

RYTON YOUTH SINGERS

Youth choir for young people ages

11-16. Regular performances in the community. Rehearsals run every Sunday 12-1pm Stargate Hall Ryton [facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551260005195](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61551260005195)

HOLY CROSS CHURCH

SUNDAY 10.30 am Holy Communion, SUNDAY 10.30 am Young Church held in Church Hall, Ryton Village, THURSDAY 10.00 am Holy Communion. Please check Holy Cross Website for further information. 01914529381

HOLY CROSS CHURCH HALL

Thinking of holding party or celebration, this may be the perfect venue for you. Church Hall has COVID-19 measures in place. For further details please telephone us using the details provided. Holy Cross Church 01914135233

RYTON OUTDOOR BOWLING

Home to the Towers, Vets and Women's Clubs. Based in Ferndene Park, Ryton. Come and join us either for pleasure on most afternoons or Sunday (am) or in Competitions throughout the Summer. Ferndene Park 01914133872

MEN'S SHED RYTON

Carving out companionship, good old-fashioned conversation in a wi-fi free environment. Meetings every Tuesday and Thursday 10-3. Ryton Methodist Church rytonmensshed@proton.me

GARDEN, GATHER & NATTER

We welcome people of all ages and abilities to come and get involved in this wonderful green space. Wednesday mornings from 9:30 (weather permitting!). For more immediate information on events, you can find us at [facebook.com/ferndeneparkryton](https://www.facebook.com/ferndeneparkryton) Ferndene Park, Ryton. friendsofferndene@outlook.com

STARGATE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Wednesday stargazers baby

and toddler group 9.30am to 11.00. Thursday 2.00 to 3.00 Yoga. Thursday 6.00 to 7.00 ryton singers. Sunday 11.00 ryton mini singers. Stargate community centre fiona.todd33@gmail.com

BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

Baby and toddler group Wednesday morning 9.30 to 11.00 term time only...Stargate and Crookhill community centre. fiona.todd33@gmail.com

SOUND RELAXATION (SOUND BATH)

Deep relaxation and restoration with soothing sounds of relaxing instruments that transport you to healing state of mind. This holistic wellbeing experience is for mind, body, and soul. Fourth Saturday of the month from 7 pm to 8:30 pm £25. Greenside Community Centre 07543268926

LUNCHTIME RELAXATION

Relaxation and meditation session with soothing sounds of relaxing instruments that transport you to healing state of mind. This holistic wellbeing experience is for mind, body, and soul. Every Friday from 12.30 to 1.30pm – £12. Greenside Community Centre 07543268926

HOLY SPIRIT CHURCH

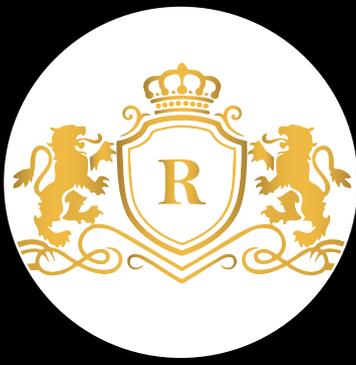
All Sunday morning services, including Children's Club, are held at Holy Spirit Church. For other services and venues see our website. Venue hire is also available at St John's Community Hall at very reasonable rates. Crawcrook. info@greensideparish.org

CENTENARY METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday Morning Worship 10.30am. Every Saturday morning 10.30am till 12 noon Coffee Morning. Drop in for a chat and a coffee/tea. Centenary Methodist Church information@centenarymc.org.uk

If you run a local charity, group or a non-profit organisation, you can list it in our What's On diary completely free at: www.tynevalleyexpress.co.uk/whats-on/





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To be continued...



"Geof is semi-retired after a long career in performing arts as a director, producer and tour manager. His work has taken him from Orkney to Penzance, Newfoundland to New Orleans, Cairo to Kolkata, and many other places in between. He finally settled in Hexham where he was Artistic Director at the Queen's Hall from 1997-2018. He says that his main focus now is on his creative writing and remembering the birthdays of his six grandchildren."

A to Z of Aging

AGING is a process that particularly affects your eyesight. A young man can stare at himself in the bathroom mirror for fifteen minutes, examining the depths of his soul. You can equal that time without having any purpose whatsoever.

BEQUEATH your Tri-ang train set to be split between your children so they meet up once a year to put the parts together again, and bore your grandchildren.

CANCEL your reservation at the care home and book a one-way ticket to that luxury hotel in the Swiss Alps. Enjoy the heady mix of chocolate, alcohol and whatever else they give you.

DEATH. The grim reaper may appear at the foot of your bed announcing "I am death." Reply with "Sorry, I'll speak up a bit." A confusing conversation may result in him forgetting why he's come. He's getting on a bit too.

ENJOY every moment as though it is your last. Maybe it is – the odds shorten on a daily basis.

FORGIVE those that trespass against you. There was nothing particularly valuable in your back garden.

GIVE some old clothes to charity shops. Avoid accidentally buying them back next week when you're browsing.

HALLELUJAH. If one of your children suggests playing a Leonard Cohen song at your funeral do not appoint them as an executor of your will (which should actually specify My Way by the Sex Pistols).

INJURIES can be more common than when you were younger. You should particularly avoid ice – it's cold and slippery and has no place in a decent glass of malt whisky.

JAPAN may be on your bucket list but don't pin all your hopes on it being an enriching experience. Remember that somewhat underwhelming trip to Blackpool?

KNOCKING noise wakes you up. It's that man again in a black hoodie wielding a strange farm implement. You need to get one of those new door answer devices that connects to your mobile phone so you can fool him into thinking you're already in Switzerland.

LOVE all the people that you have ever met. It's a beautiful thought even though it flies in the face of every social anthropology study that has been written.

MICKY was a good example of this. You were both five years old and he was the kid next door with the big friendly grin. You hated him but never knew why.

NEVER smile at a crocodile; it's a good rhyme but patronising. They can live til they're 150 and still retain most of their teeth. Something we can only dream of.

OLD people you don't know will sometimes greet you in the street. Tell them you can't stop to natter because you're on your way to a

Stormzy concert. They will probably advise you to wear a raincoat.

PRETEND to be interested in music produced since 1985. You do actually know who Stormzy is, although Rag N Bone Man is just a vague memory of a horse and cart outside your gran's house.

QUEEN Elizabeth was always someone you had a great deal of empathy with, as you don't pay any taxes and are worried about the behaviour of some of your grown-up children.

REFUSE help crossing the road. But watch out for those electric cars – their main contribution to reducing humanity's carbon footprint is silently culling the elderly.

STATINS will help stave off heart problems. Remember to take a tablet every day, even though one of the side effects is memory loss.

TREAT yourself to something. No-one else will, except those kind family members who are responsible for your vast collection of identical stripey scarves and Moleskin notebooks.

UNDO your shoelaces before you take your shoes off and tie them again when you put them back on. This is a great fitness exercise. But beware - forgetting to complete both parts of this activity can create a health and safety risk.

VACCINATIONS can reduce the risk of hospitalisation and prolong an already long and miserable life. So, get jabbed. You can add further to your misery by self-isolating when all you've got is a mild cold.

WALK on the wild side. You know you want to, and what do you have to lose? Encourage others to join you but avoid inappropriate salutations such as "Hey sugar" and "Hey babe".

X marks the spot – but does it have to? Why not get buried at sea? If you're struggling with this suggestion don't forget that your ex pledged to dance on your grave.

YOU Only Live Twice – confused messaging from the Bond franchise. Remember the good old days when it was OK to call a lead character Pussy Galore? Well, it wasn't.

ZEN Buddhism can help you deal with most of the above anxieties. To get started all you have to do is sit on the floor in the full lotus position. How hard could that be?



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What's On

HEDDON, HORSLEY & WYLAM

HADRIAN QUILT GROUP

A patchwork and quilting group meets alternate Wednesdays 1000 until 1300 in the Womens Institute Hall at Heddon on the Wall. Next session 21 Jan 2026. Knowledge of patchwork and quilting is not essential, but basic sewing skills required.

Womens' Institute Hall
mcstocksfield@gmail.com

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

Everyone is welcome at our Sunday services at 10.30am. Many different things happen as part of the life of our church. To receive weekly email or to book baptism or weddings. Contact hmschurches@gmail.com St. Andrew's Church, Heddon hmschurches@gmail.com

THE HEARTH CENTRE

We've got lots going on this Spring incl. art classes; live music; drama; well-being & a delicious cafe! See you soon.

The Hearth Art Centre
www.thehearth.co.uk/whatson

VILLAGE HALL

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WILDLIFE GROUP TALKS

All welcome £3 includes refreshments. Tuesday November 4th Lee Rankin, NWT 'Wilding West Chevington - nature recovery'. Tuesday December 2nd Tom Cadwallender 'Jaguars to Jabarus - The Brazilian Pantanal'. Tuesday January 6th Deborah Brady 'The Missing Lynx Project' St Mary's Parish Centre, Ponteland pontelandwildlife/talks

HORSLEY BOOK CLUB

Horsley Book Club meets every first Friday of the month in The

Hearth cafe from 3 pm. We read a variety of books and sometimes have play readings for fun. The Hearth cafe. 07453358745

KEEPING FIT AND FLEXIBLE

This is a dance based fitness class aimed at the over 50's. If you enjoy moving to music come and give us a try. 10.00-11.00am on Wednesdays.

James Knott Memorial Hall
01661 853365

HEDDON BALLROOM DANCING CLASSES

We welcome beginners and those with experience. Classes take place every Tuesday during term time in the Knott Memorial Hall from 8 - 10pm. Teachers have endless patience and everyone has great fun. Find a partner and give it a try. Knott Memorial Hall. 07936 542226

HEDDON METHODIST CHURCH

Everyone is welcome to our Sunday services which take place every week at 10.30am, as well as the Coffee Morning we host every Thursday 10am - 12 noon. For baptisms, wedding and funerals please contact us.

Heddon Methodist Church
lynda.coulthard@methodist.org.uk

SINGERS

Ad Murum Singers are a community choir. We enjoy a wide range of music, and constantly explore new ways to make singing fresh, fulfilling and fun. Always keen to welcome new members of all ages and abilities - No auditions! Heddon Methodist Church. 01912740217

THE HEDDON PATCHERS

A quilting and patchwork group who meet every other Wednesday in the Women's Institute at Heddon on the Wall at 10.30am. We have an excellent tutor and welcome new members. Women's Institute
01661820568

HEDDON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We host a series of monthly talks (usually on the second Monday in the month) by different speakers on a wide variety of subjects of local interest to which all are welcome. Meetings start at 7:30pm, details at www.

heddonhistory.weebly.com Heddon Methodist Church on Towne Gate. 01661853095

HEDDON ART GROUP

We meet fortnightly on alternate Tuesday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 and Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00. New members and interested visitors are always welcome to share their interest in art, whether painting, drawing or other media. Heddon W.I. Hall chambers497@btinternet.com

FITNESS CLASSES WITH SCOTT

Two new fitness classes at Knott Memorial Hall in Heddon on the Wall on Tuesday Mornings: 9:30 am LBT-Legs Bums and Tums, 10:30 am Stretch. £5 per class or 2 for £8. To book go to: Bookwhen.com/scottmiller. Knott Memorial hall. sjmm2412@aol.com

HORSLEY VILLAGE CHURCH

Services each Sunday at 11am. Please visit our website at horsleyvillagechurch.chessck.co.uk for more information Horsley Village Church horsleyvillagechurch@gmail.com

WYLAM INSTITUTE

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WYLAM METHODIST CHURCH

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WYLAM WOMENS INSTITUTE

Meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month in Wylam Institute at 2 p.m. All Visitors very welcome. For further details, please contact us using the details provided. Wylam Institute. 01661 853713

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Physio-led Pilates - small and friendly classes. Tuesday mornings: 9-10am - Level 2, 10.10-11.10am Level 1 (suitable for clients with low bone density). 11.20-12.20 Level 1. Please get in touch if you have any queries or would like to join! Wylam Institute pilatesphysio4you@gmail.com

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Tel: 07505975509 (Dave)

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www.borderreiverarchers.co.uk

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Beach and Quiet - Hemmel House

Beach and Quiet's coastal Craster cottages are winter havens. Their elegant cottage, Hemmel House, is conveniently located for a bracing wander along the Northumberland coast, followed by a local pub stop for some winter warming home-cooked food, before returning to warm your toes in the glow of the property's crackling log burner. The ground floor offers spectacular, uninterrupted rural views with the sea and Dunstanburgh Castle on the horizon while you stay warm and snug inside and you can end your evening by stargazing beneath the incredible Northumberland dark skies using the cottage's telescope.

Little Hideaways

Little Hideaways offers five stunning, Seahouses-based cottages all with log burners, charming decor and excellent locations on Northumberland's coastline. Hidden in a cobbled courtyard of traditional fisherman's cottages, they all sit within easy reach of unspoilt beaches, ancient castles and access to amazing wildlife. Their location in the traditional fishing village of Seahouses means that a range of amenities are just a short walk away, as is Seahouses harbour where you can set off for a fantastic boat trip to The Farne Islands. Just four miles away lies outstanding Bamburgh Castle, as well as Lindisfarne Castle.

Brunton House

On a country estate between Alnwick and Bamburgh, Brunton House and its cluster of cottages offering five star gold self-catering luxury. The estate is well situated between the coast and the Cheviot hills, making it feel secluded paired well with the log-burning stoves which are perfect to warm up after cold winter walks. Properties range from one bedroom retreats to Brunton House which has eight bedrooms. A welcome basket of local honey, bread and fruit is provided on arrival, and dogs are welcome in many of the cottages, making this a great base to explore Northumberland's wild winter landscapes.

Doxford Cottages

Set in a private estate near the Northumberland coast, Doxford Cottages are an excellent base for walkers, wildlife lovers, and families. There are ten individual cottages, ranging from cosy couple retreats, to winter family getaways which all share peaceful surroundings and have achieved the Visit England five-star gold grading. The interiors are perfect for cosy nights with log-burning stoves ready to be lit after a day exploring the nearby beaches and castles. The estate has scenic footpaths around Doxford Lake, a children's playground and a games room. The location makes it ideal for winter rambling and stargazing.

Glanton Pyke

Glanton Pyke's Hall and Stable Cottage are in 22 acres of parkland and formal gardens, just nine miles from Alnwick. The main house sleeps twelve across six bedrooms, while the two

bedroom Stable Cottage can extend the accommodation to sixteen guests. Inside, you'll find three living rooms with open fires, wood burning stoves and a farmhouse kitchen with an Aga. Outside, you can walk around the beech hedged maze, croquet lawn, and walled garden. The estate's Dark Sky Discovery status makes it an exceptional spot for winter stargazing too. With dogs welcome and the Northumberland coast a short drive away, it's the perfect place for celebratory gatherings or a cosy rural escape.

Laverock Law

If you're looking for a cosy Northumberland holiday cottages, Laverock Law's award-winning cottages and glamping options encourage you to relax, rewind, and reconnect. Skylark, Swallow and Woodpecker cottages each have three bedrooms on one level, organic bedding and thoughtful touches such as homemade cake on arrival. For something more unusual, book the 80-year-old Harvest Hut with its wood-burning stove and four poster bed, or the heart-shaped Northstar Treehouse with panoramic windows, a cosy stove and elevated deck.

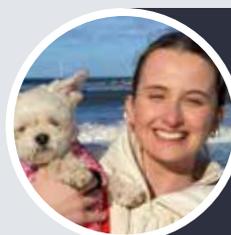
Fenwick Granary Farm

Close to the Holy Island causeway, Fenwick Granary Farm has a choice of beautifully converted farm buildings. The Stables is a spacious conversion with its original stall features and a sunny reading nook, perfect for relaxing after coastal winter walks. The Dairy is a studio apartment in the old dairy complex with cosy rustic styling and a private outdoor space and there are two stylish cabins, Cuthbert's Cave and Bede's Bothy which both sit on St Cuthbert's Way. All properties have Wi-Fi, self-check-in, and have private patios making Fenwick Granary Farm perfect for a peaceful yet luxurious base for winter adventures.

Crabtree and Crabtree: Hall Cottage & Grooms Cottage

Located on the grounds of Netherwitton Hall, Hall Cottage of Crabtree and Crabtree is perfect for couples looking for a warm base near Northumberland's attractions. Its sitting room features a log-burner and biomass heating, and guests can watch for red squirrels on estate walks. Hadrian's Wall, Bamburgh Castle, and Holy Island are all just within an hour's drive. Grooms Cottage next door has an open plan living space and a king size bedroom with a freestanding bath beneath a skylight. Like Hall Cottage, it offers estate trails for wildlife spotting and both properties can be booked together for small groups looking for a cosy winter getaway.

Now that you are fuelled with ideas for the perfect place to stay in Northumberland in winter, get booking your cosy cottage break and enjoy a winter weekend in Northumberland.



Jenni Meikle

Jenni Meikle
Content and PR executive at
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Cafe and Toddler Group. Thursdays 10 - 11.30 term-time. Playtime for the Bairns and chill time for you. Babies to pre-school all welcome. Donations appreciated. Info on Facebook: Prudhoe Methodist Church Friends. Prudhoe Methodist Church Hall Facebook page

PRUDHOE COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

Meets every Tuesday and Friday morning for friendly supported gardening. Join our group to grow fresh vegetables and flowers, sharing and learning gardening skills and helping to maintain our Community Allotment. Look out for events on our Facebook page. PCA Redwell Court pcalsinc@yahoo.com

GLEEMEN MALE VOICE CHOIR

Male Voice Choir meets Monday evenings at 7pm in Prudhoe Methodist Church. New members always welcome. E: gleemen@uwclub.net Prudhoe Methodist Church gleemen@uwclub.net

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Tuesday Evenings 6-7.15pm £10. Friday Mornings 11.15-12.30pm £10. Monthly prepayment savers available. Join Pam, qualified BWY yoga teacher & reset body & mind. Booking essential! St. Matthew's Wellness Centre 07794459268

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PRUDHOE LIBRARY

Library is open from 9am weekdays and 9.30am on Saturdays. The library closes

at 5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 6pm on Thursday and 1pm on Saturday. website - www.mylibrary.co.uk email - prudhoe.library@northumberland.gov.uk prudhoe.library@northumberland.gov.uk

SPACE FOR NATURE

Based at Prudhoe Wildlife Garden, just behind West Wylam Inn, a group of volunteers who create and manage various sites around Prudhoe to increase bio-diversity and wildlife. Contact Jane on 07870 407 168 or email prudhoespace4nature@gmail.com Prudhoe and Mickley jrcgardener@gmail.com

BORDER REIVER ARCHERS

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THE GATE CHURCH

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RENEW WELL-BEING OASIS

You'll find a warm and welcoming space at Renew Wellbeing Oasis every Tuesday from 1.00pm – 3.30pm. Lovely refreshments and it's FREE! Meet new people, share hobbies and activities or just sit quietly - it's OK not to be OK! Prudhoe Parish Hall 07985473484

PHYSIO-LED PILATES

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PRUDHOE GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

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Prudhoe Town allotment contact us by email or through our community Hut behind the West West Wylam Inn in Prudhoe (Saturdays 10am to 12 noon only), by Facebook (groups/ [prudhoegardenersassociation](https://www.facebook.com/prudhoegardenersassociation)) or by email at prudhoegardenersassociation@hotmail.com Prudhoe prudhoegardenersassociation@hotmail.com

PRUDHOE COMMUNITY BAND

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PRUDHOE & DISTRICT U3A

We are a friendly organisation offering day-time meetings for talks, coffee mornings, and a wide variety of interest groups from Art Appreciation to Walking. Our principle is enjoying shared learning, with everyone contributing. For further information please visit prudhoe.u3a.site.uk. Prudhoe Parish Hall chairmanprudhoeu3a@yahoo.com

SPETCHELLS CONSERVATION INTEREST GROUP

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Café and Toddler Group, Thursdays 10-11.30am (termtime). Play-time (songs, crafts & toys) for the Bairns and a chill time for you. Kids free and just £1 per cuppa (free refills). Info from Facebook

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PRUDHOE GROUND FORCE

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I'm Richie, MD of IR Cleaning Services and our parent company Independent Restoration.

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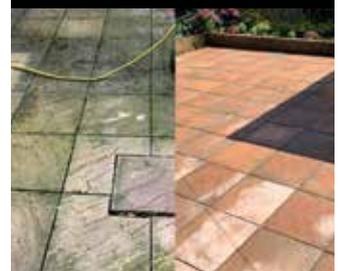
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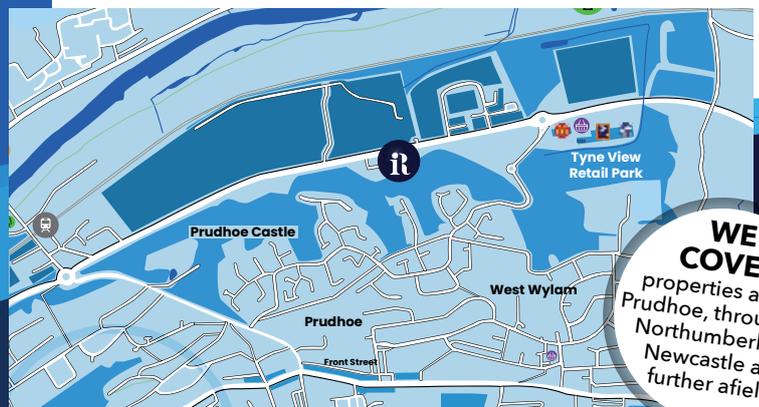


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Challenges, Targets & Goals

The start of a new year is often the time we think about making a change, and many of these changes relate to being more active. We might be thinking about losing weight, cutting back on drinking or smoking, or just generally being a bit fitter. It may be that clothes are feeling a bit tighter after Christmas, that you want to play more of an active part in the lives of children or grandchildren, or you've read about how being more active can help protect you against a wide range of age related illnesses.

Setting physical activity targets is important as they provide structure for achieving health benefits, which include reducing the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes, managing weight, and improving mental health, mood and energy levels.

Having a target or goal can really help you extend your good intentions beyond the first few weeks of January, and help you see the progress you are making. Living where we do, the Great North Run is often at the top of peoples' lists; it's a great goal but a big one, so sometimes small steps are the best ones. If you want to improve your fitness, walking is a great way to start, and try and link this to improving distance and speed. Have a target of achieving a certain distance in a single walk, improving your weekly total, or doing a regular walk a little bit faster every time. If you fancy running, Couch to 5K is a free programme for beginners that gradually helps you move from walking and jogging to running, and is available through the NHS app.

Your goal could also be something much more modest but no less of a challenge. If you struggle with mobility it could be mastering a sit to stand from your chair, or safely aiming to improve how long you can balance on one leg. It might be doing one press up or pull up, or trying to do a few extra bicep curls with a manageable weight.

Like many people, I'm a big fan of smart watches, and it's easy to use your watch to set goals. Your watch can help you set a target of daily steps and floors climbed, and also show you how your heart rate is improving while exercising or resting, and how your quality of sleep is better. As always, if you are keen to increase your activity then it's always worth having a chat with your healthcare professional first, who will be happy to encourage and help you.

Tips For Setting Targets

Follow the guidelines

The NHS recommends older adults should have a target of at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week. Mix up strength, balance and flexibility, and try to raise your heart rate and get a bit sweaty and out of breath.

Make it fun

If you do something you'll enjoy you are far more likely to stick with it and hit your goals. Being active with a friend can really help with mutual support and encouragement.



Make it a habit

Try and integrate your activity and goals into your daily routine, this will make it much easier to stick with it and achieve your target.

My 2026 Challenge

In 2010 I ran the first Kielder Marathon, and swore it would be my first and last.....

However, I turn 60 later this year so I wanted a physical activity challenge to mark the milestone and keep me motivated. So for the last few months I've been running all over the Tyne Valley in rain, sleet, snow and mud as preparation for attempting the Rome Marathon in March. Having this goal and a multitude of mini targets of time, distance and speed has really helped me, and seeing the modest improvements I've made has been really encouraging. I've really enjoyed getting out in the fresh air in all weathers, as well as appreciating all the thumbs ups and smiles from all you friendly dog walkers, cyclists and fellow runners. My aim is to finish still smiling, so I'll let you know how I did in a future edition.



Tim Morton

Tim Morton

Former head of Physical Activity
at Parkinson's UK

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What's On STOCKSFIELD & RIDING MILL

STOCKSFIELD PLANTS AND GARDEN SOCIETY

Tuesday 20th January 7:30pm
 "How to Have More Plants in Your Life" Julie from Pure Plants Hexham will talk about houseplants and their care. Julie will help you to green your indoor spaces without harming the environment. Visitors welcome (£5)
 Stocksfield Community Centre
stocksfieldpg@gmail.com

WHITTONSTALL COMMUNITY BAND

An all age community band welcoming anyone interested in playing in our friendly musical ensemble. From October to April we rehearse at Broomley School, Stocksfield every Thursday during term time, 6.30-8.30. In summer we rehearse at the church in Whittonstall. Broomley School
whittonstallcommunityband@gmail.com

STOCKSFIELD QUAKER MEETING

Meeting For Worship at 11.00am every Sunday. Details of other activities publicised at Meeting House or available from the Clerk
 Quaker Meeting House, New Ridley Rd .
StocksfieldClerk@northumbriaquakers.org.uk

SPINNERS/WEAVERS/DYERS

Tynedale Guild of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers meets 3rd Sat. of every month 10am-4pm. Visitors & new members very welcome if you would like to try your hand at these mindful textile crafts. Programme available at www.wsd.org.uk/guilds/tynedale
 Stocksfield Baptist Church
tynedale.secretary@gmail.com

STOCKSFIELD SING CIRCLE

For women of all ages and stages who want to sing for pleasure and not perfection! We learn songs by ear and sing in our natural voice! Join us on Tuesdays, in the school term time, 7.30-9pm.
 Quakers Meeting House
mynameislindsey@hotmail.com

PLAYGROUP FOR UNDER 4'S

Every Friday in term-time, RIDING MILL OUTDOOR PRESCHOOL welcomes young children. along with a parent/carer, to join us for PLAYGROUP from 9.15-11am. Check out our website (www.rmop.co.uk)

or follow on Facebook! Riding Mill Outdoor Preschool
chair@rmop.co.uk

CAFÉ CONNECT

Come and join us at Cafe Connect on Sunday, July 22nd at 4:00 pm for a Summer Barbeque. Fun and games for all the family. Everyone welcome.
 Stocksfield Methodist Church
jacquic074@gmail.com

RIDING MILL TENNIS CLUB

Village tennis club, set in picturesque surroundings off Millfield Road, is 75 years old. 3 Courts are hard macadam. Pickle ball is also played outdoors in the summer on our multi use games area court. New members welcome. Riding Mill Tennis Club
ridingmilltennis@gmail.com

ART GROUP

Supportive, self-help group for anyone interested in art. Held every Thursday morning, 9:30-12.00pm. Please contact Maggie for more information.
 The Scout Hut. 07525 054048

GARDEN VISITS AND TALKS

Derek and Patricia Hodgson OBE open their garden, called "inspirational" by Alan Titchmarsh on Love Your Garden, from May to September. Patricia also gives gardening talks and piano recitals and stand up comedy to fundraise for the NSPCC on request.
 Stocksfield for visits and venue of choice for talks. 07765862384

STOCKSFIELD STRIDERS

We're a small friendly running club that meets on Tuesday and Thursday (Regents Drive Industrial Estate) evenings at 7pm.
 Stocksfield Cricket Club
stocksfieldstriders.chessck.co.uk

STOCKSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

SLHS meets on the second Wednesday of each month (excluding December) from September to April at Stocksfield Methodist Church, Mount View Terrace from 7:30 – 9:15 pm, with a varied programme of talks on the local area. New Members welcome.
 Stocksfield Methodist Church
slhs@k-webster.co.uk

STOCKSFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

We are a warm, welcoming and informal church that meets every Sunday 10am-11.30am. All are welcome, wherever you are on your faith journey. For all events see stocksfieldbaptistchurch.net

STOCKSFIELD COMMUNITY CENTRE

We have a wide range of events and activities available. For more detailed information please visit our website at www.stocksfieldca.org.uk or contact us on the details below. SCA, Mount View Terrace
admin@stocksfieldca.org.uk

SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING CLUB

We meet on Tuesday evenings from 7.45 p.m. to 10.p.m. from February to December. No partner needed, and beginners welcome.
 Baptist Church Hall. 01661843163

STOCKSFIELD TENNIS CLUB

Small tennis club at Guessburn welcoming new members of any standard or age. Visit www.stocksfieldtennisclub.com for information on joining, session timings, coaching and more. All weather courts and floodlighting allows for year-round play. What's stopping you!
Stocksfieldtennisclub@gmail.com

STAY AND PLAY

A toddler group run by volunteers from Stocksfield Baptist Church for children from birth to starting school and their carers. It runs every Tuesday (term time) from 10-11.30am. A variety of activities are provided in a relaxed and informal setting. Stocksfield Baptist Church
www.stocksfieldbaptistchurch.net

STOCKSFIELD ANGLICAN CHURCHES

For information on services at, and contacts for Bywell St Peter's, Stocksfield St John's and Mickleby St George's, please visit our website at www.stocksfieldchurchofengland.org

HATHA & SOMATIC BASED YOGA CLASSES

Hatha/Somatic yoga practice, breathing practices and relaxation. Wednesdays 9.30am-11am, booking is essential. Contact Rose for more information and to book.
 Riding Mill Millennium Hall
 07515107774

ST JAMES CHURCH

Sundays 8:00am Holy Communion and 10:00am Parish Worship; Wednesdays 9:30am Holy Communion and 7.00pm Quiet Evening Prayer. Services are also accessible via Zoom. For further details please visit our website at www.stjameschurchridingmill.com.
 St James Church
mckenzie.d@btinternet.com

ART CLUB

A friendly self guided group with occasional guest artist, meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday at 7-9pm. Visitors and new members very welcome.
 Millennium Hall. 01434 682478

MATTERS AND CRAFTERS

We are a friendly group of crafters meeting at Newton and Bywell Village Hall every Thursday from 10.30 until 3.00. Visitors and new members welcome. For more information tel: 07810 286 285 or by email:

dorothy43@uwclub.net
 Newton and Bywell village hall.
 07810 286285

SOUND RELAXATION (SOUND BATH)

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 Riding Mill Milennium Hall
 07543268926

If you run a local charity, group or a non-profit organisation, you can list it in our What's On diary completely free at: www.tynevalleyexpress.co.uk/whats-on/





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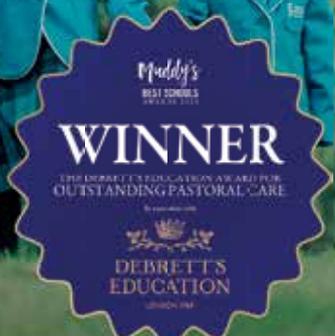
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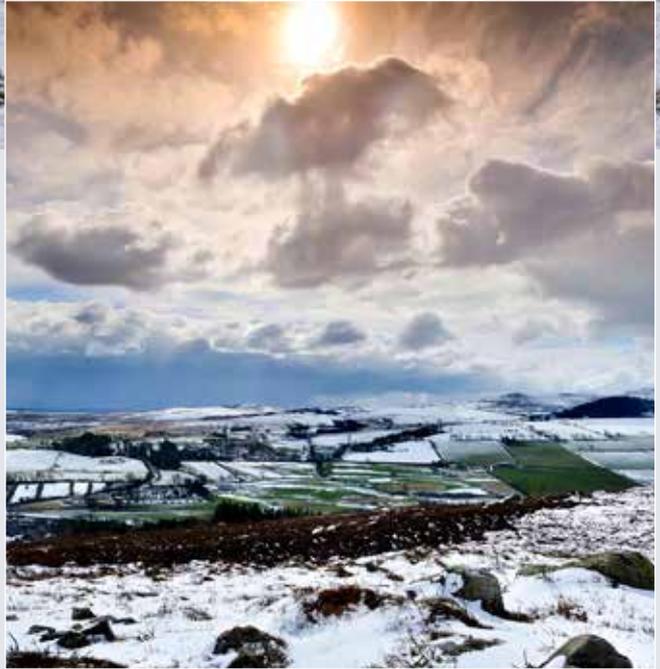
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Tyne Valley in the Winter



It's not every day you get a national treasure and a lead thinker and broadcaster on wildlife and Nature speak up on your behalf and encourage people to donate to your cause. Sir David Attenborough, long term President and supporter of Wildlife Trusts, including Northumberland, did exactly that recently, taking time in his 100th year to prepare a video on the importance of our harnessing the Rothbury Estate to demonstrate nature recovery at the biggest scale possible in England. He did this as he knows how critical it is that we start to develop bigger nature networks, he's seen so much change for the worse in his lifetime but still inspires hope and sees this as part of a new wave of conservation. It helped, immediately over a million was donated and the waves of excitement are still being felt.

It's been that sort of year for Northumberland Wildlife Trust, enormous fundraising and scaling up of our action and lobbying to reconnect people to Nature in their daily lives, as well as upscaling in connecting wildlife areas and corridors to bring more nature back, if we can't do that here what chance does nature have anywhere else?

We are so lucky in Northumberland to already have, by comparison with most places south of the Border, stunning landscapes and great habitats with a good selection of species. But even here it is less than it should be and regeneration, preservation, restoration, even reintroduction, are necessary to rebalance life around us. All this to be achieved whilst keeping areas productive for our food and forestry needs and other land uses.

The Tyne Valley is a perfect example of this with its rich and varied mosaic of land uses often at great scale, nature very much in the picture, but also pushed into the margins and not the priority very often. Change is needed here too. But I like to celebrate, especially at this time of year what is still there and take in its good and wonder, to fuel me up to take this big agenda forward. My forays in the last year around the Tyne have all been about this.

Like for many Nature is my retreat and reenergises me when life gets too busy and challenging. The Tyne valley is just the place for that as we know. Christmas is a time I often take a long work break and explore deeper into wildness.

One of the most memorable examples for me of this is one day walking out into a gentle snow fall, plodding into the woods with my snow boots on that I'd last used in Greenland. I secreted myself in a wood and, well dressed for the cold, sat like an old bear on a log, until the snow settled around and on me, until I looked and felt just like a part of the woodland itself. I stayed like this until I was literally a snow-man!

It was incredibly peaceful and calming just watching the snow fall, birds coming close, a woodpecker so black and red against the white, a hare sneaked past almost touching my boot, a rustle in the trees revealed a deer grazing undisturbed, unaware of my presence. In Native American culture this is known as 'still hunting', just seeing what happens when you blend into the background.

On another occasion by the Tyne, again in light snow, I followed the trail of a fox, who every few metres or so had killed and eaten or buried a redwing, one of the many flocks that had probably flown in from Iceland. After about a quarter of a mile I stopped and looked up a bank to see the actual fox, on the last course of his Christmas dinner!

I'm always on the look out at this time of year for birds such as winter thrushes and also siskins, and redpolls in the alders and willows by the river and if you are lucky crossbills in the spruce and pine plantations. I've had incredibly close encounters with these at Kielder and other places. On one occasion my grandson and I stood for some minutes with a flock of crossbills a few feet away, at his head height, the bright pink males and wine gum green females, like little parrots hanging there, quite oblivious of us.

You never know what is waiting for you out there in Nature, even in the depths of Winter, and I'd encourage everyone whenever they can to walk and explore. But even more importantly, to also slip away now and then, leave all the food and drink and family gatherings behind, even for short spells, to make connection with Nature. For in these moments, we sense the real meaning of Christmas in the turning of the season and feel truly human, held there in natural magic. It's the best present you can give yourself.

All the very best!



Mike Pratt

Mike Pratt - Chief Executive
Northumberland Wildlife Trust
www.nwt.org.uk

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- 10th-15th May Enchanting Isle of Scilly & Cornish Coast **SOLD OUT**
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- 26th-28th June David Austin Roses & Shropshire Gardens - 3 days
- 4th - 10th July Isle of Wight Delights - 7 days
- 17th-19th July Wentworth Woodhouse & Newby Hall - 3 days
- 31st July - 7th August .. The Majestic English Riviera - 8 days
- 9th-11th August Blackpool Airshow - 3 days.....
- 14th - 16th August Stratford Upon Avon cream tea cruise & Chatsworth House - 3 days
- 20th - 26th September... Elegant Guernsey & Scenic Sark - 7 days.....
- 2nd - 5th October Autumn in the Lakes - 4 days
- 15th - 20th October Delights of Donegal & Wild Atlantic Way - **SOLD OUT**
- 6th- 9th November Turkey & Tinsel in Bridlington - 4 days
- 14th-16th November ... Christmas at Chatsworth House - 3 days
- 27th - 29th November ... Piece Hall at Christmas - 3 days
- 6th-8th December Thursford Christmas Spectacular - 3 days
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Day tours 2026

- 11th March Preston Hall Market & Fish n Chip Special
- 23rd April Harrogate Flower show
- 7th May Holy Island & Seahouses
- 4th June Knaresborough & Leyburn
- 16th June Lunch at Dumfries House
- 2nd July Scampston Hall & Walled gardens
- 15th July Great Yorkshire Show
- 25th July Kynren
- 12th August Whitby
- 19th August Skipton Market Day
- 8th September Ullswater steamer & Pooley Bridge
- 18th September .. Autumn Harrogate Flower show
- 30th September .. Lancaster & Kendal
- 6th October Falkirk Wheel & Kelpies

Day tour list available soon.

Pick up points for day tours include: Chollerford, Hexham, Corbridge Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle

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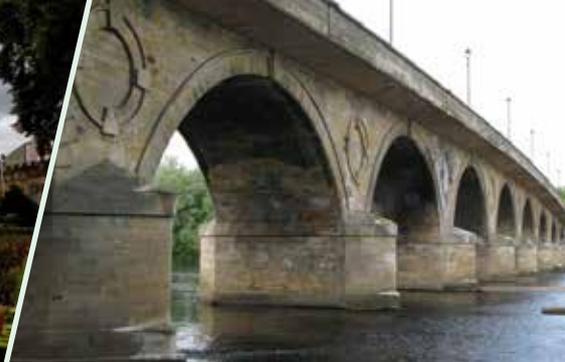
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What's On

CORBRIDGE, HEXHAM & ACOMB

NATIONAL TRUST TYNE VALLEY ASSOCIATION

On Monday, 19th January 2026, D. Blackett's talk is 'Deeds not Words' - The Knott Family

On Monday, 16th February, Ms Pat Lowery's talk is 'Crossing the Tyne'. Refreshments are served from 2 o'clock, followed by the talk at 2.30pm. The Priors Hall, Hexham Abbey. jackie.wood@gmx.co.uk

HEXHAM VILLAGE BAND

Community ceilidh band, for players of any portable acoustic instrument. Meets Saturday mornings 10.00 – 11.30. We learn by ear and play by heart. For players new to this music we run The Hamlet Band, which meets on Friday mornings. West End Church Hall
hexhamvillageband@gmail.com

HEXHAM ART CLUB

We are a community art club that meets every Tuesday 1.00 - 3.30pm in Hexham Community Centre. We are a friendly group with members producing paintings and drawings in a range of media. If interested in joining contact: hexhamartclub@gmail.com
Hexham Community Centre
andyroberts.rdesign@gmail.com

HEXHAM INDOOR MARKET

Our monthly indoor market runs from March to November 10-3pm usually the second Saturday of the month full details can be got on CH Event Facebook page
Hexham Abbey
cherylhutchinson@hotmail.com

PROPERTY SALES & LETTINGS DROP-IN SESSION

Free advice for buyers, sellers, landlords and tenants from EweMove Sales and Lettings (Hexham & Tyne Valley). Have a chat and a cuppa from 1-3pm (Tuesdays). Local charities benefit as part of our commitment to supporting the community. inside Newcastle Building Society, Beaumont Street. 07486054307

CREATIVE WRITING

These friendly classes will inspire and encourage you to write fiction, poetry and memoir, and offer supportive feedback to help you develop your work. New members welcome – try a free taster session. Hexham cafes
clare.judith.lynn@gmail.com

WOMEN'S WALKING FOOTBALL

Are you interested in a friendly game of Women's Walking Football at Wentworth Leisure Centre. Please contact 07525 211485 if you would like to be involved. Wentworth Leisure Centre. 07525 211485

DRU YOGA CLASSES

A full range of yoga and qi gong classes at the wabi Sabi attic studio Hexham. See fb wabi Sabi Dru yoga. 9:30 -10:40 Wednesday & Fridays. 18:00 - 19:00 Thursday. 19:15-20:30 Thursday
Wabi Sabi studio. 07545865009

CORBRIDGE BRIDGE CLUB

Corbridge Bridge Club meet at Corbridge Parish Hall Mondays 7pm - 10pm Duplicate and Tuesdays 1.00pm -4.00pm Aggregate. New members welcome. For further details contact. Corbridge Parish Hall secretarycorbridgebridgeclub@gmail.com

HEXHAM TOWN WI

We meet on the 3rd Monday of each month in the heart of Hexham at 7.00pm. Come along and join in our next meeting and see what we can offer you? Our meetings are interesting, informative and most importantly friendly. Hexham Community Centre. 07790 108273

JIVEALIVE

We are Hexham's Modern Jive group, a friendly group meeting weekly, Weds 8-10pm. No partner necessary; tuition most sessions, beginners welcome! Surplus funds go to local charities. JiveAlive@googlegroups.com or find us on Facebook. Torch Centre, Hexham 07800 988612

ALPINE PLANT SHOW

Alpine plant show and plant fair will be held 4th October 2025 at Hexham Auction Mart. Plant sales start 10 am, Show hall opens approx 11.00am. Several plant nurseries will be in attendance plus member's table selling plants. Large FREE car park, Admission £3.00.

Hexham Auction Mart
alan.alpine1@gmail.com

HEXHAM BEACON CLUB

We are a club for Retired

Gentlemen. We host a non political, non denominational gathering most Wednesday mornings between 10:30 and 12:00. Guest Speakers feature each week on interesting subjects along with coffee and biscuits. All are welcome.
Hexham. plholmes4@gmail.com
Hexham. plholmes4@gmail.com

HEXHAM BRASS BAND

Hexham Brass are a friendly band playing and performing a wide range of music from show/film tunes to pop to classic brass band music. We welcome new players of all ages and abilities, playing every Tuesday 7.15pm to 9pm West End Methodist Church
info@hexhambrass.co.uk

HEXHAM ARMY CADETS

We parade each Monday and Thursday between 7pm and 9pm. For both girls and boys 12yrs (yr 8 at school) to 18yrs. We do lots of activities such as Fieldcraft, Shooting, Expeditions, First Aid and the Duke of Edinburgh award. TA Centre, Hencotes.07972641665

HEXHAM BRIDGE CLUB

Hexham Bridge Club meets on Thursday evenings at 6.45pm. Friendly, competitive duplicate bridge. Tuition for beginners is available. Courses usually start in September. New members and visitors are welcome at any time, however please contact us beforehand.
Hexham Community Centre
contactus@hexhambridgeclub.org.uk

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Sunday of every month (except August) 10.30am-12.30pm. Games, craft, songs, stories and a free light lunch for everyone! We would love to see you!
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01434 601113

MORRIS DANCING

Women meet every Monday in West End Methodist Church Hall, Hexham 7.30pm-9pm. Men meet every Thursday in Acomb Village Hall (Sep – May) from 7.30pm. Come and see what we do, no obligation to join. 0780 9609166

HEXHAM PROBUS CLUB

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Connection through community, participating in Women's and Men's Circles.

Women's men's or mixed groups, circles are unravelling the healing of being deeply human, the need and peace gained to be witnessed, supported and understood.

These spaces can create a powerful social alchemy for true connection a platform for release acceptance and freedom allowing those who engage to deepen their joy and inner peace.

Women's Circles

Circles have been taking place for thousands of years. At their simplest, women's circles are where women sit together in a circle around a central alter. There are opportunities to talk and listen, and usually you hold something like a crystal or stick when it's your turn to speak.

Importantly, other women don't offer advice or pass judgement. It's not therapy, but a safe container to hear and be heard. The idea is to not save or problem solve, the medicine is just being heard from an open heart.

There's no set way for women's circles to run and the rituals of each are different. Some incorporate, health and wellness, movement, songs, craft, food, moon phases or dance.

Women's circles can be whatever you want them to be. A chance to tap into your inner feminine goddess if you want, or simply a place to sit down with other women and find sisterhood.

Some of the most meaningful benefits identified claim to offer:

Shared emotional support foster community and healing.

A space where women can express vulnerability without judgment, can reduce feelings of isolation.

Strengthened selfworth

Being heard and validated by other women reinforces confidence and personal agency.

Collective wisdom

Women often share lived experiences, insights, and coping strategies that help others navigate similar challenges and reflect on their own journeys in a gentle nurturing way.

Healing from comparison culture

Circles foster collaboration over competition reducing self-criticism. Helping women unlearn societal pressure or notice family dynamic triggers that may have led them to compare themselves.

Reconnection with feminine energy

Many circles explore creativity, intuition, and embodiment practices that help women feel grounded and enhance empowerment in all life roles.

Honouring Life's Cycles: They recognize the importance of rest and renewal, encouraging participants to embrace the natural cycles of life.

Personal and Spiritual Growth: Circles facilitate personal development through shared experiences and practices, such as meditation, breathwork journaling or even conscious dance.

Men's Circles

A transformative movement is taking place, known as breaking the silence, men are gathering in intimate circles to talk openly and honestly about their feelings, mental health challenges, and personal struggles" the Guardian (2025). These men's circles whether in-person or online are offering a space for men to speak up, break down emotional barriers, and redefine traditional masculine norms.

Participants at Men's Circle or Andy's Man Club, are encouraged to share their emotions and experiences with vulnerability. The facilitator's role is to ensure that the group follows guidelines remains respectful, non-judgemental, a chance to speak and be singularly head from the heart. When souls open, the real magic happens.

What may begin as a hesitant and shy sharing transforms into an outpouring of raw emotion. And, surprisingly, most men do talk during their first session.

As men begin to share, they uncover deep-rooted feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and unspoken fears. These circles can give them the tools and space to reflect on what is often suppressed or ignored in everyday life. The act of verbalising one's struggles with other men who truly listen, in a safe circle is an experience that many men, unfamiliar with such openness, find healing and cathartic.

Sessions typically focus on emotional literacy, accountability, wellness, mindfulness and healthy masculinity.

The main shared benefits include:

A safe space for vulnerability

Many men lack easy access environments where they can openly share struggles; circles allow for emotional expression in a gentle judgement free space.

Healthy masculine rolemodelling

Men can witness others expressing strength and softness, expanding their understanding of masculinity in today's world, with many adaptations to family roles and responsibilities.

Accountability and integrity

Circles often encourage men to take responsibility for their actions and personal conscious growth.

Reduced loneliness

Male loneliness is considered to be a major issue; circles create genuine brotherhood and belonging.

Tools for emotional regulation

Breathwork, yoga, meditation, relaxation, connection with nature and alternative communication practices. Can help men pause, ponder, reflect and action for better resilience to mental and emotional stress.

A Women's and Men's circles in Tyne Valley that you could join;

Women's soulful circle Northumberland Recovery College:

wabi sabi Hexham Friday's 11-12:30am

Contact: nrc@everyturn.org

Andys Man Club :

Hexham Tyne Green, Mondays 7-9pm

Hexham Mart - Tyne Green, Hexham, United Kingdom

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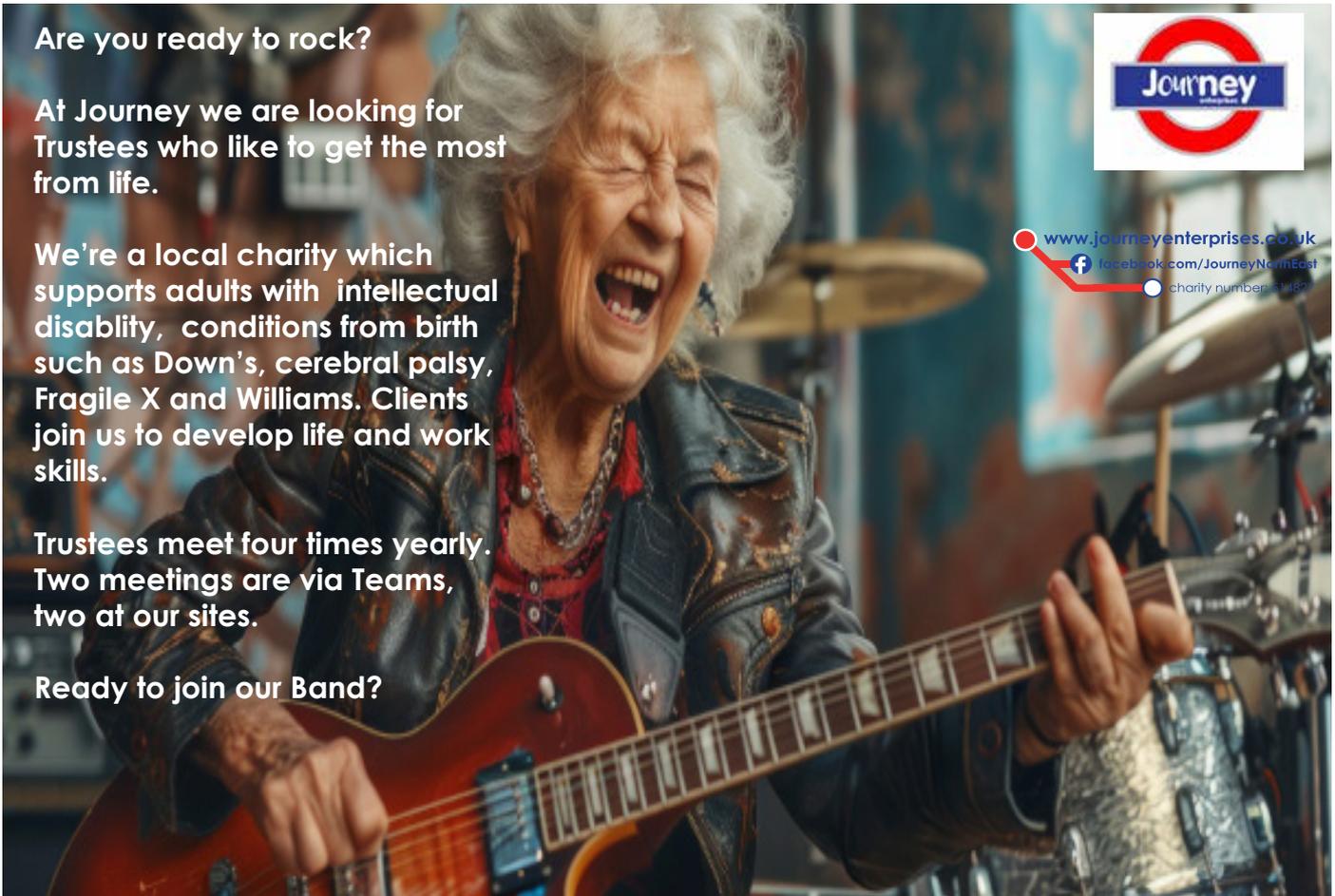
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
1	5	21	11	20		10	21	25	12	22	21	23	8
2	19		21	8			23		20		9		6
3	1	13	22	6	20	5	24		24	1	9	2	5
4	20		6		12		4		21		25		21
5	21	8	8		15		20		14	15	1	23	8
6	12				23	7	12	14	4		20		11
7	6		6		5			7		8			21
8	5		23		24	1	16	20	5				23
9	4	6	2	20	25		20		6		20	21	24
10	23		26		21		4		9		17		21
11	20	3	20	9	24		21	12	21	18	6	23	13
12	5		22		20		22		22		22		20
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H M F E J B D T S A E F X P L
R H O L Y W A T E R R C E L R
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- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| BLESSED | JORDAN |
| CAKE | MAGI |
| CHALKING | PLOUGH MONDAY |
| FEAST | SINGING |
| GALILEE | SWIMMING |
| GENTILES | THREE KINGS |
| HOLY WATER | TWELFTH NIGHT |
| JESUS | |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
					I							G

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		B										

Enter the letter in each circled cell in the order given below to reveal a themed answer:

1H	9G	1C	9K	12K	9L	3I	13D	5J	2G

Winner will be chosen at random from the correct entries. Solutions will be available on our website from the next edition.

		4	2					8		
3								5		
				3				9	1	
		2	9							4
			7					5		
4								3	7	
			4	7		3				
				5						6
			5					4	2	

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The world's largest garden wildlife survey returns, with hundreds of thousands of people watching and counting the UK's garden birds over the last weekend in January for the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

Last year over 600,000 people took part, counting more than 9.7 million birds, and over 4,000 of those passionate counters were right here in Northumberland.

This year's event takes place on 23, 24 and 25 January 2026. People in Northumberland are being asked to spend an hour watching and counting the birds in their garden or local park, or from their balcony, then send their results to the RSPB.

Beccy Speight, the RSPB's Chief Executive, said: "At its heart, Big Garden Birdwatch is an opportunity for people to spend an hour watching, enjoying, and connecting with the wildlife on their doorstep. From chirpy House Sparrows to acrobatic Blue Tits, the entertaining antics of our garden birds can brighten even the dullest day and bring a welcome dose of nature into our everyday lives. By taking part in the Birdwatch, you and hundreds of thousands of other nature lovers across the UK, play an important role in helping us understand how garden birds are doing. With the nature and climate emergency threatening even our most familiar birds, every count matters. It's good for wildlife and evidence shows it's good for our own wellbeing."

Last year's UK wide Big Garden Birdwatch results revealed that House Sparrow held on to the top spot for another year, with Blue Tit riding high at number two and Starling coming in at number three. Woodpigeon and Blackbird made up the remainder of the top five most recorded species.

Although 1.4 million House Sparrows were spotted across the January weekend last year, they have sadly suffered severe declines. Average numbers spotted in gardens, parks and community spaces have dropped 60% since the first Big Garden Birdwatch in 1979.

Over its four decades, Big Garden Birdwatch has highlighted the winners and losers in the garden bird world. The Blue Tit and Great Tit, much-loved garden species, have seen their average numbers rise by 24% and 61% respectively. While species such as the Starling, currently

at number two in the Big Garden Birdwatch charts, has seen its numbers drop by more than 80% since 1979.

To take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch 2025, watch the birds on your balcony, in your garden or in your local green space for one hour at some point over the three days. Only count the birds that land, not those flying over. Tell us the highest number of each bird species you see at any one time – not the total you see in the hour.

To receive your **FREE Big Garden Birdwatch guide**, which includes a bird identification chart, top tips for your Birdwatch, RSPB shop voucher, plus advice on how to help you attract wildlife to your garden, text BIRD to 82727, or you can choose a free digital guide (which helps the RSPB spend more on nature by reducing costs) by visiting: www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch



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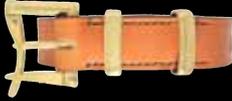
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