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SUMMER 2025

# in the MORPETH e



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to represent King Charles in county**

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# inside MORPETH

**Every now and then we can all perhaps be a little guilty of being too complacent about what's all around us right under our very noses. Take living in Northumberland, for instance. Living where we do means that we are never far from some of the most precious historic and natural treasures that people come to our county to marvel at.**

Hadrian's Wall, Bamburgh and Alnwick Castles, the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, Kielder Water and the forests around it, the rolling hills of The Cheviots and the magnificent beaches that stretch the length of our coastline, are just a few of those world-renowned treasures on our doorsteps.

Then, within touching distance of Morpeth, we have the three National Trust properties of Wallington Hall, Cragside and Delaval Hall, plus English Heritage's Belsay Hall which are all magnificent examples of quintessential English country homes and gardens once owned by the rich and famous Armstrong Trevelyan, Delaval and Middleton families, that each and every one of us now can visit and enjoy to our heart's content.

In our summer edition, we bring you news of events taking place over the next few weeks at Wallington, Cragside and Delaval Hall, as well explaining how you also might be lucky enough to watch members of Belsay Hall Croquet Club enjoying the game in the glorious setting of its walled garden.

We were also delighted that Jack Brodie, our young Deputy Editor, was able to meet and talk with former Newminster School teacher Dr Caroline Pryer, about taking over the role of being the King's representative as Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland.

It is a ceremonial title that dates back to the days of Henry VIII, and in this edition, Dr Pryer exclusively tells us how honoured she feels to be following in the footsteps of her illustrious predecessors in being the personal representative of their monarchs of their day for Northumberland, in her case, of course, King Charles.

There's a busy summer coming up in our area, so let's all enjoy the events... and hopefully, some warm sunny weather!

*Ian Leech*

Editor of Inside Morpeth

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**Front cover:** Dr Caroline Pryer, now Northumberland's Lord Lieutenant

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# From military daughter to Royal representative

Inside Morpeth Deputy Editor **Jack Brodie** in conversation with **Dr Caroline Pryer**, Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland

**Like many ceremonial positions up and down the country, the role of Lord Lieutenant carries with it a rich history and tradition with the first recorded Lieutenancies being granted in the Tudor days of Henry VIII. In Northumberland, Dr Caroline Pryer - a former Morpeth schoolteacher - took on this prestigious role as the most senior representative of King Charles in the county, just over 12 months ago. Recently, I had the privilege of sitting down with Dr Pryer to learn about her journey, her connection to the military and what the role means for communities across the county.**

Dr Pryer who comes from a military family, spent her childhood following her father's postings with the King's Own Scottish Borderers' regiment. "We went to Africa, Germany, America, Singapore and closer to home at Edinburgh, because that was what the routine was in those days when families would follow the soldiers," she explained. This early exposure to different cultures and communities would prove invaluable in her future role representing the Crown across Northumberland's diverse landscape.

Her journey to become Lord Lieutenant began in 2010 when she was invited to become one of her deputies by Her Grace Jane, Duchess of Northumberland. "One of our duties as deputies was to represent the Duchess at Remembrance Sunday services in our own particular areas, while it was also a great privilege to join Her Grace at her garden parties at Alnwick Castle," said Dr Pryer. More formally, deputies have always had the chance to put forward nominations for honours in the monarch's Birthday or New Year's honours' lists.

Whilst recognising the importance of ceremonial duties associated with the lieutenancy, Dr Pryer also saw an opportunity to make a greater impact through her role as a Deputy Lord Lieutenant. So, when she became Vice Lord Lieutenant in 2021, Dr Pryer took on the responsibilities for the King's Award for Voluntary Service, and under her guidance, nominations grew from just two groups to 11 in the current cycle.

As she told me she had been 'proud as punch' when asked by the Duchess to become one of her deputies, so you can imagine her feelings when she was first appointed Vice Lord Lieutenant and then ultimately receiving the approval of the King to succeed Her Grace in the top job!

The transition to Lord Lieutenant came early in 2024 when the Duchess announced her retirement after fulfilling the role for 15 years, as the monarch's senior representative in Northumberland, and the process began to select her successor through thorough and extensive research, involving Mr Richard Tilbrook the Prime Minister's appointment secretary. He conducted detailed research and interviews with 16 candidates,



Dr Caroline Pryer pictured in her Lord Lieutenant's uniform

and when she was chosen Dr Pryer received her invitation letter offering the post from Rishi Sunak in March 2024, followed by the formal approval of King Charles a few weeks later.

What followed was something of a dash and with only three weeks to prepare for her first engagement as Lord Lieutenant, the race was on to fit her with her ceremonial uniform – that of an honorary general in the Army complete with epaulettes adorned with a rose and crown - before the event. "The uniform measuring and fitting required a few trips to specialist tailors in London, starting with a very early morning train from Newcastle," Dr Pryer recalled.

By wearing a general's uniform, Dr Pryer also found that she actually out-ranked her father David Ward, who served as a Lieutenant-Colonel in his regiment. As she added, however, with a smile: "He would have been tickled pink to see me in my uniform – absolutely thrilled!" She also recalled a particular moving moment when she wore her uniform to meet one of her father's best friends. "Robert cried and was so moved when he said how proud my father would have been to see me dressed in my uniform," said Dr Pryer.

One of her first priorities as Lord Lieutenant was to ensure that her 29 deputies represent the entire county of Northumberland, in the best possible way. "My concern is to find people who





Inside Morpeth's Jack Brodie meets Dr Pryer



The Lord Lieutenant with three of her services cadets

understand, know or have connections at grass roots level right across the county, who know what is going on in the urban areas of Ashington, Bedlington and Blyth, for instance, as well as the rural communities in the county," she said.

During her first 12 months in her role, Dr Pryer has taken part in some memorable events. Just four days into her role, she presided over D-Day commemorations where she was supported by three of her five personal young cadets from the Army, Sea Cadets and Air Force services.

Since then she has co-ordinated a visit by Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, that brought together 150 young cadets and showcased recipients of his award scheme, at the Army Cadets HQ in Cramlington, before also attending a reception for all the Lord Lieutenants, at Windsor Castle with the King.

Perhaps the most poignant moment in the Lieutenancy came, however, when Dr Pryer was invited to lay a wreath during the unveiling of a headstone in memory of two RAF aircrewmen who lost their lives when their Tornado crashed into field behind a farmhouse between Ingoe and Kirkheaton, in 1999. In reading her briefing notes about the ceremony, Dr Pryer realised an extraordinary co-incidence involving her own family, was about to happen,

"I stopped in my tracks because we were the family living in that very farmhouse at the time," she said. "I was a supply teacher at Morpeth's Newminster School and we had just moved down from Berwick, when the crash happened. Twenty-five years later I found myself dressed in my uniform as Lord Lieutenant, giving my personal address about the impact the crash had on our community and how much the loss of two airmen meant to us. It was an extraordinary moment."

My conversation with Dr Pryer left me feeling that she is bringing not only her own personal experiences to the role, but a deep appreciation of the work of so many voluntary organisations that form the backbone of Northumberland's diverse communities. She is also particularly passionate about increasing the number of the region's representatives receiving national honours because as she told me: "Only six per cent of honours go to people in the Northern region."

Through active engagement with communities across such a geographically diverse county – Northumberland is the third largest parliamentary constituency in the country – Dr Pryer hopes to identify and celebrate more local heroes whilst also making the Lieutenancy accessible to all. "My aim is to get a good cross-section of people covering the whole of the county and all walks of life, associated with the Lieutenancy."

Anyone wanting to learn more about the Lord Lieutenant's office, or about nominating individuals for honours, or groups for the King's Award for Voluntary Services, can find information available through the Northumberland County Council website.

## Lord Lieutenancy Factfile

**The office of Lord Lieutenant is one that is steeped in history, dating back as it does to the reign of Henry VIII, when Tudor monarchs needed to strengthen their military forces around the country.**

Lieutenants were first appointed by the King to 'muster the county militia for the defence of the realm and to guard against internal revolt'. They had powers to lead the militia in the field of battle and to raise forces locally. In essence, their job was to stand-in for the king on the battlefield, as well as playing an important role in maintaining law and order in their areas and keeping their sovereign informed as to what was happening in their localities. Currently, there are 98 Lord Lieutenants who cover all areas of the UK. They are all unpaid posts, and the holders of office are non-political appointments.

Of course, their roles have changed since the days of Henry VIII, and the main duties of the representatives of The Crown these days, include arranging and supporting Royal visits to their Lieutenancy; advising the monarch on nominations for honours; identifying companies and enterprises that might be considered as recipients of the King's Award for Enterprise; maintaining a close liaison with charities

and encouraging some to be considered for the King's Award for Voluntary Service; presenting medals, including the British Empire Medal, and King's awards; continuing links with civic authorities, the armed services including their cadet forces and emergency services; and supporting and attending Citizenship ceremonies. Lord Lieutenants wear a military-style uniform on ceremonial occasions, similar to a one worn by an Army General.

The first holder of the office in our county is recorded as being Henry Percy, the 3rd Earl of Northumberland. Since then there have been 34 holders of the title, 12 of them being Earls or Dukes of Northumberland. Most recently, the 10th Duke of Northumberland was Lord Lieutenant of the county from 1956 to 1942, followed by Viscount Matthew Ridley – who was also chairman of Northumberland County Council – from 1984 to the year 2000. Lord Ridley was succeeded by Sir John Riddell, who was the Private Secretary to the Prince Charles and Princess Diana for five years, and he was followed in 2009 by Jane, Duchess of Northumberland, the first lady to hold office as Lord Lieutenant. Twelve months ago Dr Caroline Pryer was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland by King Charles.





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The Morpeth team celebrating their cup win.

# Howay the Morpeth lasses!

**Morpeth Town women wrapped up their season with a dramatic, last-gasp victory over league champions Berwick Rangers in the Northumberland League Cup Final at Newcastle Benfield. It was very much deserved after an inspired performance against strong opposition. By Paul Barwick.**

Morpeth won promotion along with Berwick in their first playing season and both teams were competing at the top of the Premier League this current season only for a catalogue of injuries to derail Morpeth's post-New Year form resulting in an eventual third place finish. But the opportunity to grab the team's first silverware was taken as the women won 2-1 with Ellie Gilmore striking in injury time to clinch the win.

Morpeth, sporting their away colours of sky blue, were kicking against a stiff breeze in the first half and had the better of the chances. The hard, bobbly pitch was making controlled football difficult but the ladies will have been happy to reach the half-time break with the game scoreless.

The second half followed the same pattern with Morpeth pressing and they took the lead in the 57th minute. Having won a corner, Rose McLean's deep delivery was

bundled in by Keira Davidson at the far post despite a despairing effort to clear off the line by a Berwick defender.

An opportunity to double the lead came shortly after as Orla Callaghan was tripped by the Berwick keeper when clean through, but the keeper saved Callaghan's penalty low to her right.

Berwick, who are a much more experienced team, pushed hard for an equaliser, but the Morpeth defence of O'Shea, Todd, Carr and Redpath were outstanding in repelling their attacks and in truth, keeper Pargeter was rarely tested.

However, with the clock ticking down, Berwick equalised when a low corner evaded everyone and was stabbed into the net by the Robinson to level the scores.

With the prospect of penalties looming, coach James Callaghan brought Anna Pratt on – the fourth player aged 17 or younger on the pitch for Morpeth – and it was Pratt who nudged a ball forward in added time for Gilmore to race clear and steer a shot into the corner of the net.

A tense couple of minutes were comfortably played out before the referee's final whistle signalled huge celebrations from the Morpeth team and their supporters. An outstanding all-round performance where every player played their part saw Morpeth deservedly claim the cup.



SQUAD: PARGETER, JONES, REDPATH, TODD, CARR, MCLEAN, JARDINE, SMITH, DAVIDSON, CALLAGHAN, GILMORE, FEETHAM, CHRISP, MILLER, PRATT, PHILLIPS, DARBY, O'SHEA.





The volunteers who help look after the Turner Garden in Carlisle Park

# The Morpeth man who truly knew his plants

Another of Morpeth's celebrated names from the past has been recognised with the unveiling of a new heritage display board detailing the life, the times and the achievements of William Turner, acclaimed by many over the past five centuries as the 'Father of English botany.' Appropriately, the board has been placed in a garden named after Turner, in Morpeth's Carlisle Park **writes Ian Leech.**

The board is the latest in a series commissioned by Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT), which has worked closely on their research and design with students from the town's King Edward VI School (KEVI), as well as with Northumberland and Morpeth Town councils and councillors.

Late last year four boards were unveiled at and in St Mary's Churchyard as well as the High Stanners, featuring Morpeth notables such as suffragette Emily Wilding Davison, Admiral Lord Collingwood, artist Joseph Crawhall and Epsom Derby winning jockeys Ralph Bullock and his nephew Billy. One board also featured a corner of the churchyard where soldiers and airmen from both World Wars including flyers from the Polish Air Force, are buried.

KEVI student Amy Wardle, who worked with six fellow classmates on the first display boards, has designed the new board with some assistance from Frances Povey of Northumberland County Council, and Dr Marie Addyman, an authority on the life of William Turner. Her teacher Sheila Clark told Inside Morpeth, that working on the board was the first 'real

brief' for Amy who hopes to follow a career in graphic design.

"Developing the signs and learning about the town's history and some of its notable characters of the past, has been an enriching and challenging experience for our students," she said. "Every one of them has welcomed the chance to do something different outside the classroom, that has been of benefit to our community at large. They have all said that they feel they are leaving a legacy behind them as they head off into their new lives beyond school."

Dai Richards, who leads the signage project on behalf of GMDT, which has commissioned other heritage boards around town in the past, said they are giving both local residents and visitors, the chance to learn more about the town and the lives of some famous people who were either born in, or have been associated with Morpeth. More boards, he says, are in the offing including one about the school itself, and another focusing on the history of Morpeth's Victorian railway station and its recent restoration and transformation into a modern transport hub.





## WILLIAM TURNER FACTFILE

William Turner was born in 1508 in Morpeth, the son of a local tanner. A plaque on the wall of The Chantry building alongside Telford Bridge, recalls that he was educated there when it was a grammar school, before he went to Cambridge to study at Pembroke Hall, graduating with two degrees in medicine in the early 1530s.

Turner is reported to have spent much of his time in the study of plants in their native habitat, describing them in greater detail and accuracy than ever before. His masterpiece *A New Herball* first published in 1551, contained the names and descriptions of plants, often including their properties and medicinal virtues, and its great significance was that it was the first to be written in English.

Two further parts of the *Herball* were published in 1562 and 1568. Together, they identified plants and their medicinal uses more accurately than ever before and led to Turner being acclaimed as the 'Father of English Botany'. Because of his Calvinist religious leanings Turner spent time in exile during the Catholic reign of Mary Tudor, particularly in Italy. When he returned to England he became a royal physician before being appointed as Dean of Wells Cathedral.

William Turner died in 1568. In 2004 the then Castle Morpeth Borough Council was able to revamp Carlisle Park thanks to a grant of £1.2m from the National Lottery Fund, which included the creation of the William Turner Garden displaying features associated with botany and

medicines in and after, his lifetime. That same year the council was invited to recreate a miniature version of the Turner Garden at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show where it was awarded a Royal Horticultural Bronze Medal.

### Who was William Turner?

*Reproduced with the kind permission of Dr Marie Addyman*

For the past 20 years I have been researching, writing and lecturing on William Turner's life, works and times to find an answer to this question.

I would say he was the first great English naturalist. He wrote centuries before John Ray, Charles Darwin or David Attenborough. He had no contemporary English colleagues, so he worked within a European framework.

Turner was the first person to write about birds, fishes and plants. We cannot represent birds and fishes in a garden, but we can represent plants as in the Carlisle Park Turner garden. So, for the past 18 to 24 months I have provided authentic plants and information, while other volunteers have contributed hard graft and horticultural expertise in order to hand over this garden to the care of Northumberland County Council's Green Spaces team.

Turner identified plants in the interests of medicine or, as he called it, 'physic'. His physic is not what we would recommend today (though herbal medicine of a different kind is flourishing). He used poisons for adults and children in a way that would horrify us. Likewise, his image



Dr Marie Addyman

of the body was deficient in many ways; for instance, he and his contemporaries did not understand the mechanics of conception, or the circulation of blood.

But, it was his ethical desire to make sure his colleagues were prescribing correctly identified plants which led Turner to scrutinise, collect and describe plants in a way which had never been done before in England. Some of his descriptions of plants, as well as birds and fishes, constitute first records. Some plants are given names in every day use today - spindle and rowan for trees; loosestrife and monkshood for perennials.

So, don't use the plants in Turner's way. But, admire the man's tenacity and diligence. Our natural history knowledge depends on a tradition originating in his efforts.



# Young writers win Rotary awards

**Local school children have won Morpeth Rotary Club's writing competition exploring the theme of 'wonderful water', gaining the opportunity to work with North East author Emma Whitehall (pictured with members of the Morpeth Rotary Club holding a copy of her latest book).**

The second year of Morpeth Rotary Club's Young Writer Competition welcomed three winners: Emilia Turnbull from Chantry Middle School for the junior category, Imogen Oakton from Newminster Middle School for the intermediate category and Eve Hendy from KEVI for the senior category. The prompt 'wonderful water' was taken in a completely different direction by each writer, according to judge Emma Whitehall, making it hard for her to pick a winner. Deciding to go with the entry that made her feel the most, Emma claimed: "Connection between the author and the reader is, I think, literal magic."

Her decision gave the three winners in



Judge Emma Whitehall with Eleanor Hedley, Emma and Gary Witheyman from Morpeth Rotary Club

each category a £50 Waterstones gift card and, along with second place senior winner Alex Eccleston from KEVI, the chance to develop their writing skills in an immersive workshop held by Emma. The workshop concluded with one last gift for the entrants, a copy of one of Emma Whitehall's books, signed personally.

Aside from sparking further inspiration in each young writer with her informative workshop, she also provided feedback on what exactly made each winner's story stick out to her. On 'Soluble', Eve Hendy's short story, she commented: "I could see everything so clearly in my mind as I read! The last line being a reflection of the

first is so powerful, too; it reads like an inevitable tragedy."

It's safe to say that the competition certainly allowed the young writers of Morpeth to get their brains engaged in doing something they're passionate about, making a friendly, competitive environment that gave the creative minds some motivation to share their work. Both the competition and Emma's workshop pushed and challenged each participant, forcing them out of their comfort zone with a theme to inspire their work. The Morpeth Rotary Club gave its local youth a chance to put themselves out there and establish themselves as one of Morpeth's young creatives through this competition.

Alongside the Young Writer Competition, Morpeth's Rotary Club were also proud to host a Young Artist and Young Photographer Competition. They hope to continue them next year with the support of their sponsors, the anticipated theme being around 'happiness in nature'. This year's sponsors, Steven Greenlaw from Lateral Art, Joss Guest Photography and David Auld solicitors, provided the entrants with workshops free of charge, making these competitions possible.

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# Anyone for croquet?

By Ian Leech

**Picture the scene! It's a gloriously warm and sunny early summer afternoon in the picturesque grounds of the splendid Belsay Hall eight or nine miles west of Morpeth and I am there to report on another Inside Morpeth story. Perhaps all that was missing to set the quintessential English scene the day I was there, was a glass of Pimm's No 1 or a refreshingly cool Gin & Tonic. Yes, dear readers, being part of our reporting team can sometimes be a tough job, but someone has to do it to bring you the stories you like to read!**

The reason for my visit was to meet some of the members of Belsay Hall Croquet Club to learn more about their enthusiasm for the game and to find out how anyone from the area can join them in a game that has been played in such glorious surroundings for nigh on 200 years.

Croquet probably began as a popular pastime among what might be considered the landed gentry of the day perhaps because they were more likely to have the means to enjoy the game with its need for a neatly manicured and flat grass surface on which to play. With no lawn mowers around at the time, gardeners skilled in the expert use of a scythe and a roller, would have been needed to prepare an appropriate surface for croquet.

There are two theories surrounding the origins of the game – one being that it was first played in France (croquet is a French word) when it was known as Pall Mall, and the second that it began in Ireland as a game called 'Crookey' before being taken up by the French. Whichever theory is correct, the game became increasingly popular towards the late 19th Century.

Today, the game still has a popular following and there are eight clubs including Belsay playing in the region from Bamburgh to Middlesbrough – none it is probably fair to say in such a splendid setting as the walled garden in the grounds of the Hall. Club members describe themselves as 'guests' of English Heritage at Belsay, which of course, is open to the public, and in a way, they



Enjoying a game of croquet on the Belsay Hall walled garden lawn

become part of the visitor attraction in the grounds and gardens with people often stopping to watch the games in progress.

Belsay's history can be traced back to the 13th Century, when the Middleton family first lived there in a medieval castle and then in a Greek Revival Regency-style mansion built around the 1820s. The family moved out of the great hall into smaller premises at Belsay in 1962. English Heritage now runs and manages the house and 30 acres of delightful gardens.

The croquet club has been playing at Belsay since 1989 and now has almost 40 members drawn from Morpeth, the Tyne Valley and Ponteland areas. They pay a modest membership fee as well as being required to become a member of English Heritage, which allows them to play as often as they wish during the season.

I met with Club Vice-chairman and Treasurer Alan Mundy, and Phil Errington who has played croquet at Belsay for more than 25 years, and they told me that the game can be enjoyed by people of all ages with beginners and new members always welcome to join. As they explained, two variations of croquet can be played – Golf

Croquet and Association Croquet – under slightly different rules.

All that a newcomer needs to begin playing is a pair of flat soled shoes as equipment such as mallets, balls and hoops can be provided free of charge by the club. Ongoing coaching, support and advice, is also given by members to help newcomers develop their croquet skills. However, club etiquette requires players to wear all-white clothing if they decide to join as members.

"Some members play socially only while others enjoy internal and external competitions, but either way croquet is great way to make friends and meet new people," said Alan and Phil agreed. "Croquet is healthy for the mind and body," he said. "On a day like today croquet is a wonderful way of exercising and enjoying the fresh air in lovely surroundings, and it is also stimulating for the mind and soul," he said.

Regular 'taster' sessions are available at Belsay Croquet Club for newcomers to give the game a try and see if it is for them. To book a taster session click on [belsaycroquet.org/taster](http://belsaycroquet.org/taster)



# WHAT DOES MARTIN LEWIS THINK ABOUT EQUITY RELEASE?

Thoughts from Money Saving Expert, Martin Lewis on Equity Release  
By Joanne Manghan, North East Equity Release

**W**hen it comes to managing money, few names are as well-known and trusted as Martin Lewis. As the founder of Money Saving Expert, he has helped millions of consumers navigate everything from energy bills to savings accounts. When Martin speaks, many people listen, and equity release is a topic he has addressed more than once. Naturally, people want to know, what does Martin Lewis think about it?

## A WORD OF CAUTION

While Martin does not dismiss equity release, he encourages people to proceed with caution, offering this advice:

*"While it can provide life-changing benefits for some, it isn't suitable for everyone."*

*"Always speak to a qualified financial adviser and involve your family in the decision."*

*"If you need money, take it as late as possible and as little as possible."*

- Martin Lewis

Equity release can be an effective way to access funds later in life, but it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Martin's comments remind us that it is a significant financial commitment that should be carefully considered.

## ALTERNATIVES TO EQUITY RELEASE

Martin also encourages homeowners to explore alternative options before committing to equity release. These include:

- Downsizing and selling your home
- Looking into unclaimed state benefits
- Exploring other financial strategies

These options may allow you to access the funds you need without the potential long-term impact that can come with equity release. Downsizing, in particular, can be a sensible alternative, especially if it reduces your living costs and releases capital without incurring interest charges.

## UNDERSTANDING COMPOUND INTEREST

One of the most commonly misunderstood aspects of equity release is how the interest accumulates

over time. Most equity release mortgages do not require monthly repayments. Instead, the interest is added to the loan each month. As this interest builds up, you begin to pay interest not only on the original loan amount, but also on the interest that has already been added. This is known as compound interest.

### Example:

- You borrow £30,000 at 6 percent interest
- After Year 1, you owe £31,800.
- In Year 2, interest is charged on £31,800, not the original £30,000.
- Over time, the total owed can increase significantly.

Compound interest can have a significant impact on the final amount you owe, which is why it is often viewed as a disadvantage of equity release. However, it is not something to fear, as long as you fully understand how it works and how it may affect your estate. Being informed allows you to make decisions that align with your goals, such as choosing a plan that lets you pay off the interest to reduce or stop the debt from growing.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Equity release can offer financial freedom in later life, helping you boost your income, support your family, or enjoy your retirement with more confidence. However, as Martin Lewis rightly points out, it is not a decision to take lightly. Careful consideration, expert advice, and open discussions with family are essential.

If you are thinking about releasing equity and want clear, honest advice tailored to your circumstances, I am here to help. With professional guidance, you can make a confident and well-informed decision that supports both your lifestyle and your legacy.

Call Joanne on **01670 209 925** or **0191 695 9493** or email [joanne@northeastequityrelease.co.uk](mailto:joanne@northeastequityrelease.co.uk)  
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# Could your home help support your retirement plans?



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Their forest school is always popular with the children

# Top marks again for this 'hidden gem' of a school!

One of the smallest schools in Northumberland just a short drive north of Morpeth, that is often described as an educational 'hidden gem', has just received another glowing inspection report **writes Editor Ian Leech**. As a Church of England Aided school Tritlington First undergoes a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), as well as being visited by Ofsted inspectors.

After their latest Ofsted inspection Tritlington was rated as a 'good' school and now that report has been endorsed by the comments of the SIAMS inspectorate which led joint headteachers Jill O'Dell and Katherine Stephenson to tell me: "We feel it is a celebration of everything we do to achieve the very best outcomes for our pupils.

"The report clearly demonstrates the wonderful culture and ethos that we have established at Tritlington School, and we are incredibly proud of our staff and pupils for achieving such glowing feedback."

To top off that good news, the school has also just been visited by Bishop Helen-Ann, Bishop of Newcastle, to formally open a peace garden in the school grounds which has been created from a patch of waste land by staff, pupils, parents, the local community and businesses all working together.

Children have been taught at Tritlington since the 1800s, first in a building now converted into a home, and since 1993 in larger, purpose-built premises next door. Just four miles north of Morpeth, the school sits in a peaceful countryside setting, providing a calm and natural environment for learning.

Tritlington First School has small cohorts of children. They have a school nursery for 3 and 4 year olds and offer flexible places for 15 and 30 hours a week. The main school consists of mixed age classes from Reception to Year 4. Children leave at the end of Year 4 with the majority continuing their education journey in Morpeth middle schools. Tritlington is part of the Morpeth Partnership and is named as a feeder school for Chantry Middle School. It is also part of Northumberland's Font Alliance, a cluster of eight like-minded schools, working together for the benefit of their pupils.

In such a rural setting, pupils attend from a wide geographical area taking in communities such as Ulgham, Widdrington, Stobswood, Pegswood, Longhorsley and Morpeth. So, what makes parents want to send their children to Tritlington when there are other schools closer to their homes?

One reason, said head teachers Jill and Katherine along with the school's third teacher Lucy Gammer, is word-of-mouth recommendations from families and friends whose children are already pupils at Tritlington, while the smallness of the school is often another influencing factor. As the three teachers tell me, they know every one of their pupils - and indeed their families. Children get on well together regardless of any age differences, there is a real family atmosphere at Tritlington School.

Pupils are taught in mixed-year classes, allowing flexible yet cohesive learning





Music lessons are an important part of school life

within key stages and as the SIAMS report concluded, curriculums have been 'carefully and skilfully' planned to meet the needs of the different age pupils enabling them all to flourish at the school. The report also added: "Pupils support and care for each other in and out of the classroom." That out-of-classroom learning is also important at Tritlington which has its own forest school within its grounds where perhaps not surprisingly in a rural setting, pupils get the chance to feed lambs brought in by a local farmer at lambing time, as well as rearing their own chicks.

Don't be fooled by the school's small size - Tritlington offers a rich and varied extracurricular programme. From a successful 7-a-side football team to weekly visits from peripatetic music teachers, children enjoy a wide range of opportunities. Year 4 pupils have even been learning the small trumpet, and last year's standout drama production of *Matilda* showcased the school's thriving performing arts scene.

Tritlington also provides convenient 'wraparound care', giving busy families peace of mind. Children can arrive as early as 8am and stay until 6pm, offering a safe, supportive environment beyond the school day - perfect for working parents.

What might be a concern for some parents is how children from a small school like Tritlington, cope when they transition to a larger school as they grow older. But, the staff tell me they have regular engagements with other schools in the Morpeth partnership, including a school-from-home residential with another feeder school in the summer, so their pupils have already made friends with children they will meet when they move to their new school.

Tritlington has an active Parent Teachers' Association as well as having strong links



Bishop Helen-Ann who opened the school's peace garden



Children learn in three mixed-age classes

with local communities and businesses in the area, factors which have been ably demonstrated via the newly-opened peace garden in a corner of the school grounds. What was a derelict and uncared for space, has been transformed into a haven where children and adults, can sit quietly to enjoy the peace and calm of the garden's natural surroundings. Before work began the children were all asked to contribute their own ideas as to what they would like to see while parents and friends of the school all also contributed by helping with the manual work and planting the garden with flowers, herbs, shrubs and grasses.

As head teachers Jill and Katherine said: "The final design of our Peace Garden has given us a self-contained space which blends in with the natural surroundings of the rural setting of our school to be

used by all members of our school, as well as our local community."

The vision for pupils at Tritlington First School is "Let Your Light Shine" - and as I left its tranquil, countryside setting on a sunny day last week for the short drive back to Morpeth, it struck me that this is exactly what the school is doing: helping every child shine in their own unique way.

Tritlington First School has spaces for new entrants to its Reception, Nursery and Main School classes for the school term beginning next September. To find out more and perhaps arrange a visit to the school, either call (01670) 787383 or email [admin@tritlington.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@tritlington.northumberland.sch.uk) further information can also be found by visiting the school's website [www.tritlington.northumberland.sch.uk](http://www.tritlington.northumberland.sch.uk)





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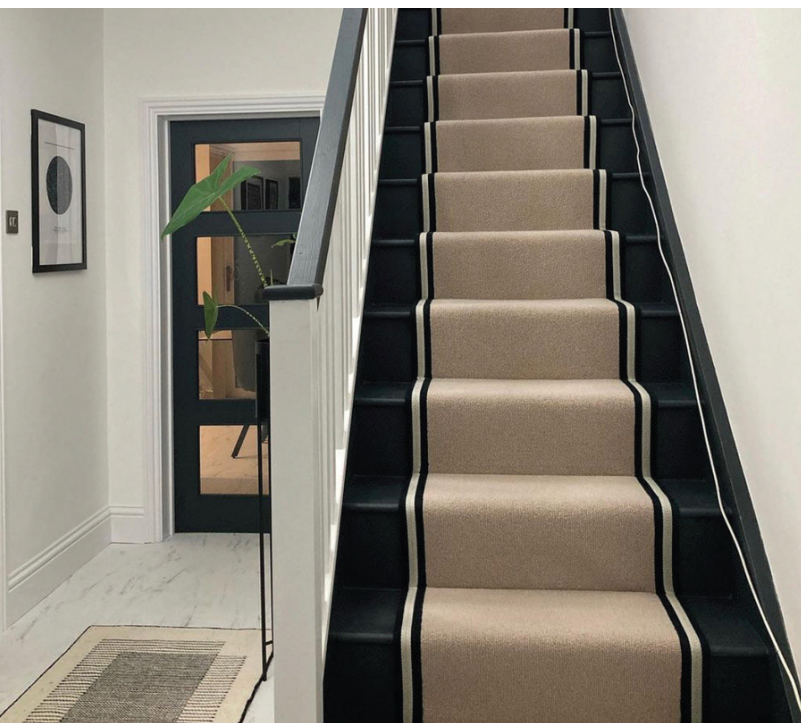
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Eleanor Wilson standing outside the Beeswing when it was a general dealer's shop and a lovely painting of the champion thoroughbred

# True racecourse legend with such strong links to Morpeth

Racing fan **Dave Thompson** looks back in this exclusive feature for Inside Morpeth, on the career of a 19th Century racehorse with strong Morpeth connections, that has been described as one of the greatest mares of all time.

As a young postal worker in the 1970s I would travel up the drive to Nunnykirk Hall near Netherwitton, to deliver mail to the resident Sir Charles Orde. At the time I knew about the famous racehorse Beeswing, but was unaware of the extent of her remarkable achievements on the racetrack some 130 years earlier.

Sired by Dr Syntax who was owned by Squire Riddell from Felton Park, Beeswing was foaled in 1833. The mare was bred by William Orde, a retired barrister and former Member of Parliament for Morpeth for the first 30 years of the 19th Century, who had inherited the Nunnykirk estate just west of Morpeth, upon the death of his father.

Standing no more than 15 hands high, Beeswing was an impressive chestnut mare, although her lightness of frame was a notable fault – a result of her owner's reluctance to feed her corn until she was a yearling. In her stall Beeswing was quite a handful, liable to kick out at the slightest provocation.

Beeswing's trainer and jockey in some of her earlier races was Bob Johnson, whose stables were at Middleham. She was said to be quite a difficult ride with a tendency to pull hard on the way to the starting line. Bob rode her to be second in the St Leger, but in 1836 he was so incensed by the judge's refusal to place her second that he immediately resolved to give up

riding, so from that day John Cartwright became Beeswing's regular jockey.

She raced at many racecourses between 1835 and 1842, amongst them being Newcastle, Kelso, Doncaster, Stockton and York, and was a real crowd-pleaser with 51 victories from 61 starts, earning a total of £7,769 in winnings.

After Beeswing's victory in the Doncaster Cup, Orde's friends urged him to take the mare to Ascot to prove her superiority to doubtful racegoers in the south. So, fortified by alcohol at a rousing party in Doncaster's Turf Tavern, he decided that her target should be the 1842 Ascot Gold Cup, one of the most important long-distance events in the flat racing calendar.

Beeswing started at 7-1 and set a strong pace, but she was passed by Lanercost shortly after entering the straight. However, Beeswing fought back with the utmost courage, to win the race by half a length to take the winner's prize of 720 guineas, equivalent to £90,000 in today's money.

The northern mare became a true champion that day!

Beeswing would go on to win the Newcastle Cup a total of six times, and an annual race called the Beeswing Handicap Stakes is still run every July at High Gosforth Park racecourse.

The horse became so famous that a small village in Dumfries and Galloway, actually changed its name from Lochend to Beeswing in her honour.

At the age of 10 Beeswing was retired to stud, where she became the dam of two classic winners sired by the stallion Touchstone – Nunnykirk that won the 1849 2000 Guineas while Newminster was the winner of the 1851 St Leger. Tragically, Beeswing died in foal to the stallion Flying Dutchman on March 4th 1854 at Eaton Hall in Cheshire.

Today, it would be nearly impossible to find a prominent thoroughbred racehorse that does not carry the blue-blooded lineage of this famous north country mare.

The Beeswing yard located off Morpeth's Newgate Street, had stables where horses were said to rest on their way back to Nunnykirk, and the house named Beeswing which is still prominent near the top of the street, had a chequered history as a pub between 1869 and 1871, then as an off-licence and an antique shop. Today it is a private residence.

On numerous occasions Orde declined tempting offers for his successful mare, declaring: "She is not mine to sell – she belongs to the people of Northumberland!"





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Sack races are among the run events at Delaval Hall

# Get set for summer with the National Trust

Plan a jam-packed summer of play and fun at a National Trust property near you. At Seaton Delaval Hall, Wallington and Cragside, you can enjoy everything from welly wanging and beaver-mask-making to adventures in nature.

## Seaton Delaval Hall

**Find a whole lot of fun at a place of great theatricality, drama, and mischief at Seaton Delaval Hall this summer. Like a party from the Delavals' Georgian heyday, expect the unexpected with pop up performances from a variety of acts indoors and out throughout the holidays for a full on festival vibe.**

Join playful, drop-in circus activities or sit back and watch the experts with mini circus performances and demonstrations. Get musical in the South East Gardens with the recycled junk orchestra or head to the Oval for badminton and ping pong. Meet up with friends and family and take part in the Delaval Dash Races; see who's

competitive in hobby horse races, sack races, welly wanging and more. Delve into a chest full of sports kit and ball games, plus table tennis and badminton. Under 5s will enjoy traditional games like tower block building or four-in-a-row in the shelter of the Secret Garden. Head for the South Lawn Scramble maze and hay bales and let imaginations free in the Delaval Playdium play area with its multi-level stages, pulleys and leavers bringing productions to life.

Every Friday in the Community Kitchen Garden, there's the chance to plant, harvest and get crafty with nature or curl up in the sheltered story corner with Young Gardeners.

If it's raining, there's still plenty to discover! Head to the West Wing to meet the Delaval family through the portraits; peek through the keyholes upstairs for

some surprises, get your selfie in the Upside Down room and play the Game of Seaton Delaval Hall in the Drawing Room. Head downstairs to enjoy a Kitchen Disco: rummage for the perfect props and perform on the Baroque-inspired stage, to the backdrop of your favourite hits with a regency flavour.

And when you're tired out, grab a cuppa from the Brewhouse or soft scoop ice cream from the Summerhouse and head to the Tent of Wonder and chill out on the giant beanbags.

## Wallington

**For a day of play, a trip (or three) to Wallington this summer holiday is just the ticket with a wide variety of activities available every day including**





Hire a bike for a ride around Wallington adventure



There's always 'someone' interesting to meet at Cragside!

**lawn games, soft archery and football croquet. Throw in some nature-activities with Rangers and adventures in the play parks, you're bound to have an action-packed day out.**

Build your own dam, create a beaver mask and find out more about the family of beavers that call Wallington home on our Beaver Day or head to the river and learn about the wonderful world of the white-clawed crayfish. Take part in the Big Butterfly Count and see what you can spot fluttering from flower to flower in the wildflower meadow or Walled Garden? Or take a close-up look at some of the many species of moth found at Wallington by joining the Ranger team to see what the traps have caught overnight.

When your tummies start rumbling, the wildflower meadow is the perfect spot for a picnic and the ice cream parlour and wood-fired pizza van are open all summer long too. Don't forget, if you can't get your own bikes to Wallington, you can hire some when you arrive and enjoy a two-wheeled adventure on the Dragon Cycle Trail.

## Cragside

**If you're looking for wide open spaces where the kids can use their imagination to create big adventures, then Cragside is the place for you.**

On grounds that span over 550 football pitches, there's giant trees towering to the sky, sparkling lakes glistening in the sun, dynamited ravines cutting through rock and overflowing flowerbeds to be discovered.

You could uncover a new corner of Cragside on a waymarked walk. The kids will feel like they are on a quest through a far-off land, while you have some added confidence in exploring somewhere new by following waymarkers.

Our favourite walks with the kids are Nelly's Moss Lake and the Rocky Ramble. Nelly's Moss provides a great breakaway from hurtling around the play area. Follow the path around the twin lakes on a hunt for tiny frogs and toads emerging from the water throughout the summer.

If you're visiting with older children, you could also try the Rocky Ramble. Along this short circular walk, you'll climb stone steps, follow paths between giant boulders and find tunnels cut through rock.

For a hassle-free fun-filled day head to the adventure play area where you'll find swings, tunnel slides, higgledy-piggledy balance beams and towering ropes. Right next door is den building, where everyone can get stuck into creating a big build. Just a short distance from play area is the labyrinth. This tangled maze has many twists and turns, with a den to discover at its centre. The easiest way to get there is by walking the trim trail path where you'll discover tyre swings, stepping stones and cargo ropes – ideal for a game of the floor is lava!

Inside Cragside House, there's lots of ways to creatively explore. Pick up a Critter Crawl activity card from the team and go for a hunt to find over-sized bugs lurking in the rooms and corridors. It ends in the Conservation Studio where everyone can inspect bags of insects and creepy crawlies using magnifying

glasses and discover why we catch them. This year, the team have taken inspiration from nature and items in the collection to create a butterfly trail. Seek out the paper origami butterflies as you explore the House. Both activities are perfect for those wet weather days that Northumberland may bring us over the summer.

## Start your planning

To find out more and see admission prices, visit the property websites.

### Seaton Delaval Hall

- Open daily during Northumberland school holidays
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- [nationaltrust.org.uk/seatondelavalhall](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/seatondelavalhall)
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### Wallington

- Open 10am-5pm
- [nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington)
- 25 minutes from Morpeth

### Cragside

- Open 10am-5pm (last entry 4pm)
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Summer of Play at Seaton Delaval Hall and Wallington is sponsored by Starling Bank with support from Sport England.



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The electrical department of Robson & Cowan Country Store that has been owned and run by the same family for more than 100 years at Scots' Gap, just a short drive westwards out of Morpeth, is linked to one of the largest retail independent buying groups in the whole of Europe.

As a member of Euronics, the store benefits from the buying power of such a massive retail network enabling them to offer customers keenly competitive prices on an extensive range of the latest technology electrical products and white goods from major manufacturers.

Robson & Cowan follows the Euronics' promise to offer expert advice on their range of products and can arrange delivery and installation on the best day and time to suit their customers.

The store can supply all manner of kitchen appliances such as washing



machines, dryers, dishwashers, cookers, fridges and freezers from major manufacturers such as Bosch, Siemens, Neff, Beko, Samsung, Leisure, Hotpoint and the exclusive Euronics brands Blomberg, Schonhaus and Sensis, as well as cleaners from Shark, Dyson, Miele and Sebo, and smaller appliances like microwaves, air fryers, kettles, toasters and irons from Bosch, Sharp, Ninja and Panasonic.

So far as televisions go, Robson & Cowan can offer customers the very latest 2025

models from 24 inch to 80 inch screens from Samsung, LG and Sony as well as aerial and satellite installations and repairs. They also supply audio-visual equipment from Humax and Freesat, and FM and DAB radios from Roberts.

To display their range of appliances and televisions to their best advantage, Robson & Cowan have recently expanded and refurbished their electrical department showroom at the store.

As the company told Inside Morpeth: "As a long-standing business we are dedicated to serving customers right across Northumberland, with a range of high-quality products which offer the latest designs, reliability and great value for money. We carry an extensive stock and are normally able to deliver and install new products as well as removing old appliances if required, within two or three days of an order being placed with us. Our Scots' Gap store is open six days a week and we invite anyone to call in to see us to experience the personal touch we pride ourselves on."



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# Step Into the Season in Style

**As the days get longer and the sun starts to show its face over Morpeth, it's time to refresh your wardrobe for the warmer months ahead. At RUTHERFORD & Co, we're proud to present our Spring/Summer 2025 menswear collection – a considered blend of timeless tailoring, off-duty staples and effortless seasonal style.**

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**Brook Taverner** brings a heritage twist to modern dressing, with lightweight blazers, linen blends and sharply cut trousers that move seamlessly from garden parties to evening dinners. Think classic tailoring with a fresh, breathable feel.

For a more laid-back look, **Fynch Hatton** delivers soft cotton polos, breezy shirts and lightweight knits in a palette of warm neutrals and cool pastels – perfect for layering through unpredictable British weather.

Add a dash of playful colour with **Joules**,

known for their bright polos, vibrant prints and summery outerwear – ideal for the man who's not afraid to stand out.

**Farah** keeps things clean and contemporary, with crisp t-shirts, tapered chinos and retro-inspired short-sleeve shirts – understated pieces that still make a statement.

And for those who lean into vintage Americana, **Original Penguin** offers nostalgic styles with a modern fit – bold patterns, heritage logos and the kind of polo shirts that never go out of style.

Our menswear team is here to help you find the perfect pieces, whether you're shopping for a special event or simply updating your everyday style.



# Spring Summer 25



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# Food for thought from wartime memories

Just a few short weeks ago events were held all over Britain to mark the anniversary of a milestone day in the history of the country. VE Day 80 on Thursday May 8th – or to give it its full title Victory in Europe Day – marked 80 years since the guns fell silent after six long years of hostilities with Hitler's Germany and the loss of millions of lives

The anniversary was marked with events large and small from parades and services led by King Charles to tea parties on village greens at the other end of the scale, to remember the sacrifices made by so many at home and abroad.

Morpeth-based Maximize Education was one local organisation to respond to requests from the national VE80 co-ordinating team to become involved in the anniversary, and chose to do so in quite a different way to many others. Chief Executive and founder Christine Jamieson and her team decided to bring together the generations to focus on one particular aspect of life on the home-front.....the daily battle of home cooks to produce tasty and nutritious meals in the tough days of rationing.

With basic foodstuffs such as meat, ham, bacon, sugar, butter and cheese all being rationed families had to survive on meals such as cabbage soup, parsnip puddings, Spam hash, vegetable stews, potato rarebit, carrot biscuits and the famous meatless Woolton Pie with ingredients home-grown in back gardens or allotments. The odd poached rabbit also made a welcome change at family mealtimes along with fruits and mushrooms foraged from hedgerows and woods.

So, with the help of memories from members of the older generation who could remember the days of rationing which went on until 1954, the Maximize team produced a series of menu cards as their VE80 project.

Local school have now taken supplies of the recipe cards including First schools from Morpeth, Longhorsley, Stanington, Rothbury and Tritlington, for pupils to take home to learn about rationing as



Guests enjoyed their Maximize Education sponsored VE80 lunch Courtesy of Stobhill Link

well as sharing wartime memories with their grandparents and older members of their families. Morpeth library also distributed more than 1,000 VE80 recipe cards throughout local libraries as part of the Maximize project.

Maximize Education also funded both a community afternoon tea at St Aidan's Church Hall and a Stobhill Link lunch club VE80 meal. Those attending the lunch club enjoyed a traditional meal as well as receiving mementos designed and created by students attending Maximize Education who say they are now looking forward to sponsoring further projects in conjunction with Stobhill Link.

"We wanted to do something a little different to mark the VE Day anniversary, so we launched our own 'Write Home for VE 80' literary project to help young children appreciate that the war was not just about what was happening on the front lines, but that daily lives at home were so very difficult particularly because of rationing," said Christine.

"Many children will have been aware of the VE 80 anniversary because of the extensive coverage it received on television but we hope our project will have taught them something different about wartime days at home."





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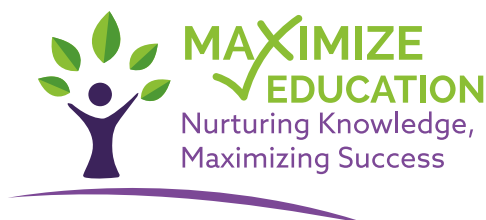
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By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI



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These could include a season ticket loan to reduce travel costs, claiming tax free childcare, switching to a low emissions company, or (my personal favourite) buying a bike on the right to work scheme.

- **Cut tax on your savings**

This can include maximising your

personal savings allowance, making the most of your ISA allowance, using the starter rate for savings.

- **Use tax deductible expenses (if self-employed)**

Reclaiming the running costs of a car when used for business, changing your accounting year end to help with cash flow, carrying forward annual losses to offset against profits from a more successful year.

- **Cut tax on your investments**

This may include maximising your dividends, using your capital gains tax allowance (and avoid CGT it by investing in ISAs), transferring assets to a spouse, investing in junior ISAs and switching investments to capital boosting investments. For the more adventurous, investing in enterprise investment schemes or venture capital trusts may be an option, along with bank shares through your company.

- **Save property income tax**

By using the rent a room relief or claiming landlord's expenses.

- **Save inheritance tax**

This has been described as a voluntary tax paid by those who dislike their children even more than they dislike the Inland Revenue. A lot of potential tax can be saved with good planning.

- **Make charitable donations**

Doing this via gift aid can help if you are subject to higher or additional rate tax. The charity can also benefit from reclaiming tax on the donation.

**Are you taking advantage of all available methods to reduce your tax bill legally?**



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# A whole lotta rose!

By **Mark Stephenson**, Inside Morpeth's wine correspondent

**It's the summer and it is that time of year where people look less for those big warming reds and reach for something fruitier and fresher. Yes, it is the season where rose really comes into its own.**

Now, I must confess I adore rose. I really think it is an underappreciated style of wine and doesn't get the recognition that other types of wines do. Also, a rose isn't just for the summer, it's for Christmas too! Amid the long bleak winter, I often yearn for a rose to transport me to those warmer and brighter days. It can be just the tonic to lift one's spirits during those cold dark months.

My own appreciation of rose can be highlighted by a trip I took to the south of France last January. I was kindly invited by one of our suppliers to attend Europe's largest organic wine convention in Montpellier.

My job was to help identify wines for them to import into the UK. One area they were looking to expand their offering was rose from Provence. I immediately volunteered for the arduous task of seeking one out for them. Forty roses later (all before lunch), I came across some absolute delights that I thought would be of interest to them. It goes without saying that I've had worse mornings! I wasn't drinking them. I was tasting them. Totally different.

It normally involves the not-so-pleasant sight of spitting a wine out into a spittoon. Although one or two did manage to slip down quite nicely...totally by accident of course... honestly. That morning reaffirmed my belief that there is much diversity and real quality when it comes to rose.

Okay, I know there is a real following for rose that are sweet and all about the fruit. For example, I'm sure in some places White Zinfandel sells very well and that's fine. Each to their own and you enjoy what you enjoy. However, for me, I rate the quality of my rose using the same principles as I do with many other wines; - it is all about the balance between fruit and acidity.

Fruit gives wine a nice taste. However, you need some acidity there to cleanse the palate, add complexity, and make you



want to go in for more. Too much of one or the other and it can either make a wine a bit "flabby" (technical term), or hard work. When you add other elements to the mix, like minerality, then you're on to a good'un in my opinion.

As for minerality, please don't ask me what it tastes like. It's just there. I suppose if you had plenty of time on your hands and wanted to see for yourself what I am talking about, buy a bottle of mineral water and drink some. Then try some that have been put through a filter. You will notice a difference.

Whilst I am also on the subject, it would be remiss for me to not to discuss the appearance of rose. In recent times, peoples' palates have steered towards drier styles of wines. For example, in whites there has been a move towards crisp dry varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio. The same can be said for rose as the most popular nowadays tend to be paler, fresher, and lighter styles. There has certainly been a move away from the deep coloured stuff as it is often seen as too sweet.

This association between colour and sweetness can be down to the aforementioned White Zinfandel which is almost light red in colour and very sugary. However, like most things in the wine world there are exceptions to this rule. A lot of the time the appearance of the wine is down to the thickness of the skin on the grape.

After all, that is where wine gets its colour from. Unlike a red wine which sees the grape juice in contact with the skins for days or weeks, with rose it is only a matter of hours. Hence the lighter appearance. A couple of examples of roses which are dark in colour are the gorgeous Tavel from the Rhone, Chiaretto from Italy, and roses from Rioja.

These roses tend to be dark pink in appearance, but have real concentration of fruit, good acidity, and are dry in style. They are also excellent wines to pair with foods - BBQ ribs or mildly-spiced Asian dishes are two pairings that spring to mind.

If the colour can be deceiving, here's a tip for you - look at the alcohol content. The lighter the alcohol the more sugar has been left in the wine and the sweeter it will be. Although, like most things in the wine world... you know what I am going to say. But it is a pretty solid rule to follow.

So why not pop in and join us on a discovery of rose wines. Whether it's sparkling, still, or even pink port, there's plenty to enjoy whatever the weather. Highlights in our current range include Domaine Lafage Miraflores from Cotes Catalanes, France (£17.50), Groot Constantia Rose, South Africa (£15.50), and Royal Oporto Rose Port (£23.00)- which is great neat or as a long drink with tonic. Cheers!



# TOWN CRYER!

The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

## Hello Morpeth residents says town's new Mayor



**I'd like to say a huge well done to the former Mayor of Morpeth, Betty Bawn for a very successful year. She attended dozens of civic events and raised over £9,000 for her selected charity, the Oswin Project.**

I'd like to extend a huge thank you to the residents of Morpeth North for trusting me to represent them for a third Term as their Morpeth Town Councillor. I really enjoy this volunteer role and the opportunities it gives me to improve our hometown.

I'd also like to thank my fellow Town Councillors for the honour of electing me as Mayor of Morpeth for 2025/26. I was previously deputy Mayor in 2020/21 during covid times but due to restrictions, the civic duties were very limited. I very much hope to have a much more insightful Mayoral experience over the next year.

I am appointing my friend and former Mayor, Cllr David Bawn as my Consort. David has been Mayor of Morpeth on two previous occasions, and I look forward to an engaging and memorable year with his expert guidance and support.

I have chosen the wonderfully charismatic Rev Canon Simon White,



Morpeth's Mayor Councillor Rachael Hogg

Rector of Morpeth as the Mayors Chaplain. His support during events such as the Remembrance Day Service is invaluable.

I was born and raised in Northumberland and have lived in Morpeth since 2010. I have a child who attends school in Morpeth, and I truly believe there is no better town in Northumberland to raise a family in.

I love everything about our town

including its interesting history, traditions, buildings and culture. We are fortunate to be able to host a number of very popular annual town events, and we have some wonderfully dedicated volunteer organisations and individuals that make Morpeth such a successful and popular town.

For 2025/26 I have chosen MacMillan Cancer Support as the Mayors official Charity. MacMillan are the UK's leading Cancer care charity and support a cause that is very close to mine and my family's hearts and I'm sure many residents of Morpeth.

MacMillan offer emotional, practical, physical, and financial support to people living with cancer and their families. They are 98% funded by voluntary donations so fund raising is vital to them and their continued existence.

I will be hosting many new and interesting fund-raising events in the next year, and I hope they are well supported by the Town and my fellow Councillors.

I look forward to meeting as many residents as possible during the course of the next year, I'm in Morpeth most days so please do stop and say hello.

**Rachael Hogg**  
Mayor of Morpeth

## Community Grant

**Morpeth Town Council welcomes invitations from organisations for a Community Grant.**

Organisations that operate or live within Morpeth must be voluntary and non-profit making and will need to demonstrate the need for financial assistance. They must benefit those who reside in the town of Morpeth.

Morpeth Town Council will fully consider all applications,

however applications from an individual person will not be considered.

The second round for applications is now open, all applications need to be received by 30th November for consideration. Visit the Town Council website for more information on the policy, [www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk/communitygrants](http://www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk/communitygrants)

Spread the word and let's see how many organisations can benefit from the Community Grant.



Morpeth Town Council, Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth NE61 1LZ

Call 01670 514314 email [joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or [mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or visit [www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk](http://www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk)



# Morpeth events

**Morpeth Town Council works hard to pull together a range of events to suit all, and this year is no different, believe it or not we have already started talking about Christmas lights!**

Before all that fun, summer is about to start with the reopening of the paddling pool in Carlisle Park. This is a popular attraction, bringing in people from all around the county and beyond.

Whilst our team do their upmost to keep the pool running throughout the summer, health and safety is our top priority and unfortunately at times the pool needs to be closed for maintenance.

Please check the Town Council website for maintenance updates to avoid disappointment.

We will again be looking to work closely with Barnabas Safe and Sound to offer a summer programme of free activities.

These sessions have proved popular and we are sure they take pressure off parents during the holidays, it can be hard to keep everyone entertained!

Following on from the success of last years 'It's a Knock Out' event, we hope to extend the offering this year so there literally is something for all ages, watch this space...!

In other news, we hope to have something new and exciting happening at the front of the Pavilion Café in the park during the summer, more information to follow soon..

Back to Christmas, with the lights being turned on at the end of what we hope to be another successful free family fun day on Bridge Street on Saturday 15th November.

There will be on stage entertainment all day, free fairground rides, and a number of other activities to be confirmed, maybe even a visit from the man in red if he's not too busy!

Following on from the lights, the Pavilion Tipi will be back to help you celebrate the run up to Christmas in style.

For updates on all activities, keep an eye on the Council website and Facebook pages for more information.

*Have a great Summer!*

## COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE

### SEE NOTICEBOARDS AND WEBSITE

Meeting Timetable for June, July and September 2025. All meetings will be held in the Corn Exchange of the Town Hall, unless otherwise stated on the agenda. All Committee meetings commence at 6:30 pm, unless otherwise stated on the posters or website.

#### Planning and Transport Committee

11th June 2025  
9th July 2025  
10th September 2025

#### Finance and General Purposes Committee

4th June 2025  
2nd July 2025  
3rd September 2025

#### Full Council

18th June 2025  
24th September 2025

# MORPETH TOWN COUNCILLORS FROM MAY 2025

## MORPETH NORTH WARD

### Councillor David Bawn

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### Councillor Rachael Hogg

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### Councillor Wendy Fail

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### Councillor Jan Rosen

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### Councillor David Towns

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## MORPETH KIRKHILL WARD

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## MORPETH STOBHILL WARD

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### Councillor Michael Air

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### Councillor Pat Elton

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### Councillor Patricia Fuller

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Email: patricia.fuller@morpeth-tc.gov.uk

## MORPETH NORTHGATE WARD

### Councillor Ed Dungait

Email: ed.dungait@morpeth-tc.gov.uk

## MORPETH ST GEORGE'S PARK WARD

*Currently going through the co-option procedures as nobody stood for election.*

Home addresses are available from the Town Council Office or website.



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Alex Pearson and Barry Mead with some re-enactors



Happy campers in the walled garden

# Holiday park helps safeguard future of neighbouring historic landmarks

Owners of holiday homes in the village of Cresswell have been invited to see how their park management team has helped with the restoration of two neighbouring historic sites that were both in danger of being lost to the community forever.

The Grade II\* Listed 14th Century Pele Tower and an adjoining classic example of a Victorian walled garden that once provided all the fruit and vegetables for the Cresswell family dinner table at their nearby mansion, had both fallen into states of disrepair and neglect until local villagers stepped in to mount two 'rescue' operations.

So, successful have their efforts been, that the Pele Tower has been removed from English Heritage's 'At Risk' list of buildings across the country, while the walled garden is now a picturesque and tranquil space for visitors to enjoy.

Both projects have been managed by the Cresswell Pele Tower Charitable Incorporated Organisation which was set up jointly by the local parish council and Greater Morpeth Development Trust, especially to raise the funds, before planning and delivering the restoration of the tower and the walled garden.

The main funder for both projects was the Heritage Lottery Fund which granted almost £1 million to the total cost of both schemes. But, there were also significant financial contributions from local funders including Parkdean Resorts which owns and manages the Cresswell Towers Holiday Park, one of 66 sites the company operates across the UK. The company has contributed a total of £62,000 towards the cost of the repair and renovation of the Pele Tower and the walled garden.

Parkdean actually owns the land on which both the Pele Tower and the walled garden stand, but has agreed long-term leases with the Cresswell charitable trust, and now that both restoration projects are substantially complete the local management team planned an afternoon event with the village team, when their holiday home owners were given private tours of the tower and walled garden.

"The support we have had from Parkdean Resorts has been a crucial

element of what we have been able to achieve at the Pele Tower and the walled garden," said Philip Hood, the charity's chairman. "There have been legal issues and insurance issues to negotiate and Parkdean has also made valuable financial contributions towards both capital and ongoing costs, which have helped complete the Pele Tower and walled garden restorations and ensure their future sustainability."

"We're deeply committed to supporting local communities and preserving the rich heritage that makes places like Cresswell so special," said Alex Pearson, General Manager of Cresswell Towers Holiday Park. "Seeing the transformation of both the Pele Tower and the walled garden has been incredibly rewarding, and we're proud to have played a role in safeguarding these landmarks for future generations. It's been a privilege to work alongside the dedicated local team who have made this restoration possible, and we're looking forward to welcoming our holiday homeowners to experience first hand the incredible impact of these projects."

The Pele Tower dates back to the late 1380s when the notorious gangs of Border Reivers were roaming, raiding, killing and pillaging along both sides of the English and Scottish border. The Cresswell family which gave its name to the village, built the tower as a miniature fortress to protect themselves and villagers, from raids by the Border Reivers. More than 150 similar towers were built along what was known as the Border Badlands until the early 16th Century. Only a handful of towers still survive.

The Cresswell tower was in a state of near dereliction before the villagers launched their rescue bid some 10 years ago. Now, it has been re-roofed, stonework repaired, and had electricity and heating installed so it can be opened to visitors and used for special events. Recently, one event

that focused on the story of the Border Reivers, attracted more than 700 visitors of all ages, in a single day.

The walled garden was attached to Cresswell Hall built during the early 1820s, to accommodate six acres of kitchen gardens where vegetables, fruit and flowers were grown. The Cresswell family lived there until it was sold to Northumberland County Council before finally being demolished in 1936.

After that, the garden fell into a state of abandonment before the Cresswell trust raised sufficient funds to begin work on its restoration. The garden has now been cleared of weeds, replanted with flowers and fruit trees, lawns laid, a pond created and a spectacular gazebo performance space designed so that it can regularly be open to visitors.

"The village has been on a journey to safeguard the future of our Pele Tower and the walled garden," said project manager Barry Mead. "As a village we were so fortunate to have two such historic and iconic sites so close to one another, and we were determined that we were not going to lose them. With the help of some generous supporters and donors we have made sure that did not happen, and the future of both sites has been secured for future generations to enjoy."

Project funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund which provided the majority of capital funding, will end shortly so the projects will now look towards working with other funders to support their ongoing volunteer-led activities and events which will continue to bring the sites back to life again

"It has been rewarding to work with Parkdean Resorts who have indeed played a significant role in what we have been able to achieve and will be a key partner in their future sustainability," Barry Mead added.





Sara Cockerill



James Naughtie



B A Parris



Mari Hannah

# Next book festival chapter

Planning is already underway for the 2026 Morpeth Book Festival after the outstanding success of this year's event. The third festival earlier in March attracted audiences of close to 1,000 to hear talks by top national and international authors, as well as local writers, **reports Inside Morpeth's Ian Leech.**

Delighted audiences at St George's Church which this year was the festival's main venue, were enthralled by talks by crime writing queen Mari Hannah (who is also patron of the festival); BBC broadcasting legend James Naughtie; author and raconteur Gervase Phinn; former MP, justice campaigner and acclaimed diarist Chris Mullin; New York Times and Sunday Times best-seller B A Parris, whose husband and in-laws are from Morpeth; and High Court Judge Sara Cockerill who spoke of two Queens of England said to have been the power behind the thrones of their husband Kings.

Equally audiences at Morpeth Library enjoyed talks by local writers including Morpeth's very own Bridget Gubbins, Colin Green and Alexis James, among others.

The Festival is organised jointly by Greater Morpeth Development Trust and the Morpeth branch of Northumberland Libraries, and Director Frank Rescigno from GMDT, declared it the most successful yet.

"We attracted great audiences which shows that Morpeth is a town of avid readers across so many different genres," he said. "But, no book festival can be successful without the people who attend them, so we want to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone

who attended one of our 'Weekend of Words' events. We also sincerely appreciate the support of local business such as Rutherfords of Morpeth, Maximize Education, Inside Morpeth, Morpeth Fair Day, and, of course, Northumberland County Council and St George's Church, plus our dedicated band of volunteers who we rely so heavily on.

"We are a small organising committee – Sarah-Jayne Kennedy-Robson, Julie Whiteman, Philip Kramer, Ian Leech and myself – and a huge amount of work goes on over the whole year, preparing for the weekend. What makes it all worthwhile is seeing so many people enjoying the event and telling us so in their feedback.

"Each year we are building on the past successes of Morpeth Book Festival. It has very quickly become an established fixture in the town and our aim now is to make our 2026 festival an even greater success. We are already working on that event and we would welcome any suggestions from local people as to which authors they would like us to try and bring to the town next spring. Any suggestions can be sent to us through Morpeth Library or at Greater Morpeth Development Trust at [www.gmdt.org](http://www.gmdt.org)."

## What's on?

### PICNIC IN THE PARK

**Morpeth's popular Picnic in the Park will be back again just in time for the start of the school summer holidays!**

Sunday July 13th to be precise, is the date of this year's free fun day for all the family from Noon until 4pm, and, of course, the venue will again be Carlisle Park.

As always there will be fun, games, music, dancing, stalls, entertainment, a free BBQ and much, much more on the day which again is being organised by Greater Morpeth Development Trust.

### ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

**Annual strawberry afternoon served café-style in the Church on Saturday June 28th.**

Doors open 2pm for strawberries or fruit salad and cream, served with tea or coffee. 3pm entertainment by the Grainger Singers. Adults £8; accompanied children £5. For tickets (including refreshments) call 01670 220853 or email [kdirvine@solveit.org.uk](mailto:kdirvine@solveit.org.uk).

Morpeth Country Dance Club with a live band at the Church. Next dances are July 12th and September 13th, then, with or without a partner, every second Saturday on the month from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Admission £2.50 – take your own drinks and nibbles. All ages welcome.

### GALLERY 45 FELTON

**Craft Café Friday 20th June and Friday 19th September, from 7pm to 9.30pm.**

A fun social event to try your hand at a range of different crafts with residential artists. Find out more or to book a place call (01670) 783424.

Music Festival & Arts Trail – Friday 20th and Saturday 21st June. Great live music Friday evening and all-day Saturday; food and drink at a 'wonderful, wholesome event for all the family.' Various venues throughout the village of Felton. [www.feltonbury.co.uk/whats-on/](http://www.feltonbury.co.uk/whats-on/)

Linoprint Workshop & Textile Workshop – Saturday June 2th from 10.30am to 3.30pm at Gallery 45, [www.feltongallery45.co.uk](http://www.feltongallery45.co.uk)



# New book tells about Morpeth woman accused of being a witch



Set against the backdrop of the true story of the Newcastle Witch trial of 1650, AD Bergin's novel *The Wicked and the Dead* tells the dramatic tale of Parliamentary spy James Archer's return to his native Newcastle on clandestine Council business, and intent on discovering the whereabouts of his missing sister, Meg.

Ahead of a book talk at Morpeth Waterstones to celebrate its publication, manager Caroline Dominey spoke to the author about the history underpinning this gripping debut novel, and about the part that Morpeth had to play in this tragic tale of cruelty and treachery.

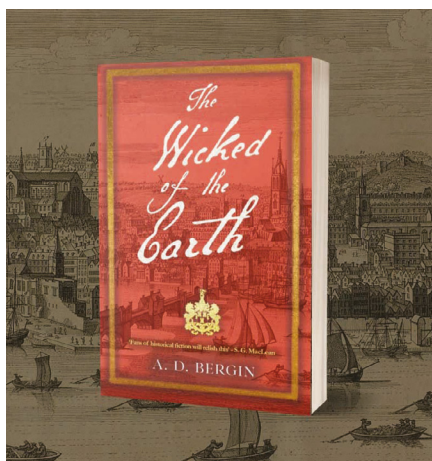
**The novel's main character, James Archer, a traumatised soldier, returns to a town that he previously abandoned to fight on the side of Parliament in the Civil War, something that sets him against many of his fellow townsfolk. Tell us a little bit about his story.**

Archer is one of the very few entirely fictional creations in 'The Wicked Of The Earth', even though the book very much has its origins in his character. On a stopped train, looking across wet, grey November fields to the stationary A1 traffic, I had a clear vision of what James might look like- a young man dragging his horse up the Great North Road, desperate to return north, but at the same time dreading what he might find upon arrival.

Archer had arrived pretty much fully-formed: war-damaged; laden with guilt for having abandoned town, family, duty and sister for the Parliamentary cause in which he has lost faith; gripped by fear of what may have happened to that sister, missing in the aftermath of the witch trial; a man seeking redemption and some semblance of peace.

**17th century Newcastle was a thriving commercial town, and for me the truly fascinating element of this book is its meticulous attention to detail when mapping out its bustling streets and its sights and smells. How did you go about making it feel so intensely real for the reader?**

For the most part, lots of research. On the one hand that comes from the cumulative work of historians upon the social and economic life of the period, and in relation to Newcastle in particular. The research encompassed absolutely everything in print.



Physically walking the ground was also, however, critically important. The principal Chares remain traversable, but a part of the purpose of this ground research was also to be able to picture and bring back to life the teeming mass of ginnels, courts and tenements which ran in between the Chares, a maze in which my Grandad was born and which was only cleared under Lloyd George's housing reforms following the First World War. It felt very personal, trying to reimagine the life and vitality of that lost Newcastle.

**Many of the characters in this novel were based on real historical figures, and one of them, Janet Martin, who was accused of witchcraft and executed on the Town Moor, came from Morpeth, can you tell us anything about her?**

Janet was a landowner near to Morpeth, seems to have been widowed or otherwise to have benefitted from a bequest of land, money and goods, and can be reckoned to be a woman in mid-life. Janet's principal accuser was also a local landowning woman. In a manner which was common, an accusation of witchcraft seems to have formed a part of a wider dispute over property, or as prop to a simple land-grab.

**To what extent were the witch trials a reflection on the social position of women like Janet?**

Very much so, in Janet's case, but even more for the Newcastle trial. We are used to thinking of these accused of witchcraft as coming from the margins of society, but that ceases to be the case in many of the mid-seventeenth century trials, nowhere more so than here in the north. In Newcastle, where we have the most evidence, we can see that most of the victims came from the town's leading merchant families.

In the Newcastle witch trial, the lives of women from the highest of social positions were coldly traded for influence over the lucrative coal trade. It is an incredible tale, together with the unique true story of the brave defiance of those women right to the gallows, and of the mass, all-female campaign to free them. I can only hope to have done them sufficient justice in my fictional retelling.

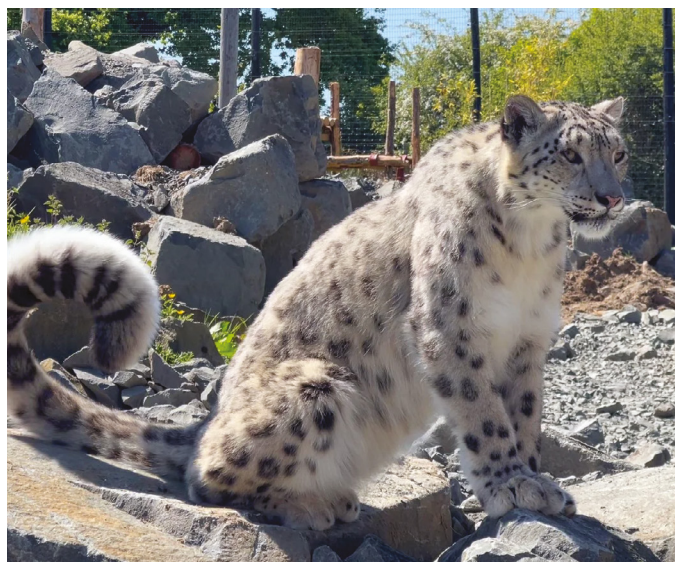
**This year marks a very special anniversary related to the Newcastle Witch Trial. How will you seek to commemorate this?**

This coming 21st August is the 375th anniversary of the execution of those condemned in the Newcastle trial, alongside Janet Martin. The campaign to establish a permanent memorial plaque has made tremendous progress, such that such a memorial is now a very real possibility. I will be working with other authors and historians to continue to raise awareness of the true events.

'The Wicked Of The Earth' is dedicated to the list of the dead, who have to stand in for the many other unnamed victims of the wider Northumberland and Durham hunt. It is long past time that they, all the victims, and the courage shown by Northern women, received proper recognition.

**A D Bergin will be talking about his novel *The Wicked and the Dead* on Wednesday August 24th at 6 pm in Waterstones, Unit 5, Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth. £5 Tickets are available instore or on [Waterstones.com](http://Waterstones.com).**





# Joining the elite of Europe's zoos!

The Northumberland Zoo just a short-drive north up the A1 from Morpeth, has won the seal of approval from the world's largest zoo and aquarium professional body, reports **Jack Brodie**.

Being a newly-accredited member of the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA) demonstrates that the county zoo is a recognised as a professionally managed, progressive centre of excellence for animal welfare, conservation, research and education. The accreditation also confirms the zoo's place within the community of leading zoos and aquariums throughout Europe, Western Asia and beyond.

The Northumberland zoo is a family-run, not-for-profit attraction founded by the Bradley family exactly 10 years ago. Since its modest beginnings with four chickens and two donkeys, it now covers 20 acres of land at Eshottheugh between Morpeth and Felton, and is 'home' to around 100 species of animals including some of its most popular residents – snow leopards, raccoons, capybaras and birds of prey. It also houses the UK's only captive population of the critically endangered Livingstone's Fruit Bats which live in a huge, specially-built enclosure that is open to the public.

During its inspection by EAZA experts which covered all areas of modern zoo management, the zoo was commended for its native species conservation projects which include the breeding and release of harvest mice in association with the Northumberland Wildlife Trust, as well as the captive rearing of critically endangered white-clawed crayfish for release in sites across the county.

Staff were also able to show the EAZA team three baby fruit bats born earlier this year, a tiny Goeldi's Monkey also born recently, as well as numerous litters of field mice set for release in the wild.

Maxine Bradley, one of the family running the zoo, told Inside Morpeth: "We are so proud to be among the first in Europe to be officially accredited by the association. For a relatively small zoo and team, it shows our dedication and highlights our positive intentions to not only our animals and staff, but shows our visitors that we are committed to doing what's best for nature conservation."

Christoph Schwitzer, EAZA's chairman, also told us: "Every member of management and staff at Northumberland Zoo should celebrate receiving our accredited status as it is testament to their hard work and dedication and shows that our members uphold the highest standards and actively contribute to animal welfare, species conservation, education and research."

Northumberland Zoo is open seven days a week from 10am until 5pm and is a great place for a family fun day out this summer. As well as all the animals to see, there's a café, picnic areas and plenty of free parking.

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# Summertime reading suggestions...

## from the experts at Waterstones Morpeth

### Non-Fiction

#### Once Upon a Toon: 18 Years Inside Newcastle United by Paul Ferris £20

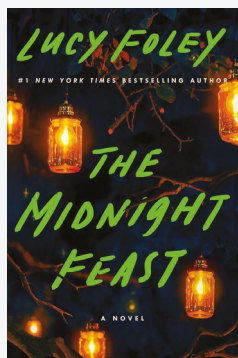
No one knows Newcastle United like Paul Ferris, he's done it all! A player, a physiotherapist, and a member of Alan Shearer's management team. Across the 18 years of his tenure, Paul has plenty of tales that have come to together in this book. Funny, insightful, and at times unbelievable, Once Upon a Toon is a must-read for any fans of Newcastle United!

#### Raising Hare by Chloe Dalton £10.99

One day Chloe Dalton discovered a tiny leveret near her house and decided to take it in, without realising the profound effect it would have on her life. A beautifully written and deeply moving tale about the bond that developed between one woman and a wild hare.



### Fiction



#### The Midnight Feast by Lucy Foley £9.99

With an intriguing plot which has plenty of twists and turns and a cast of unreliable characters The Midnight Feast from Lucy Foley is the perfect summer thriller. The Manor is a resort for the ultra rich on the Dorset coast, however there's a lot of local hostility to the enterprise which leads to one thing...murder. Who is the culprit-guest or local? For fans of Freida McFadden and Claire Douglas.

#### The Second Chance Book Club by Stephanie Butland £10.99

Stephanie Butland is one of our favourite local authors! Her latest novel is another heart-warming read with wonderfully crafted characters. The story follows September who is struggling to make ends meet until she inherits a house from a mystery aunt. Stephanie's writing is filled with heart and warmth, like a hug in book form!

#### Long Island by Colm Toibin £9.99

When Eilis Fiorello's tranquil Long Island life is disrupted by a stranger at her door, it prompts her to journey back to her native Irish town, with far reaching consequences. Colm Toibin's latest book will captivate fans of his previous novel, Brooklyn, and win over new fans too.

### Kids

#### A Minecraft Movie Activity Book by Mojang AB £6.99

Immerse yourself in the wacky world of A Minecraft Movie with this fun-filled activity book, boasting stickers, posters, puzzles and more.

#### Mayowa and The Sea of Words by Chibundu Onuzo £7.99

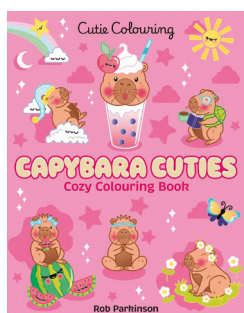
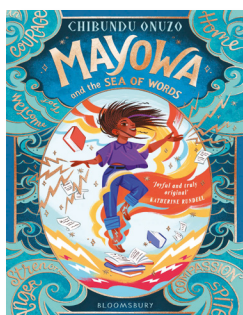
Ten-year-old Mayowa has always thought that her Grandpa Edward, who dyes his beard emerald green and jumps on books in private, is rather unusual. Until one day she jumps on a book for herself, and uncovers a huge family secret... This is a novel about the power of books, words and stories to change the world, but it delivers that message with a magical flourish.

#### Capybara Cuties Cozy Colouring Book £8.99

The perfect gift for friends and family or yourself! Sweet and simple capybara themes for calm and cute colouring fun. Fun for all ages.

#### Heir of Storms by Lauryn Hamilton Murray £9.99

Blaze has always been considered an outcast but when she is thrown into a deadly competition that will decide the ruler of the Empire, she is suddenly thrust into the limelight. This is a dazzling book for young adults filled with thrilling trials, courtly intrigue and an electrifying love-triangle. Perfect for fans of The Hunger Games and the Twin Crowns series.





# Summer is the glorious peak of gardening year

By **Ross Pearson** Inside Morpeth Gardening Correspondent

**The summer-time garden is akin to a raucous party. June arrives like a guest who's already had a few too many glasses of bubbly - flushed, excitable, and a little overconfident.**

Everything's growing at a rate that feels slightly unreasonable; roses are flinging themselves over fences, the lawn is impersonating a meadow, and the weeds are clearly plotting a coup.

Then July turns up, even louder, with sunburn, sandals and a courgette the size of a toddler. It's the peak of the gardening year: plants are either flowering, fruiting, bolting, or collapsing under their own exuberance. There's not a square inch that doesn't demand attention. Or water. Or some sort of complicated tying-in ritual involving string, bamboo canes, and mild swearing. But this is what we signed up for; the glorious, exhausting, faintly ludicrous peak of the season. This is when the garden (and possibly you) needs structure, discipline and the occasional lie-down. So put down that elderflower cordial, sharpen your secateurs, and let's sort it all out before the bindweed wins.

## Pinch Out Tomatoes

They're like teenagers - if you let them do whatever they want, they'll loll about all summer and give you nothing. Pinch out those side shoots before they take over the greenhouse like triflids. One main stem is quite enough, thank you.

## Water Wisely

The sun may be shining, but the soil underneath is suffering as a result. Water in the evening or early morning, and do it deeply. A light sprinkle is as useless as a chocolate trowel.

## Mulch Like You Mean It

Mulch around your plants with compost, bark or even grass clippings if you're feeling frugal. It keeps moisture in, suppresses weeds and makes you look like you know what you're doing.

## Deadhead Without Mercy

Snip off those faded flowers on roses, cosmos and anything else that looks a



Another summertime crop to enjoy

bit sad. It tricks the plant into thinking it hasn't done its job yet, so it churns out more blooms. Sneaky but effective.

## Protect Soft Fruit

Birds love raspberries as much as you do. Possibly more. Netting is your best friend. A top tip straight from the brilliant minds of the wise allotment gurus is to buy scaffolding netting. It's cheap, strong, tightly woven and will outlast us all. No more £1 flimsy netting from the supermarket, please.

## Harvest Often, Eat Quickly

Courgettes become marrows faster than you can say "best in show." Pick regularly and celebrate gluts with reckless generosity to neighbours. Unless of course you do wish to enter a local show, in which case leave it and feed it.

## Sow Again

Lettuce, carrots and beetroot get another crack at a crop if you get them going now for later summer salads. Succession sowing is the smug secret of the organised gardener.

## Weed Ruthlessly

Bindweed, ground elder and their delinquent friends will take over if you blink. Don't be too hard on yourself if they are taking over the garden like the grim day that ants swarm the garden from some unknown lair underground and take to the sky in unison. Yank them, burn them, sever their roots - be ruthless and proactive.

**For more gardening tips, follow Ross Pearson on Instagram at @rosspearsongardening**



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