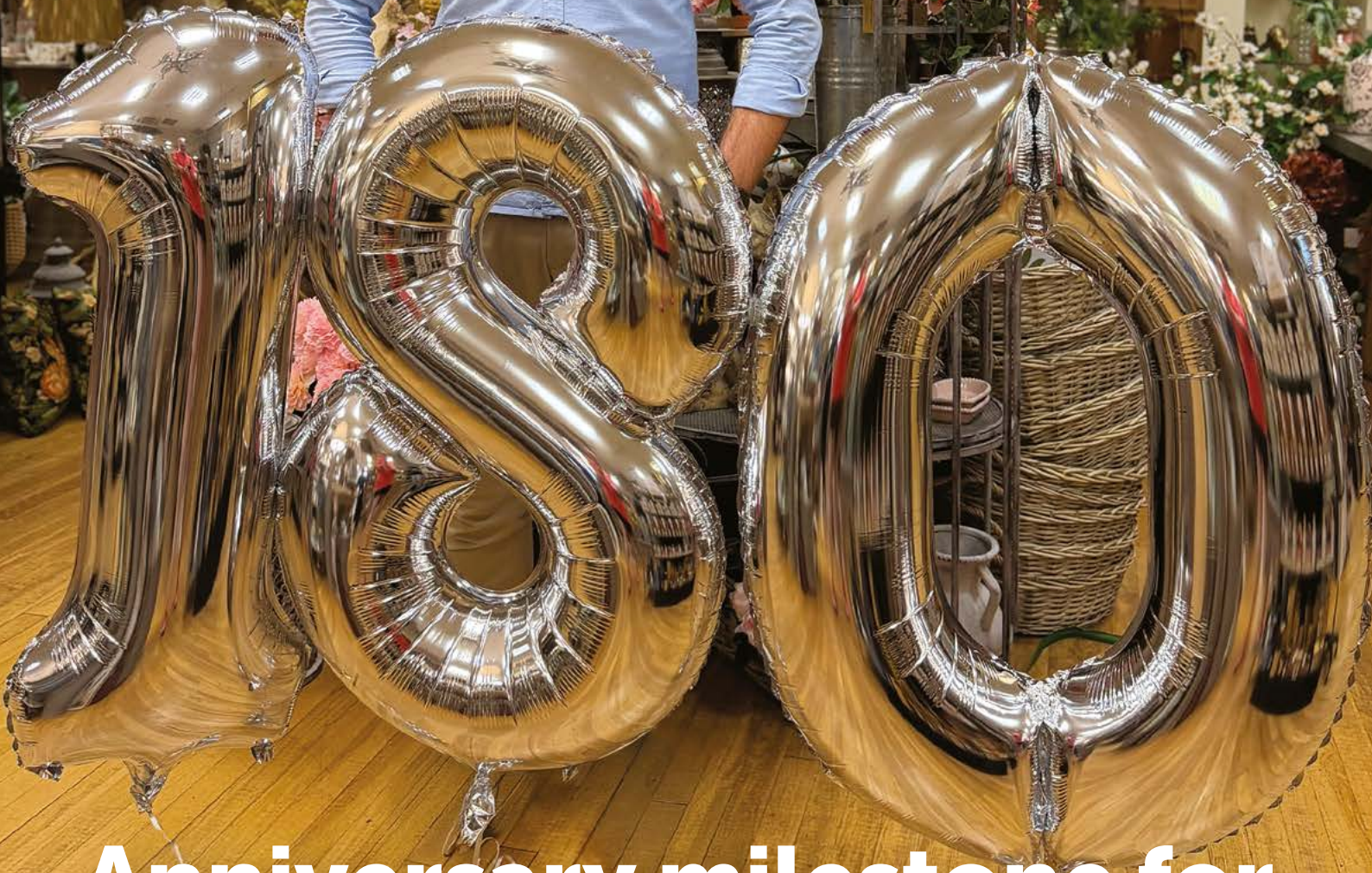


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inside MORPETH



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inside MORPETH

Right across the length and breadth of the country businesses are struggling to survive in so many town and city centres. The cost-of-living crisis means people have less money to spend in their pockets and purses, while the explosion of on-line shopping and White-Van-Man door deliveries, has seriously dented trade in many areas.

Without looking at the situation through rose-tinted glasses or indeed wishing to jinx it, Morpeth on the surface appears to have been bucking that trend for a while now. Of course, times are tough for traders and businesses, particularly in the hospitality sector, but, by and large, Morpeth has shown a resistance and determination to remain a vibrant shopping centre, thanks perhaps to doggedly sticking to a town-centre-first approach rather than welcoming a retail park on the edge of town.

This edition we report the good news that M&S has signed up for another 15 years at Sanderson Arcade and is also planning a major revamp of its food hall provision. Our other amazing Morpeth news is that this year is Rutherfords 180th in business in the town centre.

While Rutherfords and Mark Dransfield's arcade, may anchor Morpeth's unrivalled shopping experience they are backed up by so many wonderful large and small independent shops to provide the sort of diverse range the like of which no other local towns can match. Add into the mix a profusion of cafes, coffee shops, and restaurants offering such a welcome hospitality choice, and Morpeth really is the stand-out local shopping and visitor destination in the very heart of Northumberland. Long may that continue!

Ian Leech
Editor of Inside Morpeth

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Front cover: Chris Mitchell celebrating Rutherford's trading history



'Glastonbury of the North' back with a bang this August

The family music festival which began in the most modest of ways eight years ago, will be back on the outskirts of Morpeth this August Bank Holiday Weekend, even bigger and better than ever before, **Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech reports.**

Thousands of music lovers from as far away at London, Scotland, Cumbria, Tyne & Wear right down into Yorkshire and the Midlands, will once again be flocking to the festival fields near Morpeth's Craik Park football ground, to see and hear some of the very best tribute bands in the business over three days from Friday August 28th.

The cast list for this year's Party in the Park, reads like a list of show-business royalty. Performers will be bringing alive on the appropriately named Emily Davison stage, the music of The Beatles, Elvis, ABBA, Robbie Williams, Dolly Parton, Elton John, Lady Gaga, The Eagles, Foo Fighters, Arctic Monkeys, AC/DC, Sam Fender, Amy Winehouse, Madness, Oasis and Blur to name just a few!

The stage will be one of four performance stages at the festival, including for the first time, a Dance Arena featuring top DJs Altern 8, Dream Frequency and jon dasilva.

The festival has grown from an idea by pals Andy Holden and Paul Race, to stage a music day for family and friends near Causey Park alongside the A1 on the way north out of Morpeth.

So popular was the event that it has grown out of all proportion to become the biggest family music festival in Northumberland. "From that

first event we really got the bug for staging a festival to give people the chance to see and hear the music of their idols thanks to some of the finest tribute bands and performers around," Andy told me.

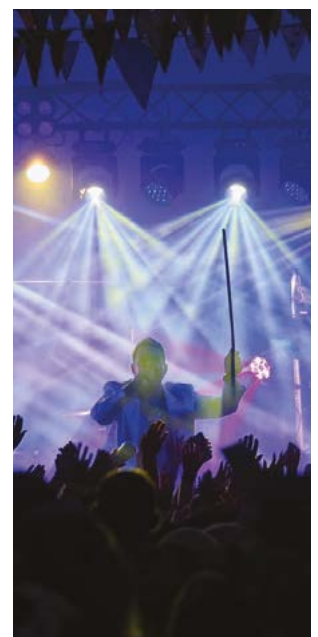
That first afternoon has now grown into a three-day festival with separate camping facilities for families and adults to stay the weekend, even enjoying the facilities of luxury loos and showers!

"Last year over the weekend, more than 6,000 people came through the gates to our event," said Andy. "We really enjoy seeing the smiling faces of so many people of all ages, thoroughly enjoying the music that they love."

As well as the music there's a performing arts stage; a dance tent with music from the 90s and the dance scenes of the Balearic Islands of Majorca and Ibiza; a VIP lounge in a fully carpeted marquee; licensed bars; showrides; stalls and street food vendors.

All the information about Morpeth's Party in the Park 2026 including how to buy tickets, can be found on its website or a variety of social media sites. It promises to be another fantastic weekend of entertainment!

Tickets can be bought on the official Ticket Link via SeeTickets





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On the right track to enjoy choral singing together

For more than a century a single-track railway running 25 miles west from Morpeth into the heart of rural Northumberland, was a lifeline for communities living along its route, writes Ian Leech.

The Wansbeck Valley Railway – affectionally known locally as the Wannie Line – carried people, goods and livestock between Morpeth, Reedsmouth and Rothbury from the day trains first started running along the track in 1862. Originally it ran as far as Scots Gap with stops at Meldon, Angerton and Middleton North, before it was extended to Knowesgate, Woodburn and finally Reedsmouth. A few years later a branch line linked Scots Gap to Rothbury, stopping at Rothley, Ewesly and Brinkburn on the way.

At the time when horse-power literally meant that because there were no cars, lorries or buses on the roads, three passenger trains a day with additional goods trains, opened up a whole new transport link to Morpeth, and, of course further afield to the emerging East Coast railway network. It even proved a vital service for transporting construction materials for the Catcleugh Reservoir when it was being built in the 1890s and army personnel and equipment to the ranges in the heart of rural Northumberland.

From the end of World War I, however, already limited passenger traffic was reduced even further, as more and more cars, motor lorries and indeed buses, took to the roads. As a result, the Wannie Line passenger service was discontinued in 1952, with the line ultimately closing completely in 1966. Later that same year local Round Table organisations organised one final nostalgic train trip along the Wannie Line.

The Wansbeck Piper as the train was named, pulled 11 carriages from Newcastle Central Station to the end of the line, packed with more than 600 passengers including local people keen to say they rode the last train along the Wannie Line, as well as rail enthusiasts from all over the country wanting to be part of a moment in railway history. The Duke of Northumberland's piper Jack Armstrong was also on board the train along with Patricia Jennings, playing their Northumberland pipes to mark the end of an era.

Co-incidentally, I had the privilege of also being a passenger on the train to report the occasion for The Journal newspaper I was working for at the time as the paper's local Morpeth reporter.



Members of the choir taking part in this year's Morpeth Book Festival

These days the only signs that remain of the line are a number of former private station buildings which are now private residences, while the Robson & Cowan country store occupies the site that was once the Scots Gap station. In places, the grassed over line of the track is also popular as a circular walking trail.

Memories may be all that remain of the Wannie Line, but its name lives on thanks to the singers of a local community choir which is based in Scots Gap itself. The Wannie Liners as the choir is called, has been singing around the area, since it was formed just over 15 years ago by Kathy Anderson who is still its conductor.

Currently, there are 31 members of the choir all of whom live within perhaps a 10-mile radius of Scots Gap where they meet once a week on a Wednesday evening, in the local chapel to enjoy singing together and rehearsing for appearances in concerts, events, church services, weddings and even a funeral service.

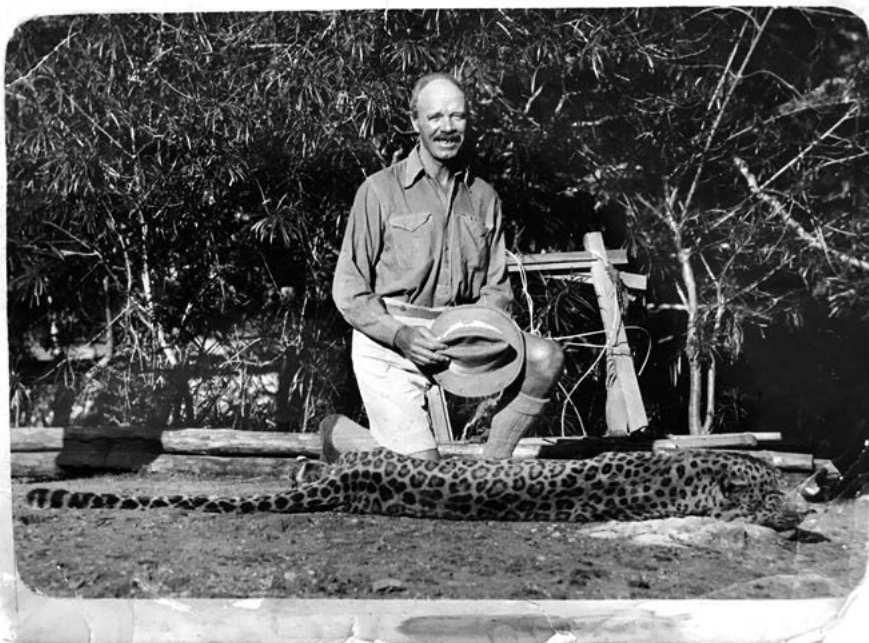
One of the choir's recent appearances was at this year's Morpeth Book Festival where its members supported Retired Major General Tim Hodgetts during an emotional presentation of his poetry anthology - *Frontlines and Lifelines* – written from his experiences as the

highest ranking medical officer in Britain's Armed Forces. Some of his poems telling of his time trying to save the lives of young servicemen and women, seriously injured in conflicts such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Kosovo, have been set to music and the choir movingly sang a number of them during his festival performance.

Gay Penn, the choir's secretary, told me that they enjoy singing a wide repertoire of music from pop to the musicals, folk to hymns. "New choir members are always welcome to join us," she told me. One of the choir's favourite composers is Sir John Rutter, who founded his own choir the Cambridge Singers, and his works including many Christmas carols, choral works and psalms have been performed all over the world.

"As a choir we so love singing together, and the book festival evening accompanying Tim Hodgetts was a very special occasion for us that we will remember for a long time to come," she added.

Anyone wanting to learn more about the availability of the Wannie Liners Community Choir or wishing to enquire about joining, can contact Gay Penn on 07809 838699.



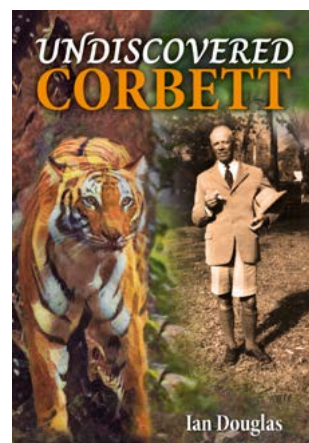
Jim and the Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag



Jim with camera, Kaladhungi, April 1937

From ace shot Big Game hunter to nature loving conservationist

Inside **Morpeth's Deputy Editor Jack Brodie** reports on a new book by **Morpeth author Ian Douglas** which explores the remarkable life of **Jim Corbett**, a local hero of Northern India in the 1920s and 30s



In his very first book 'Undiscovered Corbett', Ian Douglas presents a conclusive account of the life and times of renowned hunter and conservationist Jim Corbett including never before published excerpts from journals translated from the original Urdu along with conversations from descendants of Corbett and those who knew him.

Born in the Indian city of Nainital in 1875, Edward James 'Jim' Corbett was an Anglo-Indian hunter, expert tracker and an ace shot. He was, however, also a real lover of nature, an ardent conservationist and the author of many highly respected books and articles. Corbett gained fame for tracking down and hunting 'man-eaters' in Northern India in the first half of the 20th century. Most famously, he published his bestselling memoir *Man-Eaters of Kumaon* in 1944 which has continued to expose international audiences to his work, including a young Ian Douglas.

Corbett killed his first man-eater, the Champawat Tiger in 1907 at the age of 31. The tiger itself was responsible for killing more than 435 people in Nepal and the Kumaon division of India.



Ian Douglas

Throughout his career, Corbett would be contacted by local authorities of terror-stricken villages where these animals were running wild, killing hundreds of local people. Across his career he went on to track and kill from a documented 33 man-eaters including 14 leopards and 19

tigers including renowned animals such as the Panar Leopard and the Leopard of Rudraprayag. In total, the animals Corbett killed were responsible for the deaths of at least 1,200 people.

As Ian Douglas explains, though, Corbett was strongly against the practice of trophy hunting and instead promoted wildlife photography as an alternative. Further, despite saving countless lives and building an indisputable legacy, Corbett refused to accept any rewards for his work viewing it as his duty to use his skills embodying a truly Victorian spirit. He did, however, notably accept the gift of a .275 Rigby bolt-action rifle for the killing of his first man-eater. During his hunts for these animals and through his other work, Corbett became increasingly concerned about the environment in which he was living and developed a passion for ecology and conservation. A champion of the natural world, he felt deeply aggrieved at the degradation of the forests of India. It was because of that he pushed for the establishment of conservation funds, creating 'The All India Conference for the Preservation of Wild Life' and persuaded the Governor



The fish of my dreams' Jim with 50lb mahseer



Jim and the uncle of the man-eater's last victim

of the United Provinces Malcom Hailey to construct India's first national park. The park, which was initially named after Hailey, was renamed to the 'Jim Corbett National Park' following his death in 1955 and is still open to the public to this day. It was during his conservation work in the 1920s and 30s that Corbett swapped his rifle for the camera and took up wildlife photography which he viewed as infinitely more impressive than trophy hunting.

Throughout the book, Ian presents an incredible depth of knowledge and research on Corbett, discussing both the legendary and less well-known aspects of his life and legacy. Undiscovered Corbett follows him across India and the globe, from his time hunting man-eaters to leading 5,000 men across to Europe to fight in the First World War and protecting transporting goods with railway companies across the Ganges to his move to Africa in 1947. It was, in fact, during his time in Africa that he protected the future Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip in the Treetops Hotel where she famously 'went up the tree a princess and came down a queen.' On their visit in 1952, the couple had

embarked on a Royal Tour of Africa and Corbett had been invited to serve as their guide, guardian and host for a wildlife viewing trip. Corbett himself kept vigil and protected the royal couple overnight while, unbeknownst to the future Queen, her father George VI had died back home in England. In the visitor's logbook, it was Corbett who penned the immortal sentence: 'For the first time in the history of the world, a young girl climbed into a tree one day a Princess and after having what she described as her most thrilling experience she climbed down from the tree next day a Queen.'

Much like Corbett himself, Undiscovered Corbett as a book has followed a rather interesting trajectory. In our conversation, Ian explained that the text is the product of a lifelong passion for Corbett which he picked up when he read his memoirs for the very first time at around the age of ten. From there, he has spent his life researching Corbett and tracking down relatives, friends and descendants of those who knew him. It was in conversation with one of these relatives that the topic of writing a definitive account of Corbett's life came up. In his own words: 'I resisted doing it

until I was told to', but Jim's descendants insisted that if anyone knew enough about Corbett to write the book, it was Ian.

Ian set out writing and sent a section on Corbett's legendary Rigby bolt-action rifle to the manufacturers, John Rigby & Co. In turn, the folks at Rigby sent the extract to the publishers Merlin Unwin, who thought it was such a well written, engaging and interesting piece that they reached out to him saying they would be interested in publishing it! On this, Ian himself said that: 'They reiterated to me this was very abnormal for them to do.'

In his own words, Ian has 'lived in a world of Corbett'. For over 40 years, he's worked across the UK, Europe and Asia in conservation with a real interest in the birds and mammals of forests and wetlands.

The book itself was launched on April 30th, in time for the centenary of Jim's killing of the Leopard of Rudraprayag and is available to order from Waterstones and directly from Merlin Unwin on their website.



Jim relaxing at Dhikala. April 1941



A Machan near Kalthungi



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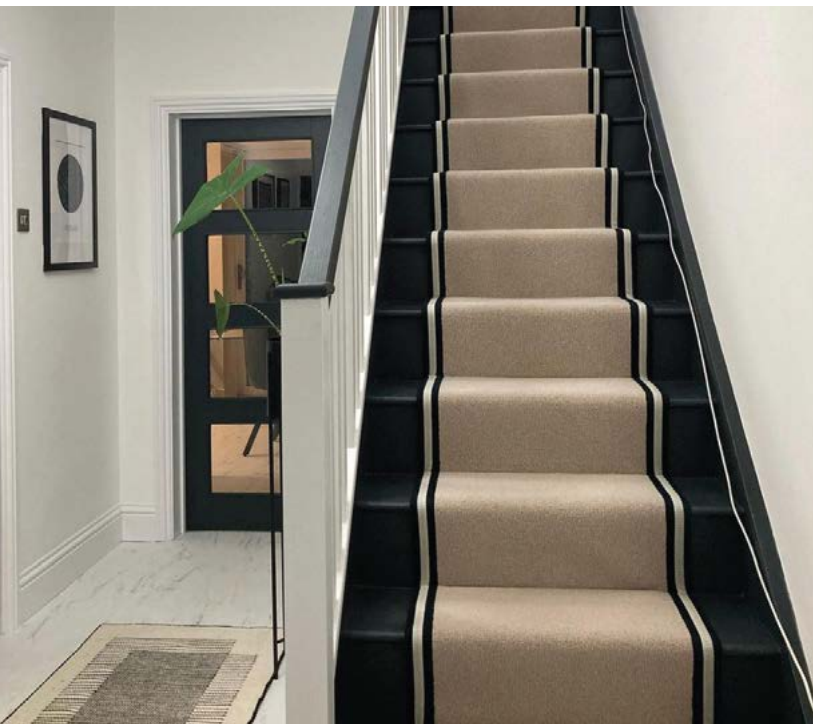
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Having fun at Delaval Hall this summer



An action-packed day out from Morpeth

If you're looking for ways to keep the kids entertained over the long summer holidays, Seaton Delaval Hall has it covered with its vibrant Summer of Play programme. Just a short trip from Morpeth and packed with activities designed to spark imagination, creativity and plenty of outdoor fun, we hope you'll be back week after week.

Summer of Play transforms the hall's gardens and grounds into a hub of family-friendly adventure. All day, every day, children can climb the hay bale scramble and get lost in the grass maze, challenge friends and siblings to giant garden games like four-in-a-row and tower building, or climb, slide and explore the Delaval Playdium play area. In the East Paddock the Delaval Dash races are perfect for those with a competitive edge, with sack races to welly wanging and a winners' podium for the all-important photo at the end. There's also a sports chest brimming with equipment on the South Lawn, perfect for impromptu football matches, cricket games or a round of frisbee. For budding performers, the West Wing Kitchen invites children to dress up and perform to a playlist of Baroque-inspired pop hits—offering a uniquely Delaval twist that reflects the hall's flamboyant history.

A lively weekly programme keeps things fresh, so no two visits are the same. Weekly visits from Let's Circus offer pop-up performances as well as have-a-go



sessions while Theatre Sprout includes puppetry and imaginative storytelling for under 7s. Green-fingered youngsters can try Young Gardeners in the Community Kitchen Garden, while colourful BubblePlaY afternoons bring joyful, sensory fun. Further highlights include comedy afternoons with top North East comedian, Lee Kyle, and Family Pride celebrations with Curious Arts. See back page for full details.

Best of all, Seaton Delaval Hall's Summer of Play activities are included with membership or standard admission, and there's no booking required, making it an easy, boredom-busting great-value day out for families.

Of course, there's more to Seaton Delaval Hall than play. The mix of open spaces, striking architecture and fascinating stories makes it an inspiring setting for children and adults alike, with plenty of spots to relax, picnic or simply enjoy the fresh Northumberland air.

While the summer programme is full of family fun, Seaton Delaval Hall is equally rewarding for adult visitors. In 2026, the hall is also marking Vanbrugh 300, celebrating 300 years since the death of its architect, Sir John Vanbrugh. This special programme presented by The Georgian Group with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund shines a spotlight on his bold Baroque vision, inviting visitors to discover more about the man who was, at various points in his life, a merchant, a spy, an architect and a soldier. The hall also offers plenty of quieter pleasures: a wander through the formal gardens, the relaxed feel of the South East Gardens, or a coffee in the historic Brewhouse Café.

Seaton Delaval Hall is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am-5pm during term-time and daily during Northumberland school holidays. For the full Summer of Play programme and further information, visit nationaltrust.org.uk/seatondelavalhall.

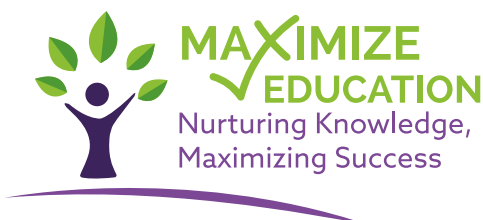
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Maximize Education is inspiring children to discover a lifelong love of reading

The Morpeth-based organisation, which provides educational support from pre-school through to undergraduate and adult level across Northumberland, is proudly supporting the National Year of Reading 2026, led by the National Literacy Trust.

The UK-wide campaign encourages children to develop positive reading habits from an early age, and Maximize Education has embraced the initiative through a range of creative and community-focused activities.

Earlier this year, the organisation launched a children's story-writing competition. The winning entry, *The Seed Who Wanted to Sprout*, has since been brought to life and distributed to schools alongside sunflower seeds for pupils to plant and nurture as they grow.

This initiative forms part of Maximize Education's wider commitment to

boosting literacy and encouraging creativity, helping children build the skills and confidence to explore the world through stories.

In addition, the organisation launched a highly successful appeal to put books into the hands of disadvantaged children who may not otherwise have access to them.

More than 2,000 new or excellent-condition children's books have been donated by schools and members of the public. These will soon be distributed to Children North East, a charity supporting babies, children, young people and families through services including mental health support, family intervention, community initiatives and youth peer groups.

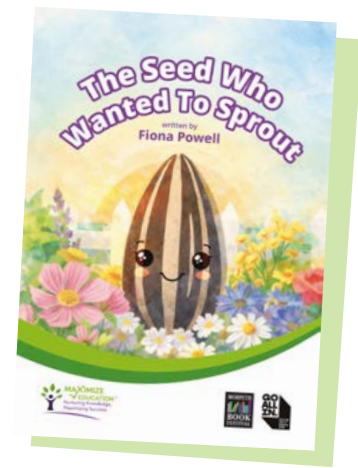
The appeal is a further demonstration of Maximize Education's ongoing commitment to improving literacy and educational outcomes for children across the region.

As another academic year moves into examination season, Maximize Education continues to ensure its students are 'exam ready' and confident.

They have seen some significant uplifts in grade expectations this year, thanks to the hard work of students.

Here's wishing all GCSE, A-Level, functional skills and SATs candidates the best of luck over coming weeks.

Registrations for the 2026-27 academic year are now open. Register early to secure your place, as availability is limited.



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Teeing off for charity fund-raiser

A major charity golf day organised by local Rotarians has raised a substantial sum for the MND Association.

Nearly 250 golfers simultaneously played the three local golf courses of Bedlington, Morpeth and Newbiggin, in the event organised by Cramlington and Wansbeck Rotary Club with support from Morpeth Rotarians.

The golf day was the idea of Rotarian Michael Metcalf who wanted to do something meaningful to support his friends David and Natalie Lynn after she was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease.

"I wanted to support them because I know how much the MND Association has helped them," said Michael who has been David's golf partner for many years. "We have organised many charity days but never across three courses on the same day!"

A raffle with some generously donated prizes, including two matches ticket for a hospitality box at a Newcastle United home

match provided by John and Jacob Murphy, plus so many others from Rotarians, friends and local businesses, helped drive the fund-raising total to more than £8,000!

Cramlington and Wansbeck President, retired GP Dick Quinby, said: "Rotary is about service above self, and that was exactly what the day was about. It was wonderful to see so many people joining together to enjoy a great day of golf and raise so much money for such a worthy cause."

In thanking the organisers, sponsors and everyone who took part in the day, Dominic McDonough, MND Association's Relationship Fundraiser, said: "Every penny raised will make a huge difference in helping us to support those living with MND and their families. Thanks to the money raised we are a day closer to making MND a thing of the past."

Event organiser Michael Metcalf with Natalie and David Lynn



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The 4th Morpeth Scouts celebrate 100 years of scouting in the town

Morpeth scouts planning grand centenary celebrations

The 4th Morpeth Scout Group plans to mark its 100th anniversary this year with a grand reunion celebration and is inviting anyone involved with the group to join in the event, reports Ian Leech.

Were you one of the many adult volunteers who helped build the group? Did you attend the 4th Morpeth Scouts as a Beaver, Cub, Scout or Venture? Were you part of the Group's varied and numerous committees, or had been an occasional supporter over the years.

If so, they are inviting anyone to go along to the Scout Group HQ in Staithes Lane. Morpeth (NE61 1TD) in on Saturday July 11th between 2pm and 4pm, to join in the celebrations, enjoy a cup of tea and a slice of cake, as well as chatting and sharing great memories of scouting in Morpeth.

Before then, a whistle-stop tour of the last 100 years! It all began in Morpeth in 1926 with Scouts, before Cubs were introduced in 1927; Beavers in 1986; and the youngest Squirrels in 2021.

As Liam Walsh (Group Lead Volunteer) told Inside Morpeth: "Our Staithes Lane HQ is unrecognisable from our original structure of 1958 which was an old Nissen Hut. Our current building went up in the early 2000s and there have been several extensions since then, notably in 2012 and again in 2020, to accommodate our ever-increasing number of sections, kit and equipment.

"Prior to 1958 meetings were held in Newgate Street at the old Workhouse and Dacre Street in what is now the New Life Centre.

"One hundred years on we are still growing and we are now the largest Scout Group in Northumberland, running weekly sessions for young people aged from four to 14 years old. As demand for scouting has increased we have risen to



the challenge, expanding our sessions and running consecutive meetings most evenings."

Five years ago, the 1st Pegswood Scout became part of the 4th Morpeth Group, which now delivers scouting in both locations.

The group now has two Squirrel Dreys, four Beaver Colonies, four Cub Packs and four Scout Troops, providing scouting opportunities on 14 occasions each week to around 280 young people, supported by more than 40 Adult Volunteers.

As Liam says, it is therefore, an appropriate moment to ask how many people still do something they first learned in scouting, be that lighting a BBQ first time with a match; knowing how to use a map; singing a long-forgotten camp fire song, or simply having the lifelong courage to 'give it a go and try new things?'

"We have built on the legacy and heritage of all those involved with 4th Morpeth over our 100-year history," said Liam. "Memories, skills and knowledge have



passed from generation to generation and from 'Being Prepared' to Skills for Life, we continue to develop young people from in and around Morpeth."

As part of their 100th anniversary celebrations 4th Morpeth is building up its archives, gathering together photographs and memorabilia. So if anyone has anything relevant, they can share it with the Group via email to 100years@4thmorpeth.org.uk or by telephoning (01670) 515785.



TMP | WEALTH
MANAGEMENT

Make your money work **for you**

You work hard to support your family and enjoy life, so it makes sense that your money should knuckle down too. This is where a little expert advice can make all the difference.

Our lives are busy and complicated. Families today can be fragmented, increasing demands on our time. You'd be forgiven for thinking that the latest technologies should make things easier, but that's not always the case. In fact, information overload can often leave us feeling overwhelmed and unsure about which way to turn.

So much financial choice can be bewildering. We're here to guide you and advise on changes to the financial landscape and the options available for you.

In so many areas, we rely on experts to point us in the right direction. If your car breaks down, you see a mechanic. If a tooth aches, you go to the dentist. The same should be true of our finances. Why wouldn't we ask the experts and make sure they're being managed effectively?

Discover our holistic approach

We understand that everyone's finances are unique. So we strive to offer a long-term, relationship-based service that focuses on what you need, as well as what motivates and inspires you. It's this holistic approach that means we can then find solutions that work well together and match your attitude to risk.

Knowing that your investments are being managed by seasoned professionals and that your worries are our concern can be a huge relief. You can also relax in the knowledge that we'll be here to support and guide you on every step of your financial journey. We want to know you and your finances inside out – and keep it that way. After all, we've learnt from experience that the best wealth management service comes via thorough

understanding and personalised, face-to-face advice. It's what we're passionate about.

Here's where we can help

You can trust us with a number of financial solutions. From access to a broad range of funds providing the potential to grow your savings and protect them against inflation, to pension advice – whatever your age. We can also help you make the most of retirement, find the best protection for you, your family and your business, and advise on Inheritance Tax issues.

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Could Equity Release be right for you?

Separating old worries from today's Regulated Advice

By **Joanne Manghan**, North East Equity Release

For many homeowners in their 60s, 70s and beyond, retirement is not simply about managing the bills. It is about feeling financially secure while still being able to enjoy their home, lifestyle and choices they have worked hard for.

You may have worked hard for many years and now have substantial equity tied up in your home. However, unless you choose to sell or downsize, that value remains within the property rather than being available to spend in retirement.

For many people, pension income may cover everyday living costs but may not always stretch to the things that can make retirement feel more comfortable or enjoyable. This might include home repairs or improvements, replacing a kitchen or bathroom, helping children or grandchildren to get on the property ladder, treating the family to a special holiday, enjoying hobbies, or simply having a little more financial freedom to make the most of later life.

This is one of the reasons some homeowners begin to ask whether equity release could be worth considering.

The most common form of equity release is a lifetime mortgage. This is a loan secured against your home, available to homeowners aged 55 and over. You continue to own and live in your home, and the loan is usually repaid when you pass away or move permanently into long-term care.

Many people still have old worries about equity release, often based on stories from many years ago. Today's lifetime mortgage market is very different. Advice is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, with many advisers, lenders and solicitors also choosing to be members of the Equity Release Council.

The Equity Release Council sets standards designed to give customers important protections. With a lifetime mortgage from a lender that is a member of the Equity Release Council, you have the right to remain in your home for life, or until



you move permanently into long-term care, provided the terms and conditions of the mortgage are met.

You also continue to own your home. This is important, as people sometimes worry that equity release means giving up ownership of their property. With a lifetime mortgage, the loan is secured against the home, but the property remains yours.

Another key protection is that interest rates must be fixed, or capped if variable, so you know how interest will be charged. Many modern lifetime mortgages also allow voluntary repayments, usually within set limits, which can help reduce the impact of interest building up over time.

There is also a no-negative-equity guarantee, designed to ensure that when the property is eventually sold, your estate will not be liable to repay more than the property sells for, provided it is sold for the best price reasonably obtainable

These protections matter, but careful advice remains essential. A lifetime mortgage will reduce the value of your

estate and may affect what you leave behind to loved ones. It could also affect entitlement to means-tested benefits. Alternatives such as downsizing, using savings, family support, or doing nothing for now should also be considered.

The most helpful starting point is simply to understand how lifetime mortgages work and have your questions answered properly. From there, you can consider whether equity release fits with your circumstances, your family, your future plans and the retirement you want to enjoy.

If this is something you have been thinking about, please feel welcome to get in touch. I would be happy to answer your questions, talk through your options and help you understand whether equity release may be suitable for your circumstances.

**Call Joanne on 01670 209 925
or 0191 695 9493, Email
joanne@northeastequityrelease.co.uk
www.northeastequityrelease.co.uk**

Are you making the most of your retirement?



A lifetime mortgage could help enhance your retirement lifestyle.

It all starts with clear, honest, professional information.

Your Easy Steps to Get Started:

Initial Phone Call - I'll take the time to understand your needs, explain how equity release works, and help you determine if it could be a suitable option for you.

Choose the Meeting Option That Works Best for You - Your choice of meeting, phone, video call, or in-person in the comfort of your own home.

Personalised Illustration – I'll provide a straightforward, customised illustration based on your individual situation.

Independent Legal Advice – A qualified solicitor will guide you through the legal details to ensure everything is clear and in your best interest.

No Obligation Decision – You'll have all the time you need to thoughtfully consider your options, with no rush to make any decisions.



We're here to help.

Get in touch to request a brochure or for a friendly chat and free advice.

North East Equity Release

Joanne Manghan

Tel: 01670 209 925 or 0191 695 9493

joanne@northeastequityrelease.co.uk

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"Joanne was extremely helpful, I would recommend her services to anyone"



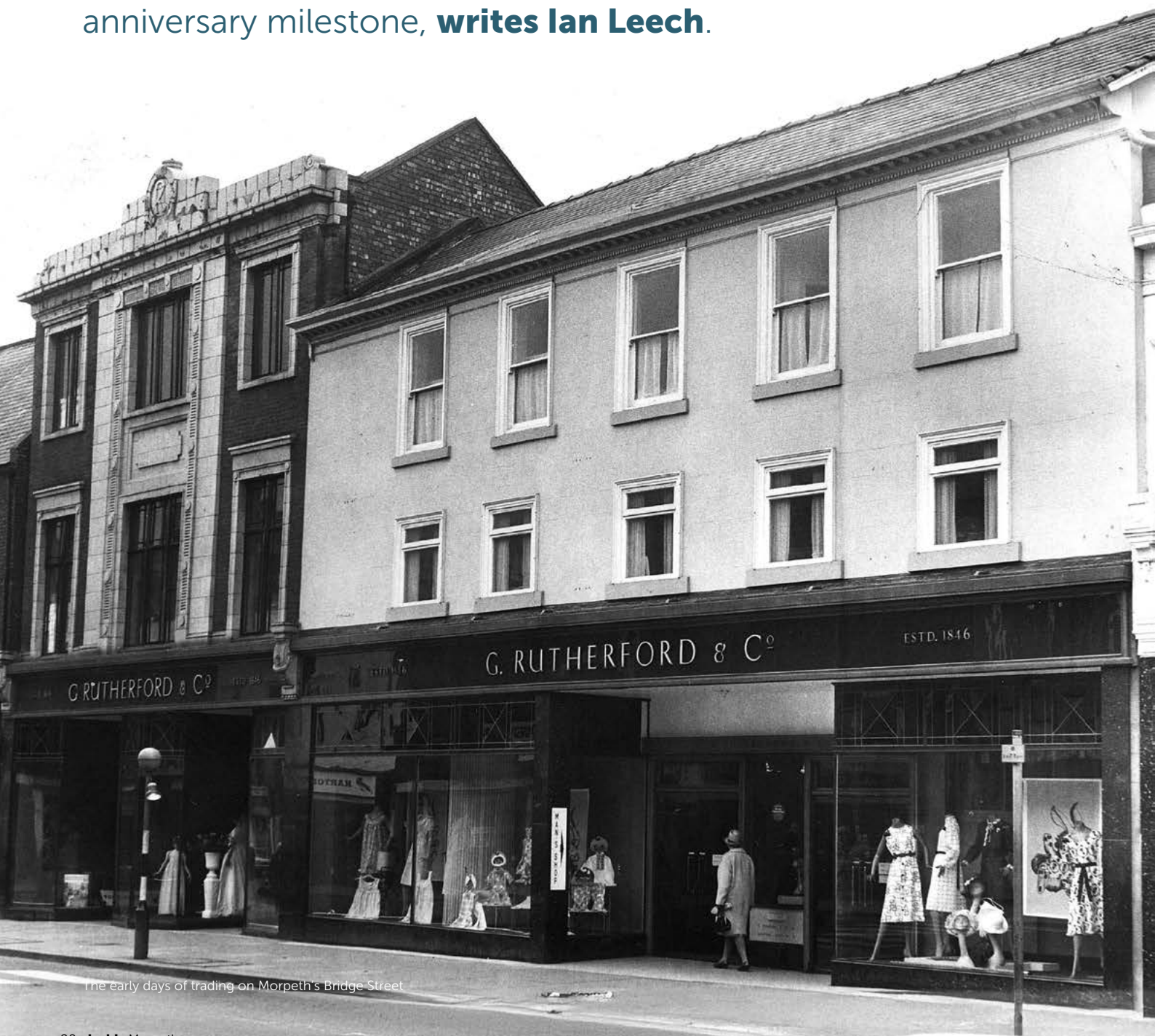
162 reviews

SCAN ME



Happy anniversary! **Morpeth store celebrating a retailing milestone**

The leading lifestyle department store not just in Morpeth and Northumberland, but perhaps the whole of Northern England, is this summer celebrating a remarkable anniversary milestone, **writes Ian Leech.**



The early days of trading on Morpeth's Bridge Street



The Rutherfords 'family' at a staff dance

In a day and age when shops seem to come and go at the drop of a hat, Rutherfords had been trading on Morpeth's Bridge Street for a remarkable 180 years since a young George Rutherford left his home on the family sheep farm in Kirk Yetholm, to journey the length of the county to open a tiny draper's shop in the town.

What George began perhaps in a way he never initially imagined, was a retailing dynasty that became known not just in Northumberland but across the North East of England and up into the Scottish Border country.

Five generations of the Rutherford family owned and ran the business that was passed down from father to son before being sold to new owner Chris Mitchell in 2019.

In that time Rutherfords grew and expanded into adjoining properties first in 1902 and again in 1926, creating a shop frontage said to be the largest between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

More than 100 staff worked for Rutherfords in those days, with some even living either above the shop or in cottages at its rear. Times, of course, were very different in those days. Trading hours were long with the shop closing at 7pm on Mondays to Thursdays; 8pm on Fridays and Saturdays; and even 10pm on Christmas Eve!

When the staff worked late, however, they had an hour off for tea, when the wife of George Mathew Rutherford (known as 'The Governor'), the second Managing Director and son of the founder, supplied

them with pies and cakes to be eaten on the premises.

Creating that family atmosphere with the staff, was very much in the DNA of the Rutherfords, and indeed, still is today, with some of the current staff having worked in the store for more than 20 or 30 years,

George Rangdale Rutherford, father of Richard, was said to know the names of practically all the store customers at the time – and, if he did not, he made it his business to find out!

Naturally, the people of Morpeth ranked among Rutherfords regular customers, but they also drew heavily on the custom of farming families living around the town, and even as far away as Alnwick and Wooler, who would bring their livestock to sale on Morpeth's Wednesday market days, at the same time as shopping in the store.

But, in the heydays of coal mining either side of the World Wars, families from the coalfield communities of South East Northumberland, were also valued Rutherfords customers.

It was a momentous moment in the Rutherfords history, in 2019 when Chris Mitchell who co-incidentally like founder George Rutherford, had chosen a career in commerce rather than following in the farming footsteps of his grandfather and father, bought the store.

He had joined Rutherfords in 2011 having being brought in by Richard Rutherford to help modernise the back-office and till functions of the store, basically from a

pen-and-paper to computerised systems.

Around that same time Jane, the late wife of Richard Rutherford, was leading its transformation into a luxurious, contemporary, lifestyle store stocking exclusive ladies and men's fashions, carefully selected homeware and furnishings, shoes, handbags and cosmetics, the likes of which cannot be found under the same roof elsewhere in the region.

Jane had travelled the world attending exhibitions and showrooms from across Britain and over to Paris and Milan, to source the stock she knew would appeal to Rutherfords customers, and create a unique shopping experience in the store.

Tragically, Jane died in 2015, but her approach was continued by Richard and now indeed, by Chris Mitchell and his current store team.

Chris told me that he believes the in-store changes she made is one of the reasons Rutherfords still trades strongly when so many other local family stores from the same era, are no longer in business. "Many departmental stores at the time were indistinguishable from one another," he said.

"Rutherfords leaned towards being distinctive, however, and became more of a 'lifestyle' than a traditional department store. With the rise of internet shopping, it has become difficult to compete with commodity products you can buy on line, but a lot of what we sell are products that customers prefer to touch and feel before buying!"



Back in the day when Morpeth was traffic-free

“The challenge as we move forward is to keep the traditional feel of a department store that has been part of the fabric of Morpeth for so long...”

Chris Mitchell



Christmas window displays are famed not just in Morpeth but across the region

That rise of online shopping, said Chris, is just one of the challenges Rutherfords has successfully faced over its long history - two World Wars; regular recessions; the Covid pandemic; the growth of supermarkets and out-of-town retail parks to name but a few.

“Over the years Rutherfords has gradually modernised whilst retaining the ‘traditional’ feel of the store,” said Chris. “Some local and regional department stores modernised too slowly and became irrelevant, while others did so too aggressively and lost the character their customers valued so much. Others, became part of national chains and lost their local identity, so Rutherfords survival is partly because the store did not become or tried to compete, with national chains.”

Of course, something else happened in Morpeth more than a decade ago, that could conceivably have impacted detrimentally on the future of Rutherfords, and that was the opening of Mark Dransfield’s elegant Sanderson Arcade.

The development attracted the sort of stores likely to be in direct competition with Morpeth’s oldest established retailer. But, as shrewd businessmen, Richard Rutherford and Mark Dransfield were very quick to realise that they both stood to gain from the opening of the Arcade, by complementing rather than competing with one another.

As the new owner of the store, Chris Mitchell says he is the first to recognise the debt he owes to Richard Rutherford, in taking him under this wing and teaching him all he needed to know before taking over the running of the store, which he, in fact, did in the final two years before Richard’s retirement.

“He was an incredible mentor to me, instilling his retail ethos and values to me, so I could build on those for the future as the world of retailing continues to change so dramatically,” he said. “The challenge as we move forward is to keep the traditional feel of a department store that has been part of the fabric of Morpeth for so long, whilst ensuring Rutherfords continues to evolve and appeal in today’s marketplace.”

Rutherfords will mark its anniversary in a number of ways with in-store and window displays tracing its history – and then, of course, there will be Christmas and the window displays which have become so much part of the festive season in Morpeth!

Timely boost for town centre trading

The news that Marks & Spencer is planning a significant investment in its Morpeth store comes as a welcome and timely boost to commerce and retailing in the centre of town **reports Editor Ian Leech.**

M&S has just signed a brand-new 15 year-lease as well as announcing a substantial upgrade to the store's Food Hall layout by extending it into the current ground-floor general merchandising space.

The existing upper floor of the store which occupies a prime space at the car park entrance to Sanderson Arcade, which will be repurposed for back-of-house operations, as well as unlocking space for nine new residential apartments in the centre of town. It is hoped the changes will have been made by the summer of 2027.

M&S has been the anchor tenant and the cornerstone of Sanderson Arcade since it was developed and opened by Dransfield Properties just over 16 years ago. As well as bringing a range of new shops to the town the Arcade has helped re-inforce Morpeth's reputation as the premiere market town shopping destination for people from all over Northumberland, Tyneside, County Durham, Wearside and into southern Scotland.

That, in turn, has focused attention on Morpeth's determination to maintain its core trading element within the curtilage of the town centre rather than encouraging developments on the edge or outskirts of the town as has happened in other localities.

Supporters of that approach would argue that has ensured there is always a demand for business property in Morpeth with very few vacancies. The attractiveness and history of the town centre of Morpeth; its proximity to the River Wansbeck and Carlisle Park; the number of restaurants, cafes and coffee shops catering for local residents and visitors; plus the diversity of shops ranging from single independents to the national chains, all mean that Morpeth is uniquely well served to cater for the needs of local shoppers and visitors alike.

Indeed, by our calculations – and don't take this for gospel because we might have missed one of two – there are at least 21 cafes and coffee shops where you can enjoy a drink and light refreshments within the town centre, plus at least a further 16 or 17 restaurants for a more substantial meal. Which leaves



A major revamp of the M&S food hall in Sanderson Arcade is planned

us asking - is there anywhere else in Northumberland with a better town centre hospitality offering than Morpeth?

For generations family businesses like Rutherfords were the very core of commerce in Morpeth. Other names to remember from those dominant family business days were Alderman William Sanderson, who owned the Queen's Head Hotel in Bridge Street and developed the original Sanderson Arcade in the 1950s; Miss Isobel Smail whose family owned and ran the unique hardware store now the Lollo Rosso Italian restaurant; Alderman Alfred Appleby and his bookstores and newsagents; the Mackay family who published the Morpeth Herald from 1854 to the mid-1980s; and the Jennings' family of motor dealers and traders.

As Chris Mitchell says: "We often describe Rutherfords store as being part of the fabric of Morpeth, the heartbeat of the town. Compared to many struggling towns, Morpeth retains a mixed retail ecosystem – independents, markets, cafes and coffee shops, and chain stores, all based in the very centre of town rather than its edges and outskirts. A

department store such as ours survives more easily when the wider town centre is healthy."

Speaking about the M&S news and the fact that Morpeth's strength as a shopping destination is its concentration of businesses within a tight town centre area, James Shepherd of MD of Dransfield Properties, told Inside Morpeth: "Our company is committed to investing in town centres because they are the economic and social heartbeat of a community and their strength is critical to long-term prosperity and well-being.

"This really is a positive move for Morpeth by M&S, and a real endorsement of our town centre-first approach of protecting the town from out-of-town retail. Morpeth is one of the few areas in the country that has promoted town centre-first regeneration and resisted the easy option to build out of town," he said.

"A successful town centre like Morpeth drives demand, attracts investment and underpins the area's overall desirability. This commitment from M&S will further support the long-term vitality of the town's core to deliver for local shoppers."

Life in a Northern Town

Our wine expert **Mark Stephenson** reflects on living and working in Morpeth

There are many reasons why Morpeth is one of the best places to live. We are so lucky to be in a town that supports its diverse high street of independent businesses. Believe me, there are many other towns in the country that would love to have what we do and are incredibly envious!

The sense of pride in our town is very much evident with the volunteers who come together to do good things. Recently, we have had the pleasure to take our wine tastings on the road by holding events at village halls, sports clubs, and church halls both in Morpeth, and around Northumberland.

The aim was to help raise money for local causes and charities. In such a turbulent and uncertain period, it has been heart warming and uplifting to see. We should be thankful and proud of what those people do, and it is deeply humbling to be asked to play our part.

As well as meeting some wonderful people, I'm pleased to say that an increasing number are getting to know us too. It is nice to walk along Bridge Street and get more "hellos" than I used to. I can't put an exact number of what we've helped to raise so far, but it is certainly

in the thousands, and we are extremely proud of that fact. As a local business, we would like to think we are an important part of our community.

It is a role that an Amazon, Majestic, or Wine Society would never be able to fill. Something worth thinking about when you're about to click the "buy" button on their websites. We look forward to continuing this good work with a number of events planned in and around Northumberland, as well as holding events to help our store charity- The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation. Look out for more details.

So, let's talk about wine. It's summer! Woohoo! So, when you are reading this, you should be basking in the glow of the sun's warmth....During this time my mind turns towards those lighter reds, zippy whites, and juicy roses. One wine I've been itching to have with a BBQ is the Lyrarakis Liatiko Red from Crete (£17.50). Tawny in colour, it has a cranberry crunch and bright juiciness. It would pair lovely with BBQ meats and charred vegetables. Worst comes to worst, it will help wash down the well-done beef burgers!

As for white, Hika Txakoli (£23.50-

pronounced cha-koli) from the Basque country, Spain is a clean, dry, fresh number that drinks great on its own, or with light salads or seafood. With flavours of green apple, lemon citrus, and a slight spritz, it is the perfect summer tippie. Traditionally, the Basques would pour this from height to get the air into it. Don't try this at home as it is an incredible waste of wine and you'll get wet feet!

Lastly, how about some rose? In a previous article I once waxed lyrical about rose and how it should be seen as an all-year-round drink. However, understandably it reaches the height of its popularity in the summer months. We head back to Greece for my pick of pink with Muses Estate A.Muse Rose (£24.00). Made with 90% Sauvignon Blanc mixed with an indigenous grape called Mouchtaros (10%). It is fruity, yet with good acidity with mineral freshness. Worth the price tag and better than the very quiet talking angel stuff, believe me!

Lots going on at G&G over the next few months. Keep an eye on our social media pages or email us at info.grapeandgrainmorpeth.co.uk to join our mailing list to receive updates. Enjoy the summer! Cheers

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Cricket authors Gill Smith and Neil Brinsdon

Bowled over by new books!

Morpeth photographer Neil Brinsdon had just published two books full of fascinating cricketing stories from every aspect of the game, which he has co-authored with **former England ladies' test player Gill Smith**.

Gill who presented England Women in the 1980s and 1990s, was the inspiration for the books which are raising funds for the Cricketers' Trust and the Yorkshire County Players' Association.

Neil, who took the opportunity in 2014 to pursue his passion for photography after a successful career in the financial services industry, says the simple idea for the books was to celebrate the people who make the game of cricket what it is.

"That idea has grown into something much more than a collection of stories, memories and moments that capture the true spirit of the game and the community around it," he said.

Gill and Neil have gathered voices from every corner of the game from professional to grassroots players, umpires, scorers, administrators and fans.

"More than 200 people shared their stories and stood in front of my camera lens," said Neil. "Their words made us laugh, smile and occasionally shed a tear and we hope our collection does the same for our readers."

Gill first picked up a cricket bat on a beach near Whitby, playing games with her father and the family dog. Ten years later she was representing Yorkshire in the Women's County Championships followed by six seasons at Middlesex. In 1986 she made her England debut in both test and one-day games as a left-arm medium pace bowler.

She played in two World Cup finals including the 1993 unforgettable victory over New Zealand at Lords. Many years after quitting the game, Gill still holds the world record for the best One Day international bowling average

Copies of the books – 'What Cricket Means To Me' and 'What Yorkshire Cricket Means to Me' – can be bought via www.whatcricketmeanstome.co.uk



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Summer style, effortlessly defined with Rutherfords

Summer 2026 womenswear is all about effortless dressing, vibrant colour palettes, and versatile pieces that move seamlessly from relaxed daytime styling to elegant summer evenings.

This season embraces breathable fabrics, relaxed tailoring, artisanal prints, and easy femininity — offering women a wardrobe that feels both contemporary and timeless. At Rutherfords, the latest collections from Soyaconcept, Part Two, Orientique, Tara Vao and exciting new arrival Apricot capture the spirit of modern summer dressing beautifully.

Soyaconcept continues to champion sustainable fashion with collections designed around comfort, versatility and conscious living. Using natural fibres such as organic cotton, soft viscose blends and breathable linens, the brand delivers effortlessly wearable pieces ideal for everyday elegance. Relaxed shirts, flowing dresses and lightweight knitwear combine Scandinavian simplicity with practical style, making Soyaconcept a go-to choice for women seeking understated sophistication.

Part Two remains synonymous with refined Scandinavian style. The Danish brand's Summer 2026 collection focuses on elevated wardrobe essentials crafted from premium fabrics with sustainability at its heart. Relaxed linen trousers, crisp cotton shirts and elegantly cut dresses create a timeless capsule wardrobe designed for effortless dressing. With clean lines and sophisticated simplicity,

Part Two continues to appeal to women who appreciate quality craftsmanship and enduring style.

Orientique celebrates artistic expression through vibrant prints and breathable natural fabrics. Inspired by global travel and handcrafted design, the Summer 2026 collection features flowing silhouettes, bold patterns and soft cottons perfect for warm-weather dressing. Every piece reflects effortless glamour while maintaining the comfort and ease that define modern summer style.

Tara Vao introduces a distinctly Mediterranean feel to the season, combining colourful prints with relaxed elegance. Known for its feminine detailing and lightweight fabrics, the collection offers easy separates designed for sunshine-filled days and warm summer evenings. Tara Vao's unique use of colour and print adds a playful sophistication to the Rutherfords summer collection.

New to Rutherfords this season, Apricot brings a fresh contemporary edge to Summer 2026 womenswear. Loved for its trend-led collections and easy-to-style pieces, Apricot blends relaxed glamour with modern femininity. Expect flowing maxi dresses, crochet detailing, soft tailoring and statement prints that perfectly capture the carefree spirit of



summer. Versatile and effortlessly stylish, Apricot offers fashion-forward pieces designed to work beautifully for both everyday wear and special occasions.

This season, comfort and versatility remain key themes throughout womenswear collections, with breathable fabrics, relaxed fits and timeless styling taking centre stage. Whether your style leans towards effortless Scandinavian minimalism, vibrant artistic prints or contemporary feminine dressing, the Summer 2026 collections at Rutherfords offer something beautifully wearable for every woman.

SUMMER 2026

Discover the new season collection
at Rutherfords from much loved
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Featuring breathable fabrics,
flattering silhouettes and vibrant
prints - designed for sun filled days
and warm summer nights.



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The country store that's a one-stop-shop

Robson & Cowan country store is truly a one-stop-shop for home-owners, gardeners, farmers, animal and pet lovers, in so many different ways.

Established more than a century ago in the hamlet of Scots Gap around 10 miles west of Morpeth by cousins Joe Robson and Tom Cowan, the store has grown into the biggest of its kind in Northumberland serving customers right across the county, up into the Borders and down into Tyneside and County Durham.

Just look at what it can offer customers! For home-owners Robson & Cowan has a recently expanded and comprehensive electrical and white goods department supplying everything from cookers, fridges and freezers, microwaves and food processors, dishwashers, washing machines and dryers, as well as the very latest televisions up to 98-inch screens and audio equipment. Electrical goods



are available in store from many major manufacturers as part of the Euronics members group.

Where needed, electrical purchases can be delivered and installed by Robson & Cowan's own specialist team, generally within 48 hours.

For outdoor enthusiasts the store has all anyone could possibly need to keep

their gardens looking their very best throughout the year, with equipment ranging from hand tools to sit-on and walk-behind grass cutters; hedgecutters, strimmers and chainsaws. Robson & Cowan is also a specialist supplier and installer of the industry-leading Husqvarna Automower which does the job of cutting a lawn all by itself!

For gardens the store stocks the widest of choice of composts, feeds, fertilisers, plant care, weed and pest control products.

Robson & Cowan also has a fantastic country clothing department stocked with exclusive, high-end and fashionable country clothing and workwear.

Robson & Cowan's country store is just a short drive from Morpeth along uncongested country roads into the heart of rural Northumberland, and is open six days a week. So, why not pop in for a browse and a warm welcome from staff!



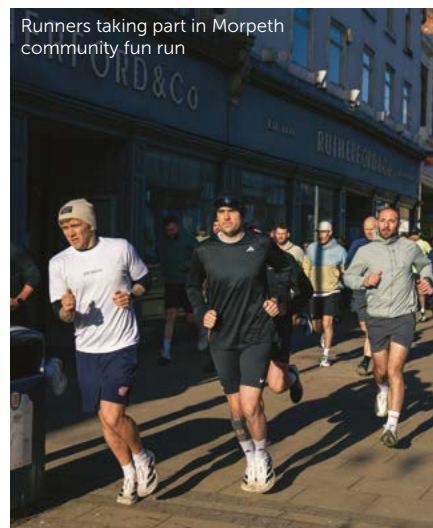
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Runners taking part in Morpeth community fun run



Olivers Financial brings community together for Morpeth Run Club event

Local financial advisory firm Olivers Financial recently hosted a successful community run club event at The Market Place, bringing together residents, fitness enthusiasts and local businesses for a morning focused on wellbeing.



Led by Olivers Financial, the event showcased the firm's commitment to community engagement, with additional support from partners including CTP Training and Tom Smith Coaching, alongside refreshments provided by WATA. The event attracted a strong turnout and created a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere in the heart of the town. Support from participants did not go unnoticed, with many travelling from surrounding areas including Tynemouth and Newcastle to be part of the event.

The 5k route, organised by Olivers Financial, was open to both runners and walkers, with a relaxed approach that encouraged participants to go at their own pace, with no focus on personal bests. Designed to be inclusive and accessible to all abilities, the run club reflected Olivers Financials focus on bringing people together, helping individuals get active while connecting with others in the local community. Participants enjoyed not only the physical benefits of the session,

but also the opportunity to socialise and support one another.

At Olivers Financial, the event reflects a broader philosophy that financial wellbeing and physical health go hand in hand. The firm works closely with individuals, families and business owners to create clear, tailored financial plans, helping clients navigate everything from protecting their income to planning with confidence. Through initiatives such as this, Olivers Financial continues to highlight the importance of balance, long term thinking and making informed financial decisions that support a well rounded lifestyle.

This event marks just the beginning for Olivers Financial, with plans to build on each one and make future events even bigger and better. Following the success of the event, more events like this are planned in the future. Readers can stay tuned for the next event, with the team already looking forward to bringing the community together once again.



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SJP Approved 08/06/26

Associate Partner Practice
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TOWN CRYER!

The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

Hello residents of Morpeth

It is my absolute pleasure and honour to be elected as the new Mayor of Morpeth. I'd like to thank the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Rachael Hogg, for her wonderful year in office. During this time, she has raised over £16,000 for MacMillan Cancer Support through various fundraising events, which is an amazing achievement.

I'd like to thank my fellow town councillors for electing me as Mayor. They have been a great support over the last 12 months and their on-going support and counsel will be invaluable, moving forward.

I grew up on the family farm a few miles from Morpeth, attended Chantry Middle School and KEVI, and have lived in Morpeth town centre for the last 22 years. I am passionate about our beautiful town, and we are so lucky to live in such a vibrant, lively place with a rich history, tradition and an array of fantastic public events.

My consort will be my husband, Dr Bill Lynch, who has been a wonderful support in his role as consort during my time as

Deputy Mayor. I have no doubt he will do me proud again this year.

My Deputy Mayor is Cllr Pat Elton. Pat is well known and respected in Morpeth, helping to organise the annual town fair and he is a huge part of the local community.

I am delighted that Rev. Canon Simon White has agreed to be my chaplain.

My chosen charity for this year is the British Heart Foundation (BHF); a charity, quite literally, close to the hearts of myself and my family. I'm sure many others feel the same way.

Sadly, every 75 minutes someone dies from a heart or circulatory disease in North East England. The BHF raises money to stop heart disease before it starts, save more lives from heart disease and supports people with heart disease to live a longer, healthier life. I am working with the regional 'mouth' of the BHF, the Heart of the Tyne, and all monies raised will be ring-fenced for Northumberland and Tyne and Wear.

I am looking forward to hosting various exciting events in the town to raise money



Morpeth's Mayor Councillor Dr Wendy Fail

for this worthwhile charity. I hope you will feel able to support me. Looking forward to meeting many of you in the coming year.

Cllr Dr Wendy Fail
Mayor of Morpeth

Summer in Morpeth

We are well and truly heading towards Summer, the days are getting warmer and with that the paddling pool in Carlisle Park is now open!

We endeavour to keep this facility well maintained and fully functional throughout the season and as health and safety is our top priority there may be occasions where we might need to close the paddling pool for cleaning or essential maintenance. So please check the website and social media for any updates to avoid disappointment.

We will be once again working with Barnabas Safe and Sound to provide an exciting programme of free activities during the summer holidays, which have proved to be very popular.

Our Family Fun Day is back this year, taking place on Saturday 29th August on St Mary's Field. There will be inflatables, face painting, fairground rides, football coaching with Newcastle United Foundation, climbing wall and more.

The Pavilion Tipi will be back in the park during the Summer so let's hope for some balmy evenings to enjoy a few refreshments outdoors! I'm sure they will have a jam packed itinerary of events

so keep a close eye on their social media page for more information.

Whilst the Summer has just begun, we are already planning Christmas behind the scenes, it's never really far from our minds! We have a new lighting installation in the park which we are sure will make the perfect spot for a picture opportunity! Christmas lights switch on will take place on Saturday 14th November whereby the usual fun activities will take place throughout the day on Bridge Street, entertainment, food, fairground rides and more, it's always one of our favourite days!

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

Have a great Summer!



Morpeth Town Council, Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth NE61 1LZ
Call 01670 514314 email joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk or mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk or visit www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk

Morpeth Bowling Club celebrates 100 years and feeling youthful

For a century, Morpeth Bowling Club has been part of Carlisle Park — and this year members are proudly celebrating 100 years on the green while embracing a fresh, youthful energy. The club blends strong local heritage with a modern, welcoming approach that invites everyone to play, socialise, and get involved.

A Proud Local History

Although a version of the club began in 1908 at the YMCA site behind today's Weatherspoon's, its long-standing home at Carlisle Park is what many locals cherish. The club still competes for the original 1908 Bainbridge Cup, donated by the Bainbridge family of Newcastle department store fame, keeping a living link with generations of bowlers.

Bowls for the Modern Age

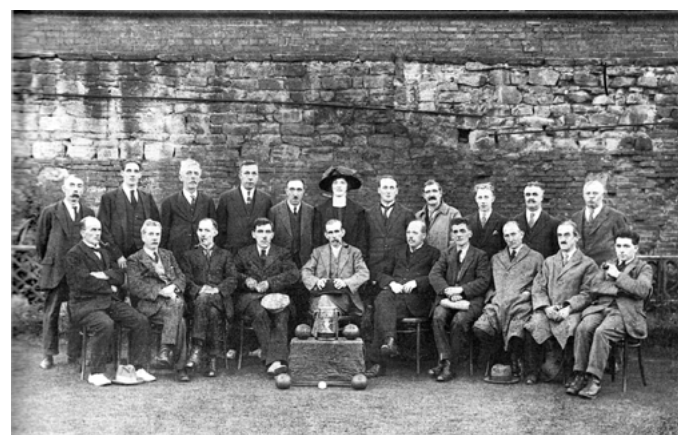
The sport has moved far beyond its traditional image. Faster formats and relaxed dress codes have helped attract younger players and families. Morpeth's bowlers have reached national finals, yet the club remains open to anyone — whether you want friendly games, social time, or competitive play. Bowls will also feature at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games from July 23 to 2 August, showcasing its continued appeal.

Growing the Game for Young People and Families

This year the club delivered winter taster sessions for more than 150 children from Stobhill First School, Morpeth Scouts, and Barnabas Youth Club. A free family fun day will run on 25 July, alongside a Saturday Youth Club throughout the summer holidays. Morpeth has also been chosen as a North East focus club to develop a Youth Academy with support from Bowls England and the Bowls Development Alliance.

Get Involved

To book free sessions, fun days, or Youth Club places, contact Janet Harrison at jan_harrison@hotmail.co.uk. Come along to Carlisle Park — whether you're curious, competitive, or simply after a friendly afternoon outdoors, there's a place for you at Morpeth Bowling Club.



COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE

SEE NOTICEBOARDS AND WEBSITE

Meeting timetable for June, July and September 2026. All meetings will be held in the Council Chamber 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
8th July, 9th September

Finance and General Purposes Committee
1st July, 2nd September

Finance and General Purposes Committee
16th September

National praise for litter-pickers



The work of a group of volunteers that was set up by one man eight years ago to help keep Morpeth looking clean and tidy for residents and visitors, has been recognised nationally for its work around the town.

The Morpeth Litter Group has received a certificate of appreciation signed by the Chief Executive of Keep Britain Tidy in which she praises it for its outstanding efforts to create a 'real, lasting impact' and for 'showing real pride' in where they live.

The group was formed eight years by Dai Richards – now Morpeth's Keep Britain Tidy ambassador – when, as a lone dog walker, he was ashamed of the amount of litter he regularly saw between Castle Close and Church Walk.

With the support of members of Morpeth Lions, Greater Morpeth Development Trust, local church groups and some other dog walkers, the area was cleaned-up in just over an hour.

An eye-catching poster was then designed by a Year 12 KEVI student to promote the anti-litter message across Morpeth.

Now, the volunteers carry out a monthly blitz around town and over the years have collected and bagged literally hundreds of tons of litter. After their latest clean-up the consensus was that the scale of litter is definitely reducing and they can see the green shoots of the message that people should put their litter in a bin or take it home to dispose of it.

Dai told Inside Morpeth that local students have become involved in litter picking as part of their Duke of Edinburgh award initiatives and there are also more than 80 'Adopt a Street' litter pickers helping keep their own neighbourhoods

litter-free, while more have also been planting flowers ever since a pattern was noticed where pretty flower beds are discouraging littering.

The group and GMDT has also just successfully bid for National Lottery money to fund a second 'Bin It to Win It' competition encouraging local schoolchildren to design anti-litter posters to display on street litter bins around Morpeth. The last time the competition was held it attracted more than 500 entries which resulted in 27 different anti-litter posters being displayed on street litter bins around Morpeth.

"Morpeth is so lucky to have a wonderful set of volunteers who want to keep our lovely town litter free, and more people of all ages are very welcome to join us," said Dai.

Anyone wanting to join the Litter Picking Group can email dai_richards@btinternet.com

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Spain at its very best

Our Inside Morpeth traveller **Miles Hewitt** reports from his favourite Spanish city.

Valencia, my favourite Spanish city, never shouts for attention in the same way as Barcelona or drapes itself in imperial grandeur like Madrid. Valencia simply gets on with being itself - a sun-drenched Mediterranean port where futuristic architecture rises from ancient riverbed parks, where paella was born and is still taken seriously and where the beach sits a 15-minute tram ride from Gothic cathedrals. A city that rewards the curious without punishing the idle, which might explain why it feels so perpetually, effortlessly liveable.

Walk into the old town through a warren of narrow medieval streets that suddenly expand into plazas on which café tables spread like ants. The Cathedral dominates the skyline with its octagonal bell tower, El Miguelete, which offers vertigo-inducing views for those willing to climb the 207 steps. Inside the cathedral sits what the Valencians claim is the Holy Grail - yes, that Holy Grail - resting in a side chapel with far less ceremony than you would expect for the cup of Christ. Authentic or not, the chalice has occupied this spot since 1437, which gives it a certain credibility.

Across the plaza, La Lonja de la Seda stops you cold. This fifteenth-century silk exchange looks like a cathedral devoted to commerce rather than God, its twisted columns soaring upward in the Contracting Hall like stone palm trees. The building earned UNESCO World Heritage status for good reason - it represents the golden age of Valencia as a Mediterranean trading powerhouse, when silk merchants grew wealthy enough to commission architecture that still makes modern developers weep with envy.

But the masterstroke of Valencia lies in how it handled disaster. In 1957, devastating floods from the Turia River prompted officials to re-route the waterway entirely, leaving a massive scar of dry riverbed cutting through the city. Most cities would have paved it over. Instead, Valencia transformed it into the Jardín del Túria, a five-mile green ribbon of parks, cycle paths and play areas that flow from the old town to the sea - an example of genius-level urban planning.

At the eastern end of the park rises the City of Arts and Sciences, the controversial dreamscape of Santiago Calatrava, a world-renowned Spanish-Swiss architect. Love it or loathe it - and Valencians remain divided - you cannot ignore it. The complex sprawls across shallow pools like a fleet of alien spacecraft: the skeletal white ribs of L'Umbracle, the eye-shaped IMAX cinema and the whale skeleton of the Science Museum.

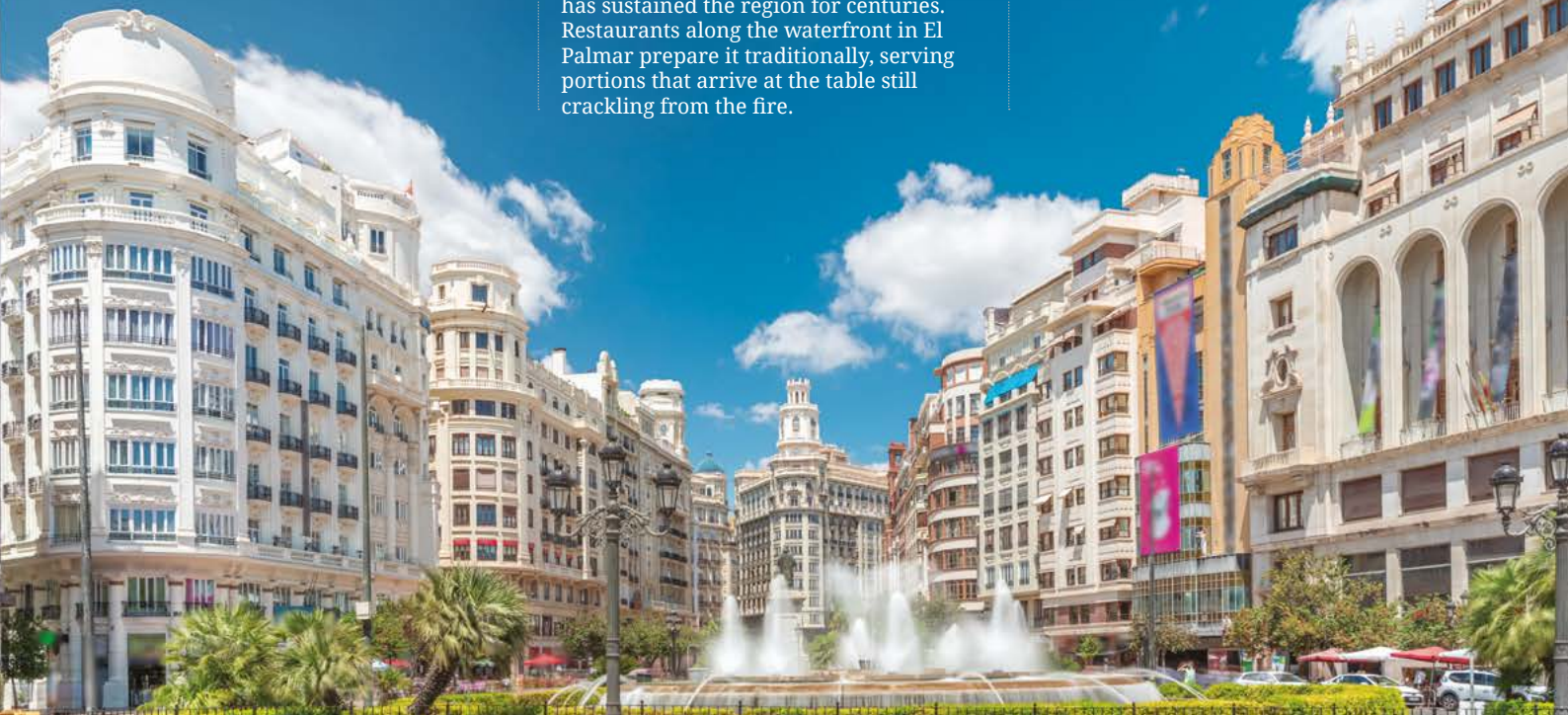
Whereas the Oceanogràfic aquarium claims to be the largest in Europe, holding sharks, beluga whales and dolphins in environments that blur the line between architecture and habitat. Whether the vision of Calatrava justified the enormous cost overruns is a debate best had over wine, but as a symbol of Valencia and its ambition to reinvent itself, it succeeded spectacularly.

Then there is the food. Valencia gave the world paella, and the city guards this legacy fiercely. Forget the tourist versions loaded with chorizo and every other foodstuff - authentic Valencian paella contains rabbit, chicken, butter beans and green beans, cooked over the flames of orange wood in wide, shallow pans. The dish originated in the nearby Albufera lagoon, where rice cultivation has sustained the region for centuries. Restaurants along the waterfront in El Palmar prepare it traditionally, serving portions that arrive at the table still crackling from the fire.

The Mercado Central provides a more immediate food education. This modernist iron and glass palace is home to 200 stalls selling jamón ibérico, turrón nougat and seafood so fresh it practically swims off the ice. Vendors call out their daily deals in rapid Valencian, the regional language that sounds like Spanish mumbled through Catalan. Gather your supplies for a picnic or simply wander through the sensory overload, past pyramids of oranges - Valencia is orange country, after all, and barrels of olives in every conceivable marinade.

The beach, Playa de la Malvarrosa, stretches golden and wide along the Mediterranean, backed by a promenade where Valencians jog, cycle, and consume vast quantities of horchata, the sweet tiger nut drink that Valencia claims as its own. The seafood restaurants here lean toward the casual end of the spectrum, perfect for post-beach dining when sand clings to your feet and formality seems like too much effort.

On our most recent visit, we arrived during the festival of Las Fallas when Valencia becomes something else entirely - five days of organised chaos filled with enormous satirical sculptures that culminate in a citywide bonfire. Fireworks exploding as the smoke, noise and crowds reach a level that would trigger an evacuation order elsewhere. Valencians call it tradition. Outside of these manic events, Valencia continues to maintain its equilibrium. Culture without being pretentious, beachy without being trashy, and historic without being stuck in the past. Once and again... Valencia, my favourite Spanish city.



For weddings and a funeral!

2026 is shaping up to be quite a year for anniversaries which members of the Morpeth Antiquarian Society are planning to celebrate over the next few months including a milestone of their very own writes Editor **Ian Leech**.

The Society was founded straight after World War II by local teacher and historian Roland Bibby, so this is its 80th year. But, as we report in this edition, 2026 is also quite a year for Morpeth in a number of other ways.

For a start, the Rutherford's store which has been a cornerstone in retailing in the town, is marking 180 years of trading since being opened in 1846 by founder George Rutherford.

Both the 4th Morpeth Scouts and Morpeth Bowling Club date back to 1926, while the town's YMCA which played such a prominent part in the lives of so many local young people, was founded 150 years ago in the building now occupied by the Manzil restaurant on the corner of the Market Place.

Seventy-five years ago as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations, Morpeth's Clock Tower which dates from the early 17th Century was restored and its bells recast.

It's 60 years since Morpeth Harrier Jim Alder astounded world athletics by winning the Marathon Gold Medal in the 1966 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica where he overcame the potential heartbreak of being misdirected into the stadium when leading the race, to doggedly run down and overtake his English rival just yards from the winning tape. Later this summer Jim will be honoured with the unveiling of a statue of himself in Morpeth, created by local sculptor Tom Maley.



Actor Ray Alexander plays the role of Sir John Vanbrugh

So, if they are the anniversaries what about 'the funeral' we mention in our headline? Well that refers to the death 300 years ago of Sir John Vanbrugh, the designer of not only Morpeth Town Hall but other architectural English gems such as Blenheim Palace, Yorkshire's Castle Howard stately home, and closer to home, Delaval Hall.

With the latter in mind, it is appropriate that much of what the Antiquarians are planning will focus on the Morpeth Town Hall, which, of course, has played such a central role in the life of the town for three centuries.

As Kim Bibby-Wilson, daughter of Antiquarians' founder Roland, told me they are planning over the next few weeks, to celebrate in different ways what she called the 'every day history' of Morpeth. "The Town Hall has been

so much part of Morpeth's everyday life involving so many people from the town in many different ways," she said

Wedding and civic receptions, and now actual betrothals; the annual Mayor-making ceremony; jumble sales and coffee mornings; dances and concerts; exhibitions or fashion shows; Morpeth's Northumbrian Gathering; and activities to mark the end of the two World Wars, are a fraction of the events that have taken place over the years in the Town Hall.

Consequently, they are asking local people to share their memories, photographs or family memorabilia associated with town hall events or activities, so they could form part of the exhibition during Morpeth's Heritage Open Days of Friday and Saturday September 18th and 19th.

Two special events are also being planned. Firstly what is being called the sort of afternoon tea Miss Bertha Burn would have been served up in her café in Morpeth before and after the war years, is to be held on Saturday July 18th.

Secondly, Morpeth's wine specialists Grape & Grain will be organising a wine-tasting evening on Friday September 18th featuring Northumbrian Heritage wines.

Both events will take place in the Town Hall. Tickets for the Afternoon Tea are £20 in advance from kim@northumbriana.org.uk (Tel: 01670 513308). For the wine tasting evening tickets are £25 in advance from Grape & Grain, Bridge Street, Morpeth.

Digging freely into Morpeth's heritage

Every September thousands of volunteers across England organise events to celebrate the country's fantastic history and culture, all of which are free to explore.

Established in 1994, Heritage Open Days has grown into the country's largest community heritage festival.

Preparations are already well underway for this year's festival and Morpeth will once again be taking part, with events co-ordinated by Greater Morpeth Development Trust.

The Clock Tower will be open for tours; the Town Hall will stage displays of local heritage; poets and pipers will perform in the Chantry; the Collingwood Society will give its annual lecture about the Lord Admiral who had a family home in Oldgate; historic churches in an around Morpeth will showcase their heritage; and there will be walking tours around the town.

The dates to note in diaries are Thursday 17th to Sunday September 20th and full details can be found from August onwards in the library in Morpeth's Leisure Centre, the Chantry, and on the Heritage Open Days website at www.heritageopendays.org.uk



Rare chance to tour the magnificent Blagdon Estate

Rare chance to tour Blagdon Estate

The wonderful grounds and gardens of Blagdon Estate just outside Morpeth, are being opened for one day for an exclusive charity event in aid of St Oswald's Hospice

Sunday June 28th from 1pm (last entry to the grounds is 3pm) is the date thanks to the kindness of Lord and Lady Ridley in allowing access to the estate, to help raise funds for St Oswald's Hospice patients and their families.

The event will also mark the charity's 40th birthday of compassionate care.

Blagdon Estate is only open a few times a year for such occasions, allowing local people to visit and enjoy seeing and touring the grounds and gardens.

Visitors will be able to take a stroll through the quarry garden, the formal gardens and woodland walks, featuring designs by architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, as well as seeing various follies around the estate.

As well as the beautiful gardens being open, there will also be a display of classic cars – weather permitting – tea, coffee, cakes and snacks for sale, plus live music performances throughout the day along with a range of stalls to browse in the courtyard.

Most of the venue is wheelchair accessible, though some walks may not be suitable in the event of adverse weather. Well-behaved dogs are welcome on leads. There is also plenty of free car parking available on site.

Tickets cost £9 per adult plus Eventbrite booking fees. Alternatively, tickets can be purchased for £12 on the gate. Under 16s are free.

Tickets can be booked now at www.stoswalds.org/blagdon-estate-open-gardens

Picnic in the Park

The ever-popular Greater Morpeth Development Trust-organised free family fun day in the town's Carlisle Park, takes place this year on Sunday July 12th from 10am to 4pm.

The event has become an annual Morpeth tradition to mark the approach of the school summer holidays.

Once again, there will be a free BBQ cooked and served by Morpeth's churches; children's games; dancing; music courtesy of the KEVI Steel Pans band; countryside specials; stalls; pony rides; and an appearance by Koast Radio.

This year, sponsors supporting the event are Maid to Butler Home Cleaning Services, David Auld & Co Solicitors and Vertu Honda motor dealers from Morpeth's Coopies Lane.

Greater Morpeth Development Trust
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www.gmdt.net

PICNIC IN THE PARK

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SUNDAY 12 JULY 2026 • 10AM TILL 4PM

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Murder and mystery in Lindisfarne monastery



Cressida Downing's gripping debut medieval mystery novel, *Consider the Ravens*, is set in 15th century Lindisfarne, and features Linnet, a female scribe who is running from her criminal past and seeking sanctuary in the island of her childhood, and whose arrival on the island coincides with a series of unexpected and suspicious deaths. Ahead of an event at Waterstones in Morpeth on Thursday 17th September at 6pm, Caroline Dominey talked to Cressida about her work and what life in a 15th century monastery in Lindisfarne was like.

You won The Lindisfarne Prize for Debut Crime Fiction in 2019 for an early draft of this book, describe how the idea for a murder mystery set on Holy Island in the 15th century originally came about.

It was a complete fluke. I had no intention of writing a novel, let alone one set in the North East (very far from where I live in Cambridge), but I visited Holy Island and was sitting in the ruins of the Priory and the idea came to me and I felt I couldn't ignore it. I realised that monks were often sent to different holy houses, especially if they had committed some misdemeanours, and Holy Island felt so remote. I started thinking 'what if you sent the most criminal of monks in your monasteries to the furthest place you could, and then you had a small collection of them in such a cut off place...'

Your novel is set amongst the monks at Lindisfarne Priory, and it paints a very vivid picture of medieval monastic life. What would things have been like for monks in 15th century Lindisfarne?

I've taken some artistic liberties of course, by the time the novel is set, there were only a handful of monks there, but it would have been remote, cold, and often boring. Despite that, I like to think that the unique feeling of the island would have been uplifting, and that the presence of St Cuthbert would have felt very near. I don't think it was as strict a lifestyle as we generally assume, there are contemporary letters complaining about monks being drunk and gambling and generally carrying on!

Your writing manages to interweave a thrilling murder mystery into a vivid portrayal of 15th century monastic life. Did this pose any challenges for you?

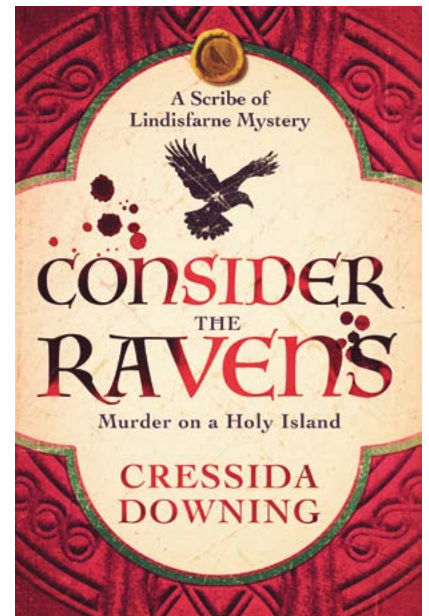
Yes! Your sleuth can't rely on any modern forensics for a start. It forces you to think creatively about what clues can be left and how they can be interpreted. You

also have to think about how justice might be obtained and by whom..

What do you think attracts people to the genre of historical fiction and crime?

I'm a keen reader of both and I think I really like to read about crime because it satisfies a human urge for misdeeds to be clearly identified and punished. Historical fiction is so interesting because you are reading about people who are just like us, in very different circumstances, but who are also not just like us, they are a product of their times, and that's the balance that I find so fascinating.

Consider the Ravens will be published on 16th July, priced £9.99. Cressida Downing will be coming to Waterstones in Morpeth to talk about her book on Thursday September 17th at 6pm. Tickets £5, instore or on waterstones.com. Please ask a bookseller for more details. Tel 01670 510491.



Reading made Easy!

Readers of our magazine might find it difficult to comprehend that more than 2.4 million adults in the UK either can't, or can barely, read which can make everyday tasks such as paying bills, reading road signs, visiting the doctor or understanding health warnings, or even reading to their children, overwhelming.

In the North East it is estimated that as many as 23 per cent of adults have poor literacy skills.

But, the good news for those people is that it is never too late to learn which is where a national charity called Read Easy UK, can help.

Read Easy is free to access and can provide one-to-one support by matching adults with trained volunteer reading coaches with help tailored to individual needs.

Recently, a local Read Easy group has been formed in Northumberland and is looking for volunteers to join its team, or become reading coaches.

More information about the group and how to help transform lives through learning to read no matter at what age, is available by contacting northumberlandleaders@easyread.org.uk or by telephoning 07597 361900.

Summer book choices for Morpeth readers

Fiction

The Artist

by Lucy Steeds £10.99

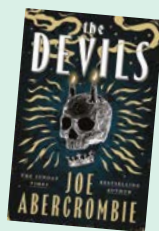
This beautifully written and deeply atmospheric story, set across a hot summer in 1920's Provence, studies the tense relationship between an elusive artist, his mysterious niece, and an eager journalist tasked with capturing their story. A worthy winner of our 2025 Waterstones Book of the Year and Debut Fiction Prize, fans of Maggie O'Farrell and Lucinda Riley will thoroughly enjoy this.



The Devils

by Joe Abercrombie £10.99

As Europe faces a bleak abyss of famine and plague, a dangerous crew of misfits comprised of ruthless murderers, necromancers and monsters are sent on a bloody quest to transport a lowly thief to her new role as Empress of Troy. With Joe Abercrombie's signature humour and cast of morally grey characters, this gripping fantasy novel is perfect for fans of Mark Lawrence and Scott Lynch.



The Things We Never Say

by Elizabeth Strout £18.99

Elizabeth Strout's latest novel is a moving meditation on human connection. We follow Artie Dam, a well-liked and admired member of his community, who, beneath the surface, is struggling with loneliness and a troubling secret. Brilliantly written and brimming with profound insight, this stunning novel will delight those both new and familiar to her work.



Crime

The Murder at World's End

by Ross Montgomery £9.99

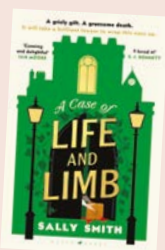
Fans of cosy crime will love this murder mystery set in 1910, amidst the panic surrounding Halley's Comet. A paranoid Viscount is preparing to lock down his manor, only to be discovered dead in his sealed study. The prime suspect is Steven Pike, the manor's newest butler. Knowing he has been wrongfully accused, he teams up with hilariously foul-mouthed 80-year-old puzzle-obsessed Decima Stockingham. Funny, sharp and hugely enjoyable, a must-read this summer!



A Case of Life and Limb

by Sally Smith £9.99

Sally Smith has returned with another wonderful legal thriller set in 1901 in London's Inner Temple. When a mummified hand arrives in the post, Gabriel Ward KC and London police officer Constable Wright must act quick to find the culprit before the body count rises. This witty and perfectly paced legal thriller will be enjoyed by fans of Rob Rinder and Richard Coles.



Non Fiction

This Way Up

by Map Men £10.99

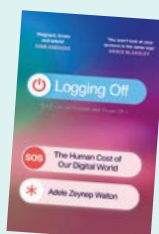
You may be familiar with their Youtube channel, but this is The Map Men's debut book! With their signature charm and wit, Mark Cooper-Jones and Jay Foreman bring you on a journey through the world's worst maps. From colonial pioneer maps, to maps at the heart of the 1950s French surrealist movement, each one tells the tales of some of the most calamitous cartography errors across history. A brilliant read for seasoned and novice geographers alike.



Logging Off: The Human Cost of the Digital World

by Adele Zeynep Walton £10.99

A fascinating deep dive into the true cost of widespread social media usage in the digital age, Logging Off tells the tale of the algorithms that prey on our insecurities and emotions while lining the pockets of tech mogul billionaires. Shocking and at times uncomfortable, this is essential reading for anyone who spends time online.



Kids

Lily Tripp: Diary of an Accidental Time Traveller

by Amelia Tait £8.99

Every New Year's Day, time traveller Lily Tripp wakes up in new century. From the ruthless Romans to the vicious Victorians, Lily has seen it all! Luckily her friends, family and secret crush are also along for the ride. Fans of Lottie Brooks and Diary of a Wimpy Kid will love this brilliant book.



Drop Dead Famous

by Jennifer Pearson £9.99

When world-famous global sensation pop star Blair Baker is murdered at her home town concert, her little sister Stevie knows she has to do whatever it takes to find the killer. As Stevie's search for answers morphs into a dark journey into her sister's life, she begins to uncover secrets that could change her life as she knows it. Perfect for fans of Holly Jackson's A Good Girl's Guide to Murder series.



Time to sit back to enjoy summer in your garden

By June, the garden has usually decided it no longer requires your input and will simply do whatever it likes. Roses hurl themselves into flower, beans scramble skywards, and somewhere beneath the foliage there is almost certainly a missing trowel you'll rediscover in October says **Inside Morpeth's gardening expert Ross Pearson.**

Summer is the season when gardeners spend most of their time tying things to other things, lurching from one small crisis to another carrying a trug, and begin every morning with good intentions and end it wondering what happened to the afternoon. The borders billow, the greenhouse smells faintly of tomatoes and panic, and every trip outside turns into an unexpected hour of "just quickly sorting one thing."

It's also wonderfully social. Neighbours peer over fences offering unsolicited advice, people suddenly develop opinions about dahlias, and every conversation begins with: "Everything's later this year." Whether it actually is or not hardly matters. Summer is here, the garden is showing off, and your job is mostly to keep up without collapsing into the hydrangeas.

Give the Lawn a Fighting Chance

By midsummer, the lawn often resembles an exhausted green rug. Raise the mower blades slightly during dry spells so the grass doesn't scorch into something resembling old hay. Perfection is unnecessary, a lawn should look welcoming, not like Centre Court at Wimbledon.

Thin Out Fruit Trees

Apples and pears have a habit of producing far more fruit than they can sensibly manage. Remove some of the smaller fruits so the remaining ones develop properly. It feels cruel at first, rather like rejecting puppies, but the tree will thank you later.

Keep Sweet Peas in Line

Sweet peas are enthusiastic climbers with no understanding of personal boundaries. Tie in wandering stems regularly before they latch onto neighbouring plants, the fence, or your sleeve. A little discipline now prevents a floral hostage situation later.

Earth Up Potatoes

As potato plants grow, mound soil around the stems to protect developing tubers from sunlight. Green potatoes are unpleasant and mildly poisonous... not qualities one seeks in a side dish. It's a satisfying, old-fashioned allotment job that makes you feel wonderfully competent.



Summer Prune Stone Fruit

Plums and cherries are best pruned in summer to reduce the risk of disease. Remove crowded growth and any branches heading in ridiculous directions.

Sow Biennials for Next Year

Wallflowers, foxgloves and honesty can all be sown now for next spring's display. It requires optimism and a certain faith in the future, two qualities gardeners somehow maintain despite repeated disappointments involving slugs.

Check Stored Onions and Garlic

Early-harvested onions and garlic should be dried properly and inspected regularly. Remove any soft or mouldy ones before they ruin the lot. Vegetables, much like bananas in a fruit bowl, have a remarkable talent for taking the others down with them.

Summer gardening is loud, busy and all too often gets out of hand, but it's also the season when the garden earns its keep. Sit outside when you can, admire your successes, and quietly ignore the failures. Because no matter what the garden throws at you, there's always another season waiting round the corner.

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Summer of Play 2026

Every day enjoy hay bales, team sports, giant garden games, a junk orchestra and races plus...

WEEK 1: 20-26 JULY

Monday 20

BubblePlay

South Lawn, 12-4pm

Chase, catch and pop bubbles of all shapes and sizes with our resident bubbleologist.

Wednesday 22

Comedy Capers

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Enjoy family style comedy and mischief from our favourite local comedians including Lee Kyle and more.

Friday 24

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!

WEEK 2: 27 JULY-2 AUGUST

Monday 27

BubblePlay

South Lawn, 12-4pm

Chase, catch, and pop bubbles of all shapes and sizes with our resident bubbleologist.

Wednesday 29

Theatre Sprout

South Lawn, 12-4pm, 3 x 20 minute shows

Original theatre for curious humans aged 0-7, featuring play, puppetry and imaginative storytelling.

Friday 31

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!

WEEK 3: 3-9 AUGUST

Monday 3

Family Pride with Curious Arts

site-wide

Creative, colourful and fun activities led by LGBTQIA+ artists and inspired by the community's culture and heritage.

Wednesday 5

Wild Art

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Join artist Mim Robson to create nature-inspired artworks, discovering colours, patterns and textures of the natural world.

Friday 7

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!

WEEK 4: 10-16 AUGUST

Monday 10

Comedy Capers

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Enjoy family style comedy and mischief from our favourite local comedians including Lee Kyle and more.

Wednesday 12

Theatre Sprout

South Lawn, 12-4pm, 3 x 20 minute shows

Original theatre for curious humans aged 0-7, featuring play, puppetry and imaginative storytelling.

Friday 14

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!

WEEK 5: 17-23 AUGUST

Monday 17

BubblePlay

South Lawn, 12-4pm

Chase, catch and pop bubbles of all shapes and sizes with our resident bubbleologist.

Wednesday 19

Wild Art

South Lawn Circus Tent 12-4pm

Join artist Mim Robson to create nature-inspired artworks, discovering colours, patterns and textures of the natural world.

Friday 21

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!

WEEK 6: 24-31 AUGUST

Monday 24/ Monday 31

BubblePlay

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Chase, catch, and pop bubbles of all shapes and sizes with our resident bubbleologist.

Wednesday 26

Theatre Sprout

South Lawn, 12-4pm, 3 x 20 minute shows

Original theatre for curious humans aged 0-7, featuring play, puppetry and imaginative storytelling.

Friday 28

Young Gardeners

Community Kitchen Garden 10am-12pm

Dig, harvest and get mucky!

Let's Circus

South Lawn Circus Tent, 12-4pm

Circus skills, have a go sessions, mini shows and more!