

Summer
2022

Edition 12

Contents

From the editors

Parish Council news

Neighbourhood
Development Plan

Bird watching notes

County
Councillor's report

Nine months with an
air-source heat pump

Aromatherapy

View

Rennington and Rock Community News



Arctic Tern - photograph courtesy of Tim Walls



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From the editors

Hello and welcome to the Summer 2022 edition of the R&R Community News. We hope you are enjoying the sunshine, even though gardens could do with a bit of rain.

We are pleased to say that the Parish Council has agreed to continue to support the newsletter, however it is only thanks to our advertisers that we are able to continue production. As ever, we hope you enjoy reading all the varied articles, and our thanks again go to all our contributors.

Have a very enjoyable summer. Happy reading.

Jane and Robert Dixon, Editors

Parish Council news

Resilience and emergency planning

Following the community survey held in the spring, a Parish Council Community Emergency Plan has been developed and

is now moving towards early steps of implementation. In the event of an emergency where statutory services and agencies may be overwhelmed and not able to reach everyone in need immediately, the Parish will rely on local volunteers for the initial response.

Would you like to be a volunteer? Along with this R&R Community News edition, the Parish Council is delivering a separate information leaflet seeking expressions of interest from residents interested in being a volunteer. The leaflet outlines the volunteer roles that are being considered within the plan and includes how you can register interest in becoming involved.



In addition to the volunteer programme, the Parish Council is in early discussion with Rennington Village Hall Management Committee on the potential use of the Hall as a rest centre in times of emergency.

The Community Emergency Plan can be viewed on the Parish Council website.

Resilience 2022



To help implement the Community Emergency Plan and to support other proposed community initiatives, The National

Lottery Community Fund has awarded the Parish Council £9045 under the project banner 'Resilience 2022'. The project aims to benefit all residents through improved communication, community resilience, emergency planning, improved public spaces and enable improved Parish Clerk support.

The funding award will enable us to provide the Emergency Plan volunteers with proper identification and equipment e.g. ID badges, lanyards, high-viz tabards, torches and training support.

Other initiatives to be funded under the award include installation of new noticeboards in Rennington, Rock, and Stamford; new bench seating on The Green in Rennington; hire of RVH when hosting non-budgeted training activities (scam training for residents); and encrypted hard drive and shredding capability to improve handling and disposal of personal information.

Rennington North Farm street lighting

Yes, the new street lighting on North Farm Mews and the C73 roadway remains in place.

Following no further actions from the North Farm developer and/or the Planning Authority, the Parish Council is preparing a planning application

seeking to remove/turn off the five new street lights. It is expected that notice will be served as required to both Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Estates (as landowners involved) followed by full submission of the application during September.

Robert Dixon, Chair, Rennington Parish Council

Neighbourhood Development Plan - an update

Some progress at last!

The Parish Council has appointed Jenny Ludman of Ludman Planning to help us progress the Neighbourhood Plan. Jenny was the consultant who worked with Embleton Parish on their plan, which has now been officially recognised. Jenny is currently casting her eye over our grant application which will, hopefully by the time you read this, have been submitted. Even better! We've just heard that we have been awarded the maximum grant of £10,000 to complete the plan.

The next steps will be for the working group to sit down with Jenny and review where we are, pull together a draft plan, and finalise a clear vision, set of objectives, and potential locally specific policy areas as a basis for the plan.

Stephen Baggott, Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Bird watching notes, early summer 2022

You may have seen in the national press articles about 'Bird Flu', more correctly called avian influenza. It has been known for some time that birds are susceptible to infections with influenza viruses, and many outbreaks have been documented, particularly amongst farmed poultry. Outbreaks in poultry farms tend to spread rapidly, there is a high mortality rate and control is usually only achieved by culling and destroying the entire flock. Biosecurity measures are critical in preventing spread of the disease.

The current outbreak was first recognised in both wild and captive birds in all four countries of the UK during the autumn and winter of 2020/2021. It is being caused by a very infectious strain of a specific influenza type virus designated H5N1. This is transmitted by infected birds in their saliva, nasal secretions and faeces. The risk of humans contracting the disease from a wild bird is very low. You should not however handle sick or dead birds and should avoid contact with their droppings or with water near them. It is also good practice regularly to clean and disinfect garden bird feeders.

In August 2021 further cases were identified amongst Great Skuas in Scotland and subsequently nearly 3,000 outbreaks involving tens of millions of poultry birds have been identified across Europe, Asia, Africa and North America. More than 77 million birds have been culled to try to curb the spread of the virus and it is estimated that at least 400,000 non-poultry birds have died in 2,600 outbreaks. These include large numbers of Cranes and Dalmatian pelicans in Europe.

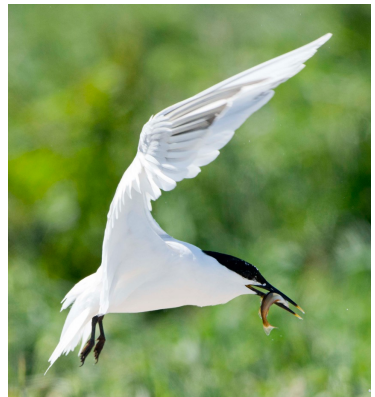
There is considerable concern that the disease appears to be spreading to wild birds more easily than ever before, making outbreaks particularly hard to contain. Wild birds spread the virus across the world because of their migration patterns. In the UK, 3,000-4,000 Barnacle geese on the Solway died from avian 'flu in late 2021. This represents around 10% of the population of the Svalbard Barnacle Geese that overwinter on the Solway.



During the last 6 months the infection has spread to our coastal seabird colonies, with devastating effects. The Bass Rock is the largest Northern Gannet colony in the world, providing the breeding grounds for around 150,000 of these birds. In June the Rock is normally completely covered in the birds; from a distance it looks as though there has been snowfall. I visited it in late June and there were large bare

areas. The boatman said that these had got considerably larger over the previous 6 weeks. He also commented that the birds were not feeding properly, he couldn't even persuade them to dive for fish thrown into the water for them. When we got close in to the Rock large numbers of dead birds were visible. The effect on the number of birds breeding this year is not yet known but it is anticipated that not only will a lot of adult birds have died but that the number successfully breeding will be severely reduced. Fishermen operating down the East coast report large numbers of dead birds, including guillemots and razorbills, in the sea.

Closer to home there has been a serious outbreak on Coquet Island, which has a very large number of breeding Common, Arctic and Sandwich Terns. It is also home to the only nesting Roseate Tern colony in the UK, with 150 pairs of these rare birds nesting there in special boxes provided by the RSPB. Roseate terns were driven to the brink of extinction in the 19th century. About two



thirds of the Roseate Tern chicks have died and there have been serious losses amongst all of the breeding terns on the Island. One ray of hope is that the puffins, which also breed in large numbers on Coquet Island, do not appear to have been badly affected and their young, known as pufflings, are successfully leaving the island now. The Kittiwakes also appear to be relatively little affected. The reasons for these interspecies differences are not known. Little information is currently available about our land-based birds.

This is the worst outbreak of avian influenza that has ever been reported in the UK and at present it is unclear for how long it is going to continue and how many birds will ultimately be affected.

Tim Walls



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County Councillor report

Hello Everyone, just wishing you all a great summer and I look forward to catching up with you all in September. Wendy

9 Parishes Meeting: Date for the Diary

A meeting for all nine of the Longhoughton Division Parishes has been arranged for Tuesday, September 13th at 6:30pm at The Old Court House, Alnwick Police Station, Prudhoe Street, Alnwick, NE66 1UJ. Community Police Officer, PC Andy Newby 2764, will talk to everyone about their areas and issues of concern, including speeding, parking, obstruction, vandalism, speedwatch training and anything else which is problematic. Northumberland County Council Officer, Neil Easton will also be present to talk about local bus services.

Please do come along, all are welcome.

New toilet facilities

Work is complete on a very special public toilet refurbishment at one of the county's tourism hotspots.

In Low Newton the facilities also include a beach wheelchair storage area funded by local donations, that will support improved accessibility to the local area.

This wheelchair will allow local people and visitors to be able to traverse easily across sand, shells and mud in comfort and safety.

Cllr John Roper from Newton by the Sea Parish Council, said: "This beach wheelchair unit will be a wonderful facility for both locals and visitors alike. I am particularly delighted how very quickly the project was completed through very close collaboration between the Parish Council, County Council, Beach Access NE (BANE) and the two amazingly generous sponsors Rob Racenis and Katie Steele."

The improvements at Low Newton are part of a wider £1.35m three-year programme of works to improve the standard of all 54 public toilets in the county which the council has responsibility for.

Around £920,000 has been allocated to improving facilities in the main towns and key tourism destinations, with work including backlog maintenance, replacement of old equipment where required and in some cases new cubicles and internal walls.

A further £500,000 is being spent on backlog maintenance and essential updates on all remaining facilities, while £50,000 will go towards accessibility improvements in all toilets to make them more user friendly for dementia sufferers and people with low vision.

Have your say on shaping plans for Northumberland's Family Hubs

Northumberland's Children's Centres will relaunch as Family Hubs in Autumn 2022.

But first, residents are being asked for their views to help shape the plans.

The Centres currently provide a wide range of support services for children aged 0-5 and their families.

As Family Hubs, this support will be rolled out to all young people extending the age range to 0 - 19 and to 25 for anyone with additional needs (SEND), making a difference to children, young people and their families.

The Hubs will be in the heart of their communities, with midwives, health visitors, early years and mental health professionals, youth workers, and a host of other services, including relationship, parenting, and financial advice, brought together into a vibrant one-stop-shop that meets the needs of family life for young people of all ages.

Family Hubs will build on lessons learned during the pandemic and will offer online and virtual services too, so that support can be as accessible in the right way, and the right place, at the right time.

We want all our young people to get the best start in life and have all the support they need to thrive. By extending the age range of our centres to create Family Hubs - our teams will be there to provide support for families with children of all ages. Please let us know what you'd like to see in the hubs, as your feedback will help us shape our plans and the services we provide.

The centres are already seeing innovative examples of partnership working. Find out more about Family Hubs:

<https://padlet.com/Northumberland/FamilyHubsInfo>

Forests re-open as summer visitor campaign launches

Following Storm Arwen last November when around one million trees were uprooted overnight, seven forests in Northumberland have now reopened in time for summer.

And the hard work to re-open many of the county's most beautiful forests coincides with the launch of the County Council's annual 'Love It Like It's Yours' campaign - to welcome people to the county while reminding everyone to act responsibly by following the Countryside Code at all times. Over the past eight months Forestry England crews and contractors have worked tirelessly to reopen Hepburn, Wooler Common, Wark, Fourlaws, Falstone, Slaley forests as well as many parts of Kielder Water and Forest Park.

On 20th July Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust officially reopened the entire route of the Lakeside Way, a popular 27 mile long, all-purpose trail.

Teams from Forestry England and Northumbrian Water have worked hard to clear thousands of tonnes of fallen timber to enable walkers, cyclists and horse riders to once again circumnavigate Kielder Water, one of the major attractions for the 400,000 people who visit the forest park every year.

Work on tree clearance and replanting is still underway in Holystone, Simonside, Harwood Forest and Thrunton Woods. Due to the size and complexity of the damage and remote locations this work is expected to continue into 2023.

Margaret Anderson, Senior Ranger at Northumberland National Park added: “If you’re planning to visit Northumberland National Park this summer, we strongly advise you check northumberlandnationalpark.org.uk before you travel. Forestry England also keeps an up-to-date list of which Forestry sites are open at www.forestryengland.uk

Wendy Pattison, County Councillor

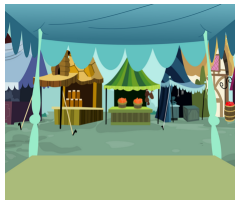
Tel: 07779983072

wendy.pattison@northumberland.gov.uk

TABLE TOP SALE
ROCK VILLAGE

Sunday, September 11th at 2pm - 4.30pm
Outside Rock Church

£5 per table



Lots of stalls and refreshments.
Money will go towards the upkeep of Rock Church.
If raining, sale will be inside the Church.
Please contact Wendy on 07979067321 or Sara on 0739388534 for further details.



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ZUMBA

Wednesdays 11.30am – 12.30pm

Join Traci for this fitness class dancing to lively Latin American music. Zumba has many health and fitness benefits, is a great way to de-stress and have fun!

TABLE TENNIS

Tuesdays 7–8pm

We are a relaxed group of all ages and abilities who play socially rather than competitively (most of the time!). There are two tables and we most commonly play doubles to enable everybody to get as much time to play as they wish.

ART CLUB

Last Wednesdays monthly 1.30 pm

An informal group supporting each other and exploring painting in a variety of mediums. The group has been led in the past by local artist Clifford Blakey who recently exhibited his work at the Alnwick Playhouse.

CARPET BOWLS

Wednesdays 7pm September – April

This is a traditional winter pastime and is the longest standing group we have using the hall. No previous experience is required and new members are currently very much needed as numbers of bowlers has dwindled over the course of the pandemic. Friendly Home and Away matches are played each week against other village clubs throughout the winter and two Open Competitions per year are also hosted. The current objectives are to increase the membership and get the programme re-started following the interruption due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

WHISKY TASTING CLUB

3rd MONDAYS 7.30pm

A very popular, lively group of mainly men who enjoy meeting for good conversation, lots of laughs and a chance to taste a variety of whiskies from all over the world.

SINGING GROUP

Thursdays 4pm – 5.30pm

No experience necessary, we are a mixed ability group of men and women singing a range of songs in harmony and rounds for fun and enjoyment. We are ably led by our teacher, Anne, who manages to make us sound amazingly good! We learn each piece by ear for those of us that don't read music and most of us find it very uplifting and enjoyable. Just turn up and give it a try or contact us for more information.

BOOK CLUB

1st Thursdays 7pm

Come along to join an informal group discussing a range of books over light refreshments. The choice of reading and discussion is very much group led and varies between reading one title discussed by all, or each member talking about a book they have enjoyed or wish to recommend to others. We have joined the local library book club scheme and there is always a book to exchange or borrow from the small library kept at the hall or between each other. This is very much an inclusive group open to all and anyone is very welcome to turn up or contact Hilary for more information.

FILM NIGHTS

Contact us for information about film showings and live sporting events, bring your own refreshments and enjoy a good movie with or without friends and family – all welcome! If you are interested in using our audio visual equipment for presentations, meetings or private functions please get in touch.

COME ALONG AND MEET NEW PEOPLE, HAVE FUN AND TRY SOMETHING NEW!

The village hall is a community facility available for everyone and can be hired for private parties, events and groups. Wifi and audio-visual equipment included.

Contact renningtonvillagehall@gmail.com for more information.

Nine months with an air-source heat pump

When we moved into our house in 2007 our hot water and heating came from an oil-fired boiler. We were never happy about that. Burning about 2500 litres of heating oil per year always seemed to us to be a bad idea, but at that time there was no obvious alternative.

We were keen to reduce our carbon footprint, so decided last year to investigate the potential benefits and disadvantages of installing either a ground-source or air-source heat pump. We weren't keen on a biomass system as we're not convinced it's as renewable or as cost-effective as it's made out to be, unless it's on a very large scale (for example, as in Austrian towns which have an area-wide system and a huge amount of very local timber). We investigated and came down on the side of a heat pump. However I know people who are very happy with their biomass system, so do consider it.

Although we have quite a large garden it quickly became clear that the ground-source option would be by far the more expensive and disruptive solution, so we focused our attention on the air-source option.

We found a local, well-recommended, insured, regularly checked by a professional body and highly skilled surveyor and installer of air-source heat pumps and their related complex electronics. We are not going to give public recommendations, but if anyone is seriously interested, we will be happy to pass on the details.

The installer undertook a free, in-depth survey of our house, which has an internal heated area of 316 msq. This is according to the updated EPC which is required for any such survey and installation. The EPC was provided by a very helpful Alnwick-based surveyor for £75. Again, details on request.

The survey produced a huge amount of detailed data about our annual hot water needs, the heating requirement in every room and area in our house, how much energy it costs to heat it, what the energy loss is due to windows etc, and therefore, net, how much energy we need to heat the water and run

the heating on an annual basis. This was all set out in a detailed document of some sixty or more pages, all provided at risk by the installer. So far it has proved to be pretty accurate.

On the basis of that document and its recommendation for a 17 KW air source heat pump, we decided to go ahead. The heat pump draws heat from the air around the house, no matter how warm or cold it is outside, compresses it and turns it into more heat. It has been completely reliable. The pump sits outside the rear of the house and is connected to the same pipework as the oil-fired system.

The heat pump was installed at the beginning of October 2021, so it has now been in place for the coldest six and warmer three months of the year. The water has been hot, and the room heating at least adequate for all of those months. We have not had the heating on since the end of April. We have a multi-fuel stove but have not had to use it.

We do have a LED ceramic electric heater which we used very occasionally in the coldest months in an individual room so we are not heating other rooms unnecessarily. On cold days, the heating needs to cut in earlier than it used to because the radiators work at a much lower temperature than with the oil-fired system, something you would have to get used to. We have had to rethink how and when we use electricity, which is no bad thing.

On completion of the work, which included getting rid of the old oil-fired boiler and the oil tank, we were given an extensive handover document which explains how the system works and includes all the necessary certificates and guarantees. The system needs to be serviced every year, at a cost of around £250. Getting rid of the oil tank was an interesting experience, again details available!

So, the house is warm and the water hot, but what about the installation and the energy costs?

The cost of the installation, including a large amount of complex electrical work, was just over £1500 more than the funds we will receive over the next 7 years (tax free and index-linked) from the government's Renewable Heat Incentive. However, you need to be aware that since 31st March this year, the RHI no longer exists for new applications. You could benefit by £5000 by getting rid of your oil or gas boiler under the new government scheme. You will need to make up your own minds about the relative costs, which will depend a lot on government decisions and subsidies and your individual house and its characteristics. As a rough rule of thumb, if you triple the cost of the heat pump itself, you won't be far off the overall cost of the whole system including installation.

So far, we are using about 2.1 times more electricity than when we had the oil boiler, but bear in mind that this has included the coldest six months of the year and we are no longer paying for oil. On the coldest days, we use around 45 KWH per day, but on warmer, and/or sunny days only 5. There is a separate meter for the heat pump, so we can track exactly how much it is using. The heat pump used 34 KWH in June, just over 1000 in January. We have solar panels, and use all the power they generate to help heat the water, run appliances and charge a car.

If I compare what we paid for oil and electricity in 2021 and would have paid this year, with what I estimate we will pay for electricity in 2022, we will still save, but not a huge amount. The volatility of and huge rises in energy costs make comparisons difficult, but I'm confident we will not be out of pocket. All our electricity comes from (so I am assured by our supplier) renewable sources.

Retro-fitting the air-source system was not a problem. If you have radiators, some of them may need to be replaced by taller ones of the same width. The system works best with underfloor heating - about 25% of our house. No floors had to be lifted, no pipework had to be replaced, no redecoration was

necessary. We were without power for about an hour and without hot water for 24 hours. Disruption was minimal, as we had plenty of notice. The whole installation took about 8 days.

You may need a new hot water cylinder. You will need some nifty electronic controls and gadgets which make sure you always use the power generated by the heat pump most efficiently. Ask your installer about EDDI and HARVI. The better the insulation in your house, the better the system will work.

I'm not recommending that you change to an air-source heat pump, I'm simply giving you the benefit of our experience. Don't do it for the money, do it for the planet, and don't listen to those who decry the solution with no or minimal evidence. There are many vested interests in prolonging the use of fossil fuels, and others simply don't accept that a system which relies on extracting heat from the atmosphere can, and in our experience does, work well. Base your decision on the evidence and calculations for your property, so a free survey is the best starting point.

The cost of purchasing and installing an air-source heat pump will come down in the next few years, but the cost of energy is likely to continue to rise. You will need to make up your own mind about when is the right time to do this or something similar. Other solutions are or will be available, but bear in mind that at some point, whether you currently use oil or gas, you will have to do something!

Phil Green mpgreen@btopenworld.com

Aromatherapy

I have always been passionate about aromatherapy and the use of essential oils from a holistic point of view. So following my retirement from recruitment in January 2019 I decided to follow my passion and began studying Aromatherapy, and have now completed advanced level courses.

What is Aromatherapy?

Aromatherapy is the practice of using the natural oils extracted from flowers, bark, stems, leaves, roots or other parts of a plant to enhance psychological and physical well-being.

Its history dates back a long time and it is considered both an art and a science. Whether the aromatic compounds are in the form of essential oils or whole plant extracts, they retain a lot of the plants' beneficial elements and this is why aromatherapy is such a common and effective wellness practice.

There is no clear indication of where aromatherapy originated, but it has been used in many different cultures throughout history. The Egyptians developed pots to distil essential oils from plants. They used these oils in their embalming processes, because of their pleasant smell and their antibacterial properties.

Aromatherapy was also used in Chinese medicine and Indian Ayurvedic practices used oils to treat leprosy and to enhance mood.

The Greeks inherited the use of aromatherapy from the Egyptians. Hippocrates, who is considered the 'Father of Medicine', believed in holistic healing, and used aromatherapy massage in his treatments, and this was passed to the Romans.

In 1977, the first aromatherapy book in English, *The Art of Aromatherapy*, was written by Robert Tisserand and this is still used extensively today. Since the late 1970s, holistic health has become a popular and respected form of medical practice.

Essential oils can have a profound effect on our emotions as our olfactory system is closely linked to the areas of the brain involved in memory, mood and emotion. These oils can have a variety of emotional benefits including uplifting, calming, renewing, soothing and energising.

A form of alternative medicine, aromatherapy is gaining momentum. It is used for a variety of applications, including pain relief, mood enhancement and increased cognitive function.

There are a wide number of essential oils available, each with its own healing properties. How you apply these oils has an impact on their healing capabilities. As they are so highly concentrated, it is not often recommended that you apply essential oils in their pure form directly to the skin. You will experience better results if you use small amounts of the oils diluted in a carrier oil or massage lotion.

The purity of an essential oil is one of the most important factors in determining its quality. An essential oil with impurities may expose you to chemical solvents, synthetic fragrances, contaminants or fillers that can be harmful. If you are looking to use essential oils my advice would be always look for Pure Therapeutic Grade oils. These will have been thoroughly tested to ensure a long and effective shelf life, potency, purity and consistency. That is why I only use pure organic essential oils.

In 2020 I researched making rollerballs to make the application user friendly, discreet and portable. This process enables essential oils to be blended and diluted in a carrier oil which can then be applied directly to the skin. The most common areas to apply rollerballs are the wrists, temples, front and back of the neck and the soles of the feet. When applied to the feet the oils enter your bloodstream quickly, usually within 20 minutes. This is also a great way to apply oils to babies, children and the elderly.

Initially, I started making rollerballs for friends and family and soon realised, from their feedback, that they liked what I was making and more importantly these rollerballs were helping to soothe their ailments.

Having gained a Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Aromatherapy, Homemade At The Elms was born.

In addition, to enhance my social media and marketing knowledge I also gained a Diploma in Social Media Marketing which has been very beneficial in helping set up my Business Facebook page, a landing page and my Etsy shop. During the Autumn of last year I started to put together a range of rollerballs to address the main concerns I was coming across. I now have a range of eight rollerballs covering the following:

- Creaky Joints, for arthritis and painful joints
- Sleep Tight, to assist your bedtime routine and aid sleep and relaxation
- Be Calm, to help reduce anxiety and stress and instil calm
- Soothe Me Menopause, to help with hot flushes and mood swings
- No Sniffles, to assist with symptoms of a cold and to help with hay fever symptoms
- Head Ease, to soothe headaches, especially effective when out in the fresh air
- Scent Again, which I created for a COVID patient. It has proved to be a great way to retrain the nostrils to recover a lost sense of smell
- Clarity, to help focus and concentration with an uplifting blend

All of the rollerballs are made with Sweet Almond oil which acts as a carrier oil. If anyone prefers an alternative carrier oil I can accommodate that. The blends are then homemade by me using pure organic essential oils.

Rollerballs are to soothe and comfort an ailment rather than cure, prevent or replace any medical treatment.

I can also make bespoke rollerballs following a full consultation and have so far made them for migraines, carpal tunnel, meditation and yoga, PMT, psoriasis, shin splints and plantar fasciitis.

All rollerballs provide a natural solution to soothe and comfort and to enhance well-being.

I recycle packaging and have so far managed to use only recycled material.

I am still learning and researching blends every day and totally love what I do! I never cease to be amazed at the power of essential oils on both the mind and body.

I can be contacted by email: homemadeattheelms@gmail.com

I have an Etsy shop: <https://bit.ly/homemadeattheelms>

My Facebook page is: <https://bit.ly/38MgxEU>

I hope to help soothe and comfort you with a rollerball soon.

Sara Eke

View

The road wound slowly downward all the way,
past trees still wintry, holding back,
each twig and branch a finger in chill air.
Then suddenly on hedge and field
a shot of blue: calm, shiftless, poised,
and close enough to touch. Round
a final bend a wider view of yellow gorse
sent shock waves skywards.

The land sizzled, could hardly bear the colour,
the cliffs for once seemed softly drawn.
I was almost fearful, but in a flash
felt curled inside the artist's eye,
craved brush and paint. But maybe words
can find the treasure in this little slip of land.

(Driving down the hill into Craster at Springtime)

Sue Elliot

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14th October 2022