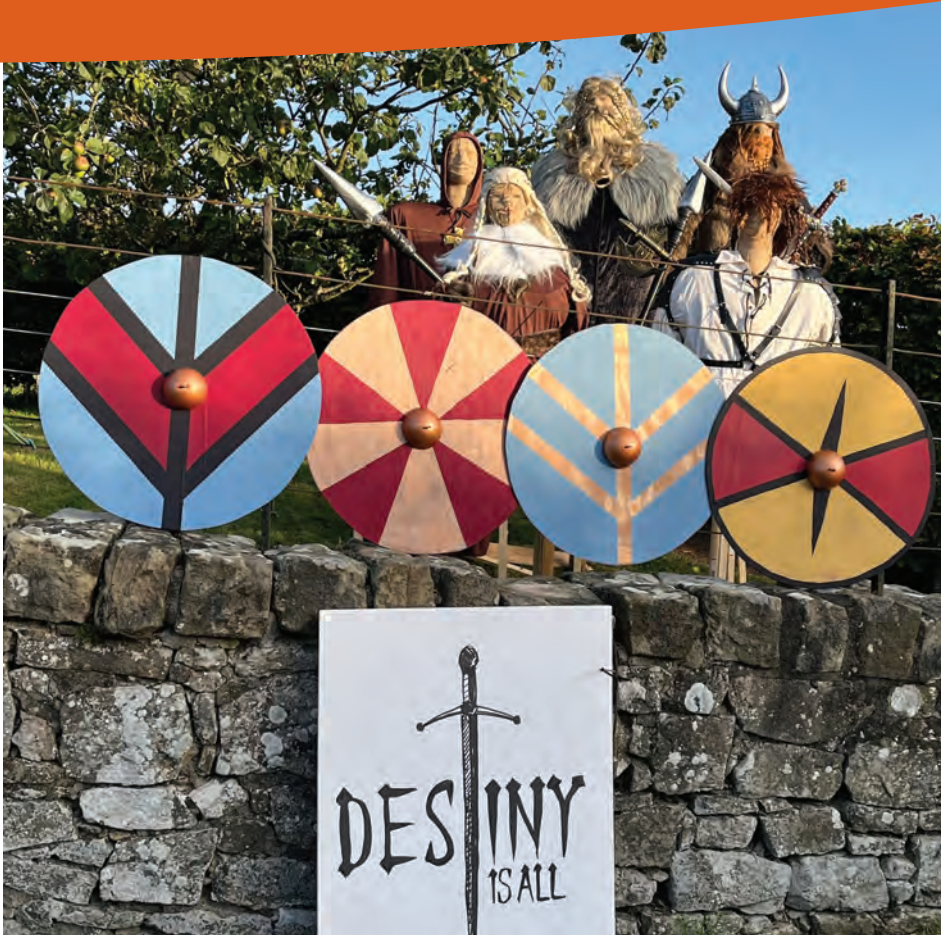


# CommunityTalk

IN RENNINGTON, ROCK & STAMFORD AUTUMN 2024



## Scarecrow Festival 2024 - 25th Anniversary

When the first Rennington Scarecrow Festival took place in 1999, few could have predicted that 25 years later it would become an established regional event attracting hundreds of visitors to a fun-packed, family day out in our lovely Northumbrian village.

Fast forward 25 years to 10am on Saturday 24th August 2024 and, hey presto, cars were already lining up on the village green, the sun was shining and the lure of fresh sausage and bacon rolls hung in the air. The stalls in the Festival Marquee were stocked, staffed, and visitors were queuing to collect a Scarecrow Trail Quiz. In the Village Hall the sandwich makers had been busy from the crack of dawn, the tables were set, and the Tea Room was ready to serve up the first delicious range of

home baked cakes and savouries generously donated by villagers all weekend.

With more than 40 amazing Scarecrows on display, in no time at all children, parents and grandparents were setting off, maps in hand, around the Village to seek out the Scarecrows and to put their general knowledge to the test.

Scarecrow designs drew on characters from history, music, sport, tv, film and literature, whilst others were bespoke designs that were both creative and funny. We had Vikings, Saints, the Seven Dwarfs, Goldilocks and celebrities galore – including Sir Elton John, Jeremy Clarkson, Lucy Bronze and Claudia Winkelman, to name but a few. Whoever and whatever, all the

Scarecrows were photographed like real life celebrities to the smiles, laughter and appreciation of our visitors, young and old, which is always lovely to see.

Thanks to all who participated in, and contributed to, the success of the 2024 Scarecrow Anniversary Festival. The event raised over £6,000 in support of the Village Hall Charitable Trust which maintains and manages the Hall for the benefit of the whole community. A donation of much needed funds will also be made from the proceeds to All Saints Parish Church in recognition of their major contribution, both in the Church and Village Hall, over the Scarecrow Weekend.

*Laurence Dent*

## Bird Watch

Autumn is when the second annual migration of our birds occurs. Birds which have come here to breed in the summer, like warblers, swallows and terns, move southward to warmer climates for the winter. The waders, ducks and geese return from breeding in the far north to overwinter in our maritime climate. Many of the blackbirds which breed here move further south and west in the UK but are replaced in our gardens by others from Scandinavia. Other birds of the thrush family, particularly redwings and fieldfares, migrate here and can be seen in the fields over winter.



**Redwings** migrate to Scotland from Iceland and to the East of England from Scandinavia. Superficially, they look like a song thrush but can be distinguished by a pronounced cream coloured stripe through their eye and by their chestnut red 'armpits'. They usually arrive in October and feast on berries in the hedgerows.



**Fieldfares** migrate from further north, Norway, Finland and Russia, arriving in October and November. They are a little larger than a redwing with a grey head, neck and rump, a pale chestnut breast, brown wings and black and white underwings - visible when flying. They are often seen in mixed flocks with redwings.

A walk among berry-bearing trees - such as around the cricket pitch at Howick Hall or up the Lonnen alongside fields with stubble in them - often yields good views of these attractive winter visitors.

*Tim Walls*

## Proud New Owners

The Horseshoes Inn is a traditional country pub with a great character. We're all about enhancing those features and making people feel even more comfortable when they enter our premises. With our backgrounds in the hospitality sector we firmly believe in creating an environment where people want to be - with an attractive offer supported by a friendly team. We want to cater for everyone and we're open every day of the week - lunchtime and evening - only closing at 6pm on a Sunday evening.

It's certainly been a hectic first week! We only had three days in which to make a few changes - the ladies toilet, the carpeting and a new coffee machine - before opening up for the Scarecrow Festival. We also now offer coffee, tea and cakes throughout the day!



The reaction we've had to date has been better than we could have hoped for. In our first week we've been heartened by the feedback from customers; we're also grateful to Mark & Louise and their family for the support they've shown both of us.

Over time we'll be making further enhancements including changes to the bar area. In everything we do we wish to build on the traditional country pub feel - making it like a home from home. The Horseshoes Inn is a key part of the community and so, as our plans evolve, we'll keep you updated.

**We look forward to welcoming you!**

*Gary & Charlotte*



## Petanque Club Update

Since our successful opening day in June our group has enjoyed many sessions together. We have made Wednesday evenings 7pm until 8.30pm and Saturday mornings 10.30am until 12 noon our main formal club sessions. An average of 8-14 players per session have enjoyed the facilities. Indeed two of our members have travelled to France for 'extra tuition'!

On Saturday 14th September our club organised a 'France comes to Rock' Party. The Francophiles even turned up in fancy dress!

And remember that the club has boules for those who don't have their

own - so please come along and join in the fun. Our season will continue well into the autumn so we look forward to welcoming more new faces before snow falls!

*Norman Hughes*



# Stick Dressing



Everyone knows what a shepherd's stick looks like and that it's not simply meant to be a stick to lean on - but also an aid in handling sheep. Carving and shaping sticks is not new - it goes back down the ages. Shepherds since time immemorial will have spent many hours - in the long winter months - shaping and carving their own sticks in wood and sheep's horn.

However what started as a necessity and a hobby has developed into a real art - the art of stick dressing. Some very fine examples are on show in Alnwick Castle; they carry the insignia of the reef knot and are the work of Norman Tulip. The only other examples of Norman's work are held in safe keeping by his four children with the advice that none should ever be sold.

Each stick Norman produced is a masterpiece.

To help others attain the special skills that Norman had painstakingly developed he wrote a book entitled 'The Art of Stick Dressing' with the foreword by His Grace, the former Duke of Northumberland. In it Norman expressed the hope that he would encourage others to take on the rewarding pastime of turning a gnarled old ram's horn into an object of lasting beauty.



When you look at Norman's work in detail you'll be able to make your own judgement and you may even be inspired to follow suit!

# Responsible Farming



We're currently very busy with harvest at the moment. However our thoughts are already turning to the winter time as we are planning to plant more new hedgerows. In the last 3 years we've planted over 6000m of hedges around the fields that surround Rennington and we have a long term plan to plant a further 5000m.

These hedges are planted where there was just a fence or a wall on field edges and also alongside our farm tracks. We plant them during the winter time and provide a cane and tree guard to give it support and protection from rabbit grazing and weeds. Once established these will be removed.

As part of a national initiative to reverse the historical decline in hedgerows and their habitats, the new hedges will have a grass margin on either side of the hedge, which will create wildlife corridors across the farm. The new hedges will

provide a habitat for farmland birds such as Yellow hammer, Skylark, Sparrows, Woodcock, and Grey Partridge to name just a few.



We will cut the hedges approximately every 3 years: this allows the hedge to grow and to provide berries which are an important food source for the birds during the late winter months. Once established, the hedges will also help us tackle climate change and be part of our goal of reducing our carbon emissions as they will be a great source of carbon sequestration.

*Stephen Siddorn Percy Farms*

# Garden Talk



## Hostaholic

“How many pots have you got?” and “How do you keep the slugs away?”

Throughout the summer these are the two questions that invariably start any conversation over my front garden wall.

For those who know me I'm an avid Hosta lover. Would you believe there are over 4000 varieties in almost every conceivable leaf size, shape and colour combination.

To answer the second question let me say that if you grow Hostas in the ground you are almost guaranteed to lose the battle with slugs and snails so I grow mine in pots on a stone patio floor.



I use a soil-based potting medium especially if the pots are large. Place the pots where they will be in the shade for part of the day. I put grit in the top of the pots and spray the leaves 2 or 3 times during the season with a garlic wash (search the internet for instructions). I do resort to using slug pellets - but only the new wildlife-friendly ones. Water regularly and add a liquid feed at the start of the growing season.

You will be rewarded with a display of rounded, domed shaped mounds of green foliage with short spires of flowers in shades of mauve or lilac.

Not that I'm keeping count but I had about 180 pots when the last census was held.

Barry Smith

# Community Spirit

2000 years ago when the followers of Jesus began to learn how to live by his teachings of love, inclusion and service, the first thing they did was to share what they had in common and live together. This was partly for protection, but mainly out of a new sense of identity as a community. The early church was born, not in buildings, but in the hearts of like-minded people.

A long way from Rennington Scarecrows! Or is it? The hallmark of any healthy community is not how it protects itself, but how it looks outwards to welcome others. Community events like the brilliant Scarecrow weekend are signs of a healthy community – yes they are challenging to organise and deliver; yes they are important for fundraising.

But the weekend was again wonderful in how it reached beyond Rennington to welcome so many visitors. Scarecrows is a lovely, positive showcasing of what a community can do beyond itself. Thanks to everyone involved.

I'm glad that Scarecrows has become a tradition, and I'm glad too to highlight the upcoming Music Festival (more details in posters and flyers) which starts on 30 September. It ends on Sunday 6 October with a Harvest Songs of Praise at noon on the village green, with a bring and share lunch in the Village Hall. Eating together – another sign of a healthy community – join us! Everyone is welcome!

Rev Alison revalisonhardy@gmail.com



## Whats On

18 September 6.30pm

Impact of the Special Olympics in Berlin, Norman Hughes, Rock Church

18 & 25 September 6.15pm

Carpet Bowls - Free Taster Sessions, RVH

30 September 7.30pm

The Bridge Singers, All Saints Church

2 October 7pm

A Northumbrian Evening with Alistair Anderson, All Saints Church

3 October 10.30am

Coffee & Cakes with the Northumbrian Bells, RVH

3 October 7pm

Piano & Songs by Philip Green, All Saints Church

4 October 7.30pm

Quiz Night & Raffle with quizmaster Ian Woods, Horseshoes Inn

5 October 7pm

Ceilidh with the Glendale Ceilidh Band, RVH

6 October 10am

Harvest Festival, All Saints Church

6 October 12noon

Songs of Praise on Village Green with bring & share lunch, RVH

9 October 6.30pm

The contemporary farming scene at Rock, Carl Tuer, Rock Church

29 November 7pm

Christmas Bingo, RVH

7 December 7pm

Fools Gold Christmas Show with Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On, RVH

### Next Issue

Winter 24; please submit content no later than 12 November 24

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