



THE BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB

Instituted 22 September 1831

www.bnc1831.co.uk

April 2022 Newsletter

Dear Member

Welcome to our first Newsletter of the year. The Field Activity Group have worked hard to produce a programme of visits which contains the variety of venues and activities that have been missing over the last two years. The virus is still with us and may yet disrupt our plans but I'm sure we'll manage our way through whatever is sent to bother us. We will be using Eventbrite and if we need to change the programme, we will email you and include an update on our website. www.bnc1831.co.uk

Best wishes

Chris Neville-Taylor. President

Special Events

We have already contacted you regarding "Rediscovering Dunglass", the conference that we are jointly organising on July 13th and 14th of July with AHSS and SGLH. We are still approaching possible sponsors for this event and would welcome any offers of help, financial and in the form of "on the day" support from members. Thank you to those who have already responded to the latter request.

Later in 2022 we are planning an exhibition to celebrate the work of Margaret Rebecca Dickinson. This will be held at the Granary in Berwick

Publications

'A Botanical Artist of the Border Counties - Margaret Rebecca Dickinson' by Dr. Liz Towner

This beautiful new book, written by a member of the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club, and published by the Club, is available to members for just £6.00. (£7.50 to non members) We will endeavour to make the books available at every field trip and meeting. Additionally members of Council will probably have a small stock where you could make a purchase. Unfortunately, if you require to have them posted there is a charge of £1.53 postage.

Shops stocking the book: - Natural History Society of Northumberland; Topping, Edinburgh; The Golden Hare, Edinburgh; The Reading Room Melrose; Interesting Books, Berwick; Main Street Trading, St. Boswells; George C Grieve, *1 Church Street, Berwick; and hopefully Summerfield Books in Penrith.*

The Club has published another book this week, entitled '**The Medieval Grave Slabs of the Borders**'. It is another fascinating read and beautifully printed and presented. Written and illustrated with colour photographs and drawings by Peter F. Ryder FSA with additional material from Richard Carlton. The layout and design has been completed by Peter Macdonald. The book features 42 churches within the Borders area and the clear descriptive text makes for a very informative read. Priced to members £8 and to non-members £12.00

Events in April, May, and June.

Thursday 28th April

HOWICK GARDENS/HOWICK ESTATE NE66 3LB

Meet at 11.00 at the entrance to the gardens (NU250175)

(/// blush.built.waters)

The Gardens at Howick Hall, near Alnwick, are primarily the work of Charles, 5th Earl Grey, his wife Mabel and their daughter Lady Mary Howick, and they follow the informal and natural style advocated by William Robinson in the late 19th century, which is still maintained today. Charles, 2nd Lord Howick and his wife Clare, who have lived in the West Wing since 1974, established the charity which now owns the Gardens and Howick Hall (built in 1782, with changes made in 1809). They have also created the Bog Garden and the Sensory Garden. The Arboretum opened in 2006. Covering about 65 acres, it contains about 11,000 trees and shrubs of about 1800 taxa planted in geographical groups, with a strong emphasis on China and Japan. Most of the trees and shrubs have been grown from seed collected in the wild since 1985. It is one of the largest collections of wild origin plants in the UK. Both the Gardens and the Arboretum suffered damage in Storm Arwen at the end of November 2021, but clearance operations are well under way, though completing the task will probably take about two years.

The gardens are best known for their spring bulbs and the woodland garden. The interior of the Hall has the Visitor Centre with displays about the Gardens and Arboretum. The centrepiece is a beautifully hand-drawn illustrative map showing key features of the Howick Estate. The Hall has not been lived in since 1967 but in 2019 most of the ground floor beyond the Visitor Centre was restored with two large rooms where visitors can relax and read with a cup of tea or coffee. There is an exhibition about Charles, 2nd Earl Grey and the

passing of the Great Reform Bill of 1832.

Tours are in groups of 10 per guide and last for 1½-2 hours.

Admission is £8.80 for adults under 60, £7.70 for over-60s, and £2.50 for children of 5-16. Payment will be on the day at the entrance. Anyone with an annual pass for the Gardens will be admitted free. There is no extra charge for the tour. The Earl Grey Tea House is in the East Quadrant of the Hall where teas, coffees, snacks and light lunches are served.

The Grounds (including the 'Long Walk' to the shore) will be available for additional viewing.

Directions

Take the exit off the A1 at the north end of the Alnwick Bypass on to the B1340 signposted to Denwick and the 'Alnwick Garden'.

From the north turn left immediately into Denwick then take the first right after the church heading towards Longhoughton.

Drive through Longhoughton following the road and follow the signs for Howick Hall Gardens.

Most of the paths in the garden are accessible to people with physical disabilities, but they are constructed of small gravel or grass. Please ask for a Physical Disability Map

Regular visitors who use a wheelchair tell us that most paths are suitable for them, but please be aware of the camber on those marked in orange and, because of the gradient, avoid those marked in red. Those marked in pink are alternative paths for wheelchairs or people with physical disabilities.

Toilets – Suitable for disabled visitors.

Dogs, except for assistance dogs, are not permitted in the gardens

So that enough volunteer guides can be available on the day please book via Eventbrite by the 17th of April

<https://howick.eventbrite.com>

Thursday 19th May

COCKLAWBURN TD15 2RJ

Meet at 10.30 at Pot-a-Doodle Do Café (postcode above)
(NU015495)
(<http://ballparks.mats.teams>)

A walk to explore the Geology and Industrial Archaeology of Cocklawburn led by Elizabeth Devon and Sandra Gann.

We shall be looking at how the underlying geology gave rise to many industries along this coast which became a hive of activity, especially in the 19th century. Now, nature has taken over and it is a wildlife haven. After refreshments and a brief talk by Elizabeth we will proceed, in as few cars as possible, to the gun emplacement car park (NU031481) at the end of Cocklawburn Road.

We will then do a slow 2km circular walk looking at the gun emplacement, the remains of a lime kiln and the remains of the Sandbanks settlement stopping to hear about the former industries (including railways) and flora and fauna on the way. We will then walk down to the beach where we can have our packed lunch. From here we continue along the coast, (there are some rocks to walk over but they are not difficult). We will be looking at the geology. A limestone pavement, some fossils, ironstone embedded in the sandstone, the lime kiln from below and finally back through the dunes to the cars where our guides can try to answer any remaining questions. The walk is short but, hopefully there will be a lot of discussion. Of course, strong shoes are essential as we will be walking on rough dune grass, uneven rocks and soft sand; walking poles are recommended. We are all familiar with the weather on the Northumberland Coast so wet weather gear and sunscreen should be to hand.

Directions

Leave the A1 at the Scremerston Roundabout and head towards Berwick on the A167. Turn right at the first junction signed for Pot-a-Doodle Do and Cocklawburn Beach. Then turn left, also signed Pot-a-Doodle Do. Continue on this road and your destination will appear on the left.

There are toilets at Pot-a-Doodle Do.

This trip is unsuitable for persons of restricted mobility.

In view of the abundance of wildlife no dogs please.

Places on this trip are limited. Please book via:

<https://cocklawburn.eventbrite.com>

Thursday 9th June

STOBO VILLAGE PEEBLESHIRE. EH45 8NU

Meet at 10.30 at Stobo Kirk (///watchdogs.mild.eyebrows) (NT 184 377), Julian Birchall as our guide. The Kirk dates from the 12th Century and is one of the oldest churches in Scotland still in regular use. According to tradition it stands on the site of an even earlier church founded by St. Kentigern in the 6th century who, legend has it, converted the wizard Merlin to Christianity.

This will be followed by a visit to the nearby Japanese Water Gardens (///defected.archduke.cherub) (NT 174 364) at Stobo as guests of Angnete Samdahl the new owner. The water gardens were originally built by Hylton Philipson the then owner of Stobo Castle and are a delightful cascade of gardens with mature planting. There will be a charge of £5.00 payable on the day.

In the afternoon Julian and Rosalind Birchall, has invited us to view his garden at the Old Manse Drumelzier. There is a walled garden

and sloping lawns to a tributary of the Tweed. Julian has a particular interest in birds in the surrounding habitat and can recommend a walk to the ruins of Tinnis Castle should you feel inclined! (donations to the Church fund would be welcome).

Directions:

Coming from Peebles on the A72 turn left after 3.5 miles onto the B712. After 2.5 miles Stobo Kirk is on the right hand side of the road.

Coming from the A702 and driving from Biggar on the B712 you will reach the Kirk on your left after about 11 miles shortly after the sign for Stobo Castle. As parking is limited please drive up to the Kirk turn your car and drive back down the drive and park tightly against the side of the drive. Please avoid parking in front of the cottage at the top.

Facilities: Stobo village hall (1 mile east of the Kirk) will be opened for us from 10.00 a.m. where toilets and coffee making facilities will be available. The Hall is opposite the entrance to Stobo Castle and there is plenty of parking.

You can bring a picnic lunch or visit the very nice cafe at Dawyck gardens just 4 miles along the road to Drumelzier.

Footwear: In the Water Gardens the paths are generally good but there are steps and steppingstones which may be wet and slippery and some steep inclines which may not be advisable for some. It is not suitable for wheelchairs.

Please book via Eventbrite: <https://stobo.eventbrite.com>

All our Yesterdays

On the 25th August 1886 members of the club undertook an extensive tour of the area around Peebles including a visit to Stobo.

'We have now reached the famous " Stobo Hedges," which are of old planting by the Murrays of Stanhope and Stobo in the eighteenth century. This was principally done at the instance of Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, " a man of eccentric character and jealous temper, but of accomplished tastes. We have still," writes Prof. Veitch, "traces of his handiwork in the rich English landscape of hedge-rows and stately trees which are to be found in the pleasant haugh of the Tweed, from the Crown Eord to Stobo Burn Foot, the Polternam of the Cymri."

(Hist, and Poet, of Borders, p. 436). They used to be notorious for getting blocked up with snow in the winter, having at first been allowed to grow too tall.