

# THE BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB

Instituted 22 September 1831



August 2021

Dear Members

Restrictions on gatherings, indoors and outdoors, have eased considerably since our last newsletter. With the anticipated easing of the rules regarding indoor visits we have included an additional event on the afternoon of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of August. We will be spending an afternoon in **Dunbar**, details below.

**NB.** The following events have quite low participant limits. Most members receive the Newsletter via email but to ensure that those who receive a hard copy are not disadvantaged by the delay in receipt we will hold back five places until seven days before any event. If requests exceed ten prior to this deadline members will be put on a waiting list and contacted on the preceding Friday to confirm whether they have a place. "Offline" requests should be made by 'phoning Chris Neville-Taylor on 01289 382395.

## Events in August and September

### Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of August

#### FOSSIL WALK WHITESANDS BAY (Nr DUNBAR)

Meet at 10:30 at Whitesands Car Park (NT 713774)

The area around Whitesands and Barns Ness is an excellent place to find fossils; you can see body fossils – the remains of the actual animal or plant, and trace fossils which are the remains of the burrows or trails left by an animal. Body fossils to find are colonial coral (Siphonodendron), solitary coral (Koninckophyllum) and many other shells and crinoid discs. Trace fossils are the burrows: Zoophycos, Thalassinoides and Rhizocorallium. The lycopod forests have left a series of 'potholes', where the trunks once stood, which can be seen when the tide is low. Our leader on this trip is Richard English who is an East Lothian Countryside Ranger.

#### Directions

Whitesands is 2.5 miles east of Dunbar. From the A1 turn onto the A1087 at the Cement Works junction east of Dunbar, go past the entrance to the Cement Works and turn right on to a minor road after 400 m, signposted for the Caravan Site. Follow this road down to the beach. The car parking charge is GBP 2.00. There are public lavatories at the car park. A 10:30 start should allow members to visit one of Dunbar's many cafes for an early coffee.

This is a rocky foreshore and whilst our guide does not regard the terrain is “strenuous” robust footwear will be essential and of course come dressed for whatever the East Coast has in store for us.

Participation in this trip is limited to 15 people. Please register your interest by contacting [chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk) Please note that if you want to participate in both activities on this day you need to register for each separately.

### **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August**

#### DUNBAR PERAMBULATION AND MUSEUM VISIT. EH42 1ER

Meet at 14:00 outside Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery (NT 679 789)

Dunbar is a former Royal Burgh and because of its strategic position on the coastal strip between Berwick and Edinburgh suffered at the hands of invading armies. In 1598 Fynes Morrison noted that it “lay ruined”. It later became a prosperous market town, port, and fishing harbour. Pauline Smeed from Dunbar & District History Society has kindly offered to take us on a 45-minute tour of the town and harbour followed by a visit to the museum itself. Across the road from the Museum is John Muir’s birthplace which accepts visitors up to 16:15 and, like the museum is free of charge.

#### Directions

The museum and John Muir’s birthplace are on Dunbar High Street and are both signposted off the A1. There is a free car park at Dunbar Leisure Pool, a few minutes north of the museum. From the A1 in either direction follow signs for Dunbar.

The walk will be on paved surfaces and the museum is accessible to those of restricted mobility with the exception of one room. Dunbar has numerous cafes and restaurants including a particularly good one at the harbour.

Whilst the museum is free, they would welcome voluntary donations.

As above participation in this trip is limited to 15 people. Please register your interest by contacting [chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk) Please note that if you want to participate in both activities on this day you need to register for each separately.

### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of September**

#### FUNGUS FORAY GIFFORD

Meet at 10:30 in the woodland at the top of Station Road in Gifford (NT 5279 6837)

Having trained as a Mycologist at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh Neville Kilkenny leads many forays throughout the year as well as running identification workshops for the RGBE. Gifford is one of his regular sites for foray so we should be in for a very interesting

day. The woodland is mostly ancient broadleaf, but the north of Fawn wood is mature pine plantation.

### Directions

From the north (Haddington) Gifford is four miles south on the B6369. From the east, Dunbar, take the B6370 from the Thistly Cross roundabout. From the south, Duns, travel via Longformacus or via the B6365 and then the B6355 via Cranshaws. From the west, Pencaitland, head east on the B6355. Please park outside the village hall just next to the Goblin Ha pub (E41 4QH). Station road runs northwest along the side of the village hall.

This is a woodland walk so not too strenuous but robust footwear should be worn. Gifford has a variety of catering outlets but since fungus forays can be very absorbing and one can lose track of time a picnic might be advisable. There are public lavatories in Gifford.

There is charge for this trip, dependent on final numbers. Participants will be advised closer to the time.

Participation in this trip is limited to 15 people. Please register your interest by contacting [chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrisnevilletaylor@yahoo.co.uk)

### **2021 AGM**

Full details of this event will be circulated separately but this year we will be doing things a bit differently. The outgoing President's address effectively took place last year via Zoom. This has given us the opportunity to follow the AGM with a public lecture by Dr Liz Towner on the life of Margaret Rebecca Dickinson. 2021 marks the bicentenary of the birth of this talented and prolific botanical artist who was born in Newcastle and lived in Gattonside for 10 years and Norham for 50 years where she died at the great age of 98. MRD. She was elected as an Honorary Member of the BNC in 1873.

A book produced by the BNC including copious examples of her work will be launched at this event and would make a splendid Christmas present for the botanist in your life.

### **Vacancy for Field Secretary**

After the disruption of the Plague Year, we are hopeful that there can be a return to normal service regarding field trips. We are looking for a keen volunteer or volunteers, to take on the role of Field Secretary. This post could be managed by a couple or by two members as a "job share". To ease the new incumbent in we are asking you to think about whether your house, garden, farm, or workplace could be of interest to members. This is very much in the tradition of the BNC when members were exhorted to invite us to their homes or those of their neighbours.

If you are interested in the role of Field Secretary, please contact Lesley Gray.

### **All our Yesterdays**

Before we delve into the archive we should note that the stationmaster at Dunbar, David Bruce, became a member of the BNC in 1893. He contributed several articles and observations to the Histories.

Now something from 1911.

The third meeting was held at Dunbar on Wednesday, 26th July, in beautiful weather. Among those present were the following: — Kev. James F. Leishman, M.A., President; Rev. J. J. M. L. Aiken, B.D., Secretary; Misses Aiken, Ayton; Mrs Bertalot, Ayton; Miss Boyd, Faldonside; Mr James Brown, Jun., Galashiels; Mr Reginald Collie and Mrs Collie, Stoneshiel; Rev. Matthew Culley, Coupland Castle; Sir George B. Douglas, Bart., Springwood Paik; Mr J. C. Hodgson, Alnwick; Rev. John MacLaren and Miss MacLaren, Ayton; Mr J. McAninly, Coupland Castle; Mr Henry Paton, Edinburgh; Mr Harry Sanderson, Galashiels; Mr Jas. A. Somervail, Hoselaw; Miss Simpson, Coldingham; Mr T. B. Short, Berwick; Mr George Sidey, Netherbyers; and Mr Edward Willoby, Berwick. The members assembled at the Railway Station on the arrival of the "market train" from Berwick (9-50 a.m.), and walked to the Parish Church, where they were received by Rev. William Borland, B.D., who kindly conducted them over it, and supplied interesting information regarding its foundation and history. Early in the 13th century a church existed, which in course of time was erected into a Collegiate charge, Dunbar the first of the kind in Scotland, and to it in all Church. probability was added the extension of 1342, which forms the composite building, with blue slates, figured in a drawing upon the walls of the present vestry. The modern commodious and well-appointed place of worship in red sandstone, comprising a spacious nave and a square tower on the Western gable, was designed in 1819 by James Gillespie, Edinburgh, and during the incumbency of the late Rev. Robert Buchanan was beautified by the addition of a lofty apse, which necessitated the removal from its original site, in the centre of the East gable, of the remarkable mural monument in alabaster, erected to the memory of Sir George Home, Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, and restored at the sole cost of the present Marquis of Bute, which formed the occasion of the Club's visit. The statesman whom it commemorates was a favourite of James I, and created by him Earl of Dunbar.

### **Contact Us**

If you need any further information regarding the Club's planned activities, please contact:

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