



PCS Newsletter

Ponteland Civic Society 2021-



*"A rose by any other
name would smell as
sweet"*

William Shakespeare,





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Greetings,

I drove up to Ponteland from Throckley the other day and as I climbed the Callerton Road I was confronted by one of those rather drab brown Tourist information signs telling me that Belsay Hall was all of 10 miles away. It was much larger than usual and needed the support of three stout steel poles, as opposed to the more normal single support. The same information was repeated on a similar sized placard as I turned into Callerton Lane at the White Cottage and when I got as far as the Rotary Way roundabout a third, equally large hoarding, let me know that the hall was now only 9 miles ahead.

At the opposite end of Rotary Way, by Dobbies, I was further reassured that the noble pile was yet closer at only 8 miles distant and traversing through the Village I discovered on the A696, at the point of entry into our National Park, the grand-daddy of them all, the biggest roadside sign ever to disfigure a Northumberland County verge and, my goodness, the distance between me and Belsay Hall had shrunk to a mere 6 miles.

It was as if some lunatic giant had rushed around the Parish in the dark of night scattering these huge panels to the wind.

Who, I asked myself, are these weird people who have to rely on a sequential display of these brown signs to find their way to a chosen destination, with eyesight that has apparently deteriorated to such an extent that giant signs are the only answer ?

All any normal motorist needs to know about the whereabouts of Belsay Hall is that it is in Belsay, a village that sits happily on a major traffic route, the A696 -, job done.

However, welcome to our September 21 edition in which we celebrate the splendours of our National Park, Will and Jim have set off on another local walk and we note the jars that stand as memorial to Maynards. We mark the demise of a much-loved terrier with suitable poetry.

The Editor

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Cover, Ponteland Bridge 2021



Northumberland's National Park

Top of the class



Stonehaugh

Yellowstone National Park, established in the US in 1872, is reckoned to be the first of its kind but it took a surprisingly long time for the concept to take hold in the UK.

Pressure built up during the nineteen thirties, culminating in 1932 with what came to be known as **The Kinder Scout mass trespass.**

Some 400 people assembled at Heyworth and set off to climb Kinder Scout, at 2087 feet the highest point in the Derbyshire Peak District.

Although this was not in itself illegal, six men ended up in jail as a result of scuffles with the local gamekeepers who attempted to bar their way.

The National Trust has established an 8 mile walk following the route taken by this merry throng.

Despite all this, it was not until after the war that the UK got its first National Park.

Unsurprisingly, the Peak District National Park was the first to be designated, followed by the Lake District, with Northumberland coming along in 1956.



Bolam Lake



Craster

England's northernmost National Park extends over an area of some of 410 square miles, from the Scottish Border down to just south of Hadrian's Wall, taking up about a quarter of the County.

Much of the land is owned by the War Office and includes the Otterburn firing range, an area best avoided when the Royal Artillery are in town.



Amble harbour



Bamburgh

The consumer magazine **WHICH** recently asked its members to name their favourite National Park and published a table of the results.

Needless to say Northumberland topped the list with an impressive 90% score. Praised for its peace and quiet but also for having an attractive range of things to do.

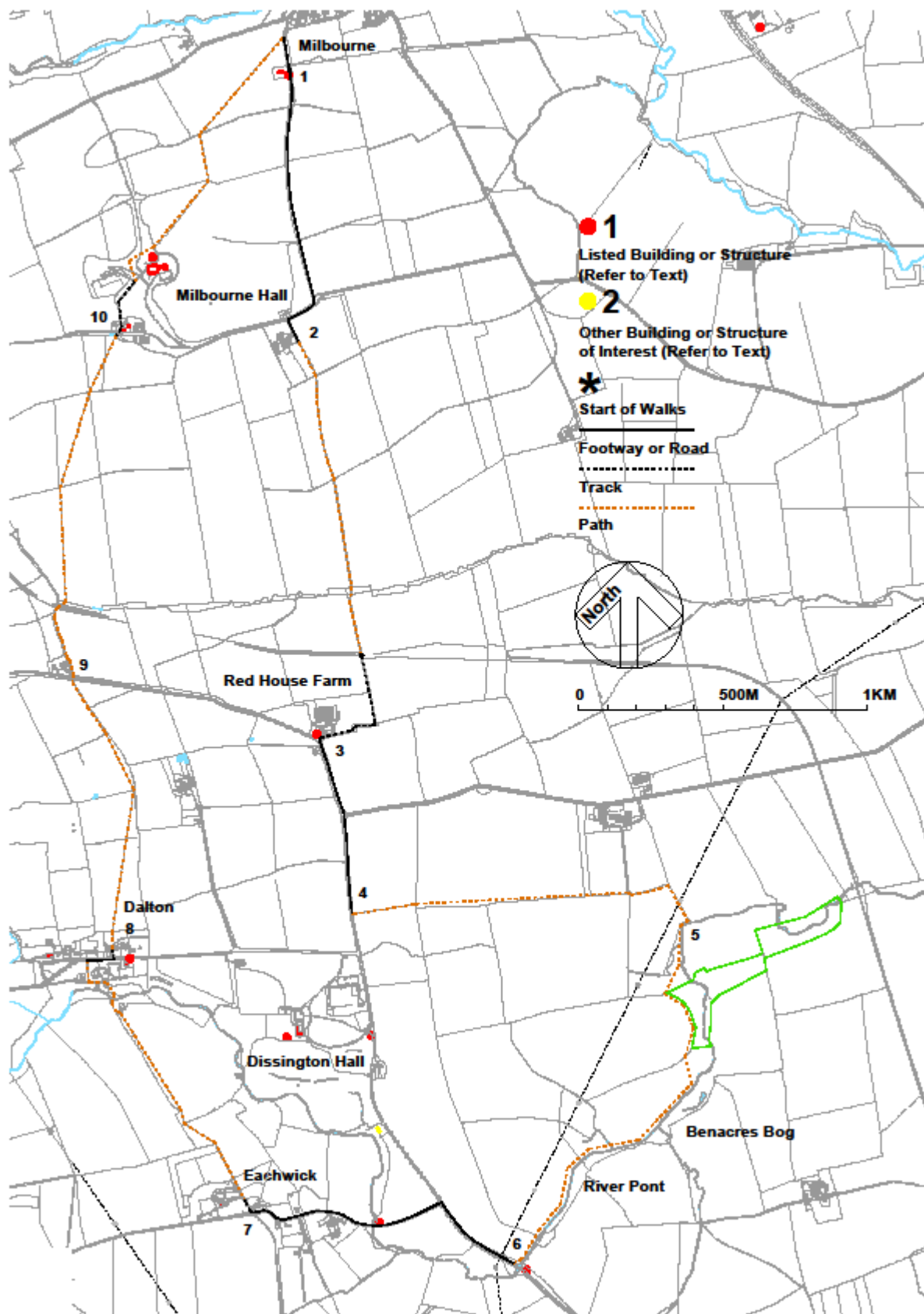
The Lake District came in fourth followed by the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors.

Bottom of the table, the Norfolk Broads earned just two stars for peace and quiet, but with members advised to stay away during the Summer months.

Just a few months later **WHICH** published the results of a similar study, this time homing in on Britain's seaside resorts.

Top of the pile this time was the splendid Northumberland town of Bamburgh, scoring high marks for its scenery, together with the three miles of golden beach set against the backdrop of the Castle. Visitors praised its vast 'emptiness' – one said "If you want crowds of tourists, candyfloss and bright lights then best go elsewhere."





Walk 5 Milbourne, Eachwick and Dalton

This quiet rural walk explores the west side of the Parish and visits no less than fifteen listed buildings and structures. About 7.5 miles (12km), there are some sections on minor roads but these have grass verges and are generally quiet. When I last walked this I realised it is best done in spring or early summer as the paths are lightly used and become indistinct or overgrown in places



Milbourne Holy Saviour Church

- 1 **Park at Milbourne Holy Saviour Church, preferably on a day when there are no services (Sunday only at the time of writing). Walk south down the road to a junction and turn right towards Milbourne Hall, after 100m turn left to go past Low House and through a gate**

Holy Saviour was built as a Chapel of Ease to the mother church of St Mary's in Ponteland with funding provided by Miss Jane Anne Bates of Milbourne Hall. The Church and its enclosing walls and railings are Grade II Listed

- 2 **Follow a path at the side of a field, go through another gate and through the next field, this time with the boundary on your right. Cross a stile into a dip and continue over a stream and up an incline to reach the remains of the old mineral railway. At this point the western edge of Darras Hall and the settlement of Medburn can be seen**

ahead. The path becomes a stoned farm track here. Follow the farm track around to the right and past Red House Farm until you reach a road



Listed gin gang at Red House Farm

- 3 **Turn left and follow the road for 600m, across the junction with Limestone Lane to a bend where there is a finger post and field entrance on the left**

The walk can be shortened here by continuing on the road past Dissington Hall East Gate and Dalton Village Hall, then take the footpath to Eachwick Bridge



Dissington Hall East Gate



Dalton Village Hall

Dalton Village Hall is not of great architectural interest in itself, with the possible exception of the six full-width laminated wooden beams which are structural members typical of the 1960's and which support the roof internally. The Hall itself does, however, represent a prime example of communal selfhelp from before the days of radio, television, the cinema and widespread car ownership

- 4 Turn left and follow a faint path straight across the field towards an isolated tree and onwards to cross a stile. Now follow the edge of a field with a short line of trees and a fence on the right and continue into an open field with a clear path running straight ahead to a wood. Keep to the right of the wood**

and continue to follow the field edge to go across a track and through a gate. Follow the field boundary round to the right, past a pylon and descend to cross a stile above the River Pont

- 5 Turn right and follow the river upstream to go through a gate at the corner of Benactres Plantation, turn left and follow the edge of the plantation to go through another gate. Bear slightly right and follow the path to rejoin the river once more, go through a gate and continue to Dissington Bridge. Climb the steps to the Road**



Dissington Bridge

- 6 Turn right and follow the road for 350m then turn left onto a minor road, just before reaching a bus stop, and follow this over Eachwick Bridge to the hamlet of Eachwick**

Pause on Eachwick Bridge to take in the view of Dissington Hall. This fine country house was built in 1794 by William Newton for Edward Collingwood, cousin of Admiral Collingwood. Since then it has been home to several other prominent Northumberland families including the Collingwoods, the Bainbridges and the Deuchars. It remains a private home but now with an attached enterprise hub. This bridge over the River Pont forms part of the landscaped setting of the hall and is dated 1819, the parapet is pierced with diamond-shaped panels



Eachwick Bridge

Eachwick was historically one of the six townships making up the parish of Heddon on the Wall. Eachwick Hall is a Grade II* listed building dating from the early c18th

- 7 Turn right to go down the side of Rosemount on driveway then follow the footpath through three gates, into a field. Eachwick Hall can be seen over the stone wall on your left**



Eachwick Hall

Follow the stone wall as it turns left to a gate and turn right here to stay in the field behind a single wire fence and go through a gate. Continue on a clear path over the next field and cross a stile to enter woodland in the corner. Descend on a path and then steps to cross the River Pont over a footbridge. Turn left and follow the path onto a driveway past Dallton Mill, turn right to climb steps and then take a path to reach the road. Turn left for 120m to see Dalton House otherwise turn right and follow the road for 90m until you reach the Old School House

A short way beyond the Old School House is the Church of the Holy Trinity. The church was designed by John and Benjamin Green of Newcastle for the Collingwood family of Dissington Hall and consecrated in 1837 as a chapel of ease to Newburn

- 8 Turn left and follow the drive to the left of the Old School House, cross a stile to go into the garden then pass through a gate into a field. Go diagonally across the field, uphill, to pass through a second gate in the top right corner. There is no marked path here. Cross the next field following the boundary on your right to reach a finger post at the road**



Approaching Silverhill

- 9 Cross the road at a finger post and go through a gap in the hedge to the right of Silverhill, over a plank bridge and a stile into a field following the field boundary past a garden and pony paddock on your left to a ladder stile. Cross the stile and a plank bridge and head diagonally across a field aiming towards an isolated tree which eventually comes into view, uphill, a gate in the top right corner. Again there is no marked path here. Go through the gate and follow the path along the field boundary, then turn right through a gate and follow the track 150m before turning left through another gate and follow the field boundary to reach a farm track. The walled garden of Milbourne Hall can be seen in front of you. Turn right onto the track**

- 10 After 120m turn left to go between High House Farmhouse and High House Farm Cottage and then onto the private drive from Milbourne Hall. Follow the drive around to the right, turn left just before the hall and follow**

the waymarked path through a small wood to a gate. Cross three fields and over two stiles heading diagonally towards a large red brick building to the left of the Church which can be seen ahead. Finally pass through a gate to follow the road back to your starting point



High House



Milbourne Hall, copyright Les Hull and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence

Ralph Bates (1764–1813), High Sheriff of Northumberland in 1812 and later Deputy Lieutenant, built the house in about 1810 to a design by Edinburgh Architect John Patterson. It was built in a Georgian style in local stone, around an octagonal courtyard and features unusual internal arrangements including a rotunda salon

This, with its attached stable block is Grade I listed, a nearby pigsty is also listed. St Mary's Church in Ponteland is the only other Grade I listed building in the Parish

Maynard's bequest

Sweet memory sustained



Lower reaches of the Ouseburn, Maynards Toffee Factory far left

March 2021

The article in the last issue about Maynards sweet shop, has prompted a couple of responses. One man wrote from London to say how happy he was to have been reminded of the place where he used to go to get his Lemon Sherbets and someone else told us that when the shop closed they gave away the big glass jars that held the sweets. Many still stand proudly in local pantries.

A continuing memorial to a much loved shop.



What happened to all those sweets

Dogs of the North

Oscar the chorister

Oscar, a long legged blue and tan Border Terrier, was born in Sheffield but came to be raised in Northumberland to pedigree parents, Oxcroft Farmer's Lad and Dream Girl Ella. His Kennel Club name was Millionaire's Dream Boy but apparently it never suited him.

He spent most of his life at the home of Karen and Jim in Morpeth, a musical household.

He would usually make a vocal contribution when instruments were played. A cross between a howl and a whine, which jarred somewhat with the violin and increased in volume during saxophone recitals in an attempt, it was believed, to drown out that particular instrument.

He was not over keen on going for walks, particularly in his later years when, if he was not in the mood, he would anchor his paws over the road side curb and perform a sit-down. But most of the time he would follow Jim anywhere. He would lag behind as they walked the banks of the Wansbeck and as the river curved he would disappear from view and Jim would have to wait for him to catch up.

Sadly Oscar passed away last year but Jim says he still finds himself pausing along Bennetts walk, and looking back, thinking that Oscar is somewhere behind, just out of sight, and he waits momentarily for him to catch up.

He has suggested that the poem entitled 'The Walk', by Thomas Hardy makes for a fitting requiem.

Oscar 25 Sept. 2008 – 14 Sept 2020



Poet's Corner

The Walk *by Thomas Hardy*

*You did not walk with me
Of late to the hill-top tree
By the gated ways,
As in earlier days;
You were weak and lame,
So never came,
And I went alone, and did not mind,
Not thinking of you as left behind.*

*I walked up there today
Just in the former way;
Surveyed around
The familiar ground
By myself again:
What difference then ?
Only the underlying sense
Of the look of a room on returning thence.*

Thomas Hardy 1840 - 1928

Comforts for 2021

Number five

Leaves

Assuredly one can derive great comfort from the emergence of new leaves at the onset of Spring.

The wondrous way those verdant shoots suddenly emerge from dry black twigs, from dormant bushes, from plants one had assumed could never revive.

And then there is the astonishing variety of shape and colour, each tree, each shrub, each plant determined to do its own thing rather than simply adopt ideas promoted by their neighbours, where have I heard that before ?

They emerge pale and shining, darkening as they slowly mature and go out in a blaze of glory when the Autumn winds whisk them away to a leaf strewn heaven.

We are talking here, of course, of the deciduous varieties. The evergreens stand glumly by, unable to join the party, destined forever to be clad in the dull dark uniforms they chose at the outset, unable to escape their past.

Leaves, of course, have numerous practical uses. Eve adopted leaves as a form of clothing to cover her modesty after the problems she had with that Adam fellow, and many people down the ages have been grateful for the availability of the occasional fig leaf.

The word 'leaf' has other connotations. It is used to describe the hinged panel of a folding table but luckily, very few drop from trees.

The only joke involving leaves that I have been able to identify is the tale about the Panda who goes into a restaurant, eats his meal, shoots the waiter and hurries out the door, giving rise to the newspaper headline,

'Panda eats shoots and leaves'



Both Eve and the Panda declined to provide a photo.

Established 2003

Membership Secretary, Janet McCann

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