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eyemouthliving

Your local community magazine

May 2025

https://www.eyemouth.org/magazine

welcome

It's amazing to see the changing seasons fly by so quickly, no sooner has a lovely Easter break passed but we are now into May! So 'may' I welcome you to the May issue of *Eyemouth Living*. As always there is a lot in here for you to digest or try out this month from finding out about some truly inspiring and trailblaizing women from Eyemouth's past to discovering the wonders of rhubarb.

There's also instructive and fascinating notes on flies in the wildlife notes from the National Trust ranger and some great tips about preparing for summer in our gardens. There really is something for everyone this issue.

If you are looking for things to do make sure to check out some of our promotions, whether it's getting a chance to see 'The First Wave' at Duns's Playfest, having lunch at the Brunch Hub, or joining in with the Women's group, run by Splash, at the Masons' Hall.

Could I also take this opportunity to invite you along to the Development Trust's AGM where you can find out about all our amazing work and even have the opportunity to be part of all that we do. Hopefully we will see you on 7th May at our AGM, otherwise I hope the start of this Summery season treats you well!

Andy Haddow
Chair, Eyemouth Development Trust

contents

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abundant borders

Rhubarb – a Vegetable That We Eat Like a Fruit

Rhubarb is a vegetable but in most recipes we use it as a fruit. It's important to note that only the stalks of the plant are edible. The leaves are poisonous due to the presence of oxalic acid.

Rhubarb is very easy to grow if you plant it in the right spot. It needs an open, sunny space. Ideally it needs plenty of fertilizer and water, but it will tolerate a little bit of neglect. Once the plant is established, it benefits from having the crown splitting every three to four years. This will create 1–3 additional plants.

The harvesting season is reasonably long. The rhubarb plant should be ready to harvest in early April in some areas and will continue through the early summer. To ensure the health of the plant it is advised to stop harvesting in late June or July, allowing the plant to store energy for the following year.

Rhubarb is very rich in antioxidants that help to keep the cells in our body healthy by fighting free radicals and inflammation. It's an excellent source of vitamin K which is essential for bone health and helps to keep osteoporosis at bay. It is also very beneficial for our digestive system and can help relief constipation. It may also help lower cholesterol and improve blood glucose levels.

abundant borders

Rhubarb is a great addition to any meat dish, adding a touch of sharpness.

When stewed with cinnamon, it makes a delicious topping to oatmeal or yoghurt. It also makes lovely cakes and crumbles. Below you can find my favourite recipe for rhubarb crumble that only takes about 10 minutes to prepare and can be baked in either oven or an air fryer.

Sabina Sekowska (Abundant Borders Food Project Worker)

Rhubarb Crumble

Serves 6

Ingredients:

- 600g rhubarb, sliced
- 1 orange, juiced
- 1tbsp sugar
- 1tsp cinnamon
- 100g plain flour
- 75g oats
- 50g caster sugar
- 75g butter

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C
2. Sieve the flour into a bowl
3. Rub the butter into the flour until it looks like breadcrumbs
4. Stir in sugar and oats
5. Slice the washed rhubarb into 2cm chunks
6. Put in the baking dish and toss with the sugar and orange juice
7. Cover with the crumble mixture
8. Bake in the oven for 20-30 minutes, until golden brown

Abundant Borders (SC049008)
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abi & kathy

Abi and Kathy Discuss Changes

Abi and Kathy were pondering changes as they were sitting in the sun on their bench on the Bantry.

Abi: Have you seen those news reports about the wildfires across the country? Shocking, that fire by Glen Trool looked awful. We went camping there one year it was great apart from the midgies.

Kathy: Yes, it's awful! It's been so dry I can't believe that I am hoping it will rain soon. The gardens and flower beds are so dry. I saw that the Rotary did a litter pick last week and collected over 80 kilos of rubbish. I'm glad it stayed dry for them as it usually rains when they do one. Maybe they need to do another one and get it to rain!

Abi: Yes! Did you get that letter from our MP about a Banking Hub? Not sure I understand what he wants to be honest. It would be good to have a reliable cashpoint in the town. The one in the General Store is ok but sometimes I need to get a bit more money out.

Kathy: It's good they did that when the Bank of Scotland went. Things have changed since I was wee. Not sure they're always for the good.

Abi: Totally agree, some things have gone backwards. Mind you the town seems to be doing better than it has been. The new Turkish restaurant has now opened. I hear it looks smart. Have you seen the Auld Bank has a new sign?

Kathy: Yes I saw that on facetube. They seem to be doing well. It's nice to see the queues outside Pazzi's with people getting their ice creams and sitting on those benches on the harbour. The tourists are here and it's nice to see.

Abi: Did you see that tall ship that the boatyard were fettling with? It was amazing to see it go up the cut into the boatyard.

Kathy: I must take a walk round and have a look. Do you know what is going to open on the High Street where the post office used to be?

Abi: Think it may be something to do with diving. Saw the Rib Trips have started again. Haven't tried their Sunset Cocktail cruise yet. I would be too scared to spill it. I'd need one of those baby bottles.

This caused great hilarity as they went off to go and get coffee and cake.


Food is music to the body, music is food to the heart
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wildlife notes

"Maybe, … maybe there is a beast … maybe it's only us"
William Golding

In the March issue of *Eyemouth Living*, Wildlife Notes touched on the importance of flies as pollinators for our early flowers. But what do we actually know about flies? They certainly get a bad reputation as those pesky, biting creatures that carry disease and eat rotting flesh. But there's a lot more to them than that – let's delve into the world of the fly!

Flies are part of the order called Diptera, two-winged insects, that make up 7,100 species across Britain and Ireland. They come in all sizes from minute midges to big craneflies, with some sporting amazing colours. They pollinate flowers and help to control aphid numbers as part of their diet.

Hoverflies a-plenty

Their lifecycle is the same across species, starting as an egg, then hatching into larvae as legless maggots. They can either use their jaws for biting or sucking up liquids, breaking down organic matter from decaying wood, fungi and rotting flesh. Eventually the larva forms a pupa from which the adult will emerge.

As an adult, a fly has no jaw and has evolved to suck up moisture or nectar. Some species can pierce surfaces such as skin in humans and animals, to feast on blood. It's all a 'bit gross' as my niece would say but they do provide food for a host of creatures, especially birds. Swarms of flies can provide much-needed energy for incoming migrants such as Swallows and House Martins.

Let's have a look at a few spring species that you might see over the May period:

St Mark's Fly:
Also known as the Hawthorn Fly (*left*), these black, hairy flies with dangling legs swarm like mad over hedgerows and grasslands from late April. Their larvae live in the soil

wildlife notes

on rotting vegetation. The adults feed on nectar and are important pollinators, especially for fruit trees. They also provide a huge banquet for birds, especially for those migrants coming into the UK.

The Hoverflies:
These sun-loving flies are true to their name and hover over flowers and vegetation. Mainly black, white and yellow, with the occasional orange, they are also important pollinators, and their larvae love aphids so are a gardener's best friend. A favourite of mine is the Marmalade Hoverfly (*above*), the commonest of the bunch and can be seen all year round. Here on the coast, there can be huge swarms as migrants come into the UK during the summer, so they are fairly easy to spot.

Dark-edged Bee-Fly:
From the middle of March to June, these flies look very similar to bees in the way they appear, rest and hover (*below*). They feed on flowers such as Primroses and Violets, using a long proboscis (sucking mouthpart) to gather nectar. However, they have a darker side to them – they are parasitoids and actively search for solitary bee nests to lay their eggs. The female will disguise her eggs by rolling them in dirt, sand etc at the entrance to the hole which will be picked up unwittingly by the solitary bee. The larvae hatch and develop on the host, eventually killing it.

There are plenty more species to see so get out there and look out for the flies!

David Lewis,
NTS Ranger Team, St. Abb's Head NNR

All Photo Credits David Lewis

gardening notes

Preparing for the Summer

Your garden should be at its most glorious just now with spring flowers still blooming and trees and bushes coming into full flower too. We have had some wonderful hot, sunny days but watch out for late frosts which can destroy young plants. Protect outdoor sowing with fleece or use cloches. If in doubt it is advisable to wait and continue to sow indoors.

Before moving indoor plants outside they need to be 'hardened off'. This process allows tender plants to get used to the colder conditions without being damaged. They need to get used the extremes they will encounter outdoors so take them out into the garden during the day but bring them back inside at night. This needs to be done for a week or so and then these plants can be planted outside in their permanent positions. This is particularly true for hanging baskets which are very exposed to temperature changes. Plant the seedlings in the basket but keep the baskets indoors at night.

Use fleece to cover your carrots. Carrot root fly can decimate your crops but there are some simple ways to cut down on the losses. In spring the female carrot fly emerges from hibernation to mate and then to lay the eggs. The eggs are laid in the soil beside the young carrot plants which then hatch into larvae which burrow into the nearest roots. Carrot flies are attracted by the smell of the carrots so any disturbance to the seedlings encourages them. This means it is best not to thin them out but to sow them quite thinly. Select resistant seeds and use companion planting of strong-smelling plants such as onions, chives or garlic. Sow carrots later on into June and July and encourage a wide range of animals and small birds in your garden to eat the

gardening notes

eggs. And don't forget the moles!

Grow some carrots to enter in The Ayton (& District) Show on September 6th. The schedule of classes will be available from May 17th.

Garden tasks for May.

May is the busiest time in the garden. There is so much needing to be done, such as sowing summer crops, planting and harvesting. Not to mention maintenance tasks like weeding and sorting out the perennials.

Remove spring bedding which is past its best and cut back old flowering bulb heads.

The young plants which were sown last month can be planted outdoors but will need protection using fleece if the weather is cold. Don't plant out summer bedding plants and tender annuals until all risk of frost is past.

Continue to sow the more tender crops in the greenhouse or under cover. For example indoor cucumber, sweetcorn, dwarf or climbing beans, runner beans, courgettes, pumpkins and squash. And sow cabbage, kale and broccoli, for transplanting next month. Continue to sow radish, spinach, beetroot and lettuce directly outside in small batches each week.

Harden off outdoor tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins for planting early next month.

Potatoes will need earthing up and keep an eye on the weeds around onions and garlic.

Asparagus spears may well be tall enough to harvest now.

Before you trim bushes or hedges, check for nesting birds and leave them alone until the end of the breeding season.

To support the wildlife in your garden leave small piles of twigs, bark and stones amongst the bedding flowers where invertebrates and small mammals can shelter. These animals will also help you combat slugs and snails.

Caroline Lathe (Ayton Gardening Society)

SPLASH BRUNCH HUB

Brunch Hub

Alison and her team look forward to welcoming you to Splash Brunch Hub from 10.30 - 1.30. Open every Thursday at the Community Centre for breakfast rolls, teas, coffees and a lovely selection on home baking, with Lunch being served from 11.30.

Keep an eye out for our weekly Specials

eyemouth development trust

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO:

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ON WEDSDAY 7TH MAY 2025 AT 7PM.

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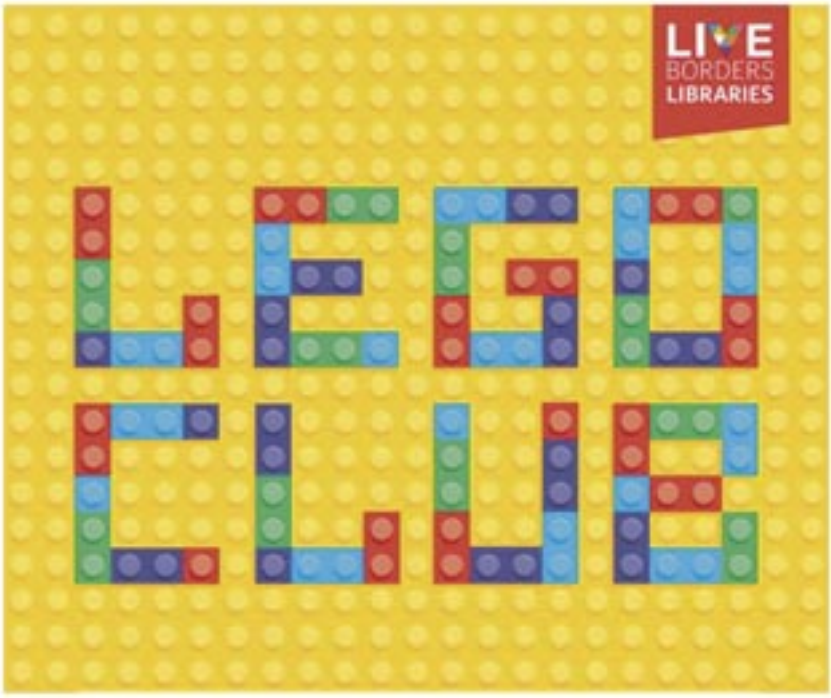

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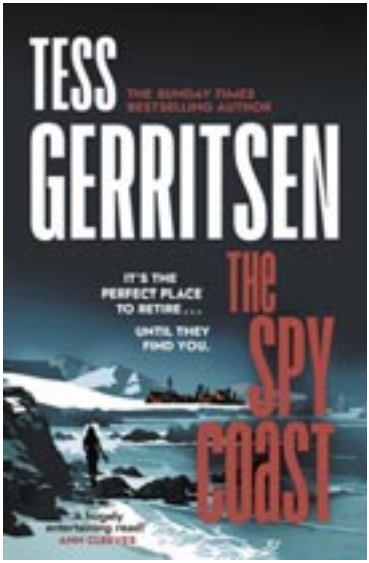
book news

Library opening times:
Monday 10am–1pm, 2–5pm, Thursday 10am–1pm, Friday 10am–1pm, 2–5pm.

***The Spy Coast* by Tess Gerritsen**



Tess Gerritsen has been writing crime novels for many years (you may know the *Rizzoli* and *Isles* series) and now she has turned her hand to the world of espionage. *The Spy Coast* is the first book in a new series introducing us to Maggie Bird and her friends. They retired to live quietly in the seaside town of Purity, Maine and they meet regularly as a book group known as the Martini Club. What the locals don't know is that they all used to be spies.

When a dead body is dumped in the driveway of Maggie's chicken farm, she realises her past is coming back to haunt her. The Martini Club are going to have to come out of retirement and combine their skills and experience to track down the person who wants her dead. The local police chief, Jo Thibodeau, has her work cut out keeping up with them.

As the story travels across the world it explains Maggie's past and what lead her to Purity and her friends. She will have to fight to save her new life and it's a gripping tale reading how she does it.

Available at Eyemouth library.

Joany Cook

Library News

There may be some temporary disrupton to internet access through our public access computers this month. This is due to ongoing work to modernise the service.

Bookbug on Tuesdays at 9.45am
Drop in Lego Sessions 16th and 30th May, 2–4pm.
Walking Bookgroup on Tuesday, 13th May 2–3pm.
Hearing Aid Clinic on Friday 16th May, 10am – 12pm.

Berwickshire Coastal Arts Present

'The First Wave'

Highlighting the quiet resilience of the coastal communities of Berwickshire, this short film by **Kate Sweeney** and **Roma Yagnik** captures Eyemouth and surrounds during Covid 2020/1

Accompanied by stories, sketches, and songs from

The People of the Sea Project and **Eyemouth Fishermen's Choir**

Artist: Liz Walker

Friday, 9 May 2025 2:00pm - 3:15pm

Volunteer Hall

Langtongate, Duns, TD11 3AF Tickets £5 book at https://tikt.link/dpf25wave or buy on the door

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banking hub campaign

The people of the Borders have been treated shamefully by big banks who have treated loyal customers with little regard. As online and telephone banking have grown in popularity, big banks have used that as an excuse to close branches and leave people without access to the in-person services they need. They don't understand that local people, especially the elderly and vulnerable, need access to cash services. Many small businesses also rely on being able to deposit and withdraw cash. They ignore the needs of Eyemouth residents and treat people in more remote and rural areas, like where we live, with disdain.

As you will remember, 18 months ago, Bank of Scotland decided to close the branch in Eyemouth. Ever since, I've been pushing for better access to cash services for the local area. I have met with the banks in question and urged them to reconsider. I have pressed LINK, which runs the UK's cash machine network, to bring in more cashpoints. I have joined a national 'Save Our Banks' campaign alongside MPs from other areas who are suffering as we are.

I have also started a campaign for a new banking hub to be introduced in Eyemouth, following my successful campaign to have one introduced in Jedburgh. I have started a new campaign urging LINK and big banks to make this happen.

If you support my work, please sign-up to join the campaign on my website, and please continue to get in touch with me if you believe your local area needs better access to cash.

John Lamont, MP for Berwickshire

We wondered what is a Banking Hub?

A quick google search came up with: *https://www.cashaccess.co.uk/hubs/*

Banking Hubs offer easy access to face-to-face cash and banking services across the UK. They are owned by Cash Access UK and operated by the Post Office.

Customers of all major banks and building societies can access cash services from the Post Office counter service, whenever the hub is open, Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm:

- pay in cash (notes and coin) and cheques
- withdraw cash (notes and coin)
- check your balance
- pay utility bills
- top up your gas and electricity
- access change-giving services (for registered businesses)

You can also talk to a community banker from your bank on the day your bank is in the hub. There is a private space where you can talk face-to-face about more complicated banking enquiries like payments and transfers, managing your account, and how to use online banking.

The Editors

history

Eyemouth's Female Pioneers

It seems only fair that, having written about some of Eyemouth's male pioneers, I should write about some of the women. They are a much smaller band because in the 19th and early 20th centuries women had few rights, freedoms or opportunities to shine!

Mrs Margaret Forsyth (*above*) is the earliest female in the book *The Pioneers of Eyemouth*. She was married to James Forsyth, a merchant in the town, who died aged 42 leaving Margaret with four small children. Undeterred, in 1835 Margaret opened a general merchant's shop in the front room of her house, just off the Market Place at the top of Chapel Street. She was the first woman to go into business on her own account. In spite of general disapproval, Margaret became popular and successful, especially with French sailors who frequented Eyemouth at that time. She had provided a shroud for a French sailor who had died in Eyemouth.

Margaret's eldest son, James, was apprenticed to a merchant in Berwick but his heart wasn't in commerce. James wanted to be a doctor, a career that involved long and expensive training. He persuaded his Berwick master to talk to his mother and plead his case. Despite having three other children to support, Margaret gave James all her savings, which allowed him to follow his dream, while she continued to work in her shop. As soon as James qualified he returned to Eyemouth and became the town's doctor for the next sixty years.

Three generations of women in the Gray family, who lived at Northburn Farm, were pioneers in their own right. Two of them were married and, as was the custom at the time, are referred to by their husband's name .

In 1853 **Mrs David Gray** (*left*) was the first woman in Eyemouth to make her own butter using a 'plunge' butter churn. Three years later she worked tirelessly to save her husband's cattle

history

from a newly registered Foot and Mouth Disease. She fed them soft, nutritious food when their mouths were full of ulcers, made sure their bedding was replaced regularly and bathed their infected feet in antiseptic lotion. Not one cow died.

Mrs Gray's daughter-in-law, **Mrs Charles Gray** (*right*), introduced the 'barrel' butter churn and taught other farmers' wives to use this innovation. In 1910 she introduced intensive poultry farming, buying an incubator and an artificial 'brooder' and introducing different breeds. Later Mrs Gray bought a hen-house called 'Paradise', where hens could shelter in bad weather. A neighbouring farmer also bought one, but soon turned the hens out and used it for a workshop and smoking den!

Her daughter, **Miss Margaret Gray** (*below left and right*), was the first Dux medallist of Eyemouth Public School in 1900 but, as a girl, she was not encouraged to go on to university. She went to work on her father's farm which by this time had a dairy herd. Margaret helped with improvements in the treatment and bottling of milk. Margaret never married but In 1925 she and her brother became joint owners of Northburn Farm. Later she became the first female town councillor and had a particular interest in improving housing. In 1929, with three other women, she joined the Board of Management of St John's Church. Margaret helped introduce a putting green and tennis courts to the town, was the first woman to propose a toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns, and was a member of The Eastern Star, a charitable body linked to the Masonic Lodge. Margaret Gray was a pioneer and a very accomplished lady!

Fay Waddell

andys man club


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the benefits of exercise

Exercise can mean so many things to different people. To some it's a daily ritual, others a way to clear their heads; for some it's their profession.

Exercise is all of these things and none of them. You don't need special clothes or to sweat profusely or push yourself so hard that you nearly feel you're going to pass out. It can be as simple as doing some some stretches on a chair or lifting one leg off the floor.

Doing even small, simple exercises and micro additions to someone's lifestyle can have extremely beneficial results including increasing your mobility, flexibility, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol and improving circulation. It can also improve mental health, encourage social interaction and create a community.

Recently the explosion of exercise and training has created a double-edged sword with exercise being beneficial for some and majorly inhibitory for others. Guilt, injury and even cash flow can be barriers. Instead, some of us are trying to spread the word that any type of movement, change or addition to a lifestyle is exercise, and much more beneficial. We're aiming to educate and create a much more inclusive, wholesome space for all.

Many forms of exercise are constantly undergoing adaption to become inclusive. These include Chair Yoga, Standing Pilates and wheelchair-based movement and mobility classes among others. All these classes aim to improve mobility and benefit health and wellness whilst creating a sense of community and an accessible space for everyone. Going to a new class may seem daunting, but interactions you could have could be one of the reasons you keep going. Some people go on to explore additional options alone or with others.

All forms of classes, with varying abilities and adaptions, are appearing all over the Borders and are aimed to be a welcome space of inclusivity, community and gentle exercise to provide benefits to daily life. Give it a try and see how it goes, after all what's the worst that could happen? There's a type of beneficial exercise for everyone, you just need to find the right one for you.

Maddie Reynolds • Yoga and Pilates classes including Chair Yoga available in Coldingham, Eyemouth and Berwick – email me at maddiereynolds@me.com

TEEN TALKS

THE MAGIC OF MILLY

The magic of Millie is supported by family, friends, and many generous people who were touched by Milly during her short but very brave life.
Milly, who had a very rare congenital condition and Sadly following heart surgery, suffered numerous post-operative complications and passed away the night before her second birthday.

Many people raise money and awareness in her memory for the Birmingham Children's Hospital, to help support doctors, nurses, and support staff who provide care to children like Milly

"Milly touched the lives of all who met her and made a great impact on the world around her in her short life - We call this the Magic of Milly"

25 MILLY MILES

On what would have been Milly's 12th birthday, Magic of Milly launched 25 Milly Miles!

25 Milly Miles is a fundraising charity event where you tackle 25 miles through walking, running, swimming, or any movement of your choice over the course of May

The Magic of Milly 25-Mile Challenge is a fantastic opportunity to get active, have fun, and make a real difference in the lives of children battling serious illnesses

Around 20 people from Eyemouth High School are participating in the challenge by running, walking, and even paddle boarding (our friend group) to raise funds for this fantastic cause

eyemouth high school

The Greenpower Goblin Challenge

Established in 2016, the Eyemouth High ERacing team has been at the forefront of electric racing. Our team designs, builds, and races fully electric cars. From East Fortune to Bo'ness, we compete in championships, including endurance, time trials, and hill climb racing.

In 2022, Greenpower recognized the school with its Centre of Excellence award for our dedication and comprehensive programme for students across the Eyemouth cluster. This year has hosted our biggest project yet: the Goblin Challenge.

It was our team principal, Paul Watson whose ambition was to bring Greenpower into the primary schools in the Eyemouth cluster. After acquiring a Greenpower Goblin chassis, the team set to work creating a programme that would teach pupils the design process. The Eyemouth District Rotary joined the venture, providing their expertise and manpower. Pupils were put into teams the goal of fabricating a body kit.

Pupils were required to log all their team decisions, including initial concepts, themes, unification of ideas, and material choices. Seeing the final products was exciting – there were dragons, fighting fish, an Olympic guinea pig, and even a ScotRail train!

At the end of a five-week development cycle, the Eyemouth High ERacing team returned to the school to provide the teams with the final phase of the programme: a test drive. Using the school playground, a bespoke track was created. The Education Officer from the Jim Clark Museum, Kenneth McLean, sounded the horn to start the test drive. We

eyemouth high school

witnessed skill, focus, and determination, and when the helmets came off there were big smiles all around.

There are additional activities, including a remote-control car maze challenge – testing precision and focus – and a wheel-changing task, a core skill required for racing. Being prepared is essential; you never know when your tire will pop!

The core of Greenpower is to design, build, and race, and this programme was created to meet all three goals. At the end, the pupils were judged and awarded on their work by members of the Rotary, Jim Clark Trust, and Museum. Finally, all students received a Greenpower Junior Driving Licence.

This endeavour has not gone unnoticed. Education Scotland discovered what was happening and has documented our time at Ayton Primary. A video will be released later this year – so stay tuned! The ERacing team is pleased with the outcomes and is looking forward to bringing the programme to the final school after the Easter break: Eyemouth Primary.

gong bath

Gong Baths – as seen on TV!

You may have heard talk about a strange sounding thing called a gong bath taking place at Coldingham Priory. You might even have seen someone (me!) on TV giving Robson Green a gong bath on series 1 of his Weekend Escapes. And many of you will have been wondering what it's all about; and I don't blame you – it's all sounds a bit odd doesn't it? As the person who runs gong baths in the area, I was delighted to be approached by the *Eyemouth Living* editorial team asking me to do a piece about them.

In a nutshell, a gong bath is a form of meditation where you are bathed in sound produced by gongs, singing bowls and other instruments – no water is involved at all! It's a fabulous form of meditation because all you need to do is lie or sit comfortably, close your eyes and give yourself over to being immersed in waves of mesmerizing sounds. The many overtones produced by the instruments switch off the brain-chatter and help you sink into a meditative state, whilst the sound vibrations filling the room give you a hands-free massage so you emerge from the experience feeling de-stressed, relaxed and invigorated.

We all instinctively know that sound is good for our health and well-being. Whether its listening to or playing music, and perhaps dancing or singing along; or hearing the sound of waves breaking on a beach, or the wind in the trees. When I was struggling with stress, anxiety and depression a few years back, tuning into the therapeutic power of sound really helped me. In fact, it was life changing! So now I love to help other people connect with the health-giving properties of sound.

I have enjoyed singing and drumming for many years, but I only started really tuning in to the therapeutic power of sound around 15 years ago. Since then, I have had great fun exploring the many different ways of enjoy-

gong bath

ing the beneficial properties of sound, been on lots of training courses and I have built up quite a collection of interesting instruments. I first began running sessions for others in 2017, but this was on top of my day job (as the Ranger at St Abb's Head), so I didn't have the time to run as many events as I would have liked. So, when I was made redundant in 2020, this offered me an opportunity that I felt wasn't to be missed and I have been running regular gong baths in Coldingham, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Dunbar ever since! I also run occasional ones in other locations in the area, and am happy to travel to other places within around an hour's drive of Eyemouth.

Why not give it a try? I would love to share the power of sound with you! You can find my schedule of events and book a place at https://bookwhen.com/inournature, but be aware that the gong baths at Coldingham Priory can get booked up very quickly!

Liza Cole

u3a

Charity No SCO 31477

East Berwickshire U3a Open Meeting

At the Eyemouth Community Centre on Wednesday 9th April, Linda Bankier, the Berwick Archivist gave a fascinating talk on the history of the Berwick Old Bridge. As most of you will be aware, last year was the 400th anniversary of its opening and it has just had its cloak of scaffolding removed in preparation for reopening shortly.

Linda explained the shortcomings of earlier Tweed crossings at Berwick with a ford or ferry being subject to tides and currents. Earlier wooden bridges needed constant maintenance despite which they more than once failed to withstand winter floods. Things came to head in 1603 when King James VI had to cross the rickety wooden structure on his way to London to take up the English throne. His Majesty was persuaded to grant £8000 for the building of a stone bridge with construction starting in 1611. Very detailed weekly accounts were prepared to show the king where the

money was going, and these have been preserved in the archive. Linda showed us examples and we were able to see the names, trades and pay rates for everyone employed on the project. Despite the careful accounting, just like many more recent public building projects the cost was almost double the original estimate and it took thirteen years to complete. The royal grant was supposed to cover the building of a new church as well as the bridge but there wasn't enough left for that, so the church wasn't built until Cromwell's time.

Altogether it was a most informative talk and a fitting end to our 2024–25 season of open meetings. We already have a number of speakers on varied topics lined up for the 2025–26 season which will start on 8th October. We hope to see many of you at the Eyemouth Community Centre, you don't have to be a U3a member to come along.

David Hunter

ayton gardening society

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