

Swarland Village Action Group Committee:

Chairman: Neil Mansfield, Secretary / Editor: Bryan Stanley,
Treasurer: Susan Richardson.
Committee Members: Robert & Sue Brotherton, John Richardson,
Suzanne Stanley, Caroline Thomas.

Write it Down Now !!!

Please supply information to the Editor for
inclusion in the June issue by
Thursday 22nd May 2020.



The cost of production of this issue of
The Column has been met by
**Newton on the Moor
& Swarland Parish Council**
and
Swarland Club

The Club is currently still providing its newspaper service
for our area. All daily newspapers are catered for along with
the sale of bread, eggs and milk, all thanks to John.

**This service is currently open
from 7.30 to 10am every day**

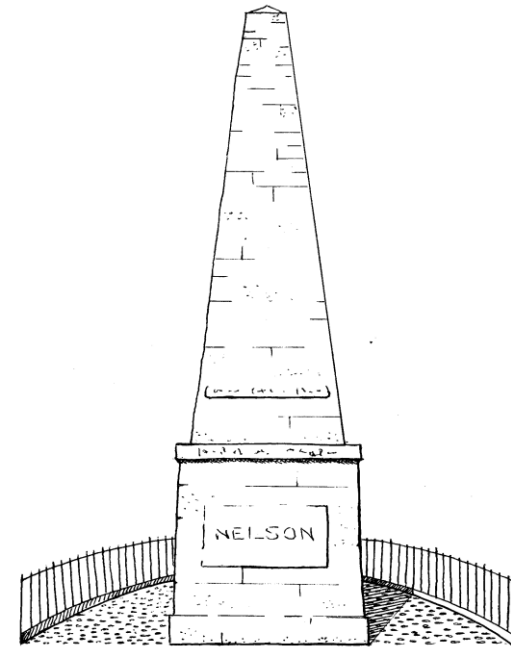
Newspapers and magazines may be ordered and reserved.
**However, the Post Office is not able to provide its
Monday and Thursday service at present.**

**SWARLAND VILLAGE
WORKING MEN'S CLUB**

Tel. 01670 787 825

Swarland Club is pleased to sponsor *The Column*.

The Column



April 2020

Produced by

Swarland Village Action

Newsletter 106

**Covid-19 precautions across the
parish - see inside for details.**

Welcome to your latest issue of The Column and if you're new to the area, welcome to you too. To include something, however small, in the June issue, please supply it for inclusion by Thursday 22nd May. Send it to: The Editor, Bryan Stanley, on 01670 787 916 or by email at maxitoby1@gmail.com.

Because of the Covid-19 situation, we are unable to use our usual printer Northumberland Community Enterprise Ltd (NCE Ltd) at Stobhill. However, rather than just issuing The Column on-line, the NCC Communities Together Scheme is printing it for us; for which many thanks to Ruth Armstrong.

Help and Support in NotM & Swarland during the Coronavirus Emergency

Since information leaflets were sent out I have been contacted by residents to say how much they appreciate the presence of this service, and praising everyone's amazing community spirit.

Over 40 people have volunteered to help fellow residents within this Parish, which is fantastic. We have a population of about 905 in the Parish, in around 410 houses, and many are elderly and / or living alone. Many more are 'at risk' and are self-isolating, therefore needing this service.

Volunteers are there to help you if you are vulnerable through ill health or age, and don't have anyone else to help you. The sort of support we can provide at the moment is as follows:

- Daily Phone calls to check you are well and do not need help.
- Phone calls for a chat
- Collection of prescriptions on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Collection / delivery of food.

If you need help, email (if possible) janandersonpc@gmail.com or telephone **07775 060 430** preferably during office hours. However, with the Northumberland County Council scheme and NHS schemes coming on line, this may change.

The Parish Council website is being revised and added to every day with information relating to services available in our Parish: <http://newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk/>.

Best wishes, Jan Anderson (Parish Clerk)

Swarland Village Hall

The Hall which is run as a community facility (Reg. Charity No 1058471) is at present not offering its usual range of facilities and activities. If you wish to check on whether you can book the Hall for a future private event please contact Bryan Stanley (see above) or Steve Woolfrey (at 01670 787 883 or stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com).

Neighbourhood Watch Update - March 2020

Swarland / Newton on the Moor:

Once again I am pleased to say that our area is a relatively safe place to live. Here are a few items of 'local' police news:-

Theft of fuel from Swarland, Felton area.

Between 20.00 hours on Monday 10th February and 07.00 hours on Tuesday 11th February approximately 500 litres of fuel were stolen from a tank on a farm just off the B6345 road. There are many ways to prevent such an incident and information can be obtained easily via the police website.

On 4th February, I received the following information from the police (I have included it to highlight the benefits of taking simple precautions to protect one's property). **A trailer, a chain saw and two ATVs were stolen.** These were recovered as a tracking device (sensibly fitted to the trailer) indicated that they were heading south along the A68.

Due to recent information received, it appears there may well be an increase in the number of **door-to-door sellers offering household goods and fish for sale.** Be very wary and cautious of any such activity. These individuals may even claim to be on a scheme sponsored by an official body. There is no such body. **BE WARNED.**

Call 101 to report any suspicious activity or if you see a crime or wildlife crime taking place. The advice is to always dial 999.

If residents have information on any crime, please report this via the following numbers: Emergency issues 999, non emergency issues Tel. 101. To contact Rothbury Police, phone 101 ext 61353, e-mail alnwick.npt.northumbria.pnn.police.uk, or call in at the office in the Coquetdale Centre, Church Street, Rothbury. If the office is unattended please use the yellow phone on the wall and an officer will be able to assist with your enquiry.

*NW Co-ordinator, Harold Hinchliffe, 2 Nile Drive, Swarland.
Tel.01670 783 669 or Mob.07713 097 250*

Mobile Library Dates

Like all other NCC Library services, the NCC mobile library has been withdrawn until further notice. Let's hope that eventually we will get it back and that we don't lose it permanently.

Recycling Corner

Why not recycle your unwanted items through The Column? Recipients of free items can make a donation towards this newsletter's running costs. Items for sale? – If successful, the seller can make a similar donation.

For Sale: Honda "Izzy" petrol lawnmower. Hardly used, excellent condition. Manual and paper work available. Cost £410, sensible offers only to 01670 787 522.

Felton Film Society

Sadly due to the current situation we have to announce that the original schedule for the next couple of months has been postponed. Watch out for future films in due course.

Sylvia Allan, Treasurer, Felton Village Hall

Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group

As we are all aware of the situation with COVID-19 the Committee has cancelled the April and May 2020 talks. We will keep you updated regarding the June meeting. The Annual Summer Outing to Markenfield Hall on 1st July will hopefully still go ahead, but this depends on the situation at the time.

On a rather sad note, Caroline Thomas, who has been our Chair for many years, has taken the difficult decision to step down from that role. Caroline's organisational skills, knowledge and professional approach in maintaining the smooth running of the Swarland Moor Local Heritage Group have been exceptional. She has organised a wide variety of interesting Speakers, Summer Outings, Exhibitions at the Swarland Shows, Christmas Dinners, involvement with the Nelson Park Information Board, the Oral History Project and, the most recent venture, the feasibility of erecting a War Memorial in the Village Square.

The Heritage Group is very grateful to Caroline and on behalf of the Committee and all members, thank you so much for the sterling work and dedication you have shown over the years. It is really appreciated. We will be pleased to hear from any members who would be interested in joining the Committee as Chairperson. As our AGM would have been April 2020, if we do meet in June, nominations for this vacant position can be put forward, carried and voted upon.

On a lighter note, on Tuesday 11th February our speaker, Mr Andrew Clark (The Detectorist), returned with his follow-up talk (Digging the Past: Part 2). Another fascinating talk with visual presentation and artefacts, including a most unusual doll that was made from lead. Not particularly the best metal for a child to be playing with!

On Tuesday 10th March we welcomed Dr Paul Morrison presenting his talk "Secrets of Coquet Island". This was split into: Part 1- A tour of the history of the Island, including the Trinity House Lighthouse developments over the years. Part 2- The life and work of an RSPB warden with a visual presentation of the many different species that nest there: Eider ducks, Roseate Terns and many people's favourites, the Puffins.

We will provide further updates on our events in the June issue of the Column. Meanwhile, keep well and busy.

If you have any queries please contact me on 01670 787 654.

Lesley White

NotM & Swarland Parish Council

The Parish Council (PC) met on Wednesday 26th February in Swarland Village Hall and should have met again on 25th March in Jubilee Hall, NotM. Nationwide restrictions on human contact and movement have caused us to re-think how we can best help our local community, while continuing to carry out our various duties, within the framework of local government laws and regulations. We hope the following will be of help:

1) **News:** we are endeavouring to keep our fingers on the pulse of what is happening locally, and to publish updates on our website on the 'coronavirus' page. This includes information on offers of voluntary help, the services being provided by pubs and suppliers, what is happening to County Council services etc. Do please let us know of anything which we may otherwise have missed, so that we can add it to the website.

2) **Consultations, complaints etc:** although a lot of everyday public life is being curtailed, all sorts of issues are continuing to arise, totally unconnected with Covid-19, ranging from planning consultations and highways maintenance, to incidence of crime, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, and more. We will continue to act as our community's eyes and ears and therefore we will still respond to consultations, report problems to the responsible authorities, seek improvements in the delivery of local services etc.

3) **Supporting local voluntary activity:** we do have some flexibility within our budget, and we are open to the prospect of providing some financial assistance, if needed, to local groups. This might be for new activity connected to coping with the Covid-19 restrictions, or helping our local village halls whose income will be severely depleted.

4) **Working safely:** for the foreseeable future, we will not be able to hold meetings, nor run our normal 'public questions' sessions. We will conduct most of our business by email communication, and we will publish our decisions and discussions on our website and notice-boards, in a format very much like the minutes of our meetings. We are very happy to continue to receive questions and suggestions from our local residents.

PC Website: newtononthemoorandswarlandparishcouncil.org.uk/
PC Contact: PC Clerk, Jan Anderson at janandersonpc@gmail.com or on **07775 060 430**.

Local Help and Businesses Offering their Services

NotM & S PC has already circulated a list of local businesses which are willing to help provide a take-away / delivery service in this time of self-isolation. That list is now out-of-date and to check on the current situation go to the PC website which is updated regularly.

If you need help in any way ring **07775 060 430** or email the PC on janandersonpc@gmail.com to be put in touch with a local volunteer.

Vyner Park News

Coronavirus Impacts:

The government has introduced various measures to reduce the spread of Coronavirus which has had an impact on Vyner Park. To comply with current measures, the children's play park, all-weather area, tennis courts and Nelson's are closed for the foreseeable future. However, the Park itself remains open and is available for people to use: As the weather improves it is a pleasant local area for a walk or run, but please note the government's guidelines on 'social distancing'.

Carpark: Towards the end of 2019 significant work was carried out on the Vyner Park carpark. We have now resurfaced the unmetalled part of the car park making the metalled and unmetalled areas the same level. As part of a County Council project, supported by our County Councillor, Trevor Thorne, we have created additional car parking spaces. Only a small amount of ground-work still remains to be done. This will be completed when the area is drier in the early summer.

Improvements to Paths on the Park: At the end of 2019 we used existing funds to carry out some remedial work on the path to the far east side and on the path that runs through the grassed area to the south of the Park. Over the longer-term we hope to carry out further improvements to the paths.

Tennis Courts: Unfortunately, moss tends to build-up on the tennis courts each year and creates a potential hazard. To mitigate this, they were cleaned in February and an anti-moss treatment will be applied in the near future.

Sewage: During any period of heavy rain the foul waste manhole covers on the north side of the Park overflow resulting in contaminated water flowing down the nearby paths, eventually ending up in the Mere Burn. We have recently had a discussion with Northumbrian Water about this issue and various periodic maintenance actions are now being tried. Sewage overflows and smells are a problem, though not just confined to the Park; it affects other parts of the village most notably Chesterwell. If a problem occurs on your property or nearby, please report it to Northumbrian Water (NWA) (0345 717 1100). If more people complain then it is more likely that NWA will take meaningful action to identify and solve the issues. No reporting, means no action by Northumbrian Water.

*Steve Woolfrey on behalf of the VPC Management Team -
stevewoolfrey.PC@outlook.com .*

**Deadline for items for the June issue of The
Column: Thursday 22nd May 2020.**

Help to pay for care - Attendance Allowance

Care for the elderly is a huge issue that affects most of us at some point in our lives. Most benefits offered by Social Services are means tested and as such are difficult to access for middle earners. However there is an allowance that can be claimed that is NOT means tested.

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people over state pension age who need help with personal care due to an illness or disability. The money could help you or a loved one stay independent in your / their own home. It is tax free, won't reduce any other income you receive, isn't means tested and doesn't have to be spent on a carer. Current rates are around £58 or £87 per week depending on the level of care that is needed.

You can get Attendance Allowance if you've reached state pension age and the following apply:

- you have a physical disability (including sensory disability, for example blindness), a mental disability (including learning difficulties), or both
- your disability is severe enough for you to need help caring for yourself or someone to supervise you, for your own or someone else's safety
- you've needed that help for at least 6 months (unless you're terminally ill).

To claim you simply need to complete a form that you can download from the **gov.uk** website (search for Attendance Allowance). Additional information is also available on the **gov.uk** website. The only negatives are the length of the form (52 pages including information) and around a 6 week turnaround time for a decision.

But, if like me, you have loved ones that are in need of care support and fit the criteria then this is a hidden gem. Have a look.

A Swarland resident

A Cautionary Tale

One of my neighbours suggested I contact you with some information that be worth including in The Column.

On the old A1 near to the fancy Newton Hall gates where the wood runs parallel with the road, a local found some offal in a field gateway. A week later, another local found a dead deer which had been in a trap and had pulled its own leg off. There were also nine empty bottles of Jack Daniels beer in the ditch beside the wood. The police have been notified about all the animal remains but perhaps it's worth drawing other local peoples' attention to it so they can be more vigilant and report any further suspicious behaviour to the police. To me it sounds like illegal poaching unfortunately.

A NotM resident

Although the Bailiffgate Museum and Gallery's building will be closed for the foreseeable future in response to government advice, virtual visitors can share in a wealth of fascinating historic content online.

The *Bailiffgate Collections* website is a digital archive of photographs, documents and images of objects and artworks held in the Collection. Recently uploaded is a striking collection of over 100 rare portrait photographs, likely to be some of the first such portraits ever taken in Alnwick. It also includes a database of local servicemen who died in World War One.

Bailiffgate TV YouTube channel shows films made of local people and archive footage over the last 70 years. A recent film features International super-model Stella Tennant selecting haute couture dresses from her wardrobe for Bailiffgate's popular *100 Years of Fashion* Exhibition.

Bailiffgate's Out of Town (OOT) Museum celebrates the rural heritage of Coquetdale. Recent additions to the OOT website include stories about farming, wrestling, dancing and photographs of Coquetdale from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Jean Humphrys (Chair of the Trustees) said 'the whole country is facing a difficult time ahead and although Bailiffgate's building has had to close, we will be working hard to provide new stories, photographs and items of interest online for our virtual community. Visitors can stay up-to-date by following us on twitter, Facebook and on our main website. And, our unique myth-busting exhibition about the Vikings in collaboration with JORVIK will now take place in the summer of 2021'.

High Res photos of Bailiffgate at
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/u9jomns97kanwgr/AABxF5WifEspEBCv64jNSxTa?dl=0> .

Contacts: Jane Mann, Press Enquiries: 07849 107 080, Vivien Kay, Museum Coordinator: 01665 605 847. ask@bailiffgatemuseum.co.uk
14 Bailiffgate, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1LX. Tel. 01665 605 847
Website **Bailiffgate Museum & Gallery**
Find us on **Twitter** and **Facebook** .

Bailiffgate is an accredited museum and a registered charity.

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Pest Management Services

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Wasps and other insects.

Contact Rory Brotherton
01670 788 174 or 07769 176 666

Lower Coquetdale Red Squirrel Group



Once more many thanks to all of those who have taken the trouble to go onto our website and record sightings of Grey and Red Squirrels. We feel that in some spots we are seeing more Red Squirrels now than in the last couple of years. So please keep your records coming – it is all very valuable.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, if we receive regular reports of Grey squirrels in a specific location within our area, we are unlikely to be able to take any action.

If you are willing to help our group, then that would be great! Volunteers can take part in a variety of tasks, putting up posters, writing articles, monitoring feeders and topping up, checking collecting boxes and dispensers for our lovely squirrel cards. If you know of anywhere where we could display our collecting boxes, we would love to hear from you.

And – thanks again!

www.lcreds.org.uk

Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor – Corona virus

With great regret, the Trustees of the Jubilee Hall have accepted the advice of the government and of the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium and have decided to close the Hall with immediate effect. Our coffee mornings at Easter and in May will therefore not take place and groups of musicians and other hall users have been notified that they can no longer use the building.

It seems quite wrong to stop local activities at a time when, ideally, we should be providing more opportunities for people to meet. We shall review the situation at the end of May and the Hall will reopen as soon as it is practicable to do so. Please contact 01665 581 173 if you have any queries about the closure.

Alison Gallico, Jubilee Hall Secretary

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Parish Council Litter Pick



Old A1 just after clean-up

Many thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the litter-pick on Sunday 15th March. The litter was mostly the usual mixture of drinks cans and fast-food wrappers, plus several accumulations of empty Listerine and Jack Daniels bottles, and some old tyres. Bizarrely, some toilet pans and washbasin pedestals were found dumped beside the Newton - Swarland road several days later. We just hope that the recent closure of the Alnwick Household Waste Centre does not lead to more fly-tipping in our area.



Cracking the housework issue

As we're all currently largely confined to our homes, housework is likely to become more of an issue. For most of us, it is a necessity, not a joy, but unless we don't mind living in out-and-out squalor, then it has to be faced. I've pondered for years over how to achieve a clean enough house without devoting my life to it. Note: the word **enough** is important here. A clean *enough* house is one in which no-one should catch a disease in the kitchen, bathroom, or loo, and to the casual visitor passes muster. Have I come up with the ultimate solution? No. Do I have a number of options tested over decades? Yes. Here they are:

1. Little and Often

This is best applied via a weekly rota whereby you assign specific days to the cleaning of rooms (eg Tuesday = Kitchen). Time-limit your effort, remembering that it need only be good *enough*. **This system works well for those who:** a) work from home; b) don't work at all (the retired, the kept man or woman, the full-time home-maker); c) work part-time; d) can face housework only in small doses. **Disadvantages:** you have housework demands every day unless you discipline yourself to have a couple of days off each week.

2. The Weekly Big Bash

You devote one day of each week to cleaning the entire house knowing you can then walk into any room and take pride in its sparkle and freshness. **This system works well for those who:** a) work from home; b) work full-time outside the home and are prepared to sacrifice one of their days off; c) don't work at all (see 1b above) but have better things to do with the rest of their week; d) have no children or dogs. **Disadvantages:** a) it's exhausting and tedious on the big day; b) you need the constitution of an ox and an iron will to see it all through to the same high standard; c) the effect lasts only a couple of days at best during which time you're over-protective; d) when it gets really bad, you know Big Bash Day is looming like 'flu.

3. The See and Do Method

This is much more relaxed. You do a job only when the need is so great that it's offending even you. There's no objective standard for this, as levels of tolerance differ, but for example if you've become uncomfortably aware of treading dog biscuit crumbs and crisps into the carpet, vacuum them up **now**.

This system works well for: a) those who don't suffer perpetual nagging guilt about the state of the house; b) health geeks who want to ginger up their immune systems; c) owners of children and dogs. **Disadvantages:** a) picky visitors might consistently refuse meals and cups of coffee at your place, roll their eyes and whisper behind your back that you live in a pig-sty; b) your home is just never seriously clean (but then is any house, ever? - and you don't mind anyway!).

4. The Spotlight Approach

This involves not worrying about the whole house. Identify key rooms and turn the spotlight on them. For example, you might want to keep kitchen, bathroom, and toilet at a high level of cleanliness for health reasons, and one living room tidy and dusted in case anyone calls. If you consistently allow visitors only into your classy or cosy kitchen and the loo, you've achieved both aims with one effort. The rest of the house, securely behind closed doors, can remain a midden, and can be tackled at leisure using any of methods 1 – 3 above. **This system works well for:** a) the perpetually rushed and harassed; b) the terminally lazy. **Disadvantages:** this approach is the physical equivalent of harbouring a grim, dark, personal secret, and can result in jumpy, nervous behaviour if guests show signs of becoming free-range.

5. Hire a Cleaner

I haven't ever done this, so can't comment on the advantages and disadvantages. However, it's obvious that: a) it costs money, so is fine if you're time-poor and cash-rich; b) it gives someone else a job; c) domestic tasks might be done better *or worse* than you'd do them yourself. **Do not use this method** if you hate others handling your stuff, need to have total control, or if you'd have to have a frantic housework binge before the cleaner came.

Well – I hope this helps someone out there! But beware dangerous perfectionism setting in, and don't spend too much valuable housework time trying to work out which method to use.

Suzanne Stanley

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