

2014

# Kirknewton Festival Report



Northumberland National Park



*Working in partnership  
with Kirknewton Village*



**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland County Council

by

Ann Logan

## 2014 KIRKNEWTON FESTIVAL

The 2014 Kirknewton Festival took place between Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August and Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September. It was a two part event, consisting of an Archaeology Weekend [Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> August] and a Walking Week which provided six days of walking, beginning on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014.

**The Archaeology Weekend** was based at Kirknewton Village Hall (see left) where there were exhibits from the Gefrin Trust and Northumberland National Park providing information about the past in this part of Northumberland, the Northern Heritage bookstall run by Northumberland National Park volunteers as well as Coquetdale Community Archaeology and Tillvas stalls and an area of tables and chairs for the light refreshments provided by the Village Hall Committee.



There were also showings of the recently produced virtual tour of the local church dedicated to St Gregory the Great. Outside, in the grounds behind the Village Hall, there were demonstrations during all three days of heritage crafts by Graham Taylor [pottery], Paula Constantine [textiles], David Constantine [horn carving] and Lance Robson [woodworking].



In addition there was a visit to the Gefrin site led by Roger Miket each day and also a walk to an archaeological site on each of the three days [West Hill (see right) on Friday and Sunday and Yeavinger Bell on Saturday] led by Chris Jones, Chris Burgess and Krissy Moore.



On the Friday and Saturday evenings talks were given on the history and archaeology of the area in St Gregory the Great and on the Saturday afternoon a literature course "Border Ballads" took place in Cheviot View. The Sunday was also the day of the annual sheepdog trials and, associated with this, the local archery club offered the public the opportunity to try out the sport.



**The Walking Week** began on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> August and provided two walks per day for six days with starting points between Wooler and Hethpool. Each day both walks started at 11.00am, one considerably longer or higher than the other in an attempt to attract a wide range of walkers.



**The objectives** of the 2014 Kirknewton Festival were to build on the success of the initial 2012 Kirknewton Festival and, while providing continuity with what was valued in 2012, to develop the event and provide greater variety of activity. In 2012 the driving force for the two voluntary rangers, Ann Logan and Brian Rogers who initiated the event, was a desire to help raise the profile of the northern edge of Northumberland National Park, to provide an event for visitors and local people which showcased the archaeology of this part of Northumberland National Park and offered the opportunity to explore the area on foot and also to work co-operatively with local people to provide an income generating opportunity for the local community. These continued to be key aspirations for 2014.

**The Team** who developed and delivered the event consisted of Northumberland National Park staff and volunteers and would not have been possible without close partnership working with Kirknewton residents and the Gefrin Trust.

**Funding** for the 2014 Kirknewton Festival came from a successful bid to the Action Areas Budget for £2,130 and from donations from The NNP Volunteer Liaison Committee of £1,000 and from the Gefrin Trust of £100. In addition to this many people gave substantial amounts of time to make the Kirknewton Festival a success. Members of the NNP volunteer Service contributed a total of more than 97 days to the 2014 Kirknewton Festival [Archaeology Weekend delivery 25 days; Walking Week reconnoitres and delivery 45 days; organisation and associated activities 27 days]. For these purposes a day is considered to be seven hours long and the totals include travelling time. This equates to a financial contribution of £4850.00. It does not include the volunteer time involved in designing the leaflet, nor does it include the time, expertise, commitment and support provided by Northumberland National Park staff, in particular Ruth Dickinson and Chris Jones.

**Publicity** took a variety of different forms. Seven thousand copies of a leaflet about the Festival were produced along with a hundred posters. Local newspapers were contacted [Journal, Berwick Advertiser, Northumberland Gazette] with information about the Festival and the Journal printed an article about it in the run up to the Archaeology weekend. The Festival events also appeared on the NNP website.

There were two specialist markets to contact – those interested in archaeology and those interested in walking as well as the more general groups of both local residents and visitors. In 2012 Northumberland National Park and also Northumberland County Council emailed the leaflet out to their networks of local archaeology society contacts and as this worked well it was repeated in 2014.

Working in partnership with  
Kirknewton Village  
NORTHUMBRIA  
NORTHUMBRIA  
The Gefrin Trust  
Northumberland National Park

**Kirknewton Festival**  
**Archaeology Festival Weekend**  
Friday 15 to Sunday 17 August

**FREE**

**Weekend Events Programme**  
At Kirknewton Village Hall  
Light refreshments available all day

- Demonstrations of Ancient Crafts - including pottery, textiles, horn and wood carving
- Archaeology Exhibition and Displays
- Free Guided Tour to the site of the Anglo Saxon Royal Palace of Gefrin with Roger Misk of the Gefrin Trust  
Friday & Sunday 11.30 - 12.30 • Saturday 11 - 12
- Free Guided Walks to local archaeology sites:  
West Hill & St. Gregory's Hillforts (3 miles/Moderate)  
Friday 2pm - 4.30pm • Sunday 12.30 - 3pm  
Yeaving Bell (4 miles/Strenuous)  
Saturday 1pm - 5pm
- Kirknewton Sheepdog Trials  
Sunday 17 August • 10am - 4pm
- Try out archery with Kirknewton Archery Club  
Sunday 17 August • 2pm - 4pm

**Free Evening talks programme**  
At St Gregory the Great Church, Kirknewton **FREE**

- "King Oswald's Northumbria"  
Friday 15 August • 7pm  
Illustrated talk by archaeologist Max Adams
- "Cows, Books and Estate Organisation in Early Northumbrian Monasteries"  
Saturday 16 August • 7pm  
Talk by archaeologist Colin O'Brien

**Border Ballads Course**  
Saturday 16 August 1pm - 5pm  
Come and explore the rich heritage of Border Ballads surviving in song, poetry and prose and telling us about our unique Border County history with Richard Moore.  
Advance Booking essential. Cost: £10  
To book contact Wooler Tourist Information Centre  
T: 01668 282123 (Booking opens on 16.6.14)

KIRKNEWTON WALKING WEEK Sunday 31 August to Friday 5 September  
FREE GUIDED WALKS - NO NEED TO BOOK!

Kirknewton is located on the B6351 road, 2 miles from the A697 just north of Wooler

Since 2012 The NNP Guided Walks programme, run by fellow NNP Voluntary Rangers, has become a successful and well known annual feature for the local walking community and,

with good publicity coverage, is also accessed by visitors to the area. It was agreed that the 2014 Guided Walks programme would carry information about the walks available during the Kirknewton Walking Week.

During the **Archaeology Weekend** it is estimated that more than seventy people attended on each of the Friday and the Saturday and that there were in excess of one hundred visitors on the Sunday. Clicker counters were used at the main entrance but not everyone came through the main entrance and the main entrance was not staffed for the entirety of the event so they provided only part of the picture. The total number attending is probably in the region of two hundred and fifty to three hundred and, as happened in 2012, many visitors treated the event as a workshop, staying for most of the day and in some cases returning the following day. The numbers attending the Gefrin visits and walks are based on a head count and are exact. Seventy five people went on the Gefrin visit over the three days [Friday 27; Saturday 20; Sunday 28] and sixty two people went on the archaeology guided walks [Friday 22 to West Hill; Saturday 20 to Yeavinger Bell; Sunday 20 to West Hill].



The talks in the church (see left) in the evening were also well supported with seventy to eighty turning out on the Friday evening to hear a talk given by Max Adams on “King Oswald’s Northumbria” and forty to fifty on the Saturday evening to listen to Colm O’Brien on “Cows, books and estate organisation in early Northumbrian monasteries”. The “Border

Ballads” course [the only activity during the Festival for which a charge was made to members of the public] had nine bookings.

Fifty four people completed **visitor feedback forms** [Friday 9; Saturday 15; Sunday 30], roughly 20% of those attending, a pleasing proportion. The document summarising their responses is included in the Appendix. Key information is that they all liked the event – fifty one “a lot” and one “a little” with no one at all indicating that they had not liked the event. Of the respondents, one came from abroad, seven came from other parts of the United Kingdom and the remaining forty seven came from Northumberland/Durham, Tyne and Wear, Borders, SW Scotland or Lothian.

People obtained information about the event from leaflets [Barrowburn Tea Room, The Muddy Boots Café, The Queens Head in Rothbury, Once Brewed Information Centre, the libraries in Alnwick and Newcastle and the Tourist Information Centres at Wooler, Alnwick, Berwick and Newcastle were particularly mentioned as sources of information]. The Newcastle Journal, Northumberland Gazette, Berwick Advertiser and Northumberland National Park Visitor were also identified as sources of information.

Feedback from the ancient craft demonstrators expressed overall satisfaction with how the event had gone although there was concern at the small number coming out to visit them on the Saturday [a concern shared by the organisers] and useful suggestions were made regarding having specific time slots. The Gefrin



Project suggested having large banners in places such as in the High street in Wooler and perhaps in Berwick and the organisers are aware of the need for improvement and differentiation in the publicity strategy.

The Village Hall group worked very hard in providing refreshments during the three days of the Festival and also cheese and wine on two of the evenings. A pleasing profit was made but it was hard work for the small group involved. The enthusiasm and willingness to support the Festival and help solve the problems which arise on the part of Kirknewton residents is key to the success of the Festival and the organisers would be loath to try and deliver an event such as this without that support.



Visitors also appreciated the presence of two local archaeology societies – Till Valley and Coquetdale who brought the opportunity to look at finds, read local research, buy books and find out more about how to get involved.



**The Walking Week** attracted eighty one walkers. Two walks did not take place. The first of these was to West Hill to which there had already been two walks during the Archaeology Weekend and the second was to Hethpool Linn to which there had already been one walk earlier in the week. Overall the longer walks were better supported. Once again the vast majority of walkers came from the North East of England and the Scottish Borders [fifty nine] with twenty two from the rest of the United Kingdom and one from overseas. The walkers obtained information about the event from the same and very similar sources to those who attended the Archaeology weekend and were also alike in greatly enjoying the walks.



### What Next?

It is clear that the Kirknewton Festival has once again been a success. The people who came to the Archaeology Weekend and the Walking Week all enjoyed themselves and the activities offered were well supported and this has encouraged the team to commit to organising a third Kirknewton Festival in 2016.

The objectives are very similar to those of 2012 and 2014 in seeking to help showcase and promote the scenery and archaeology of the north end of Northumberland National Park and to work cooperatively with the local community to develop and diversify the range of what can be delivered. Funding the 2016 Kirknewton Festival will be a key challenge but the positive feedback received from visitors during the course of the 2014 Kirknewton Festival has encouraged the team to commit to continuing to develop this event.

The 2016 Kirknewton Festival will be launched with a concert on the evening of Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The Kirknewton Walking Week will commence the next morning and

there will be seven days [Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> August] of exploring the area on foot culminating in the Festival Weekend [Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August – Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August].

Ann Logan  
November 2014

Photo credits: Andy Bennett and Ian Glendinning.

# Kirknewton Festival Archaeology Weekend 2014

## Composite Visitor Responses

### Q1 Where do you live ?

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Northumberland, Durham, Tyne and Wear | 42          |
| 2. Borders, South West Scotland, Lothian | 5           |
| 3. Rest of UK                            | Cambridge 1 |
|  | Essex 2     |
|  | Shrops 2    |
|  | Yorks 2     |
| 4. Overseas                              | Italy 1     |

### Q2 If you are attending this event while staying away from home, please give the name of the nearest town to where you are staying:

Beadnell, Berwick, Cornhill, Hethpool, Kelso, Norham, Shilbottle, Wooler.

### Q3 How did you hear about this event?

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Emailed leaflet            | Friend [1]; BAS [1]; unspecified [2]  |
| 2. Website                    | NNP [2]; CBA [2]; Tillvas [2]; Kirknewton [1].  |
| 3. Poster                     | Kirknewton Village Hall [1];  |
| 4. Leaflet                    | Barrowburn Tea Room [1];<br>Libraries – Alnwick [1]; Newcastle [1]; unspec [1]<br>Muddy Boots Café [2]; Queens Head Rothbury [3] Once<br>Brewed [2]; Hotel unspec[1]; Unspec [1]. |
| 5. Tourist Information Centre | Alnwick [2]<br>Berwick [1]<br>Newcastle [1]<br>Wooler [5]   |
| 6. Newspaper/Magazine         | Berwick Advertiser [1]<br>Newcastle Journal [2]<br>Northumberland Gazette [1]<br>NNP Visitor [3]  |
| 7. Social Media               |   |
| 8. Other                      | Passing [3]; friends [5]; tutor [1]; B&B [1]  |

#### **Q4 Have you enjoyed your visit to the Kirknewton Festival?**

1. A lot 50
2. A little 01
3. Not very much
4. Not at all

#### **Q5 Which aspect of the Festival have you enjoyed most?**

Seven responses indicated that they found the Gefrin visit most enjoyable, four referred to the guided walk and the rest are produced in full below:

- "Location, pleasant landscape, facilities of spacious new village hall. Knowledgeable and friendly experts. Reconstructions of crafts/tools/materials – outside area fascinating".
- "Hard to distinguish. All enjoyable. Excellent speakers/guides made walks and talks really good. Good idea to have bookstall".
- "Visit/walk/meeting like minded people".
- "Lovely walk up Yeavinger bell with friendly knowledgeable rangers".
- "Walking in Cheviots".
- "Four hour walk on Saturday – very friendly and informative".
- "The walking and info provided".
- "Meeting interesting people".
- "Meeting people who know their subjects very well. Expert guidance at the archaeological sites".
- "Walks, lectures, meeting people".
- "All good. Most enjoyable".
- "Talks".
- "Talk on Gefrin. Cake and soup".
- "Roger Miket Gefrin. Displays and activities outside but everything really".
- "The outdoor activities specifically pot making".
- "Location".
- "Crafts brilliant".
- "The whole atmosphere and friendliness".
- "WW1 section".
- "Field trip".
- "Talks, demonstrations".
- "Ad Gefrin; ancient technologies".
- "Scenery and walks".



- "Outdoor stalls – v good and enthusiastic speakers on pottery, textiles etc. Indoors – tea lady was enthusiastic. Also walk v good. Well done altogether".
- "The overall presentation – nice meeting the pottery man and the lady from Coquetdale Community Archaeology".
- "The evening talks and everything was very interesting as well".
- "The guided archaeology walk up West Hill. Verely informative and archaeologist was very knowledgeable".
- "Talking to the people on the stalls. The talk on Gefrin".
- "All very enjoyable".
- "Enthusiastic demos/talks by historic crafts – especially bone carver".
- "West Hill Walk. Learnt lots. Exhibition in hall also very informative. Liked demonstrations of crafts".
- "Chat with participants – mostly volunteers".
- "Guided archaeology walks to Gefrin and West Hill – such knowledgeable guides and well delivered".
- "Finding out about the historical aspects of settlements in the area and how to read the landscape".

#### **Q6 What could improve the Festival?**

- "More workshop activities".
- "Perhaps an earlier start – more time for viewing exhibits".
- "Fine as it is".
- "It deserves to be more widely known. More publicity through bodies like "Explore".
- "More of it and longer".
- "More talks and demonstrations".
- "Make the info boards more spread out".
- "All excellent. Less wind!"
- "More audio visual".
- "Very little".
- "More talks".
- "More live music if possible".
- "Less misleading and intrusive instructions".
- "Lunchbreaks timetabled between events".

#### **Q7 Ideas on how to further develop the Festival**

- "Different walks each day".

- "More publicity e.g. contact Archaeology Scotland, archaeologists at Borders & E Lothian Councils; archaeology depts at universities inc Edinburgh".
- "More of the same".
- "Broader sweep of sites, more historical recreations and displays, models, hands on stuff".
- "Incorporate an Anglo Saxon re-enactment".
- "More info on overall Northumbrian history and in relation to rest of UK".
- "More publicity".
- "More events/displays outside village hall – weather permitting".
- "More publicity outside of the local area".
- "More publicity outside of the immediate area".
- "More concerts; music".
- "Illustrated lectures prior to engaging with guided landscape walks".

**Q8 Any other comments?**

- "Many thanks for organising this interesting event".
- "Very enjoyable and informative".
- "Thanks to all involved in organising this event. This is a lovely part of Northumberland and well worth visiting and discovering in more depth".
- "Keep up the good work".
- "I very much enjoyed the day. Thanks".
- "Lovely day out".
- "I hope it continues".
- "It is ok the way it is".
- "A splendid occasion, well organised".
- "Thanks very much to you all. Very impressed by the friendliness of everyone I met, both organisers and participants".

**Q9 Age Group**

Under 17 years of age	3	17 – 35 years of age	4
36 – 59 years of age	13	60 years of age and older	26