



Autumn 2026

Lindisfarne Castle

Since we last spoke, the Upper Gallery exhibition has finally been installed, with much thanks to the highly professional folk at North Exhibition Services of Whitley Bay and believe it or not, my Dad, who leant his specialist electrical abilities to help with our very bespoke lighting scheme – the joys of working with a listed building with limited power supplies! I'm really pleased with the room and it is so nice to see visitors up there again and enjoying the space. We've had lots of lovely comments and we even saw a little boy cuddle up to his Dad on the sofa and ask for a story from the bookshelf we have in there. (That wasn't me and my old man by the way!) The exhibition focuses on the lives of keys castle characters from the early 20th century and what they got up to when their association with the castle and island came to an end, neatly tying off the threads of their stories told elsewhere in the building.

One of the main characters is of course Sir Edwin Lutyens, and by chance we were delighted to recently welcome some of his descendants to the castle. We have really good links with the family and the Lutyens Trusts in the UK and the USA, and all three parties were represented on the visit. The architect's great nephew Martin Lutyens managed the ramp despite his 90 years, as did his wonderful wife Beatriz (who being Spanish was most put out by the painting of the Armada's defeat in the Entrance Hall!). Martin's son Marcos is the current chair of the Lutyens Trust of America - who have a very active YouTube channel covering the architect's work (including one featuring yours truly) - and he was accompanied by his wife and son, all swapping the bustle of Los Angeles for the, well, bustle of Holy Island in the summer. I reckon at five, this is most number of Lutyens's that have been in the castle since the summer of 1906, when Sir Edwin was accompanied by four of his children.

I've just come back from a week's camping in Scotland – picking the only week this summer when we had 5 consecutive days of rain – and when I got back I was delighted to see the ReBreathe festival programme on my desk. The castle will be an active participant, both in the castle and garden and in the village. Myself and Joe Wood, our Gertrude Jekyll Gardener, will be doing a talk in the hall about Jekyll's work on the island on Thursday 1 October, and the following day I'll be back talking about how the castle has been presented in art over the centuries. Other castle-related activities will be advertised nearer the time. Hope to see you there!

Nick Lewis, Collections & House Manager, Lindisfarne Castle

Northumberland Coast

It's a short but sweet update from the coast team this month! Autumn is the second busiest time for us outside of the Summer bird season. We are currently in the middle of cutting, raking & removing the arisings on a number of areas in the dunes we manage to help encourage wildflowers to flourish.

September is also the time we are able to bring in cows to help manage the vegetation at Newton Pool. On Friday 25th September we took delivery of three one year old, castrate male, Highland Cows from the herd managed by Holistic Land Management. As with the 3 young females we had last year, they are fitted with No-Fence GPS collars, which allow us to create a virtual fence around areas we want to target grazing in. The coos were unfazed by the 4 Exmoor ponies currently grazing there already but the ponies really weren't sure what to make of the small, hairy, orange things!

On a bird related note, I spotted my first flock of Pink Footed Geese last week making their way down the coast from their breeding grounds in the far north. I'm always a bit sad when summer is over but the sight of great skeins of Pinkies squeakily honking away in the sky is one of my favourite signs of autumn.



Anna Butler, Ranger, Northumberland Coast

(Photos: Kirstin Chapman)

Farne Islands

Rangers and volunteers have worked hard over August and September. Armed with brushcutters, we have been cutting back the vegetation to maintain the nesting Tern areas for next year and improve Puffin habitats.

This time of year, Rangers enjoy looking out for European Shag Darvic rings. These rings are brightly coloured and easy to read with a unique code for each bird. In the early mornings, Shags can be seen roosting on the churn rocks of Inner Farne. This routine happens after their morning feed, landing as a group to dry off their feathers whilst socialising or snoozing. We report our ring sightings to The UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (known as CEH). They run a project that involves mapping the winter distribution and survival of European Shags that breed on the East coast of Scotland and England.

Autumn is a great time of year for bird watching on the islands. As birds move to their wintering grounds, many seek refuge on the islands after stormy conditions. We've seen Pied Flycatchers, Siskin, Lesser Whitethroat, Sooty Shearwater, Balearic Shearwater and Common Redstart.

I always find this a sad time of year as our breeding birds begin to migrate. It's very easy to take for granted the rumbling of the Guillemots, the growling of the Razorbills and the wonderful chattering of Arctic Terns. However, there is something about the peace and quiet Autumn brings, before we get ready for the chaotic seal pups which will be born in October.



Images from left to right are Common Redstart, Two Siskin, and a Ringed Shag that has recently Fledged. Its blue Darvic ring can easily be read as Blue EXD. Photo credit: Hannah Wilkes and Beth Thompson.

Rosie Parsons, Ranger, Farne Islands

Community and Partnerships

The Druridge Bay Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and associated surveillance, has proven successful so far this summer. A combination of increased on site presence, engagement with the public and wide publicity has resulted in a much quieter complaints inbox for us and also, a number of Fixed Penalty Notices being issued. Huge thanks again to all the organisations involved in taking a bay-wide approach to the problems we were all experiencing. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the measures and review our approach for the next high season.

Nick mentioned the ReBreathe - Holy Island Arts Festival (Saturday 26th September to Sunday 4th October). We were delighted to be asked to be a part of the programme and hope the weather is kind on the island for all of the activities!

If you would like to get in touch with us about any of the above updates then please just drop me an email.

Kerry Shaw, Communities and Partnerships Manager

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