Winter 2009

Allendale Caravan Park Newsletter

Your peaceful retreat in beautiful countryside

Volume 24, Issue 1

National Profile for Allendale Caravan Park

We have been members of the professional body for caravan parks, the BH&HPA, for seven years now. We offer their standard licence agreement to caravan owners so owners can be sure that their purchase is protected, we attend training courses they offer and keep up with the latest innovations and regulations in the journal.

Each area nominates a director of the BH&HPA and Verona was nominated as Northumbria Branch director at the end of November. This role is not paid, apart from covering train fares to London four times a year for board meetings.

Mike and Verona on the old railway platform

Verona will represent Northumberland, Durham, Tyneside and Teeside parks at the meetings and being a director of the association should give more weight to points that Verona has been making in recent years to local North East bodies about the importance of caravan parks to North East tourism and to the rural businesses around the caravan parks.

Verona has her first trip to London in December when the nomination should be formally agreed.

Sustainable Allendale

Allendale is the only North East project to have got through to the second round of a BBC/ Big Lottery competition for up to £400,000 to make the village more sustainable. In the next few weeks, the group in Allendale has to choose an external helper to develop the project. Projects which get through the next stage will be filmed for a BBC series and viewers will vote for the best project.

"GO-AHEAD Allendale has once again hit the national headlines with its unquenchable community spirit." Hexham Courant, 13/11/09

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Special Points of Interest

- *Expand your mind with craft workshops*
- *The 100mph lawnmower*
- *The market for buyers*
- *'New for old' or 'market value'*
- *What about the sea trout?*

2009/10 Events in the Allen Valleys

Tuesday evening is Quiz evening at the Crown in Catton, just a short walk away and every Thursday evening there is a traditional music evening. No charge, just go along and listen to local musicians joining together to play music as you enjoy a drink.

Pebbles Gallery Show in December '09 is the Christmas festival, BIG KNIT- textile and colour

There are Christmas Carols on the green in Catton at 7pm on Christmas eve. Quite a group gather in woolly hats and gloves to sing well known carols in the clear, frosty air and enjoy the glass of ginger wine and mince pie provided part way through. Bring a torch.

Look out for classical music concerts in St Cuthbert's Church, Allendale held once a month—drink and nibbles included in ticket price. Again, the film club turn the Village Hall into a cinema once a month, with a drink and often nibbles beforehand to make it more of an occasion. Look out for dates for these and other local events on the Co-op notice board.

STARS printing museum and Allendale Bakery at Allen Mill are running day and part day workshops on various crafts and bread making. Further sessions will run in the spring. Worth considering if you fancy learning a new skill as a Christmas present.

2 March Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. 1pm, 30 minutes. Free. Meet a North Pennines Lead Miner. Paul Mercer from Nenthead Mines explains how the 1850s lead miners lived and worked and how different life was from the coal miner of the times.

Electrical Safety on the Park

There is a 16A supply to all caravans on the park so it is rare that a caravan trips its supply. It does happen occasionally (sometimes if a very old electrical appliance is brought from home) and all caravan meter boxes have a reset. New boxes have external resets, though on most the reset is inside the box and Mike does the reset.

The latest health and safety advice is that all boxes are sealed so that caravan owners could not open the meter box and seals will be put on all boxes before the start of next season.

We are replacing meter boxes so that all have an external reset over this winter and next winter. In some cases we will need to replace the meter as well as we cannot get external reset boxes to fit some meters. Meter readings will be recorded if they are changed.

There are also increased requirements for inspection and testing of trip switches over the season.

"Once or twice in 6 years lightening has tripped some caravans. Don't have your freezer caught out with lots of food."

Fastest lawnmower in the west

Cutting the grass is an important job on the park and we are quite pleased with the finish given by the mulching deck on our Countax mower. It is not a speedy job with lots of turning and reversing to get into awkward corners.

The grandson of Sir Malcolm Campbell and the nephew of Donald Campbell (who between them set 20 land and water records) is aiming to set a world lawnmower speed record at over 100mph using a Countax mower.

The record attempt is in February on Pendine Sands in West Wales, with a specially modified mower and hopes to beat the previous record of just under 81 mph set on Bonneville salt flats 3 years ago. From 'The Times' 2/12/09

Verona mowing with our more pedestrian speed Countax

Snippets

Beauty therapy sessions are being trialled this winter at Pebbles Art Cafe and Gallery in Allendale. If they are successful then regular sessions may be available.

We recommend that caravan owners have a gas check each year. Gas checks are carried out by C&D Newman of Hexham and can be booked in the 2010 pitch reservation form.

We are sorry that Bill Armstrong on pitch 36 is not continuing on the park in 2010. He will still be visiting the area so you may see him around the village.

As in 2009, the latest seems to be that caravan manufacturers will be building caravans to order in 2010, rather than building up stock. This means that buyers need to be willing to wait until their caravan has been built or to buy from stock at local dealers. Dealers may also keep their stock for other buyers to view so it may need longer planning to have a new caravan on park when you want it.

Hawthorn berries on the park, December 2009

Insurance—What type?

What does your insurance cover and what happens if the worst happens?

There is about an equal split on the park of caravan owners who have insured their caravan on 'new for old' and on 'market value'.

Thankfully, there has been only one claim on a caravan on the park in our six years here - for accidental damage to a carpet in one caravan— and it was settled promptly.

However, bigger problems do occur and the recent floods in Cumbria bring the insurance issue to mind. We are fortunate that our 30m height above the East Allen river stands to us here, but flooding is not the only risk.

If a caravan is totally destroyed the **'market value'** insurance pays out the sum insured less what is required for clearing the pitch. The caravan owner then needs to source another caravan from a dealer and get it sited and connected on the park. It may be difficult to find a suitable caravan of the right size, specification and price. Smaller caravans are now very difficult to find as are good specification ones. We had the word out everywhere on a line from Manchester northwards in 2009 trying to find a good second hand caravan with central heating and double glazing, but failed to find one.

With **'new for old'** insurance, you get a new caravan to replace the destroyed model. The BH&HPA trade magazine had an article recently about a park further north in Northumberland which had a large area flooded last year and water destroyed 20 caravans. The insurance company (Jardines, the same company through which we offer insurance to caravan owners) travelled to the park the next day (Sunday!) under their disaster recovery plan and a plan was agreed that day. Caravan owners were given brochures and a fortnight to make up their minds on a new caravan. A final settlement was agreed by underwriters within a week, allowing the park to mend roads, pitches and get up and running as soon as possible. However, the park next door was also flooded, but 10 months later flooded caravans were still in place— obviously a different insurance regime.

Flooded caravan park Nidderdale this November. Nidderdale Herald 30/11/09

If you get quotes for insurance from elsewhere do make sure that you are covered. Some policies offered to caravan owners this year insisted that the caravan must be inspected every day and state that the caravan is not covered if someone is not present for a week, or for 30 days, depending on the policy.

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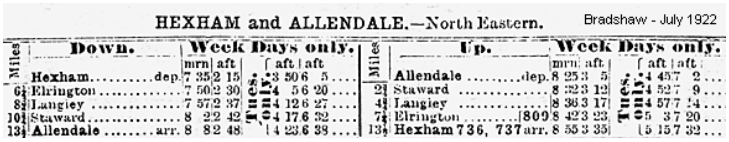
The history bit

In 1910 a visitor was impressed by the quality of railway stock on the line that is now Allendale Caravan Park and by the fact that the carriages were lit by electricity rather than gas.

Goods carried on the line included milk from the creamery next door, lead products, livestock, fodder, timber, coal, and general merchandise. However, passenger numbers were always low. Up to 1923 Allendale had 11,712 passengers a year bringing in £2092, but by 1929 there were only 3,493 passengers bringing in £358.

Buses were responsible for the drop in numbers. Emmerson's ran buses at two-hourly intervals between Newcastle, Hexham and Allendale Town. Wharton's buses had a 75-minute interval between Hexham and Allendale. The fastest buses equalled the train. Emmerson's were owned by LNER and they assumed that their buses would gain the revenue lost when the railway closed.

Timetable from Bradshaw 1922 and details from disused stations website www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/stations/a/allendale/index.shtml



HEXHAM and ALLENDALE.—North Eastern. Bradshaw - July 1922

Miles	Down.	Week Days only. mrn	aft	aft	Tues. Only. aft	aft	Miles	Up.	Week Days only. mrn	aft	aft	Tues. Only. aft	aft
	Hexham.....dep.	7 35	2 15		3 50	6 5		Allendale .....dep.	8 25	3 5		4 45	7 2
6¼	Elrington.....	7 50	2 30		4 5	6 20	2¾	Staward	8 32	3 12		4 52	7 9
8¾	Langley	7 57	2 37		4 12	6 27	4¾	Langley	8 36	3 17		4 57	7 14
10¼	Staward.....	8 2	2 42		4 17	6 32	7¾	Elrington.....	809 8 42	3 23		5 3	7 20
13¼	Allendale .....arr.	8 8	2 48		4 23	6 38	13¼	Hexham 736, 737 arr. 8 55	3 35			5 15	7 32

Railway timetable for the Hexham to Allendale Railway

Nature Notes

Work rebuilding the north side of the weir on the East Allen a few hundred metres away is almost finished. Very large sea trout have been seen coming up the new fish ladder—an easy route compared with the huge leap previously.

The Environment Agency have been closely involved to ensure that the fish can manage the new ladder—helped by the fact that their chap lives half a mile from the weir.

The contractors have re-used some of the large stone blocks to pave the new weir and a large quantity of very square new blocks.

They are now repairing undermining on the other half of the weir and filling in the very fast channel the fish previously had to negotiate. There is a little more work moving stones and gravel below the weir and they expect to be finished shortly. High levels in the river in the last month have meant that work has had to stop frequently until the level reduced.

The new fish ladder and re-built weir at the East Allen bridge

The autumn spectator sport for caravan owners of watching the sea trout coming up river to spawn should be even better in 2010.