



# Historic Environment Survey for the National Trust Properties on the Northumberland Coast

General Background  
Report and Management  
Recommendations

Prepared for

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

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*The coast is low and flat, and opposite Lindisfarne and the Fern Islands large tracts of sand, called "Flats," are laid bare at low, tide. These are found at intervals along the entire coast. The principal harbours are Berwick, Warkworth, Holy Island, and Seaton Road. There are lighthouses on Coquet Isle, at Warkworth, the Fern Islands, and at Berwick.... Along the coast are Bamburgh, a structure of the highest antiquity, Dunstanborough, and Warkworth castles'*

The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland (1868)

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## **Introduction**

The north Northumberland coast is a remote and dramatic landscape with extensive sweeping sandy beaches, backed by flower rich dunes which contrast with high basalt cliffs. Offshore isolated islands provide a refuge for countless sea birds and seals. Even on the south Northumberland coast where the NT landholding at Druridge is based, the sweeping bay and high dunes provide a refuge from a landscape still recovering from extensive open cast coal mining. The rich landscape and biodiversity is complemented by the historic remains and the rich story that the historic landscape has to tell. These special qualities led to the north Northumberland coast being designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1959. The primary purpose of the AONB legislation is to conserve and enhance natural beauty. The term 'natural' beauty is defined as being '*...not just the look of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over centuries.*'<sup>1</sup>

Heritage Coast is a non-statutory definition and is designed to cover the most unspoilt areas of undeveloped coastline around England and Wales. The main purpose of the Heritage Coast definition is to conserve the natural beauty of the coastline and, where appropriate, improve accessibility for visitors. In addition Heritage Coasts are designed to maintain the environmental health of inshore waters.<sup>2</sup>

Offshore, the stretch of coast from the Scottish Borders to the Coquet Estuary at Alnmouth is a European Marine Site (EMS). This international designation includes a series of other national designations mainly based on their wildlife interest including the Northumbria coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, the Lindisfarne SPA and Ramsar Site, the Farne Islands SPA, The Berwickshire north Northumberland coast Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and the north Northumberland dunes cSAC (AONB/EMS 2009, 4).

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<sup>1</sup> Northumberland Coast AONB & Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast EMS Management Plan draft 2009, 3

<sup>2</sup> Countryside Commission 1992 CCP 397

This survey of National Trust properties along the Northumberland Coast was commissioned in 2009 in order to assess the archaeological interest and management requirements of the landholdings which had been mainly acquired for their landscape interest. The National Trust properties are divided between 15 different locations covering 668 hectares. However the survey covers a slightly smaller area of 455 hectares as it excludes the Farne Islands. As a result of the survey the number of records relating to archaeological sites within the NT land holdings has risen from 102 to 397 sites.

<b>Site group</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>Archaeological Records</b>
Alnmouth and Buston Links	89.4 ha leased from Northumberland Estates 7.5 hectares owned by NT	48 new archaeological sites added.
Druridge Bay	37 ha	52 new archaeological sites added
Dunstanburgh and Embleton	195 ha	157 archaeological sites recorded of which 79 are new.
Newton Links, Low Newton and Newton Point	51 ha (of which 49.8 are sea bed at Newton Haven)	72 archaeological sites added of which 61 are new.
St Aidan's and Shoreston Dunes	24.3 ha	19 new sites added.
Beadnell kilns, Beadnell and Annstead Dunes	3.6 ha	13 new archaeological sites added
Lindisfarne	15 ha	36 archaeological sites recorded of which 23 are new.
Farne Islands		not included

## **The archaeology and cultural heritage of the coast**

The archaeology of the coast has an exciting story to tell. The busy dangerous waters have, for over 8,000 years, served as a maritime highway for trade, conquest and communication. For the people who lived near the coast it was a valuable source of food and the fertile lands that formed its hinterland supplied rich farmland. The flat terrain made for ready movement across the landscape providing a main north-south route for wandering people looking for food and shelter.

This rich heritage is accessible in a way that is rarely mirrored in the hinterland. Not only is much of the beach accessible to the public, but the potentials for the dune landscape to shift and expose hitherto unknown remains means that dog walkers and picnickers are more likely to stumble upon remains of the past than archaeologists are.

The Coastal heritage is distinctive in a number of ways:

### **Early human activity**

The coastal plain was one of the earliest areas in the county to be settled and exploited. The earliest evidence for human activity along the coast dates to Mesolithic times (about 10,000- 4,000 BC). Populations were relatively small, living in highly mobile family groups, exploiting seasonal resources such as game, fish and a variety of plant resources. The majority of Mesolithic sites in Northumberland have been found along the coast and along the river valleys. Recognised concentrations of activity include Holy Island, Ross Links and Newbiggin by the sea (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 12). More sites are coming to light all the time in places such as Howick where a seasonally occupied homestead has been excavated showing that the local family groups which used this site returned to it again and again. During this period, the coastline was further east than it is now, so the sites which survive along the coast were not necessarily coastal at the time of their occupation. The coast, however, undoubtedly played an important role in the local economy and social infrastructure being relatively rich in resources both with regards the sea, and

the estuaries, supplying not just marine life, but also waterfowl and seasonal salmon runs.

The transitory nature of these sites makes them difficult to identify, but what is often spotted along the coast is the waste left behind 8,000 years ago, possibly flint discards, shells or bones. Flint flakes are the easiest to identify and occur in a wide variety of shapes reflecting a variety of uses. Most blades were very small, usually between 2-4cm long, and may have been component parts of a larger tool, such as multi-barbed pear points. Axes, awls, scrapers and bevelled pebbles can also sometimes be found. By far the largest quantity tends to be waste flakes, the little chips left behind after tools have been made on site. It is astonishing that these can still be collected 8,000 years later.

The more settled existence brought about by the advent of agriculture about 4000-2,500BC is rather sparsely represented in Northumberland and along the coast. It is possible that in terms of the archaeological evidence, much of this is currently being dated to earlier or later periods and not recognised. The focus of much of the monumental archaeology associated with this period is the Milfield Basin, but there is evidence of Neolithic settlement on the coast on Holy Island in Marygate and The Palace and at Howick. Stray flint finds, dated to the Neolithic, have also been found at Dunstanburgh, on an outcrop known as Scrog Hill, just south-west of the castle. However, there is currently no evidence of settlement from the area. It is likely however that any settlement continued to be seasonal split between uplands and lowlands for some millennia.

The period between 2000 and 800 BC is known as The Bronze Age and this is better represented along the coast with numerous burial mounds, some of which have been exposed purely as a result of coastal erosion, such as the remains which appear near Low Hauxley. Other burials of a similar date have also been found at Seahouses, Beadnell and Dunstanburgh, while earthwork mounds on Newton Point may also be burial mounds. This has obvious implications for the NT landholdings in the adjacent areas.

## **Early Christianity**

The early medieval period is best understood through its religious sites. The Northumberland coast became an important centre of early Christianity, and many of the isolated locations attracted monks and hermits (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 26). The isolation of the islands and promontories of the coastline are, even today, able to exert a sense of spirituality and separateness which may have been recognised in prehistoric and early medieval times. Isolation from the outer world allowed contemplation and prayer; an important aspect of Celtic Christianity. The earliest site is the monastery on Holy Island, or Lindisfarne, established by St Aidan and his Irish monks in AD 635. Later in the seventh century, the monastery came under the leadership of St Cuthbert, who for a time lived as a hermit on a rocky outcrop next to the monastery, which became known as St Cuthbert's Island. Cuthbert later moved to the even more isolated island of Inner Farne.

Other sites with important early medieval religious associations include St Ebba's Chapel at Beadnell, the hermitage on Coquet Island, St Aidan's Church at Bamburgh, and the site of St Waleric's Chapel on Church Hill near Alnmouth where an Anglian cross shaft was found (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 26). The establishment of Christianity led to a great flowering of craftsmanship in the seventh and eighth centuries, in architecture, metalwork and decorated texts. The influence of Northumbrian art and crafts can be seen in the relatively large amount of surviving church architecture and stone sculpture in both the North East and the North West (Newman 2002, 149). This golden period came to an end with the Viking raids from the late eighth century. One of the earliest recorded was on Holy Island in AD 793, and in AD 875 the monks finally left the island (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 26). The monastery was refounded in the eleventh century and, along with the hermitages on Little Farne and Coquet Island, survived until the Dissolution in the sixteenth century.



**Plate 1. Monk's House (left) on the northern perimeter of the St Aidan's landholding. This was the location for a monastic grange. Church Hill in Alnmouth (right)**

The coast continued to attract an infrastructure to support spiritual centres long after Christianity was established, such as at Low Chibburn where a Foundation for the Knights Hospitallers established a preceptory in 1313 consisting of a church and possibly a moated manor house. After the Dissolution it passed to the Widdrington family who built the dower house next to the chapel in about 1550. While the preceptory is outside the NT landholding at Druridge, the estate must have included what is now NT land. The controlling arms of the church extended along the coastline with granges being established in order to provide food and income for the ecclesiastical centres of Holy Island and the Farnes and one such grange was located on the northern boundary of the Seahouses landholding. Presumably its estate also included what is now NT land.

## **Defence**

The strategic defence of the coast and the English/Scottish border (Lindisfarne Castle, WWII military archaeology including pillboxes, fox holes and anti-tank cubes) has produced some of the most visible archaeology including prominent medieval castles (Dunstanburgh, Lindisfarne Castle, the Berwick defences which date to medieval Edwardian and Tudor times, The Fort on the Heugh, and The Palace).

Dunstanburgh Castle stands on a dramatic headland of the grey-black basalt, (an outcropping of the great Whin Sill) and towers impressively over the surrounding landscape. The natural defences offered by jagged cliffs have

been exploited as a military site at least since the Iron Age when a promontory fort occupied the area. Later it became the stronghold of Sir Thomas, Earl of Lancaster who built the imposing castle on the headland, surrounded by a hunting park and landscape. The castle and park served not only a military purpose but also a symbolic function, emphasis the power of the barons in 14<sup>th</sup> century England. Today, the site attracts thousands of visitor each year and the stark ruins, set against crashing waves and glowing skies, have proved popular with artists, poets and photographers for generations.



**Plate 2. The remains of a possible anti tank ditch at Buston Links (left) and anti tank cubes at Druridge Bay now appreciated as resting places**

The Second World War structures were part of a network of coastal defences known as Ironside's Crust, named after Sir Edmund Ironsides, the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Forces (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 85). They were concentrated along the most vulnerable stretches of coast, and comprised pillboxes, searchlights, radar stations, gun emplacements and anti-tank cubes. Built of concrete, many of these features still survive, both along the coast and inland, and are a strong physical reminder of a period which is rapidly transforming from memory into archaeology. These later monuments to defence are supplemented by the availability, albeit increasingly limited, of oral accounts fleshing out the concrete shells with thrilling stories.



**Plate 3. Two different periods of defence at Dunstanburgh**

### **Industry, Farming and Landscape Character**

The role of fishing, quarrying and the lime industry and associated structures such as harbours, ship wrecks and fishing communities (Lindisfarne harbour and kilns, Beadnell harbour and kilns, Craster, Low Newton, Coastguard station) are an obvious distinctive aspect of coastal archaeology. Further, the agricultural exploitation of this fertile strip has also created a particularly distinctive field pattern giving rise to a coastal plain historic landscape character, dominated by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosed fields, with islands of more ancient land uses sitting within it.

Large parts of the rural landscape of the North East were subject to substantial replanning following the Norman Conquest. Land was redistributed amongst Anglo-Norman lords, who in turn leased estates out to feudal tenants. In many cases, landholdings within townships were planned around new settlements, with open arable commonfields divided into strip holdings. Longhoughton was such a settlement, where land under cultivation made up around 43% of the township, with the rest comprising moorland and pasture (Lomas and Muir 2006, 57). In general, however, this type of township was more dominant to the south, and in Northumberland

commonfields tended to form a much smaller proportion of the total area of the township, and common pasture was more dominant (Roberts and Wrathmell 2002, 174). Former medieval field systems exist around Longbank near Longhoughton, Low Buston, Warkworth, Amble, Togston and Cresswell, although in all cases, however, the fields are almost certainly much altered from their original enclosed forms.



**Plate 4. A cistern at Seahouses**

The importance of the monasteries as major landholders also played a key role in the medieval landscape character. Monasteries developed many of their rural land holdings into discrete farms, enclosed and separate from the commonfield holdings of the townships, most enclosed out of the common waste (Lomas and Muir 2006, 600). Secular landlords, too, often encouraged the development of new farms enclosed out of the waste, particularly as the population increased. As some tenants became wealthier, they looked to improve and increase the size of their holding, and in areas of dispersed settlement their farms developed distinct and discrete blocks of land around them. Evidence for such discrete farms can be traced in the field patterns by distinct blocks of more irregular fields, for example at Broomhouse Farm, Easington Grange, Dukefield near Bamburgh, Tughall and Tuggal Hall.

Although the Northumberland coastal plain was well settled in the medieval period, the biggest change to the landscape probably did not occur until the eighteenth century with the advent of agricultural improvements (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 58) and it is this period of agricultural reform which has created the landscape character that dominates today. The land of the coastal lowlands was suitable for both arable and pasture farming, and with improved drainage, fertilizer and crop rotation common pasture and moorland was taken in, enclosed and improved. This process was assisted in Northumberland by the presence in the county of many of the leading agricultural innovators. Moreover, landholdings were large which made it easier to carry out large-scale, cost-effective investment in estate improvements.

With improvement came the construction of designed farmsteads, built to be well-run and efficient. These farms are a common landscape feature of the Northumberland coastal plain, laid around yards, and with purpose-built structures for processing crops and animal husbandry. However none exist within NT landholdings. Such farms are visible from the Druridge Bay landholding and the stone wall which forms the western boundary at Buston Links is certainly a wall which reflects the wealth, position and social status of the landowner, latterly the Duke of Northumberland. Similarly, many landowners took the opportunity to reflect their sense of fashion and good taste through land improvement by planting large numbers of trees in woods, copses and shelters belts (MacRaild and Purdue 2006, 80-1), and through the creation of ornamental parkland. Within the coastal strip there are a number of small-scale designed parks and gardens, for example at Shoreston Hall, Caster Tower and Howick Hall, Morwick Hall, Togston Hall and Creswell Hall. Howick Hall, in particular, was subject to extensive tree planting and is a registered park, grade II.

In particular, the NT has two interesting areas of designed landscape on the coastal plain, both very different in date and character. Records show that the designed landscape at Dunstanburgh formed part of the original plans for the castle devised by Thomas, Earl of Lancaster in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. It

included an enclosed hunting park and a series of three fresh water meres, effectively dividing the castle from its hinterland. This served to make the castle headland a virtual island, an important factor for defence but also, possibly more importantly, would have created an imposing site with the towering castle reflected in the still waters of the meres. Much later, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, castle landscapes were still being planned with a small garden designed by Gertrude Jekyll sitting at the base of Lindisfarne Castle.



**Plate 5. A beautifully built wall at Buston Links (left) and another less well built one at Embleton (right), both a product of 18-19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural improvements**

The post medieval field patterns and boundaries on the coastal plain are generally regular in form, making up nearly two thirds of all fields across the coastal strip. In many cases irregular field patterns were dictated by topography, but in some cases they could be attributed to surviving earlier field patterns, though usually much altered. These probably denote individual enclosed farms of medieval or early post medieval date, or evidence for enclosed former townfields. Elsewhere, around Rennington and Lesbury, the fields may be the result of piecemeal enclosure from common waste, either in the late medieval or early post medieval periods. The boundaries of these earlier field systems have almost certainly been subject to extensive alteration through time, although most mapping only dates from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and so it is difficult to monitor to what extent the landscape has changed over time. It is clear however that the landscape around the landholding at Druridge has been through enormous changes due to open cast coal mining.



Plate 6. Upturned fishing boats at Lindisfarne

Improvements in agriculture encouraged the development of the ports of Alnmouth and Berwick. Both were medieval ports, but acquired prosperity in the eighteenth century by exporting grain. Alnmouth also imported Peruvian guano for fertiliser and Baltic timber (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 58), whilst Berwick exported a range of goods including fish, eggs, paper and woollens (*ibid*, 61). A number of the sites identified on the Alnmouth landholding are associated with these trades, such as the saw mill, loading bays and just outside the landholding, but visible from within it, the guano shed.



Plate 7. Limekilns at Castle Point, Lindisfarne (left) and at Beadnell (right)

Also associated with agricultural improvements was the production of lime, which was required in huge quantities to improve the acid upland soils, and also for mortar used to build new farm houses and agricultural buildings. By the end of the eighteenth century, lime kilns were found throughout Northumberland, many of them built to serve individual farms. Lime was also produced on an industrial scale and exported, and so banks of large lime kilns were constructed along the coast, to allow easy transport by ship (Hardie and Rushton 2000, 63-5). On Holy Island, for example, quarries on the rocky outcrops on the north side of the island supplied stone by tramway for burning at the Kennedy lime works on the west side of the island from the early eighteenth century, and the resulting lime was shipped from Tripping Chare. The limeworks were replaced by one of the largest limeworks in Northumberland in the mid-nineteenth century. These were at Castle Point on the south east point of the island and now in NT ownership. It comprised a bank of six kilns, and was fuelled by coal from Dundee, to where the finished lime was then shipped.

Beadnell was another centre of commercial lime production from at least the mid-eighteenth century and is now too in NT ownership. Here, a bank of four lime kilns were built in the late eighteenth century next to the harbour and supplied by stone from adjacent rock outcrops next to the sea. The harbour was extended at the same time to accommodate the export of lime, as well as for curing herrings. When lime production stopped in 1822, the kilns were used for curing herrings. Beyond NT landholdings there were large-scale limeworks at Christen Bank and Hoppen from the nineteenth century, both of which are now disused.

Other quarries were for Whinstone, which was exported from Craster. Two of the larger quarries were at Howick and Embleton. Most of the stone quarries, however, were very small, and supplied stone for local use only. Within the NT landholdings there are small quarries at Embleton and borrow pits running along the field boundaries at Lindisfarne. Coal mining had been undertaken on a small scale before the twentieth century. Eighteen coal mining sites are

recorded on the NHER, many to the south of Berwick. The main coal mining district lay in the south where the underlying geology comprised Westphalian Coal Measures. It was in here, mainly to the south of the study area, that coal mining continued on a large scale in the twentieth century.

### **Coastal views and cultural associations**

The National Trust coastal properties contain some of the star attractions in Northumberland and the wider region, namely Lindisfarne Castle and Dunstanburgh Castle. The National Trust coastal properties do not all contain iconic and dramatic remains but they do help to protect the coastal views of the rest of the coast and the islands of Coquet, Farne and Holy Island. These picturesque monuments have attracted artists and poets particularly since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and so when conserving the monuments, considerable thought also needs to be given towards the care of views and special places cherished by the likes of Turner and Sir Walter Scott.

Holy Island and the Farnes are associated primarily with a number of early Christian saints (Aidan, Cuthbert) and appear in the works of Bede. Holy Island in particular is inextricably bound with the growth of early medieval Christianity, the Lindisfarne Gospels, and was at the forefront of the Viking invasions which were to leave a permanent mark on our culture. The exotic appeal of the tombolo (the correct term for a tidal island) has also resulted in visitors flocking there to appreciate its picturesque qualities, of which the castle rock was the main attraction.



**Plate 8. Lindisfarne Castle and Priory as painted by Turner (left) and Girtton (right)**

The Northumberland coast also features in the works of Sir Walter Scott who based his poem *Marmion* in the county (1910, 105-6, first published in 1833):

*'And now the vessel skirts the strand  
Of mountainous Northumberland;  
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,  
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.  
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,  
And Tynemouth priory and bay;  
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall  
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;  
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods  
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;  
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,  
Mother of many a valiant son;  
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell  
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;  
Then did the Alne attention claim,  
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;  
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear  
The whitening breakers sound so near,  
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar,  
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;  
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,  
King Ida's castle, huge and square,  
From its tall rock look grimly down,  
And on the swelling ocean frown;  
Then from the coast they bore away,  
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.*

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*'The tide did now its flood-mark gain,  
And girdled in the Saint's domain:  
For, with the flow and ebb, its style*

*Varies from continent to isle;  
Dry shod, o'er sands, twice every day,  
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;  
Twice every day, the waves efface  
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.  
As to the port the galley flew,  
Higher and higher rose to view  
The castle with its battled walls,  
The ancient Monastery's halls,  
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,  
Plac'd on the margin of the isle.'*

These associations with nationally important artists and poets endow some of the iconic buildings and places with added significance in terms of their cultural value, and serves to highlight the need not just to protect the historic structures, but also their inspirational views.



**Plate 9. Modern artwork at Castle Point**

The artwork continues today in many forms. On Holy Island, the heugh land around the kilns has become the focus of many pieces of impromptu artworks; some spiritual and some just fun. All have some worth both as art and the

stamp of families and groups who have had a positive experience on the island. The artwork currently constitutes human figures, hearts and Celtic crosses. Their very nature is ephemeral as new budding artists often destroy earlier artwork in order to build their own. The tides and weather also put an end to those nearer the sea. These artworks add to the amenity value of the NT landholding and offer an insight into that essential human condition that has a need to leave its mark through the construction of monuments in stone.

The haunting stark beauty of Dunstanburgh Castle and the sweeping shores of Embleton Bay have provided inspiration for scores of artists, poets and writers over the centuries. Possibly the most famous artist associated with the site is J.M.W Turner who made a series of studies of the castle and its landscape in 1797-8. Often seen as the precursor of the impressionists, Turner's paintings of the castle are full of the drama of the landscape and the dynamic play of light and sea. These elements continued to inspire artists throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century including Thomas Girton and John Mogford. In more recent years, Dunstanburgh has attracted scores of photographers, both amateurs and professionals alike, including Mike McFarlane, Ken Cowis, Joe Cornish and Philip Dixon.

There is also a strong folk tradition associated with the site which has been explored by a number of writers and poets. In particular the castle is connected with the Arthurian legend of 'Guy the Seeker'. According to legend, a beautiful young maiden lay sleeping beneath the castle ruins, bound by a spell cast by an evil wizard. One wild stormy night, a young knight by the name of Sir Guy the Seeker, approached the castle looking for shelter and was met by the terrifying wizard. He laid down a challenge to Sir Guy to awaken the sleeping maiden and claim her as his own, but he failed his task and died. His ghost is said to now haunt the ruins, forever in search of his lost love. In 1809 M.G. Lewis composed an epic poem based on the tale:

*Whence the neighbours all the night now call  
By "Guy, the Seeker's" name;  
For never he knows one hours [sic] repose  
From his wish to find the Dame;*

*But still he seeks, and aye he seeks,  
And seeks, and seeks in vain;  
And still he repeats to all he meets,  
—"Could I find the sword again!—"*

*Which words he follows with a groan,  
As if his heart would break;  
And oh! that groan, has so strange a tone,  
It makes all hearers quake!*

Extract from *Sir Guy, the Seeker* by M.G. Lewis, 1809

The site has also inspired modern writers like the local writer and historian Katrina Porteous.



**Plate 10. Dunstanburgh Castle by Thomas Girton (1775-1802)**

Other properties also have cultural associations. Seahouses and the Farnes are associated with Grace Darling, although her connection to Aidan's Dunes is somewhat lacking. Druridge Bay and Alnmouth witnessed the attack of Jean Bart in 1691 and Alnmouth is associated with St Waleric.

### **Distinctive architecture and geology**

The architecture of the coast relates to fashions particularly of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, although the exception to this is the expanding suburbs of Beadnell and Seahouses which have grown 'bungalow' suburbs and holiday homes. Embleton too has a distinctive collection of wooden holiday chalets derived from the 1920s and 30s movement to get people out of the industrial conurbations into the fresh air of the coast.



**Plate 11. Low Newton 18<sup>th</sup> century fishermen's cottages (with 19<sup>th</sup> century additions)**

However the predominant themes are the 18<sup>th</sup> century fishing cottages with solid stone window and door jambs in pinkish sandstone and rubble walls, sometimes rendered and painted in bright pastels, The Victorians developed a fondness for seaside living and so it is no surprise that much of the architecture of popular Victorian villages has the bargeboards, finials, bay windows and tall gables so popular in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Alnmouth perhaps typifies this more than any other coastal town; however there is very little evidence of it within NT landholdings. The architecture is directly related to the geology; geological deposits creating the very stone from which the settlements are made. At Craster the buildings are rubble built, using the hard grey whinstone, while elsewhere the easier to work pinkish sandstone forms the basis of many settlements. In other areas the blue/white limestone is the

focus of much industrial activity creating the need for the monumental limekilns at Lindisfarne, Beadnell and Seahouses. Traditional coastal buildings tend to be roofed with red pantiles, although some use a combination of pantile with stone slate at the eaves, possibly a hang-over from days when roofs were thatched. The geology therefore also related to employment and the economic infrastructure – it made the lime industry, the coal industry and quarrying possible.



**Plate 12. St Oswald's and a lean-to building against Lindisfarne Castle, both on Holy Island and showing the traditional use of pantiles (St Oswald's are modern replacements)**

### **The dynamic nature of the coastal landscape and its management challenges**

The erosive forces of nature combined with the possible impacts of global warming and sea level rise, create an environment where archaeological remains are vulnerable and may need rapid recording or protection. Coastal erosion poses two kinds of threats to the historic environment:<sup>3</sup>

- Erosion of coast itself caused by the action of the sea leading to the destruction or truncation of assets
- Damage to assets caused by various mitigation strategies

The level of threat relates to the geology, land use and the existing engineering solutions designed to minimise erosion. The National Trust have identified a number of potential threats to landholdings at Alnmouth, Druridge Bay and Dunstanburgh and the potential need for further archaeological

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<sup>3</sup> SMP 2009, D4

recording if remains are threatened or unexpectedly exposed.<sup>4</sup> Those remains which occur below the MHW level of 5m are under the greatest threat. The Shoreline Management Plan for the Northumberland coast has identified the following listed buildings as being at or below this sea level and therefore under greatest threat:

1. The barn/guano shed at Buston Links (just outside the NT landholding)
2. Church Hill on Buston Links (leasehold land)
3. Monks House/ Brockburn (just outside the NT landholding)

Other archaeological sites in NT landholdings which have also been identified as suffering from or potentially suffering from coastal erosion are:<sup>5</sup>

1. Beadnell Limekilns
2. Bronze Age sites and DMVs at Low Newton by the Sea
3. Oyster beds at Alnmouth
4. Remains at Low Hauxley have also been identified as at risk, but these are a little to the north of NT landholding at Druridge.

The listed buildings at Low Newton have not been identified in the SMP as being at risk, but the MHW is between 6m and 10m OD and therefore there is some long term risk to buildings and infrastructure on the sea front including the former life boat house. The National Trust have also identified some flooding risk at Low Newton and the need to engage residents with this issue. Because this is a working community and a nationally important asset, Low Newton village may in the longer term, be one of the highest priorities for conservation action to protect the buildings from flooding. Such pro-active management would require considerable input from conservation specialists to ensure that any modifications to houses did not detract from their historic character.

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<sup>4</sup> CRA2 Report

<sup>5</sup> SMP 2009, D55

The SMP has also identified the loss of the coastal road north of Seahouses as a likely scenario.<sup>6</sup> This would in effect mean the total loss of the landholding. Fieldwork carried out as part of this project has not identified any sites sufficiently important to influence the recommendation to allow natural development, but monitoring will be important.

The high amenity value of the coast creates a balance of difficulties and opportunities. The shifting sand dunes and eroding coastal edges can expose



**Plate 13. A Bronze Age burial cists exposed by stormy weather in the dunes at Low Hauxley (not in NT land)**

hitherto unknown remains overnight.

Normally spotted by dog walkers (and their bone - hungry dogs), a quick management response may be necessary when archaeology is uncovered. Once uncovered the remains suffer a constant

bombardment of inclement weather conditions leading to their loss over a

relatively short period of time. The prehistoric burials found along the coast are always a tantalising hint of promised future discoveries, perhaps Bronze Age, Romano-British or Anglo-Saxon cemeteries exposed in an eroding sand dune. The popular use of the coast means that any remains exposed are likely to be reported quickly. However the use of the sand dunes for sand slides and the footpaths which cut across the dunes linking the main roads and beach, all lead to greater erosion. This in turn exposes archaeological remains. The amenity value of the coast has less attractive consequences for pillboxes. The evidence from inside them suggests that those which are still accessible, particularly towards Embleton, are used for evening drinking amongst teenagers and somewhere to dump dog waste and nappy changing bags.

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<sup>6</sup> SMP 2009, L3



**Plate 14. Refuse from anti-social activities in an Embleton pill box**

### **The Wider Management Regime**

The whole stretch of coastline is part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) making it nationally important for nature conservation. On the seaward side the European Marine Site (EMS) extends from the Scottish border to Alnmouth and is of international importance for marine and bird life. Both designations can have implications for implementing conservation works on archaeological sites if they are likely to result in disturbance to dune flora or fauna, even if this impact is only indirect. Likewise, the conservation of the natural environment has the capacity to conflict with the conservation of historic sites, e.g. the expansion of native woodland cover.

Druridge Bay is outside the AONB and the EMS, however it is part of a SSSI and is covered by an existing management plan which includes the historic environment, its conservation and interpretation. It is therefore important that any management within NT landholdings does not conflict with, but complements, existing approved management policies. Fortunately the

National Trust is represented on all relevant management groups and therefore no conflicts are foreseen.

The following properties are located within the North Northumberland Coast AONB:

- Alnmouth/Buston Links
- Newton
- Dunstanburgh
- Seahouses
- Lindisfarne

These sites are already covered by the existing AONB management plan and the forthcoming combined management plan covering the AONB and the European Marine Site, thus ensuring that a holistic approach is taken to land and sea (EMS and AONB Management Plan 2009). Of particular relevance within the combined management plan are a number of aims (*ibid* 37) which also need to lead the approach taken at each NT property listed above.

#### *Long term management aims*

1. Improve identification and conservation of historic sites and features that are important to the character, distinctiveness and understanding of the historic environment.
2. Increase community involvement and enhance skills base in all stages of identifying and conserving the historic environment
3. Facilitate understanding of, and physical and intellectual access to, the historic environment without damage to its integrity.

In order to achieve these aims, the plan includes a number of policies (*ibid*, 40). Those considered most relevant for NT landholdings in relation to the historic environment are:

*Policy H2*

Extend surveying and recording of the historic environment within the Plan area to ensure information is available to support its conservation, particularly currently under-identified, under-recorded or undesignated features.

*Policy H7*

Develop a mechanism to address the identification and monitoring of historic sites impacted upon by coastal and marine environmental change

*Policy H9*

Identify and assist in preserving written, oral and illustrative records to better preserve the cultural heritage of the coast and its communities

**General management recommendations for coastal archaeology**

*General Conservation Principles*

The following principles can be used to guide all future management decisions relating to the historic environment:

- I. ***Minimum intervention and disturbance*** – keep to a minimum any actions which have a physical effect on the fabric of buildings and monuments
- II. ***Reversible change*** – anything new that is introduced should be reversible wherever possible leaving little or no impact to the underlying structure. Repairs and alteration work should not prevent the future re-evaluation of structures or sites of archaeological interest
- III. ***Repairs*** – the purpose of repairs is to restrain the process of decay, but any repair work must retain the integrity of the structure (or landholding) and respect its character
- IV. ***Like-for-like*** – repairs to buildings or structures should be carried out using traditional techniques and re-used or salvaged materials where possible. Priority should be given to repairing what is there rather than replacing with new fabric.

- V. ***Detail*** – particular emphasis should be placed on the design of the detail of any new build or structures with regards material, location, method of fixing, etc. All detail should enhance and complement the historic integrity of any structure
- VI. ***Research*** – no repair work should be undertaken without adequate research and recording of the existing structure or field monument. Any removal of fabric, structure or spaces should be adequately recorded according to appropriate guidelines
- VII. ***Removal of material*** – should only be undertaken where it is shown that it plays no significant role in the cumulative historic interest of the site, building or monument
- VIII. ***Reconstruction*** – priority should be given to restoration over reconstruction when repairing field monuments, structures, or buildings. Reconstruction should only be undertaken where indisputable historic and pictorial evidence is available

#### *Speedy responses*

The dynamic coastal landscape can unexpectedly expose hidden remains from any period in the human past, particularly after inclement weather. This may become more relevant if global warming results in sea-level change. A fast response is required when such remains are exposed if they are to be recorded. The exposure of a stray find can be recorded relatively simply by a local volunteer and referred to the Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) via National Trust archaeologists, but the excavation of human remains or other more complex sites requires specialist skills and funding to pay for their excavation and removal at short notice. Most discoveries of human remains on the coast are likely to be exempt from the requirements for a burial licence, but it will be necessary to confirm this with the National Trust archaeologist. The National Trust needs to work with Northumberland County Council to identify a rapid response system for such unexpected discoveries.

Work with the County Archaeologist and AONB Management team to resource a rapid response system to the reporting of unexpected discoveries of human remains or sites.

### *Military Management*

The flat sandy beaches of the coast have considerable potential for remains relating to the Second World War. Further structures may be exposed and existing structures may be covered in the future by wind blown sand. The management of these structures requires a light touch and an acceptance that they are in the process of becoming buried archaeology. Indeed the covering of sand may help to protect them for future generations. The majority of defensive structures are built of reinforced concrete which has reached the end of its life span. The internal reinforcing is rusting and splitting the concrete leading to exposure of potentially hazardous wires. Monitoring of the structures should continue and photographic records made of them while they are exposed. The health and safety of visiting public must be made the priority, but as long as structures are safe they should be retained.



**Plate 15.** over a metre of sand has built up over WWII archaeology at Embleton Bay.

Anti-tank cubes require little or no management providing that they do not disintegrate. They are readily used by visitors as picnic tables and seating and should be retained.

Observation posts should remain inaccessible to discourage anti-social behaviour and pillboxes should be allowed to become sand filled. This provides support from within and discourages access into the interior. If pillboxes start to slip down sand dunes, posing a safety concern to the public, they can be carefully towed down to a stable position and left. Exposed rusting reinforcing should be cut and removed from site.

Retain military structures on site and in situ providing that they do not pose a health and safety risk.

Photograph structures every five years and any structures newly exposed in sand dunes. Inspect structures annually for degradation which might pose a health and safety threat to the public.

If structures are considered unstable they should be removed after recording in order to protect the public, otherwise they should be retained. If anti-social activities within the pillboxes becomes of particular concern, access points can be gated and locked and opened on special occasions.

Remove any exposed rusting reinforcing which might cause injury

Allow pillboxes to become sand filled and keep observation posts (at Druridge Bay) blocked to discourage anti-social behaviour

If pillboxes start to slip down sand dunes, they can be carefully towed down the slope to a more stable position after recording photographically.

The coastline was originally protected with double rows of barbed wire. Occasionally pieces of rusty barbed wire are exposed by shifting sands. When this happens, it should be recorded with hand held GPS and safely removed by a warden using the appropriate protective gear. It is vital that wardens keep their tetanus jabs up to date.

Carefully remove any exposed barbed wire after recording its position using had held GPS and adding the location to the NTSMR

### *Monitoring*

Most landholdings have a recommendation requiring some sort of monitoring, particularly after stormy weather. In addition further monitoring would be necessary after any episode of vegetation clearance, in particular the removal of gorse. Similarly sites should be walked over after any unforeseen natural event like a large a heath fire.

In some cases, specific areas are identified as being of higher potential than others. Archaeological monitoring could be carried out by a warden, but might also be easily carried out by volunteers with little training. NERRF (2006, 231) flags up the need to monitor the condition of sites, in particular it cites the increasing access to upland areas made possible by the CRow Act. However there have since been moves towards making all coastal land accessible too and the impact of this will need to be monitored.

Monitor all NT landholdings for newly exposed sites particularly after stormy weather and vegetation clearance.

### **Interpretation**

The presence of such a varied selection of military structures has the archaeological potential to bring the recent past back to life. Visually easy to identify, pillboxes and anti-tank traps have the greatest amenity value, but anti-tank ditches can also be highlighted for the military enthusiast. Druridge Bay Country Park is the most obvious location for interpretation of military structures and this allows users of the park to appreciate the remains over the wider Druridge Bay area. In order to complement the existing Druridge Bay Management Plan, the Country Park should be used by the National Trust and other partners to display the social importance of these structures and act as a base from which users may wish to explore the wider Bay. No on-site interpretation should be used at Druridge because of the threat of vandalism,

but self guided walks using GPS triggered information and warden led walks would be an appropriate interpretation medium.

Thought should also be given to providing intellectual access either via a dedicated website, or a subsection of the existing National Trust site. This might provide a history of the defences at both Druridge and the other coastal holdings, and offer the opportunity for visitors to record wartime recollections, report new finds and offer alternative interpretations. This element would be particularly important for those who are physically unable to visit the site and would form a beneficial link with the local community as well as schools.

### **Property Specific Management Recommendations (in alphabetical order)**

#### *Alnmouth*

The landholding is relatively stable, but Church Hill and the estuary on leasehold land are subject to erosion. The preferred management approach in the SMP for Alnmouth is to leave natural processes to take their course along Buston Links, to manage change in the estuary and to defend the town. Those remains such as the boundary wall around Church Hill, the remains of the church and the graveyard and the mortuary chapel are all under long term risk from sea level rise and should be monitored. Within the estuary, the oyster beds and remains of the fords are also at risk and should also be monitored. The boundary wall around Church Hill requires considerable maintenance to protect the structure from further damage, but if global warming predictions prove accurate then the centuries old process of erosion at Church Hill may have to be allowed to run their course. The former quarrying at Birling Carrs has created some erosion on the landholding, but otherwise the area seems relatively stable. In the event that there is dune movement, possibly after a severe storm, there is also some potential for military remains to be uncovered and some of the post medieval buildings identified from historic mapping may also come to light. The management of such structures should follow the recommendations given above (see section on military management).

*Beadnell*

The hinterland is virtually inaccessible at the southern end due to extensive ivy cover and the lack of any grazing regime has made the rest of the landholding very tussocky and difficult to walk across. Its proximity to the road makes it a tempting place for illegal dumping – at the time of field survey a satellite dish had found a new home here along-side an older winch for boats.



**Plate 16. Ivy on the Beadnell landholding has taken over the southern end**

The tussocky nature of this landholding makes it difficult to identify archaeological features as archaeological bumps are indistinguishable from dune bumps. There are also a number of unsightly pipes crossing the landholding. One such ‘bump’ is the remains of a former kiln. No management recommendations are being made to expose this kiln or to interpret it, other than as part of a guided walk, because better examples exist in the NT landholding on Beadnell Harbour and on Holy Island.

The landholding at Beadnell is relatively stable, although some erosion is taking place along the sea front and at the limekilns. The NT coastal risk assessment has identified the dunes as at risk from erosion with an estimated

loss of between 50 and 100m over the next 100 years.<sup>7</sup> Currently, erosion is limited to the coastal edge where modern rubbish in bin liners is being exposed as well as older concrete structures, possibly earlier attempts at hard engineering or an old pill box. There is nothing of sufficient importance to suggest that protection is required from erosion, although the concrete sandbags should be monitored in order to better identify what they are. The Coastal Risk Assessments also identify the kilns and harbour as a potential flood hotspot. However, the current Shoreline Management plan proposes allowing natural development of the dunes, but limiting protection to Beadnell Village and Harbour and therefore the kilns. Nothing of sufficient archaeological value is currently known about in the dunes which might merit altering the long term management proposed in the Shoreline Management Plan (Royal Haskoning 2009, SMP2).



The limekilns on the harbour are in poor condition and have been temporarily supported by RSJs for many years. They are also suffering from the effects of wave action. As these are located in a public place, used for storage by fishermen and are nationally important monuments, conservation works are urgently required both in terms of health and safety and their historic value. A

**Plate 17. 'Temporary' shoring should be replaced with longer term conservation**

<sup>7</sup> CRA 2 Beadnell Dunes

structural engineer's survey is required and a bat survey to help mitigate against any disturbance to bats during conservation work. Archaeological recording has already been carried out. No additional recording is required except for such archaeological supervision and recording as necessitated by any repair works.

#### **Management Recommendations**

Monitor sand bags on coastal edge in order to better interpret what they were (pillbox or erosion control)

Obtain a structural engineer's report for kilns (if not already done)

Obtain a bat survey of kilns (if not already done)

Have a specification for conservation works approved by EH and obtain SMC

Carry out conservation works to kilns as a matter of urgency

#### *Druridge Bay*

*'Although the level of visible archaeology on this stretch of coastline is not great, the potential here may be accounted one of the greatest of the entire coastline'<sup>8</sup>*

This area of coastline is eroding, but it is a bay of two halves. The northern part is eroding more rapidly than the south. The current Shoreline Management Plan has identified Druridge Bay as being one of two bays in the north east which have not stabilised (SMP 2009, 24) and are susceptible to sea-level rise (the other is Newbiggin). This is despite the cessation of mining and sand extraction which led to quite high rates of erosion in the past. This is confirmed by The National Trust's own risk assessment of the area which has suggested that all land except the high sand dunes are prone to future flooding potentially leading to the loss of the access road. The areas of greatest instability are in the northern end and mostly outside the NT landholding. Erosion rates are estimated at 0.1m a year, up to 15m over 100 years for the main bay. Hadston Carrs, Bondi Carrs and Low Hauxley have

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<sup>8</sup> NCC 1994, 21

significantly higher estimated rates of erosion with predicted losses over the next 100 years of between 75 and 135m (ibid, 190). The communities of Druridge Bay (including The National Trust) have come together to form the Druridge Bay Partnership and have produced a management plan which is due for revision after 2010.<sup>9</sup> This recognises the long history of exploitation of the area and the peculiar management difficulties encountered on a rapidly eroding coastline. It includes management considerations for the Historic Environment and any site specific policies identified as part of this current survey will complement those for the wider Druridge Bay Management Plan.

#### Historic Environment Vision (Druridge Bay Partnership)

Sites and features of importance to the history of the Bay are conserved in their setting and where appropriate are made accessible and interpreted for the benefit of the public. The traditional character of settlements is maintained and informs the design and form of new development.

The existing Druridge Bay Partnership Management Plan has the following long term management plans with regard to the Historic Environment and these should instruct more site specific management recommendations.

1. Develop active community involvement in the recording, interpreting and conservation of the historic environment.
2. Enable historic sites and features to be an important element in the attraction of the Bay
3. Ensure new development is complementary to the historic character of the Bay

In order to meet these management aims, the following policies from the Druridge Bay Partnership Management Plan are of most relevance to the National Trust landholding. Policies promoting public access have been ignored here as a National Trust landholding it is already publicly accessible.

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<sup>9</sup> Druridge Bay Partnership 2006

#### Policy H1

Develop the surveying and recording of archaeological and historic sites and buildings to aid the prioritisation and delivery of conservation initiatives

#### Policy H2

Engage local communities in the archaeological monitoring of dune edge and other sites threatened by erosion and land use pressures

#### Policy H3

Assist local communities in the preservation of written, oral and illustrative records

#### Policy H11

Improve the provision of co-ordinated information and interpretation in respect of archaeological and historical sites and buildings

#### Policy H12

Develop the existing interpretive facilities at Druridge Bay Country Park to provide the central resource for the understanding and interpretation of the history of the Bay

#### Policy H13

Deter metal detecting on sites of known archaeological importance and encourage the reporting of finds on other sites (metal detecting is prohibited on NT landholdings in any case)

#### *Management of the National Trust landholding*

The archaeological potential of the landholding is not clear as many of the discoveries to date have been to the north or south of the National Trust land. However, if the archaeological potential of the land to the north and south can be considered to be high, then it would not be unreasonable to assume that this is also the case for the National Trust section. What is clear is that Druridge Bay has an excellent collection of military remains covering the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of such a varied selection of military structures has the potential to bring the past back to life. Visually easy to identify, pillboxes and anti tank traps have the greatest amenity value, but anti tank ditches can also be highlighted for the military enthusiast. Druridge Bay Country Park is the most obvious location for interpretation of military

structures and this allows users of the park to appreciate the remains over the wider Druridge Bay area. In order to complement the existing Druridge Bay Management Plan, the Country Park should be used by the National Trust and other partners to display the social importance of these structures and act as a base from which users may wish to explore the wider Bay. No on site interpretation should be used at Druridge because of the threat of vandalism, erosion and flooding but self guided walks using GPS triggered information and warden led walks would be an appropriate interpretation medium.

#### **Management Recommendations**

Keep shelters closed to the public, although a lockable entry point would permit accompanied access on heritage open days

If resources permit, survey anti-tank ditch and excavate a cross section to expose its original form (permission would be required from Natural England).

This would provide a record if the area becomes inaccessible due to flooding.

Use Druridge Bay Country Park to focus any interpretation based on the military use of the site – consider the use of GPS triggered downloads to lead guided walks from the Country Park

Monitor the coastal edge after severe weather

#### *Dunstanburgh and Embleton*

The natural geology of this stretch of the coast divides the holding between the more rugged, durable dolerite of the Whin Sill to the south, and the softer sandstone to the north. To the south the land remains relatively stable but to the north, along the expanse of Embleton Bay, the sandstone is under in a constant process of erosion. Consequently this stretch of coast has been identified as being of high archaeological potential (NCC 1994, 17). A number of factors are at play in the area. First, the gradual erosion of the sandstone by the action of the waves (escalated by high tides and storms) has the potential to erode material out of the backshore. Such erosion will become an increasing issue in the future as sea levels rise. Secondly, although the dunes are relatively stable (DEFRA 2007) there is still the potential that archaeology along the coastal strip might be either revealed or buried by dune movement.

Finally, this stretch of the coast, with its hidden rocks and reefs, is particularly dangerous and is likely to feature a number of unknown wreck sites. Material could also potentially be deposited on the foreshore by storms from anywhere either out to sea or along the coast.

Some of these factors also affect the southern part of the holding, but here possibly the areas of highest potential are along the streams, and various irrigation/ drainage channels which cross the holding, including those along the base of the castle. Similarly, the banks of the Embleton Burn are of high potential, particularly where the water course opens out to join the sea at The Skaiths. All these are relatively volatile areas where erosion could reveal archaeological material.

The implications of sea level rise have already been noted by The National Trust and the possibility that chalets might be lost and the access road to Dunstanburgh may become flooded, necessitating an alternative route. It is inevitable that archaeological remains would also be exposed in such scenarios and provision would need to be made for recording them before they are destroyed.



**Plate 18. Attempts to prevent dune erosion at Embleton-but new impromptu 'paths' are a continued threat.**

The popularity of the holding for recreational use has an impact on the area with various footpaths, both official and unofficial, crossing the site. The largest of these is the North Northumberland coastal path which runs the whole length of the holding. The section between Craster and the castle is particularly popular and is used by thousands of visitors each

year. The path runs very close, or crosses, some known archaeological sites, such as the remains of Nova Scotia and numerous weapons pits and foxholes from the last war. These sites are under threat from erosion and need to be

monitored. In other areas unofficial footpaths, across the dunes at Embleton and on the land to the west of the castle, have the potential to damage the archaeological resource and need to be monitored, especially after the winter and prolonged periods of wet weather.

On the golf course, which dominates a large area of the Embleton Bay holding, the main threat is perceived to be to the ridge and furrow. This is important as it reflects the wider medieval setting of the castle and its contrived landscape and the development of settlement at Embleton and Dunstan Steads. At the moment the ridge and furrow appears relatively stable but there is a marked difference in the preservation of lands within the rough and green areas of the course. It might be advantageous to have an exhibition of the archaeology on the area in the golf club so that users are aware of the resource and can actively work with the Trust to preserve it and report any changes.

Another area of concern, although no longer directly linked with the golf course, is the chalets at the northern end of Embleton Bay. Some of these are of considerable architectural merit and complement the landscape but there is a danger that, with any expansion of the site, the area could become a 'shanty town' and a potential eyesore. Both the present buildings and any planned expansion of the community should be managed and monitored with care in order to preserve the natural beauty and heritage of the area.

Those features at greatest risk are considered to be the sites associated with WWII coastal defence. The holding has four of the better preserved examples of pillboxes, one of which (NT SMR 10299) is still surrounded by its weapons pits and foxholes. Unfortunately, these features, which run along the ridge close to the footpath, are under threat from vegetation and wind blown sand. It would be a shame to lose them completely and an annual programme of cleaning and vegetation removal might be considered. Only the pillbox to the north of the Skaiths is in poor condition, although this is relatively stable. The other buildings are good examples of their type and show almost the full range

of designs. All features should be recorded and then possibly some filled with sand to prevent any potential vandalism (though this does not appear to be a big problem). However, some examples should remain open to the public. The results of the survey should be made available online so at least intellectual access remains available to the monuments.

The buildings of the radar station remain stable and in good condition, possibly largely because they remain out of the public view. It is a pity that the history of the site, which played such an important role in the war on both a national and more personal, local level is not made more accessible to the public. However, in so doing the archaeology of the site could also be put under greater threat.

Across the site one of the biggest issues is the spread of gorse. This is now very thick along the escarpment to the west of the castle and at the northern end of Embleton Bay. The roots of the gorse can undermine boundary walls and remains of weapons pits as well as ditches and sod-cast dykes. However, the removal of gorse also has the potential to cause damage so a considered policy needs to be determined. Where gorse and other vegetation is cleared there is the potential to uncover new archaeological sites.



**Plate 159. dense gorse coverage surrounding pillbox and Dunstanburgh**

The southern half of the holding is grazed by sheep but this seems to be of no threat to the archaeology, except possibly in wet weather if a single, long term feeding station is established which could cause the surrounding area to be churned up. For similar reasons cattle should only be grazed in the area during dry weather and should not be allowed in the low lying marshy areas west of the castle.

#### **Management Recommendations**

Monitor the backshore and foreshore at Embleton particularly after heavy storms of high tidal action.

Monitor the dunes for erosion and accretion. Record any archaeology exposed or under immediate threat.

Walk the path of water courses on a regular basis to check for archaeology eroding out of the banks.

Monitor the formation of unofficial pathways across the dunes and possibly divert tracks if necessary.

Record all archaeology crossing or adjacent to the coastal path and monitor for any decline in condition.

Record pillboxes and agree long term management policy

Record foxholes and establish maintenance regime

Establish regime for the management of gorse and other vegetation

Work with the golf course staff/users to make them aware of the archaeology on the site and act to preserve it (and inform of any changes).

Continue to manage and review the bungalows, particularly any expansion of the current community.

#### *Lindisfarne*

A low-lying island, Lindisfarne is potentially threatened by rising sea levels. Global temperatures are predicted to rise between 0.5 °C and 2.5 °C by the year 2030 leading to further melting of the polar ice caps. This will almost certainly lead to loss of land particularly around Castle Point, the Glebe and the field to the west. This is confirmed by the Coastal Risk Assessment

carried out by The National Trust.<sup>10</sup> This needs to be considered when prioritising work in the surrounding fields. In the meantime, there is little evidence for coastal erosion on the NT landholding at Lindisfarne and in places along the heugh there appears to be more accretion than erosion. Management issues relating to the historic environment on the main landholding (excluding the buildings) relate to field boundaries and pasture.

*‘The planting of marram grass became a common practice during the later medieval period, after the storms of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had caused sand dunes to encroach on a number of coastal settlements all over Britain. In 1742, what can probably be considered the first conservation act in Britain was passed, specifically to protect this grass; it made uprooting it a criminal offence’.*

O’Sullivan and Young 1985, 23

The use of the land as pasture in Castle Field is beneficial to the archaeology, but does have the undesirable consequence of the boundary stones being used as rubbing posts. There is no acceptable way to avoid this and posts should simply be re-erected when toppled. The walled garden is well-maintained and although the tramways are suffering from some limited erosion caused by sheep, there is insufficient to merit any action in the near future. The erosion on the tramways should however be monitored.

The limekilns appear to be in good condition, but attempts to exclude people from their interiors are failing. Rather than excluding them, the kilns should ideally be made safe so that entry can be obtained legitimately. The dark passageways are too inviting to resist. The pot tops are adequately fenced off for health and safety purposes.

Glebe Field and the field to the west are products of enclosure, however the dry stone walls are no longer being maintained and have been replaced by post and wire fencing. The loss of these field boundaries will result in a

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<sup>10</sup> NT CRA 2 Lindisfarne

gradual change of character, but this character is one that was established only within the last 200 years. Consideration needs to be given to whether this change in character is desirable. If it is not, the dry stone walls should be repaired and brought back into active use. If the enclosure character can be dispensed with, what shall the new character be? In the short term the access points into the fields have been used for some dumping of building materials and should be cleaned up to discourage further dumping.

### *Interpretation at Lindisfarne*

The castle is open only seasonally yet there does appear to be a demand for longer opening hours. An Audience Development Plan may explore this option further. The kilns however are accessible all year round and so offer interpretation with free access. If they form part of a wider lime trail it will help visitors explore the furthest reaches of the island and provide an activity suitable for when the tide is in.

The compelling need to create artwork along the heugh from beach pebbles and the long history of artists painting the castle and priory provides scope for an interesting form of interpretation based on Holy Island as the subject of art and poetry. This could be carried out across the island in partnership with other managing agencies, taking in the statue of St Aidan, the Lindisfarne Gospels, Greenshiels (as the source of vellum for the gospels) supported with copies of art by Turner, Girtton etc and the modern day art on the heugh and Jekyll's garden.

### **Management Recommendations**

Re-erect boundary stones when toppled over

Monitor tramways for further sheep erosion

Make a policy decision on the long term future of the drystone walls so that they are either conserved or there is an acceptance of a change of landscape character

Remove waste building materials from the field access points

Commission a survey as part of an ADP to explore changing the castle's

opening times (if not already done)

Work with NCC to bring forward the publication of the lime trail

Explore a joint cultural project exploring Holy Island as the focus or location of art and poetry through the ages – possible link with Cultural Olympiad

### *Low Newton*

This stretch of coast has been identified as being of high erosion and a high archaeological potential (NCC 1994, 17). The Talcan Station sits within an area identified as being at risk from erosion and this is also an area of some archaeological potential with a number of possible Bronze Age barrows. Traces of land use cluster around Newton Point and Low Newton, but are less dense towards the northern stretch along the Links. The coast is a particularly dangerous stretch and so is also a likely source for wreck.

The village of Low Newton sits at between 6 and 10m OD and while erosion is not currently evident, any sea level rises are likely to lead to an increase in flooding of the properties.<sup>11</sup> As most of the properties are listed buildings, a long term strategy needs to be devised exploring flood prevention measures and how they can be adapted for listed buildings. The hamlet of Low Newton is sufficiently important in architectural terms to require a Conservation Management Plan for the whole and for each building. This should then be used to inform future management decisions. The CMP should include outbuildings such as netties.

The Links were used during the Second World War as a line of defence to compensate for the shallow sandy beaches and so the line of anti-tank cubes are particularly well-preserved. However no management recommendations are required for these or other military remains on the Links as they are relatively stable. The area was also used as a weapons dump after the Second World War and it is also worth monitoring erosion for any exposures. The removal of the 'bomb' like fishing trawl net roller has already been

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<sup>11</sup> NT CRA2

recommended. The Long Nanny estuary should be monitored for future exposures, particularly after stormy weather.

Make the results of recent excavations at Blind Millers public and record the excavations on the NCC HER and OASIS. These could be combined with oral history accounts relating to Blind Millers. Third parties should not be permitted to excavate on NT properties unless there is a requirement to lodge information with the relevant HERs and OASIS within a short time frame.

The clusters of archaeological interest at Low Newton and Newton Point are stable apart from those parts on the coastal edge. These should simply be monitored, particularly after stormy weather for additional structural information relating to their use.

#### **Management Recommendations**

Monitor the Long Nanny for future discoveries particularly after bad storms  
Monitor exposed structures at Newton Point after storms to help identify their former use  
Obtain oral accounts of military use and of tales associated with Blind Millers  
Record the excavations at Blind Millers on the NCC HER and OASIS  
Commission (or carry out) a Conservation Management Plan for Low Newton

#### *Seahouses*



**Plate 20. Exposed old ground surface in dunes**

This stretch of coastline north of Seahouses may be lost over the longer term if sea level rises predicted in the SMP take place.<sup>12</sup> It is an area where there are no proposals to create defence against flooding (except for the frontage where there is housing). The main archaeological

<sup>12</sup> SMP 2009, L3

interest is currently well back from the sea front and the main erosional threat is along the Tumblers where hard landscaping has attempted to hold back the erosional processes. The erosional threat at the Tumblers is such that no recommendations have been made regarding the management of the brick cistern, although further research into its function, perhaps by seeking advice from local fishermen, may be rewarding. It is assumed that it is already well photographed and there is no need for further recording. Some coastal erosion on the grass at St Aidan's Road is also exposing lime waste and so monitoring here may help to identify additional industrial activity.



**Plate 21. A long deceased seat from the 1960s**

At the north end of St Aidan's Dunes dark turf horizons have appeared in eroding sections of dune (ibid) and this combined with the presence of prehistoric activity in what is now the caravan park, means that the coastline should be monitored for unexpected discoveries. In particular the estuary adjacent to Monks House

should be monitored as it is of archaeological potential. The current horse grazing regime appears to be causing no damage to the historic interest and may in fact be making the dunes more accessible by cropping the grass cover. However the prolific use of fencing does limit the amenity value.



**Plate 22. Serpentine seating at St Aidan's, Seahouses**

Further towards Seahouses, the coast takes on a beach resort character with 20<sup>th</sup> century housing, amenity grassland and an assortment of seating. The seating is in need of particular management and should be considered high priority. The original Victorian seating reflects the popularity of beach visits in Victorian times, but is in very poor condition. Attempts should be made to restore these wonderful serpentine seats. The types of additional seating should be controlled so that there is not an assortment of seats planted on the whim of bereaving families. The skeletal remains of failed 1960s seats should be removed.

#### **Management Recommendations**

Monitor the coastal edge for unexpected discoveries – those areas of highest priority are at the estuary at Monk's House, the grassland edge on St Aidan's Road and the Tumblers.

Restore the serpentine seats and agree a range of seating designs which must be conformed to for new seating (it would be politic to leave existing memorial seats)

Remove broken 1960s concrete seats

## **General Recommendations for Future Research**

English Heritage (1997) has identified coastal research as an area of high priority on a national scale. Those prioritised areas most relevant to the coastal landholdings are: coastal processes, submerged landscapes and military archaeology. A number of research priorities have been identified for the region (NERRF 2006) and those most relevant to the National Trust landholdings are considered below. The archaeological potential is relatively unknown for pre- Second World War periods on most landholdings and the nature of the coastline means that this research potential could alter dramatically overnight requiring a rapid response to sites which may need to be explored for their research potential at very short notice.

It is difficult for the archaeological community to keep abreast of the work being carried out in the region. In order to improve communication channels, there should be a regular (once a year?) exchange of data between the County HER and the NT HER. All NT projects based on archaeology should be archived on OASIS and this should be a condition of future commissioned work. Projects should also be logged on to the NT HER within 6 months of completion. This should also include historic buildings work. This fits in with the regional research priorities MG 23-26 (NERRF 2006, 232).

### *Key Research Themes for the coast (NERRF 2006)*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Key Research Priorities</b>	<b>NERRF Reference</b>
Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods.	Mi. Understanding coastal environmental change, in particular the drowning of the North Sea basin and its links with patterns of early human settlement	NERRF 2006, 123
	Mii Relationships between local geomorphological processes and site formation/preservation patterns	ibid
	Mii The apparent lack of Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic sites. Is the lacuna real?	ibid
	Mv Mesolithic lithics in the NE	ibid, 124
	Mviii. Mesolithic burials	ibid, 125
	Mix. Food and Raw materials	ibid, 126
	Mx. Faunal evidence	ibid

Neolithic and Early Bronze Age	NBiv Rock Art	ibid 128, 133
	NB4 Cairns	ibid
	NB5 Round houses, settlements and field systems	ibid 129
Late Bronze Age and Iron Age	Liii Landscapes	ibid 137
	Liv The later prehistoric coastal zone	ibid 138
	Lix Burials	ibid 141
Roman	Is the lack of evidence along the coast real?	ibid 144
Early Medieval	Emi Landscape	ibid 157
	EMii Settlement	ibid 158
	EMiii Architecture	ibid 159
	EMiv The early medieval coast	ibid 160
	EMvi Christianity	ibid 161
	EMvii Death and Burial	ibid 162
	EMviii The impact of the Vikings	ibid 163
Later Medieval	MDii Landscape	ibid 170
	MDiv Castles and defensive structures	ibid 172
	MDv Churches and religion	ibid
	MDix Trade and economy	ibid 174
	MDx The fishing industry	ibid 175
Post Medieval	PMi. Cultural and ethnic identity	ibid 182
	PMii Industrialisation	ibid 183
20 <sup>th</sup> century	MOi. Industry	ibid 193
	MOii. Transport and communication	ibid
	MOiii Agriculture	ibid 194
	MOvi. Military and defence	ibid 195
	MOVii. Sports and leisure	ibid
Science and environment	SEii. Palaeoenvironmental evidence	ibid 199
	SEiv. Prospecting techniques	ibid 200
	SEv. Human burial	ibid

The regional research agenda and strategy particularly focuses on maritime and coastal archaeology (NERRF 2006, 201ff). It identifies the preservation and recording of any medieval wrecks as of the highest priority (MT3) and notes that estuaries and creek offer particular potential for wreck sites (MT8). It also identifies the early development of life saving infrastructure such a coastguard stations and rocket posts and the need to record them (MT13). This extends to a wider range of maritime structures such as warehousing and smoke houses (MT 14). This project has added such features on to the NT

HER, particularly for the Newton stretch and providing that the records are available more widely, then the NT will have contributed to this process.

While the submerged landscape is outside the National Trust landholding, offshore activities may have an impact on the stability of the dunes and the consequent exposure of archaeological remains. It is important that if the National Trust are consulted on any off-shore activities that they request further information which may help to throw light on the potential of the offshore landscape and thus contribute towards our understanding of the present day coastline. This might include sharing the results of swathe bathymetry, side scan sonar and conventional shallow sub-bottom profiling and coring of sea bed sediments. Good communication channels with local fishermen could help to add new information on stray finds found as a result of snagging (NERRF 2006, 203).

*The Changing Coastline (policies from NERRF)*

MT24

Detailed research should be undertaken on the historic pattern of coastal change along the coast of the region

MT25

A wider understanding of long-term coastal change would help understand patterns of distribution of the archaeological resource. An up to date survey of coastal erosion could usefully be mapped against the archaeological evidence

*Dune systems*

MT26

Dune formation and destruction can be rapid; there is a need to ensure regular re-survey of dunes for archaeological remains, particularly after major storm events

MT27

A regression map showing changing patterns of sand dune distribution, based on Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs, should be constructed. This may indicate areas of rapid change and significant stability and should be supplemented by a campaign of coring and paleoenvironmental investigation.

(NERRF 2006, 203)

Coastal properties are also associated with a number of iconic Northumbrian images such as those painted by Turner and Girtton, or captured in poetry by Sir Walter Scott. It is also associated with tales of ancient kingdoms and human devouring worms. A greater level of research into the cultural associations of coastal properties would provide a better level of knowledge which can be used to make informed decisions about the appropriateness, or otherwise, of distant developments and their impact (or perceived impact) on

views to and from the property. In a similar vein, recollections of the properties and their uses within living memory could be collated in order to attach a local value to the property beyond that of the purely historical. This may include oral accounts from the war, film locations, associations with famous people and also more recent artistic depictions including published photography (Joe Cornish and Graham Peacock for example), paintings and poetry (Katrina Porteous for example).

### **Property Specific Research Priorities for NT landholdings (in alphabetical order)**

#### *Alnmouth*

As the predominant archaeological site type at Buston Links relates to Second World War archaeology, the research potential is inevitably biased towards this area. The wider research agenda has identified the need for oral history as a matter of some urgency (NERRF 2006, 195). While it is possible to interview and record the memories of people who may have sat inside the pillboxes or Nissen Hut in August 1940, these recollections should be recorded. There is also a need to survey all defensive features still extant in order to build up a picture of the defensive network rather than the isolated component features within it (NERRF 2006, 195). The Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment has taken us some way towards this, as has this particular survey, however regular monitoring of the dunes, particularly along the foreshore and some additional survey of the anti-tank ditch may be of benefit before it is filled in completely.

The stretch of land under lease from the Northumberland Estates has greater potential because of its changing coastline and river frontage and because of the presence of Church Hill. It may be able to contribute significantly to our understanding of the growth of Christianity and of pre-Christian religions. The discovery of earlier causeways in 1992 after heavy rain is also a reminder that much of this area is dynamic and may expose remains relating to early medieval times, but also the later industrial use of the area. The waterlogged

nature of the floodplain also raises the possibility of organic remains, not normally found elsewhere.

### *Beadnell*

The main areas of archaeological research near Beadnell cover prehistoric burial practices, the early Christian community, the commercial production of lime and fishing.

Any works within the landholding may wish to explore:

- Whether the cemetery discovered in the caravan park extends to the Links landholding. This may throw additional light on the reuse of prehistoric burials in Roman times and shed some light on Romano-British burial practices in the area which are relatively unknown.
- Additional remains from the lime industry at the Links; did the kiln exist in isolation or were there other buildings there? Did the kiln replace earlier examples?

Wardens may also wish to monitor the dune edge for signs of stone cists, limestone and charcoal scatters suggesting limeworking, human bones or building remains.

### *Dunstanburgh and Embleton*

Dunstanburgh has the potential to feature in a broad study of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement in the area, but the material from each of these periods from within holding alone is not extensive or well understood. There is no evidence of early medieval settlement but the predominance of Old English place names might indicate something of the pre-conquest population of the parish of Embleton and would warrant further study. However, undoubtedly the site has the greatest research potential for understanding the late medieval landscape, the development of castles and defensive structures and the designed, or at least contrived, symbolic landscapes around them. A considerable amount of work has already been undertaken in this field by English Heritage but there is still the potential for more discussion and analysis, possibly placing the site within the broader context of the barony. In the post medieval period, a study of field patterns

and the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation could advance an understanding of the development of settlements and agriculture. The rise of the fishing and quarrying industries around Craster is also of importance, as well as transportation and trade. These themes continue into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century as industrialisation increases demand on agricultural production, and the quarrying and fishing industry expands. Finally, continued research into the WWII coastal defences along the coast should be considered, in particular oral histories from those still surviving. Again, considerable in-roads have already been made in this field by English Heritage, Harry Beamish and various local history groups.

Future research into the landholding may wish to explore:

1. Documentary evidence of the settlement at Nova Scotia, possibly covering the nature of the settlement and reasons for its decline.
2. Documentary evidence of the relationship between the barony of Embleton and the castle; in particular, this might look at links with the village as the administrative centre of the manor prior to (and possible after) the construction of the castle. This might be extended to look at Craster, Dunstan and Embleton in terms of the support structure for the castle and its impact on the surrounding settlement.
3. A multi-disciplined study of quarrying in the area, looking at the social impact of the industry as well as transport changes, architectural implications, and a more detailed (NT Level 4) survey of the surviving quarries. This might also include an oral history project tying up with the work already undertaken in Craster.
4. A metric survey of the surviving pillboxes and associated foxholes/weapons pits – maybe a community recording project.
5. A documentary and archaeological study of the golf course and the associated bungalows, looking at the development of the site from the 1900s and how it has responded to changes in recreation, class, and the two world wars – might include oral histories.

### *Lindisfarne*

The main areas of archaeological research on the island cover prehistoric settlement, the early Christian community and subsequent Viking invasions, the evolution of the fort, the Benedictine re-foundation; the dissolution of the monastery and the creation of a military stronghold; then the commercial production of lime and fishing.

Much of this research is based not just on issues of local importance, but also on ones identified as being nationally important. The growth of Christianity had national consequences, the Viking invasions had national consequences, and Holy Island was at the heart of it all. Any works within the landholding may wish to explore:

- any of the craft industries which Lindisfarne became famous for during Northumbria's Golden Age, and how they were organised;
- seek to identify the impact of the Viking invasions on the island community;
- It is likely that such a prominent position as the castle rock was exploited long before the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence for this early activity could be uncovered during routine maintenance or building works.

Holy Island had a vital strategic role to play. Its location close to the border with a sheltered harbour made it possible to supply the navy and land army with food and ammunition. As such an important harbour, it merited defending, and so after the Dissolution, the story of Holy Island moves from a sacred island to a secular military supply base. How is this reflected archaeologically?

In 1542, three separate bulwarks were built around Holy Island's harbour. These have not been located, although two at least are likely to be beneath the castle and the Fort on the Heugh. Future archaeological work should endeavour to throw light on this early defensive system on the island.

The rock on which the castle sits today was not developed until the 1540s. Prior to this it may have had a beacon. Its first stage of development as a gun

platform was replaced by a fort in the 1560s. Although the castle is not subject to modern development pressure, future archaeological work based on the post-medieval period on the rest of the island, should see it as a vital part of this stage of the island's history. The castle, the Fort on the Heugh, the Palace and the Priory buildings are all strongly related to each other as component parts of the island's defences. The Fort on the Heugh remains are largely 17<sup>th</sup> century, but it may be located on the site of earlier defensive structures. The natural coastal erosion along the access route to the castle should be monitored to check for new archaeological information.

### *Low Newton*

The landholding does not as yet appear to offer any promise of particular research potential as the number of sites currently recorded for the area are relatively few. Its contribution towards research opportunities therefore lies in being part of a larger group of dune landscapes which could form part of a wider landscape study.

The main areas of archaeological research at Low Newton would be in relation to 18<sup>th</sup> century agricultural reform and the great rebuilding using the settlement at Low Newton. There is also some limited potential with regard to Second World War archaeology, although there are better ranges of monuments at Druridge and Embleton. With a relatively early coastguard station and a Cold War NATO Long Range Area Navigation Tactical Air Navigation System there is an opportunity to carry out more detailed building recording thus contributing towards regional research priorities. The presence of an early coastguard station here and on other NT properties in the region also provide an opportunity to research the history of this service, using national archives which have not been consulted as part of this project. Otherwise research may be opportunity-led by what is uncovered through the process of erosion.

### *Seahouses*

The main areas of archaeological research potential at St Aidan's cover prehistoric burial practices, the organisation of land by medieval ecclesiastical authorities and the early commercial production of lime and fishing. Any research opportunities within the landholding may wish to explore:

- The relationship between granges and Lindisfarne priory in Northumberland
- The evolution of the lime industry (although there are better NT landholdings to do this, e.g. Lindisfarne)

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