

## The Tale of the Tompot Blenny

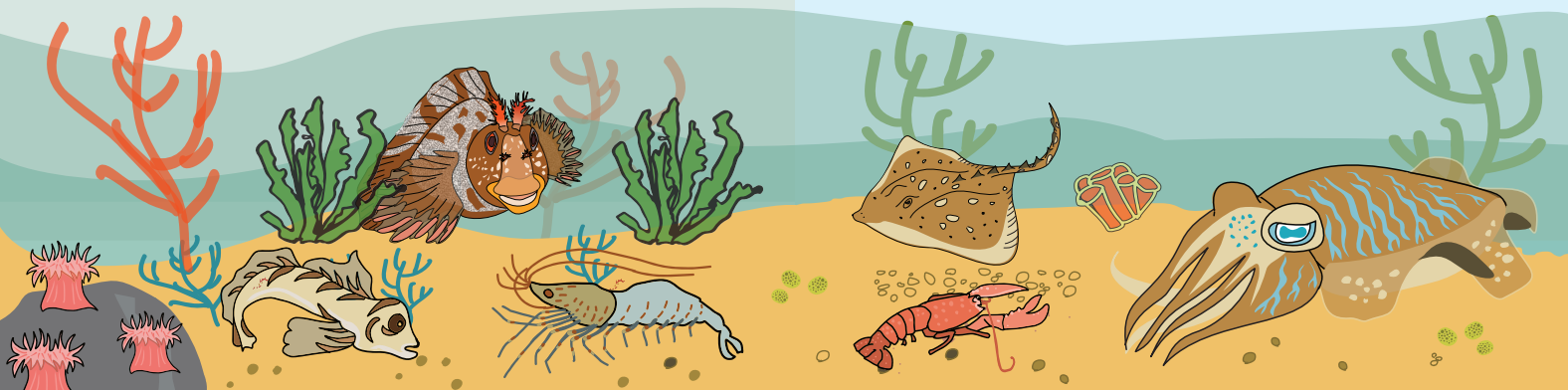
1

This is our tale, as told by a blenny, who's stripy and fiery and called Lil Benny With frilly cute fins and bulging bright eyes, he hides in the rocks where the seaweed lies.

"I'm a Tompot Blenny," he says with a grin, "I live in the rockpools where the tide tumbles in. I've got neighbours galore and secrets to share, about Allonby Bay and the wonders found there!"

There are creatures that shimmer, birds swoop and dive, a magical bay where so much is alive. There are mussels, anemones, cuttlefish too, and dunes where the Natterjack sings to the moon.

Allonby Bay has always been a special place, and together, we can help protect its grace. So come on, adventurer, and follow my lead, I'll show you the wonders beneath the seaweed...



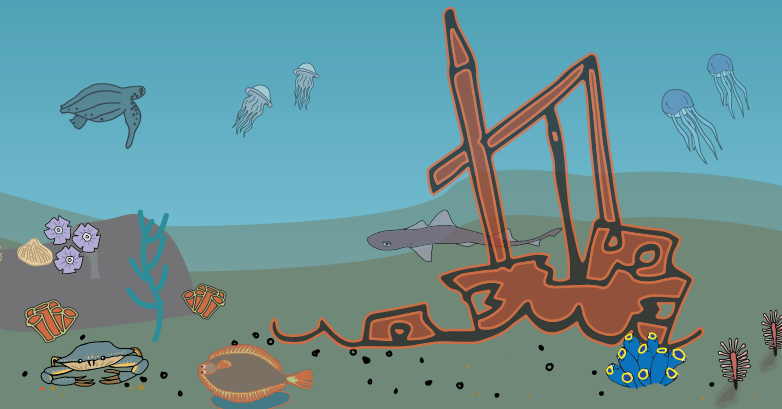
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Once upon a time, Romans walked this shore, trading their treasures and building much more. Saltpans smoked where the tidal waves curled, their crystals were famous all over the world.

Centuries later, herring ruled the bay, and fishermen smoked them by night and by day. The smell of the catch filled the old cobbled street, as ships lined the harbour and markets bustled with heat.

Then came the breakers, dismantling the grand, giant ships broken down by weathered old hands. Every plank, every nail, every wooden beam, carried stories and whispers, like something from a dream.

Allonby Bay's history runs deep as the tide, woven with secrets the waves cannot hide. So many lives have worked with the sea, and its past still lingers for those who can see.



2

Let's start at the shoreline where waves gently play, where curlews and oystercatchers hunt for their prey. The mussel beds glisten, so shiny and dense, and gulls squabble loudly on driftwood and fence.



Out in the shallows, the sea starts to glow, flatfish lie buried where soft currents flow. Thornback rays glide like ghosts on the sand, while guillemots dive where the kelp forests stand.

But the true stars below, where the tides ebb and weave, are the honeycomb worm reefs that few can believe! Little architects of magic, they build their sand towers, creating safe homes for sea squirts and sea flowers.

Down among shadows where the sea secrets hide, cuttlefish dance, hypnotic and wide-eyed. With three little hearts and blue blood in their veins, they flash colours like lightning, through seaweed chains.

5

Back to my pool where the tide likes to creep, and creatures emerge from their sea-salty sleep. A hermit crab scuttles, a rock goby darts, red beadlet anemones open their hearts.

Mermaid's purses, like treasures, drift on the strand, they held baby cat sharks so tiny and grand. Porpoises surface and blow gentle sprays, while curlews gather in shimmering bays.

There's a world beneath waves, and we all have a role in keeping it thriving and healthy and whole. Pick up your litter, leave shells where they lie, respect the wild places where seabirds fly high.

Because every reef, every worm, every ray, makes up the great story of Allonby Bay. Together we guard it – it's precious, you see, for all the wild wonders, for you, and for me.



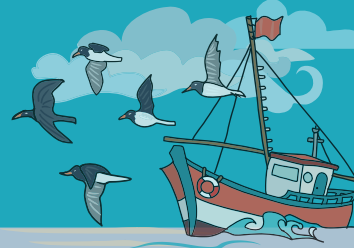
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Hop to the dunes, where the sea breezes play, golden and grassy, swaying all day. Here, rare Natterjack toads call through the night, and cinnabar moths flutter in their scarlet flight.

Stonechats perch proudly, chirping their song, and butterflies dance as you wander along. But the dunes are fragile, so tread with care, many creatures depend on the shelter found there.

Beyond the sands, the folklore begins, where smugglers once hid their contraband tins. Ghost ships drift silently on misty nights, and white horses gallop through moon-silvered lights.

And listen... if the breeze carries tales from the past, you might hear the whispers of ships sailing fast, or the Ferret Customs Boat chasing a thief, as shadows of history float just beneath.



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As the sun dips low and the waves softly sigh, gannets dive sharply from high in the sky. The seals relax on the warm sandy bars, while overhead twinkle the first evening stars.

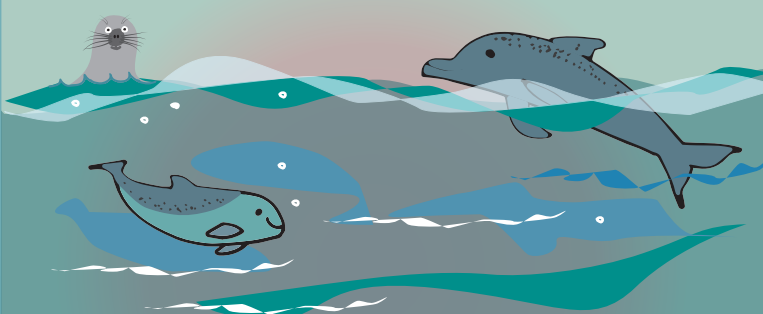
The blenny peers out from his rock by the shore: "I've shown you my world... ...but there's still so much more! Allonby Bay's magic is calling to you, a place to protect, to cherish, and renew."



So wander the dunes, search the tide pools below, spot guillemots diving where salt breezes blow. Look out for porpoises rolling at play, and keep Allonby wild in your heart every day.

This is our tale, a story to keep, from the shore to the reefs, from the dunes to the deep. And now, little explorer, it's your turn to say:

**"I'll help protect magical Allonby Bay!"**



**The bit for grown-ups...**  
In 2023 Allonby Bay was designated as England's first inshore Highly Protected Marine Area (HPMA). It's a special part of the Irish Sea where marine life can flourish and recover. The bay is home to an incredible variety of sea life, from sponges and honeycomb worms to many species of fish. Protecting these waters helps keep the ocean healthy for everyone, now and in the future.  
**Route Length**  
Coastal meadows and beach trail: This shorter trail (2.5km) starts and finishes at the car park opposite Twentymans ice cream parlour, with a turnaround point at Benny's bridge. It is possible to shorten the route at any stage and enjoy an explore on the beautiful beach or dunes.  
**Longer Route:**  
Continue along the coastal trails to The Moody Cow, where you can buy delicious milkshakes!  
**Trail Safety Information**  
The terrain is a mixture of sandy/pebbly beach, grassy footpaths, tarmac tracks and quiet roads. It is part of the new King Charles III England Coast Path. Please stick to the marked footpaths and avoid unstable ground on the coast.  
**Extra explorations**  
After the Allonby Bay Tale Trail, why not discover more along the coast? Stroll through Crosscaonby Nature Reserve, step back in time at Millfortlet 21, or follow the other Coastal Tale Trails for more stories, wildlife, and breathtaking sea views.  
**Refreshments**  
After your trail, why not enjoy some local refreshments? Try Twentymans for delicious ice cream, or relax with a meal at the Ship Hotel.  
**Directions and Parking**  
By car: Allonby is easy to reach via the A596 or B5300 coastal road. Parking is available in the car park, opposite Twentymans (ice-cream parlour).  
By bus: Regular services run to Allonby from Maryport, Workington, and Silloth. The bus stop is just a short walk from the village centre.

**fun local story walks**  
for children and the young at heart

**Walks around**  
The Solway Coast

**A Tale of the Tides**  
A story walk from Allonby  
By Anja Phoenix

