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Consett's Independent Magazine

ISSUE 12/ July 2013

LONG-SIGHTED

A surprise discovery and a long heritage

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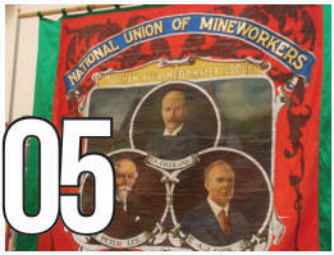

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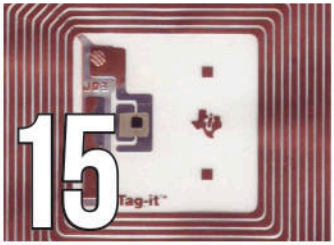

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Welcome

To issue 12 of the **Consett Magazine!**



This month has been well and truly a busy time for us here at Consett Magazine. The few weeks preceding the final print deadline were running the team into overdrive.

I would like to personally thank all of the businesses and contributors who have came forward to help us put out our July edition together. We certainly couldn't have done this without your input, whether it be financially or creatively (or both). Don't forget to mention Consett Magazine when you use any adverts in the mag!

A special mention goes out to the lovely 94 year old Mrs. O'Toole, who called us up a few weeks ago. After reading Rod Hicken's story on the old watch in issue 11, she told us that she can still remember Dobson Gradon's shop on Derwent St in Blackhill. We very much encourage people to call or email us with stories like this as we endeavour to get the local public involved in Consett Magazine.

As always, we hope you enjoy this month's mag!

Ivan J. Laidler,
Editor-in-chief

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MEDOMSLEY VILLAGE CELEBRATES THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

by Chris Brown

There has been a lot going on in Medomsley over the past month as the village decided to celebrate the rich history past and present of the village whilst also looking towards the future. On Saturday the 8th of June, all were welcome to visit the village school hall to see a number of different historical artefacts and photographs which help give a better idea of what Medomsley was like long ago before most of the houses we see there today were even imagined.



The focal attraction of this historical display had to be the newly refurbished miner's banner bearing the names J. Gilliand, Peter Lee and A.J Cook. The exemplary work performed on the banner has truly brought it back to life for a new generation to enjoy.

With summer finally with us the event also played host to a stall manned by Derrick and Ann English spreading the word about the up and coming Northumbria in Bloom competition. This is the first year that the village will have entered this specific contest and are looking for the support of residents to make it a day to remember. Many of the village's main establishments will be getting involved with the contest to try and give Medomsley the chance to claim the title.

The annual scarecrow contest was also held and judged at the event. A number of unique entries were submitted all based around a royal theme. The winner was an easily recognisable Queen Victoria in full black dress made by a young Eve Jeffrey-Moore. This completely home-made entry was just one of a number of great scarecrows submitted on the day.

Alongside the local attractions, a Police Community Outreach Officer was on site trying to solve any issues and listen to what the people of the area had to say. They were helping the community by distributing important information relating to crime prevention and staying safe this summer.

Overall, a fantastic day was had by all of the people who took them time to visit the school and see some of the past, present and future of Medomsley village. If you missed out don't fret, Medomsley Village Fair will be taking place on the 17th of August.



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PACT

Police & Communities Together

GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY

by Chris Brown

Many people in the local area would consider Consett to be a community driven town. So many people living in the region are truly passionate about what goes on with our local government, area action partnerships and much more. For many people one concern which they want addressed are the issues surrounding the Police and crime prevention. Believe it or not, you do have the opportunity to let your voice be heard to make a difference in the way our town and surrounding areas are policed.

PACT or Police and Communities together are a series of meetings where the public can discuss the issues which matter to them with the Police to try and develop an effective solution. If you have any concerns about your local area, then a PACT meeting could well be the place to get you voice heard. These meetings are split into local districts to get the best result from the process as different wards have different concerns which they would like addressed. PACT meetings are mostly held on evenings meaning more people are available to come along to discuss their concerns for the local area.

After the last meeting of the Consett and Templetown PACT, the issue of littering and dog fouling on the public footpaths near the Consett bypass was raised as being one of importance to the residents of this area. This is just an example of what sorts of issues are discussed at the PACT meetings. If you want to get involved with the way your local district is policed then don't hesitate to get involved. You can call the Police on 101 if you are interested in the times and dates of the next PACT meetings in your area.

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Sizzling Summer BBQ Tips

Summer has officially arrived and the weather has been perfect for getting out and cooking al fresco style.

Warm weather only means one thing to millions of people across the UK, barbecue time. It's funny that for a nation which has such torrid weather for a large percentage of the year we would be so passionate about cooking outdoors.

With a limited amount of days to get cooking in the sun it's important that you make the most of your barbecue.

Here we have some tips to make sure you get you can handle the heat.

If you remember these points it will reduce the stress of being head grill chef while cooking up your fantastic barbecue feast.











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JULY GARDENING TIPS

It's July and gardens are full of colour. There is still plenty to do, but don't forget to sit down and enjoy them during the long summer evenings.

Remember to take care when working outdoors in the sun for long periods. Make sure you have plenty to drink and take regular breaks. Plants also need to be protected from the heat, ensure they get the water they need, in particular hanging baskets and bedding plants as well as trees and shrubs planted during the Autumn and Winter. The best time to water plants is early in the morning or evening when it is cooler.

Early flowering shrubs such as, philadelphus and weigela should be pruned into shape as their flowers fade if this was not done last month.

Roses can be deadheaded to lengthen their display or prune back to a bud in a leaf axil to encourage new growth and prolong the display into the Autumn.

New growth on Wisteria should be cut back this month to within five or six buds of the main stems. Trim conifer hedges to keep them under control and encourage a strong thick growth.

Keep removing weeds from beds and borders to stop them going to seed.

For more information please check out our Monthly Garden Planner at www.briary.co.uk

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THE MEDOMSLEY PIT DISASTER OF 1923

by Mike Bowden

As you leave Bradley cottages and head towards the junction for Medomsley and Consett, directly in front of you there is a large field. In that field are two small fenced enclosures. These are the 150m deep shafts of Medomsley Colliery. Opened in 1839 the wheels finally stopped turning in 1972. In 1923 a terrible disaster struck. Medomsley Colliery was considered a safe pit but on the 24th of February eight young men were to be involved in that pit's worst tragedy.

At 7.25am on the Saturday morning, eight men entered the narrow cage that would hoist them back to the surface. There was a metal bar wedged across the cage at waist height, the only device that offered means of protection. In an environment where sudden death was always expected, this was the place where nothing ever went wrong. The cage sped up the shaft, daily maintenance checks ensured that everything would run smoothly.

The cage was nearing the top of the shaft when a terrible series of events began to take place. The banksman heard a huge crash. The cables began to stretch and the engine driving the headgear began to protest loudly. The engine man stopped the machinery immediately but it was too late, the cable parted and only the severed end appeared above ground. A bosun's chair was rigged and two men were lowered into the depths. They found the cage wedged across the shaft 50 meters down and to their horror saw that the front of the cage was facing downwards. There were three mangled bodies lying on the roof, the other five had fallen to the bottom of the shaft.

The ensuing enquiry found that one of the clamps holding the cage to the wall of the shaft had cracked allowing the cage to swing free. The shaft had cross members at regular intervals and the cage had snagged on one of them. The verdict, accidental death.

The coal mine has gone now, along with the miners. There is no memorial to the dead but if you visit the churchyards around Consett you may find the names of those unfortunate men etched into their headstones.

Mike's book "A Breed Apart", a historically based novel, gives a great idea of what the local coal industry was like back in 1906. Available in both paperback and kindle format from Amazon.co.uk.



> THERE WAS A METAL BAR WEDGED ACROSS THE CAGE AT WAIST HEIGHT, THE ONLY DEVICE THAT OFFERED MEANS OF PROTECTION. IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE SUDDEN DEATH WAS ALWAYS EXPECTED, THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE NOTHING EVER WENT WRONG

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BEAMISH: THE PERFECT SUMMER TREAT

by Jim Callan

With the arrival of the summer, one of the perfect family activities returns with the beginning of the annual festival season. And this region plays host to some of the largest outdoor festivals in the U.K.

This year, however, there's a very special event taking place across the North East in the form of the "Festival of the North". With one of Durham's foremost open-air museums hosting a number of events in celebration.

The first of these took place last month when Beamish Museum played host to the "The Celebration of Transport" which featured an array of vintage vehicles, outdoor activities and even a Victorian-style Methodist service in the Pit-village Methodist Chapel.

With a line-up of fully functioning steam engines, trams and an Omnibus on show that visitors could either drive or ride on, there was a unique chance to experience Victorian-era travel.

In addition to the working vehicles, there were other attractions to visit at the museum. These included an old-time sweet shop where boiled, flavoured sweets and confectionary was on sale. The highlight being freshly prepared trays of toffee which were cooked, then smashed with a toffee hammer and sold to customers.

There was also a traditional Victorian-style chip shop where the chips and the rest of the menu was prepared in the old time, traditional manner. This sensational addition to the museum arrived last summer and has quickly become a rapid success.

Beamish Museum, which uniquely features a working pit-head and railway, village farm and steam train attraction manned by period-dressed characters, such as "Dr Quack". Beamish was also chosen as the BBC's Children in Need broadcast location in 2011.



RED DUST

A LOCAL POEM BY ALAN HARLAND

As time turns clarity more claret-y
I see my past in a rose-tinted haze
Or - this may be because
Consett just bloody was
Rose-tinted in those days.

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AN UNUSUAL FIND

by Brian Harrison



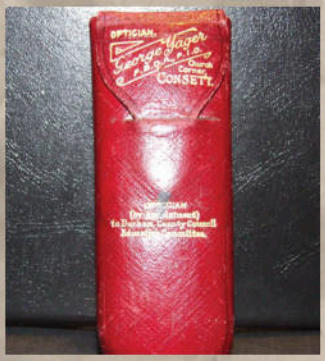
Recently, while looking through a popular auction site, I came across a very unusual item of interest; a pair of old spectacles linked to Consett. But it was even more intriguing when I saw the name on the case. They read "Optician George Yager F.B.O.A., F.I.O. – Church Corner, Consett – Optician (by Appointment) to Durham County Council Education Committee".

I was born and bred in Consett and as I am sure most other people would agree the name Yager is synonymous with Pork Butchers. The family are an established and well respected firm in the town. The name is also quite unusual so this had to be the same family. So I decided to do a little research to see how George fit.

Charles (Karl Christian Frederick) Yager was born C1846 in Westenbury, Germany. He emigrated to England sometime in the 1860's and married Mary. The couple's first children were born in Goole, Yorkshire. Sometime in the 1870's they arrived in Consett and set up business as a Pork Butcher, a skill Charles had obviously brought with him from his home in Germany. His business did not initially take off and they moved to South Shields. By 1881 Charles and Mary where living in Osmand Street, Jarrow, with 4 children and still working as a Butcher. The family continued to move around the area moving next to Sunderland before finally arriving back in Consett at the end of the 1880's.

By 1891 the family had finally found their place in Consett and set up a Pork Butcher Shop in 6 Shakespeare Street. Charles and Mary now had 6 children the youngest being George born 1887 in Jarrow. Sadly tragedy struck the family and Charles died at the age of 47 and was buried 25 August 1892. Mary struggled on with the business and along with her children made the business a success; a true testament to her resilience. As for young George, he must have been educated well as in 1911 he could be found working as a pharmacist in Leeds. He returned to Consett very shortly after and opened up his own pharmacy in 4 Shakespeare Street only 2 doors from his families Butchers.

Brian is part of the Consett & District Heritage Initiative. For more info contact cdhi@live.co.uk or drop into The Lodge, Blackhill & Consett Park, Wednesdays 10am-4pm.



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YOUR MORTGAGE MATTERS

by Bob Gardener



It has been well documented that over the past 12 months and more that many thousands of mortgage payers having come to the end of their **fixed, tracker or discounted mortgage deals** are now paying extra interest on their mortgage as they pay The Lenders' Standard Variable Rates. The danger is if Mortgage Rates rise in the future then it may become an issue. Many mortgage payers could save money on their monthly payments and thousands of pounds of interest over the term of the mortgage by securing a good **fixed, tracker or discounted rate** then reviewing their mortgage on a regular basis **reducing the term** thus saving even more in interest payments.

Unfortunately many mortgage payers are **trapped** in their mortgage for several reasons such as restrictions on equity due to falling house values over the past few years and struggle because of status including self-employment, adverse information recorded or even holding on to their present good mortgage deal.

There is also the problem of first time buyers getting onto the property ladder and home movers wanting to upgrade or downgrade (whatever their circumstances). Other factors influencing the choice of a good mortgage deal include affordability issues.

Finally, many mortgage payers miss an opportunity to protect what is their **biggest debt** which is their mortgage. Premature death and Serious Illness are factors that can cause heartache for families in many ways.

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THE EYES HAVE IT

by Ivan Laidler

It's amazing to think that after so many years of studying the human body, new and exciting advances in biological science are constantly being made telling us more about how our bodies' work and function. Although we don't need to know this to live our lives, it is good to know how our bodies work. It is especially interesting when you find out that a completely new part of the body has recently been discovered!

The eye is one of the miracles of nature. By using a complex system of muscles, tendons and lenses it is possible for us to focus light in a manner which allows us to see the world in perfect detail. Although already intricate, a new layer of the eye has recently been discovered by scientists at Nottingham University who have been researching this important organ. The eye has numerous layers which all offer protection as well as performing the role of reflecting light into the rod and cone cells of the eye. This new section known as Dua's Layer currently sits behind the cornea and allows for light to be effectively focused allowing us to see.

The big news behind the medical breakthrough is the implications it will have on ability to safely operate on the eye to alleviate specific illnesses known as Corneal Hydrops. This is where water is allowed to enter the cornea causing some serious vision problems. This research has speculated that this condition is actually caused by a tear in the Dua's Layer allowing the water though. This information can be put to good use when treating a number of eye conditions hopefully resulting in more people retaining their sight after treatment.

Science is such a quick moving subject that you can't really predict what will be around the corner but medical science breakthroughs have large real world implication to people all across the globe. Let's hope that this new discovery can help people with Corneal Hydrops and other eye conditions get back to full health.

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RFID CHIPS - INNOVATIVE OR INTRUSIVE?

by B. Kirkam

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is a wireless non-contact device allowing data to be transferred for the purposes of identifying or tracking objects.

In recent years, many people have been wary about the uses of the RFID chip and how it could be secretly used to gather data or track someone unknowingly. A RFID chip could easily be attached to clothing or even implanted within people. The easy ability to take data or track someone without consent has raised privacy concerns. UK passports already have RFID technology where data can be stored and recorded digitally on the passport to include times, dates, and places where you have entered of exited.

RFID have been made to be so small that researchers at Bristol University successfully glued RFID micro-transponders to live ants in order to study their behaviour.



“ HITACHI HOLDS THE CURRENT RECORD FOR THE SMALLEST RFID CHIP AT JUST 0.05MM X 0.05MM

← Actual size!

There are of course many uses for RFID tags to make life easier for managing inventory or track things such as cars, mobile phones, or even pets. RFID tags for animals are one of the oldest uses of this technology. Another example where this type of technology could come in to be useful is for tracking goods being sent through the mail or for tracking airport baggage.

There are many companies experimenting with the use of RFID so this technology is likely to see major advances as new applications are constantly being developed. These tiny chips are sure to revolutionise our world in the coming years.

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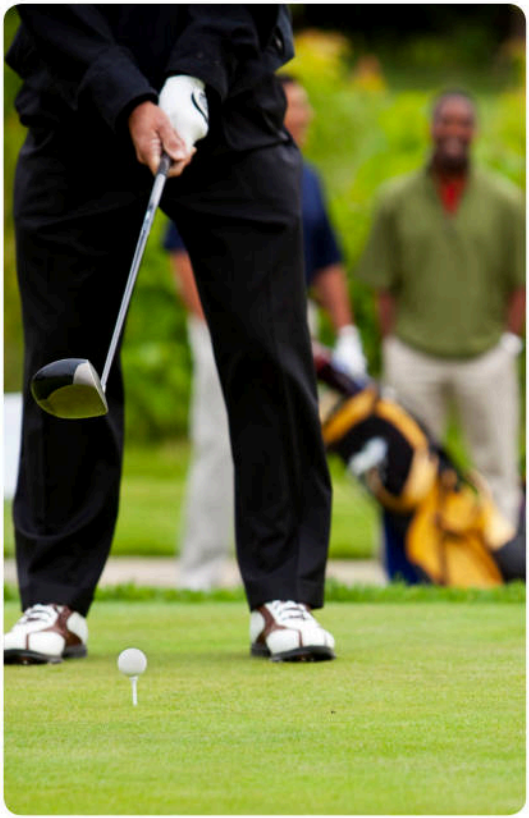

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A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Durham

by Ivan Laidler

To celebrate the arrival of the Lindisfarne Gospels in Durham this Summer, an eagerly awaited comedy play based on the last 1400 years in the North East will be coming to Consett's Empire Theatre as part of a celebration of the rich history in our local area. "A Funny Thing happened on the Way to Durham" has been written by two of the North East's top playwrights Ed Waugh and Trevor Wood and will be performing across the region throughout July.

Billed as a fast paced trek through the last 1400 years in less than two hours, this comedy show looks at everything from the arrival of the Vikings to the Battle of Hastings. The intimate cast of three consisting of Tyneside-based Chris Connell, Viktoria Kay from Sunderland and North Yorkshire's Robert Hudson has been assembled by director Gareth Tudor-Price.

When asked about the play, writer Ed Waugh said "We were asked to write a comedy to celebrate the exhibition of the Lindisfarne Gospels in Durham. The best description of the play is a cross between Monty Python, Blackadder and Horrible Histories with our own brand of humour mixed in." These popular British comedy acts all have a historical basis to their shows and if this humour can be translated to the theatre then the crowd will no doubt be laughing from start to finish.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are a massive piece of our local history and thanks to the British Library we will be able to get a glimpse of the legendary pieces of text for ourselves. This area is filled with local history and to be able to see these artefacts is an amazing opportunity. Even though the Gospels themselves may be the main attraction, "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Durham" is a fantastic and funny way to see the history of our region.

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Durham will be at the Empire Theatre on Wednesday 17th of July and tickets range from £14 to £12 for concessions.







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LOOK OUT FOR DRINKS PROMOTIONS AT THE CLUB

Steph's THE CLUB THAT ROCKS

by B. Kirkham

Steph Bamford and Dave Evans managed The Coach & Horses in Leadgate for a couple of years. Over this time they built up a strong live music following in the community.

In October 2012, ideas started to come into effect for a live music venue and rock club in Consett. The Club That Rocks was the brainchild of Steph, hence the name of the club Steph's Club That Rocks. The new venture was backed by local musician and retired businessman, Jim McGeorge. Together this great team have pulled out all the stops and created a local live music spot and rock club right here in Consett.

The club which is located on Newmarket Street in Consett and has been refurbished to accommodate a strong rock following with easy access and stage facilities for musicians and bands. The stage is the centerpiece in the venue sporting one of the region's best sound systems. The sound as you could imagine could be loud for nearby residents, but the club has addressed the genuine concern from neighbours by installing the best in sound baffles, soundproofing, and a hard roof which all work to contain the sound. Inside the club there are guitars on the walls which look superb and give the club an authentic rock club feel.

The club has an admirable aim to create jobs in the town and has already placed eight people into employment. One of the clubs' top employees, Charlotte Cannon has provided some much needed experience and skill when promoting and operating the club. Sophie Saint Photography has helped the club with professional photography.

The rock venue has some amazing live shows lined up for the coming months, so be sure to check out the Facebook page or the website for further information on bands coming to the club.

The club is currently open Thursday to Sunday, with Sunday afternoon featuring the very best in local talent. Artists, bands and musicians are invited to come along to the club every Sunday to enjoy a buskers style weekly event on a great stage with an awesome sound system.

Visit: facebook.com/TheClubThatRocks or theclubthatrocks.com



BANDS TO LOOK FORWARD TO INCLUDE:

Ross Tippings, Bon Jovi Forever, Powerage, Sub Human Race, Motley Crue Tributes, and many local bands (with free entry for local live events).

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One of the best things about this estate agency in particular is the no sale no fee basis which means you have peace of mind when selling with Harrington Brown. Fees for selling or letting a home are very competitive and their professional service by a small team of dedicated and highly motivated staff means the whole process is made very simple yet effective.

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by Chris Brown

BOOMSHANKA

Running a club night isn't an easy job. It takes a special kind of person to go out and put so much on the line to create a special night for punters and performers whilst keeping your feet firmly on the ground. After an epic birthday bash 3 local guys got the opportunity to make something of their initial success and started Newcastle's latest and greatest bi-monthly club night.

Ant, Liam and Carl initially set out to put on a birthday bash that everyone would remember at The Globe in Newcastle. After drawing a huge crowd and booking some of the best local DJs in the business the guys were given another chance to show what they could do. After settling on the name "Boomshanka" the guys went about organising the debut event at The Globe.

By taking a democratic stance when planning the event, Ant, Carl and Liam made sure to stick to some key principals to ensure this new night would be a success. One of these principals was to make the night accessible to everyone. As many nights around Newcastle now cost upwards of £10 a person, Boomshanka are keeping the costs down at a relatively low £5 a ticket.

The debut Boomshanka night in May was a massive hit with over 200 people through the door to enjoy the combination of Breakbeat, Old School, Dub and Drum & Bass acts from across the country at a great price. This hasn't gone unnoticed as the 2nd night, Boomshanka in the Jungle, is set for the 5th of the month and the guys from Boomshanka have been invited to guest DJ at a number of different events across the North East.

It truly is a jump into the deep end moving going from Consett to Newcastle but Ant, Carl and Liam have managed to keep their heads above water and are looking towards the future.



If you want to find out more about Boomshanka be sure to check out their Facebook at facebook.com/boomshankanewcastle1





All enquiries please call: 01207 438292

THE BATTLE OF E3

by Ivan Laidler



The E3 gaming Expo in Los Angeles is one of the most hotly anticipated events in the gaming world as all of the big companies come out swinging to try and get a leg up over the competition. Since it has been so long since many of the big hitters have released a new console this E3 was shaping up to be a big one. Both Sony and Microsoft have already announced the arrival of the next generation consoles with the PS4 and the Xbox One but many of the specific details had been kept under wraps coming up to E3.

Both Microsoft and Sony had headline spots at E3 to fill in the public on the important information about their new generation of games consoles. Microsoft was up first with the Xbox One. The Xbox 360 was a huge commercial success and the follow up would have to be something special. Coming into stores at the end of the year with a price tag of £429 the new Xbox has full Kinect integration, 10 times the processing power of the previous console and an innovative home entertainment system. The main issue with the Xbox is the digital rights management issues which have cut the availability of pre-owned games. This is a big issue as cost is a huge factor for the regular gamer. The Xbox does have a good range of exclusive titles including the fan favourite Halo 5.

Sony didn't have the greatest success with the initial release of the Playstation 3. Super high prices caused many people to avoid the Japanese offering in favour of an Xbox. Sony have seemingly learned from their mistakes by pricing the PS4 at a more affordable price point of £349 undercutting Microsoft. The big news from Sony was again talking about the issue of digital rights management. Sony have decided that pre-owned games will be allowed keeping a similar system to what already exists. This announcement has made a lot of gamers happy as pre-owned games are a great way to save cash.

The Xbox One and the Playstation 4 are both amazing pieces of machinery but it will be interesting to see which one comes out on top.

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David Bellamy, resident here in the North East, says *"I support Homeopathy as it is safe, low cost and compared to the usual drugs, it can be effective."* He adds, *"More and more people are now using homeopathy and realising the benefits of a more natural approach to healthcare."*

David Beckham also used homeopathy for a broken foot just prior to the 2002 World Cup.

Politician **Peter Hain** says *"I've now used homeopathy for some years and am convinced of its therapeutic value."*

Gabby Roslyn, TV Presenter, says *"I find homeopathy incredibly useful for keeping me and my family healthy. I depend on it and have a kit of homeopathic medicine ready for what my day-to-day life might bring. Homeopathy works extremely well on children."*

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VIVA LAS VEGAS – CONSETT BOXERS HIT THE STRIP

by Chris Brown

Las Vegas is the spiritual home of professional boxing. Every boxer dreams of seeing his or her name in lights at the MGM Grand before getting into the ring in front of millions across the globe to prove themselves in the ring. Whilst it is usually only the professionals who get to go to the city of Vegas, a group of talented young boxers based in the Consett YMCA have recently returned from the challenge of a lifetime fighting at the home of boxing.



The dedicated group of 16 boxers, trainers and parents had been involved in a 2 year struggle to make sure the trip went ahead after a number of failed attempts to get the club abroad. Ran in conjunction with the famous Finchley Amateur Boxing Club whose members include Olympic Gold Medallist Anthony Ogogo, Consett YMCA Boxing Club took up the challenge to raise the required funds to get them over to Vegas for this once in a lifetime opportunity. Charitable donations from Paddy O'Connor, Mr and Mrs Don Robson and tireless fundraising efforts gave these lads the chance of a lifetime.

The Silver Nugget was the venue for the Consett boys to show what they could do and they certainly didn't disappoint. Out of the 5 fighters, 3 took home the win and one also went to a judge's decision. This is an amazing showing from the young competitors who included the promising 11 year old Kyle Bessford. Alongside the boxing the group enjoyed seeing the sights of Vegas visiting the Luxor hotel and meeting boxing legend Earnie Shavers.

On a sad note, after returning to the UK, the head of the Finchley ABC Jim Oliver who worked with Consett head coach Gary McCrory extensively when planning the trip passed away from Leukaemia. For two years the club had the plan to get Vegas but was postponed due to Jim's illness but this wasn't going to stop him and Gary organising this dream trip taking these talented young boxers to the home of the sport that they are all so passionate about.

We would like to offer our congratulations to all of the boxers who went out to Las Vegas and wish them all of the best for the future.

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