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Consett's Independent Magazine

ISSUE 18/ January 2014



JOBSEEKER PLUGIN

A new app surfaces to aid in the never-ending job hunt.

TACKLING DEMENTIA

The UK looks to help tackle the crippling disease.

FIX UP, LOOK SHARP

Ace your future interviews with some surprisingly simple tips.

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This month...



NEWS

Read all about a Jobcentre revelation, beauty competitions and night sky observation in our news this month.

LIFESTYLE

Supplement your lifestyle with our pieces on dementia, parsnip soup, murder mystery and pleasant cafe experiences.





HISTORY

The story famous wolf of Shotley Bridge Zoo is bitten into this month. The even more famous Winter of 1962/63 is also covered.

BUSINESS

We have two business stories this month; one showing you how to impress your future boss and the other highlighting the comeback of the high street.





SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

This month's tech section is all about visual and computing technology with pieces on a revolutionary new TV device and the swansong of Microsoft Windows XP.

ENTERTAINMENT

Your personal entertainment for the first part of 2014 is covered with Consett Magazine.





SPORT

Check out the latest fixtures and match rundowns for Consett AFC and read all about Shotley Bridge Cricket Club's latest endeavours.

WELCOME

To Issue 18 of Consett Magazine!

FROM THE EDITOR:



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Mike Bowden
Rob Grinter
Peter Wood
Jim Callan
Malcolm Clarke

Happy new year to all of our readers, writers and clients!

Whether you're still recovering from the festive season or battling blizzards in our harsh British Winter, we hope you will find the time to sit down with your copy of Consett Magazine.

2014 has plenty in store for Consett Magazine. We're looking to recruit even more regular writers to grace our pages in the coming months. If you fancy yourself as an aspiring journalist then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me (editor@consettmagazine.com).

Please enjoy the January issue of Consett Magazine!

Ivan J. Laidler,
Editor-in-chief

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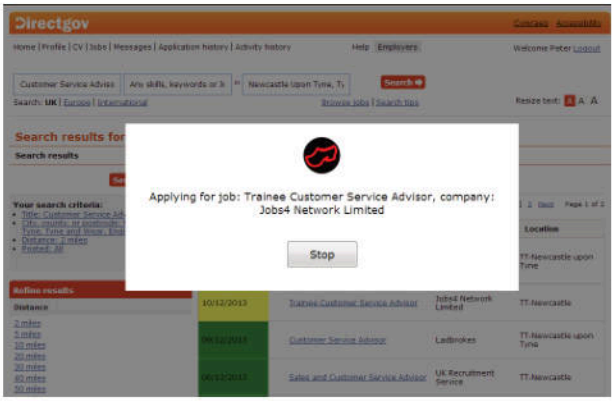
Jobseekers Aided By Web Plugin

by Peter Wood

Developers have devised a web browser plugin which automatically applies for jobs on the government run job listings service, Universal Jobmatch, and bypass having to use the website.

Universal Automation, a plugin (also known as an extension) which is only available for Google Chrome users, can be configured to search Universal Jobmatch for appropriate jobs and automatically send CVs to multiple employers with a simple one-click activation.

From March 2013, the Department for Work & Pensions made it mandatory for claimants of Jobseekers Allowance to sign up to Universal Jobmatch - which in November received an award for being the worst online jobs board of 2013 - which could gather data about jobseekers' activities on the site.



But the creators of the Universal Automation plugin - whose logo is a sabot, a wooden clog widely believed to have been the origin of the word sabotage after French workers threw them into machinery in the late 19th century in labour disputes - have more political motives other than simply to make it easier to avoid a bad website.

"The purpose of [Universal Jobmatch] is not to help people actually find work" their website states, "It is to get people off benefits. This is achieved by monitoring claimants' activities, including jobs that are just looked at as well as those that are then applied for. This data could be used to accuse the claimants of not looking for work hard enough and then provide the justification needed to sanction claimants by suspending their benefits."
Under current plans by the DWP, jobseekers will be required to spend up to 35 hours per week in job search activities, so it is entirely possible that the metrics provided to Jobcentres from the Universal Jobmatch site would form a crucial part of enforcing this requirement.

Universal Automation's creators say that many of the jobs advertised on Universal Jobmatch are not actual jobs, "Numerous postings on the site are spam, identity fraud scams, or work disguised as self employment to avoid paying National Minimum Wage. Alternatively, many of the real jobs are simply automatically re-posted from other sites.

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Beauty Pageant Star Aims For The Top

by Chris Brown

Beauty Queen Hannah McGeoghegan is getting ready for one of the biggest days of 2014 with only a few months until the Miss Galaxy England Pageant in Preston. It's a big step from 3 years ago when Hannah was just starting out on the pageant scene. Originally hailing from Shotley Bridge, Hannah is now living over in Cumbria but still has strong ties to the local area which she remembers so fondly, regularly coming back for visits and holidays to see friends and family.

Hannah is set to be one of 60 girls in the Miss Galaxy England competition fighting it out for the coveted top spot on March 9th. It's a lot more than just looking the part as competitors need to be polite, graceful as well as having a great look. The Galaxy Pageant is split into categories and the 7 winners will head forward into the Miss Galaxy International competition which is held in the home of the pageant, The United States.
This would be a huge step for the Consett girl and we wish her all the best in achieving her dreams.

It's not all fun and games for Hannah as she takes her position and puts it to good use for a number of causes. She is currently a brand ambassador for radio station CFM which is the part of the same family as local station Metro Radio, Glitzarati Shoe Design and also promotes a wide range of charities in the time when she is not preparing for the next show. It's this combination of hard work and a positive attitude which have seen Hannah climb to the top and continue to strive for the next goal in her life.



Above: Hannah McGeoghegan and our bearded editor, Ivan.

We here at Consett Magazine would like to wish Hannah all the best in the upcoming competition.

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Northumberland Seeing Stars

by Chris Brown

> THE DARK SKY PARK WILL ALLOW BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR ASTROLOGISTS THE CHANCE TO SEE THE UNIVERSE IN BETTER DETAIL THAN EVER BEFORE.

The North East of England has always been a beautiful part of the UK. The vast forests of Kielder, the Derwent Reservoir and the expansive moors all add to the regions natural charm. Now, a large portion of Northumberland is being awarded the honour of being classified as a Dark Sky Park. These areas are designated as parts of the country where light pollution is at a minimum allowing full view of the stars which reside in the sky above us.

This is the first International Dark Sky Park in the UK and the biggest in Europe to date. It puts Northumberland in the same bracket as Death Valley in the United States. This is being done to help protect the skies for the future generations as light pollution becomes an ever increasing issue for star gazers in the UK. The Dark Sky Park will allow both professional and amateur astrologists the chance to see the universe in better detail than ever before.

The bid for the prestigious title awarded by the International Dark Sky Association took 2 years to finalise but it appears all of the hard work has paid off.

With the area around Kielder Forest and the Scottish Borders being certified as the perfect place to view the Milky Way, there has never been a better time to get out a telescope and peer into the majestic cosmic maelstrom which is space. You'd be mad not to head up the road to witness the beauty of these unspoiled views..

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by Chris Brown

Exercise To Prevent Dementia



Dementia is a serious mental illness which causes untold problems to a number of people all across the country. In recent weeks there has been a lot of talk about dementia with the Prime Minister David Cameron announcing that funding for dementia research will be doubled by the year 2025. A G8 summit held on the 11th of December last year saw a number of health chiefs from around the world getting together to help and solve the problem of dementia. Recent research has also been making progress to help unravel the mystery of dementia.

Performed over a 35 year period at Cardiff University, research has found that exercise may be the most important factor when it comes to reducing the risk of dementia in later life. Alongside exercise, there are also 4 other life factors which also play a part in reducing the risk of dementia, heart disease and strokes. A 60% reduction in dementia and a 70% decrease in heart disease is nothing to scoff at.

Exercise, not smoking, having a low body weight, a healthy diet and low alcohol intake are said to be the 5 major factors when it comes to reducing the risk of dementia. Whilst it seems simple and obvious, by following these simple steps you can significantly cut the risk of dementia and a number of cardiovascular diseases.

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Roast Parsnip & Rosemary Soup

Even though we are now in 2014, it's still winter. January is a time for staying warm and this recipe will help to do just that.

You will need; -

- 600g of chopped parsnip
- 4tbsp of oil
- 50g butter
- 225g of finely chopped onion
- 2 vegetable stock cubes
- 750ml of water
- 750ml of milk
- 1tbsp of rosemary

Instructions

1. - Place parsnips in a baking tray with the half of the oil and roast for 15 minutes at 200 degrees C.
2. - Heat the remaining oil, butter, rosemary and onions in a saucepan. Cover it up and let it fry gently for 3 to 4 minutes.
3. - Add the roasted parsnips and the rest of the ingredients to the saucepan and bring to the boil. From here, let the ingredients simmer for 5-7 minutes.
4. - Blend the mixture to a smooth consistency and season with salt and pepper to your liking.

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Whodunit?

by Lorraine Weightman

The Rotary Club of Consett organised a Murder Mystery Night at Snods Edge Village Hall to raise money for their charity funds.

The Snods Players who have been active since 1992 began by writing and performing pantomimes in the church hall to help raise money to support it. The members of the Players who are all connected to the hall are friends who wanted to keep their community thriving so they came up with this ingenious idea to raise funds.

The Snods Players began writing and performing their own Murder Mystery Nights in 2000 as a bit of fun after playing the commercial boxed sets on offer in the shops and finding them a bit predictable.

Sandy Rawson, who has written the plays for the last 13 years said none of the group expected it to take off the way it did but it proved so popular that other groups after seeing their performances wished to book them for their own charity events. It transpired that the players were performing at least once a month in church halls, working men's clubs, sports halls and a whole variety of venues in their own area and further afield. They have continued to entertain and amuse audiences over recent years and have been a popular choice with The Rotary Club of Consett who book them on an annual basis.

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Geraldine's Guarantees a Pleasant Café Experience in Consett

by Malcolm Clarke - http://malcolmclarke.blogspot.com

WHEN YOU VISIT GERALDINE'S YOU WILL NOTICE THAT SHE HAS EARNED THE LOYALTY FROM MANY REGULAR CUSTOMERS BY PROVIDING A GOOD "SERVICE EVERY DAY

Geraldine's café is situated on Victoria Road in Consett, directly opposite St. Patrick's Church. Geraldine's offers hot and cold food with tea and coffee in a pleasant café environment and is highly regarded by a growing number of customers.

Before the smoking ban came into force on 1st July 2007, it was permitted to smoke inside places of work. You may recall cafes being particularly affected as all customers dined in a very smoke filled environment. When the smoking ban came into force, smaller coffee shop and food businesses, often referred to as 'Greasy Spoons' instantly became more appealing to a wide range of customers.

Writing this short review I researched the term 'Greasy Spoon' and found it to mean a small establishment serving primarily fried food. It is part of British culture, however, although I tend to use the term in a more affectionate way, I would not wish to imply anything negative about Geraldine's as it is clean, tidy and well-presented. Customers receive a friendly service that offers tasty home cooked food at a good price.

When you visit Geraldine's you will notice that she has earned the loyalty from many regular customers by providing a good service every day. This delivers a community feel where customers get to know one another and visit regularly, some even dine there every day. It is not unusual to find myself waving and greeting a number of familiar faces because they were there the last time I visited.

Walking through Consett I note with dismay a number of empty shop units. I hope that businesses snap up the opportunity to let the units with shop frontage. Cafes like Geraldine's keep the soul of the traditional high street alive and we should support them to ensure they remain in business and available to us as local customers. There is a place for large supermarkets and large retailers, but we must not lose the small businesses in a marketplace that makes it very difficult for small businesses like Geraldine's to survive. You can be reassured that you are guaranteed good food, a warm welcome and I am sure you will return again.

There are many other small businesses like this in Consett and I look forward to profiling them in future editions. Any suggestions on a business or food establishment that deserves a special mention and praise for providing a dedicated service to the Consett community please contact the magazine.

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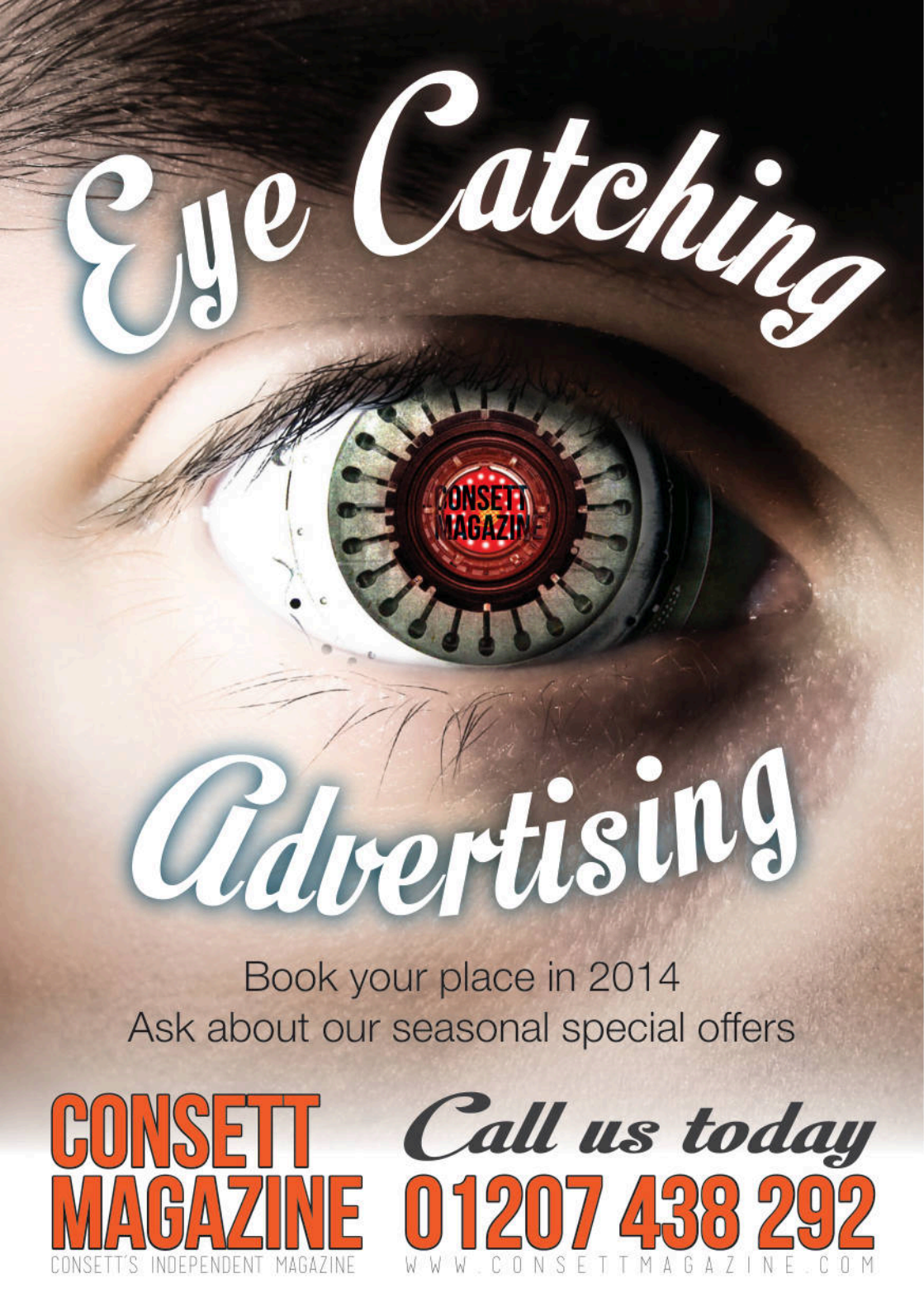

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Consett's Very Own Big Bad Wolf?

by Brian Harrison



In the winter of 1904 the local newspapers ran with the story "The Wolf of Allendale". From November 1904 until January 1905 the area around Allendale was gripped with the killing and mutilation of livestock sending the farming community into a fury. Farmers housed all their livestock each night and set up guards, but still the killing went on and over 40 sheep were lost.

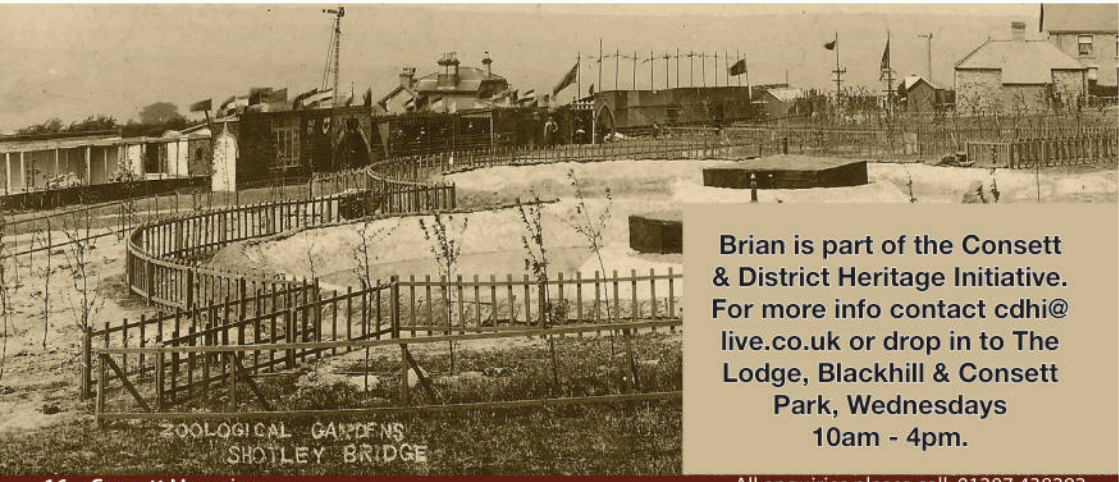
The main suspect at the time was a grey wolf which had escaped from Shotley Bridge Zoo some 3 months earlier. Captain Bain, owner of the Zoo, denied it could be his wolf as in his words "it was of no harm to man or beast".

The Wolf evaded capture on numerous occasions. The first time it evaded a hunting party of over 150 people and later a heavily armed hunt of over 200. It seemed as though nothing could be done. Numerous sightings were made, some stating the beast was Black and Tan some saying Grey and some even saying Dun. With so many variation people began to wonder if there was a family of wolves roaming the area.



In early January 1905 the body of a wolf was found on the railway tracks at Cumwinton, Cumbria some 30 miles from Hexham. Captain Bain rushed to the scene, only to profess the beast far too mature to be the cub he had lost. This may have been a method of Bain removing responsibility and blame for the wolf but only pure speculation. By the end of 1905 all reports stopped and the Wolf took its place in local history and folklore.

The Zoo at Shotley Bridge was only short lived, maybe due to this very incident. Initially a large house and garden planning approval was given to convert the site on the 15th January 1904 and was done on behalf on the Consett Iron Company. By the end of 1908 it was no longer viable and on 17th March 1909 planning permissions were approved to convert the area back into housing.



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

Winter of 1962/63

Buried in the snow at Christmas. A True story.

by Mike Bowden

The coldest winter since 1740 was about to descend on Great Britain. The country would suffer temperatures as low as minus twenty two degrees centigrade, the lowest for over 200 years. Rivers would freeze, livestock would be lost, and food supplies would run low. In one particular mining village, in the coalfields of North West Durham, the snow started on Christmas Eve.

Smoke from the hundred chimneys of Bradley Bungalows was whipped away to the south, as a bitter north wind blasted the little bungalows underneath. Fifty each side, they stepped down to the bottom of the hill. The night was clear, and millions of stars lit the sky. There were no street lights. At the bottom, the road wound upwards again, passing a huge pit heap on the way.

At the top of the hill, was the Eden Pit, its pithead wheel turning slowly, as it brought the last miners up from the bowels of the earth to celebrate their short winter holiday.

The snow began to fall as cloud moved in, the flakes bigger than anything we had ever seen. It was Christmas Eve, and the snow made it even more exciting. We were outside as quickly as possible. The cold didn't bother us, we were used to living in cold and damp conditions. But we soon felt the difference in temperature, compared to previous years. We pulled on homemade balaclavas, and old socks on our hands, as we couldn't afford gloves. The snow was soon deep enough for sledging, and it wasn't long before ' bleazers' appeared on the street.

These were made from steel, about two feet square, with a handle in the centre. There main use was for 'drawing' the coal fires, to get them burning more quickly, but they made excellent sledges. Finally, with frozen fingers, and balaclavas frozen to our faces, we were called in by our parents.

Read the rest of this story @ consettmagazine.com

Mike Bowden's book 'A Breed Apart' is available on Amazon.co.uk in paperback and kindle format

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Looking the Part

Does it really matter how you dress for an interview these days when most of us like to dress casually whenever we can?

From my experience with a wide range of employers the answer is yes it does matter how you present yourself. You really do have to look the part.

Many employers make a decision about a candidate within the first three minutes of them entering the room so make sure you are looking the part. This simply means that you need to appear to be suited to a particular type of work.

How do you know what the dress code is? Well, if it is not stated in the advert you could contact the employer or recruitment agency and ask. This shows initiative so make sure you leave your name when you call.

The nature of the job itself should give you some clues as to what is required. It is a pretty good bet that an office based job or a supervisory position will require you to dress smartly at interview.

By smart I mean a shirt and trousers or a smart skirt at the very least.

Regardless of the job it is wise to dress as smartly as you can for ANY interview. This shows:

- respect for the employer
- that you care about your image and presentation
- you have made an effort to impress

Whatever you do make sure you do your homework and find out what is expected of you. If you look the part and you are half way there.

If you turn up for interview in jeans and a tee shirt and the interviewers are all formally dressed it is unlikely that a brilliant interview will be enough to get you the job.

Many employers will appoint people who they think will "fit in" with their way of doing things. Meeting their dress code gives you a better chance of being hired than those who don't.

That is why looking the part is so important.



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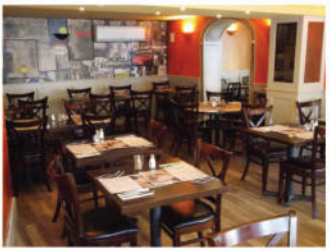


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Looking Back at the High Street Christmas Revival

by Jim Callan



Over the last ten-or-so years the traditional high street has come under threat by the recession, the out-of town shopping centres with their piped music and covered-in appeal and, above all, a lack of parking facilities.

But, over the last few years, the high street has fought back and has now returned to being the place to do festive and, of course, general shopping. Due, mainly in part, to local authorities changing parking policies and the return of many familiar retail and food stores to the high street.

As well as many of the big names, such as Tesco and Morrisons, concentrating on the high street, the more traditional businesses that range from photographic and bridal studios, the traditional fish and chip shops, independent fast food shops and franchises and discount shops have increased their presence. One example being the new Tesco complex in Gateshead.

However, perhaps the biggest benefit the high street has is the atmosphere that can only be found where there are a variety of businesses and activities that, whilst not entirely unique to the high street, can have an advantage over the out of town shopping malls.

For instance, and especially during festive periods such as Christmas and Easter, there's nothing like the atmosphere of the high street where party-goers and shoppers can mingle during both regular and extended shopping hours whilst under brightly coloured Christmas lights and even the traditional town and city centre Christmas tree.

As a further example of this, the high street can offer all-day, multi-venue entertainment in a way the malls can't. After all, an average shopping centre can't produce the atmosphere of the traditional city and town centre pub-crawl.

And, whilst the indoor experience offered by the likes of giant malls can be more convenient and comfortable, the high street can offer a more stimulating experience which can be preferable due to the flexibility, sights and sounds and atmosphere provided by the collective shops, bars, pubs and traditional high street businesses.

> THE HIGH STREET CAN OFFER ALL-DAY, MULTI-VENUE ENTERTAINMENT IN A WAY THE MALLS CAN'T
>
> “

All enquiries please call: 01207 438292

by Chris Brown

CHROMECAST: THE NEW WAY TO WATCH TV

Smart TVs are one of the newest ways to bring internet connectivity to your televisual experience. One of the newest ideas out the Google headquarters is the Chromecast. This tiny device could be the next big development in interactive TV services as it turns a regular HDTV into a modern Smart TV. By adding the Chromecast dongle into the HDMI port of your TV, it is possible to open up a whole new world of interactivity to your TV.



By connecting to your WIFI connection, the Chromecast can stream video media from your PC or tablet to your television in full HD where available. This means you can watch Netflix, Youtube and Love Film on your TV rather than using your laptop. Whilst some older Youtube videos may look dated when stretched onto a big TV screen, newer media looks fantastic and helps to bring some of the latest internet exclusives onto your TV screen.

At only 30 grams, the Chromecast is a lightweight and impressive piece of kit which will no doubt be a big hit when it is released in the UK costing almost 1/3 or the Apple TV systems which are available.

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Microsoft Windows XP Is It Time To Move On?

Microsoft Windows is the world's most popular operating system for personal computers. Windows XP has a large userbase despite being 12 years old. The graphical user interface which turned computing upside down was the original breakthrough which has lead to the Seattle based company becoming a household name worldwide. Windows 8 may be the latest version of the software but recent research has shown something much different.

It has been found that 31% of Windows users are still using the XP version of the software which was released back in 2001. Whilst XP is an easy to use and lightweight operating system, support for the technology is to be stopped in March. This leaves current XP users in business and home applications with a predicament. There will be no new updates to help keep the OS secure against cyber attacks. This means that XP users could well become a target of malicious internet crimes.

Microsoft suggests that users move to a newer version of the operating system like Windows 7 or the recent update Windows 8. Many people have grown to love XP in a way which could never have been imagined. XP was the software which many of us have grown accustomed to. It was accessible, easy and ergonomic.



The latest version of Windows, Windows 8 has be created to incorporate touch screen technology and an easier to use interface.

It is recommended that XP users consider upgrading their operating system to get the latest security updates.

hits
Health Improvement Through Sport

Looking to become more active or try something new?

The Health Improvement Through Sport programme offers fun and accessible activities throughout the community.



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TUES	Boxercise	Annfield Plain Community Centre 6.00 - 7.00 p.m.	£1.50, All welcome
	Table Tennis	St. James' Church Hall, Burnopfield | 6.00 - 7.30 p.m.	£1.50, Children welcome*
WED	Cricket Conditioning	Beamish and East Stanley Cricket Club | 6.00 - 6.45p.m.	Free for club members, £2.00 for public, All welcome
	Pilates	Ebchester Village Hall 6.30 - 7.30 p.m.	£1.50, All welcome
	Over 40s Keep Fit	White-le-Head Methodist Church 7.15 - 8.15 p.m.	£1.50, Over 40s
THURS	No Strings Badminton	The Louisa Centre, Stanley 6.00 - 7.30 p.m.	£2.00, Children welcome*
SUN	Archery	Consett Academy (North Campus) 9.30 - 11.30 a.m.	£2.00, All welcome
	Xpress Tennis	St. Bede's Catholic School, Lanchester | 11.00 - 12 noon	£1.00, Over 18s

*Children welcome but must be accompanied by a participating adult.

For more details contact: Rebecca Haynes, Sports Development Co-ordinator
Leisureworks, The Louisa Centre, Front Street, Stanley, DH9 0TE
Email: r.haynes@leisureworks.net | Phone: 01207 218505
www.leisureworks.net and click on Sports Development

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LEGO LEAPING BACK - SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS

by Chris Brown

2014 is looking like it could be the year of the Lego brick as February sees the release of the first Lego movie! The Lego Movie certainly isn't a low budget affair, as the cast of this animated epic features the likes of Liam Neeson, Will Ferrell and Jonah Hill trying to save the world of Lego by using their building skills.

As with most film releases, there will no doubt be a range of Lego toys being released to supplement the film. Keep you eye out for this great release for the kids.

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Entertainment 2014

is looking to be a great year for entertainment as the latest films, games and music will be hitting the shelves in the coming months. Let's take a look at what is happening in entertainment this year.

In the cinema, this month sees the release of the long awaited remake of the classic action thriller RoboCop. Whilst many are wondering why the original has been remade, this film is set to be a great action spectacular to start off the year.

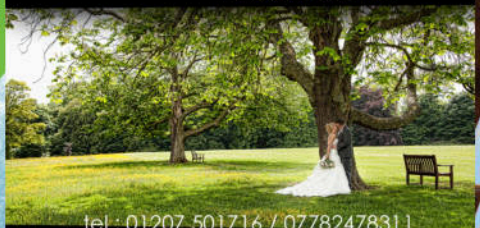
2014 is set to be the new dawn for gaming with both the PS4 and Xbox One. March brings with it the next instalment of the popular Metal Gear Solid series with MGS5: Ground Zeroes. This stealth action blast will be available on PS3, PS4, Xbox 360 and Xbox One. Donkey Kong Tropical Freeze will be making it's way onto WiiU in February to bring Nintendo's favourite ape into 2014.

These are just a few releases which are looking to make this a memorable year for gamers everywhere.

The world of music is just as exciting in 2014 with some big albums making their way out this year. After her success in the 2013 Strictly Come Dancing, Sophie Ellis-Bextor is releasing her new album Wanderlust in January. If pop is your thing then don't miss out on this release.

Remember to keep a look out for reviews and previews of the latest entertainment releases on consettmagazine.com.

IN FOCUS STUDIO
Photography by Gerard Turner



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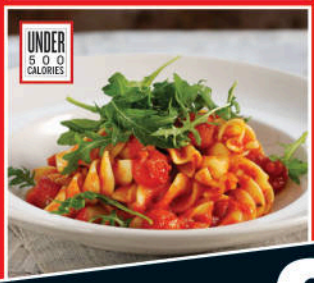

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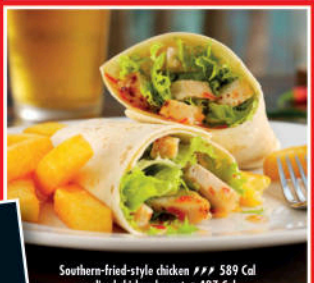

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Tue 7 Jan - Hartlepool United (Durham CC 2)	Home
Sat 11 Jan - Shildon	Home
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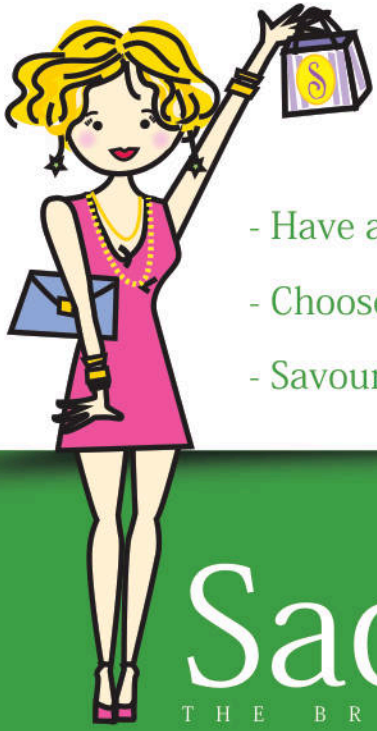
Football News

After a high flying December where the Steelmen showed their skills in an amazing 10-2 victory against struggling Northern League One side Bedlington, Consett will be looking to take this amazing form into the new year. January is set to be a busy month for Consett AFC with 5 games scheduled throughout this month.

Some of the highlights will be the clash against Sunderland RCA on the 3rd of January and League 2 Hartlepool United visiting the Belle Vue Stadium in the Durham County Cup on the 7th of January. This will be a great test for the Consett lads and shouldn't be missed. All throughout the month there will be home games every Saturday so make sure you get along and support your local team.



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In The Summer Time When the Weather is High

by Rob Grinter - Read more @ consettmagazine.com

We Brits are fixated about the weather and this is especially true if you happen to play or follow cricket. After the summer washout of 2012 Shotley Bridge Cricket Club enjoyed a successful season.

The first team seem to be making a habit of winning the A. M. Brown trophy and won it again last season for the third year in succession. Not to be outdone the third team went one better and won the Hetton Lyons Sunday league.

The club has spent a lot of effort developing its junior section and this paid off handsomely when the Under 18s and under 13s produced a crop of players capable of winning their respective leagues. A number of junior players also stepped up to play for the first and second teams which shows the rich stream of talent which is coming through at the club.





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