CONSETT MAGAZINE

FREE

Consett's Independent Magazine

ISSUE 21 / April 2014



PLANTING TREES FOR POLIO

We take a look at a community project to end polio.

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Local photographers capture the amazing Northern Lights.

A MURDER OF CROWS

Find out what the collective nouns are for some animals.

CONSETT FESTIVAL

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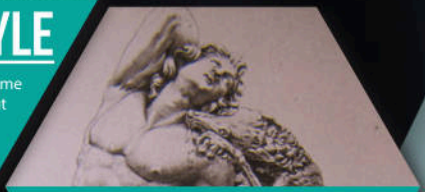
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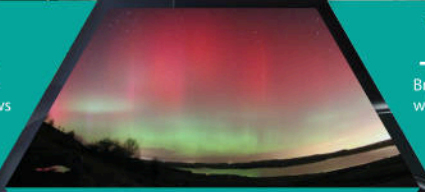
Learn about the the collective name for some animals as well as an out of this world story.





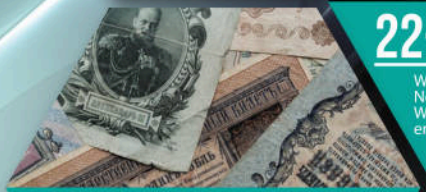
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WELCOME

TO ISSUE 21 OF CONSETT MAGAZINE

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CATRINA ROWLANDS

BETHANY CUNNINGHAM

Hello everyone and welcome to the April edition of the Consett Magazine. Things have been a bit different here at Consett Magazine headquarters this month as our favourite editor Ivan is taking a well earned break, leaving myself and our lead designer Marco with the roles of guest editor for the month.

This issue is packed with great stories to help get you through those April showers and into a sunny Spring. The big thing which is happening this April is the return of Consett Festival. Last year we had a fantastic day at the rugby club enjoying some great music and even better company. I highly recommend you head along to this years event. You can find out more in this month's entertainment section.

Alongside this we have a whole host of other stories from around the area from the beautiful Northern Lights to what's been going on at Derwentside College. I hope you enjoy this edition of the Consett Magazine.

CHRIS BROWN - ACTING EDITOR

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NEW PRINCIPAL AT DERWENTSIDE COLLEGE

Consett based Derwentside College is delighted to announce the appointment of Karen Redhead as its new Principal and Chief Executive. Karen takes over the reins following the retirement of Albert Croney after eight years at the helm, which has seen the College go from strength to strength to become one of the largest providers of work-based vocational training across the North East region.

With an extensive knowledge of further education, Karen has held a number of senior roles over the last 20 years before being appointed as the College's Director of Curriculum and Quality and Deputy Principal in 2010. At a time when the College has succeeded in gaining significantly above national average results for its learners progressing to apprenticeships, Karen is eager to take the College forward to its next stage of development building upon its many recent achievements.

Karen said "I am absolutely delighted to be appointed as Principal and Chief Executive of Derwentside College. The College has an excellent and well deserved reputation for getting people into good jobs and for helping employers to up-skill their workforces. We have developed some key strategic partnerships that were judged to be outstanding by Ofsted in our most recent inspection. I am looking forward to working with the senior team and our strategic partners to build on the many successes achieved to date and to realise our ambitious and forward-thinking plans for the future".

For further information, please contact the College's marketing team on 01207 585900.



WORLD HEALTH DAY

Written by Ben Mullen

World Health Day is celebrated every year on the 7 April. This date marks the founding of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1948. Each year a specific theme is chosen and highlighted to bring an area of public health to attention - 2014 is focused on vector-borne diseases.

A vector is an organism that transmits pathogens/parasites from one infected person or animal to another. The infection spread by a vector is called a vector-borne disease - which are illnesses within animal and human populations. Probably the most well-known, and certainly the most deadly, vector-borne disease is Malaria. However, the fastest growing disease of this nature is Dengue (or Dengue Fever), which at its worst can develop into variants of the base disease and cause bleeding, low levels of blood platelets, and dangerously low blood pressure.

In addition to World Health Day, April also sees two other significant campaigns - World Immunization Week during the last week of April, and World Malaria Day on 25 April.



Written by Bethany Cunningham

THE BIG CAKE BAKE IS BACK...

Due to the high success that Dans Monster Cake bake showed last year, the event is yet again taking place this year to show even more support than they did last year. The cake bake event will be in aid of the NDCS - National Deaf Childrens Society - this charity means a lot to the host and it would be much appreciated it if you came along to raise as much as you can for the children in the society.

To add to this fun day, Mica McNeill - British bobsleigh champion - will be attending the event to show her support to the NDCS. At 19 years old Mica, has won a silver medal in the two-man bob with Jazmin Sawyers at the inaugural Innsbruck 2012 Youth Olympic Games. Since then, she has gained a bronze medal in the 2012 World junior Champions. Miss McNeill, coming from the North East herself, is more than happy to be attending the Big Cake Bake.

There will be a lot of enjoyable things happening inside of the event itself including a raffle with lots of prizes, facepainting, nail art and glitter tattoos from Alpha Glitz; make sure you don't miss out on these fantastic prize giveaways by getting your tickets now. Tickets have been on sale from the 22nd of March.

Anyone who would like to donate any yummy treats to the cake bake such as cakes, biscuits, scones and pies are more than welcome, as you will be a big help for raising funds for the children at the NDCS. Also for any volunteers out there, your help would be valued.

This spectacular cake bake event will take place on Saturday 10th May between the hours of 12 noon and 2pm, at Bishop Ian Ramsey school in Medomsley, Consett. What's more is that this event is public so bring as much support as possible. If you would like tickets or more information about the event don't hesitate to contact: **thecakebakesociety@yahoo.com.**

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PLANTING TREES TO END POLIO

Written by Chris Brown

On Saturday the 8th of March, a group of dedicated volunteers got together at Crookhall Community Centre to help make a difference in the fight against Polio. The event organised by the Derwentside Rotary Club aimed to be part of the final push towards ending the disease in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria where it is still endemic.

By allowing people to sponsor trees which were marked to be planted in the designated site in Crookhall donated by Durham County Council, the Derwentside Rotary Club were able to help raise money for this important cause whilst providing a new woodland area in the region.

The volunteers all met at Crookhall Community Centre for a brief introduction to the day followed by instructions from local company Groundwork North East.

With 500 various trees to plant, the large team who gave up their time to help this project set about delivering saplings to their new home in Crookhall. Leaving enough space for the local kids to still have their favourite sledging spot in the winter, Polio Wood will help to transform what was once a slag heap from the old Crookhall Colliery into a great wood for future generations to enjoy.

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LOCAL WELDER IS A STEP CLOSER TO WORLDSKILLS, SAO PAULO, BRAZIL!

Local welder, Reece Taylor from Consett, has become a member of the Squad UK Pool; this is the first step towards the next International WorldSkills Competition. He is currently serving an apprenticeship at Dyer Engineering in Consett, County Durham, and is training for his welding qualifications at Derwentside College. All of the top three highest scoring candidates from the North East Regional Semi Final of SkillWeld2013 are apprentices at Derwentside College.

Graeme Parkins, Managing Director of Dyer Engineering, said: "We are delighted at the recognition Reece is receiving from his participation in the SkillWeld competition. It reflects fantastically on his individual skill and talent, but also underlines the importance and emphasis we at Dyer Engineering place on training people within our business and developing our own pipeline of talent for the future success of our business."

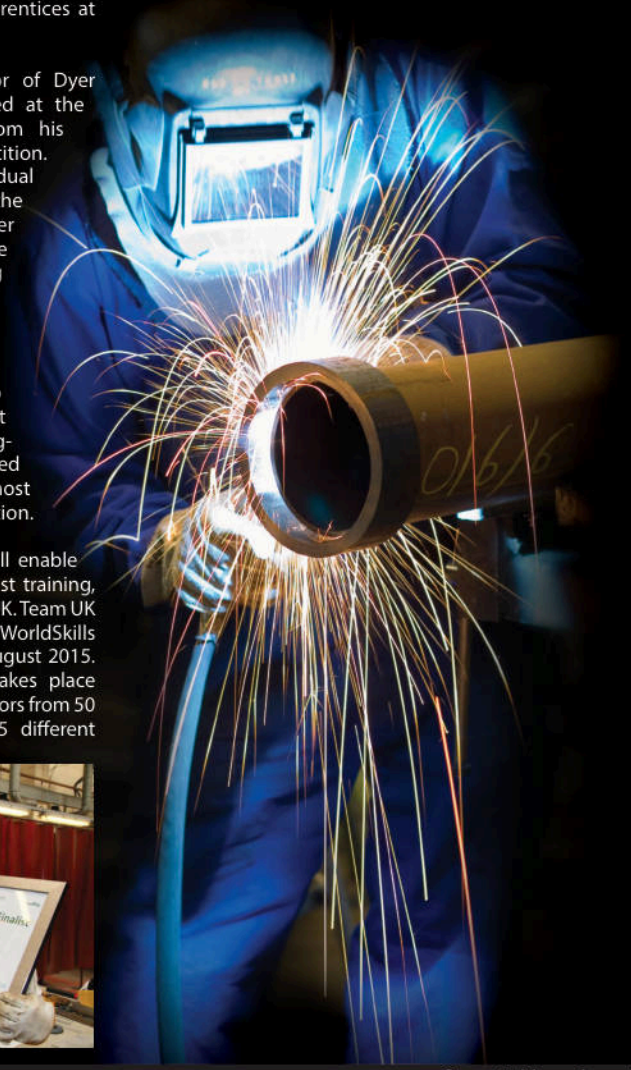
Reece was one of just ten welders from the Semi-Finals invited to compete at the national final – held at The Skills Show, in the NEC Birmingham. The winner will be crowned SkillWeld 2014 champion, the UK's most prestigious, national welder competition.

Being part of the Squad UK Pool will enable Reece to take part in further specialist training, leading to the final selection of Team UK. Team UK will represent the UK at the 43rd WorldSkills competition in São Paulo, Brazil in August 2015. This final WorldSkills Competition takes place over four days, with over 800 competitors from 50 different countries competing in 45 different skills.



DERWENTSIDE COLLEGE WOULD LIKE TO WISH REECE 'GOOD LUCK' IN THE NATIONAL FINAL!

For more information about apprenticeships at Derwentside College please contact 01207 585900



CONSETT DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT GET CREATIVE



Written by Chris Brown

Members of the Consett Detached Youth Project have been busy designing a new logo for the group with the help of Firefly New Media.

In a session at the Firefly Offices on Middle Street, 3 members of the Detached Youth Project came to share their ideas for a fresh new logo. Ran by Firefly New Media, the session involved a look at the processes which are involved when professional design agencies develop a concept into a full blown finished product.

Starting with activities looking at the impact branding has, the three teens set to work analysing their favourite logos to see what stands out and works in a design. After some serious sketching, work moved on to the development of the new Detached Youth Project logo.

By taking everyone's different ideas a concept was developed and refined to create a unique and vibrant logo for the Detached Youth Project which has been designed and developed by the young people who make up the very fibre of what the project strives to do.

Consett Detached Youth Project are a great cause which set out to help young people across the local area by meet with young people on the streets to forward them to more worthwhile endeavours whilst giving advice surrounding health, drug and alcohol, parenting and well-being. This charity helps to provide the young people of Consett with opportunities to explore the possibilities of what is available to them.

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Written by Susan Ross

The Derwent Valley Car Club, based in Blackhall Mill, has an environmentally friendly electric car that you can use as often as you like. If you drive less than 8,000 miles per year then a car club could save you up to £3,500 a year. Car clubs give you greater flexibility, charging only for the time you hire the car, not when it is sitting on the drive.

Car bookings are on a first-come first-served basis, but experience in other Car Clubs shows that there is little problem with availability.

It costs £5 per month to become a member but this fee is offset against any use of the car each month. It then costs £5 per hour to use the car although there is an introductory offer of: £5 for 1 hour, £9 for 2 hours, £12 for 3 hours. The time must be used together i.e. a one, two or three hour booking.

There are no mileage fees or hidden costs. Insurance, servicing and maintenance costs are all covered by the car club so you can enjoy hassle free motoring!

We also need volunteers to help run the club, so if you're interested in joining the Club or volunteering why not drop email to:

dvcarclub@yahoo.co.uk

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LANCHESTER WRITERS

A group of local writers meet together each Tuesday at Lanchester Library to share their stories and poetry. The group which has been meeting weekly for a number of years welcomes anyone who has a love of words and wishes to share their work with like minded others.





Lanchester Library make the members very welcome and provide a comfortable place in the main part of the Library for the group to enjoy. In the two hours between 2pm and 4pm the group read pieces they have worked on from the previous week and then proceed with their workshop. All are encouraged to share their stories, poems or life writing in an extremely relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

Lanchester Writers are looking for new members to join them, you will be made very welcome. If you are interested please email **lorraine7556@gmail.com**
Lanchester Library is situated on the corner of Front Street and Newbiggen Lane, opposite the community centre.

Supernova screen reading software and large keyboards are available for people who are visually impaired.

If you are travelling by bus, the X31 (to Newcastle via Annfield Plain and Stanley) stops just outside the library. Service 15 (to Consett and Durham) stops opposite the library. There is parking for two cars behind the library, with additional parking spaces behind the community centre and on Front Street.

Written by Lorraine Weightman

Visiting writers and poets visit the Library on occasion to inspire and encourage aspiring writers.
There is a poetry reading workshop taking place on Tuesday 8th April from 2pm - 3pm. For more details contact 01207 521021

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HOLISTIC HEALING

Written by Chris Brown

On any given Saturday at Citizen's House on Station Road, you can head along and experience a new and completely natural method of healing and relaxation which involves no medication or painful procedures. Holistic healing and Reiki are two different ways which natural energy can be used to help alleviate pain and reduce symptoms of medical conditions. I went along to the Derwentside Centre For Wellbeing to see exactly what these forms of treatment entail and how they could help a lot of people in the local area coping with illness.

First off I went to see Alan to get a taste of his holistic healing methods. Lying on a bed with soothing music playing in the background, Alan set away with transferring his energy to various parts of my body. As he was working a distinct heat could be felt on the areas being focused as I fell into an almost meditative state. Holistic healing works by promoting self healing through relaxing the body and attempting to strengthen the immune system.

After a half hour session with Alan, I proceeded to visit Jennifer who also works out of the Derwentside Centre for Wellbeing. Unlike Alan, Jennifer specialises in the use of Reiki which roughly translates to "universal life force". Rather than transferring energy from healer to patient, Reiki works through the practitioner drawing the natural energy from the environment. This method of treatment is again a great way to relieve stress and relax in what is a busy, fast paced world.

The Derwentside Centre for Wellbeing operate on a non-profit basis and suggest a donation of £5 for each visit. This money is used to keep the centre open providing treatments for those who need them. I spoke with a long term fan of holistic healing who talked about the feeling of peace and calm the treatment can bring about making it a great option to relieve stress.

If you are interested in either Holistic Healing or Reiki, then don't hesitate to get in touch with the respective practitioners.

Holistic Healing – Alan – 01207 506987
Reiki – Jennifer – 01207 500602

I'd like to thank both Alan and Jennifer for giving me a short taster of what holistic healing and reiki treatment can do to heal and relax.

ALBERT ROAD CAR PARK

Local councillors have voted on limiting parking in popular places, such as Consett's Albert Road car park. There have been rumours about traders from Consett demanding restrictions for the main car park on Albert Road for many years.

Last July, Durham County Council monitored the 157 spaces in Consett's town centre for two days and on average 90% of the car park was filled by 9am, and 477 vehicles were in and out of the car park on a daily basis. However, there were 121 cars parked for longer than three hours.

Traders say they are losing out because motorists are unable to just pop in to the town centre quickly. The final decision was decided on Wednesday 12th March, there will be a three-hour limit between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday - with no return within an hour.

However, traders also say that they will have nowhere to park whilst at work, so the local residents of the Consett town will be forced to have cars displaced onto their streets. In this case shoppers are the main priority, not the workers - this is because there is another four car parks in the Consett town area for the traders to park - as shoppers would prefer to be in close range if they are just doing a quick sweep.

It would be beneficial to build brand new car parks, however Consett does not have the money or the space to be starting up huge projects like that. Although anything that can be done, will be done.

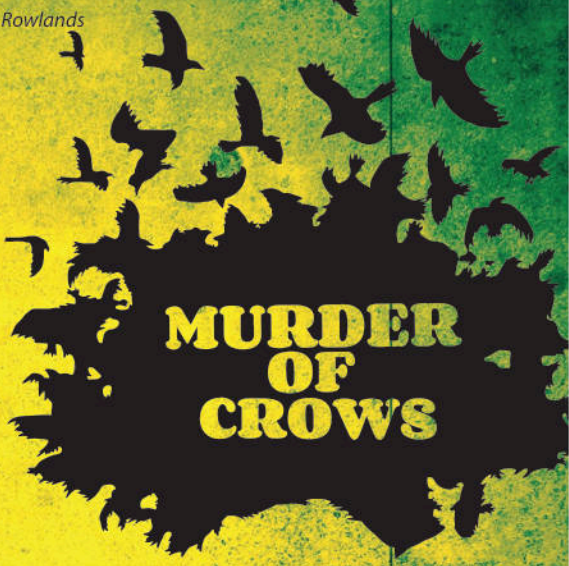
Written by Bethany Cunningham

QUINTESSENTIALLY BRITISH

Written by Catrina Rowlands

Recently, I discovered that a group of crows is called a murder. Later I was to find out that a collection of ferrets is a business! How poetic, how deliciously unlicensed! Keeping the tapestry of English alive along with nursery rhymes and folklore.

Steeped in the poetry of superstitions and levity. Perhaps helping to make the backbone of English. It is also an interesting exploration of our relationships to these animals. It captured my imagination and I began to look deeper.
Most of us have heard of a herd of sheep or a flock of doves but who has ever heard of a flock of lice! **Below are some of the quirkiest examples I have found.**



APES: *A Shrewdness, Troop*
SEA BIRDS: *Wreck*
WILD CATS: *Destruction*
CLAMS: *Bed*
FROGS: *Army*
SALAMANDERS: *Congress*
WOMBATS: *Wisdom*
ZEBRAS: *Zeal*

You can find out more at thealmightyguru.com/pointless/animalgroups.html

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PARIS MATATHON

Written by Ben Mullen

Ian Campbell is a 37 year old living in Consett. In 2009 Ian several seizures that initially resulted in a diagnosis of epilepsy - however, after more tests and investigation into his symptoms it was discovered that he had an incurable heart condition called Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy. Mr Campbell is a keen cyclist and runner, but exertive exercise can actually make the condition more serious as it strengthens the heart muscle further. As he didn't want to give up such an important part of his life, Ian made the decision to raise money for The Cardiomyopathy Association.

Unfortunately, less than three months after running the London Marathon, Ian suffered another two serious seizures which resulted in a broken arm and a fractured spine - putting him out of action for months. Despite additional seizures since January 2013, Ian has worked tirelessly to get back to peak fitness in time for the Paris Marathon this April.

"I could not have achieved any of this without the brilliant and invaluable help of Consett Run England and the brilliant Blackhill Bounders Running Club whose members have supported and encouraged me every single step of the way!"

With little time remaining until the event starts, we want to wish Ian the best of luck and hope that he raises even more money than he already has - so far he has raised over £200!

http://www.justgiving.com/Ian-Campbell14

THE ALIEN

Lucy Renwick, aged 9 lives in Castleside with her Mum and Dad Louise and Jay ,Ruby the bulldog and Daisy the cat. Lucy attends St Pius X primary school in Castleside, the school normally enters Radio 2's ' 500 words' , a competition open to school kids up to the age of 14, for story writing. It encourages children to use their imagination and write a story of no more than 500 words. Lucy has in previous years entered the competition through her school however this year the school weren't taking part so Lucy decided to use her own initiative and enter herself. Lucy has a vivid imagination and loves writing stories as you will find from reading the 'ALIEN AND ME'. You can find Lucy's story "The Alien and Me" on our website in full.

STARBUCKS SERVES CONSETT

Euro Garages have invested £400,000 in the development of a Starbucks store in Consett. As well as a premium coffee offer, customers will be able to use the space for both social and business use with the added benefit of free Wi-Fi. There will also be adequate customer facilities including car parking and disabled facilities.

Euro Garages hope to create 20 new jobs in the area. Euro Garages currently employees just under 2,000 staff members across its 120 site estate.

Euro Garages are committed to raising aspiration levels in local areas and are proactively involved in the local community.

As part of on-going investment and growth plans, Euro Garages are looking to acquire additional sites and locations in the North East.

We'd like to know what you think about the recent development at Genisis Way.

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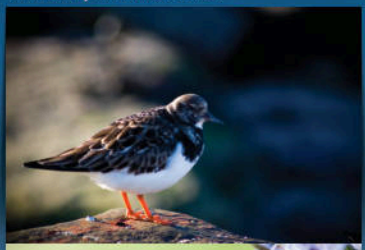
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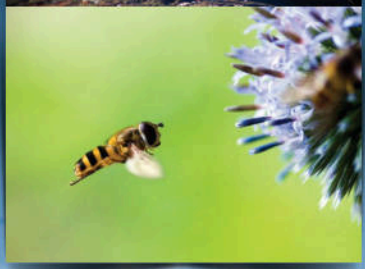
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ST MARY'S LIGHTHOUSE

Written by Thomas Jones

I awoke to the whistle of the wind through the extractor in my bathroom, my usual Saturday morning haze disturbed quite abruptly by the icy blast that has inflicted itself on my locality. Blurry-eyed, I wander to my window to see another dusting of snow has fallen, as if a baker has been to work with a sieve and some icing sugar.





My photography has been on the back burner of late through horrendous weather and other more pressing commitments. I had, however promised myself a trip this day, but where was another matter altogether. I usually meticulously plan a photography trip so I'm not arriving blind which tends to lead to disappointment but today, I'm going out under-prepared.

I decide over my stodgy porridge that today I must photograph the coast; the raging winds and darting clouds promising some good seascapes. And after some thought I decide where specifically I must head – St Mary's Island.

On arrival I was given less than a warm welcome from the wind; relentless in its attack on any exposed skin, this weather was truly blighting. I heaved my camera bag and tripod onto my back with a groan and headed off down the exposed road to the sea. I jump down onto the wet sand, rippled rock hard from the forgotten force of the last high tide, the remains of seaweed torn from its anchors and strewn across the beach like leaves in an autumn gale.

I wonder onto what appears to be a lifeless strip of sand and rock but experience tells me not to be so sure. A moment spent studying the rocks, pools and waterline exposes a raft of bird life, so well attuned to its harsh environment they're barely visible, this colour chart of browns hiding them from all but the keenest eyes.



THE MAD MOMENT THAT CREATED AN ARTISTIC GENIUS.



Written by Brian Harrison

John Graham Lough was born 8 Jan 1798 in Black Hedley near Consett the son of William Lough a local Blacksmith and his wife Barbara (nee Clements). As a young man he became apprenticed to a local Stonemason at Shotley Field and his passion for art began to build. All the while he had been encouraged to look further afield by Mr Silvertop and explore his artistic skills. It was this encouragement and his new career as a stonemason which propelled him at the age of 26 to head to London and study the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum.

He took up residence in Burleigh Street, London above a greengrocer's shop were he commenced his "Milo of Croton" inspired by Michelangelo's master pieces. Lough became obsessed with his work and soon the piece became too big for the room and in a fit of madness he smashed through the ceiling above. His landlord was incensed and called for Mr Henry Brougham (later to become Lord Brougham) in order to take legal action. Unfortunately for the landlord on seeing the artwork Mr Brougham was spell bound and word spread quickly. Within days the house was besieged by people wanting to see this master-piece. His work impressed London society so much that soon he had his choice of patrons which in turn helped establish his career.

By 1826 his sculptures had been displayed in Royal Academy and he had the pick of work. He eventually took up the advice of the Mr Silvertop and went to Rome with his family for 4 years from 1834-38 where he studied in the neo classical style. Arguably one of his best and most famous sculptures is the Stephenson Memorial, Newcastle completed in 1862.

Lough died on 8 April 1876 and was buried Kensal Green cemetery, London a long way from his simple roots on the outskirts of Consett

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5 WEALTHIEST BRITISH FAMILIES HAVE MORE THAN THE LOWEST 20%

Written by Chris Brown

Leading British charity Oxfam has recently released a report which shows the top 5 wealthiest families in the UK having more money in total than the lowest 20% of the British population. This shocking report has highlighted the financial disparity which can be seen in the UK today. The group which features the Duke of Westmister and Sports Direct and Newcastle United owner Mike Ashley have a combined wealth of that of the poorest 12.6 million people together.

Oxfam have now urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osbourne to take drastic steps to curb tax avoidance from the rich and introduce a living wage to help the regular person out on the street. This is a contentious issue and the Labour party have already made it clear that a living wage is one of their priorities for the next general election campaign.

Poverty in the UK is now a genuine concern as the cost of living increases significantly in comparison to the current minimum wage which will rise by 3% to £6.50 an hour in October of this year.

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PENSIONS CLOCK IS TICKING

Written by Rob Grinter

My article on Pensions Auto Enrolment in February's Consett Magazine seems to have hit a nerve with employers and employees alike.

Some employers have expressed ignorance of, or at best a vague understanding of, what the changes will mean for their business or their employees. In one local company none of the workforce knew anything at all about Auto Enrolment. This is worrying to me as a HR person as employers face quite strict financial penalties if they miss their date for setting up a pension scheme.

I don't provide pensions advice so I have no vested interest in the matter. I do however urge employers and employees to start asking the following key questions now.

If you are an employer now is the time to set up a suitable pension scheme for your employees. This will take at least a few months to arrange. You can get advice from any number of Independent Financial Advisers in the Consett area. Make sure they are independent and not tied to one specific pension provider. You will need the best scheme for your business and your employees.

If you already operate a pension scheme this may already meet the requirements of Auto Enrolment but please do not assume that it does. Take advice from a pensions expert.

If you are an employee why not ask your employer for information on your membership of a company pension scheme? You may not earn enough to be automatically enrolled into a scheme but you may still be allowed to join if you wish.

I asked three Consett based financial experts for their opinions and here they are:

Philip Bousfield of Advanced Financial Planning said " All employers will have to set up a pension scheme sooner or later. Now is the time to check when you have to be compliant with the law."

David Wilson of The Independent Financial Advice Bureau said "This is a big opportunity for employees to establish an income in retirement. Their employers need to seek professional advice now."

Graham Spratt of Positive Solutions Financial Services said " Pension providers now have a backlog. Don't get caught out with the large penalties which will be levied for not complying".

So there you are; the pensions experts have spoken. What are you waiting for?

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NIGHT OF LIGHTS

Written by Dave Thompson

"Can you see it?" I shout hysterically down the phone to my wife. "See what?" she replies. "The aurora, look out of the bedroom window and down the street!". "What am I looking for?" she replies. "A big green arc with lots of red and columns!".

This is the telephone conversation that took place on the evening of Thursday 27th February. My wife was tucked up at home in the warm, I was in a cold, muddy layby near Edmundbyers frantically snapping away with my DSLR while the Aurora Borealis danced over Derwent reservoir.

I had spent the early evening glued to Aurora forecasting websites. A huge 'X-class' flare had erupted on the Sun's eastern limb, two days earlier, throwing off a wave of charged particles, and there was a chance the wave would sideswipe the Earth that evening and trigger Aurorae. The moon was new, and the weather forecast was for clear skies, the conditions could not have been better.

The Earth has a liquid iron core which generates a magnetic field around us. This magnetic field acts as a shield, deflecting harmful charged particles from the Solar Wind that would strip away our atmosphere left unchecked. Despite this, a small number of particles still manage to make their way down into the atmosphere around the poles and there they energise atoms of Oxygen and Nitrogen causing them to emit photons (packets of light) in various colours – green and red for Oxygen, purple and blue for Nitrogen. It's like a Neon light on a giant scale! This all takes place many miles up so there is nothing to be scared of!

The earth is constantly bombarded by charged particles from the solar wind. This is usually enough to trigger Aurora Borealis at northerly latitudes, but for us southerners, we really need a solar storm to enjoy the show. On 27th February we got the storm of the decade!

The Aurora Borealis is not the brightest of astronomical phenomena, you need dark skies to observe it in all its glory. Fortunately, in Consett, we are privileged to live on the edge of some of the darkest skies in England, in the North Pennine AONB.

Dave Thompson
Durham Astronomical Society
http://www.durhamastronomy.org/

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OCULUS RIFT

Written by Ben Mullen

The Oculus Rift is widely considered to be the next best thing in the gaming industry - a head-mounted virtual reality display that responds to movement both in the virtual world and the real world. Users of the technology feel as though they are truly involved in what they're seeing, seemingly interacting with objects and even people through the display. Oculus VR are developing the device, having raised over 50 million pounds to start the project, and so far have released a developers kit at a total cost of $300 (£180); this has encouraged a range of developers to begin making their games compatible with the software, with some games being designed specifically with the Oculus Rift in mind.



More recently the company have been celebrating the addition of a new member to the team, a former employee of gaming giant Valve Software, DICE, and even Intel - Atman Binstock. With his introduction to the project he brought his expertise of developing a VR system at Valve to improve the Oculus' systems, effectively removing 'simulator sickness'.

A consumer version of the device is expected to be available for purchase later this year or early 2015, however Oculus VR have not yet confirmed any planned or rumoured release dates. Even without the consumers version available, a variety of games are compatible with the system, from first person shooters such as Team Fortress 2 to simulation games like Second Life.

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A NEW EMAIL HACK THAT IS DOING THE ROUNDS

Written by Malcolm Clarke

I opened my email and had one message from someone I know very well, a female colleague in her sixties. The message asked me to send her money as she was on holiday and it revealed someone had stolen her money and her phone and having had her holiday ruined, she wanted to come home straight away but needed money to do so. Fortunately I was able to call this person and as well as checking she was alright, advise her to quickly change her email password and run a full virus check on her computer, as it was clear her email account had been hacked.



As email scams go it was one of the more believable ones. It contained no link to buy cheap pills online, nor did it advise me of a large inheritance that I could obtain a healthy percentage of in return for assisting moving the funds. It is often difficult to tell whether emails are genuine, particularly if someone is asking for help. A simple rule of thumb is, when the email gives you an excuse about why you cannot call the sender and/or urges immediate action without delay, you should do a bit of checking and you should never send money directly through a link provided in the email.

These problems are usually unsophisticated hacks where the Trojan or virus sends emails to your contact list. Almost all of the time they will ask for money or send links to products, unfortunately often of an explicit nature. These hacks are frustrating, intrusive and can cause offence, they are certainly one of the downsides of being online. However, a full scan with your anti-virus software and a password change usually sees things return to normal.

Patricia Greensmith, who runs the Willington-based Chyrelle Addams Cancer Support Trust and sings under her stage name Chyrelle Adams, recently went to the press after her email was hacked and her large contact list received the email I refer to above asking for help as she was supposedly stranded overseas. As Mrs Greensmith is a well-known and trusted charity fundraiser, she was concerned her supporters and donors would react to this erroneous call to action.

This goes to show that you need to be vigilant and it is the kind and trusting among you who are most at risk of sending money and getting scammed. Regular virus scans on your computer and medium term password changes reduce the chances of this happening to you, particularly if you have a well-known website or are well-known online.

Malcolm Clarke
http://malcolmclarke.blogspot.com

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BAR 1898

Written by Chris Brown

Newmarket Street right here in Consett is the home to one of our town's newest and exciting venues. Bar 1898 is a new establishment which aims to bring an upmarket drinking and dining experience to Consett. Alongside the great selection of classic cocktails on offer, Bar 1898 also have a fantastic selection of food to tickle the taste buds of even the most particular of pallets.



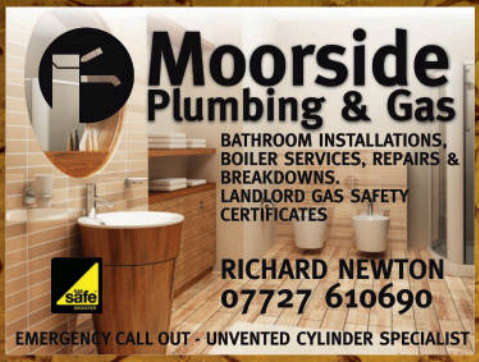
After finding a seat in the beautifully furnished venue, I started my night by having one of the expertly crafted cocktails from the bar. With classics such as the Long Island Ice Tea, Lynchburg Lemonade and the Cosmopolitan all available you can be sure there will be a refreshing mixed drink to quench your thirst.

The menu had a wide selection of regular and vegetarian starters which included the excellent mixed sharing platter with home-made chicken goujons, crispy onion rings, battered prawns, garlic bread and succulent chicken wings. This high quality platter was the perfect start for a group heading out for a few drinks and a bite to eat.

For your main course there are a whole host of different options for whatever mood you are in. There are gourmet choices such as the crispy battered prawns presented in a truly classy manner or if you are after something simpler, you can go for the pulled pork sandwich, a burger or even a pizza.



If you are looking for somewhere a bit different in Consett to grab a bite to eat and some drinks then you should definitely head to Bar 1898 and see what they have to offer.





CONSETT FESTIVAL

Written by Chris Brown

April is here and that means the return of the legendary Consett Festival. After the massive success of the inaugural festival held in April of 2013, this year is set to be bigger and better than ever. Whilst last year's event was held on a Saturday, 2014 is upping the ante by adding an additional evening of music on the Friday.

This new day of music is set as an adult only event featuring a whole host of great acts to get the party started on Acoustic Friday. Acts such as Chris Justice, Driven Serious and Gary Granger and Friends will take to the stage to provide a rousing soundtrack for a more intimate Consett Festival experience. There will only be a small amount of tickets for the exclusive Acoustic Friday, so get yours while you still can.

Saturday at the 2014 Consett Festival looks to take the great atmosphere of last year and take it to the next level. This year there's the No1 stage alongside the Steel Town Music Stage playing host to a wide range of musical tastes to get you and the family in the mood. Alongside all of the various stalls, activities and attractions, there is something to do at the festival for people of all ages.

Make sure you have the 25th and the 26th of the month in your diary and get ready for the latest and greatest Consett Festival.

You can get more information and your tickets for the festival online at
consettfestival.co.uk



Written by Ben Mullen

LITTER FREE DURHAM

LitterFree Durham are hosting the Big Spring Clean 2014 event from 7 April to 11 May. Participants are given the proper equipment to safely pick up litter around County Durham and are invited to take part in any of the organised meets throughout the period. Anyone wanting to run an event in their village or town, or somewhere nearby can do so and should contact LitterFree Durham to ensure that the equipment is available and the local council are aware of when and where to pick up litt bags at the end of the event.

It has been organised by a group of volunteers for the Campaign to Protect Rural England as part of the Stop the Drop campaign in County Durham and Darlington. Booking forms are available via email at the address below - posters, equipment, and feedback forms can also be obtained by contacting LitterFree Durham.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please send an email to litterfreedurham@durham.gov.uk or telephone: 03000 266 080 and for more information visit the LitterFree Duram website at:litterfreedurham.org/

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GAME REVIEWS

Written by Chris Brown

SOUTH PARK: THE STICK OF TRUTH

March saw the release of one of the most highly anticipated video games of the modern era as after years of development with Obsidian Games and the now defunct THQ. South Park: The Stick of Truth is an open world RPG game which is set in the all too familiar town of South Park, Colorado were you assume the role of the new kid in town.

It's not long before you meet all of the familiar faces from the South Park universe and start exploring a world which was once the preserve of TV. With extensive input from the show's creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, Stick of Truth has become the must have game for South Park fans.

If you are into crude and somewhat rude comedy, role playing games or just a South Park fanatic, this comedy adventure is a must play.

TITANFALL

Whilst Stick of Truth has been one of the biggest releases on the PS3, Xbox 360 and PC, Microsoft has landed a huge exclusive with the release of multiplayer action spectacular Titanfall. Since the release of Titanfall, sales of the new Xbox One has increased significantly across the country. Ths first person shooter takes what we know and love from the long established genre and adds an interesting twist by adding giant titan robots into the action.

This creates a new combat environment with endless possibilities for carnage using these large robots to turn the battle in your favour. If online e-sports action is your scene then you can do a lot worse than giving Titanfall a try.



LOCAL OUTDOOR FITNESS GROUP TAKES ON MUD RUN FOR WILLOWBURN

Written by Lorraine Weightman

Matt Underwood runs an outdoor fitness company called X-PT in the Consett area and has organised a charity event to help support a local hospice.

He, along with 14 other participants, have signed up to take part in the Lake District Total Warrior 10km mud run and obstacle course challenge in August.

All the proceeds will go to Willow Burn Hospice.

The team were given the opportunity to choose the charity and the hospice had an overwhelming majority with a few offering personal experiences regarding family members.

Matt stated that the vast majority of his clients have never undergone any form of fitness programme before and a few haven't run since their school days; so to even consider running 10km at such an early phase in their fitness journey is both brave and commendable.

'As their instructor I have nothing but admiration for this group and the commitment they have demonstrated in reaching a level of fitness required to complete this epic challenge'.

Matt's company caters for all ages and the present age range is from 19- 47 which demonstrates that all can participate and make good steady progress.

Anyone in the community can witness the specific style of training the group experience every Sunday at Crookhall beginning at 4pm. The regime includes: leopard crawling through mud and under nets, jumping through tyres and carrying sandbags. It is a unique demonstration of fitness training.

Let's hope they enjoy their day while raising money for this worthwhile local charity.

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CONSETT AFC

Written by Chris Brown

The football season is drawing closer to the end as we head into April for some of the last Consett AFC fixtures for the 2013/2014 season. This season has been one of big changes for the Steelmen but this hasn't stopped them from cementing their place in the top half of the Ebac Northern League table. April sees Consett up against some of their competition in the top half of the table promising some amazing action on the pitch.

On the 5th of April Consett go up against West Auckland Town in a fierce battle at Belle Vue Stadium. This game is set to be a tight one as both teams are currently occupying the same space in the league table. The next game is an away fixture away at Spennymoor Town on Saturday the 12th of April. After the rare jaunt away, Consett will back back in action at the Belle Vue Stadium on the 15th and 20th of April facing off against Hebburn Town and then Durham City who are currently owned by Newcastle United legend Olivier Bernard. All of April's fixtures have promise to be some great displays of local football. Be sure to head to the Belle Vue Stadium to support your Steelmen.



Written by Ben Mullen

COUNTY MARKETS

Consett's Country Market is relocating to Citizens House Community House, opposite Consett Medical Centre. The market is open to visitors on 12 April, 10 May, and 14 June from 11am to 1pm each day. Come along with friends for a tea or coffee and buy fresh, home made cakes, pies, jams, chutneys, crafts, and plants.

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CRICKET RETURNS TO THE SPA

Written by Rob Grinter

At last we see the return of cricket to the Spa Grounds as a new season gets underway in April. The home of Shotley Bridge Cricket Club will be the place to be if you want to see some great old local rivalries being renewed. As usual the playing surface will have been expertly prepared by Alan Milburn, David Collingwood and Charlie Stephenson and the pre-season net practice will have got the players focussed on the first games of the season.

The sun will hopefully be shining and the Spa will be enjoying some good weather as the scene is set for our first encounter of the season and what a match that should be.

The fixture list has thrown up a local derby for the first home game of the season on Saturday 26th April when Shotley Bridge's first XI take on our local rivals Consett. This game should give a good insight into how both teams will fare in the league this season.

Our first team finished third last season and we are looking for a good start against Consett before our trip to Ponteland on Saturday 3rd May.

Our Second XI will make their first home appearance on Saturday 3rd May against Ponteland. We will be fielding a young team this season who will be guided by our experienced team Captain and Club stalwart David Golightly.

Both teams are looking to improve on last year and the opening few matches will prove a stern test.

We welcome visitors to the club so why not come along and have a relaxing afternoon watching your local clubs do battle on the field while you have a drink or two off it?

FIXTURE LIST FOR APRIL AND MAY 2014

Sat 26th April	First XI V Consett	**Home**
Sat 3rd May	Second XI V Ponteland	**Home**
Sat 10th May	Second XI V Swallwell	**Home**
Sat 17th May	First XI V Lanchester	**Home**
Sat 24th May	Second XI V Whickham	**Home**
Sat 31st May	First XI V Leadgate	**Home**



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