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Photo By: Haley Redshaw

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Welcome

Welcome Bonny Lads and Lasses,

This month has once again been another busy one for the folks Consett Magazine. We've been send a plethora of stories, events, photographs and other amazing submissions for this edition.

As we ramp up to Christmas we'd like to take the chance to thank all our advertisers, old and new for their continued support.

If you think the weather has been bad of late check out Brian Harrisons recollection of bad snow on page 4. Regular and much loved local lass Lorraine Weightman shares another great story from her hopping and bopping at the Castleside Club on page 7. Ollie and Nina are also their mischievous selves, with "The Snow Man" on page 13.

Alex Nelson discovers some magnificent places to visit by train in a new regular feature "Places to Go" on page 8. This month highlights Kingston Upon Hull.

We have a new village store and "Yarn Bombing" on page 11, as well as an insight into one of the best nursery schools in the area.

Be sure to check out page 16 for some amazing photography submissions from Audrey Rogan and Mark Tennant.

Don't miss page 18 with Blackhill Clubs new function room and service, sure to be the perfect venue for weddings, birthdays and a whole host of other functions.

So without further a do, we invite you to flip through your December edition of your free Consett Magazine.

Merry Christmas from all the Consett Magazine team..

PS - Please remember to support the local businesses within the magazine and let us know if you'd like to showcase your story, photograph, or business in the Christmas edition please call us on 01207 438 292, message us on Facebook "Consett Magazine" or email us directly: editor@consettmagazine.com

Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
Frank Bell
Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
Mark Tennant
Malcolm Clarke
Jim Callan
Christina Stubbins
Haley Redshaw
Steven Mason
Audrey Rogan
David Fort
Alex Nelson

The Front Cover

If you have a photograph you would like to share, then send it across and it could be your photo we use - send any photographs to: **editor@consettmagazine.com**

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BAD SNOW IN CONSETT

Consett has always been known for its infamous weather, something I am glad to say has not plagued the area as much in the last few decades (Please excuse me while I touch some wood). My memories are of the 1976 and 1979 big winters, the latter seeing me able to climb on to the roof tops in Iveston Road, Delves Lane and dive head first into the snow drifts. Delves School was closed for a number of weeks and without knowing it many local residents were walking over parked cars when making their way home.

As kids it was fun. I can remember regularly running in getting changed out of my wet clothes and heading straight back out with new warm ones back on. It was weeks before a bus came down through the Delves but we all seemed to survive. I recall my dad digging out from the doorway along the path to the road. Each member of the street had done the same all meeting up to create a walled pathway. We made igloo camps, had mass snowball fights and revelled in the enormity of the winters snow.

I never thought back then how it would effect the town. People unable to work, babies being born at home with the midwives struggling to get to the houses to help. It was just the way of things and from my research was the way it has always been in the area.

I found a newspaper clipping from 1880 describing snow drifts of 7-9 feet high which had totally obscured the train lines and cut Consett off from the outside world. The storm raged from the 5th December till the 10th December. By the 7th all work at Consett Iron Company had come to a standstill leaving 8000 hands idle and waiting for the snow to abate.

William Jenkins, CIC Manger learned from this and when a similar storm hit in January 1887 had his workforce clearing the roads to both the Works and the local Pits. Also hearing from the local Limestone Quarry that they were snowed in he took the 500 men who were unable to work due to the weather, packed them onto a train so they could clear the snow there too. A very industrious man. However, Jenkins also understood the necessity to look after his work force. For those who were unable to work or were struggling he supplied coal, up-to 100 tonnes, created a soup kitchen to feed 1000 soup and bread, as well as taking care of locals not connected to the company.

This is a tradition of the Consett community that has always been prevalent, even when I was young, the ability and need to look after the entire community. Everyone helped each other, looked out for their neighbours and friends. There are pockets of this community still about and I am pleased to say seem to be growing. I still love to see the snow today but just with a little more trepidation.

I hope you all have an amazing Christmas and a very Happy and Prosperous New Year



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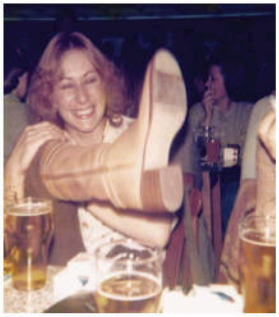


At the beginning of December thoughts of Christmas and going home for the holidays were on everyone's mind. I was so looking forward to seeing my family and friends - as well as a Yager's pork special - for a long awaited catch up, even though we did keep in touch in those days by sitting down to write letters on coloured Basildon Bond.

I'd opened my return correspondence to find the itinerary for the Christmas Nights out in Consett. There were bands on at The Trades, Blackhill Club, The Demi, along with various house parties on New Years Eve and of course the New Years Day extravaganza in Castleside Club to finish off the celebrations.
So, after packing my bag and heading for Kings Cross, in my excitement I caught the heel of my new cowboy boots in the ridges on the underground escalator and tumbled down the last few steps onto the platform.

I only realised after my fall that I'd lost my train ticket and student rail card so spent most of the journey talking to the inspector, who in spite of having kind eyes took his job very seriously and made me fill in a form to report my loss. After this ordeal I dragged my rucksack with it's broken zip to the corridor, pulling down the train window so I could get a clearer view. Unfortunately I hadn't accounted for the spring-back effect and the window shot up to trap my head as we slowed down. Much to the merriment of my travelling companions I let out an unfortunate expletive and was reprimanded by the ticket collector.

There's nothing more wonderful - after a four hour train journey confined in a smoking carriage, with nothing to eat but an individual apple and blackberry fruit pie for sustenance - than the majestic sight of Durham Cathedral as the train pulls into the station. Things could only get better I reflected, as I hugged my family and my sore chin after an hour's journey from Durham to Consett on a red Northern bus.

Along with the usual Christmas preparations:
collecting the turkey from Forster's,the vegetables from Donaghy's and filling up the cupboards with Birds Trifle, Carnation milk and tins of Pek for emergencies when the shops were shut, we all appreciated the celebratory joy and buzz in the town.

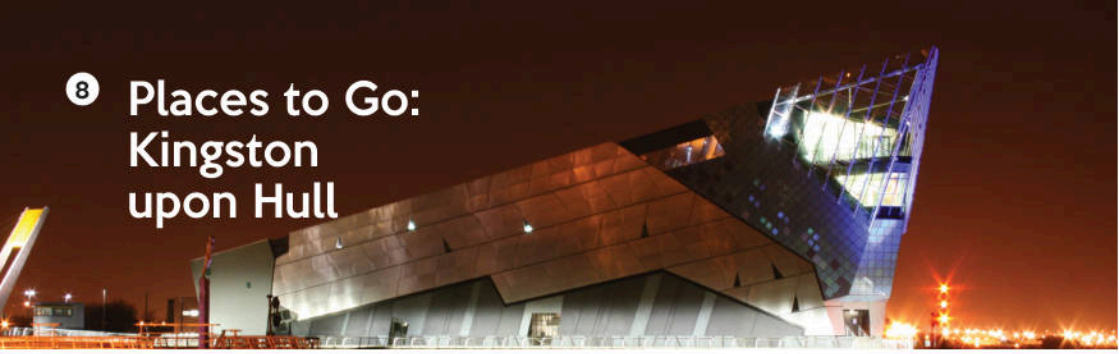
With Christmas under our belt and no more mishaps, it was time - after a New Year's Eve consuming mince pies, a wee dram and depositing pieces of



coal into our neighbours houses - to pack our Tupperware sandwich boxes and head for a day out in Castleside. The club filled up quickly and even though everyone had their own seats it was compulsory to get there early. Chairs tightly packed around uniform rectangular tables filled with drinks, Tudor crisps and packets of pork scratchings, housed party creatures enthusiastically waiting for Brass Alley's first set. As usual they were not disappointed and the place was rocking even before the bingo tickets were sold.
Needless to say at the end of the night, before the club chairman could part with the money in his pocket, everyone was up dancing between the tables to 'The Hunter' . As usual my friends and I wanted to be at the front. Unfortunately I didn't see the speaker and for the second time my cowboy boots failed to save me. Sprawled under a sea of dancing legs, I realised it was time to pick myself up, dust myself off, and walk to the bar to get a double round in.



Places to Go: Kingston upon Hull



The UK City of Culture project was born out of the success of Glasgow and Liverpool which were European Capitals of Culture in 1990 and 2008 respectively. The cultural buzz and economic momentum generated by these events inspired the Government to create the title "UK City of Culture". The award is bestowed on a city in the UK every four years; the scale is national but the focus is truly local. First to secure the title was Derry-Londonderry in 2013, when Durham was not shortlisted. For 2017, no north-east city entered, and Hull won. On a recent visit to the city I picked up the 96-page brochure outlining the attractions and events for just the first three months of 2017.

Tony Todd, one of the Chester-le-Street station staff, and I were visiting the factory of Bemrose Booth Paragon which produces the majority of rail tickets throughout Great Britain. We arrived by train from York, although it is possible to reach Hull via Doncaster or Leeds as well, and passed under the spectacular Humber Bridge which, when completed in 1981, was the longest single-span suspension bridge in the world. I parked my luggage next to the statue of Philip Larkin, famous poet and son of Hull, whilst we were waiting for our host to arrive at Paragon station to pick us up. Hull lies upon the River Hull at its junction with the Humber estuary, 25 miles inland from the North Sea, with a population of 257,710.

We were at the factory all day, so we missed the 3,500 fish, sharks and stingrays at The Deep, or learning about the City's heritage in any of the eight free museums (including the Streetlife Museum of Transport and the Spurn Lightship) nor could we take one of the trails that wind through the city and marvel at the cobbled streets of the Old Town. Additionally, two covered shopping arcades remain in the town centre: Hepworth Arcade, and Paragon Arcade.

The town of Hull was founded late in the 12th century. The monks of Meaux Abbey needed a port where the wool from their estates could be exported. The exact year the town was founded is not known but it was first mentioned in 1193. Renamed Kings-town upon Hull by King Edward I in 1299, Hull has been a market town, military supply port, trading hub, fishing and whaling centre, and industrial metropolis. Hull was an early theatre of battle in the English Civil Wars. Its 18th-century Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce, played a key role in the abolition of the slave trade in Britain, and it gained City status as Kingston upon Hull in 1897. The city is unique in the UK in having had a municipally owned telephone system from 1902, sporting cream, not red, telephone boxes.

Ferens Art Gallery has been closed for major refurbishment works. It reopens early in January. Admission to the Ferens Art Gallery, including the Children's Gallery, is free. It has a magnificent collection of paintings and sculptures and you can enjoy refreshments in the popular café, Venue Hull. It's a great place for children to show their creativity. With a regular programme of events, guided tours and changing exhibitions, there's always something new to explore. The gallery's permanent collection of paintings and sculpture spans artistic periods from medieval times to the present day. The collection includes European Old Masters, portraiture, marine paintings, and modern and contemporary British art. Highlights include masterpieces by Frans Hals, Antonio Canaletto and David Hockney. I think more visits to Hull will be called for in 2017.

www.hull2017.co.uk

By Alex Nelson

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Shotley Bridge Nursery School selected for National Maths Champion Challenge

Shotley Bridge Nursery School has been selected to take part in a national Maths Champion Challenge in association with the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) and Durham University.

Established in 1990, the reputable nursery school will be involved in the year long programme which supports young children and staff by embedding maths into play and activities. Led by a designated graduate member of staff, the aim of the programme is to build confidence in maths among the children and practitioners.

Directors Anne Young and Laura Bowery announced, "Everybody at Shotley Bridge Nursery School are absolutely thrilled to have been selected for the National Maths Champion Challenge. It is an amazing opportunity to build children's confidence and understanding of Maths during their time at the nursery and at home. We are very proud that we were chosen to be part of this challenge for free and will contribute our findings to national Early Years research".

The challenge, which has previously shown a 95% improvement in children's maths development is supported by online audit tools such as over 300 maths related activities for children. For further information please visit:- shotleybridge-nurseryschool.co.uk

YARN BOMBING

Colour your Life - a local arts programme - have organised a 'yarn bombing' project to be exhibited in Blackhill and Consett Park during December. The installation of the art work produced by the group will be on view from Wednesday 30th November. If you have ever wondered exactly what 'yarn bombing' is now is your chance to come along and see the park's transformation.

The group are also holding a celebration event on Wednesday 7th December at The Lodge, Blackhill and Consett Park between 10.00am ad 4.00pm. Find out what goes on in Colour your Life studios, and there will also be the opportunity to buy gifts from stall holders.

The Lodge in Blackhill and Consett Park provides a warm, friendly, welcoming environment for anyone wishing to engage in creative activities. The light airy studio and relaxed ambience provides an ideal place for creative hands and minds. Here you will be given an opportunity to learn new skills, have fun, make new friends and get involved in your local community. Professional, experienced tutors deliver artistic and informal learning in this supportive atmosphere.

We are currently holding a Christmas Crafts session on a Wednesday afternoon 2.00-4.00pm. To find out more about the programme please contact the programme coordinator on 01207 218019 or email colouryourlife@leisure-works.net or visit: colouryourlife.org.uk.

Ebchester Village Store – Now Open!

Ebchester Village Store

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By Neil Sullivan



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Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

Christmas Hazards

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When venturing outdoors, sweet-tasting antifreeze is toxic to cats even in very small quantities and holly, mistletoe and poinsettias can all cause tummy upsets. Please enjoy the festive season but keep your pets safe as well. If you have any questions or concerns at all, contact your vet at the earliest opportunity.

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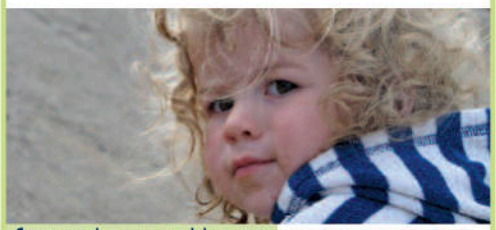

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Autumn Pictures

Submitted By Local Photographers



Mark Tennant - Northern Lights



Audrey Rogan - Autumn Colours

LIFESPAN CONCERT

Lifespan is in the very friendly village of Leadgate, meeting local businesses & schools. Lifespan is very much a discreet charity but they need the support of local communities to help us raise funds and raise awareness of the great work we do. It would be lovely to see the St Ives Church in Leadgate full. Lifepan are holding a Christmas Concert on the 12th December at 7:30pm–10pm

Tickets can be purchased via the Lifespan Office on 01434 673777. We have now have the facility of taking payments over the phone and we shall post your tickets to you. Or you are welcome to send a cheque to our main office. Tickets can be bought on the door but advanced booking is advised.

Tickets are only:
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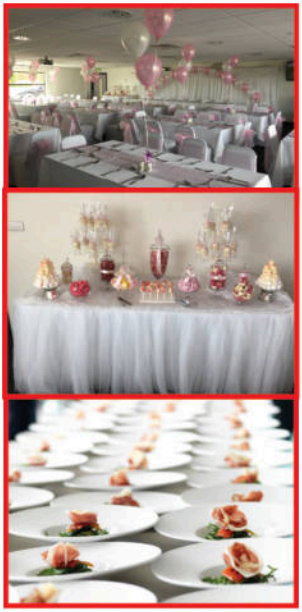

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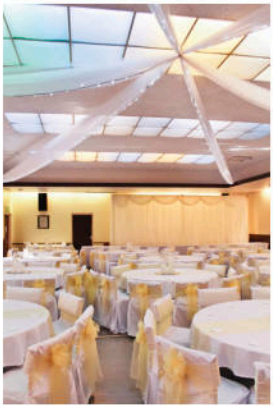
Blackhill Club

Blackhill Comrades Club in Ridley Street, Blackhill has been an iconic part of local history for almost 70 years. Started after WWII to provide support and comradery for returning veterans and locals struggling to rebuild their lives after the war. Now in a very different time they have provided a warm welcoming atmosphere in a wonderful community based social club.

Over the past 13 years the committed staff and committee have been working tirelessly to refurbish and update the facilities and have made some great changes, with more to come.



Now towards the end of 2016 Blackhill Club can offer disabled and family friendly function room facilities and with their brand new kitchen offer delicious home-made food for hot and cold buffets. The club has refurbished and improved their toilet facilities, the lobby, bar and cosy lounge which can host functions of up to 80 people. Even more plans are underway for 2017, with hopes to complete the huge task of refurbishing their concert hall, which is well loved venue for weddings, christenings, funerals and much more. The huge hall can host parties of up to 200 people and is a great space for community activities, presentations or performance rehearsals.

2016 was an exciting year for the club working alongside local C.I.C. The ALT Group to provide a weekly free of charge Community Meal which offers a hot 3 course meal, to everyone, to allow the community to come together to socialise and eat. They also plan to complete their Community Garden project in 2017. The garden will be multi purpose allowing for a new social space as part of the club, but also working with members of the community to learn how to grow food together and share the rewards of this collaborative effort. If anyone would like to get involved please contact:

www.thealtgrp.co.uk



Room hire is available from £20 at this fantastic local venue and booking couldn't be easier, with a modern website www.blackhillclub.-co.uk where you can find all info you need, and friendly staff ready to answer all your questions they have all you need to make your special event one to remember.

Colour Your Life

Colour your life while you're colouring mine,

Mix up the paintbox and help me to shine,

Show me in art, all the ways that I can

paint out my life's canvas, then make a plan

to live in the moment, sculpt every day,

draw some conclusions that sketch out the way,

to the yellow brick road, I'll follow to find,

my own back yard, and, my, peace of mind.

Glue every corner, knit every line,

Thread every needle, print every sign,

Weave every tapestry, stitch every patch,

Write every word, cut out, a huge batch

of solid solutions joining the quilt,

braid community friendships being built.

Brush up your laughter, model your way,

Colour your life with a rainbow each day.

By: Lorraine Weightman

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