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Welcome

Hello Consett!

This month Brian Harrison takes a look at the life of a Railway Navvy of pages 4 and 5. Lorraine Weightman remembers her musical passion on page 7. The historical town of Richmond, North Yorkshire is this months "Place to Go" on page 10. You can find our review of Neil Sullivan's "Daft Doggie Doings" on page 11. Chunkcast 54.8 has a special Christmas message on page 17.

Got something to shout about this December? Get in touch, email editor@consettmagazine.com to speak to us about your idea for an article in print or online. And remember, we always aim to work with charities to help promote their good causes. So if you are a charity or community group, send your press releases to us and we'll help you to promote it in the Consett and DH8 area.



If you'd like to have your business included in Consett Magazine next month, you can call Barry or Marco on 01207 438 292 or email sales@consettmagazine.com.

We have heavily discounted campaigns for six and twelve month plans. There's never been a better time to use the magazine to reach more people and get them talking about your great business.

All the best,
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy,
and the everyone who contributes to Consett Magazine.

P.S. Check out all of the local advertisers in the magazine, they are the people who make the magazine possible. Let them know you saw them in the November edition of Consett Magazine.

Welcome to the December edition of Consett Magazine!

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The Front Cover

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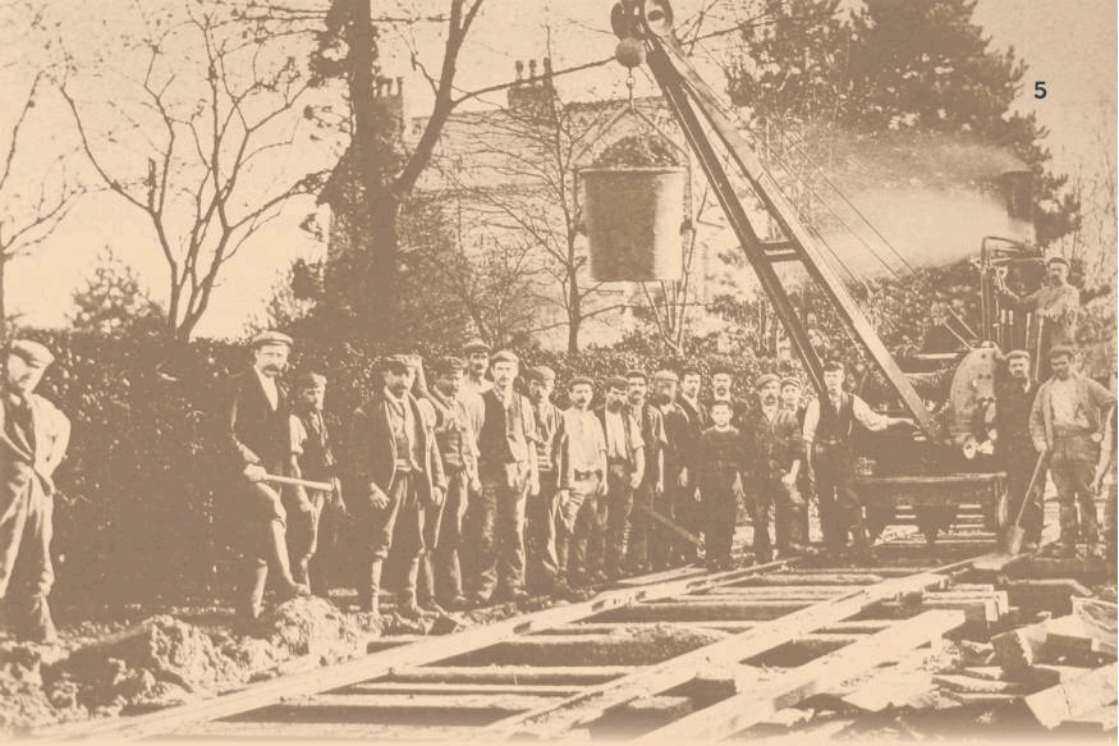
LIFE OF THE RAILWAY NAVVY
BLAYDON TO CONSETT 1865-1866

During the early industrial days of the Derwent valley the advancement of the railway was all important. It moved the coal, iron, limestone as well as the people needed to keep the industries growing. This was the time of the Navvy. A hardy breed who found shelter and lodgings where they could during the long laborious months and sometimes years of laying tracks and building the bridges. During the years of 1865 to 1866 the Blaydon to Consett rail line was being constructed. Many of the navvies during this period found accommodation at Swallwell, Winlaton Mill, Winlaton, Blaydon, Ebchester and Consett. Most were boarding in standard family homes helping supplement the costs to the families that already lived there. Many times these people would have many more men boarding with them than would have been allowed in licensed properties. But these were hard times and hardy men who accepted the situation. At Swallwell there were also a couple of make shift rows of wooden houses built to help accommodate the needs of this moving workforce.

However, the most industrious created a couple of small hamlets of Turf Huts the first just after the bridge which crossed the river at Burnopfield on the way to Consett and another further on toward the town. These huts, which I suppose we today would describe as Hobbit Houses, were crudely built but set in some of the most glorious and beautiful parts of the Derwent. The homes were described as wooded construction with turf blocks for walls about a foot thick. The roofs were timbered with branches interwoven and grass turfing laid over the top. Most of the homes consisted of 2 or 3 rooms each 12 to 18 feet long and 9 to 12 feet wide with a central fire made of brick, with an abundant fuel supply. The beds where make shift, more like the cots found on boats. The furniture crude stools and tables but effective. They did not only house the workmen but also many had families who's area's were curtained off for privacy. Many of the makeshift homes where owned by the families who took in the lodgers. One of the women who owned one of the homes, Mr's Smith when talking to a reporter stated that before she would let a knew lodger into one of her beds she would make sure



FRONT STREET, BURNOPFIELD 1262



he had a clean shirt before he did so. In her words "When men have been on the tramp, there was know knowing where they had been" and "everyone knows that travellers got strange bedfellows".

The main food was pork which came from the pigs which the community reared themselves. Supplemented with rabbit and other game which came their way, even in the off season. Cold tea and water from the stream was used to quench their thirst, very few of the men being drinkers. The hamlets were made up of both English and Irish workers who lived and worked together without discrimination or animosity. Many of the children of the Navvies working the Derwent, when old enough, could be found labouring at the brickworks near Pont Burn, helping supplement their parents costs. They were an industrial lot. On a Saturday the women would press the best clothes with a tiny iron, heated by the embers of the fire, and lay them out across all the beds in preparation for Sunday. They would attend the local church or sometimes a local clergy would come to them and give a service in the hamlet. It was a hard but romantic way of life.

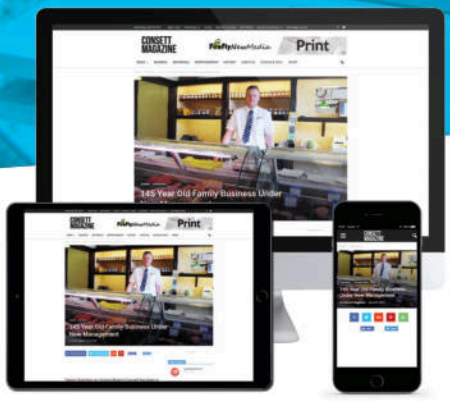
Things were not always perfect though. Over a period of 3 months an "Extraordinary Highwayman" laid siege to the hard work navvies. On the days they were paid he would lay in wait jump out and rob them. Over and over the local police tried to catch him but to no avail. However, on 23rd Dec 1865 PC Forster of Craghead and a number of his colleagues decided to stake out the area, knowing the men had just been paid that evening. It was on the path from Leadgate to Burnopfield when they came across a fellow who had just been robbed of 3 and half pence, not a small sum in those days. They encouraged him to go back the same way, only this time they would follow in the shadows. Within only a few minutes a man jumped out of the bushes pushed the man to the ground and demanded money. The police promptly dropped on him and took him into custody. It followed that he was a man by the name of Bates who worked as a Pitman in Lintz Ford. The following day he was sent to Lanchester to appear before the magistrate.

By Brian Harrison

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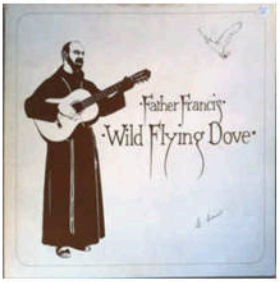
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WILD THING

My Auntie Rose came back from her trip with The Women's League to Holywell in North Wales proudly holding a signed copy of the LP 'Wild Flying Dove' by Father Francis; also known as 'The Singing Franciscan'.



I eyed my present cautiously, wondering how she - after watching me play Leo Sayer's 'One Man Band' and 'Family's 'Burlesque' followed by 'Radar Love' - had so wildly misjudged my taste in music. However I accepted it graciously scanning the back of the record sleeve to see if I recognised any titles.



Delighted to see that Side B track 5 was 'A Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On' I placed it on the turntable.
A pleasant warbling voice sang the poshest version of the song I'd ever heard; not a hint of the raucous Jerry Lee Lewis, or the hip swivelling Elvis. As my ears grew accustomed I was itching to play it to my friends and invited them round for a premiere.



Soon we were all singing along, pronouncing every syllable slowly in the Queen's English while we jived in time. It was one of those 'you have to have been there' moments but the din from the side splitting laughter echoed down the street.

From then on we could only sing the song one way, and soon we were encouraging each other to sing every song we liked 'in the style of Father Francis' and began voting for the top ten. 'Wild Thing' had been at number one for four consecutive weeks with 'I Can't Get Enough Of Your Love' a close second. Bearing in mind Father Francis hadn't recorded these, we were ahead of the game, choosing what we thought his next virtual album could be.



The Back O' The Shaft in Leadgate was a great place for a sing along and many of the locals strutted their stuff there. El Paso, Running Bear, Eye of the Tiger, (I just want to be your) Teddy Bear, and Great Balls of Fire were weekly favourites, performed with a generous helping of audience participation.

Knowing that Leadgate was not quite ready for the Father Francis Hit Parade, we decided to hold an alternative 'Back O' the Shaft' night complete with compare in my Auntie Rose's dining room while we were getting ready to go out on a Saturday. Everyone had a different song to perform.
I chose 'Play That Funky Music' which went down well and 'The Boy's Are Back In Town' was a firm favourite, but the overall winner by a mile was 'Born To Be Wild' accompanied by a frantic hair raising air guitar!



The next morning bleary eyed and in need of a bacon sandwich I overheard my Auntie Rose comment from the kitchen on my constant use of the stereogram, and last night's shenanigans!

'Now I know how much she likes him, I'll make sure to get his new one when I go back to Wales next year!'

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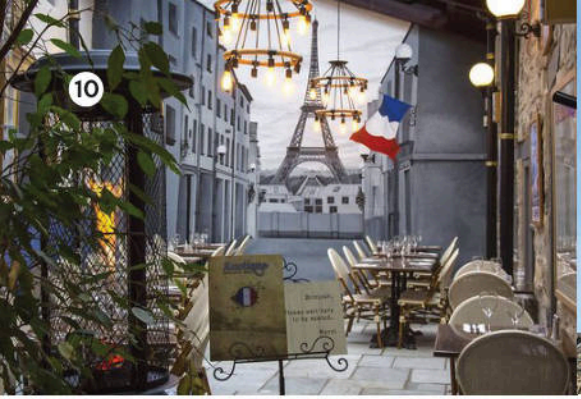
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Places to Go: Richmond, North Yorkshire

For December's article, I usually choose somewhere not too far away (given it gets dark so early) which might be a good place for Christmas shopping. This year I have been to Richmond three times, twice speaking on rail fares and once on an excursion with my daughter. As you'll know all railway stations in GB have a three letter code. RMD is for Richmond in Greater London which has a busy station (also visited twice in 2017). Indeed Richmond is the most duplicated UK placename, with 57 occurrences worldwide, including a third Richmond outside Sheffield.

There is no rail connected railway station in Richmond, North Yorkshire, but it is possible to buy a rail ticket to RMK (for Richmond MarKet Place) and use the regular Arriva express bus X26 and X27 bus from outside Darlington station's Victoria Road exit direct to Richmond. It takes about half an hour to arrive in the cobbled market place, one of the largest in England Indeed, from the north, it is quicker than the train via Northallerton ever was, before the line closed in 1968.

I asked the bus driver if we could stay on the bus over the bridge of the Swale to The Station, which was not a problem. The old railway station is now repurposed not for trains but as a food, film and art centre which admits 300,000 tourists a year. It has a restaurant, cinema, art gallery and heritage centre, as well as a bakery, cheese-maker, micro brewery, ice-cream parlour, fudge house and honey-maker. A great place to pick up some innovative Christmas presents at some time during your day, and some good coffee.

A pleasant walk over the meadows into the town centre, including the interesting town garden at Millgate House, brought us to the Georgian Theatre Royal. This historic building, founded in 1788 by the actor Samuel Butler, is off the market place. A decline in the fortunes of theatre led to its closure in 1848 and it was used as a warehouse for many years. In 1963 the theatre was restored and reopened, with a theatre museum added in 1979. It is one of Britain's oldest extant theatres and a guided tour shows you the whole of the building, including beneath the stage.

The dominant building in the town is the Castle, completed in 1086, now in the care of English Heritage. Through the winter it is only open at weekends, You may have heard of the story of the Richmond Sixteen, conscientious objectors from WWI, which is told in the block they inhabited before being shipped to France. I suspect we had better food than they did in a French restaurant called Rustique in Finkle Street. Rustique opened in 2009 offering traditional French cuisine amongst its Parisian-style murals and music. Transporting diners to the streets of Paris, with views of the Tower Eiffel and Arc de Triumph, diners can enjoy rustic French-style cuisine in amongst a busy, vibrant bistro atmosphere.

Two other museums complete the tourism offer in Richmond: the well-regarded Richmondshire museum is closed until April, but the Green Howards Regimental Museum (in the old Trinity Church) is fascinating, and close to the bus stop to return to Darlington.

www.thestation.co.uk



Book Review

'Ollie and Nina and... their daft doggie doings'

For more than a year we've really enjoyed sharing Neil Sullivan's funny cartoons about his two daft dogs: Ollie and Nina. Now Neil has compiled his crazy cartoons and published a book. We think the cartoons are hilarious and the little stories are full of clever insights into the madcap world of all Ollie and Nina and their long suffering Mum and Dad. If you love dogs or know someone who does, 'Ollie and Nina and… their daft doggie doings' will make an ideal Christmas present.

Keep up the good work Ollie and Nina driving Mum and Dad mad.

By Marco Tierney Elsy

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ASK The VET

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By Christina Stubbins
Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

Christmas Hazards

As the festive season approaches, there are some things to bear in mind if you have a pet, to ensure they're kept safe and well.

- Some animals may be very interested in the cords of Christmas lights but chewing them can result in electrocution. Cover up the wires and turn them off at the plug when you're not in to reduce this risk.
- Fallen Christmas tree needles can get lodged in paws and cause abscesses so make sure they are hoovered up every day.
- Dried fruit (like in your Christmas cake), chocolate, mistletoe, poinsettia and alcohol can all be toxic and should not be left within reach of your pets.
- Ribbons, wrapping and tinsel might look like attractive treats for your dog but can cause upset stomachs and intestinal blockages that may require surgery.

Your vet will have to provide you with a service over the festive period, whether that's at the practice itself, or with an out of hour's provider. Make sure you get the relevant contact details now in case you do have an emergency outside of normal working hours.

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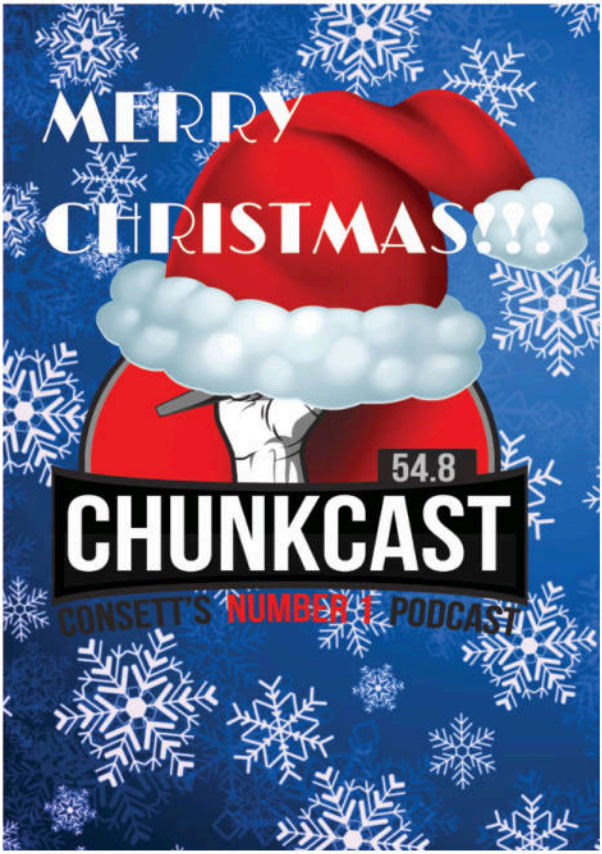
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Chunkcast 54.8 - December 2017



Hi Everyone, Chunk here.

Merry Christmas Everyone, All though we are a little early, Chunkcast 54.8 would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Seasons Greetings to all the readers and genuine best wishes to 'one and all' over the festive period. Santa's on his way, the presents are wrapped, and the pigs are already in their blankets. It's been a busy year here at Consett's No.1 Podcast and with a new studio in the making and many new exciting projects lined up for 2018 I can't wait to bring to the table an eclectic mix of interesting podcasts and hopefully by spring we shall be well on the way to having our very own Consett Radio Station.

I hope you also have lots of new ventures lined up for 2018. If you'd like to take part in a discussion or suggest a topic for a podcast, please get in touch via the usual social media platforms and keep an eye out for the Chunkcast 54.8 logo around town and online.



Season's Greetings and heartfelt best wishes Chunk!

Don't forget to check out www.northukradio.com as I now oversee the station fully and shall be making the Blackhill Broadcasting Centre not only home of Chunkcast 54.8 and NorthUK radio, but home to a Consett FM. Much Love and Best wishes Chunk Out!



FANTASTIC FOURTH WIN FOR BEAMISH MUSEUM AT TOURISM AWARDS

Beamish, The Living Museum of the North is today celebrating being named Large Visitor Attraction of the Year for the fourth year running.

The museum was presented with the Gold Award at the North East England Tourism Awards 2017 ceremony in Newcastle last night (16th November).
Richard Evans, Beamish's Director, said: "We are really delighted to win the award for the fourth year in a row.
"It's a real credit to all of our staff and volunteers at the museum for all of the hard work they do. I hope they are proud of the success they've achieved."

The North East England Tourism Awards celebrate the region's amazing attractions and tourism businesses. The ceremony was hosted by BBC Radio Newcastle presenter Alfie Joey, at The Boiler Shop in Newcastle's Stephenson Quarter. Beamish was shortlisted alongside Kielder Water & Forest Park and The Alnwick Garden. Other awards included Hotel of the Year, Taste of England Award, Guided Tour of the Year, Business Tourism Award and Dog Friendly Business of the Year.

Beamish will now have the chance to enter the national VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2018.
The Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award marks another successful year for the museum, which saw record visitor numbers of 750,406 visitors in 2016/17, which have more than doubled in the last eight years. The museum has about 420 staff and more than 500 volunteers.

Building work has started on the £18million Remaking Beamish project, which includes a 1950s Town, 1050s Farm and expansion of the Georgian area, including a coaching inn where visitors can stay overnight.

Christmas at Beamish begins tomorrow (Saturday, 18th November) and runs every day until 24th December. Father Christmas will arrive in a magnificent parade at 1pm tomorrow featuring horses, huskies, fire engines, bands and period vehicles.

Find out more at: beamish.org.uk

The North East England Tourism Awards are organised and delivered by NewcastleGateshead Initiative and NGI Solutions in partnership with the Northern Tourism Alliance.

BEAMISH
THE LIVING MUSEUM OF THE NORTH

Saturday 2nd - Sunday 31st December 2017



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