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AUGUST 2018

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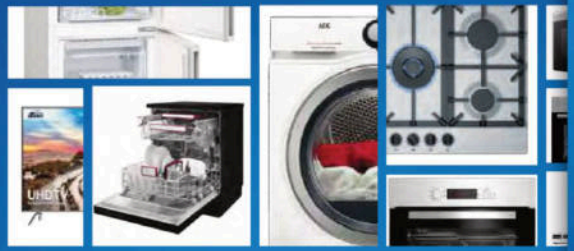

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Welcome

Thanks for picking up the August edition of the free Consett Magazine.

As always, we've got some wonderful local stories for you to feast your eyes on this month; both in the magazine you have in your hand now and online at consettmagazine.com (we're proud to tell you, last month the website received 172,282 hits). So, if you've not visited us online yet, now might be a good time to have a look and see what all the fuss is about!

A very interesting opinion piece was sent to us by Dr. David Taylor, a concerned resident and group leader of over 600 members in Delves Lane & Templetown who oppose the council's planned development for more housing in the area. The group states that Schools, Doctors, and Dentists are already full and the plan offers little in the way of improving important local infrastructure and services. Read this story on page 10, have your say online in the comment section of this article on consettmagazine.com or search Facebook Group: 'Delves and Templetown residents against the planned developments for more information.'

Brian Harrison, your favourite local historian goes back in time to the 19th century to share the story of John Seymour, a local businessman and philanthropist (see page 4-5). Interestingly Lorraine Weightman also goes back in time (although a little more recent than the 19th century) to the 1970s with her piece "Blue Jeans On" where she reminisces about the denim fashion trends of that time.

Once again, thanks for reading this month's edition, please recycle this magazine after you're finished reading it by passing it onto a friend or family member. And do mention Consett Magazine when reaching out to any of our advertisers, they are the lifeblood of the magazine, without them this free publication could simply not exist. So, thanks to everyone who advertises and contributes to the magazine each month.

If you'd like to get involved with Consett Magazine, share a story, or simply give us some news you'd like to shout about, then please contact us using the contact details on the bottom right of this page.

Warmest regards,
Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy,
and everyone who makes this magazine a success (you know who you are!)

PS- Book your space online or in print, just call us on 01207 438292 or email sales@consettmagazine.com to request our media kit (covering online, print, and digital marketing options).

Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
Frank Bell
Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
Christina Stubbins
Alex Nelson
Dale Hazell
David Taylor
Leslie Rutherford

The Front Cover

Thanks to Dale Hazell
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JOHN SEYMOUR – LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AND PHILANTHROPIST

By Brian Harrison

John Seymour was born in 1815 in Durham, to Thomas Seymour a paper maker and Ann his wife. He married Margaret Jopling a farmers daughter from Witton Gilbert on 7 Dec 1837 at which time his profession was given as a Smith. The couple initially stayed in Witton Gilbert where they had their first child Elizabeth born in 1841, 2 months prior to the first official Government Census of the same year.

John, however, decided to take on a new profession and moved to Consett taking up the position of Publican in the first public house near to the new up and coming Iron Works, The Puddler's Arms. Open round the clock for the works shifts, John's profits soon started rolling in. Seeing his chance he began to speculate in more pubs in the area building his portfolio. He ran two by himself The Puddler's Arms and the Stirling Castle (which was formerly named the Black Bull) and in his others he placed landlord tenants, two being his wife's brothers. John and Margaret had 4 children in all, Elizabeth mentioned above and also Annie b1846, Thomas b1849 and Mary Jane b1852

By 1860 John was sitting on the Consett Board and his premises, The Puddler's Arms, was the venue for most big meetings within the town. The Board consisted of many well known Consett men, J Priestman, J Dolphin Esq (Delves House), John Murray the Auctioneer and cattle salesman (Richard Murray's father) and J Gledstone to name a few. John had also started investing in many of the local services and was on the committee which demanded that Consett should be known as Consett and not Berry Edge by the Postal Services who had enforced the name upon the town.

Over the next two decades he helped set up the the Consett Water Works Company, sat on the board of the Shotley Bridge



Stirling Castle Inn, Consett

& Consett District Gas Company, was on the Consett Overseers committee and was also the treasurer on the committee for the building Consett Christ Church. He was a self made man but one who also gave back to the area.

Of John's children, daughter Elizabeth married Richard Murray JP in 1863, combining two major business families in Consett at that time; Annie never married; Thomas married Hannah Whorrall and Mary Jane married Alfred Bailey. John passed away in March 1879 leaving a small fortune. A list of some of his shares and stocks were put up for Auction in the April after his death, at his son in law Richard's Royal Hotel, Blackhill. These included: 800 shares in Consett Water Works at £5 a share; 60 shares in the same company in which only £4 on each had been paid; £780 of Consolidated Stock of Shotley Bridge and Consett Gas Works; as well as shares in the Gas works and shares in the Edmonbyers & Hexham Mining company, etc..

He also left numerous buildings and pubs to his family. His son in law Richard took on the Freemason's in Consett and a few other of his pubs, already being a brewer and pub owner. John's son Thomas took on the Stirling Castle with his wife and family and actually passed away in the pub on 13 November 1903. John's legacy lived on through the deeds of his family, especially the Murray family. Like many of the people who helped shape our great town he would be all but forgotten if it were not for the naming of Seymour Street after him, which still stands proudly today.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN MUSIC, SINGING OR DRAMA?

Consett Phoenix Youth are a friendly group who meet every Sunday at St John Ambulance Hall, John Street, Consett between 3 and 5.30pm.

We do recording, encourage budding musicians and help boost confidence.

We are also looking to do a musical later this year. Need more information why not pop along before we start or give us a ring for more details.

Contact number 07771890409. See you there.



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BLUE JEANS ON



In this hot summer weather there is still a reluctance to swap our jeans for a more cooler option. Interestingly they have become part of our fashion lineage and generations have embraced and lived in their comfortableness.

Originally created as workwear because of it's strength and durability, denim entered popular youth culture in the 1950's made popular by James Dean and Marlon Brando and is synonymous with teenage rebellion.

As each subsequent generation embraced blue jeans, they steadily became mainstream and branded fashion took over.

In the hottest summer of the 1970's still intent on wearing denim my friends and I decided that cutting up a old pair of jeans to make shorts would be preferable to sweltering in the heat of 1976. Lee, Wrangler and Levi Strauss were all popular brands and we all had our own favourites. Being a Levi girl I was reluctant to cut up my best jeans so hunted around for an old pair of flares that were on the way out in the fashion stakes. I wasn't aware at the time that there was a list of do's and don'ts when making cut offs and went straight in with the scissors, instead of measuring, pinning or using tailors chalk to get the right diagonal flattering line.

Jeans in those days were worn skin tight and it was common practice to lie down on the floor armed with a shoe lace threaded through the loop at the top of the zip to fasten them up. This figure fitting look resulted in rivet indentations permanently visible to the flesh around the hips and a semi permanent state of indigestion as internal organs were pressed continually against the backbone. Still in the name of fashion it was worth it!



My Lee jeans had seen better days and had flares that wafted so strongly with the slightest movement, they could put out a fire at twenty yards.

With the bottom half of my jeans lying on the floor I tried on my newly made cut off denim shorts only to see - even in those days when I was only 7stone 10 pounds wringing wet - I'd created a new fashion of pink sausage legs popping out of the fraying hem.

Aggrieved yet unperturbed I went back to my Levi's, put on a T-shirt and met up with my friends for our Saturday night out. No one had shorts on! Settling down in the Brit with a half of ice cold lager and lime and in the mood for a party we put Elton John and Kiki Dee on the Juke Box and sang all the words to 'Don't Go Breaking My Heart' followed by T. Rex 'I Love to Boogie'. By then the disgruntled heavy rockers muscled in and we moved onto The Wheatsheaf leaving them to listen to Abba's 'Dancing Queen' Middle street was awash with double denim combos; waistcoats, jackets, shirts, skirts and dungarees all heading in one direction - towards Botto's!

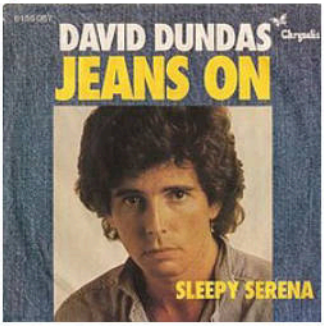
Once inside Levi, Lee Cooper, Wrangler and Brutus mingled amicably, enjoying drinks in

plastic glasses and energy sustaining chip butties downstairs. Afterwards I tried, in my 505's to unsuccessfully recreate a Debbie Harry impersonation on the dance floor!



As the night wore on, and the lights had flickered twice to break up a couple of disagreements - we were standing by the steps up towards the Tudor Room when we noticed a small group in a heated argument at the top of the stairs. Reluctant to intervene we attempted to crane our necks to see round the corner but could only hear raised voices then the tearing of cloth.

Triumphantly the winner emerged with a ripped denim shirt in her hands followed by the loser. On closer inspection we noticed a tiny bit of frayed denim between the gap in her front teeth. At least he'd managed to keep his blue jeans on!



LEARNING FOR LIFE

I was lucky enough to be invited to visit the Learning for Life Centre in Herbert Street Consett which opened recently.

The new centre has and is being adapted from old school premises to provide classrooms and large indoor and outdoor areas to accommodate it's learners for education and care in the centre of Consett.

Learning for Life is a specialist provider of education and day care for adults with high support needs, special educational needs or disabilities and has been operational on No.1 Industrial Park for a number of years.

I was overwhelmed by the welcome I received from both staff and students as I melted into the wonderful caring atmosphere provided for these young people. It was obvious to me on arrival that this was a hive of activity and I was delighted to meet a band of hungry participants who had just returned from playing football at the sports centre.

Although there is now a 30 year lease on the property and it boasts a new kitchen which prepares delicious lunches for all, there is still a long way to go before all the dreams for Herbert Street can be fulfilled.

After speaking to the Principal Marie Matthewson it was obvious that a daily search for funds is paramount to maintain and develop the plans to build, equip and furnish an enterprise workshop, creative arts centre and outdoor area; alongside refurbishing a sensory and a quiet room. All this can only improve and enhance the wonderful learning and magnanimous environment which already exists, however the projected cost is in advance of £150,000.

Many of the young people who attend are wheelchair users and the charity feels 'we are in desperate need of a 17 seater mini bus in order for them to be included in the diverse society we live in.' Through constant fundraising they have managed to reach the £17.000 mark but the total cost of the minibus will be £35.000.

The centre which has committed, highly trained and skilled staff is not only looking for financial support but also for volunteers who can give some of their spare time, skills and life experience to support this worthwhile charity in our area.

Recently the learners attended an annual prom hosted by Ushaw College, while two athletes competed with Gateshead in the Special Olympics in York.

I would encourage anyone to visit and find out more about Learning For Life in Consett as it does exactly what it strives to do - Embracing Diversity & Enriching Lives

To find out more about this local enterprise please contact the following:
Learning for Life - Herbert Street 01207 509936
Email: info@learninglife.org.uk

Consett Housing Boom Causes Outrage in Delves Lane and Templetown

By Dr. David Taylor



Residents of Redmire Drive in Delves Lane, many of whom had only just moved into their new houses where shocked to get a letter from Durham County Council to say the Land next to their houses has been picked as the proposed site for 290 houses In the new Durham Local Plan. Most were shocked as they had been told by their developer that no houses could be built on this site less than 1 year previously.

Only residents within 100 meters of the site got the letter so although the proposed site is used by 3 large communities of Delves lane and Templetown, very few were told of the proposal. Luckily local residents spread the word and started the face book group '**Delves and Templetown Residents Against the Planned Developments'.** The group has gained over 600 members in 2 weeks and is still growing.

Residents were outraged upon learning about the details of the new Durham Local Plan. This plan aims to build 820 new homes in Consett by 2035. This doesn't include any of the developments currently being built such as Genesis way or other private developments just council ones.

When adding up the numbers Consett will have well over 1000 new houses built by the end of the 2035. Where is the improved infrastructure to support these extra houses you may ask? Well there lies the problem. Most residents are very concerned that Schools, Doctors, Dentists are already full and the plan offers little in the way of improvements. Consett Academy already had to turn children away this year and primary schools have already had to create new classrooms to support the extra spaces required. Consett Roads are already busy and there is next to no plans to improve them.

The site at Delves lane has caused particular outrage as it will take away the local green space used by the local communities. The site is used by hundreds of local dog-walkers runners, walkers, cyclist, horse riders and local children on a daily basis. The large site is also home to a vast variety of local wildlife from badgers, to bats, to owls and many more. The site will also back onto the local primary School which has just spent a fortune on developing its 'Outdoor Play And Learning' facilities. There are many disabled and elderly residents especially in the Fellside Estate for whom this is there only source of green space and if taken away will have to drive to another.

The site also Plans to build a Road through from the Hownsgill Industrial estate to Templetown. This will create a busy main road running through the estates. The road will run right past the new park being built in Templetown. This has also caused great concern as if the recreational fields are taken away children will be forced to play in the streets or new park which will be made dangerous by the increased traffic.

To learn more join the Facebook Group **'Delves and Templetown Residents Against the Planned Developments'**

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Places to Go: Nottingham

The City of Oxford is known as "the city of dreaming spires", a description coined by the poet Matthew Arnold. It is large, populated by 170,000 permanent residents, but the ancient colleges of the university are grouped around the compact city centre and all the places you might like to visit are to the east of the railway station. Trains arrive hourly from the north east stations of Newcastle, Durham and Darlington on the Cross Country route towards Reading and Southampton. Typical journey time on these direct trains is just over four hours. On arrival, head for the City Sightseeing booth on the station concourse to pick up a map of the open top bus which tours the centre, which has a detailed street map and marks all the attractions. Not that you actually have to ride the bus, though you can if you want to, but the map itself is remarkably handy.

On 4th July, I had a day in Oxford centred on the Pitt Rivers museum of anthropology and archaeology, which is free to enter, the Weston Library, part of the Bodleian Library and also free, with lunch and a concert at Corpus Christi College, which is one of the smaller colleges, founded in 1517 by Bishop Foxe who was Bishop of Winchester but who earlier had been Prince Bishop of Durham. His family emblem, the pelican in her piety, piercing her breast with her beak to feed her young, can be seen in Durham Castle, at the rear of the Great Hall and in the kitchens which he built in the period 1494-1501. I am told that the alumni (old students) of Corpus Christi are making a visit to Durham in early September to see Foxe's work. But I digress.

You would not visit Oxford as a day trip from the north east, as it's too far. But for one or more nights away, Oxford would be an excellent city to explore. Hotels tend to be rather expensive, and even my favourite Premier Inns are north of £150 a night in the Oxford area. But booking into an hotel is to overlook the opportunity to stay in one of the ancient colleges, all 44 of them. Many offer empty student rooms in the long vacation from early July to early October, and the availability can be found at universityrooms.com with a range of single and larger rooms, en-suite and the cheaper rooms without, modern peripheral halls which tend to be cheaper than the central ancient colleges, so there's plenty of choice. Each College has a Porter's Lodge protecting the quadrangle, but many of them welcome visitors for at least a few hours each day. There's an official map, available free, published by the University, of the various colleges and museums. These latter welcome donations but have an ethos of public access and the Pitt Rivers, for example, has a policy of conserving items and putting much on display. Indeed I have rarely seen so many exhibits per square inch. I was particularly pleased to see exhibits from James Cook's exploration of the Pacific islands, and even indigenous peoples come to see the pieces traded with their ancestors.

The Castle and Prison are a separate tourist attraction: "step inside and so 1,000 years of time", on a one hour guided tour, shown in the pictures. The Saxon tower and crypt are there to be explored. But it's not only buildings: the parks and gardens alongside the river with its punts and tea rooms are a delight to be discovered.

nationalrail.com

By Alex Nelson

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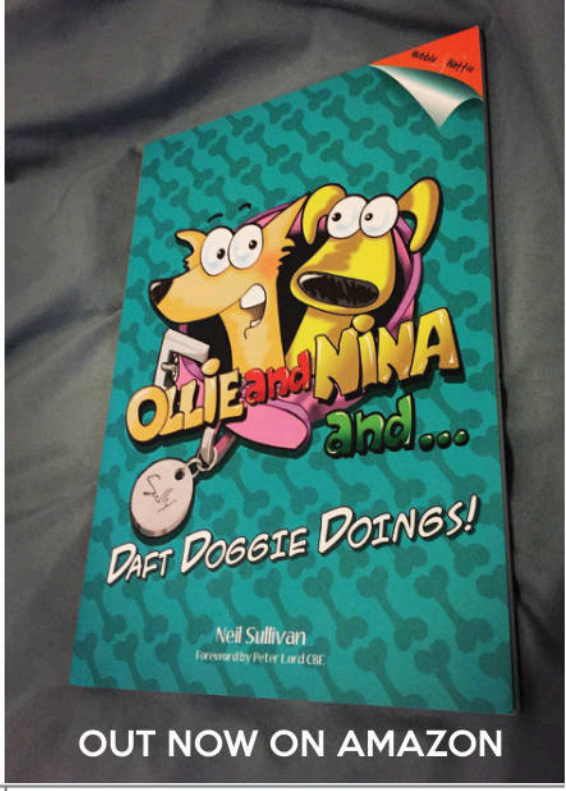



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By Christina Stubbins
Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

GRASS SEEDS

As the days start getting warmer it's really important in the summer months, injuries caused by grass seeds are a common problem seen at veterinary practices, with dogs with hairy ears and feet being most at risk. Grass seeds tend to be shaped like little arrowheads which means they can attach onto a pet's fur and burrow their way into their body, causing all sorts of problems when they do so.

Grass seeds most commonly burrow into the space between a dogs' toes forming cysts and infections. These are usually very painful and require medical, and sometimes surgical, treatment. Grass seeds can also make their way into your dog's ears causing infections and they can even cause damage to the ear drum. They can also make their way through the skin all over the body so it's always best to look out for any new swellings or wounds and see your vet if you're concerned. It is recommended that you check your pet after walks and remove any vegetation from their coats (and it's a great time to check for ticks too!) to reduce the risk of them developing any problems.

http://princebishopvets.co.uk/client-advice/

The Polish Prince - Fascinating Wartime Friendship



The friendship between a would-be king and a County Durham man was explored in a talk last month. Paul Salvator Riedelski-Piast laid claim to the Polish throne during the First World War, claiming to be descended from the ancient dynasty of Piast.

In 1915, he befriended Robert Holmes Edleston, a vicar in Gainford, County Durham, and the pair remained in contact for nearly 30 years exchanging regular letters.

Gabriel Damaszk, an archivist at Durham County Record Office, discussed the pair's friendship using the letters which are among a collection of papers from the Edelston family that have been preserved in the archives for nearly 30 years.

The talk, entitled The Polish Prince: Aspirations of Grandeur, took place at County Hall. It is part of the record office's Third Thursday talk series, which give members of the public the chance to hear about the archive collections at the record office from expert speakers.

Mor info can be found at www.recordofficeshop.gov.uk or by calling 03000 267 626.

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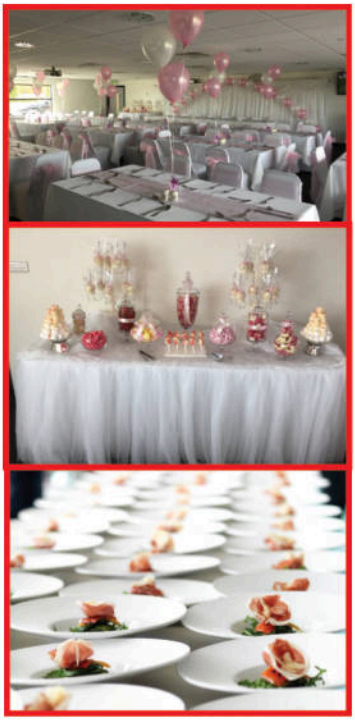

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