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MAGAZINE
NOVEMBER 2019
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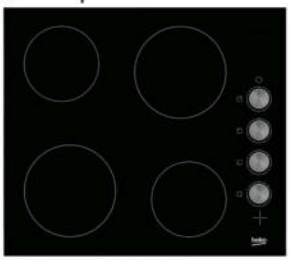

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Welcome

Dear Consett readers,

Thank you for picking up your free Consett Magazine.

It's November. In just a couple of months, this decade will be over! With 2020 just around the corner, I was hoping we'd have those flying cars and teleportation devices we were promised back in the 90s.

In this months edition, we've really focused on Consett of the past. Local historian Brian Harrison takes us all the way back to our town as it was one hundred years ago with "A Few Happenings of November 1919", when Consett was still an international powerhouse producer of iron and steel (see page 4). I just wonder what Consett will look like in 2119!

We're also really pleased to have received Joan Willis' piece, "A Memory of Shotley Bridge Hospital" which takes us back in time to 1951 at Shotley Bridge Hospital (see page 6). Lorraine Weightman is "Keeping the Faith" (on page 10) where yet more history is made when St.Patrick's Church was officially opened in November 1959 (see page 10-11).

Remember to check out all of the advertisers for quality local products and services, without these wonderful local advertisers the free Consett Magazine simply would not be possible.

This month's front cover magically paints a picture of an Autumnal day in Consett - a big thanks to John Bagnall for sending in another wonderful illustration. If you'd like to see your illustration, art, or photograph on the front cover - go ahead and give us a call on 01207 438 292 or email us on editor@consettmagazine.com.

Have a wonderful November,

Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy
and everyone who makes Consett Magazine possible each month.

Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
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Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
Christina Groves
Alex Nelson
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The Front Cover

The front cover this month is an illustration by John Bagnall - send any drawings or photographs to: **editor@consettmagazine.com**

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By Brian Harrison

A FEW HAPPENINGS OF NOVEMBER 1919









Winter came thick and fast with 5 inches dropping over night and frost setting it in on 12 November 1919. It was a sever cold start to the season and was threatening worse.

A few days later and after a few more snow flurries an important and exciting cup-tie took place at Leadgate between two local teams, Leadgate Park and Consett Celtic. There was always a good amount of rivalry between the two teams which lead to over 3000 spectators turning out to witness the spectacle. It was the 4th round of the Durham Senior Cup and for all the players the stakes were high. The pitch was inches deep in snow but it did not deter the players spirits and within the first 5 minutes Consett scored with a fantastic shot from Elliott followed only minutes later with another goal for Consett by Wigham. Mid way through the half Consett made a concerted charge the Park goalkeeper Hood coming out to meet it. He went down badly on the hard snow and fractured the small bone in his leg and was carried off the pitch. He was replaced by Turner but by then Consett had continued to build the pace and Leadgate could not keep up. The game ended Consett Celtic 4 and Leadgate Park nil.

Earlier in the month a talk had been given by Mr James Caygaill, a local naturalist on "Peter the Great and a Great Boulder". The talk took place on 10th in the Co-Operative buildings on New Market Street for the Consett & Derwent Valley Research and Naturalists Club. It was attended by over 100 people and was said to have been a great success

Knitsley and some parts of Healeyfield, which had previously been under the jurisdiction of Lanchester Rural District Council were brought under the control of Consett Urban District Council, increasing the size of the local area significantly and making Consett the biggest controlling Council within the immediate area.

Consett Iron Company on the other hand had seen a dip in share prices due to the Governments Bill which reduced the profits which could be made on Coal. As the CIC was also heavily involved in coal as well as steel and iron this had an adverse effect on profits and dividends. They took to the press to reassure investors that the manufacture and orders were on the up and that it was not them but the government who had forced this situation. However, the severity of the weather and Consett's well known affliction's of snow did not calm the worries. Fortunately prices stayed fairly constant after the initial drop. In other business the Consett Iron Company had pledged that at least 5% of employees at the works would be sourced from disabled soldiers and sailors something which they had already started to implement prior to the November and were actively still doing. There was also a severe shortage of trucks at the works which had lead to some of the problems they had been having and a letter was sent off to the Ministry of Labour hoping to have some aid with this situation.

Always a contentious issue, especially in our area, Mr Aneurin Williams MP for Consett spoke regarding the Irish problem and hoped that a peaceful solution could be found. He also spoke to the people about the vast sums made by certain businesses during the war years and how an investigation's should be held to look into this issue as he felt it was abhorrent, this caused major cheering and applause. Mr A Williams was not always the most loved MP and had scraped through the previous year by a very small minority.

In the Globe Theatre, Front Street , Lloyd Clarence MD had the pleasure of presenting Ethel Van Praagh and J. Edward Witty's production of "A Pair of Spectacles". The reviews stated that it was by far one of the best performances ever to have appeared here by one of the best companies.

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A MEMORY OF SHOTLEY BRIDGE HOSPITAL - MAY 1951

By Joan Willis



I was about 10 and a half when I contracted Tuberculosis. I was very ill and taken to Shotley Bridge Hospital by ambulance.

The ambulance man carried me in his arms to Ward 15 on the old huts. He wore a rough navy blue uniform and wore a peaked cap.

I was ordered bed rest and given a nightdress and a scratchy blue wool dressing gown that (to me) smelt peculiar. Every patient wore the same kind of clothing.

I was carried to be weighed by a Sister Stevenson who told me that she had babies on the ward who we're heavier than me. My weight was 2 stone 7 pounds.

I was in an alien world! I was prescribed Streptomycin injections (one of the first patients in the country) I was told by the paediatrician, Dr. Stansfield.

It was administered by injection 3 times per day with an enormous needle (remember I was very thin), not a very pleasant experience.

Every day I was given a dessert spoonful of Virol with vitamin tablets stuck in it. Ugh! I recall the smell of it to this day.

There was no education for children in hospitals in those days but I devoured every book and comic that was given to me.

I was taken under the wing of a wonderfully kind domestic called Mrs Gaye who made jellies and put them in the chilly air raid shelter (dug into the hillside between the wards) to set. She spoon fed me hot chocolate (cocoa) drinks which I love even now.

Mrs Gaye was responsible for the maintenance of the coke stove which was the main source for the ward.

The ward was sprinkled with disinfected sand every morning and swept up by the nurses, then polished with a bumper (a heavy device that was sung back and forth). The floor was dark red and shiny.

There was a Nurse Tulip and a Staff Nurse Williamson and many more whose names I cannot recall.

I was in the hospital for 2 months and received a basket of fruit from my school, Benfieldside Junior School, which was shared out with the whole ward. It was sheer luxury!

By now the ward was no longer an alien world. My hospitalisation made a huge impression on me. I met a lot of children some of whose stories I can still recall.

Ward life became my life and all I wanted to do was to be a nurse.

I started work on Ward 14 in 1957 as a pre-student nurse. My starting pay was £2. 17. 6 in pre decimal money for a 42 hour week.

I stayed 47 years, only taking breaks to have our children.

But that's another story.

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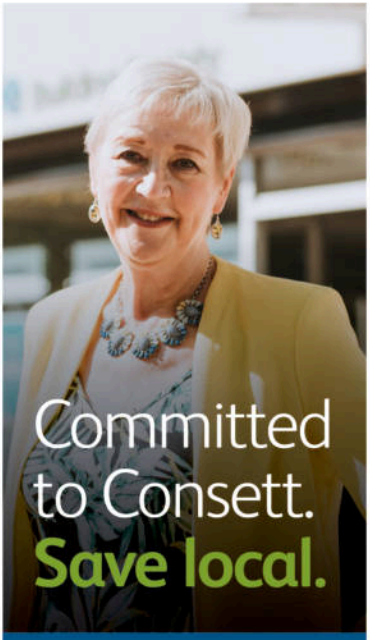

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With the season well underway in all 3 divisions, Blackhill Club, Kings Head, and Demi A find themselves top of divisions 1 2 and 3 respectively.

In division 3, newcomers Demi B, are finding themselves in 3rd place, with some brilliant results including, an 8-5 victory over Freemasons B.

Division 2 sees last seasons Division 3 winners, Bellamys, struggling at the bottom of the league, although with 2 games in hand. The station club, last year in division 1, find themselves level on points with Kings Head, and looking good for promotion.

The Scotch are finding life in Division 1 difficult as, they are yet to win a game, with the Barn A, and Snooker Club joining them. A surprising 8-5 victory for the Pheonix over Blackhill Club away from home, saw Blackhill reduce their lead at the top by 5 points, with 4 points now separating, them from Finnians B, who are the only current team in the Consett league, currently unbeaten.

In the team knockouts, it was victory for last years winners Blackhill club, with a closely contested, 7-5 victory over the Black Horse. The Queens Head will also find themselves in the 2nd round, with a brilliant 7-6 victory over Demi B.
The singles, doubles and scotch doubles knockouts are also well underway, with a shock result in the Doubles, where Graeme Thompson and Steve Todd were 3-1 victors over highly respected David Harrop, and experienced David Holmes.

There were victories for Phillip Marshall, Dave Castledene and Jack McLennan in the division 1 doubles, whilst there were victories for Hugh Graham, Lauren Raine and Ray Richardson in the division 2/3 singles.



For any information about the league, email consettpool@gmail.com

Question & Answers

By J.McGuigan

Now what should I be thinking
When I sit down here with pen and paper
While my brain goes off on its own silly caper

To me it makes no sense or reason
No matter the time or even the season
Just memories and thoughts
That seem to escape
Into some distant landscape
While I sit here like a fool
Mouth agape beginning to drool

Now I was just beginning
Or even ending
On some trail that seems never ending
Is it over the moon?
Or under the sea
How should I know
It never consults me

So that's it
Let's try again
Settle, now firmly grip your pen
And say to yourself
Thank god your back
Amen.
Now let's try again.

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KEEP THE FAITH



Saint Patrick's Church in Consett was officially opened and consecrated on November 4th 1959 - which makes it 60 years old this month.

I was just three and a half then and lived in Alexandra Street, three doors away from my Auntie Rose, Uncle Pat and Uncle Michael.

My cousin Bernadette was nineteen and after a fairytale romance she and her fiancé Michael were planning their wedding.

Working to a budget and without time on their side they began preparing for the big day.

The first thing after meeting with the Parish priest and arranging a date was to look for a reception venue. Auntie Rose said her house was available - as she would - so Bernadette set to, stripping off wallpaper to decorate, however with only three weeks to the wedding it was never going to happen. Michael who was twenty one had just come out of his bricklaying apprenticeship at 'The Company', and plucking up the courage, he rang her up while she was at work at Howard's in Taylor Street and asked her to marry him. Of course she said yes and that was when the fun started.

As with all families there was some wedding tension as her mother thought she was far too young to get married and voiced her opinion strongly, as did her future mother - in- law. However with determination and resourcefulness, the soon to be happy couple knew they were meant to be together and ploughed on with their plans.

There was a trip to Newcastle for the dress and decisions to make about bridesmaids and suits. With them both working full time, Michael agreed to buy the wedding band alone and he was given the engagement ring for the correct size. (It turned out to be too small and had to be cut off the day after the wedding - but that's another story!)

The cake was ordered locally and Donaghy's agreed to do the flowers, but with venues charging triple time to open on Boxing Day - the first day you could be married after Advent - Bernadette's Mam called in a favour from one of her hairdressing clients. The Stanefordham in Moorside was booked for the reception but no children were allowed. I was the little bridesmaid so had to be let in , but this proved to be a bone of contention with the other side of the family, who decided not to attend if they couldn't bring their kids. This led to a series of unfortunate events.



With one bridesmaid down, another cousin was asked to stand in. She agreed but didn't have a dress so hired one from a shop in the town. As the shops were closed for Christmas it was left on the front door step for collection and turned out to be totally wrong for the occasion but it was too late to make any changes. Similarly as the engaged couple went to pick up their three tiered cake it was placed surreptitiously on Bernadette's knee in the back seat of the car, where she promised faithfully to protect it on it's short journey to the pub. She closed the door carefully, unaware that the handle had deftly sliced through the bottom corner leaving a crumbly mess!

Most of the family were staying at Auntie Rose's and all wanted a bath on Christmas night ready for the wedding the next day. With only a back boiler to heat the water, there was a good hour waiting time in between baths for the water to achieve the desired temperature, so the family sat around and chatted

and shared drinks to pass the time. As it was getting late and the bath queue seemed to be getting longer. Bernadette and her chief bridesmaid Ann made their way to Castleside to her house for their ablutions and came back late in the evening.

My Mam was making my dress and sat up most of the night painstakingly securing all the satin fastenings and getting my beautiful silver shoes and coronet ready. After practically no rest it was consequential that we all slept in for the wedding, which was at 8 o'clock in the morning.

With everyone else ready, I remember being hauled out of my pyjamas and flung into a wedding car while Bernadette tried to tame my bed hair with her fingers, before plonking the floral band on my head just in time, as we pulled up at church.

The rain was relentless and as the guests poured into church they left a mountain of umbrellas in the front porch. In the rush and confusion I paraded down the aisle with a large bouquet of flowers meant for the bride while Bernadette had a dainty posy designed for a 3 year old!

And so the first wedding in St Patrick's was under way and even though Nana decided not to go at the last minute - despite having all her make up on - she commented that she was happy enough to sit in her wedding outfit in Auntie Rose's; having a cup of tea, delighted that all the prayers she'd offered up for the Holy Souls had been answered, and her granddaughter was marrying a good catholic lad!

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Catherine Meades BSc DipGen QG
Cameo Family History

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Part 11 – World War I Ancestors

World War I lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918 and impacted the lives of everyone in the UK, whether or not they actually fought in the war.

Records of soldiers, other servicemen and other people involved in war work are mostly held at The National Archives (TNA) in Kew. However, this is not a major obstacle to researching your wartime ancestors as many of these records are now online either on one of the subscription sites or via TNA's Discovery site. Also, following the recent activities related to the centenary of WWI, a lot of research has already been done based on names and places.

For example, check out the Durham at War website (http://www.durhamatwar.org.uk/) to see if there is already information on your ancestor. If there isn't, perhaps you will want to add your findings at the conclusion of your research.

Often the starting point for researching a WWI ancestor is an item of memorabilia such as a medal, photograph or letter. Alternately, you may have a family story which you wish to learn more about. Each of these items provides its own set of clues towards identifying key pieces of information for researching a military ancestor – name, unit with which they served and, ideally, a service number.

More information on using these clues to search WWI records, together with previous articles in this series, is available on the Cameo Family History Website: www.cameofamilyhistory.com.

Next month: Directories

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Places to Go: RACING AT PONTEFRACT

My friend Andy Bartlett, who, before he started the GO ROAM app, was a racing jockey suggested we went to Pontefract races one day, as it was a course I had never been to. In the event, he was unable to go on the date agreed, but I had arranged my accommodation coming back from London at the Premier Inn Doncaster, and train travel so I decided to stick to the arrangements and take advantage of the £11.30 advance fare from Pontefract to Chester-le-Street which was less than a quarter of the fare on the day. I even had a table of four to myself on a class 185 TransPennine train from Leeds back home, and a pleasant meal between trains on the south side of Leeds station using the platform 16 exit.

Pontefract has three railway stations – Monkhill and Baghill, but Tanshelf is closest to the racecourse served from both Wakefield and Leeds. It's only a ten minute walk across the park and I collected my Premier badge (I had been in a Premier Inn the previous night after all) and it was no problem to leave my baggage in the Raceday office. I had booked in advance a meal voucher and a tour behind the scenes. I was amazed to find that no-one else had booked the tour. So I had a one-to-one with a former female jockey who was also the presenter on the PA based in the winner's enclosure. I was even allowed in the stewards' office and jockeys' changing room and their tea room too. After lunch, at which I made my selection for the toteplacepot from the programme (£3), I went to consult the prices of the on course bookies.

Pontefract has three separate enclosures or areas. Starting at the winning post and moving down the course, they are the Premier (£25 per person), the Grandstand and Paddock (£17) and the Picnic which is only £6 through the turnstiles. Even this more basic area had plenty of undercover seating, a bar, and catering outlets and two brave bookies located separately from the main betting ring. I made the acquaintance of Mark Ryan, the Betting Ring Manager, who explained how it was that in one race most of the bookies declined to take each way bets and just offered Win Only.

In the course of the afternoon one horse came second a 50-1 and another third at 33-1, but I had not backed either, nor indeed any winners at all, but it was a very friendly course, close to the station, pleasant traditional architecture, and it only rained for a few minutes all afternoon. I have resolved to find out what happened to the "Back a Winner by Train" promotion which has not surfaced for a few years, despite its reduced price entry and discount placepot being very popular with punters.

Racing starts next season at Pontefract on Tuesday 7th April. Redcar races is also close to Redcar Central station.

Look out next month for the nationalrail.com map of all the railway stations in the United Kingdom. It also tells the story of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower ship which launched from Rotherhithe, London, in 1620, 400 years ago. The map will be officially launched on Wednesday 6th November in Rotherhithe, London, at the Brunel Museum.

Anybody actually attending the launch at 1600 can obtain a FREE copy of the map, which will thereafter also be available by mail order at £10 plus postage and packing.

Full details in the December copy of the magazine.

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ASK The VET

PRINCE BISHOP VETERINARY HOSPITAL

By Christina Groves
Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

Getting Speyed

One of the questions I get asked often is whether someone should have their bitch speyed (or neutered). If owners wish to have a litter of puppies the answer is obviously 'no' but nobody should underestimate the work involved in this, and, contrary to the old wives tales, it is not necessary for the bitch.

There are good reasons for speying apart from avoiding the obvious mess and dogs hanging around the doorstep every 6 months. Bitches who are speyed before their first season (and that is what we recommend) very rarely suffer from mammary cancer in later life and never have ovarian or womb cancer, or the relatively common womb infections.

They also never suffer the misery of false pregnancy which makes some bitches very miserable twice a year.

Overall I think there are compelling reasons to have this done – for more see:

princebishopvets.co.uk/client-advice

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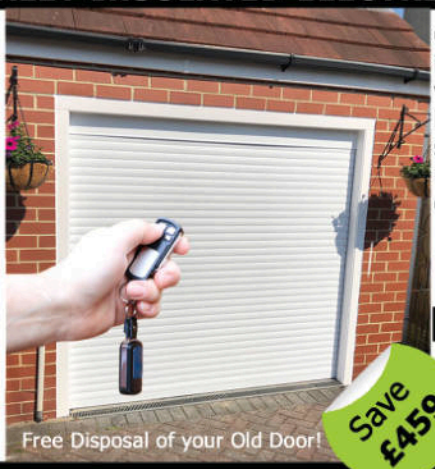

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