

CONSETT MAGAZINE

August 2020

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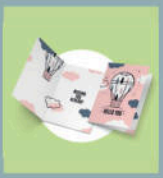
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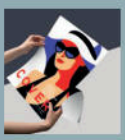
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Dear Consett readers,

We are excited to have relaunched the print edition of Consett Magazine this August, having taken the difficult decision to postpone during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Distributed locally, the monthly publication will continue to focus on Consett issues as we have for the last eight years (Issue one was distributed back in August 2012). We'll intersect between positive stories and informative features, championing our town and promoting neighbouring businesses and organisations.

Led by Barry Kirkham and Marco Elsy, the print magazine celebrates local writers, artists and photographers (and anyone who would like to get involved with story tip-offs, ideas, photos, art, or interesting local features).

We truly love to work with local contributors to spread positivity in Consett. That's why we started all of this. To get involved, email editor@consettmagazine.com with your name, phone number, and story idea.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Consett Magazine.

Warmest regards,
Barry Kirkham and Marco Elsy

PS - Join thousands of local people who've subscribed to our weekly email newsletter on consettmagazine.com, where you'll also find 1732 articles including links to all 91 previously published print magazines.

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SCAN ME

The Front Cover

The front cover this month is by **Neal Crossan**
send any drawings or photographs to:
editor@consettmagazine.com

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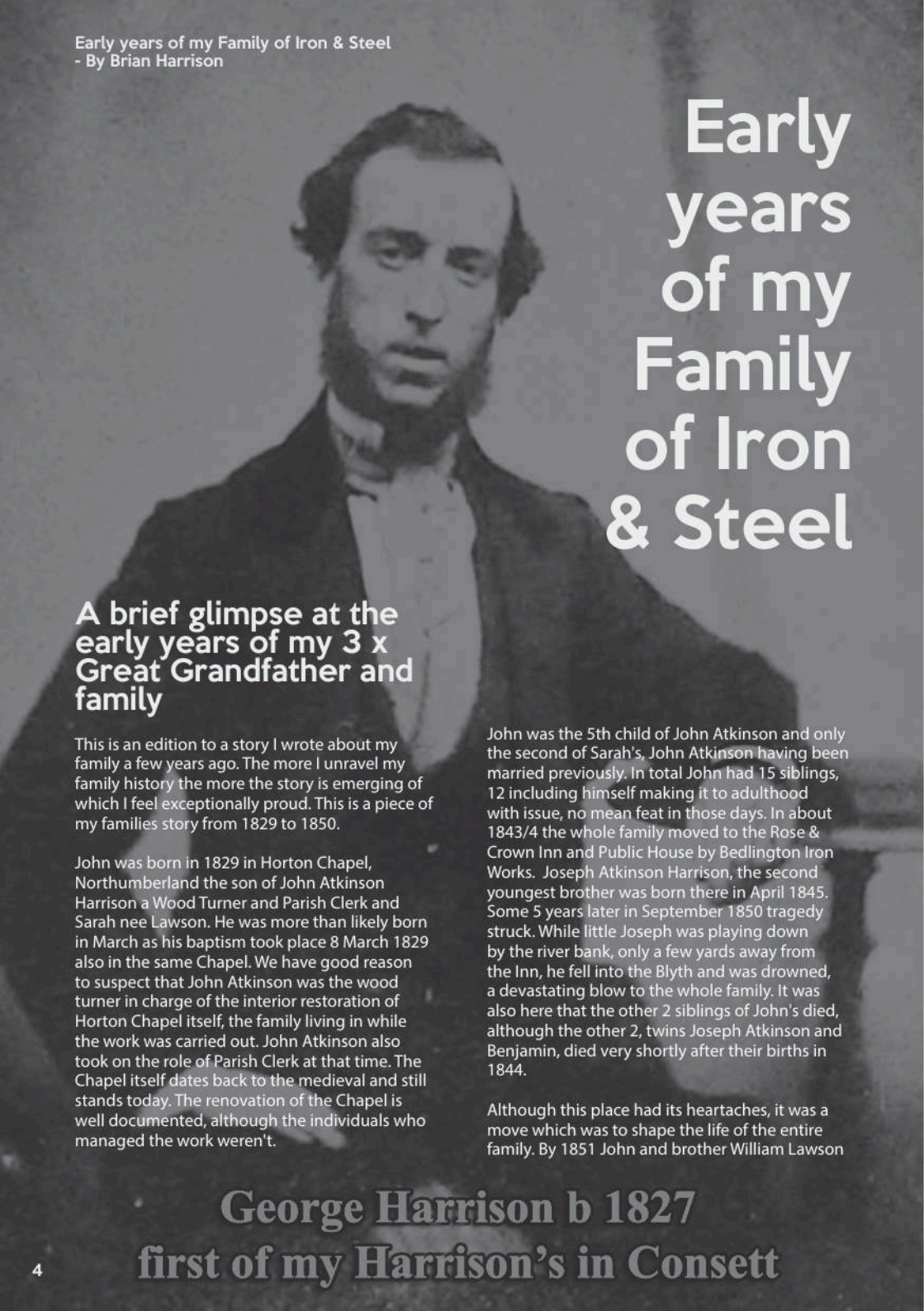
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Early years of my Family of Iron & Steel



A brief glimpse at the early years of my 3 x Great Grandfather and family

This is an edition to a story I wrote about my family a few years ago. The more I unravel my family history the more the story is emerging of which I feel exceptionally proud. This is a piece of my families story from 1829 to 1850.

John was born in 1829 in Horton Chapel, Northumberland the son of John Atkinson Harrison a Wood Turner and Parish Clerk and Sarah nee Lawson. He was more than likely born in March as his baptism took place 8 March 1829 also in the same Chapel. We have good reason to suspect that John Atkinson was the wood turner in charge of the interior restoration of Horton Chapel itself, the family living in while the work was carried out. John Atkinson also took on the role of Parish Clerk at that time. The Chapel itself dates back to the medieval and still stands today. The renovation of the Chapel is well documented, although the individuals who managed the work weren't.

John was the 5th child of John Atkinson and only the second of Sarah's, John Atkinson having been married previously. In total John had 15 siblings, 12 including himself making it to adulthood with issue, no mean feat in those days. In about 1843/4 the whole family moved to the Rose & Crown Inn and Public House by Bedlington Iron Works. Joseph Atkinson Harrison, the second youngest brother was born there in April 1845. Some 5 years later in September 1850 tragedy struck. While little Joseph was playing down by the river bank, only a few yards away from the Inn, he fell into the Blyth and was drowned, a devastating blow to the whole family. It was also here that the other 2 siblings of John's died, although the other 2, twins Joseph Atkinson and Benjamin, died very shortly after their births in 1844.

Although this place had its heartaches, it was a move which was to shape the life of the entire family. By 1851 John and brother William Lawson

George Harrison b 1827 first of my Harrison's in Consett



Site of Bedlington Iron works in 1900- Rose & Crown behind chimney

were employed in the Works, John as a Forge Man (Furnaceman) and William Lawson as a Puddler. Three of the younger brothers, Ralph, Thomas and Richard also took up position's within the iron and steel trade as they became old enough to do so. However Robert, who I can only assume had an aptitude for figures, was apprenticed as a book keeper from a young age. Although Robert still had connections to the Iron Industry when he became Stock-taker in Darlington Iron works sometime in the late 1870's and into the 1880's. The 2 older brothers took up different professions however, Henry Marshall becoming a Taylor and George a Blacksmith.

John married Mary Alice Shadforth, daughter of Michael Shadforth a School Master and his wife Isabella nee Dryden, on 27th April 1853 in St Mary's Church, Gateshead.

Mary Alice was born in February 1835 Sands, Hartlepool. At the time of their marriage John was commuting to Swindon along with his sister Ann's husband Thomas Laverick. This was at the time of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's building of the famous Locomotive Works for which he required skilled men to build. Bedlington Iron Works had previously been one of the most advanced Iron Works in the country as well as having the added advantage of the Bebside Engine Works connected to it, where Stephenson had built many of his most famous engines.

The Harrison brothers were the equivalent of high tech engineers and computer programmers today. Their skills learned at Bedlington mean't they were highly sort after. Bedlington also had an added advantage in that the owner of the works there encouraged learning and education and the Harrison's took great advantage. At the closing down of the Bedlington Works the family branched out across the North East and could be found where ever Iron and Steel works sprang up. George, John's second oldest brother, had already moved to Consett by 1841. It was a move that would eventually shape the lives off at least 3 of his brothers families and their descendents.



Fern Property Solutions, Proudly serving Consett and the North East of England

Local brothers Liam Carr and Sean Henderson have launched their new business, Fern Property Solutions. The company offers building, electrical, plumbing and roofing services for residential customers throughout the North East of England.

Liam has been a fully qualified electrician for 12 years and has worked on commercial, domestic and industrial projects across the UK. Sean also has over a decade of experience in the building, roofing and plumbing trades.

They've worked separately for other large firms, but have teamed up in 2020 to combine their expertise and offer their all-in-one property services to people wishing to upgrade and maintain their homes.

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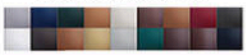
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You've Got A Friend

By Lorraine Weightman

Originally marketed by Hallmark cards in the early twentieth century as an advertising campaign, 'International Friendship Day' is apparently celebrated on the first Sunday in August. I've been totally unaware of this special day, so perhaps I owe my friends an apology as I haven't ever acknowledged it. On Friendship Day we are encouraged to look around us and identify the people who have made a difference in our lives, with the added option of giving cards and gifts.

However on the other three hundred and sixty four and a bit days of the year, friendships manage to flourish without a card or a fancy gift, and furthermore they can last a lifetime; staying strong, even when distance restricts close communication, by keeping people tactility apart. I've heard so many - including myself - pick up on a past conversation after a long awaited reunion - and say, 'It's like we've never been away!' At this time in our lives, when physical contact, like hugging, is a long and distant memory, it's especially important to value and rejoice in what we have, while looking out for others.

There are also those occasions when a complete stranger reaches out and offers the hand of friendship to those in need, and at certain times in my life I have experienced impromptu, simple acts of kindness that will stay in my heart forever.

In Harper Lee's novel 'To Kill A Mockingbird' there is a famous quote: 'You can choose your friends but you sho' can't choose your family'. Yet in the majority of people's lives, being part of a family is our very first encounter with friendship, where we learn to bond and realise the importance of mutual respect and sharing.

One of my very first experiences of reading about friendship and how friends rely on each other was in the Winnie-The-Pooh books by A. A. Milne. My Auntie Rose encouraged my interest. Here, very different characters and personalities embrace each other's idiosyncrasies, while offering support when their friends are not having the best day! "If the person you are talking to doesn't appear to be listening, be patient. It may simply be that he has a small piece of fluff in his ear." Pooh's simple words of wisdom sum up the tolerant and accepting attitude he displays to his friends.

And accordingly all his friends - perhaps with the exception of Tigger - hold some responsibility for their mates. But then again who hasn't had a lovable narcissistic friend who gets away with the precept that the world revolves around them! One of my favourite songs written by Carole King, and performed by her and James Taylor still brings a tear to my eye as I sing along and reflect on a lifetime of friendship with those I hold dear to me. I remember as a child playing in the back streets behind Alexandra Street and Albert Road in Consett, and loving Mondays when the Mams' strung their washing lines between the houses; hanging out white sheets and pillowcases to dry.

We made pot pies in the steel speckled black and red dust, which lay heavy in the gutters, and ran or scootered our way between the flapping washing lines until it was bath time. And the Mams' who had intermittently chatted all day with their neighbours, didn't mind one bit that their dry washing had tiny grey/black handprints and smudges hidden in the corners; as they reflected the happy days their children had enjoyed, procuring the art of forging lifelong friendships.

So on the first Sunday of August, perhaps - like me - you will think about the special people in your life and ask and answer the following question!

'We'll be Friends Forever, won't we, Pooh?', asked Piglet.

'Even longer,' Pooh answered.



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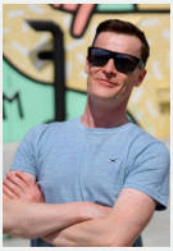
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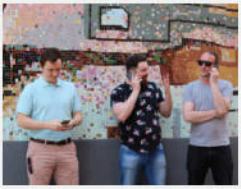


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Places to Go:
Berwick-upon-Tweed

On the many occasions I have been to visit Berwick, I have always turned right out of the station to follow Castlegate into the town centre. This time, I turned left over the railway, looking out for the 1937 Coronation Park on the left, through which runs a footpath downhill to the north bank of the River Tweed. I was walking the new three mile Tweed and Coast nature trail, supported by many local bodies and charitable foundations, and devised by the local U3A. There are fourteen information boards on the trail which runs through Berwick and Tweedmouth via the docks to Spittal beach so the path is part riverside, urban, industrial, dunes and seaside promenade. Spittal has a long and wide expanse of sandy beach, and is rather nicer than the name might imply. In the 1800s it was a popular spa. A similar trail about L. S. Lowry, the artist, is available.

There is plenty of wildlife to see and the information boards are attractive and, notably, are changed for each season four times a year to keep the content relevant. A simple idea, but I have not seen it done before in practice. The group organising the trail has just installed the summer versions of the boards. One told of the 2m long Pholiderpeton fossil – might have been useful for helping social distancing.



I passed through the ruins of Berwick Castle at low level and was impressed by the grandeur of the Royal Border Bridge, which was officially opened by Queen Victoria on 29th August 1850 on her way to Balmoral, a process which took only twelve minutes from her train arriving to continuing over the border, 2.5 miles further north. (It was a good day for rail openings: she had opened Newcastle Central station earlier the same day.) I continued into town under the 1928 Royal Tweed Bridge which relieved most of the traffic on the Berwick Old Bridge of 1633, which I crossed to Tweedmouth. Road traffic had to trundle through the town until the opening of the A1 Berwick bypass in 1984.

It's much quieter now, and although the population is around 12,000 you would think it were bigger owing to the large number of villages in both England and Scotland which look to it as their local centre. I was originally intending to visit after the pubs and restaurants reopened on 4th July, but I reckoned that since Berwick pubs were the closest for locked down Scots up to 300 miles away it might be wiser to visit beforehand. I enjoyed fish and chips at the Cannon near the station and ate them in Castle Vale Park with its view of the rail bridge, but I could have sat out at the open air café in Spittal. On the nature trail you also pass the Berwick Shellfish which had a good range of seafood. They offer to put it in a polystyrene box with ice for just £1 extra to take home.

From Spittal there is a choice of walking back along Main Street and over the river to town, or use the Borders Buses route B1, which runs half-hourly (hourly on Sundays). If you don't want to visit the town centre, the bus goes back close to the station. I spotted the Spittal War Memorial off Main Street and behind it a fountain which was an iron-rich chalybeate spa, but there was no indication whether the water was safe to drink. So I didn't.

Alex Nelson travelled to Berwick from Newcastle with CrossCountry for £9.90 and returned with LNER for £8.20.



Nancy Shaw - "In with both Feet"

Each month we'll bring you an excerpt from the fantastic book written by Nancy Shaw - "In with both feet" - Available on Amazon.

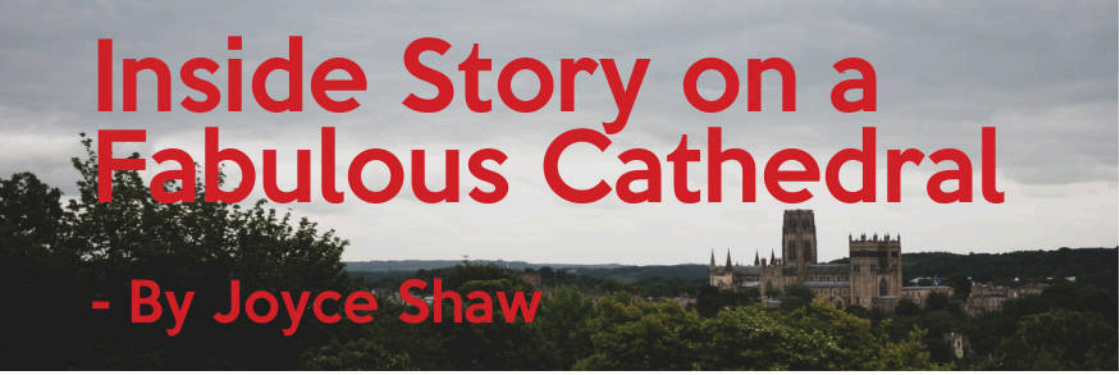
PART 1 - England - Templetown

It was into this Company town and social environment that I literally arrived on Thursday, March 4, 1943 and nobody had a hint of what was to come. I was born in a bedroom in my Grandads' house at 2 Engine Shed Houses, in the village of Templetown, in the town of Consett, in the County of Durham, England, and was the second female born out of wedlock to his daughter, Beatrice Maud Buckett. My older sister, Nora, was born two years earlier, and when I was two years old, our mother, who was ready to give birth to a third child, a boy, married his father, Bill Dodds, and went to live in her mother-in-law's house, and Nora and I were left behind with our grandparents.

The grandparents had each been married before and between them had seven children, all of whom were adults and married with their own homes by the time I was born, and when the grandparents got together they had four more children: Marjorie (married but visited daily), Jimmy, Billy and Lorna and they still lived at home, and my sister and I were raised to believe the grandparents were our Mam and Dad, and our aunts and uncles were our sisters and brothers, and this is my life story, as I remember it, and for simplicity's sake I give my grandparents their proper title.

You couldn't really call Templetown a village, because that implies amenities such as butchers and baker's shops, and there weren't any. Other than one enterprising person who adapted their living room into a small convenience store for essentials such as candles and potatoes, all 200 villagers trailed up the hill into Consett for supplies.

Templetown was also home to the Company's power plant. It stood guard at the top of the hill, keeping vigil over the four or five supervisor's houses that faced the road in order to watch the workers coming or going to work. Below these houses were five or six streets of workmen's houses all running parallel to each other, and behind them were acres of land on which cattle and sheep grazed. Running past the power plant were railway lines that traversed the steel bridge spanning the road into Templetown, carrying iron ore wagons into the steel works. At the end of the stone wall and attached to pylons was a 6-foot high barbed wire security fence that ran the length of the village and enclosed all the Company's property. Once the fence reached our house, which was about a quarter of a mile past all the other houses in the village, two 6-foot wide gates replaced it, and the right-hand side gate was fastened to our backyard wall. These gates were never closed which was just as well because we had to go through them and round by the backyard to enter the house by the kitchen.



Inside Story on a Fabulous Cathedral

- By Joyce Shaw

I am immensely proud to call Durham cathedral part of my heritage. I boast about it whenever I am in foreign parts as it has survived when other European cathedrals have fallen. It also has a long history of establishing early Christianity, putting our locality on the map!

A few years ago, the cathedral invited the public to write poems about the cathedral for the pilgrim visiting there. Plenty of books and articles had been written about its history and architecture but there was nothing, at the time, for the pilgrim.

Imagine my delight when I received a letter from one of the canons, inviting me to an evening soiree where the finalists could meet together and hear the winning poem!

We had to make our way to the Dean's palace which was behind the cathedral along the Bailey. I parked in Palace Green (you could in those days!) and was joined with a young couple who helped me find the way. He was a tall Englishman and his wife was a petite Chinese lady who befriended me as we walked to the palace. We were welcomed into a beautiful room called the Solarium and I noticed the Chippendale furniture and antique silk wallpaper, before the Dean, Peter Belz, appeared.

I could hardly believe my ears when the finalist was announced and it was the lovely Chinese lady who had accompanied me from the car park! Her poem was very beautiful, cleverly describing the birds singing in the cloisters as if they were the choirboys.

No sooner had the soiree ended, the Dean then asked if we would like to see something exciting! I could not believe that some wanted to stay and talk as they sipped their sherries! I was excited to join the party on a personal guided tour!!!
The Dean took us to the lobby of his apartments where the decorators had stopped work because they had discovered the golden head of the madonna on the plastered wall. Experts from Canterbury cathedral had been called in to rescue the work and it was estimated to be a few thousand for the restoration….I had noted to myself that it was more than my mortgage at the time!!

Well, it didn't stop there because he then invited us to see the rest of his home! We went through a secret door in his library which took us through his dining room. It had a beautiful wooden ceiling carved with the English rose and I noticed a cabinet of silverware with a missing silver dish…he must have used it for dinner!!!

He explained that it was called King James' bedroom because this is where the king slept overnight on his way from Scotland to claim the throne in London.

He was so amusing as he asked us what we though of the narrow alleyway which led to the kitchen….he told us it used to be the monks' urinals!!!

It was an amazing and humbling experience to be part of the evening with such a warm and friendly dignitary who held such respect in the cathedral.

I left the event feeling so honoured and the memories remain so vivid after all the years. Here is my poem, written on a Sunday afternoon as I made a hurried visit to my favourite cathedral, when evensong was taking place and I could only be in the Galilee chapel and the close vicinity. - (Poem on the next page)

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Matthew Fraser from Consett Junior School;
We have been lucky enough that we gained our 1st allotment in Lockdown.
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Mark Wilkinson Photography in association with Consett Junior school are putting together a time capsule of images from the lockdown.

We need your best shot that sums up what you did during this very unusual time whether it be hair styles and cuts, clapping for carers, home baking for the first time. Also include your name and a brief description and email it to: **mwphotography92@icloud.com**

The pictures are to be buried in Consett Junior school, by staff, children and our local MP Richard Holden who is taking time out of his busy schedule to be present.

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Joan Stevens;
"hope and promise of happier times"

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A Visitor at Evensong - By Joyce Shaw

I entered by a side door slipping past a notice saying
"Quiet please, a service is in progress."
And so into a world far from the stress and strain
Of mortal life, I came.

A hushed and quiet reverence had filled the cool still air
And in the chapel they called Galilee
The bare stone floor directed me
To where the great St. Bede now lay.

Impressive in simplicity, the bold black stone stood gaunt
Stark ebony against the glittering words
"Christus est stella"--memory stirred
Familiar to the old saint's tongue.

Now out beyond the gates I see the font which blessed the young
The privileged few, new life to try.
A sudden beam lifts up my eye,
I see a warrior, arms spread wide.

And so man strives to live with God, to win all wars for Christ.
To build in stones and words and deeds
And store them all in hope, that evermore
Mankind will learn to live in peace.

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Lungworm

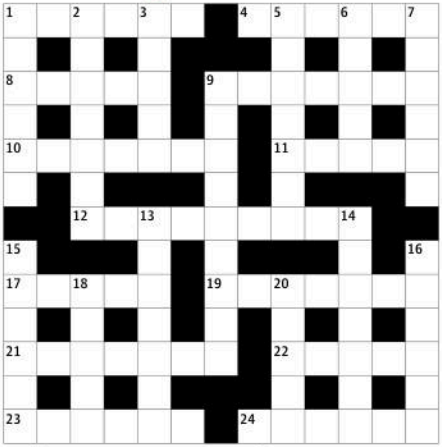
Angiostrongylus vasorum (also known as canine lungworm) has become a widespread problem in the dog population across the UK in recent years. Dogs become infected when they ingest slugs or snails, and potentially if they ingest their slime too.

Lungworm infections can result in a number of dierent (and often vague) clinical signs including coughing, changes in behaviour, seizures, lethargy, unexplained bleeding and anaemia. After examining you pet, there are several ways in which your vet can diagnose lungworm, including a patient-side blood test and a faecal test. Unfortunately, lungworm can be fatal so preventing infection in the first place is far better than curing an already infected dog.

There are several products available that will protect your pet from lungworm, all of which must be given monthly. A vet or nurse at your local practice would be able to speak to you about all the options available to keep your pet safe from lungworm as well as all other internal and external parasites.

princebishopvets.co.uk/client-advice

Puzzle Corner August 2020



Across

1. With long coarse hair (6)
4. Frank (6)
8. Less civil (5)
9. Moderately slow musical passage (7)
10. Thick soup with clams or fish (7)
11. Leading Brexiteer's given name (5)
12. Not the same (9)
17. Further from a centre (5)
19. Wide continuous area(7)
21. Go on the rampage (3,4)
22. Cunning (5)
23. Tramp (6)
24. False (6)

Down

1. Took industrial action (6)
2. Automaton resembling a human (7)
3. Wounded by a bull (5)
5. Within hearing range (7)
6. Benefactor (5)
7. Wearing stylish clothing (6)
9. Conformity (9)
13. Surreptitious (7)
14. More piquant — Moroccan port (7)
15. Not nice (6)
16. Become more distant (6)
18. Melodies (5)
20. Heathen (5)

Answers for July

■	■	■	D	I	S	G	R	A	C	E	D
A	■	G	E	■	A	■	O	■	O	■	E
R	O	A	S	T	■	F	L	O	T	S	A	M
R	■	R	E	■	E	■	F	■	M	■	O
A	B	D	I	C	A	T	E	■	D	O	U	R
N	■	E	■	T	■	Y	■	D	■	P	■	A
G	U	N	N	E	R	■	R	E	C	O	I	L
E	■	C	■	D	■	S	■	C	■	L	■	I
M	E	E	K	■	S	I	B	E	L	I	U	S
E	■	N	■	L	■	N	■	A	■	T	■	I
N	O	T	H	I	N	G	■	S	P	A	I	N
T	■	R	■	L	■	E	■	E	■	N	■	G
S	W	E	L	T	E	R	E	D	■	■	■	■

Answers for this puzzle will be published on the same page next month.

Ask the MP - Questions & Answers

Q. **Does our MP Richard holden agree with the U-turn its government (brought to attention by a young footballer) on assisting families with school meals over this School Summer holidays and how will families in North West Durham be assisted if there is a second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in a local school or nursery in coming months? - Graeme Hall**

A. The Government took the unprecedented step to provide free school meals over the Easter holidays and summer half term without any external pressure. I lobbied the Chancellor on this issue as I know that school meals will make an enormous difference to many local families facing uncertainty this year and I am glad that they've extended them this summer too.

Particularly for the children from the most challenging backgrounds, school is vital to given them the opportunities to thrive, so I hope every child will be going back as soon as possible.

The Government has done a huge amount to support families and the economy across North West Durham and has provided extra funding for schools. I hope there isn't a need for a local lockdown in our area, and there is no indication that one will be required, but if there is there will of course be extra support available.

Q. **I've not seen my grandchildren in months and have done my very best to shield myself and my family from the virus (as per government instructions). What is Richard's thoughts on senior government adviser Dominic Cummings coming HERE to County Durham from London (when the virus was spreading rapidly in the Capital) during the lockdown, potentially bringing the virus into County Durham? - Anna. S**

A. My grandparents have been isolating too – in fact, my dad who is a carer for one of my grandmas has had to maintain social distancing from my mum because she works in a hospital – so I do understand the utter frustration of so many people who are having to shield. The end is in sight though, with the ending of the special category of shildeding on the 1st of August.

Sticking to the guidelies is the right thing to do. I made clear that I wouldn't have made the same calls as Mr Cummings did.

Q. **I love the train line idea to be opened up again. But I think we need to get the buses to all surrounding villages to be more consistent. If I have to get to the hospital in Durham, I have to spend almost 2 hours to get there and two hours to get home. That's with the connections of the buses and the waiting around you have to do. - Colin Simpson**

A. I agree – our rural transport and bus services are not up to scratch at the moment and are not serving the community as well as they should be. I am working on getting bus improvements – I want to see an improved timetable with more frequent services, esepcially in the evenings, at night and on weekends. The campaign I'm running for a fixed public transport link between Consett and the Tyne is part of a wider transport campaign I am leading for North West Durham and I believe we will see real improvements over time. The Government will publish it's national bus strategy later this year which will be the backbone of any bid we make to transform local bus services, particularly for Crook/TowLaw/ Willington, the rural villages surrounding consett and in Weardale.

Q. **Sure Start centres offered a lifeline for new parents and were a valuable part of the community, but were sadly closed. Could they be brought back? - KSChilds**

A. One of the things that I'm proudest of in the manifesto I stood on is the expansion of taxpayer funded childcare – it's such a massive cost for so many families – like a second rent or mortgage. While I've backed the rollout of 30 hours free childcare for three and four year old children with parents in work and 15 hours for all two year olds there is still much more to do and some anomalies in the system (for example, I've a constituency case at the moment of a trainee doctor who can't get the full 30 hours for her three year old because she's a student) and I want to ensure that those are dealt with. I'd love to see a further expansion of childcare hours for working parents as a priority and would not be averse to sure start centres being in that mix.

Q. **What provisions have your government put in place to replace the money we currently receive from the European Social Fund after we leave the EU? This money helps support thousands of people in your constituency and funds a lot of organisations that do good work in the community, so some clarity on the plan to support them would be greatly appreciated. - Jonathan McGee**

A. Firstly – it's our government and my party in Government. It must also be remembered that we are a net contributor to the EU – all funding Britain received from the EU was simply getting back a fraction of the money we gave them, meaning that we will be able to continue funding vital projects that have the same aims and outcomes as EU projects. Under the Withdrawal Agreement, we're continuing to fund programmes through the transition period and the government has made clear that support in future UK schemes will be at least as generous as the ones we had access to from the EU. As soon as the details of those schemes come forward, I'll be sharing them across my social media and directly with local stakeholders.

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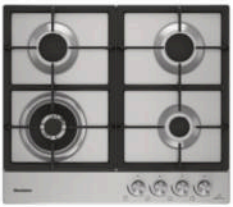
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