Issue 114 May 2022

CONSETT MAGAZINE



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A very warm welcome to the 114th Issue of the Consett Magazine!

Publishing positive local news!

With the Consett Magazine now being available in both Tesco and Morrisons we've seen a HUGE increase in our readership!

We're now getting over **50,000 visitors** to our website every month!

Lorraine Weightman is getting proverbial the Tupperware party started on **page 4 and 5.**

Saving the planet is high on the agenda with the launch of a new electric vehicle hire in Shotley Bridge on **page 6.**

Consett In Focus is in full voice in this issue, bringing us fantastic pics from three local choirs on **pages 7, 8 and 9.**

Joyce Shaw celebrates the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in a regal poem **on page 13.**

We'd like to thank everyone involved in the making and production of the magazine.

For nearly 10 years we've tried to bring the people of Consett positive local news.

If you have a story, issue, photo or poem you'd like published, please don't hesitate to contact us via email: editor@consettmagazine.com

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SCAN ME

The Front Cover

The front cover this month is by Paul Reed. Send your drawings or photographs to: editor@consettmagazine.com

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Get the Party Started

By Lorraine Weightman

There was a time in the sixties when visiting friends houses to buy Tupperware was all the rage.

I remember going with my Mam, where we viewed various sizes of plastic boxes and containers and 'ooh'd ' and aah'd with everyone else at the magnificent storage possibilities.

The trend started in America by it's inventor, Earl Tupper - I just found this out - and soon spread worldwide, and folk are still buying it today; apparently even the Queen keeps her breakfast cereal in these containers!

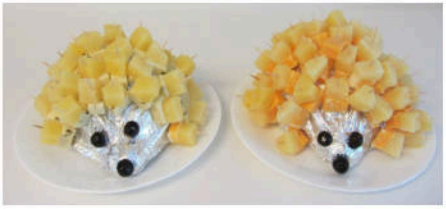
Yet fashions come and go and house parties changed a little in the 1970's, when wicker and rattan homeware was on trend. I remember being cajoled into make some extra income by inviting my friends to host wicker basket parties, which included macramé plant holders, dried flower arrangements and those big basket chairs that Morticia used to sit on in 'The Addams Family'.

At any of these events there's always the hidden pressure to buy something, even if you are not in the slightest bit interested, because the hostess is not only feeding guests by employing her new fangled culinary skills, but also plying them with drinks to take them off their guard; as the more she sells, the more free gifts she receives.

Seventies buffets reached new heights as the hostess with the mostest replaced traditional homemade corned beef pies, sausage rolls and ham and pease pudding sandwiches with Vol au vents filled with tinned chicken in



white sauce mixed with mushrooms. And of course sliced hot dog sausages with silverskin pickled onions speared onto cocktail sticks. In the meantime, the bright yellow cheddar cheese and tiny slices from pineapple rings were reserved to decorate the foiled potato hedgehog.



And no self respecting table would be without Twiglets, cheese straws, a Black Forest gateaux with pouring cream and an Arctic Roll in the freezer for backup. I remember one evening at one of these gatherings, when my friends had consumed copious amounts of Mateus Rosé, Blue Nun and Liebfraumilch, finding my order book full, and the only thing left in the bottom of the last, large cardboard box was a fluffy yellow pig dressed in red dungarees - I'm not even sure how it got there - but nonetheless there were two grown women fighting over it!

And I can never forget at the end of the night, watching the group leave with armfuls of basket-ware, like crazed Crackerjack contestants winding their way home with primula cheese spread on ritz crackers stuck to the back of their Levi's.

One week later, when I delivered their Peacock chairs, I gave out invitations to yet another party, and it still surprises me to this day that they accepted!

Needless to say I didn't escape the rattan and wicker obsession and found myself spending my extra earnings on baskets filled with dried flowers and four macramé handbags.

I kept them for years, yet like most people, gave them away to charity shops before they became vintage and would make a fortune on eBay today.

The memories of those happy days are priceless and I chuckle at their recall. Especially, when our homes couldn't take another item of wicker, rattan and macramé, there were still things to aspire to.

As, most of my friends - including me - were saving up for a Fondue Set!



Electric vehicle car hire launches in County Durham

Residents in County Durham can now hire an electric vehicle for the day, as part of a new car club service.

Durham County Council has been working with Derwent Valley Car Club to help it launch a new electric vehicle hire service in Shotley Bridge.

The car club has three fully electric cars available to borrow, which residents can hire for an hour up to a full day.

In conjunction with the launch, an electric vehicle charge point has been installed on Front Street in Shotley Bridge, where one of the vehicles is based. The remaining two vehicles are based in Rowlands Gill and Blackhall Mill.

It costs £5 a month to join the scheme and the hire rate is £4 per hour for the first three hours, then £3 for every hour after that, or £30 to hire the car for a day. There is no geographical limit as to who can join the scheme.

Volunteer drivers from the club are also available to use the car to take people to hospital appointments.

Cllr Mark Wilkes, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for neighbourhoods and climate change, met the club to officially open the scheme.

He said: "We are delighted to have been able to work with Derwent Valley Car Club to help it launch its electric vehicle car club scheme. Every car club vehicle can remove up to 20 non-electric cars off the road and will create a new option for residents who are looking to switch to greener modes of transport.

"The service has been set up particularly to help families who have returned to workplaces on a hybrid-basis, where they no longer need to run two cars every day and can borrow an electric vehicle as they need from the club.

‘Consett in Focus’ Documentary Photography Group

Consett has found it’s voice this month and the ‘Consett In Focus’ photographers have been out and about photographing some of our local choirs.

If you are part of any Art, Craft and Hobby group or know of any people or groups that are and would like to be part of this growing project, then please, please contact us at:

facebook.com/ConsettTownofCulture

Website: consettinfocus.weebly.com

Or email us - consettinfocus@gmail.com

Red Dust Choir, Citizens House

Red Dust Company Choir meet in Citizens House Consett on Friday nights. They were set up in 2019 after Clare Suddes saw a tribute 'Whitney Houston' act at The Empire'. She posted on Facebook asking- 'Who in the area was interested in joining a choir' and received over 100 hundred replies.

The group recently returned to weekly meetings in March 2022 following the Covid restrictions, numbers were lower than normal, but members are keen to restart and are always welcoming to new people who want to come along and have a good 'sing-a-long

(Images: George Ledger)







Consett Citizens Choir, The Parish Church Consett

Founded in 1949 by William E. Westgarth M.B.E, Consett Citizens Choir continues to celebrate over 70 years of quality choral music in Consett. They are a mixed-voice adult choir who take great pride and pleasure in their singing, they are very keen to ensure a warm friendly atmosphere at all of their concerts
.
Each year they present a summer and Christmas concert, as well as singing at smaller events throughout the year! Amongst the members are the founders daughter Vivian Westgarth who has been a member for 60 years and 91 years young Marjorie who joined in 1951.

(Images: Steve Webb)



Salvation Army Choir, Consett

The Salvation Army in Consett has always seen music as an important part of their worship and have had a rich musical heritage for many years. The songsters were first mentioned in 1880 even though William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, did not allow the formation of Songster Brigades until 1898. Brian Kirkup, the choirmaster here has his own heritage with music in the Salvation Army as his great grandfather was in a string band in the 1880's. Brian has continued this tradition and has been choirmaster for 33 years. He is looking forward to retiring soon and letting Ruth Markew take over. I suspect that Brian will continue to be involved and keep up the family tradition. The Songsters are a very inclusive group, singing ability is not important and nor is faith. They are just happy to spread their message to all who hear them.

(Images: Chris Bruce)




Steve Webb
@Consett in Focu


THE SALVATION ARMY
Chris Bruce
@Consett in Focus



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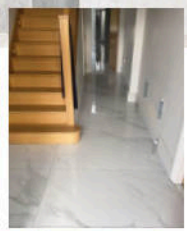

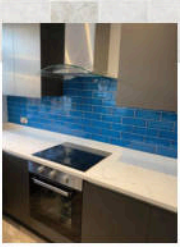
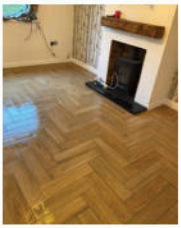
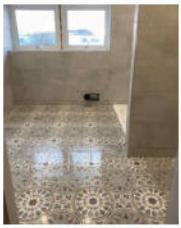
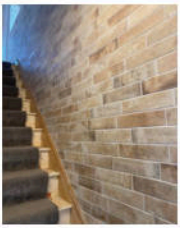

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A Queen is Crowned

By Joyce Shaw

The Platinum Jubilee celebrations are so special for the UK and the rest of the world as it is a unique piece of history for us all…. we are celebrating the reign of the longest serving monarch who also happens to be female! During her 70 years on the throne, she has had family problems in her own dynasty, seen unimaginable changes in our laws and way of living in our society, as well as all the tragic wars, and natural disasters in the world. The world is fascinated by Great Britain and its traditions and heritage history and so 2022 marks an important point in the Queen's reign, which began on a sad and forlorn day in London in February 1952 when her beloved father died and she was many miles away not aware of the new life awaiting her.

It was another 17 months before she was crowned queen with all the grandeur of a coronation, a unique event, filmed for the first time so that millions, at home and abroad, could witness such pageantry.

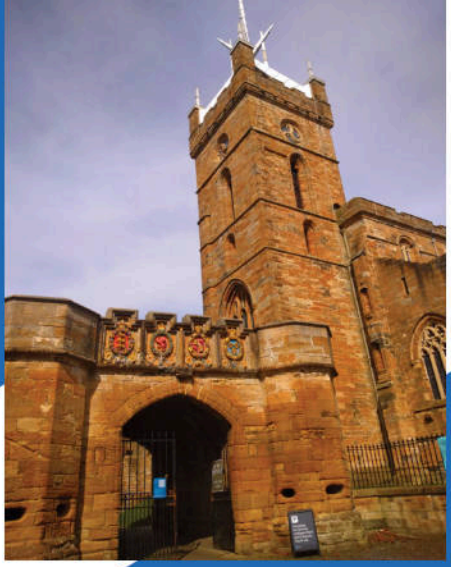
Her Platinum year has already begun but the coronation days in June 1953 have been chosen instead of February, in the hope of better weather… however June 2nd 1953 could not have been wetter!! It rained in London as the heavens opened and royal dignitaries, such as the Queen of Tonga, in an open coach, continued to smile, because nothing was going to spoil this amazing event!

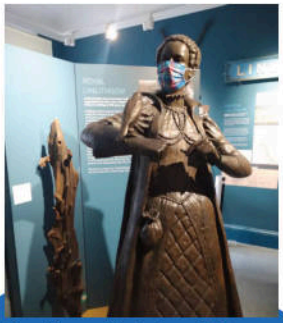
Of course there were few people who had TV in those days, and I remember, as an 8 year old, walking in crocodile fashion from school to the Rex cinema, to watch a film of the Coronation Day in marvellous Technicolour!!! (Another event which was celebrated worldwide was the conquering of Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary, a New Zealander who reached the summit only 4 days before the Queen's Coronation).



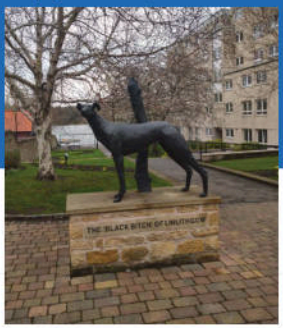
This is a poem I wrote as I recapped the memories of this fantastic day for Great Britain.

Would sun come out or ever shine again?
All the preparations had been first rate
Each intricate detail of splendour, ornate.
The timing and order of pageantry grand
Was now up and ready to march at command.
The people were lining the streets in great masses
Just hoping to catch a small glimpse as she passes
In one golden coach pulled by horses so proud.
The colourful livery so stunning, no cloud
Could darken the brightness of this golden day,
As carriages came by in a wondrous display
Of monarchs and chieftains from lands far apart
Who wanted to honour their new queen of hearts.
Yes! London was filled with an air of delight
As millions had waited night after night
For this special moment in world history
A princess, so calm and serene was to be
Crowned as our very own Queen, though so young
She knew that her life was a dutiful one
To her country and commonwealth, her promise was made
For a life, long or short, in service she laid
Aside selfish desires, for she well knew
That a good monarch always has duties to do.
And her subjects will love her and loyal remain.
As she starts on this journey beginning her reign
Of serving her people for more than three score
Years of devotion and duty galore
Her future is mapped out and now very soon
Her head will be crowned on this day in June.
So what of the weather? Who cares about rain?
The cheers and the smiles are like sunshine again.
It's a day to remember and celebrate and see
What the future may bring..yes! a Platinum Jubilee!





Mary Queen of Scots, born 1542



Places to go...

Linlithgow

There are four train operating companies running between Newcastle and Edinburgh: LNER, TransPennine Express, CrossCountry and Lumo. This means that fare are very competitive and on Thursday 7th April I went to Edinburgh for £7.35 each way with my railcard. Then onward to Linlithgow, the ending pronounced as in low rather than how. It's a compact town and my list of places to visit was simple: Palace, Church, Loch, Museum and Canal Basin. All are close together, although the natural loch is quite large and if you want to walk round the perimeter it is a pleasant 2.3 mile stroll.

Whilst I left Chester-le-Street on time, my train for the main leg of the journey, TransPennine's 0919 train from Newcastle to Edinburgh, had been cancelled. A quick visit to the ticket office had me reserved on the 0947 non-stop LNER service to Edinburgh, which arrived on platform 9 on time where my connection to Linlithgow was fortuitously waiting on adjacent platform 8. Accordingly I arrived at my destination at the originally scheduled time of 1133. The subway between platforms of this station is very low. I am not tall at 5ft 11ins but there was only an inch clearance above my head. First stop was the Post Office to dispatch one of my railway maps (www.railmap.org.uk). It was actually going to Oxfordshire, but with prices having gone up, I felt I was getting better value for money for my £6.95 sending it from Scotland.

Then time for a cup of coffee at the Cafe 1807 (named after the fountain completed in that year outside the cafe), and a visit to the welcoming and fascinating Museum inside the 1939 Court House and Administration building of the County of Linlithgowshire, which provided a useful orientation to the town, It is now part of West Lothian managed from the new town of Livingston. The attractive building was opened in 1939, and the museum comprises three rooms, admission free but donations welcome. It is now named after Tam Dalyell, the local MP who holds the record for the most supensions in the House of Commons.

The railway station at Linlithgow may be the earliest station to be photographed anywhere in the world. There's a picture dating from 1845, and the railway line slices through the south of the town on its way from Glasgow to Edinburgh. In 1822 the canal, further south and at a higher level, also passed east west and was called the Union Canal with a canal basin constructed to allow goods to be loaded and unloaded.

Lunch was in the Star and Garter pub, including some haggis, before I walked up to St. Michael's church and found the adjacent Palace closed for high level renovations. The town motto is "St. Michael is kinde to straingers". As an ancient town, Linlithgow is not immune from controversy: not everyone likes the aluminium super-structure built on the church tower (although I did). The high street is an eclectic mix of different period buildings with a large 1970s brutalist concrete development, the Vennel, where the loch reaches closest to the town. Most recently, though, controversy has raged about a pub named after the Black Bitch, see the statue photographed, celebrated for swimming across the loch daily to bring sustenance to her master who was marooned and chained on an island. Echoes of Greyfriars Bobby in Edinburgh (where you can break your journey). The Black Bitch pub has been renamed this year as the Willow Tree.

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