February 2023
Issue 123

CONSETT MAGAZINE

We ♥ Consett



Consett Tabletop Games Society
Consett Methodist Church Hall
Picture By Chris Bruce

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Welcome to the February 2023 edition of the Consett Magazine!

As we welcome in the month of love, let's take a moment to reflect on some fun facts about February. Did you know that February is the only month that can pass without a full moon? Or that it's the shortest month of 2023 with only 28 days (29 days next year as 2024 is a leap year)?

This month, we have a variety of exciting content for you to enjoy. Our front cover feature is the Consett Tabletop Games Society, captured beautifully by Chris Bruce. Our resident history buff, Lorraine Weightman, delves into the past of Fat Tuesday (or Mardi Gras) in another fun story.

Our "Consett in Focus" group takes a visit to the Consett and District Model Railway Club, the Consett Tabletop Games Society, and a Ukrainian artist and restorer living right here in Consett.

We are thrilled to announce the official opening of Consett Eyecare on Middle Street. This premier optician offers a range of great glasses and lenses, along with 60 years of combined experience. Be sure to check out their Coral Eyewear frames on page 8 and visit them at 25 Middle Street.

In our "Places to Go" section, we travel to Wakefield in West Yorkshire on page 9. And, for all you coffee lovers out there, we have an interview with local coffee roaster Mike Williams of Eclectic Coffee Roasters. Mike shares the reasons he started roasting in Consett and the entire process of how to get those beans ready for your morning cup of coffee.

We also have an important topic on page 11, where we invite residents to have their say on the homelessness situation in County Durham, particularly in Durham City. Together, we can shape a new strategy to help reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in our community.

In this edition, we also pay tribute to a much-loved local figure, Darren Blakey, who recently passed away after a short illness. Darren was a larger-than-life character who was loved by all at Consett AFC, from fans to board to players.

And, as always, we have a whole bunch of other positive local content for you to enjoy both in print and online at consettmagazine.com.

Next month, we want to hear from you! If you have a story to share with the Consett community, please call or email us: editor@consettmagazine.com

Best regards for February 2023 from Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy, and everyone who makes the free Consett Magazine possible.

firefly.magazines

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Phone: 01207 438292

Email: editor@consettmagazine.com

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SCAN ME

The Front Cover

Consett Tabletop Games Society
Consett Methodist Church Hall - By Chris Bruce.

Send your pictures to:
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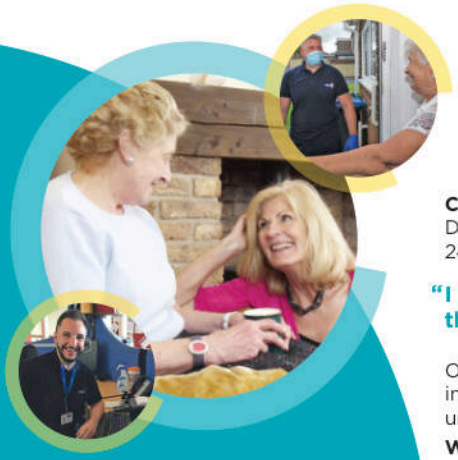

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Printing the Way to Success: How Traditional Marketing Materials Can Elevate Your Business

In a world where digital reigns supreme, it can be easy to overlook the power of good old-fashioned print marketing. But let's face it, there's just something special about holding a business card, leafing through a brochure, or catching a glimpse of a flashy flyer that makes us feel like we've stumbled upon a little piece of treasure. And it turns out, businesses are catching on to this too.

More and more companies are turning to traditional print materials like business cards, flyers, and brochures to set themselves apart from the competition. Why? Because in a sea of digital noise, these tangible materials stand out. They're something people can hold on to, keep on their desks, and refer back to later. Plus, they can be targeted to a specific audience, making them an effective way to reach potential customers.

But it's not just about nostalgia. These materials are also cost-effective and easy to produce.

Business cards, for example, can be printed in bulk and handed out at networking events, placed in brochures, or left behind after a sales call. Flyers can be distributed in person, left on bulletin boards, or included in direct mailings. And brochures are a great way to provide detailed information about your products or services in a comprehensive way.

So, next time you're tempted to dismiss print marketing as outdated, think again. These traditional materials may just be the secret weapon your business needs to stand out and make a lasting impression on potential customers.

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Our professional and cost-effective printing services include business cards, flyers, and brochures that will leave a lasting impression on potential customers. Don't miss out on the opportunity to refresh your branding and stand out from the competition. Order your branded print materials now from Firefly.

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Fat Tuesdays

By Lorraine Weightman

Mardi Gras, roughly translated as Fat Tuesday is historically known as the day before Ash Wednesday, and this year it falls on February 21st.

Traditionally, it's the day we use up all the ingredients in the home, like butter, eggs, sugar, meat and alcohol in preparation for the fasting and reflection of the 40 lean days of Lent.

Over the years Mardi Gras has developed, and it's now a time for carnivals, that include music, parades, singing, dancing, and of course some over indulgence! Almost uniquely the UK celebrates it as Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day.

Reflecting on these traditions made me think about our human traits, and how, when we are about to be denied something, we naturally can't stop thinking about it, craving it, or treating ourselves to more of it, before it is taken away!

This in turn took me back to a time when I attended WeightWatchers in Consett during the mid 1980's. I had just had my first baby and couldn't believe how my body shape had changed. This might have had something to do with the chocolate craving I developed, and the amount of Kit Kat's I consumed over a nine month period; when my hormones were adjusting themselves to Motherhood.

So, when Michael was 3 months old, I decided to try and shed the extra pounds and follow the WeightWatchers diet plan.

I have to say, it was brutal!

It was certainly not a culinary pleasure to weigh out 2 ounces of cottage cheese in the tiny portable customised scales onto two cracker breads - while saving up two more to enjoy in the evening - with half a can of drained tuna fish in brine, a cherry tomato and a slice of cucumber, lovingly spread to the edges to try and make it go further.

Alcohol was a complete no no, with it's unforgiving empty calories, and even a glass of soda water was denied a splash of lime, as too much of that could pile on the weight!

The class took place on a Tuesday, upstairs, in The Carlton, and was packed with rows of chairs, all facing the front.

The growing queue snaked down the carpeted stairs, as individuals awaited the dreaded 'weigh in' before they could take their place on one of the seats. The majority of us slipped into The Ladies to empty our bladders, just in case that would make a difference!

Wearing the lightest clothing possible and kicking off our shoes, myself and the other participants held little white cards in clenched white knuckled fingers, all ready to be marked up or down!

The deep exhalation was audible as the the tutor looked over her glasses, and reading the numbers on the scales before her, exclaimed what she saw in the voice of a town crier. 'Two pounds off, have you had a good week?'

Ecstatic I hadn't faced the public humiliation of gaining weight, I skipped back to my seat and inwardly congratulated myself; as now, I had no interest in the recipe of the week - how to make crustless, pastry free quiche with one egg and a spoonful of skimmed milk - as I was already anticipating the fish and a bag I was going to buy on the way home; lovingly washed down with half a lager and lime, followed by watching my favourite Billy Connolly DVD; and looking forward to enjoying a cheddar cheese sandwich on white bread with crisps, before bedtime!

After all, along with my fellow WeightWatchers, I had the following seven days to eat Ryvita, lettuce and a smattering of protein from the rigid exchange plan. The obligatory once a week serving of liver was hard to stomach, but as our tutor used to say,

'You're not here to enjoy yourself!'

And she was dead right!

However, as the weeks went by I reached my goal, and was made a ' life member',which meant if I stayed within 2lbs of my stipulated weight then I could attend the meeting free!

Hurrah!

Some people I know are still going to these classes as lifetime members. And for this they deserve a medal the size of a dustbin lid.

Over the years the rules changed and instead of calorie counting, a points system was introduced. While other weight loss programmes brought in the idea of red days and green days, then 'free food', proclaiming that you can eat as much of this as you like and still lose weight. I can't comment as I haven't tried it, but it seems much more appealing than the rigid regime I followed. Not sure if it's a good one to in Lent!

Now in my middle sixties, and almost 2 stones heavier than I was 30 years ago, I've found that my dodgy gallbladder keeps my weight in check, and walking around Consett two or three times daily is the best medicine.

In fact, in the early evening, when my Fitbit congratulates me on my 10,000 steps, I'm delighted to pour a lovely cold glass of white wine, put on my pyjamas and slippers, then settle down with Billy Connolly!

‘Consett in Focus’
Documentary Photography Group

Consett Table Top Society

Consett Tabletop Games Society meets every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 1.00 – 6.00pm in Consett Methodist Church Hall. They play board games and tabletop strategy games such as those in the Warhammer universe. If your experience of board games is limited to Monopoly at Christmas, you'd be amazed at the variety and inventiveness of the games available now. Our photographer knows that though these games can become very complex with experience, they are easy to pick up and then can really become involving. The Warhammer models have all been painted by members of the group, which can itself become a very satisfying part of the hobby. The members are also very keen to introduce new players to these games and are also happy for people to bring games they want to play up to the meetings. - Photos by **Chris Bruce**



Consett & District Model Railway Club

Consett and District Model Railway Club's goal is to promote and encourage the wonderful hobby of model railways. Whether you are new to model railways, looking to get started or an old pro looking to share your knowledge with like-minded people, this local model railway club has something for everyone. The club was founded in the late 1980's to encourage members to enjoy and build model layouts and run model trains. They meet at Blackhill Community Centre on Friday evenings from 6pm. They currently have one completed layout as a permanent display and are currently making a second. They used to transport the layouts to various places around the area for shows etc. but at present are more focussed on completing the second layout.
- Photos by **George Ledger**



Tetiana (Tanya) Mikhailova - Ukrainian artist and Restorer

Tetiana (Tanya) Mikhailova is a Ukrainian artist and picture restorer now living in the Consett area. She is carrying on her work here, mainly doing portraits of people and pets at the moment but her landscape work of Eastern Europe is also excellent and visible on her Facebook page Tanya's Oil Paintings or website tatyanamykhailova.com. The dogs shown here belong to her hosts, Logan, the wolfhound is huge but ever so soft. Tanya has restored numerous paintings and icons in Ukrainian churches and has works in private collections throughout Europe and further afield. Some of her work is in important collections in Ukraine. - Photos by **Chris Bruce**

‘Consett in Focus’ Documentary Photography Group’

IOur next project has started and it’s called 'Consett at Play'. We are going to photograph how the people of Consett spend their leisure time.

Our Facebook page: **facebook.com/ConsettTownofCulture**
Website: **consettinfocus.weebly.com/**
Or email us: **consettinfocus@gmail.com**


BRASS
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MONSTER


Chris Bruce
@Connett in Focus

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No. 25 - 27



Clean the Ocean, Look Good Doing It: Coral Eyewear frames now available at Consett Eyecare

Consett Eyecare is proud to announce its latest range of eco-friendly frames from Coral Eyewear. This innovative company creates frames from recycled waste and plastic rescued from the ocean, giving people an opportunity to own a piece of eyewear that not only looks great, but also helps protect the environment.

The frames from Coral Eyewear are stylish, comfortable and lightweight. They come in a variety of colors and styles, making it easy to find one that perfectly suits your individual look. Not only are they good for the environment, but they are also a great way to express your personal style.

At Consett Eyecare, we are committed to providing our customers with the best eyewear available, and the Coral Eyewear range is the perfect way to do just that. By choosing these frames, you can make a difference in the world and look great at the same time. So why not come and see us today and browse our selection of Coral Eyewear frames? You can be sure that you'll find something that you love!

In addition to our commitment to providing eco-friendly frames, Consett Eyecare also welcomes all patients, both new and previous. We also accept prescriptions from other optometrists, so if you have already had an eye examination and would like to purchase glasses or contact lenses from us, we would be happy to help. Although the practice is new, we are a very experienced team with over 60 years of combined experience.

We are equipped to handle all of your eye care needs and provide the highest level of care to all of our patients. So come and visit us today and browse our selection of eco-friendly frames from Coral Eyewear, and make a difference in the world while looking great at the same time.



Call: 01207 505 151

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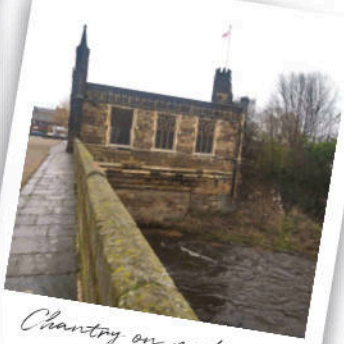
Wakefield Cathedral



Barbara Hepworth studio



Chantry on medieval bridge

Wakefield

Thursday, 5th January was not the most auspicious date for a trip out by train: an ASLEF strike day sandwiched between two RMT walk-outs. But LNER was running a skeleton service which allowed me to reach Wakefield via Doncaster, travelling on a Durham to London train with a connection to Wakefield Westgate. Travelling first class, the outward ticket was £50.60 and coming back was only £25.10. Normally, when trains are available via Leeds, the day return fare with a railcard is about £22. Wakefield has two stations, Westgate and Kirkgate, and both were rather hidden away but now have direct pedestrian links into the city centre with new vistas. In the City Centre, paving tiles cover the main pedestrian area but seemed rather slippery on a wet day even though I was wearing stout shoes. I shudder to think what it is like in ice and snow.

I could have used the Wakefield Free Bus to get from Westgate station to my first objective, the Hepworth Wakefield. This is a useful service running every ten minutes, and is also to be found in Leeds and Huddersfield. But close by was the mediaeval Chantry, set on a stone bridge, built about 1342. Here prayers would be said for the deceased, usually the person(s) who paid for the Chantry. It is now in the care of Wakefield Cathedral. Over a busy road to the Hepworth, I found Barbara Hepworth's studio in replica, and many of her sculptural works, together with three temporary exhibitions comprising a photographic exhibition, some fantasy paintings and an area devoted to British Surrealism. All the galleries in this series of big grey cubes are on the first floor, and the inside is much more appealing than the exterior. There's also a pleasant café downstairs.

Wakefield has several fine nineteenth-century civic buildings, but the newest, One Wakefield, contains the interesting town museum which is worth half an hour's exploration. It is not large, but crammed with relevant artifacts, and worth seeking out between the Civic Quarter and Westgate station. It also tells the story of Charles Waterton (1782-1865) who was a Catholic naturalist, environmentalist and slave owner. One of his freed slaves practiced taxidermy in Edinburgh and taught the skill to the young Charles Darwin.

I had hoped to visit the Mental Health Museum at Fieldhead Hospital, a leading museum on this vital subject. Open Tuesdays to Thursdays 1300-1600, you have to book your visit on 01924 316360. When I phoned, I was told that they were closed for the Christmas break until 13th January, which was a disappointment but at least avoided a wasted trip. To go there, bus 111 (as in NHS 111!) goes to the adjacent Pinderfields hospital half hourly from top stand 24 in the town bus station, at 19 and 49 past the hour. Somewhere to remember for another trip.

Instead, I went to the impressive Cathedral and said evening prayer with three members of the clergy.
I finished my excursion to Wakefield at Estabulo, a Brazilian steakhouse a couple of minutes from the station. Estabulo is a new chain offering a fixed price combination of salad bar and meats brought round on a skewer. As such it is an upmarket all-you-can-eat restaurant, with friendly staff and a range of 15 cuts of meat in the evening, just eight at lunchtime. Whilst I can happily recommend the Wakefield location, there is another one on the River Walk at Durham, a bit closer to home. Five minutes after leaving the Wakey Estabulo, I was on the train towards home.

nationalrail.com

alexnelson@dunelm.org.uk

www.nationalrail.com

hepworthwakefield.org

estabulo.co.uk





From Lockdown to Local: Eclectic Coffee Roasters in Consett, County Durham

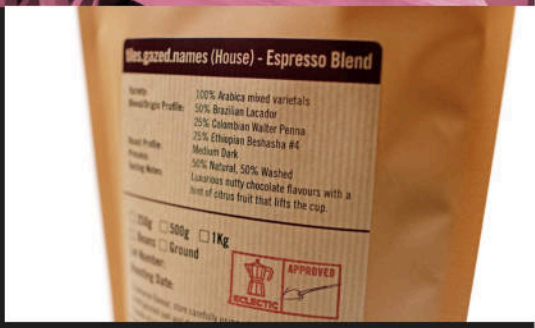
- By Barry Kirkham

Mike Williams, the owner of Eclectic Coffee Roasters, is a true coffee enthusiast with a passion for the art and culture of coffee-making. His journey began during lockdown in 2020 when he realised that his true passion lay in coffee. He had always had an interest in the drink, and his experiences in the Balkans and Italy, where espresso is a morning staple, further cemented his love for the beverage. His time working in Africa, where coffee is an important part of daily life, also played a role in his decision to start a coffee roasting business.

To perfect his craft, Mike took four coffee courses and deliberately took his time to develop his brand. He believes that coffee culture brings people together and that the way it makes people feel and how it's drunk around the world is a fascinating subject. He is particularly interested in the sensory experience of coffee and the noises it creates.

When it comes to sourcing his beans, Mike prioritizes sustainability and environmentally friendliness. He works with a coffee collective who share his ethos and sources his beans from countries such as Colombia, Ethiopia, and El Salvador. Falcon Specialty Coffee, works directly with farmers to provide them with premium prices for their beans, and believes that working directly with farmers is the best way to ensure fair trade and sustainable practices.

Mike's roasting process is a precise and carefully controlled one. He roasts 2 kg of beans at a time using electric heat for environmental reasons. The roaster is preheated for an hour prior to adding the beans at a temperature generally between 190-200 Celsius. After approximately one and half minutes, the turning point is reached, and the drying process begins and after around 5 minutes, the beans turn yellow and release a hay-like smell. The Maillard reaction, also known as the browning process, occurs during this time, and a couple of



minutes later, and around 196 Celsius, the beans reach first crack, a sound similar to popcorn popping. First crack is caused by the moisture evaporating, creating steam, and the pressure builds up, causing the beans to crack open. On the 2kg roaster, first crack normally lasts around 2-2.5 minutes and the development of flavour profile occurs during this period. If you were to roast longer, a second crack would occur, and this releases oils from the beans, creating a dark roast coffee. The whole roasting process is about controlling the heat and air flow. The next day, a tasting exercise is conducted, via a process called "cupping"

Mike's nano roastery is unique in that it's deliberately small, with a focus on simplicity for coffee lovers. His nano roastery produces four roast types (light, medium, medium-dark and dark) along with a specific Espresso blend and with plans to add a decaffeinated option in the future. He believes that keeping it simple and focused on the brand is the key to success.
Eclectic Coffee Roasters is proud to be based in Consett, County Durham, and Mike is a long-time resident of the area. He has lived in Consett since 1995 and has had a business there since 1998. He is passionate about the community and his roastery is located in the former boys' changing rooms of the English Martyrs, which closed in the early 1980's. He has converted the space into a functional roastery and is proud to be part of the Consett community. Find more about the roastery and its coffee products on their website www.ecr.coffee - unlike many other roasters he has no plans for major expansion or global domination, instead choosing to focus on roasting the very best coffee possible

instagram.com/eclecticcoffeeroasters



Have Your Say on Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy

Residents are being invited to have their say and shape a new strategy to help reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in County Durham.

To further meet the needs of residents and their communities, Durham County Council is looking to refresh its Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy which will cover the next five years to 2028.

The new strategy will focus on four main priorities. These include preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place; increasing the number of affordable homes available and improving access to them; ensuring the appropriate support is available for people who are homeless; and ending rough sleeping for good.

Cllr Alan Shield, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for equality and inclusion, said: "As a local authority, we are extremely committed to preventing people from ending up on the street. Our homelessness strategy sets out how we are tackling the issues that lead to rough sleeping and includes a range of issues including financial, employment and mental health support as well as assistance with housing issues when relationships break down.

"We are working hard to sustain the reduction in the number of rough sleepers across the county, in particular in Durham city centre, with the reports of homelessness and rough sleeping being relatively low in comparison to previous times.

"We are asking for everyone's help to develop and progress this new strategy, so please let us know what priorities you believe that we should focus our efforts on."

Feedback will be used to shape the draft strategy and action plan, which will be available for a further round of consultation later in 2023. Once adopted, the new strategy and action plan will inform the council's work to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.

The closing date for comments is Sunday 5 March.

"Solving Business Problems and Achieving Objectives with Ease"

My dear local business owner, are you looking for expert support to guide you on the journey of starting and running a successful business? Allow me to tell you that you are not alone in this. There are professional business consulting companies that truly understand the unique needs of local businesses like yours.

Think about it, starting a business can be a challenging and exciting journey, but it doesn't have to be done alone. A professional business consulting company can provide the guidance and support you need to succeed. From marketing planning and market research, to ongoing support, these experts are here to help you navigate the complexities of starting and running a local business.

Local experts, Firefly will help you conduct market research to identify your target market, understand their needs, and determine the best ways to reach them. And their team can provide advice on advertising compliance, help you develop marketing and sales strategies, and provide support with website design, branding, and other areas of your business.

"Firefly New Media's expert consulting services are the guiding light for local business owners, providing comprehensive support for the unique needs and challenges of starting and running a successful business."

But that's not all - Firefly New Media also offers consulting services for growth, with a focus on branding, sales and channel management, customer experience, and digital marketing. Their brand consulting services will help you truly understand who you are as a company, who you want to be, and how your customers perceive you. And their sales and channel management consulting will help you improve the effectiveness of your sales and customer interactions.

At Firefly New Media, they offer expert consulting services for local businesses at an affordable price of just £199 per month. The team of experts will provide guidance on marketing planning, market research, and ongoing support for various areas of your business. They also offer consulting services for growth such as branding, sales and channel management, customer experience, and digital marketing.

Don't let financial concerns hold you back from reaching your business goals, contact Firefly on 01207 438292 to find out more and start your journey to success today.

Exploring heroes and heroines from history with Four Seasons Health Care



Our Consett homes have collaborated with History Hit to celebrate their local history

Residents and team members from our Consett homes are exploring heroes and heroines from history with relatives and their local community in March. As part of our Magic Moments activity programme this year, we have partnered with award-winning podcast and history channel History Hit to bring local and global historical moments to life with our residents.

With a chance to explore everything from Florence Nightingale, Tutankhamun and Napoleon through to our town's local history, our residents can both learn and teach others about their own heroes and heroines that are historic, local, or even personal to them. From mastering the art of 'Walking like an Egyptian' to tracking back Viking ancestry, exploring history can be near or far, and from recent history or ancient!



Creating Magic Moments

Our Magic Moments Coordinators create an ever-changing variety of opportunities, built on our residents' past experiences and interests. Our team members ensure each resident is offered the chance to re-kindle talents, find new hobbies, and involve family, friends and the community in exciting events in our homes.

As magic moments are unique to each individual, our Magic Moments programme reflects this too. It is carefully tailored to meet each resident's individual needs and preferences for the here and now as well as to meet future aspirations, whatever they may be.



Call our friendly teams today:

Abigail Lodge Care Home
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Brockwell Court Care Home
01207 201819

Redwell Hills Care Home
01207 201839

For more information, please visit
www.fshc.co.uk

Four Seasons Health Care



Lunar New Year in Durham City

Communities and venues across County Durham welcomed the Year of the Rabbit with a host of traditional events and activities.

Durham City celebrated the Lunar New Year on Saturday, 21 January with activities, performances, and entertainment from a variety of different groups, organised by Durham County Council.

A lion dance procession, organised by Durham Markets Company, winded its way from Millennium Place through the city centre, entertaining shoppers with a colourful display and a special appearance by the junior dragon dance team from West Rainton Primary School.

At Durham Town Hall, visitors enjoyed a full day of activities including traditional music, costume and dance performances by Durham Chinese School, Durham University students and local schoolchildren.

There was also a demonstration of Tai Chi, opportunities to take part in East Asian crafts, and a catwalk show of traditional Chinese costumes.

For those with a taste for something different, students from New College Durham were cooking up a number of oriental dishes for visitors to try, and there was a tea tasting ceremony to experience in the afternoon.

The Oriental Museum will also be hosting a Year of the Rabbit Lantern Festival on Sunday, 5 February, from 6pm to 8pm, with festive snacks, a live traditional Korean percussion performance and dragon dancing for children.



Believe & Be

Believe and Be situated on Medomsley Road in Consett is now owned and run by Karen Masters who took over the business in December 2021 Karen who has been there since it's opening in 2016, loved working there so much that she decided to buy the business. Alanta, Karen's niece works with her, as well as her son Bradley.

Karen and her team provide a safe, well organised environment in which children can play and learn. Adults are also well catered for, as the cafe provides not only hot drinks but good food alongside a special children's menu.

It's a great place for social gatherings and it's also available for private parties from Monday to Sunday. During December Karen and her team provided Santa sessions for all your children's needs.

'Believe Town is designed to open the doors for your children to explore all the things they could be.

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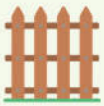
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Tributes paid to local man Darren Blakey

Darren passed away a few weeks ago after a short illness and is missed by all at Consett AFC, where he was a much loved figure - from fans to board to players - Darren was a larger than life character who suffered from learning difficulties and poor health. Sent By Bazza Davidson

Dental Disease

Up to 80% of dogs over the age of three have clinically significant dental disease so it is a really important issue in veterinary medicine. Dental disease in dogs and cats is different to that seen in people (who most often get tooth decay) because the biggest problem we most often see is inflammation and infection in the tissues surrounding the teeth (also known as periodontal disease).

Periodontal disease occurs due to accumulation of plaque and tartar on the teeth which causes gum recession and pocketing where the tooth meets the gum. This infection and inflammation can spread deeper into the tooth socket causing teeth to become painful and loose and even resulting in tooth root abscesses.

Most dental disease is preventable with daily brushing using a special pet toothpaste but if your pet already has a build-up of tartar, your vet may recommend a scale and polish under general anaesthesia first. It is also recommended that dental X-rays are performed and the same time to identify any disease located beneath the gum line which may be causing problems. Many vet practices will offer free of charge dental checks for your pets, so if you've noticed your pet has smelly breath, discoloured teeth or pain when they are eating, book them an appointment to get checked out as soon as possible.

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