CONSETT MAGAZINE

March 23 | Issue 124



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Consett Delta Amateur Boxing Club
Picture By David Leck

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A warm welcome to our beloved readers!

We are thrilled to have you join us as we embark on a journey of local discovery and adventure through the pages of the Consett Magazine.

The arrival of March 2023 signals the end of February and the beginning of a new month, full of fresh opportunities and exciting possibilities. Let us take a moment to appreciate the wonders of March, a month named after the Roman god of war, Mars. Did you also know that March is a time of transition, marking the start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and autumn in the Southern Hemisphere?

As always, the Consett Magazine is here to provide you with an array of interesting and diverse local content to savor. Our front cover feature for this month captures the raw essence of Consett Delta Amateur Boxing Club, as seen through the lens of talented photographer David Leck. On page 5, Lorraine Weightman takes a look at True Confessions Day, which will take place on the 15th of March.

Turn your attention to page 6 and 7, where we bring you another compelling segment from "Consett in Focus". Here, we explore the wonders of languages with Casa Lingua, the rejuvenating powers of yoga with Jacqui Gunnion, and the raw passion of amateur boxing with Consett Delta.

We are thrilled to announce the opening of new businesses in Consett, Consett Eyecare on page 8, we have useful tips on how to care for your eyes during the colder months. Additionally, on page 15 we introduce the Haystax Inclusive Farm Experience, it's well worth the visit.

Take a look at page 9 as we highlight the joy of the £2 maximum bus fare, which runs until the end of March 2023.

Homeowners in Consett and County Durham, listen up! On page 11, we urge you to take advantage of the Eco 4 scheme, which could qualify you for a range of free insulation and heating solutions.

Remember, the Consett Magazine is your go-to source for all things local and positive. Stay tuned for more exciting content, both in print and online at consettmagazine.com.

As we bid adieu to March, we want to hear from you!

If you have a business or story to share with the Consett community, please reach out to us via phone on 01207 438 292 or email editor@consettmagazine.com.

Warmest regards for March 2023 from Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy, and the dedicated team that makes the free Consett Magazine possible.

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SCAN ME

The Front Cover

Consett Delta Amateur Boxing Club
By David Lack.

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True Confessions
- By Lorraine Weightman

I was amused to read during the week that March 15th is 'True Confessions Day'.

Intrigued, I read on, and found out that a couple in the USA, who own and run a wellbeing business, are proposing we put this day aside to concentrate on our contentedness, and wholeness, by telling all.
Apparently, confessing to your friends, family, and workmates is all the rage now, especially if you do it all on this special day!

Yet for some of us, confession, repentance and penance have always been part of our lives. In fact in church we confess to each other at the beginning of Mass every time we go, so we don't necessarily need to wait for March to come around. Yet, perhaps some folk do!

Well, this got me thinking back to my own experiences, after making my first confession as a child. We were taught to examine our conscience - always a good thing to do - and think of how we could be a better person - very positive - while making a list in our head of the things we had done wrong in the last fortnight; as we were encouraged to go into the confessional box around every two weeks.

As a seven year old at school in Consett, I must admit I found it hard going to think up a list of impressive sins to confess to. And spent time with my friends in the school playground where we exchanged our sins of the week. I remember one friend saying she'd eaten her sister's dinner and got wrong off her Mam. Which made me wonder what penance she would get for that, surely three Hail Mary's would do it!

Although, even though she was forgiven, I couldn't help but think how that would do nothing to alleviate her sister's hunger!

It was all so confusing at the time, that I remember relying on my staple misdemeanour, and rolling out it fortnightly, 'I've missed my morning and night prayers' even, if I hadn't - which technically was me telling a fib, while asking for forgiveness!

I'm guessing at that time I didn't fully understand what I was doing, and hadn't mastered the logistics. I remember kneeling before the grill, my heart racing and just wanting to get in and out as quickly as possible, say my penance, then go home.

However, I do believe as an adult, that confession is a beneficial thing for all of us to practice. Whether through the Sacrament or a chosen day in March, everyone gets a chance. And the latter encourages us to confess to good things on that day, for example, how much we like or admire people, and ways in which they make us happy. In turn this would make the people you tell, happy too, making it a win win scenario.

Historically, centuries ago, penitents were forced to confess their sins in public, by wearing sack cloth and ashes and giving alms to the poor!

It's just as well things have changed, as I wouldn't fancy sitting in Wetherspoons with a hair shirt on underneath my Marks and Spencer's jumper!

Anyway, it's all about saying sorry, and meaning it!, whichever path we choose.

I think as a nation we find ourselves saying sorry almost all the time, usually for trivial things, like bumping trollies in Tesco, side stepping on pavements, or when someone or something blocks our path!

Yet, do we find it hard to say sorry and mean it for the bigger things?

In fact we are all used to listening to various politicians apologising for their actions, but are we fully convinced of their contrition, I'm guessing, not!

I wholeheartedly agree with the concept of fessing up to what we've done, as guilt can be a very negative thing to live with. And the feeling of lightness and grace after lifting the weight from our shoulders must be extremely beneficial to our wellbeing.

By the way, did I mention, around 50 years ago, myself and my class mates cooked up a conspiracy to set off the fire bell at school as a final hurrah when were leaving, just before taking our exams.
Well, It looks like I have now, and I'd like to apologise by saying,

'I'm very sorry!'

Happy True Confessions Day!

‘Consett in Focus’
Documentary Photography Group

Consett @ Play

Casa Lingua

Not all hobbies and leisure activities are just for fun, some can be educational as well. Language lessons not only keep the grey cells working but can be useful for holidays and keeping in touch with friends and family abroad. Kim at Casa Lingua, based in Shotley Bridge, offers lessons in French, Italian and Spanish to suit all abilities (or perhaps none to start with). Classes can be conversational or more focussed towards a qualification and timings are varied to suit the members – Kim even offers zoom lessons, as well as group sessions in a local coffee shop for the ultimate relaxed session.
Casa Lingua can be easily found on its own website and Facebook page. - Photos by **Chris Bruce**

Consett Delta Amateur Boxing Club

A complete change in pace for today’s post, and in the Red Corner is 'Consett Delta Amateur Boxing Club' were formed in the 1970's and it is the original 'Consett Boxing Club' at present they have approximately 100 members.
They have met in three different locations over the years but are now firmly established in Consett Delta North, in Parliament Street Consett. Peter Donaghey is the head coach and he is supported by another 5 fully qualified coaches. Many of the club’s members compete in various Boxing tournaments but others attend purely for the gym and improving their fitness. Training is on three times a week, Monday’s Wednesday’s and Friday’s from 6pm – 7.30pm.

- Photos by **George Ledger & David Leck**

Jacqui Gunnion- Yoga

Jacqui’s Yoga classes involve gentle postures that allow you to explore and work with your own comfortable limitations. They create a balance between strength and flexibility. They also incorporate breath awareness and relaxation for a fully rounded session. Although you are never too young to start yoga classes they generally attract people in their thirties and forties or older and who want to maintain or improve their range of movement. Classes take place in most community centres around our area - Citizens House, Delves Lane Community Centre, Leadgate Community Centre , Castleside Community Centre and St Cuthbert’s Church Hall Shotley Bridge. - Photos by **Steve Webb**

‘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.

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Winter Eye Health: Protecting Your Eyes During the Colder Months

As the colder months of the year take hold, it's not only our immune systems that need extra care and attention - our eyes are also at risk. The dry and cold air, combined with more time spent indoors in front of screens, can cause a range of issues that affect our vision and overall eye health. In this article, we'll explore some of the common problems associated with winter eye health, and suggest some ways to alleviate these issues.

One of the most common issues during the winter months is dry eye syndrome. Dry eye occurs when the tear glands in the eyes don't produce enough moisture, or more commonly, when they lose the moisture to the cold air, leading to irritation, redness, and even blurred vision. This condition can be exacerbated by the dry, cold air outside and the dry indoor heating systems that people use to keep warm. At Consett Eyecare, we offer Hycosan products that are free from preservatives and have superior moisturizing properties to help combat dry eye.

Another problem that many people experience during the winter months is digital eye strain. With more people working from home and spending longer hours on screens, the blue light emitted by electronic devices can cause eyestrain, headaches, and fatigue. While blue light is not necessarily harmful, it can be uncomfortable for many people. To combat this issue, we recommend Essilor lenses with their anti-reflective coating technology that can protect against both UV and blue light, making it easier on the eyes.

Exposure to UV light has been linked to various eye conditions, including cataracts and macular degeneration. During the winter months, the sun's position in the sky can increase the risk of exposure to harmful UV rays and glare. To safeguard your eyes, it's crucial to wear sunglasses with UV protection when spending time outdoors.

At Consett Eyecare, we offer both budget lenses and Essilor lenses with superior engineering that can protect against UV and blue light. Our knowledgeable staff can help you choose the best lenses for your needs and provide advice on how to protect your eyes during the winter months. We also offer a range of other products to help alleviate dry eye and other issues, so be sure to stop by our practice to learn more.

In conclusion, it's essential to take care of our eyes during the colder months of the year. Dry eye, digital eye strain, and other issues can be exacerbated during this time, but there are plenty of products and solutions available to alleviate these symptoms. At Consett Eyecare, we're dedicated to providing our customers with the best products and advice to keep their eyes healthy and comfortable year-round.



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Bus photographs by Andrew Tyldesly

£2 maximum fare on buses until the end of March 2023

This column usually concentrates on rail services, since it is sponsored by nationalrail.com, a rail retailer. But occasionally something happens so big, and so unknown to many members of the public, that it is worth shouting from the rooftops! Bus fares have been slashed throughout England and the maximum single fare has reduced to only £2, every day of the week, any time of the day, for any age of person who would normally pay adult fare. It's part of the government's help with the cost of living. It has been in place since the start of January with all major operators taking part and many of the small independents too.

It was launched with a fanfare at New Year, and regular bus users are using it every day to go to work, shops, and on days out. Those people who have opined for years that if bus fares were cheaper, more people would use the bus, have been proved sadly wrong. Anecdotally (and the figures will no doubt follow) there has been no appreciable increase in ridership through this promotion. It goes on for three whole months, and provides some substantial savings on journeys more than a couple of miles.

Long routes such as Go North East's X10 between Newcastle and Middlesbrough have seen fares cut to £2 when the single fare by train is £12.30 off-peak, more at peak times. Other long-distance routes participating include the now all-Stagecoach Newcastle to Carlisle service 685, which route takes you through Hexham from where there is a network of £2 a shot routes to places like Bellingham and Allenheads via Allendale Town. I was up there late last year and was the only one on the bus thinking "why aren't there more people wanting to experience this wonderful ride?"

How often to you jump in the car to give someone a lift somewhere and return home having used up your time when the other person could just have gone on the bus? I am taking my wife's car in for service tomorrow, and I will drop it off in Sunderland, and get bus 8 back home, returning later by bus to collect it and drive home. I don't really need a courtesy car. If you get engrossed in a book, or texting a friend, or researching the internet using the free wi-fi, it's amazing how quick the journey can go. Sure, it's often slower than taking the car, but you can use the time constructively, there's no hunting for car parking spaces, and you don't need to get back on the bus where you left it, whereas you have to return to a parked car.

So don't be one of those "I've never been on a bus for years" people, as if it was something to be proud of. Reduce your carbon emissions, even occasionally, and give the humble bus a try. If you want advice on what runs round your way, just drop me an email. One really stark fact that comes out of the £2 promotion is what good value the regional day tickets can be. If I go to Durham from home, I need to change in Chester-le-Street or Craghead so it's £4 there and £4 back until the end of March, total £8. But there's a County Durham zonal ticket for £6.40 for all Go North East services in the County, yes, as far as West Auckland which I use when visiting the station in Bishop Auckland. And for the whole region from Whitby up to Berwick and Carlisle, investigate the Explorer ticket, currently £10.90, including all the buses pictured, plus Tyne and Wear Metro, rail services Blaydon to Sunderland, and even the Shields Ferry. That's the Daddy! It makes £2 a trip positively expensive.

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Heritage & Art Exhibition is a 'Heart Warming' Success

Hundreds of people enjoyed reminiscing about Consett past, with photographs and artefacts which were available to the public from 9th-11th February.

The event took place at Consett Heart and was organised by the committee which is made up of Ryen Huntley, Damian Huntley and Brian Harrison. They were supported by local artists and businesses to create the event which also boasted an art exhibition.

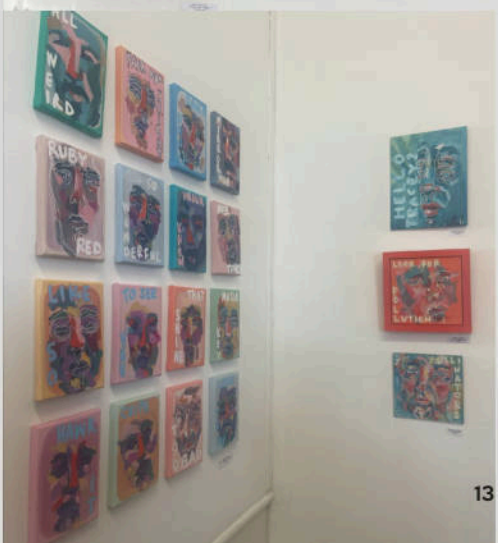
Artists contributing to the exhibition included Debbie Todd, Darren Cairney, Glenn Malpass, Bernard Nixon, Mary Patterson, Vaila Somerville and Phil Bartle, Ryen Huntley, Damian Huntley and Brian Harrison.

This event was the first that has been ran by the centre, who also host regular art and craft sessions, creative writing workshops and games evenings.

Reflecting on the event, Consett heart commented 'To us it shows that Consett Heart can be a true centre for the heritage and arts, not only for our area but region wide and in time further afield'.

By Debbie Todd.





Stonecellar Doggy Day Care:

A Legacy of Love for Animals

Stonecellar started as a small breeding operation for Shetland ponies in the mid-90s, founded by the late Mrs Carol Shaw and her partner. The name was adopted from the partner's dad's old farm in Washington, which was eventually taken over by the New Town development. The couple's passion for animals led them to have numerous adventures with their ponies and create lasting friendships.

In the early 2000s, they became some of the first breeders of Labradoodles, and even sent 32 of the pups as assistance dogs to Herpine in The Netherlands. They continued to use the prefix of Stonecellar for the pups they bred. Sadly, Mrs Shaw passed away in 2018, but her legacy lives on through the new business venture started by her partner in her memory.

The love for dogs has always been a driving force for the couple. They owned three beautiful Skye Terriers who earned 2nd place awards at Crufts in both 2018 and 2019, a testament to their dedication and care for their animals.

The new Stonecellar Doggy Day Care & Hotel venture will continue the couple's legacy and passion for animals. The team is excited to welcome new furry friends and their owners, and to create new memories and lasting friendships.

Thank you for taking the time to read about the history of Stonecellar Doggy Day Care. Come visit and be a part of the legacy that the late Mrs Carol Shaw and her partner have left behind.



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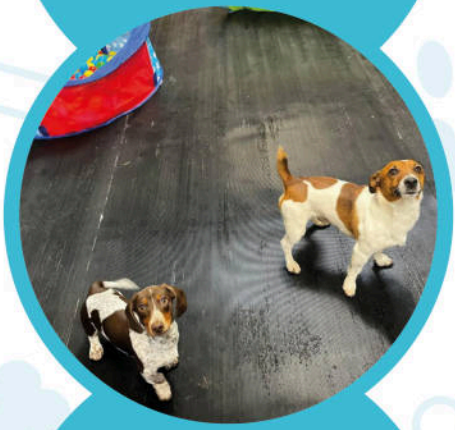

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Haystax

Haystax Inclusive Farm Experience Centre has a vision to provide a safe place for everyone to visit, while enjoying quality time experiencing the amazing surrounding countryside. As it is an inclusive venue, it welcomes everyone.

The Haystax Experience was designed to accommodate the requirements of those with special needs and disabilities in mind. And as the needs of their diverse customers are met, it allows them to create a calmer and more assessable experience for all.

The beautiful welcoming Coffee Shop which opened on the first day of February and serves amazing coffee and cakes is open from Wednesday to Saturday at the moment.

The café also has a Changing Places toilet facility and three sensory rooms that have been designed with a range of needs in mind.

As of now, the first two accessible luxury holiday lodges are available for rental. Chestnut Lodge and Cherry Lodge are well designed and have a luxury feel about them, allowing the accessibility features to fade into the background. This in turn provides a homely and welcoming atmosphere.

Each lodge has a hot tub with a mobile hoist, an accessible bedroom with a wet room and a smart toilet, a spacious open-plan living space with room to accommodate wheelchair users, a rise-and-fall chair, and a bank of additional extras on request.

There are plans for an open day on Sunday 26th March 2023. Go along and explore the development, and meet the dedicated team and get a taste of what they have to offer. There will be an opportunity to try out the sensory rooms, meet some of the animals, take part in a forest school session, enjoy a coffee and slice of cake and speak to some of the organisations working with them.

On the day, every purchase over £5 in the coffee shop will earn you a raffle ticket for the prize draw where you could win a 2-night stay in one of the luxury lodges.

This is well worth a visit.

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instagram.com/haystaxfarmexperience

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Ask the Vet: Ticks

Tick season will soon be upon us and with several reports over the last three years of the tick-borne disease Babesia canis being diagnosed in dogs that had not travelled outside of the UK for the first time, it is more important than ever that you keep your pets (and your family) protected.

Ticks are small parasites that attached on to animals and humans to feed off their blood. The bites themselves are not painful, but dangerous diseases such as Lyme disease can be transmitted to other animals and humans while the tick is feeding.

There are several proven anti-tick products available and they come in a monthly spot-on preparation, as a monthly or three-monthly tablet, or as a collar which provides seven continuous months of protection. Many of the products also protect against other parasites as well so it is best to speak to your vet about the most appropriate product for your pet.

If you do find a tick on your pet, it is best to remove it as soon as possible. This can be done at home with a special tick remover, closely following the recommended instructions, or alternatively the team at your local veterinary practice will be able to do it for you.

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