

# pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Council receives 1,000  
objections to green belt  
housing plan

More than 30 drivers caught  
by new speed camera

Blackbird set to fly again

## Kristina and Laura get taste of the big screen



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# Pont students get taste of the big screen

**Two Ponteland students mingled with the stars as they took part in filming with acting legends Vanessa Redgrave and Terence Stamp.**

Kristina Hollier and Laura Longworth had their film break as extras in newly released comedy drama *Song for Marion*, which also stars former *Dr Who* Christopher Eccleston and Bond girl Gemma Arterton.

The film, which centres on grumpy pensioner Arthur and his wife Marion who is terminally ill with cancer, was shot on Tyneside and in Durham.

Kristina and Laura, both 17 and students at Ponteland Community High School and the Famous 4.15 performing arts school in Jesmond, enjoyed a full day's filming with the cast and crew in High Heaton, Newcastle.

Laura said: "We were in the park as the choir sang, dancing and watching. We did

a whole day's worth of filming. It was a fun day; meeting the stars was amazing. It also made me appreciate how much work goes into making a film - it's not as glamorous as you think, however it's definitely something I want to do."

Kristina added: "I enjoyed the day; it was really interesting to meet new people and talk to them about their experiences as actors. It makes you realise how much time and effort goes into a few scenes and makes you appreciate the work ethic of the crew as well as the cast."

Their first foray into the world of the big screen follows earlier work on the small screen, as Kristina explained: "We have been attending Famous 4.15 for six years. They encourage and like to give us as many opportunities as possible in all forms of performing and got us the parts in *Song for Marion*.

"We've also been in CBBC's *Wolfblood*, *Tracy Beaker*, *Tracy Beaker Returns* and *The Dumping Ground*. Our acting coach at

Famous 4.15 Tony Havelock took us along on the day and he was in the film himself."

Laura is studying A Levels in Art, Performing Arts and 3D Product Design and Kristina is taking Performing Arts, English Literature and Psychology. Both finish this summer and hope to study drama at university with a view to becoming professional actresses.

Tony, who also works as a media professional for the BBC, said: "It was great because the girls were right in the thick of it. They really got a feel of what it's like to be in a production like that."

Famous 4.15 is based at the former Quaker House in Jesmond and offers dance, singing and acting classes to a variety of age groups. To find out more visit the website at [www.famous415.co.uk](http://www.famous415.co.uk) or email [info@famous415.co.uk](mailto:info@famous415.co.uk) or call (0191) 239 9850.

**Cover shot** of Kristina Hollier, Tony Havelock and Laura Longworth by Trevor Walker



# Cadets take controls of £12m 747 jumbo jet simulator

**Two Ponteland Air Cadets enjoyed a test flight on a British Airways 747 jumbo simulator during a visit to Heathrow Airport.**

Cadet Sergeant Alex Burn and Cadet Corporal Josh McAree took the controls of the £12m simulator at the BA Flight Training Centre, which are used to train the firm's own pilots.

Following the visit, the cadets were hosted overnight at RAF Northolt before being taken to the Royal Air Force Battle of Britain Bunker at RAF Uxbridge where they were given a guided tour of the museum by one of the volunteers. During World War 2, the Bunker housed the No.11 Group Operations Room and was used to coordinate the RAF's side of the Battle of Britain.

Josh, 15, said: "This was easily the best activity I have done with the Air Cadets. I have flown the simulators at the Squadron and at the Air Operations Acquaintance Centre at RAF Linton-on-Ouse, but this was something else! It was just like flying a real 747 and I had a brilliant time".

Alex, 16, added: "The visit to the Battle of Britain bunker was a fantastic opportunity to learn about the RAF's involvement during World War 2 and I learned a huge amount about the history of the RAF. I even got the opportunity to sit in the chair that Churchill sat on in 1940 when he visited the Bunker at the height of the Battle of Britain!"

861 (Wideopen) Squadron is based in Wideopen, meets every Monday and Thursday from 7pm-9.30pm, and is recruiting now. Anyone aged 13-17 years who would like to join can visit the squadron's website at [www.861sqn.org](http://www.861sqn.org) or email [861@aircadets.org](mailto:861@aircadets.org) or call (0191) 236 6583.



Cadet Corporal Josh McAree at the controls of the 747 jet simulator

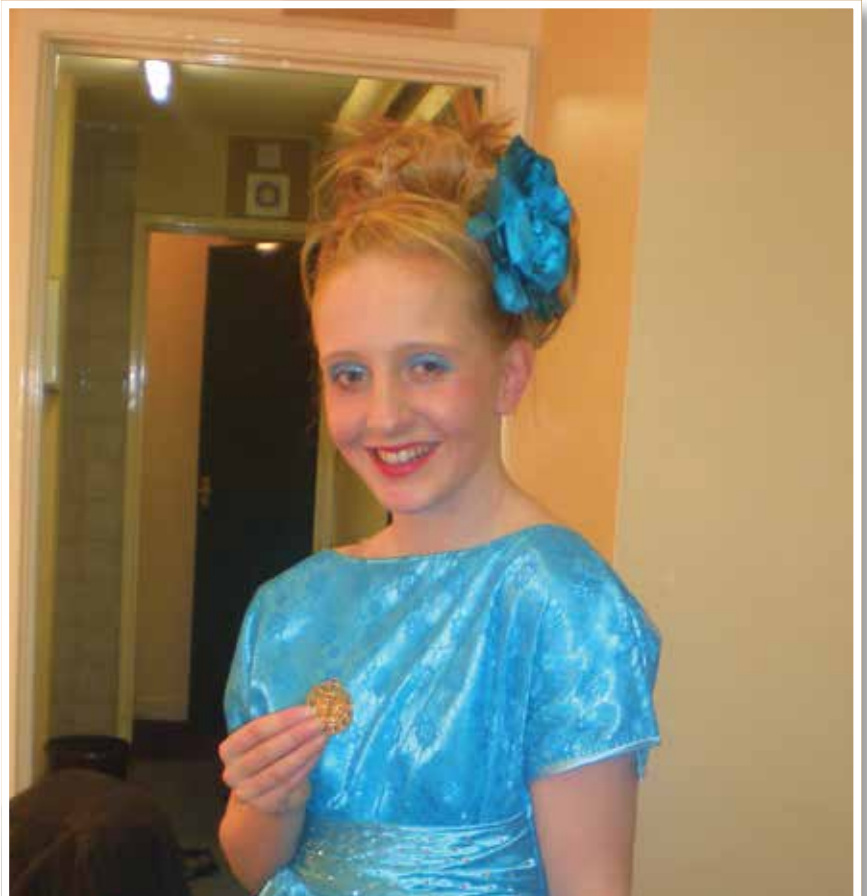
## Teen star Olivia sets sights on O2 Arena

**Teenage performer Olivia Dixon is bidding to represent the North East in a nationwide talent contest at London's O2 Arena.**

Olivia, from Ashbrooke Drive, Ponteland, has been selected for the regional final of Teen Star 2013, being held at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre.

The 13-year-old, a pupil at Richard Coates Middle School, has attended the Elaine Milbourne Dance School since she was two and has already performed in two Ponteland Repertory Society shows alongside numerous dancing contests. But this is her first big singing competition.

Olivia said: "I am so excited and nervous about singing in front of such a large live audience. But I'm sure the experience will be amazing and I'm going to enjoy every minute."





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## PROJECTS REPORT

### Memorial Hall

The planning application has been lodged with the County Council and is currently out for public consultation.

### Street information signs

Work on the design of the back of the maps is nearing completion.

### Skate Park

Arrangements are being made to have the requested noise survey carried out.

### Repairs to brick walls at Waitrose Bridge

Approval of the application lodged with the Environment Agency was awaited.

### War Memorial

Prices are being sought for the repair of the damaged front wall. A report is to be considered at the April meeting regarding the War Memorial design.

### Tree works at sub station and Darras Road

This work is now complete with the exception of the felling of one tree at the Darras Road bus stop.

### River bank repairs

Quotes have been sought from four companies to carry out the necessary works at the worst areas of bank erosion in the park. The Council has allocated funds in the budget for this work and it was agreed that the lowest quotation be agreed.

## GRANTS TO LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

### Ponteland United Reformed Church Luncheon Club

The Council approved a grant of £250 for assistance towards transport costs to allow people to attend this Club.

### Ponteland United Football Club

The Council approved a grant of £500 following an application from the Football Club for assistance towards the purchase of new adult size goal posts and nets for use on one of the new pitches being constructed.

## REQUEST FROM PARTY IN THE PARK FOR USE OF THE PARK – SUNDAY 9 JUNE

The Council agreed the use of the Park for Party in the Park to be held on Sunday 9 June and to provide the toilets as in previous years.

## DARRAS HALL ESTATE COMMITTEE – BRIDLE PATH

The Council considered a report on the bridle path, which has been maintained for many years by the Darras Hall Estate Committee and the Town Council had given an annual grant towards this. The Darras Hall Estate Committee has had to reluctantly agree that they will have to scale down the extent of their work as it was becoming an increasing financial burden. According to agreements made in 1972, the County Council is responsible for its maintenance and will need to increase its involvement, although it was recognised that its budget was also constrained. It was reported that some drainage ditches had been created recently in view of the level of damage caused by the heavy rains and the Town Council agreed to a contribution of £200 towards the cost of these works. The Council also agreed to discussions being held with NCC and the Darras Hall Estate Committee in an attempt to establish an acceptable maintenance regime.

## CORE STRATEGY

It was reported that three Councillors had reviewed the Core Strategy document and had prepared a submission for review and confirmation by the Council. Councillors agreed with the comments made and these would be submitted to NCC as the Town Council's response.

## CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Various meetings of the Council's Cemetery Committee had been held to discuss issues relating to responsibility for this service being transferred to the Town Council from 1 April 2013. The service would be delivered by the County Council in 2013-14 on a Service Level Agreement basis. The Committee held on 4 March had made several recommendations for approval by the Town Council. The Council agreed to accept the proposal for the standard of maintenance at the Cemetery which would be the same as that currently provided by the County Council. The fees and charges already set by NCC were also agreed and the new scale of fees for 2013-14 would be approved when set by the County Council. The Council approved the residency criteria for Prestwick Cemetery as follows: residency was defined as living within the civil parish at the time of death or having lived in the area previously for a specific period of time i.e. 20 years. Proof would be required. This would hopefully deal with residents who

had had to go into care homes etc and were living outside of the boundary. Councillors also agreed the regulations for the Cemetery and the woodland burial section.

## HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on 21 February and the Council approved the recommendations from that group. The repainting of the bollards at Broadway would be carried out by the Town Council. A request was to be made to the County Council to divert the funds for the North Road resurfacing scheme to resurfacing on Middle Drive in view of the poor state of repair of this road.

## ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on 18 February and the Council approved the following recommendations made by the Group:

A quote for the planting works next to Waitrose was approved.

It was agreed to have some works carried out to one of the large planters at the top of Merton Way near to the CIU Club in response to comments made by the judges from Northumbria in Bloom last year.

Approval was given to obtaining quotes for various tree works as a result of the tree report received from the Council's consultant.

It was also agreed to carry out a survey of trees in the Council's ownership that were not in the Park.

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that the County Council's budget had been set and some £6m was to be used for roads and potholes. He reported that he was attempting to have the lay-by on Thornhill Road made into some parking spaces for users of the Merton Way shops. A further meeting was to be held soon. He expressed some concerns about parking on the corner of Ashbrooke Drive and this was to be examined to see what could be done.

*This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on March 13.*



# New parking bays to ease daily scramble for spaces

**The lack of parking spaces on Thornhill Road has been a controversial subject which has led to demonstrations by concerned pedestrians who have accused some parents doing the school run of dangerous driving.**

But the daily scramble for spaces on the congested Ponteland street will be at least a little easier for residents after the creation of 12 new parking bays.

Social housing provider Isos and Northumberland County Council have steered through the project, which has been delivered by Mears Construction and Groundwork North East. Local ward member Councillor Richard Dodd has also been a driving force behind the £57,000 initiative.

He said: "We have worked on this road for quite a long time, putting in a crossing and new lining and this is the final piece of the jigsaw to give the more senior residents the chance to be able to park directly outside their homes."

Having parked the car for the first time in the new bay adjacent to his home, Joe Faulder said: "This is much better for us now, being able to park right next to the house and not having to worry about finding a space or parking on a narrow, busy road."

Andy Kennedy, Support Services Manager with Isos, added: "We know the residents have been experiencing parking problems here for some time and so, in consultation with the local community and partnership with the council, we have provided these extra bays to ease the squeeze."



Joe Faulder (pictured in the door mirror) is helped to get his car into the new parking bay by Coun Richard Dodd, Stuart Jones of Groundworks, Andy Kennedy of Isos and Lee Fraser from Mears.

## Blackbird set to fly again

**A pub company has pledged to put an historic Ponteland watering hole "back on the map" with a major investment programme.**

The Blackbird, on North Road, was taken over and refurbished by the Washington-based Principle Leisure Group in 2010, but closed its doors again last year after PLG went into administration.

Now it has been taken over by the Burton upon Trent based Spirit Pub Company, which owns around 800 licensed premises in the UK including the Chef & Brewer, Fayre & Square and Flaming Grill brands.

Managing Director Chris Welham, in a letter to Ponteland Civic Society, said: "I am very pleased to say that we have taken the decision to invest in improving the pub and we will be doing this with an independent and very experienced operator.

"The pub will not be converted to one of our managed brands but rather a unique local pub. I am confident that the new operator will create a great place for all of the community of Ponteland and certainly put the pub back on the map.



"We are currently finalising the development plans, permissions and agreement approvals and hope that we can secure everything for April this year."

Planning and listed building applications on the building, which has origins going back to the 13th century and features including a Tudor fireplace, Jacobean players' gallery in the upstairs function room and an ancient tower, are currently awaiting decision by Northumberland County Council.

# Do you recognise this 'view'?

By Muriel Sobo

**Yes, it is Cheviot View, the gates of The Lodge on the left place it, but it is the two school boys on bikes, the lack of traffic and the abundance of trees that are all very different from today.**

This picture was probably taken in the 1950s. In 1955 the road was widened, Clickemin bridge was widened and two brick cottages, opposite Clickemin farmhouse, were demolished to facilitate all this.

Clickemin farmhouse and the farm cottages are marked on plans from the beginning of the 1800s, and may go back further. There was also a milestone from the Turnpike days marked on a map. Now the question. Does anyone have photographs or memories of this part of the road, from the Dobbies roundabout to Bell Villas, before 1955 when it was widened? Please contact me on (01661) 871969.

Last month I found a formal picture of the Castle Ward Rural District Council, mounted and everyone named, just before it was consigned to history in 1973. From the charity shop in Merton Way!



## Council receives more than 1,000 objections to 280-home green belt scheme Decision on application expected in July

**Controversial plans for a 280-home development on green belt land at Birney Hill have generated more than 1,000 objections to Northumberland County Council.**

The £96m scheme also includes a community farm, commercial space, landscaping and open spaces, with 75 acres of land 'gifted' to the local community and managed by a community trust owned and run by residents.

Applicant Lugano Developments says the community trust will have access to funding of up to £10m to "enhance the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the town".

A spokesperson for Northumberland County Council said: "We have received at least 1,000 responses to the consultation on the application by Lugano Developments Ltd for outline planning permission for land at Birney Hill Farm near Ponteland. We are progressing with the details involved in consideration of the application.

"We are currently planning to schedule a member site visit and public meeting for June, with a view to reporting the application to the July meeting of the West Area Planning Committee, subject to satisfactory progress with the application."

Ponteland Town Council held a special meeting on March 7 at Merton Hall to discuss the planning application, which more than 20 members of the public attended. The Town Council has lodged a formal objection to the county council on the following grounds:

- It contravenes Green Belt policy
- It is premature
- It is inappropriate
- It is unsustainable.

The minutes which show the detailed objection are available on the Town Council's website [www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk)

Local people can find out more about the Birney Hill proposals at a series of briefings being held by Lugano until April which will be advertised on the [pontelandfutures.co.uk](http://pontelandfutures.co.uk) website.

To view the application visit <http://tinyurl.com/birneyhillplanningapplication>

Anti-green belt development campaigner Ponteland Green Belt Group's website can be found at [www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk](http://www.pontelandgreenbelt.co.uk)

### FLIGHT OF THE RED KITE EXHIBITION COMES TO ST MARY'S

**A giant red kite mosaic with a 22m wingspan will be the focal point of an exhibition coming to St Mary's Church in May.**

The artwork was created by Team Valley based Chromazone using 150 polystyrene tiles. It will be accompanied by textual information and images by professional photographer Kaleel Zibe showing community involvement in the Northern Kites Project.

The project was responsible for the re-introduction of 94 red kites in this core area between 2004 and 2009. In 2006 red kites began to breed in the region for the first time after an absence of 170 years.

The exhibition runs at St Mary's Church from May 14th to 22nd and more information can be found at [www.friendsofredkites.org.uk](http://www.friendsofredkites.org.uk)



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# Your letters

More calls for the protection of the green belt and a winter bridleway ban on horses, and good news for an historic watering hole in this month's letters...

## County council planning strategy should protect farmland

**In their new Core Strategy document, Northumberland County Council's vision and objectives for the future of our beautiful county focus largely on development and is weak on protecting the lovely open countryside that we all value. Surely this does not represent the views of the majority of the population?**

Six of the eight objectives preferred by the county council promote development and there is no recognition of the importance of the agricultural economy or the need to maintain openness and separation between settlements.

The countryside is under enormous pressure from developers who are seeking to profit from the Government's eagerness to rescue the economy by creating development opportunities. Whilst appropriate development is clearly to be encouraged, the open countryside and productive agriculture is in great danger of being lost forever.

There is considerable doubt that newly approved development land would actually be developed in the short term. The market for housing, for example, is depressed not because of land shortage, but by the lack of available finance.

Developers are more likely to build up their land banks with new green field acquisitions, but delay development until the economy is stronger. These would then be developed ahead of brown field sites which are currently available, but compromised by market conditions.

All of us who care about keeping Northumberland open and green whilst encouraging development where it does not compromise this character, must let the county council know our feelings by responding to the consultation on the new Core Strategy.

In particular we should urge that its vision should recognise that Northumberland is a largely rural county with well separated settlements which is distinct from adjacent urban areas and that the continued use of productive farmland should be given a high priority and protected. This should also be supported by suitable objectives and policies.

**David Hobson**

*Willow Way,  
Ponteland*

## Developer's job claims don't add up

**The proposal by Channel Islands developer Lugano to build 280 houses on virgin green belt land near Ponteland faces very strong opposition.**

In order to get 'buy-in' from the local community Lugano support their large scale development proposal with the promise of 900 job opportunities.

The figures provided by Lugano are underpinned with the provision of 672 jobs during the construction phase of the Birney Hill development: "in a good market – sales would reach 30-40 dwelling units per annum".

Good market conditions would give us a development period of between seven and nearly 10 years; it would seem to be more realistic that we are looking at 67 construction jobs for each year of development as opposed to 672 total construction jobs over the life of the development phase.

It would appear that within the 'job opportunity promise' Lugano have included a 16% allowance for potential residents who will choose to work from home (144 out of 900 jobs) – they omit to mention that there is currently a good supply of high quality homes available to purchase in Ponteland. Those wishing to move into the area in order to work from home can, and will do so, without the need for the Birney Hill development.

The outline proposal includes establishing a community trust to manage commercial business space at Birney Hill; there is no indication of the type of business envisaged to enable a clear understanding that this has the potential to be a viable and sustainable proposition.

The trust will also manage a community farm project, employing up to three staff; this fails to acknowledge the inevitable loss and destruction of existing agricultural businesses and jobs should the proposed development go ahead. Unfortunately the prospects for a profitable community farm seem poor and have potential to be detrimental to the existing independent green grocers, butchers and the regular farmers market that are already established in Ponteland.

Whatever the number of jobs created, they will not be created only if Lugano's scheme proceeds. Job opportunities are not increased just because the development is

on green belt land (brown field and green field sites are currently available that have been identified as suitable for development).

The construction of housing over and above the housing need is not justified; it would not represent sustainable development. The creation of construction jobs is not, and must never be, a justification for building on the green belt. Any housing development should be based on housing need and not developers' greed!

**Lesley Noble**

*Cheviot View,  
Ponteland*

## Pub chain confirms plans for Blackbird Inn

**In your December 2012 issue, R & M Tipping were rightly concerned about the future of the Blackbird pub – right in the middle of our Conservation Area and one of only two Grade II\* buildings in the Parish.**

Our ever-tenacious Secretary, Pat Cooper, has now got some information from Chris Welham, the MD for Spirit Leased Pubs. Whilst apologising for the delay he tells us that they have decided "to continue to invest in improving the pub ... it will not be converted to one of our managed brands but rather a unique local pub."

They hope to have all the plans and submissions in place for April this year and the Blackbird will "welcome back guests very soon".

The Tippings floated the idea that the Blackbird could have provided a community centre for the village and perhaps a home for the Town Council.

Maybe we have all missed the boat on that, but I would merely mention that the plans to rebuild Belleville House as a nest of apartments have recently been withdrawn, and there is no other use presently in sight for these former office buildings.

They also date back to 1841 and are in our Conservation Area – and have been vacant for several years. Without great modification they could provide accommodation for the Town Council, an information centre and more besides.

The large (but admittedly unattractive) industrial extension at the rear could house artists' studios and whatever else you care to think of – and there is parking for at least 36



cars. Is there an opportunity here?

**Philip Ham**  
Chairman,  
Ponteland Civic Society

### Unsung heroes deserved more praise in magazine

**I was disappointed to see 70 years of outstanding service to the local community relegated to a few easily overlooked lines at the bottom of a page.**

Surely if anyone deserved a full page spread with picture it was Lucinda Porter and Lesley Hughes who received 40 and 30 years service to guiding awards.

Many congratulations and thanks to them and all the other unsung heroes who give their time selflessly to running scouts, guides, brownies and other organisations in Ponteland.

**Hilary Clarke**  
Western Way  
Darras Hall

### Ideal location for new speed camera

**Speed cameras. Your camera needs to be in operation on the North Road on the bend at Louisville heading in to Pont at about 4pm any afternoon.**

That way you can catch all the off duty police officers in a hurry to get home, but I wouldn't hold your breath.

**Jimmy Pierce**  
Jackson Ave,  
Ponteland

### Winter ban on horses needed for bridleway

**I wish to bring to the attention of Darras Hall Estates Committee the appalling state of the Bridleway between the Broadway and Western Way.**

It really is disgusting the way that a few selfish horse riders have destroyed this pathway which is used by many more people than horses.

We are now having to navigate our way through vast patches of mud churned up by horses hooves as well as avoiding large stinking mounds of horse muck liberally splattered along the path.

Can the Estates Committee not spend some of the huge amount of money garnered from the Darras Hall residents to repair this important walkway and make it more suitable for all our residents?

In bad weather could a ban on horses not be brought in to allow the path time to dry out and repair itself?

**John Worth**  
Errington Road,  
Darras Hall

Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

**May issue deadlines:** The May issue will be delivered on Tuesday April 30. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday April 12. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the May issue.



Isabella with nephew Peter and his wife Alison ready to cut the cake and open the champagne.

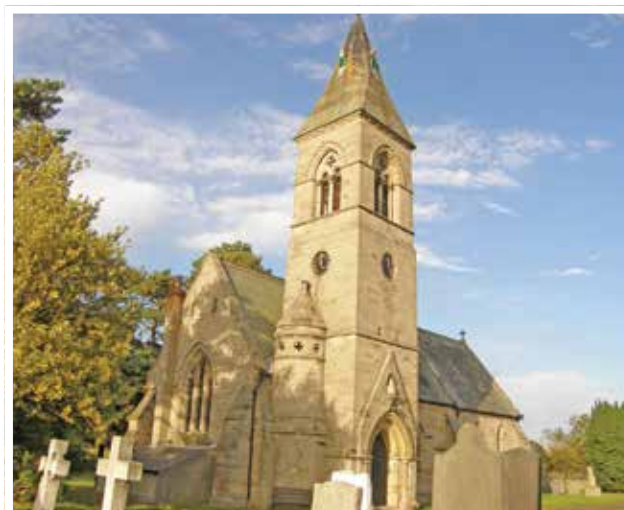
## Isabella celebrates 103rd birthday

By Muriel Sobo

**Isabella Douglass celebrated her 103rd birthday in March at the Grange Lea Care Home where she has been living since last year.**

Born in 1910 she went to school in Great Bavington, left at 14 years, and much later was an Elder at the Presbyterian church there. Isabella worked on farms in the Kirkwhelpington area all her life. She was both the indoors help and the outdoors worker, turning her hand to all the farming tasks.

Never married, she had a party with her nephews and their wives and friends at Grange Lea, organised by the owners Dan and Joyce Whaley. Isabella was wondering what all the fuss was about!



## Would you like to join the Milbourne Singers?

By June Atkinson

**We are an ecumenical choir composed of members from Holy Saviour Anglican Church and the Methodist Church in the village of Milbourne, four miles north-west of Ponteland.**

For 25 years we have led worship at Holy Saviour and sung at Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas. In recent years we have also led Summer Evensong.

We are a dedicated choir, but our number has diminished. Would you consider joining us in our fellowship of song?

Please contact choir director David Foster on (01661) 821555.

# What's on...

## Ponteland Manor Care Home Easter family day

Saturday 30th March 10am to 2pm, Thornhill Road. Free to attend. Easter egg hunt; egg decorating; nail painting; cup cakes; green lucky dip; bottle tombola; raffle; egg and spoon race; hurdy gurdy; remembrance tree; ukulele group (from noon); old fashioned sweetie stall; guess the number of balloons. Small charge for activities. Tel. (01661) 821 400.

## Ponteland History Society Help Desk

Are you doing a school project, researching family history, needing historical information on a date, building or person in the Ponteland area, or looking for an old local photograph? Then perhaps we can help. Our free help desk is open at Ponteland Library from 2.15pm to 5pm on Friday April 5, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see <http://www.ponthisistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html>

## County Council surgeries

Your local Northumberland County Councillors Richard Dodd, Peter Jackson, Veronica Jones and Eileen Armstrong are available to meet constituents on the first Saturday of every month from 10am-11am at Waitrose supermarket, Ponteland and Broadway, Darras Hall. Their next surgery is on Saturday April 6.

## Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday April 8 is Brian Burnie who will talk on "Daft as a Brush Charity". Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm. Membership is open to gentlemen aged over 55. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at [donaldflloyd@sky.com](mailto:donaldflloyd@sky.com) or on (01661) 872661.

## North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

On Monday 8th April we are delighted to welcome our guest speaker Ian Christie. He will be talking about the propagation of plants, there will be a demonstration and if you would like to participate, you will need to bring – plastic bag, pencil, labels, scissors and plant material (optional). Ian Christie has been

a member of the Scottish Rock Garden Group for 40 years, a past President and a Royal Horticultural Society committee member. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at [t.teal@btinternet.com](mailto:t.teal@btinternet.com) or (0191) 4132574.

## Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland, on the second Wednesday of the month at 2pm. Visitors £4.

## Ponteland Lions Club

Ponteland Lions now hold a business meeting at their new venue, Merton Hall, on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm. Social meetings are also held on the fourth Wednesday of each month, when a wide range of visits and events are organised for the enjoyment of members and their friends. We welcome prospective new members to join us. Our monthly book stall takes place outside Waitrose on the last Saturday of every month (except December) from 9am until 4pm. Book donations and volunteer helpers are always most welcome. For information about the book stall or becoming a member of Ponteland Lions please call John Morris on 0845 833 9913.

## Merton Hall excursions in April and May

Durham Day Trip is planned for Thursday 11th April, departs approximately 10am. Please contact Merton Hall on (01661) 821712 for details. The May trip to Gilsland is one of our favourites. The outing is planned for Thursday 30th May, includes lunch, entertainment and afternoon tea for £30. Please contact Merton Hall for more information. Meet new and old friends for a chat and a cuppa, it's only 30p and the second cup is free (Monday to Saturday morning). Keep fit and flexible with chair based exercise every Monday at 11am till 11.45am, no need to book just come and join in for £1.50.

## Darras Hall WI

Meeting on Thursday 11th April at 2pm in the URC Hall. Visitors are most welcome to come along and listen to Mrs Ann Dunn-Glass whose talk is about 'The Mystery of Magnets'. Mrs Dunn-Glass is a healer in alternative medicine, specialising in magnetic therapy. There will be a competition for

'A Bracelet', followed by tea and biscuits.

## Friends of Ponteland Park AGM

Friends of Ponteland Park: Annual General Meeting will be held at Merton Hall on Tuesday 16th April at 7pm and will be followed with a talk by Chris Wright – our local birdlife expert. All welcome.

## Ponteland Floral Art Club

Tuesday 16 April 2013, 7.30pm, Ponteland Memorial Hall. Demonstration by Christine Ogle of Morpeth (A). Title: 'A Touch of Class'.

## Ponteland Community Partnership

The Partnership meets on every third Wednesday of the month (except August and December) at 7pm in the small meeting room in Merton Hall. It is an open meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend.

## Embroiderers' Guild - Ponteland branch

We now meet at the Memorial Hall from 2pm – 4pm on the fourth Monday of the month (except December. On Bank Holidays the meeting is on the preceding Monday). Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird (01661) 881395.

## Rotary Club Golf Competitions

Ponteland Rotary Club are holding their two Annual Golf Competitions at Ponteland Golf Club as follows: Tuesday 23rd April - St George's Day Competition followed by dinner in the evening; Tuesday 28th May - Charity AM/AM 4-ball Team Stableford Competition. All proceeds to Rotary Charities. Full details from Rotarian Eddie Dunn (01661) 824888.

## An Evening with John Grundy

Tuesday 23rd April at 7pm, St Mary's Church, Ponteland. Tickets £10 including a glass of wine can be obtained from St Mary's Church Office, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, 9am-12noon Monday to Friday or 6 Mayfair Gardens, Ponteland tel (01661) 822105. All proceeds to Christian Aid.

## Ponteland Repertory Society

Ponteland Repertory Society will be recreating a little corner of war-torn occupied France and saying 'Allo 'Allo to audiences at the Memorial Hall at the end of April. The stage version of this TV

favourite follows the adventures of hapless cafe owner Rene and his wife Edith as they struggle to keep for themselves a priceless painting acquired by the Nazis, and endeavour to repatriate two British airmen with the help of the Resistance. Society stalwarts John Hutton and Brenda Rutter are once again reprising the roles they delighted audiences with the last time the show was staged in Ponteland, those of Rene and Edith. It is a totally new venture for director Carole Davies though as she makes her debut with the Rep. The show runs from Tuesday 23rd until Saturday 27th April and tickets are available from Alan Newton Butcher's on Merton Road, tel (01661) 822985.

## Ponteland Methodist Church

The Spring Concert will be given by 'Graeme and Valerie Danby in concert with Dodici Voce' on Saturday 27th April at 7.00 pm in the church. Refreshments will be served after the concert. Tickets, costing £7 each, are available from Syd Cowan – 01661 824459 or [syd.cowan@btinternet.com](mailto:syd.cowan@btinternet.com) to reserve for collection at the door on the evening.

## Ponteland Civic Society

The next meeting of Ponteland Civic Society will be on Monday 29th April, 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall. Brian Tilley, who is Deputy Editor, will speak on The Hexham Courant and the talk as usual will be followed by tea and biscuits and time for a chat. Visitors warmly welcome (for whom there is a nominal charge of £2).

## Ponteland Bowling Club 'taster' sessions

On each of the four Saturdays in May Ponteland Bowling Club in Darras Road, next to the Memorial Hall, will be hosting free 'taster' mornings. Sessions are from 10.30am until 12noon. Why not come along and give the game a try, everyone welcome and no age limit. See our website for more club information at [www.pontelandbowlingclub.co.uk](http://www.pontelandbowlingclub.co.uk)

## Ponteland Photographic Society

We meet at 7.30pm every Monday evening through to April 15 in the large room at Merton Hall in Ponteland, with a short break over the Christmas/New Year holiday and again at Easter. Meetings usually last for two hours. If you are interested in photography, you're welcome to come along and see how we can develop your interest even further.



# Birney Hill proposals: your chance to see the detail

**Local people are invited to see for themselves the planning application for up to 280 houses at Birney Hill, Ponteland. The documents, maps, reports and illustrations are all available at Ponteland library for anyone to find out more about the proposals for this £96m scheme.**

Birney Hill offers huge benefits to Ponteland and the wider region. It will bring a remarkably low impact scheme – only 3.5% of the development site will be covered by houses – to the outskirts of Ponteland, while bringing more significant change by reviving the village through a multi-million pound investment in long sought improvements bestowed by a development trust.

It will create attractive new green spaces, growing areas, environmental education, outdoor recreation, play areas and a large community farm. More than 92 acres of land will be gifted to the local community for the benefit of generations to come in the largest example of its kind in the UK since the establishment of Milton Keynes' parks trust.

## COMMUNITY TRUST

A key element of the proposals includes the implementation of one of the country's largest community trusts, with Lugano gifting over £16 million and 92 acres of land to residents of Birney Hill and Ponteland.

The community trust would also include £3m funding for a community farm with kitchen garden, urban allotments and a visitor centre, designed as an attractive, useful hub for residents and a destination in its own right. The community farm, located at the existing Birney Hill farm, will also include commercial and business space.

Birney Hill will build high performance housing to cut typical energy bills by 80% for a family house to £320 pa against the average £1600 pa for a property of similar size.

The overall design concept is to build on the best of local traditions, notably the pre-highways engineering concept of placing homes sensitively within a landscape. Lugano proposes to offer innovations



within a package that will be comfortably familiar, including energy efficient design to the proposed 2016 definition of zero carbon.

The types proposed add to the mix of housing in Ponteland and Darras Hall by offering 70 properties suitable for smaller households (including many designed for potential downsizers) alongside a range of larger homes for growing families.

## GREEN VALUES

The green values that lead the scheme echo the original thinking behind the Darras Hall development at Ponteland, which set out to integrate housing and horticulture.

Climate change and the ability of existing infrastructure to cope with increasing demands has been at the forefront of the proposals. Ponteland's longstanding flooding and drainage concerns will be tackled through innovative technology including a Sustainable Urban Drainage system collecting surface water from the site.

The most effective and up-to-date drainage systems would be incorporated into the

infrastructure at Birney Hill. Major long-term improvements together with porous paving, green roofs and reed beds address flooding issues head on, and also lead to improvements for existing residents in the area.

Importantly all of these solutions will significantly reduce the surface water run-off from the current agricultural fields meaning that the pace of surface water flows from the agricultural fields will be a fraction of what they are now when the new development is completed.

The planning application looks in depth at all aspects of the proposals, and includes reports about the impact of the scheme on the wider area. Noise, transport, access, bats, environmental impact, wildlife habitats, job and economic growth have all been studied in depth by independent consultants and all form part of the application. The scheme plans for enhancements to wildlife and biodiversity.

**See the planning application at Ponteland library or online at <http://tinyurl.com/birneyhillplanningapplication> Visit [www.pontelandfutures.co.uk](http://www.pontelandfutures.co.uk) for more details.**



# Understanding living together

The words of Eric Hoffer, in the quote below, remind us that couples live together for a variety of reasons, some well thought out and some not. Even those based on love and understanding initially can sadly fall apart later in a society with increasing financial and emotional burdens and hurdles.

That is true of married and unmarried couples both, but there is a crucial difference in the protection the law gives to married couples which it does not give to unmarried couples.

When the understanding to live together comes to an end, will there be an understanding about that ending between you and your unmarried partner? There can be if you give this the thought and preparation it requires in advance of any breakdown. It doesn't need to be in contemplation of a breakdown. It should be a simple step in ensuring future financial stability, like registering your home at the land registry when you buy a property.

Let me be clear THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A COMMON LAW WIFE/

HUSBAND. Excuse me for shouting, but this myth lives on. Tell your friends and family. Spread the word! It was last a concept in 1753, no less than 260 years ago. In this age of twitter and faster forms of communication, it is shocking that it still persists. Until the government changes the law and recognises that married couples are now the minority, then couples need to protect themselves by contract and agreement.

A couple who have lived together do not have any right to be financially supported by the other simply by the length of time they have lived together. That may be fine for a young working couple but introduce children, redundancy, ill health and other facts of life and the picture can be much starker. The court may still consider claims on behalf of children but not unmarried partners.

The way the courts treat ownership of a family home for unmarried couples is complex and arbitrary. If there is a dispute then it can be vastly costly and

involve delay. The recent Supreme Court case of *Kernott v Jones* in 2011 highlighted this. After a period of separation since living together the Supreme Court reduced a partner's share in a joint property to only 10%.

Lord Justice Wall spoke to us all saying; "this is a cautionary tale, which all unmarried couples who are contemplating the purchase of a residential property as their home, and all solicitors who advise them, should study."

We have taken his advice and suggest you do too.

Major Family Law can prepare a living together agreement for you at a competitive rate; email us [info@majorfamilylaw.co.uk](mailto:info@majorfamilylaw.co.uk). We also offer a free initial consultation.

Jo Hall, Major Family Law  
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“There would be no society if living together depended upon understanding each other.”

Eric Hoffer

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# Aztec day brings history lesson to life



Children enjoyed a taste of Ancient Mexico in a history lesson with a difference at Richard Coates Middle School.

Year 5 pupils took part in an Aztec day when they enjoyed crafts, games, music making and dance.

The children had all created their own Aztec head dresses in art lessons, which they wore on the day, together with a costume. Some came dressed as Eagle warriors or noblemen, while others were merchants or slaves.

The event ended in an Aztec feast where the pupils ate the typical Mexican food they had made earlier in the day.

Teacher Mrs Cowan said: "The effort put into the costumes by pupils and parents was fantastic."





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# More than 30 drivers caught by new speed camera in first month

By PC Rob Anderson  
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



**In the period between 14th February and 14th March we have had seven crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.**

These break down to the following offences:

- two damages to motor vehicles
- one theft other
- one harassment offence
- three burglary dwellings.

The harassment and theft offences have been detected. Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the other offences.

Following the request last month for more vigilance from the public regarding burglary dwellings and thefts from motor vehicles I would like to thank those of you who have contacted us to assist.

It is however still important to highlight and remind you of the actions which would help us to prevent any further crime:

- If you see anything suspicious, either people or vehicles, please contact the Police. The smallest thing could help us to either prevent an offence or assist us to detect a crime.
- Take registration numbers of suspicious vehicles. Let us know where and when

you've seen the vehicle and what the occupants look like.

- Please lock your vehicles when you leave them. An offender has been targeting vehicles which have been left unlocked and taking items.
- Door locks. Your home security is very important and the first step in preventing a break in is by ensuring you have good door locks. If you have UPVC doors they have multi-lock systems but it's worth investing in a mortise lock if your wooden door only has a Yale type lock. Of course, a lock is only any good if it's locked which is another thing people sometimes forget to do.

Be vigilant and together we can reduce crime.

Over the period of 14th February to 14th March the speed camera was utilised on the following roads with the attached results:

- Middle Drive – out of 203 vehicles six were stopped speeding
- Darras Road – out of 117, six were stopped speeding
- Western Way – out of 367, 21 were stopped speeding

- Runnymede Road – out of 15, one was stopped speeding
- North Road – No vehicles stopped speeding out of 65 checked

We will continue to check these roads so please curb your speed.

If you would like some crime prevention advice please contact PC 613 Davison or myself, PC 395 Anderson, on 101.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- CSO Jill Ruddick 6th April 9.30am–10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison 13th April 11.30am–12.30pm at Belsay village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 27th April 11.30am–12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have engagement days at these venues and dates:

- 24th April 10am–12noon Merton Way/1pm–3pm Broadway
- 16th April 1pm–3pm Stamfordham/Belsay.

Please come along and have a chat to get to know us.

## CALLUM SELECTED FOR ENGLAND U16 RUGBY SQUAD

**Ponteland High School's Callum Chick was recently selected for the England U16 Rugby training camp which took place February 12th to 14th at Hartpury College.**

The camp provided the basis for final team selection for the International matches held in April. Callum approached this challenge with a first class attitude, training intensively and we are delighted to report that his hard work has secured him a place in

the England squad for the international match against Italy during the Easter holidays.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Callum is an outstanding rugby prospect and we wish him well in his upcoming matches. He is also highly intelligent and a great role model for others in school; I know he will be a success in whatever he chooses to do in the years ahead."

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## Now we, the community, are really helping to shape the future of our village

As announced in the January issue of this magazine a Community-Led group, the PNP Group, has been set up to work on behalf of Ponteland Town Council and the wider community to develop a comprehensive Neighbourhood Plan for Ponteland and its surrounding villages. The principal aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to encourage appropriate development in Ponteland that meets the needs and priorities of the community including, but not limited to those associated with housing, education, healthcare, employment, retail, leisure, transport, car parking, heritage and infrastructure facilities.

Public participation, consultation and approval in a referendum will be at the heart of this exciting opportunity for our community.

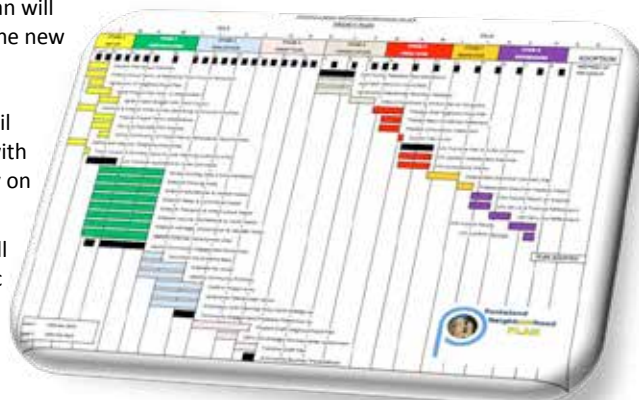
Visit our new website at [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) for the detailed aims of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Terms of Reference for the PNP Group approved by the Town Council.

The geographic area to be covered by the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan will be the civic boundary of Ponteland Town Council. Visit [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) for a detailed plan of the designated area.

The Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan will sit alongside, and dovetail with, the new Core Strategy for planning policy currently being developed by Northumberland County Council who are currently consulting with communities across the County on their preferred options.

It is expected that the preparation of the Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan will take between 18 months and 2 years to complete including time for a public referendum prior to its adoption as a formal planning control tool.

Visit [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) to see the detailed project programme including, in particular, the periods for further extensive community consultation.



Of course, community consultation has already commenced with our Initial Survey carried out in January and February of 2013. This received over 420 responses and the detailed results can be found at [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk).

Headlines from the survey include the following:-

- Top priorities for infrastructure improvement are traffic congestion, drainage and flooding.
- Top priority for public services is the improvement of our shopping centres.
- 89% of respondents wished to see the Green Belt continue to be protected.
- Only 25% of respondents considered affordable housing for social needs to be a priority.

The PNP Group is made up of a cross section of the local community including residents, local business representatives, members of the Civic Society and Ponteland Community Partnership, Town Councillors and County Councillors.

Visit [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk) for more information about membership of the PNP Group and how you can get involved.



# [www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk](http://www.pontelandneighbourhoodplan.co.uk)





# Winning pic worth the wait

By Mike Sadler

Marjorie Wilkinson won the latest competition held by the Ponteland Photographic Society with her excellent digital image entitled 'Fed Up Waiting'. Elspeth Gordon was runner-up.

April sees the end of this season's meetings but I'm delighted that the Club goes from strength to strength. A varied and interesting programme has generated an increase in membership this year and, thanks to Ponteland Library, we have been able to display members' photographs throughout the winter.

Meetings resume in September but full details of the Society's activities can always be found on the website [www.pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk](http://www.pontelandphotographicsociety.co.uk) and anyone interested in photography is always welcome to come along on Monday nights, 7.30pm at Merton Hall.

## PONTELAND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AGM

The 2013 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday, May 15th at 7pm in Merton Hall, Ponteland.

Nominations for membership of the Executive Council, for the annual posts of Chairman and the Chairmen of the Regeneration, Transport, Environment, Neighbourhood Development Plan and Youth sub-Groups and for the post of Vice Chairman (three years) should be submitted in writing not later than Wednesday May 1st to: Mrs Shirley Hill, Hon Secretary, Ponteland Community Partnership, 90, Runnymede Road, Ponteland, NE20 9HH.

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**Ponteland Golf Club**  
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Golf North East, 2008

Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. The club is actively looking to recruit young adults and has recently introduced intermediate membership categories with no joining fee for 18 to 29 year olds. For information contact:  
Secretary Greg Waugh at:  
[secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk](mailto:secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk)  
Tel: 01661 822689

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