

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



Young farmers bare
all for charity

Record turnout for
Remembrance Sunday

Full list of Xmas church
services

Pont girl's dog snap wins international photo competition

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or call me on 01434 601420
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Pont News and Views is published by Ponteland Town Council in conjunction with Ponteland Community Partnership. If you would like to submit an article, feature or advertise in the magazine, contact: **Tel:** (0191) 3408422 **Mob:** 07954 157939 **Email:** pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk

Write: Cian creative pr, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH

Produced by Cian creative pr



Dancing girls to perform in top Tyneside panto

Three Ponteland schoolgirls have beaten the competition to win places in the junior dance teams performing at a top Tyneside panto this Christmas.

Ellie Armstrong, 12, and Sophie Apedaile, 10, who both attend Richard Coates Middle School, and Sophie Reddy, 10, a pupil at Ponteland Middle School, will appear in Newcastle Panto Ltd's production of Robin Hood & The Babes In The Wood at the Mill Volvo Tyne Theatre.

None of the girls knew each other before starting rehearsals together.

Newcastle Panto Ltd, based at the magnificent Grade I listed Victorian Theatre on Westgate Road, Newcastle, was formed by local actor, comedian and musician Brendan Healy, and has been producing annual pantomimes for 18 years.

The company is proud of its North East roots and works closely with the local community every year, offering educationally

www.pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk

approved free workshops for local schools, which have proved so popular that bookings are already being taken for next year's workshops starting at Easter.

As part of supporting the community, the junior dancers for the show have been drawn from local dance and stage schools, who were invited to a full day of auditions in September.

The girls are all looking forward to appearing in the panto, which runs from December 7 until January 6. The production boasts a number of local celebrities and personalities, including JoJo from Capital FM's breakfast show as Maid Marian, Charlie Richmond who plays Gary in the current Moneysupermarket television commercial, and NUFC commentator and sports promoter Steve Wraith.

Tickets can be booked via the website newcastlepanto.co.uk, in person at the Box Office, or by calling Ticketmaster on 0844 493 9999. The panto also operates a dedicated booking line for enquiries and book groupings: 07565 510 364.



Young farmers bare all for charity calendar

LOVE CHRISTMAS?

You'll love Kirkley Hall's Christmas events 2012

SWING INTO CHRISTMAS WITH JASON ISAACS

Thursday 6th December, 7pm for 7:30pm

CHRISTMAS LUNCHES

Monday 10th, Tuesday 11th, Wednesday 12th, Tuesday 18th, Wednesday 19th, Thursday 20th, 12noon - 2pm

COMEDY DINNER DANCE

Thursday 13th December, 7pm for 7:30pm



KIRKLEY HALL
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Booking is essential for all Christmas events, for more information or to book please contact us on **01670 841235** or email **enquiries@kirkleyhall.co.uk**

A mixed group of Northumbrian young farmers have bared all in producing a naked calendar to raise cash for charity.

Members of Ponteland Young Farmers Club got their kit off in a bid to raise cash for the Farm Crisis Network and to support the development of their club.

Chairman Jen Craighead said: "We wanted to do something which was fun but which raised money so we decided on this. We've seen other calendars which were similar but we've went all out and got everything off. There's not a thong in sight."

Scenes include bareback horse riding, harvest, fencing and a typical farmer's kitchen, with 50% of all profits donated to the Farm Crisis Network.

The calendar, which can be ordered now, has been stocked in local shops and has received quite a bit of interest already.

"We've had international interest with an American shop putting in an order for them," Jen added.

"We thought they were joking at first but they weren't."

Ponteland YFC is part of the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, a rural youth organisation for people 10-26 years of age. Further details can be sought from Jen Craighead or Matthew Sharp on pontelandyoungfarmers@gmail.com.

Calendars can be bought for £10 + p&p with photos taken professionally by George Swift. Orders can be placed by emailing pontelandyoungfarmers@gmail.com or contacting Northumberland YFC County Office on (01661) 872 562.



Residential Sales and Lettings

Relocation Agent Network...

Is the new name for the national network of independent estate agents, formerly known as Home Sale Network. The new name redefines the Network's focus as an organisation of relocation specialists and reflects the scope of services that each member offers their customers.

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PROJECTS REPORT

Memorial Hall

A meeting is to be held with the Memorial Hall representatives.

Bridge redesign

The bridge was opened on November 3 although there may be a need to close it temporarily while works are completed on the abutments.

River bank repairs

The application is still with the Environment Agency.

Street information signs

Work is still ongoing to organise the back of the paper map copies.

Skate park

No further progress in relation to the planning application which had been submitted to the County Council or the lease which was still awaited.

Park path lighting project

The design is still being worked on by the County Council prior to quotes being sought.

Repairs to brick wall at Waitrose

Details of the various quotes received for this work have been received and the Council has agreed to accept the lowest tender. An application for the works has to be submitted to the Environment Agency.

Repainting of Millennium Bridge in the Park

A specification had been sent out to three companies and quotes had to be submitted by November 19. This would be reported to the December meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME DEADLINE CHANGED

The Council agreed some amendments to their Standing Orders and these would be reissued to Members. It should be noted that one of the amendments related to public question time and it was agreed to bring the deadline forward to 12noon on the Thursday prior to the meeting on the following week. This would come into effect for the December meeting; therefore the deadline for questions would be 12noon on Thursday December 6 for the December 12 meeting.

PRESTWICK CEMETERY

The County Council is transferring responsibility for cemeteries to parish and town councils from April 1 2014. This means that Ponteland Town Council will be asked to take over Prestwick Cemetery from that date. Various options are available, including asking NCC to run the cemetery by means of a Service Level Agreement, taking over responsibility and the Town Council running the service or the County Council levying a special expense on council tax payers in this area for continuing to run the service. Various meetings have been held with the County Council officers on this subject, however some costs are still awaited. These costs are necessary to enable the Town Council to set their budget by the County deadline of January 22. A further meeting was to be held with NCC on November 16. The Council agreed in principle to take on responsibility for Prestwick Cemetery and it was likely that this would be operated via a Service Level Agreement for the first year only depending on the details of income and expenditure received.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on October 17 and discussed various items including an audit of grit bins, Western Way and Stamfordham road junction improvements and potholes. A further letter requesting a response to various items had been sent to the County Council.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on October 15. The Council endorsed the recommendation of the Working Party to proceed with work to continue the fencing at Twizell play area. They also agreed to replace three of the seats in the park and to carry out refurbishment of some of the other seats. Two dog bins would also be replaced. A decision relating to the installation of a picnic bench had been deferred pending further discussions being held with a resident. The Chairman of the Working Party

also wished to express thanks to Waitrose who had carried out some work in the park as part of their community involvement. This had been very successful and all the staff involved had worked extremely hard.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Richard Dodd reported on his attendance at a meeting of the Leisure Centre Users Group. He explained that the Leisure Centre was experiencing difficulties recruiting bar and catering staff. NCC had earmarked a sum of money to carry out some work to the Leisure Centre including work on the windows and roof. He also reported on drainage of the pitches which was ongoing. Councillor Dodd reported that he three other County Councillors had allocated part of their Members small scheme budget to fund a speed gun for the Police which would be used in both Ponteland and Prudhoe. He stated that work was to commence very soon on the parking bays for the aged persons bungalows on Thornhill Road. This had been jointly funded by his Members small scheme allowance and ISOS housing. Councillor Dodd reported that he had had a

meeting with the Friends of Ponteland Park regarding replacement of the bird hide. He had also had discussions with officers at the County Council about the possibility of turning the lay-by at Merton Way shopping centre into some short stay parking bays and he was hopeful that this could be resolved. He had also received various letters and emails in relation to flooding on Callerton Lane which he was dealing with and it appeared that this was being caused by run off from a nearby field.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had attended a meeting of the Neighbourhood Development Plan group when various issues had been discussed including the possibility of a questionnaire being sent out hopefully with Pont News & Views in an attempt to gauge resident opinions as to what they would like to see in the Plan. The Deputy Mayor had attended a concert in aid of Help for Heroes that had been very well attended and most enjoyable.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on November 14.

Office Assistant required

The Town Council is looking to employ an administrative assistant to work directly to the Clerk to the Council. This is on a temporary basis, for eight hours per week initially.

Applicants should have good IT skills and be conversant with the use of Microsoft Office. The job will entail general administrative duties such as filing, photocopying and word processing. There may be a requirement to attend an occasional evening meeting or weekend event.

For an informal discussion about the role and salary, please contact Mrs Kath Mavin, Clerk to the Council, by email at km@pontelandtowncouncil.co.uk or by calling (01661) 825092 between 9.30am and 12.30pm from Tuesday December 11 to Wednesday December 19.

If you are interested in this post please send a CV to the address below or by email no later than Wednesday December 19. Interviews will be held early in the New Year and will be carried by the Clerk and the Mayor.

Ponteland Town Council, Unit 1 Meadowfield Court, Meadowfield Industrial Estate, Ponteland, NE20 9SD.



Bubbly teenager's dog snap wins international photo competition

A bubbly Ponteland teenager has won an international photography competition with this snap of her family pet.

Sixteen year old Jessica Keating has been announced as the winner of the youth category of the Kennel Club Dog Photographer of the Year competition.

Jessica, who is currently studying for her A-levels at Ponteland Community High School, captured her labrador Inca in the back garden mesmerised by bubbles floating around her.

Judges said they were impressed by the contrast between the strong and proud labrador and the soft bubbles entwined together.

Jessica, from Pont View, said: "I was completely surprised when I got told that I had won the category because I didn't think that the pleasure of taking photos of my pet would ever lead me to winning a category in this competition.

"Inca inspired me to start taking photographs to keep a complete record of her growing up and from this, my love of photography spiralled. I started photography two years ago after saving up for my own camera. Last August I decided that I wanted to improve my photography and I started a 365 project where I was to take a photo a day for a year, and the photo of Inca was actually my 365th and last image.

"I grew up around dogs as my grandparents had two golden retrievers and they were lovely. I was 13 years old when I was able to get a family dog. Inca is now three years old, and despite the early and often miserable mornings, having a dog is indescribable. They are a wonderful companion and somehow manage to put a smile on your face, regardless of how bad your day has been."

Jessica's image was on display throughout London's leading dog event, Discover Dogs, which took place at Earls Court on November 10 and 11. Jessica was presented with a Dog Photographer of the Year certificate and rosette at the event.

Kennel Club Secretary Caroline Kisko said: "Jessica's image really stood out. The Labrador Retriever is the nation's favourite dog, and with this image it is clear to see why. Inca looks healthy and happy and it must have been a pleasure to watch her playing with the bubbles."

The Kennel Club Dog Photographer of the Year Competition has been taking place annually for seven years. It is open to both professional and amateur photographers, and this year attracted a record-breaking 5,000 entries.

Fancy a go at wheelbarrow race?

By Andy Anderson

This traditional event is run every New Year's Day at noon from the Blackbird Inn.

Last year, Oscar Redman and Dan Pybus beat the five times winners Andy Pybus and Alan Redman with a time of 6min 58sec. They romped home 30 seconds ahead of their fathers.

The 2012 race saw 29 teams take part in front of hundreds of spectators, raising £400 for the Leonard Cheshire Home for disabled people in Ponteland.

The course is just over one mile which starts and ends at the Blackbird Inn. Prizes are awarded to the winners of the men's, ladies' and junior's races.

Ponteland 41 Club and Ponteland Rugby Club will again be organising the event. There will be the usual men's race, ladies' race and a junior race - weather permitting. We will provide the barrows for these races, loaned each year by Greenham Tools of Gateshead.

This year we would like to have a short parade in the form of a Fancy Dress Barrow Parade. We would like local businesses and individuals to enter by coming dressed up with a suitably decorated wheelbarrow and parading from Merton Way to the Blackbird. There will be prizes awarded to the best barrows.

The Diamond is providing mulled wine and Uncle Scooby will be selling hot food and drinks.

Please support our annual race either as an entrant or a spectator on Tuesday January 1st 2013 at 12noon and help raise money for Bobby Robson Cancer Charity and The Prostate Cancer Charity.

The 2012 men's race winners Dan Pybus and Oscar Redman - photo by Keith Robertson.



New dial-a-ride service live

A new service which provides transport to and from your home to destinations within the Ponteland area is now available.

As announced in last month's issue, the minibus service launched on November 9 and is now operating around Ponteland every Friday between 10am and 2pm.

For only £2 return fare you can be collected from home and taken into the village for shopping or just meeting friends and then be taken home again. This could be to meet or visit friends, shop, have a coffee or attend a club, a GP or dental appointment, or to visit the library.

Northumberland County Council, in partnership with Adapt (North East), Ponteland Town Council, Ponteland Community Partnership and Home Instead Senior Care, has funded the new service.

All users need to do is to telephone Adapt (NE) on 01434 600599 no later than noon on Thursday to book your seat on the bus the following day. You are required to be a member of Adapt (NE) at a cost of only £2 per year, and if you give Adapt a call on 01434 600599 they will send you an easy to complete application form.

Ponteland county councillors Peter Jackson and Veronica Jones with the 'Ponteland Hopper' at Ponteland Medical Centre. Photo by Trevor Walker.





Record turnout for Remembrance Sunday service

Members of Ponteland's community joined together in record numbers for the annual Remembrance Day service and parade on November 11.

They included most of the larger organisations in the village such as the Scouts, Army Cadets (who did a Guard of Honour), Memorial Hall, Bowling Club, and Tennis Club, Civic Society and Darras Hall Estate Committee.

The Queen's representative was Deputy Lieutenant Bryony Gibson from Hexham.

Photos by Trevor Walker



Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Calls for action to save one of Ponteland's oldest landmarks and to protect pedestrians and cyclists from speeding drivers in this month's letters...

Historic Blackbird Inn must be saved

A question was posed in readers' letters in the last edition of Pont News & Views: "Does anyone know what is happening with the Blackbird Inn?"

Might we suggest as members of this community for all of our lives (since 1931) the following?

Could perhaps English Heritage or National Trust or Northumberland County Council or our own Town Council take it over? People visiting the area are interested in Ponteland's history and many garbled tales are told. Many visitors look for local accommodation which is not easy to find.

An information centre (large or small) in this historic building would surely be a valuable attraction. Include an attractive area with gifts, books, DVDs, CDs etc. Provide space for local artists and the photographic society to display their talents and hold exhibitions. Obviously a coffee/wine bar would be an attraction. Why not a Museum?

Ponteland missed this opportunity with the Blacksmith's house and forge. Many of us could tell a good yarn about its former incumbents.

Please don't let this beautiful historic building rot. It is one of the few original places of interest we have left.

Throughout the UK, Europe and the States, communities have turned similar buildings into places and venues they are proud of. Why not Ponteland?

HELP, PLEASE SOMEONE SAVE IT.

R & M Tipping
Mayfair Gardens
Ponteland

Call for crackdown on speeding drivers

It was great to see young cyclists out during half term doing their "bikeability" (aka cycling proficiency) training.

But isn't it all the car and van drivers who speed with impunity around Darras Hall who are in far greater need of 'speed awareness' retraining?

Why is nothing done to enforce the 30mph limit on Darras Road in particular, where some drivers can be observed on any day of the week hurtling past at 50 and even 60mph?

Travelling at excessive speeds - which now seems to be accepted as the norm - also totally disregards the very real hazard of the Darras Road/Eastern Way crossroads where collisions have long been commonplace.

The left turn onto Eastern Way (where the footpath all but disappears) is very tight and totally blind, so that anyone cornering too fast swerves into the path of any oncoming traffic.

I have also recently observed drivers of 'performance' cars accelerating hard across this junction in order to hit the infamous 'dip' in Eastern Way at maximum speed. This same 'dip' marks the place where the old railway line/bridleway and only safe cycle route through Darras Hall is obliged to cross the public road. There is no warning sign to indicate this crossing, only the appalling state of the road surface at this point - continually exacerbated by drivers who choose to accelerate downhill!

Isn't it time the speed limit was properly enforced - and better provision made - to meet the needs and ensure the safety of all would-be cyclists?

Kath Guellard
Meadow Court

Ponteland Town Council – planning procedures

Ponteland Town Council thought it would be helpful for local residents to understand the background to the discussions at our recent planning committee, when the scoping option submitted by Lugano Developments to Northumberland County Council came before us.

As part of any large scale development application, the planning authority normally

asks for an environmental statement from the developer, which addresses issues such as flooding, traffic, noise, air quality, etc.

In order to produce an environmental statement, the applicant can prepare a scoping report to seek opinions as to whether or not they have covered all the environmental aspects that need to be addressed in any planning application.

The scoping report, 52 pages long, was discussed by the planning committee on October 23. Consideration of the report had been delayed for two weeks so that we could seek expert advice about exactly what were the various implications involved, and our response to it has been published online at <http://pontelandonline.co.uk/Forum/phpBB2/viewforum.php?f=20>

On a more general note, residents should be aware that any planning application which affects the Ponteland area, be it an extension to a house or several new properties on a patch of land, can currently be viewed during each morning at the Town Council office on Meadowfield Industrial Estate.

The planning committee meet every other Tuesday morning to consider recent applications and formulate their response on behalf of residents, and local people are welcome to come along.

Residents should know that the Town Council has no power to accept or reject a planning application; we are solely a consultee and can only make recommendations. It is Northumberland County Council (NCC) which is the Planning Authority, and it is their decision as to whether a planning application is accepted or rejected.

It is to the West Area planning office of NCC therefore, that all comments and/or objections should be directed. Our Town Council planning committee welcomes sight of copies of letters that are sent to NCC by members of the public on any planning application, because they assist us in our considerations and responses to NCC.

Councillor David Butler
Chairman of the Planning Committee
Ponteland Town Council

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.

January issue deadlines: January issue deadlines: The January issue will be delivered on January 3. Please note, due to the printer's Xmas holidays the deadline for all copy and adverts is a week earlier than usual on Friday December 7. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the January issue.

What's on...

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 December 7, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see <http://www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/page12.html>

Ponteland Methodist Church Christmas Concert

Ponteland Methodist Church Christmas Concert will be held in the church on Saturday December 8 commencing at 7pm when the Wannie Liners will be accompanied by Katherine Anderson. Tickets priced at £7 including refreshments at the end of the concert are available from Syd Cowan on (01661) 824459.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday December 10 is Dr Mary Midgely and her subject: Ageism and other 'isms'. 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 donaflloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

North East of England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

The next meeting of the Group will be on Monday December 10, 7pm for a 7.30pm start. It is our annual AGM followed by a seed exchange and a social with seasonal refreshments. Anyone interested in Alpines is welcome to come along and find out what we are about and what we do through the year. We then hold a seed exchange to buy members seed to sow in the New Year, followed by refreshments and a chance to chat. Our meetings take place in St Marys Hall, Thornhill Road, the doors are open at 7pm for a 7.30 start. The charge for visitors is £2.50 per meeting.

Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 413 2574.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet in the Memorial Hall, Ponteland, on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 2pm. Meeting December 12 – Jan Faulkner (AD) of Middlesbrough 'Christmas Time'. Visitors £4.

Merton Hall Christmas buffet

The honorary officers wish to thank all the volunteers and trustees from Merton Hall by inviting you all to a Christmas buffet in Merton Hall on Thursday December 13 from 12noon to 2pm. Please ring (01661) 821488 or (01661) 872917 to confirm attendance.

St Mary's Singers Christmas Concert

St Mary the Virgin Church, Ponteland, Saturday December 15 at 7.30pm.

Rotary Club of Ponteland Christmas Concert

Music by the Bedlington Salvation Army and Songsters on Thursday December 20 at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall. Tickets costing £1 (accompanied children aged under 10 free) can be obtained from Mackley & Steven Opticians in Main Street, Ponteland or from Rotarians F Gilhespy on 825802, P Jenkins on 822269 or E Dunn on 824888.

Northumberland Lights to stage night time spectacular at the Alnwick Garden

Northumberland Lights has joined forces with The Alnwick Garden to produce a unique after dark Christmas experience. From Tuesday December 18 to Sunday December 30 with timed slots every half hour from 5.30pm-8.30pm (excluding 24th & 25th) visitors to the 'Festival of Fools' will embark upon a magical evening trail through the glowing winter landscape on a quest to unravel a series of riddles hidden throughout a spectacularly illuminated world beyond the Ornamental Garden gates. With hot food offers in the Pavilion Cafe and a luxury hot chocolate

station in The Garden's atrium, guests can fuel up before navigating the beautifully lit hornbeam tunnels to enter a world of festive mischief at The Alnwick Garden's non-traditional 'Festival of Fools'. Advance tickets are on sale now – visit www.alnwickgarden.com/festivaloffools or call 01665 511350 (option 3) to order.

Ponteland Photographic Society

We meet at 7.30pm every Monday evening through to April 15, 2013 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.

Ponteland's weekly market

Ponteland's weekly market at Merton Way shopping centre is on between 9am and 4pm each Friday.

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 January 6.

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. On January 28 we will be assessing and researching some of the 'Folios from the Embroiderers' Guild'. New members and visitors are most welcome (you don't have to be an expert to join!). Visitors' fee £3 (includes tea/coffee and biscuits). Further information from Carol Bird on (01661) 881395.

For a full list of Christmas church services, see p12.

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Christmas message

From the Reverend Peter Barham,
Vicar of Ponteland



Is it really six months since we stood on Coates Green and watched the Jubilee fireworks? It was an excellent display and a very good weekend, but the summer seems a very long time ago.

I love the long summer evenings we enjoy north of Hadrian's Wall, but when it is dark at 4pm I do wonder why I moved north.

When Christians in the first century AD wanted a Festival to celebrate the birth of Jesus, they chose to borrow the pagan mid-winter festival. Even though a Roman winter is not as dark as ours, what a good choice they made. In the darkness we need some light.

In St Mary's we start the Advent season with a Procession on Sunday December 2 at 6.30pm. Once everyone is seated we turn all the lights off. Then one of those hairs-on-the-back-of-the-neck moments as the music starts and slowly the lights come on. We prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ.

As the season goes on, there is something magical about singing carols on Coates Green with the tree lit and the floodlight shining on St Mary's church (7pm on the evening of Wednesday December 19 this year). When we give children Christingle oranges their faces are a picture. At Midnight Mass I ask someone to light the final candle on the Advent Crown as midnight strikes and Christmas Day begins.

But it takes effort to enjoy light. Our homes are warm and light, and it takes effort to leave them to stand in the cold on Coates Green, it takes effort to join others on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. There are times when even the Vicar wonders why he has to go to church!

Make the effort. Not just because our churches are great when they're full, not just because our community needs to come together, but because we all need light in our world. Even in nice Ponteland some people struggle in the darkness, and none of us know when deep darkness will strike.

At the beginning of John's Gospel, we are told that "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out." In our churches we keep that light shining, and we invite you to celebrate with us.

Churches Together in Ponteland

United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall

| | |
|--|--------|
| Sunday December 23 – Getting ready for Christmas | 10am |
| Christmas Eve – Christingle Family Service | 3.30pm |
| Christmas Day – Family Service | 10am |
| Sunday December 30 – Looking ahead to New Year | 10am |

St. Mary the Virgin, Ponteland

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Sunday December 16 – The Story of Christmas | 10am |
| Sunday December 16 – Carol Service | 6.30pm |
| Sunday December 23 – Choral Communion | 10am |
| Christmas Eve - Family Carols | 4pm and 5pm |
| Christmas Eve - Carol Service | 7pm |
| Christmas Eve - Midnight Mass | 11.30pm |
| Christmas Day - Holy Communion | 8am |
| Christmas Day - Family Communion | 10am |

Methodist Church, Ponteland

| | |
|--|---------|
| Sunday December 9 – BB and GB Carol Service | 10am |
| Sunday December 16 – Carol Service with Grange Lea | 3pm |
| Sunday December 23 – Carol Service | 6.30pm |
| Christmas Eve – Communion | 11.15pm |
| Christmas Day – Family Service | 10am |

Methodist Church, Milbourn

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Sunday December 23 – Carol Service | 6.30pm |
| Christmas Eve – Communion | 11.15pm |
| New Year's Eve – Watch Night Service | 11.30pm |

St Matthew's R.C., Ponteland

| | |
|----------------------|---------|
| Christmas Eve – Mass | 6pm |
| Christmas Day – Mass | 10.30am |

Holy Saviour, Milbourn

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Sunday December 23 - Carol Service | 11.15am |
| Christmas Day - Holy Communion | 11.15am |

Waitrose, Ponteland

| | |
|--|---------|
| Saturday December 15 - Carols outside Waitrose | 10.30am |
|--|---------|

Coates Green, Ponteland

Wednesday December 19 - Churches Together
Carols on the Green (if wet in St Mary's) 7pm
Your opportunity to sing carols in the centre of the village, arranged by Churches Together in Ponteland with support from Newcastle International Airport. Refreshments served afterwards in St Mary's Church Hall.

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Richard Winter is pictured with (l -r) Charlotte, Harrison, Daniel, Katie and Jack. Photo by Trevor Walker.

Children enjoy visit from the dentist

Children at a Ponteland school were all smiles during a visit from their local dentist.

For Richard Winter told the Year 5 pupils at Ponteland Middle School it was actually ok to pig out on sweets this Christmas!

Provided, of course, they made sure they ate their chocolate goodies all at once – avoiding too many damaging sugar ‘hits’ – and brushed their teeth properly afterwards.

Richard, from the Higgins & Winter dental practice in Bell Villas, dropped in to talk to the children about oral health and prevention. And just in case they did not believe his warnings about the dangers of decay, he dispensed disclosing tablets which show up plaque as deep purple.

Richard said: “The advice I gave centred

around three things mainly - brushing 2-3 times daily, reduction of the frequency of sugar intake and reduction in the amount of acid-containing drinks (fizzy drinks and concentrated fruit juice).

“A good Christmas sweetie message is to pig out; in other words eat all the sweets at once - it is the number of sugar ‘hits’ which are dangerous to the teeth, not the amount/volume.

“I also talked about the different types of teeth, what they do and when we get them. Mind you, the children were very well informed!

“The feedback was excellent, and the children have followed this up with projects done at home. I gave out some disclosing tablets which show up plaque for the children to take away. I have seen some of the projects they have done with photos and they look great.”

Richard also took some impressions for sports gum shields for a number of the children - vital for decent protection during contact sports and something he is happy to do for other schools in the area.

Headteacher Caroline Pryer said: “The children had a great time while receiving a lot of important advice on how to protect their teeth. We’re all very grateful to Richard for taking the time to visit us – I’m sure he allayed any fears the children may have had about going to the dentist!”

To find out more about children’s oral health or other services offered by the Higgins and Winter Dental Practice, visit their website at higginsandwinterdental.com or call the surgery on (01661) 872979.

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Can you help us shape long term development of Ponteland?

By Alma Dunigan, Chairman, Ponteland Neighbourhood Plan Group

Volunteers with professional expertise who can help shape a long term planning blueprint for Ponteland are being sought.

The aim of the Neighbourhood Plan is to promote and improve social, economic and environmental conditions in the area over the next 20 to 30 years.

We are looking for people who live or work in Ponteland who can give a broad balance of professional expertise and are willing to help by giving up their time to support the existing group. We would welcome all ages from 18 to the retired.

There has already been a meeting with David English, Principal Planner with Northumberland County Council, where an outline of the process to achieve the status required was clearly identified and the time frame in which all parties would have to meet.

We have also met with Ponteland Town Council and I'm sure all parties would endorse this was a very meaningful exchange of ideas with a positive outcome. An initial survey, to fulfil the start of consultation with the community, will be issued in January with Pont News & Views and published via the website www.ponteland.pcp.co.uk

There are many hurdles in front of us but with your input and support we will have the best chance of success to influence and shape the future of "our Ponteland".

If you have the skills required to help our group with time available to take on some challenging work and you live or work in the Civil Parish of Ponteland, or you want a chat to find out more on what it might involve, please contact the committee via www.ponteland.pcp.co.uk and we will get back to you.

Banks cash boost for hall's heating system works

Work to complete the replacement of Ponteland Memorial Hall's heating system received a boost after a generous grant from a housing developer.

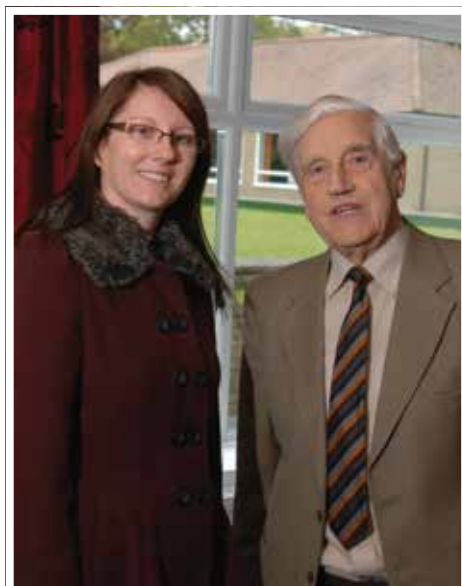
The 90-year old venue's management committee launched a £500,000 fundraising campaign in March 2011 to fund a full interior update, a new extension, full central heating, rewiring, and toilet and ceiling replacements.

The £10,000 grant from the Banks Community Fund has paid for the safe removal of asbestos, the 'boxing in' of five windows, the replacement of the hall's curtains with blackout linings, and the installation of ceiling and wall insulation which will further improve the new heating system's operational efficiency.

Commander Eric Marshall, chairman of the Ponteland War Memorial Hall committee, said:

"The new heating system has created a totally different atmosphere in the Hall, one on which many of our users have already commented extremely positively, and we're continuing to look at ways in which we can improve our use of energy in the building, which will in turn help to drive down both our consumption and fuel bills."

The Banks Community Fund is administered in partnership with the County Durham Community Foundation. Further information on the types of capital projects that may be eligible for funding for community groups or voluntary organisations in the vicinity of a Banks Group development is available at bankscommunityfund.org.uk



Emily Hunter of Banks is pictured with Eric Marshall

WISHING READERS AND ADVERTISERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

It has been another excellent year for Pont News & Views, where we have once again fully covered the costs of producing the magazine from advertising revenue - ensuring it is free of charge to local residents.

The size of the monthly magazine has again increased and many issues during 2012 have been 24 pages – triple the size of the first publication back in October 2005.

We enjoy a great deal of positive feedback from both readers and advertisers – as well as vigorous debate about some of the more contentious issues covered, including the proposed housing developments on the Green Belt.

Pont News is published by Ponteland Town Council in conjunction with Ponteland Community Partnership as an apolitical publication which serves the whole community. We always welcome

suggestions for content to further improve the magazine and ideas should be sent to pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or to Editor, Pont News & Views, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH.

The editorial committee would like to wish all readers and advertisers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We will welcome in 2013 with our next issue out on January 3.

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Molly Henderson: 1916-2012

By Muriel Sobo

Molly Henderson, a quiet thoughtful person, spent nearly 19 years as a resident at Abbeyfield House, where she is already sadly missed.

With her death in October another link with our village past is broken. She was always interested in village people and happenings.

Molly was born in Ponteland and spent her early years at East Farm, Milbourn, from where she attended Higham Dykes school, opposite The Waggon. The family moved to the North Road in Ponteland, Molly passed the scholarship and went to Gosforth Grammar School.

At the outbreak of war in 1939 she was called up and joined the ATS where she became a corporal clerk dealing with mountains of paper work at local Drill Halls. The longest spell was at Heaton with a billet on the Coast Road.

Her next posting was more ambitious and she went to Newark to man search lights and completed the training course for the girls. This was experimental to see if the girls could do it as well as the chaps! Of course they could! But Molly declined to go any further since she found it impossible to sleep during the day after an illness.

Now a sergeant clerk, she was sent all over the country and experienced bombing in Plymouth and doodle bugs and V2 rockets in Chislehurst and Kent. She was demobbed after VJ day and joined the family firm of joiners and builders which was founded by her grandfather.



The Henderson's builder's yard was between the Blackbird and the former Council School. The family firm went bust in 1960 and the site was used to build an extension for the school, housing the dining room and assembly hall.

The school closed in 2007 and the McCarthy & Stone Care Home now occupies the site. They called the building Henderson Court in recognition of the history of the place.



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Don't drink and drive

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Community Beat Manager



Total Policing

In the period between October 13 and November 16 we have had six crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- one sexual assault
- two obtain services by deception
- one theft other
- one damage to a motor vehicle
- one possess an offensive weapon.

The sexual assault and possession of an offensive weapon offences have been dealt with and enquiries are ongoing in relation to the other offences.

The two obtaining services by deception offences happened on the same day at premises in the Ponteland area.

I think another prompt is in order for householders about their home security now the dark nights are here. Remember to make sure you leave a light on or set

them on a timer when you are going out for the evening.

If you're away over the coming holiday period let your relatives or neighbours know so they can keep a watch on your house and don't forget to lock your doors and windows.

Most people like a drink over the festive break and one of the local cab companies has come up with a novel idea to remind people about the consequences of drinking and driving.

"Don't end up on a slab, phone a Broadway cab!" will soon be seen on beer mats in the public houses in the Ponteland area and can be encouraged as a positive step in the direction of pointing out the dangers of driving after consuming alcohol.

Every year Northumbria Police runs a drink/drive campaign during December so please leave your vehicle at home if you know you'll be drinking alcohol. Don't get caught out as you'll only have yourself to

blame for the consequences.

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 Friday December 7: 11am-12noon Ponteland Library
- PC Rob Anderson Saturday December 15: 11.30am-12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO Jill Ruddick Saturday December 22: 9.30am-10.30pm Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison Saturday December 29: 11.30am-12.30pm Belsay village shop.

We also have an Engagement Day on Thursday December 6 in Merton Way and Broadway. Please come along and have a chat to get to know us.

Best wishes for the festive season from everyone at Ponteland Police Station.

Duke of Edinburgh success for Ponteland Scouts and Guides

Four young people from Ponteland were invited to Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh to receive their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Alex May, Jen Clarke, Chris Lakey and Matthew Mundy all completed their Awards as members of Ponteland Scouts and Guides.

The event was held in the presence of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and the certificates were presented by Alan Hinks, the internationally renowned mountaineer who has climbed all 14 of the 8,000 metre mountains in the world. Alan is also an enthusiastic supporter of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Completion of the Gold Award is a great achievement and is a culmination of five years of sustained effort as a young person works through the challenges of the Bronze, Silver and finally the Gold Award.

Ponteland Explorer Scouts offer the opportunity to undertake the DofE Award as part of a comprehensive Scouting programme and over the years many young people have completed this ultimate challenge. Congratulations to Alex, Jen, Chris and Matthew.



Childcare on tap!

Essential day care for children from Ponteland is to continue thanks to an accommodating regional business.

Belsay Day Care, which provides pre and after school care and education for children aged between two-and-a-half and 13, faced the threat of closure due to run-down and insufficient facilities, until Northumbrian Water intervened and donated a portable building.

Richard Irving, who has worked for the water company for ten years, and his wife both work full time and rely on the Day Care centre to look after their six-year-old son, Anthony, before and after school.

On finding out about the centre's threat of closure, Richard, of Kirkheaton, approached his employer to see if they could help out. Northumbrian Water agreed to donate the 120-square-foot portable building which they no longer needed and is double the size of the previous dilapidated prefab which housed the Day Care centre.

The centre, which is a registered charity and was established in 1997 by a group of parents, supports more than 30 families from Belsay and the surrounding areas, and more than 60 children enjoy activities including painting, baking, crafts, football, cricket and nature activities.

Chairman of Belsay Day Care's volunteer parent management committee, Verity Shepley, said: "I am so grateful to Northumbrian



Water and to every business, parent and charity who helped us ensure the children taken into our care have a wonderful place to play, learn and grow."

Visit belsaydaycare.webs.com to find out more information about the centre.

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You can also visit Santa in his FREE Grotto on the ground floor of Metrocentre Qube from 10th November. Every child that visits Santa receives a FREE gift.

The Metrognomes are back 21st December - 6th January in their brand new Pantomime: Glitzen's Christmas Surprise. Fun, laughter and frolics take place in the North Pole as Herbert, Sherbet, Maggot and Rusty discover exactly what Glitzen's surprise is!

For full details of opening times, events and retailer offers visit metrocentre.uk.com



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