

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



New skatepark to open
this summer

Five 'illegal' workers
arrested in restaurant raid

All set for week of Diamond
Jubilee celebrations

Could new housing schemes spell the end of Ponteland as we know it?

Amanda Williamson

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Annabel Parslow, seven, of Darras Hall First School, receives her prize from Mayor Peter Cowey. Also pictured are pupils Rob Jones, of Darras Hall First, and Eva Sykes of Ponteland Middle School. Photos by Trevor Walker.

Award winning pictures fit for a Queen!

Artistic pupils at all five schools in Ponteland and Darras Hall who helped illustrate the Loyal Address for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee have received special awards from the Town Council.

More than 7,000 signatures have been collected for the document, which is being bound before being presented to the Duchess of Northumberland in her role as Lord Lieutenant on June 6 at Alnwick Castle.

The schools nominated the prizewinning pictures from more than 200 submitted, and £20 awards were presented to James Dodd of Ponteland First School, Rob Jones and Annabel Parslow of Darras Hall First School, Ellie Campbell of Richard Coates Middle School, Eva Sykes of Ponteland Middle School and Bridghe Swan of Ponteland Community High School.



Opposition growing as plans for hundreds of new homes announced

Plans for two major housing developments which could transform the character of Ponteland look set to face huge opposition before they have even got off the drawing board. Chris Jennings reports.

With the recent relaxation of national planning policy guidance, it was perhaps inevitable that developers would soon look at the potential for land around upmarket suburbs like Ponteland and Darras Hall.

County Durham based Banks Property was first to announce its plans in May – a 500 home scheme on agricultural land on either side of the B6545 (Rotary Way) at Clickemin. Billed as a ‘high quality family housing development’, it could include a ‘major upgrade of sports and leisure facilities’.

Managing Director Michael Shuttleworth said: “Ponteland has proved itself as a fantastic and popular place to live, but the recent lack of new development and associated investment means that its supporting infrastructure is not everything it should be for such a town.

“When compared to other similar settlements, Ponteland has fewer facilities when it comes to sports and leisure provision, retail choice, community and public buildings and family housing supply, and the Clickemin scheme that we are developing has the potential to make a significant positive impact across all these areas.

“We are at a very early stage with this scheme, have much work to do on our designs before any planning application is submitted, early indications suggest the scheme could comprise in the region of 500 new homes. We will of course take every care to ensure that the new development would be sympathetic to the existing surroundings in terms of scale and design.

“The involvement of local people will be central to taking the design process forward, and we will provide every possible opportunity over the coming months for all interested parties to put forward their ideas about how this scheme might be shaped.”

Banks Group say detailed proposals are currently in development and some distance away, but they will be holding a public exhibition this summer at which they will be discussing the outline principles of the scheme with local people and listening to their views.

Details of the second scheme are a little more sketchy. The Newcastle based Lugano Group, understood to have significant landholdings on the outskirts of Ponteland, is holding a special ‘planning ideas day’ at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Thursday June 14 to ‘contribute to the formulation of regeneration and new development proposals’.

Lugano say the idea behind the day is to explore the priorities and concerns of local people and generate options and proposals in response.

The drop-in event at the Memorial Hall will see designers, planners, engineers and ecologists on hand to discuss current and future issues and concerns about Ponteland, and will be followed by a main presentation at 7pm.

Lugano say the event will explore the future of the entire town, including current housing, shops, businesses, leisure and green areas and the town centre.

Sunil Mehra, a partner in MKP, behind the existing plans for the redevelopment of Merton Way, said: “As a resident of Ponteland, I’m not alone in being disappointed with the delay caused by the issues surrounding the library but we continue to work in partnership with Northumberland County Council. We remain as committed to regenerating Merton Way now as we ever have been.”

Special feature by Lugano Group: P9

County council consults on planning blueprint

Northumberland County Council is holding a public consultation event in Ponteland next month as part of a countywide tour to inform its Core Strategy planning policy framework.

The event is being held on Tuesday July 3 at Waitrose in Main Street from 2pm to 7pm. For more information visit: www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6270&article=2006

Opponents line up

Coun Peter Jackson, Conservative Opposition Leader at Northumberland County Council, said on the basis of information to date all four Ponteland county councillors would be opposing schemes put forward and he would be happy to lead the anti campaign.

He said: “I want to make clear that the four Ponteland county councillors are pretty much opposed to what is being proposed. On the evidence of what we have seen so far we can see no significant benefit for existing Ponteland residents. Both developers appear to want to concrete over large plots of green spaces on the outskirts and between existing properties.”

MP Guy Opperman is also voicing early opposition. He said: “I have said it before, and I will say it again. Building on the green belt is wrong. What our region needs is affordable sustainable development on brownfield sites and bringing empty homes back into use.

“Just as we have done in the past, we will oppose big developers looking to make a quick buck off the back of cash crop housing estates on the green belt. Ponteland is a unique place to live. The reason so many people do want to live here in the first place is because of its beautiful surroundings.”

Brian Prickett, Chairman of Ponteland Community Partnership, who has met with representatives of both firms, said: “The following matters were raised which we felt would be of concern to the community – water and sewage services, flooding, varied retail offer, schools, transport and access to medical services. In particular, we stressed the essential need for affordable housing.

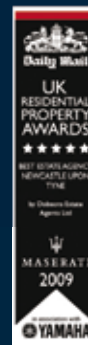
“We would urge all interested residents to attend these consultation events and let us know your views either by contacting members of the PCP or Ponteland Town Council, your county councillors or by letter to Pont News & Views.”

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ELECTION OF MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor Peter Cowey was elected Mayor for another year and Councillor David Butler was appointed Deputy Mayor. Both Councillors thanked their fellow colleagues for their support.

REQUEST FOR USE OF THE PARK BY ROTARY FOR THE DUCK RACE

The Council agreed to the use of the Park by Ponteland Rotary in respect of the Duck Race which is to be held on Sunday September 2, and to provide the toilets for the event.

PROJECTS REPORT

West Road Easy Entrance

Work has commenced on this project but completion has been delayed due to inclement weather.

Car park at Fox Covert Lane

The necessary tree works and hedge removal have been carried out.

Coping stones at Waitrose Bridge

A meeting has been held with the contractor carrying out the work and it has been agreed that an application will be submitted to the Environment Agency as soon as possible.

River bank repairs

A further meeting is being sought with the Environment Agency.

Street information signs

A meeting was being held with the suppliers of the map and all Councillors were invited to provide input into the final draft of the map.

Coates Green path repairs

This work had been carried out however the replacement

of some paving stones was required and this would be carried out shortly.

Skate Park

See article on p8.

Park path lighting project

Quotes are now being sought for the design of the scheme based on preliminary layouts.

War Memorial

Various options have been prepared and councillors were asked to submit their preference as soon as possible.

Basket trees at park entrance

The Clerk reported that the basket trees were due for delivery week commencing May 14. The quotation for installation was approved and an assurance had been given that they would be installed in time for the Civic Service and the Jubilee.

REQUEST BY POLICE TO ERECT "NO BALL GAME" SIGNS IN MERTON WAY

A request had been received from Northumbria Police to erect signs in Merton Way. The request had been made by several businesses in this area. It was agreed that two signs would be erected with an addition relating to the operation of CCTV in the area for a trial period of six months, following which their effectiveness would be reviewed. The Clerk and the Police would liaise on the most suitable locations.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on April 18 and a variety of items were discussed including the installation of bollards at Brewery Lane and at the

bottom of North Road. The works will be carried out as soon as possible.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

Various items had been discussed by the Working Party at their meeting held on April 30. The Council approved a recommendation to begin charging commercial businesses £100 per annum to use the park for commercial gain and licences would be drawn up and issued as soon as possible. The Council also approved the recommendation to meet half of the costs incurred by the Friends of Ponteland Park to remove spoil heaps left behind when some path works were carried out.

DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

The Council considered an update report in relation to the Jubilee preparations. Over 7,000 signatures had been collected for the Loyal Address and this was now with the book binding company. The book would be presented to the Duchess of Northumberland in her role as Lord Lieutenant on June 6 at Alnwick Castle. Appreciation was expressed to Councillors for collecting signatures and to everyone who had signed. Councillors wished to express their appreciation to Robin Ramsay for his hard work in ensuring the success of the project. The Jubilee exhibition was to be held in the Memorial Hall from June 2 to 5, with over 30 organisations taking part. Bunting was to be erected in the next few days and also pictures submitted for use in the Loyal Address were on display next to the Pele Tower. The Diamond Jubilee emblem

was also going to be displayed. Various celebrations were being organised by restaurants and public houses over the Jubilee weekend. The Town Council was working with the Diamond Inn for the Beacon lighting event on June 4, when there would also be fireworks. The Music in the Park event is being held on 8 July in the afternoon and will feature music from all five schools. Sponsorship had been provided by Ponteland Rotary and Lions and the Council expressed their appreciation for this support. Work is nearing completion on the Heritage Sign at Broadway which will hopefully be installed later in the year. See full list of events on p12.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Richard Dodd reported that consultation on the Local Development Framework would be starting at the end of May and would run until September. He stated that some progress had been made with the grass cutting on Thornhill Drive which had recently been carried out. Isos Housing had engaged a different contractor. Work was expected to start shortly on the draining of the playing fields.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor had presented prizes to children at three of the schools in respect of the Loyal Address drawings. Other prizes had been presented by Councillor Ramsay. See report on p3.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on May 9.

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New skatepark to open this summer

By Brian Prickett,
Chairman, Ponteland Community Partnership

At last we are able to announce that the funding for the proposed Callerton Lane skatepark is now assured.

Thanks to contributions from Banks Community Fund, The Community Chest and our four County Councillors, together with the original sums raised as part of our Big Lottery bid in 2010, we now have sufficient funds to build a skatepark designed by Clever Curves Ltd on the unused piece of land adjacent to the current playpark on Callerton Lane.



Their design is for a mini spine ramp with twin height and a volcano and is designed for use by children over 13 years of age.

The works will require realignment of the present right of way and this will be fenced on both sides as it will run between the playpark and the skatepark. A planning application and the relevant public consultation is in progress and the necessary land transfer agreement is in hand.

We are hoping that the facility will be completed by mid-August and will update on progress.

POLICE HUNT BOGUS CALLER WHO TARGETED PONTELAND PENSIONER

Police are investigating whether three bogus caller incidents are connected. They took place on Wednesday May 16 in Seaton Burn, Ponteland and Gosforth.

In all three cases the victims who were in their 80s and 90s were targeted by two men claiming to want to check the water supply. They then found cash was missing.

Supt Mick Paterson, of Northumbria Police, said: "It's disgraceful behaviour to target the elderly and vulnerable in our communities and we're doing all we can to trace those responsible. All legitimate workmen who are associated with utility or other companies will be more than happy to prove their credentials. We'd also ask that people watch out for their elderly relatives and neighbours."

SUBSIDISED BUS SERVICE REVIEW GETS ON THE ROAD

A review of subsidised bus services is underway across Northumberland.

The county council has begun 12 weeks of consultation on current non-commercial services where the subsidy approaches or exceeds £5 per passenger. Services being considered include the Snaith 79 Newcastle Airport, Ponteland and Morpeth service which runs on Wednesdays.

The council is planning to freeze its £2.46m annual budget for such services until March 2015, but as costs increase it will not be able to fund as many routes in the future.

Now local communities, parish councils, members and bus operators are being asked to work in partnership with the unitary authority to promote routes and encourage greater use of bus services, as well as identify those that are most vital.

Suggestions include publicising services, changing routes or days of operation and making minor timing adjustments to attract more passengers or reduce costs. The council is also seeking support from parishes in applying for funding from the National Sustainable Community Transport Initiative or other bodies.

Head of Sustainable Transport Mike Scott said: "This situation is a challenge. Although we agreed to invest the same amount of money in subsidising bus services, this amount won't go as far as it used to.

"We must review those routes which are not working efficiently to see if, in partnership, we can do something to improve this. We must also make sure that we are concentrating on those routes which are vital to local communities. We would welcome the views of any interested parties on how we can address this challenge."

Responses to the consultation should be submitted by Sunday, July 15. For further information or the full list of services under review visit www.northumberland.gov.uk/transport

PUB BURGLARY IN PONTELAND

Police are appealing for information after a burglary to a pub in Ponteland.

Between 12.20am and 12.30am on Tuesday, May 8, burglars broke into the Badger pub in Street Houses. They searched the pub and caused damage to the door before fleeing. Nothing was stolen. Officers are carrying out extra checks overnight on pubs in the area and enquiries into this incident are ongoing. Anyone with any information into the burglary, or anyone who saw any suspicious people or vehicles in the area around the time of the burglary, is asked to contact police on 101 ext 69191.

I'M HERE TO HELP... GUY OPPERMAN MP

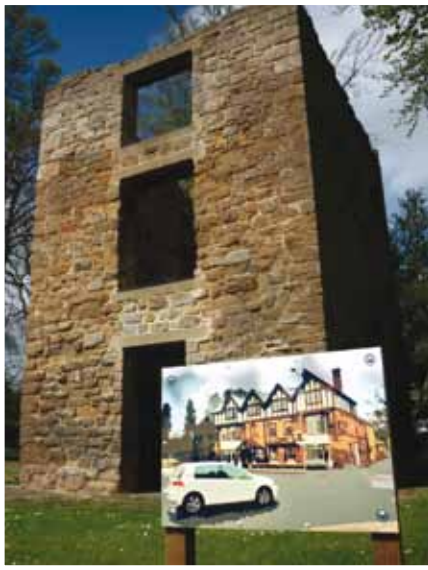
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Have your say in Ponteland's future

A special 'planning ideas day' is being held at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Thursday June 14 to consider long term needs and growth around Ponteland.



The idea behind the day is to explore the priorities and concerns of local people and generate options and proposals in response.

The sessions will include workshop discussions with specialists, a public presentation and the chance to explore design ideas and suggestions of future change.

The planning ideas day is hosted by the Newcastle-based Lugano Group, which is interested in investing in proposals to meet the needs of the next generation in Ponteland. The aim is to contribute to the formulation of regeneration and new development proposals, and to improve the area's local ecology and energy efficiency.

The event at the Memorial Hall will have designers, planners, engineers and ecologists on hand to discuss current and future issues and concerns about Ponteland. The day will begin at 10am on Thursday 14 June, with public sessions at 10am and 2pm to explore different aspects of the future of Ponteland.

A main presentation at 7pm will bring together possible ideas for the future, and talk over the ideas that have emerged during the day and at other earlier community consultations.

NEW LIFE TO THE TOWN

The event will explore the future of the entire town – including current housing, shops, businesses, leisure and green areas and the town centre. The aim will be to build up the strengths of Ponteland and find out what is needed to meet the aspirations of people who live and work there, now and in the future.

Issues to consider are likely to include the range and quality of shops and services, the location and affordability of new homes, green space biodiversity to enhance the habitat of red squirrels and native wildlife, and the natural landscape around Ponteland.

IDEAS WELCOME

A whole range of ideas are already being generated by early discussions, including new types of energy efficient homes for local people, helping wildlife, tackling flooding and traffic, and creating business workspaces.

The team behind the 'planning ideas day' will be looking for imaginative input and ideas to help to evolve design proposals for the future of the town.

This is a chance to explore exciting ideas and have your say as an interested resident or business involved in Ponteland. No-one will be expected to endorse any suggestions at this early stage.

This future planning day is complemented by a programme of community engagement to bring together the views of different groups and individuals. The overall aim of this time-intensive consultation is to make sure that whatever proposals emerge over the next few months, they are informed by thoughtful forward-looking community involvement.

The future planning day is at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Thursday 14 June from 10am, finishing with a presentation open to everyone, which begins at 7pm.



Your letters

An appeal for additional car parking provision from a concerned mum in this month's letters...

Road safety campaigner lays down gauntlet to county highways chiefs

I have been raising parking and congestion concerns about the two schools on Thornhill Road with Northumberland County Council over the last two years.

I counted the cars parking on the paths here and it came to over 300 cars each day! A yellow line and time restrictions have been put in place halfway up Thornhill Road and the situation here is much, much safer, and I would like to personally thank Councillor Richard Dodd for facilitating this.

Children can now walk and run along these paths safely, however the situation higher up Thornhill Road past Richard Coates Middle School's gates has not improved, as many parents have simply moved higher up Thornhill Road.

I strongly believe that the yellow line and time restriction should go right up Thornhill Road, but that there is also an urgent need for additional car parks to be built

to accommodate the out of area pupils attending all of our schools.

I have applied under the Freedom of Information Act for the actual numbers and they are quite frankly staggering! At present there are 1,590 out of area pupils attending our five schools, with another 241 due to start in September 2012.

This breaks down to at present 170 (56%) at Ponteland First, 300 at Richard Coates Middle (67%), 270 at Ponteland Middle (45%) 750 at Ponteland High School (67%) and 100 at Darras First (23%) with, I reiterate, another 241 due in September.

No wonder then that local residents have parking problems on Dunsgreen, Callerton Lane, Middle Drive, Eastern Way, Thornhill Road, Kirkley Drive, Broadway etc, and these local residents are then often verbally abused in the most disgusting manner as I have been by parents/drivers.

I think that it is time for Northumberland County Council's Highways dept to carry out a full road traffic and car parking survey. There have been no changes made to the

roads into/out of Ponteland in the last 20 years; the last was the introduction of Rotary Way, and no additional car parks have been built. Where does NCC expect these out of area parents to realistically park, and the congestion and risks which Ponteland has to put up are unacceptable.

Come on Northumberland County Council, build some additional car parks to accommodate these out of area pupils you keep allowing into all our village schools, Ponteland residents have had quite enough.

I have no objections whatsoever to pupils attending our schools from outside Ponteland but the infrastructure should be there to support this and to ensure that local residents can safely walk along the paths.

Over the two years I raised safety concerns about Thornhill Road there were 19 near miss incidents involving very young children.

Janet Dakers
Bell Villas
Ponteland

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.

July issue deadlines: The July issue will be delivered on July 2. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday June 15. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the July issue.

SAINSBURYS STAFF RUN FOR CHARITY

Staff at Sainsburys Ponteland are celebrating after going the extra mile in their fundraising efforts for this year's Sport Relief campaign.

Following a number of sport-themed fundraising activities which included pedalling to the Olympic Park in London (not literally but on an exercise bike situated in the store), they raised over £700 which has been added to the grand total of £4m raised by Sainsburys overall for this year's campaign.

To culminate their fundraising for this year's campaign, several store employees were involved in the Sport Relief Mile which was run on the Quayside, Newcastle. Ponteland store manager Vicki Mains, who took part, said: "Running for a good cause with so many local people truly was a great experience. We'd like to thank all our customers who helped us through their generosity and support."

MARY MARKS HER CENTURY

There were parties galore for birthday girl Mary Haugh as she reached the grand age of 100.

Mrs Haugh enjoyed her first celebration with about 40 relatives and friends at the Waterford Lodge in Morpeth, before joining fellow residents at Ponteland Manor Care Home for a smaller birthday bash. The former school worker only moved to the Ponteland home about a year ago after spending all of her life in Stamfordham. She was born on a farm at Hillhead and is well known locally for her impressive baking and cookery skills. And the secret to her long and happy years – she doesn't drink or smoke, and eats lots of fruit and vegetables.



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 June 1, where we can give access to our own archives. For more information see: www.ponthistsoc.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 June 2.

Northumberland Fuchsia Society

Our next meeting is on Thursday June 7 from 7.30pm at St. Matthew's RC Church Hall, Ponteland.

Euphonic Sounds at

Holy Saviour Church, Milbourn

The Return of Euphonic Sounds at Holy Saviour Church on Saturday June 9 at 7.30pm. Come and hear a wide selection of music drawn from four centuries - fun and serious, instrumental and vocal, in various combinations of this "pro-am" group of friends. Tickets cost: Adults £8; Children £4; Under 10 free.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday June 11 is Mrs Freda Thompson on 'The Blaydon Races'. 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 who are not in full time employment. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at donaflloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Our demonstrations are on the second Wednesday in the month (except July & August), starting at 2pm at the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Ponteland. Visitors are very welcome (price £4). Come along & enjoy a flower demonstration, cup of tea and biscuits afterwards.

63rd Kirkheaton Show

Saturday July 21. Attractions include horse and pony classes, birds of prey, alpacas, children's races, Cumberland wrestling, quoits, dogs, terriers and hound classes, home crafts and children's classes, vintage tractors and vehicles, children's fun fair, trade stands, homemade teas, licensed bar and the largest owl in the world - the European eagle owl. Gates open at 9am and after the day's events you can dance from 8pm until midnight in the main tent.

Ponteland's weekly market

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

Ponteland Netball

Did you used to play netball or are you new to the game? Come and join us for a fun and sociable workout. All levels welcome. Every Monday 8pm-9pm term time in the sports hall behind Ponteland Middle School. Contact Jane at pontnetball@gmail.com or on 07867 483551.

Ponteland Runners

Ponteland Runners are a local running group that meet and run around the Ponteland/Darras Hall area. We are an England Athletics Affiliated Club, with representatives at many local runs. We'd like to invite anybody, of any running standard, to join this friendly group. Please view www.PontelandRunners.org.uk for session details or for further information email secretary@PontelandRunners.org.uk or contact Chris or Sue Heppell on (01661) 860327.

For full details of Diamond Jubilee celebration events see p12.



Party in the Park: Sunday June 17

By Barry L Shaw

Final preparations are being made for one of the most popular events in the Ponteland calendar - Party in the Park.


This year the event will be opened by Caroline Pryer, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland, and entertainment includes The Tyneside Steel Band and a tea tent, BBQ and the Arts & Craft tent.

Friends of Ponteland Park will once again have a major feature. Up in the meadow area they will have Kielder Birds of Prey, a bee expert with live bees, the Bat Conservation Trust and more. Please come and see us and enjoy our wildlife.

The Party in the Park is organised by the Christian Churches in Ponteland: St. Mary's Church; St Matthew's Roman Catholic Church; Ponteland Methodist Church; and the United Reformed Church.

It starts at 1.30pm on Sunday June 17 and admission costs £1/children under 5 free.

Families enjoy the entertainment at last year's event. Photo by Trevor Walker.



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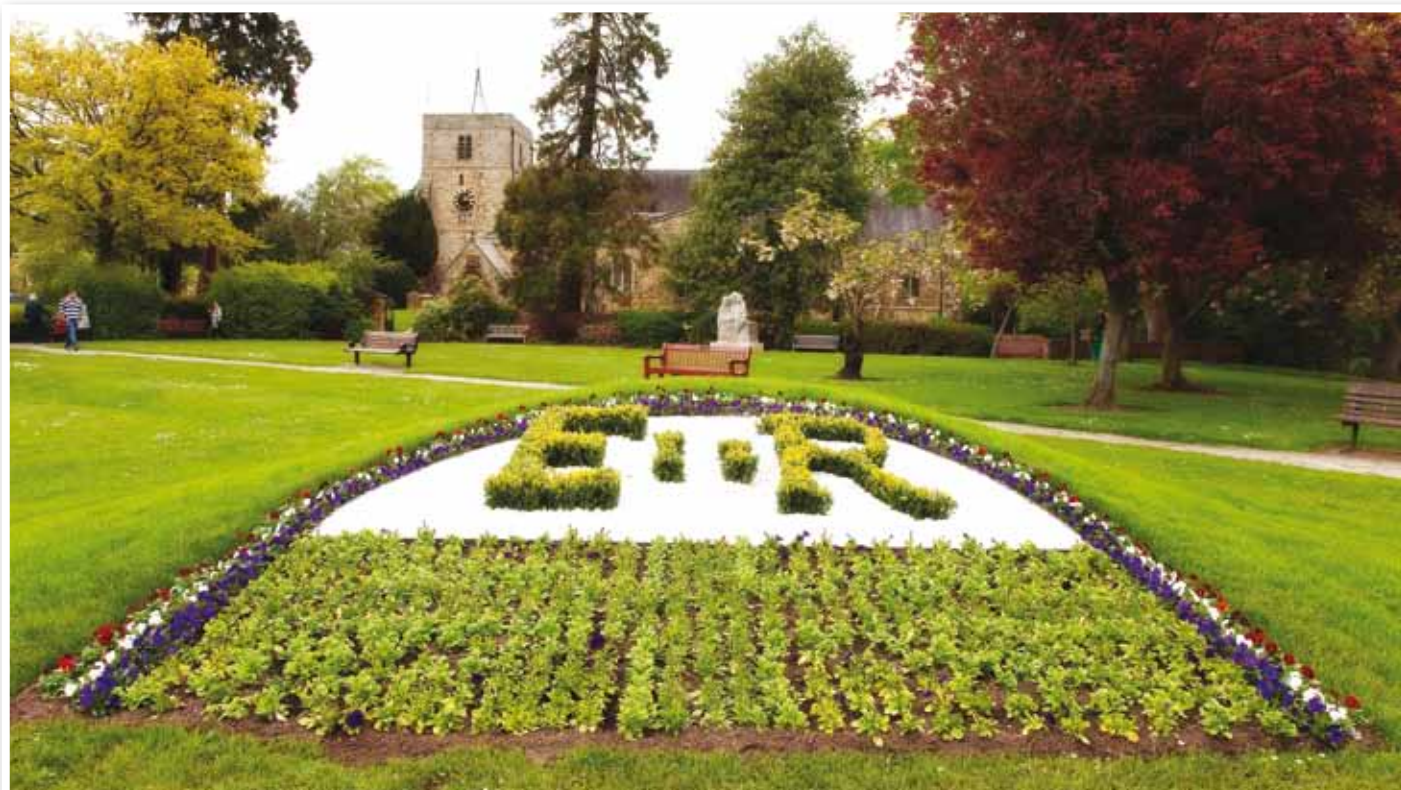
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All set for week of Diamond Jubilee celebrations

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations are set to go off with a bang in Ponteland over the next week.



Highlights include a four day exhibition at the Memorial Hall, lighting of the Jubilee Beacon on top of St Mary's Church and a firework display at Coates Green.

Bunting is up around Ponteland and Darras Hall, while Merton Hall is holding a special Jubilee Tea hosted by Ponteland Floral Art Club and the Diamond Inn will also be joining in the festivities with its own events.

The exhibition at the Memorial Hall will run from 10am to 4pm from this Saturday (June 2) until Tuesday and include a comprehensive display covering all aspects of life in Ponteland from churches, schools, organisations, clubs and societies in the village.

Ponteland Local History Society has also agreed to put on a display to show how the area has developed during the 60 years of Her Majesty's reign - also at the Memorial Hall - between Saturday and Monday.

More than 7,000 signatures have been collected in an illustrated Loyal Address, which has been professionally bound and will be presented to the Duchess of Northumberland, in her role as Lord Lieutenant, on June 6 at Alnwick Castle.

Coun Robin Ramsay, who recently received his MBE from The Queen, is leading the Town Council's efforts to mark the Jubilee. He said: "This celebration is really bringing the whole community together."

The Jubilee floral display at Coates Green. Photo by Trevor Walker.

DIAMOND JUBILEE EVENTS

Memorial Hall Jubilee exhibition

10am-4pm Saturday June 2 to Tuesday June 5 at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Free admission.

Big Lunch

St Mary's Church Hall Sunday June 3 at 12.30pm. Bring food to share.

Churches Together Jubilee Service

Sunday 3 June at 6.30pm, Ponteland Methodist Church.

Lighting of Jubilee Beacon and firework display

Coates Green: Monday June 4 at 10pm.

Merton Hall open day

Tuesday June 5 from 10am-2pm. Drop in day for tea, coffee, cake, sandwiches. Entertainment: 11am - Imagine5 and 12.15pm - U3A choir led by Mr B Prickett.

Jubilee Tea

Merton Hall - Thursday June 7 from 2pm - 4pm. Extend the Jubilee Celebrations with an afternoon tea hosted by Ponteland Floral Art Club. Cost £3.



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- At age 65 now, the average man in the UK can expect to live a further 18 years while the average woman can expect to live another 20.6 years.*
- The average value of inheritance is £8,400 for the 16-29 age group, £31,000 for those aged between 30-49, and £60,000 for those aged 50+**
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* Source: Office for National Statistics. ** Source: The Age of Inheritance May 2008.



New head sets out vision for High School

By Kieran McGrane

My name is Kieran McGrane and I have been working in Northumberland schools for the last fifteen years.

I qualified as a PE teacher at Loughborough University in July 1992 and have worked in schools most of my time since then except for a brief spell working at a university in St. Louis, USA.

I worked as an Assistant Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher at Ashington High School before taking up the headship of Bedlingtonshire Community High School in January 2007.

I have been married for the past 14 years to Julie, who is a qualified teacher, but now works as an independent educational consultant. She is also an Ofsted inspector, but then I suppose every marriage has its own challenges!

We have been blessed with three wonderful children; Daniel who is 10, Elizabeth – eight and Esther, six. We have recently moved to Stocksfield from Newcastle and the children are really enjoying the change in lifestyle and have settled very well in to their new schools.

My personal interests have always been dominated by sport; I played football to a

high standard and would spend summers coaching in the USA. Any spare time would involve playing anything that involved activity and competition.

As my football career came to an end I decided to take up golf and am now enjoying the challenge of trying to improve and achieve a single figure handicap, although I fear this will not happen any time soon. Away from sport my time is spent with family and church activities.

I am very much looking forward to the challenge of leading Ponteland High School in the coming years. The school has a strong reputation and academic record so the plan is to build on this to become truly distinctive and outstanding.

I believe that securing this requires leadership that demonstrates clear values; mine are underpinned by traditional family values and my Christian faith.

It is my belief that all young people are unique and special, and the role of school is to help them make the most of their skills and talents.

My aims for students are for them to be happy, feel safe and secure, and achieve exceptionally well; exactly what I want for my own children. This, I believe, is most

likely achieved when students are exposed to the very best teachers and teaching, therefore a key priority is to ensure that we recruit and retain the best staff whilst promoting a culture of continuous improvement in our classroom practice.

This will support our young people in achieving academic results that rival the best schools in the country.

Schools should not be seen just as exam factories, however, and I want our school to offer a vibrant and stimulating experience for students that will include strong provision in art, drama, music and sport as well as a commitment to field trips and educational visits to vividly bring learning to life.

These opportunities offer rich learning that it is not always possible within the confines of a classroom and it is important that there is something for all students to engage in.

I genuinely feel privileged to have the opportunity of leading Ponteland High School and I am looking forward to getting to know, and working in close partnership with, parents and staff from local feeder schools to ensure that our students thrive within an environment that is challenging whilst also being supportive and caring.



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Cancer survivor Roy, 79, abseils 85ft off hotel roof

A 79-year-old Darras Hall man who underwent four major operations in a month in life-saving cancer surgery has proved he is fighting fit once more after taking on a charity abseil.

Roy Twelves completed the amazing feat at the Malmaison Hotel at Newcastle Quayside to raise awareness and funds for the Northern Oesophago Gastric Cancer Fund.

The keen sailor was eager to support the cause to show his appreciation for staff at the RVI in Newcastle who helped to save his life.

It was in 2008 that Mr Twelves was diagnosed with oesophageal cancer after he told his son, Dr Nigel Twelves, a Ponteland GP, that he was having trouble digesting his food and needed to drink a lot of water at meal times. Dr Twelves recognised the symptoms and

told his father to see one of his colleagues and, after an endoscopy, the diagnosis was confirmed.

However, his treatment was far from straight forward, as Mr Twelves explained: "It was a fairly aggressive cancer. They decided they could operate, but it would be a benefit to have chemotherapy beforehand so I had three months of fairly severe chemotherapy and went into hospital just before Christmas to have my operation.

"Unfortunately, there was a slight problem with haemorrhaging so I had to go back and get it re-done, then about three weeks after that I got an infection inside



and the whole thing had to be repeated again.

"Obviously they had to clear out the infection and about a week after that I had to have a further operation. Over a period of about a month I had to have four pretty major operations. I have always been a fairly fit person, I kept myself fit and looked after myself, so it was felt by the consultants that it would stand me in good stead and enable me to put up with it."

In all, Mr Twelves spent six months in the RVI due to further complications, although he said it is not unusual for other people undergoing the same procedures to be back home within ten days. However, he says his treatment could not have been better.

"It was very serious. Quite honestly, the skill and the expertise of Professor Griffin, the head of the department, and his staff is remarkable. They are all dedicated, highly-skilled people."

When he was finally able to leave hospital in June 2009, Mr Twelves began his road back to full recovery, taking up sailing again in his 30ft racing yacht and serving as President of Sunderland Yacht Club, as well as riding his bike and leading Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club.

"The consultants always said they would get me back to 80 per cent of what I was before – I would like to think they have gone better than that and got me back to about 90 per cent," he said.

So it was no surprise that when the Northern Oesophago Gastric Unit (NOGU) announced an abseil as part of its awareness-raising campaign, Mr Twelves was one of the first to sign up.

"They have this awareness week every two years and two years ago they had an abseil and I thought I would like to do that so this time when it cropped up I had to make sure that I did it," he said.

"Heights don't bother me and I'm used to being around ropes from sailing so once I was shown how to do it, it became fairly easy."

Mr Twelves hopes to have raised more than £200 from his adventure, contributing to a group total from 60 participants of around £6,000.

The abseil was organised by specialist nurse Claire Sedgewick and Prof Mike Griffin, along with a team of helpers from the RVI, to raise awareness of the symptoms of oesophageal cancer and the importance of having them checked out early. Symptoms include feeling full earlier than expected when eating, excessive or unexplained weight loss, swallowing difficulties or regurgitating food and persistent heartburn or indigestion.

For more information about oesophageal cancer and the fund visit:
www.oesophagoose.org

Photo by Keith Robertson



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Five suspected illegal workers arrested in restaurant raid

A Ponteland restaurant could face a £50,000 fine after a raid by immigration officers saw five suspected illegal workers arrested.

Detectives from the UK Border Agency launched the raid after gathering intelligence on the Bawarchi Indian Restaurant, on Brewery Lane.

After carrying out a search of the premises, all five chefs were arrested and taken away in handcuffs, leaving just the manager and one waiter behind.

Five Bangladeshi men aged 24, 30, 31, 33 and 36 were arrested on suspicion of immigration offences. Officers said that none of those arrested had permission to work in the UK and steps were being taken to deport them.

The restaurant was issued with a civil penalty notice of up to £10,000 per illegal worker – a potential total of £50,000. The business was given 30 days to show that it carried out proper checks on the workers, or face the financial penalty.



Wallace Wilson, manager of the UK Border Agency Northumbria Local Immigration Team, said: "The UK Border Agency will continue to clamp down on employers who choose to use illegal labour.

"We carry out regular operations like this across the whole of the region. Immigration crime is not victimless. It defrauds the taxpayer and takes advantage of some of society's most vulnerable people."

The UKBA provides support to employers so they understand the rules, from compliance visits to a dedicated telephone and website support.

Anyone with information about illegal workers should call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, the Northumbria Local Immigration Team on 0191 238 0484 or on the UKBA website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk



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Norwegian violinist headlines music festival

Brinkburn Music Festival – Brinkburn Priory
Friday July 6 – Sunday 8 July



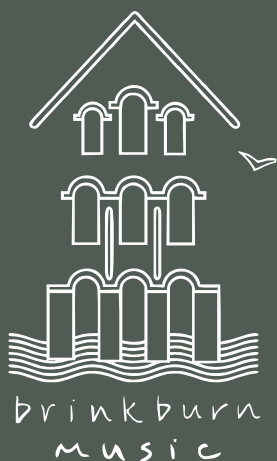
Brinkburn Music Festival returns this summer to bring a feast of wonderful classical and choral music to be played and sung by world-renowned artistes in the beautiful 12th century priory near Rothbury, Northumberland.

Now in its 19th year, the festival hopes to attract music lovers with a fascinating and enticing programme starting on the Friday evening with one of the world's most sought after violinists, Henning Kraggerud, performing Eugène Ysaÿe's Six Sonatas for solo violin.

The exciting British vocal ensemble, Stile Antico, follow on Saturday with an evening of songs, which reflect all the colour of the Tudor era; and the festival closes on Sunday with a recital by early flute specialist, Katy Bircher, followed by rousing performance by Brinkburn favourites, The Gabrieli Consort & Players, of St Matthew Passion.

This year's festival will also feature a variety of food and refreshment options once again, such as the ever popular picnic hampers from Grannies of Alnwick and the Brinkburn Bistro with a mouthwatering menu, devised by Kings Catering, served within the Manor House.

For full programme details and more information on this year's Brinkburn Music Festival, including details of menus and how to buy tickets, please go to www.brinkburnmusic.org or contact the festival office on 01665 833751.



BRINKBURN MUSIC FESTIVAL 6 - 8 JULY 2012

Friday 6 July - 7.30pm

Henning Kraggerud - Violin

Saturday 7 July - 7.00pm

Stile Antico

Sunday 8 July - 12noon

Katy Bircher - Baroque Flute

Sunday 8 July - 2.00pm

Gabrieli Consort & Players

Sunday 8 July - 6.00pm

Evensong

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www.brinkburnmusic.org



URC's new Minister flies in from New Zealand

By Frank Thomson

Ponteland URC has a new Minister, following the induction of Revd Joan Ross.

Revd Ross was welcomed to the joint Pastorate of Ponteland and St. John's Wideopen at Ponteland United Reformed Church, Broadway, Darras Hall, at an event on Saturday April 21.

Born and bred in the North East, Revd Ross trained for ministry and was ordained in Auckland, New Zealand, where she spent over 22 years working as a parish minister, family counsellor and hospital chaplain. She returns home to the UK with her husband James, a Kiwi.

In our service we were reminded that we all have specific gifts but that God is our spiritual compass to guide us in our every day situations. Joan referred to her recent



journey from New Zealand to Ponteland as like riding a surf board on a large rolling wave but that it felt as though they were coming at last safely to the shore. The move felt like a whole new adventure, a new journey in Christ and faith.

We welcome Joan and her family to the whole community in Ponteland.

Pictured are Revd Joan Ross and Revd Rowena Francis, Moderator of the Northern Synod, URC

Darras Hall dentist retires after 30 years

After 30 years, Darras Hall's dentist Carolyn Campbell can take a well-deserved rest and look back upon a life's work, proud of the fact that she made a difference in some small way to the people in and beyond Darras Hall.

Samuel Johnson wrote: 'Don't think of retiring from the world until the world will be sorry that you retire.'

Those who have travelled down from the Borders every six months without fail, those housebound and visited in their homes, and all of those eternally grateful dental patients of Darras Hall will tell you that they are sorry Carolyn has retired.

The original practice used to be part of, what is now, the doctor's surgery, established in 1965 before making its way next door in 1982. It is at this point that Mrs Campbell joined Dr Guellard, before becoming the outright owner in 1994.

The building itself has seen many changes, including an extension. But unlike the building, there have been relatively few changes of staff. Two of the most loyal and well-known members, Louise and Lisa, have only been surpassed by Mrs Wiper, who has been working at the practice since 1976.

During her working life Mrs Campbell held the Secretary post at Northumberland's Local Dental Committee, became a treasurer for the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry and also found time to raise her two daughters.

Mrs Campbell refers to many of her patients as friends, saying: "I often have a chat about a



wisdom tooth over the fruit counter at the supermarket or admire a small child's wobbly tooth they were desperate to show me".

She also remarks how she has been "overwhelmed by the response, with gifts, cards and messages, wishing me well in my retirement and I would like to thank them most sincerely".

As for the practice itself, it is now been passed to the care of Dr Paul Shenfine and Dr Tim Davies. Having known them personally and professionally for some time, Mrs Campbell says she can "wholeheartedly endorse them as personable and highly professional dentists. I will be entrusting my oral health to their care and I hope everyone will be happy to do the same".



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WELL KNOWN MEAL ON WHEELS VOLUNTEER DIES

A Ponteland woman who was well known in the community and honoured by the Queen has died.

Joan Hughes was born in 1921 at Edgbaston in Birmingham, but is fondly remembered in Ponteland where she came to live with husband Tom in the late 1960s.

She taught in Wantage and later joined the Land Army. After her release Mrs Hughes went back to teaching and in 1947 she met Tom, an RAF veteran who flew Spitfires during the war until he was shot down over Monte Cassino and captured by the Germans. He spent about a year as a POW before an exchange brought him home.

Mrs Hughes was involved in the then extensive Meals on Wheels programme run by the WRVS and soon worked her way up to become the County Organiser. She was quietly efficient and ran a well-oiled operation, which brought recognition in the award of an MBE in 1983. She became the Ladies' Captain at Ponteland Golf Club in 1997.

Mr Hughes died on December 31, 2010, leaving his wife devastated. Mrs Hughes died on April 7 after illness. She is remembered affectionately by the many people she worked and socialised with in Ponteland and the wider community.

A Memorial Service was held at St Mary's Church on April 25.

Scaling new heights at Ponteland High

Pupils at Ponteland Community High School will be able to scale new heights after the launch of a state-of-the-art climbing wall.

The £20,000 bouldering wall was joint-funded by South East Northumberland Recreation and Arts Committee (SENRA), Ponteland Town Council and a Sport England 'Sportsmatch' Award.

Covering two sides of the school gym, the 21 metre long structure includes two tricky overhanging sections and poses a dozen different climbing problems.

As well as offering Ponteland High students a chance to scale new heights, it will also be available to students in other Ponteland schools as an extra-curricular activity, and community groups will be able to hire the facility.

The aim of the project is increase the sporting and recreational opportunities available to young people in Ponteland and those living in surrounding rural communities.

Ponteland High Associate Headteacher Mrs Anita Brown said: "The Ponteland Bouldering Wall is a superb addition to our facilities and I'm sure it will attract lots of use from the local community over many years to come.

"We are deeply grateful to all of our partners in this exciting venture, which would not have been possible without their cooperation and generosity."

An official opening ceremony was held in the school gym on May 1, and included a demonstration by students using the wall.



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Golf North East, 2008

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Secretary Greg Waugh at:

secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk

Tel: 01661 822689



SIMONE FROM SARDINIA IS SHAKING THINGS UP!

A Ponteland restaurant is shaking things up with the appointment of an Italian cocktail connoisseur.

Simone Sedda has joined the bar team at Fratelli in Bell Villas after emigrating to Northumberland from his home in Sardinia.

The 21-year-old holds professional qualifications in bartending and flair (performing tricks with bar tools, including juggling bottles) and he is aiming to make cocktails more popular.

He said: "The drink of choice for Italians is usually a cocktail or coffee, they don't drink beer or lager like people do here in the UK. I hope that my passion for creating mouth-watering concoctions will encourage more men and women to give them a try."

Fratelli offers a selection of 18 cocktails, including Death by Chocolate, Bramble and the Signature Fratelli Fizz.

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Life-saving Scouts bring new blood to Ponteland

Ten Explorer Scouts have followed in the footsteps of their leader by signing up to become life-saving blood donors.

The group from Ponteland Explorer Scouts all rolled up their sleeves and gave blood for the first time at a blood donor session at Ponteland's Memorial Hall on March 8.

The scouts, all aged 17 or 18, went along to the blood donor session with their group leader Richard Walker, who is an established donor himself, having given his first blood donation in 1970.

Mr Walker said: "Giving blood is something that fits in perfectly with the Scout's ethos of helping other people.

"I also hope the example set by these young people will inspire others in the Ponteland area to sign up as blood donors."

Darren Bowen, NHSBT's Lead Donor Relations Manager for the North East, added: "It's fantastic to see these young

people supporting our life-saving service by giving blood for the first time.

"Each year, we need to recruit hundreds of new donors in the North East to replace those who have to retire from giving blood, so we would extend a warm welcome to any new donors who are able to come along to the Ponteland blood donor session and save lives by giving just a little of their time.

"We very much look forward to welcoming these young people back to their second blood donor session visit and many more in the future."

The next blood donor sessions in Ponteland will take place at the Memorial Hall on Darras Road on Thursday June 21st. Appointments are available either between 1.45pm and 4pm or between 4.45pm and 7pm.

It is preferable if appointments are booked in advance. However, there are usually spare appointments for donors that turn up on the day of the blood donor session.

First-time donors should be aged between 17 and 65, weigh at least 50 kg (7 stone



12lbs) and be in general good health. Those who have donated before can start again up to their 70th birthday and there is no upper age limit for donors who have donated in the last two years.

Anyone wishing to find out more or book an appointment can either call NHS Blood and Transplant's donor line on 0300 123 23 23 or visit www.blood.co.uk

Pictured are Ponteland Explorer Scouts Chris Ashforth, Jeremy Charlton, Matthew Mundy, Kate Sheridan, Grace Curson and Nick Dorani.



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