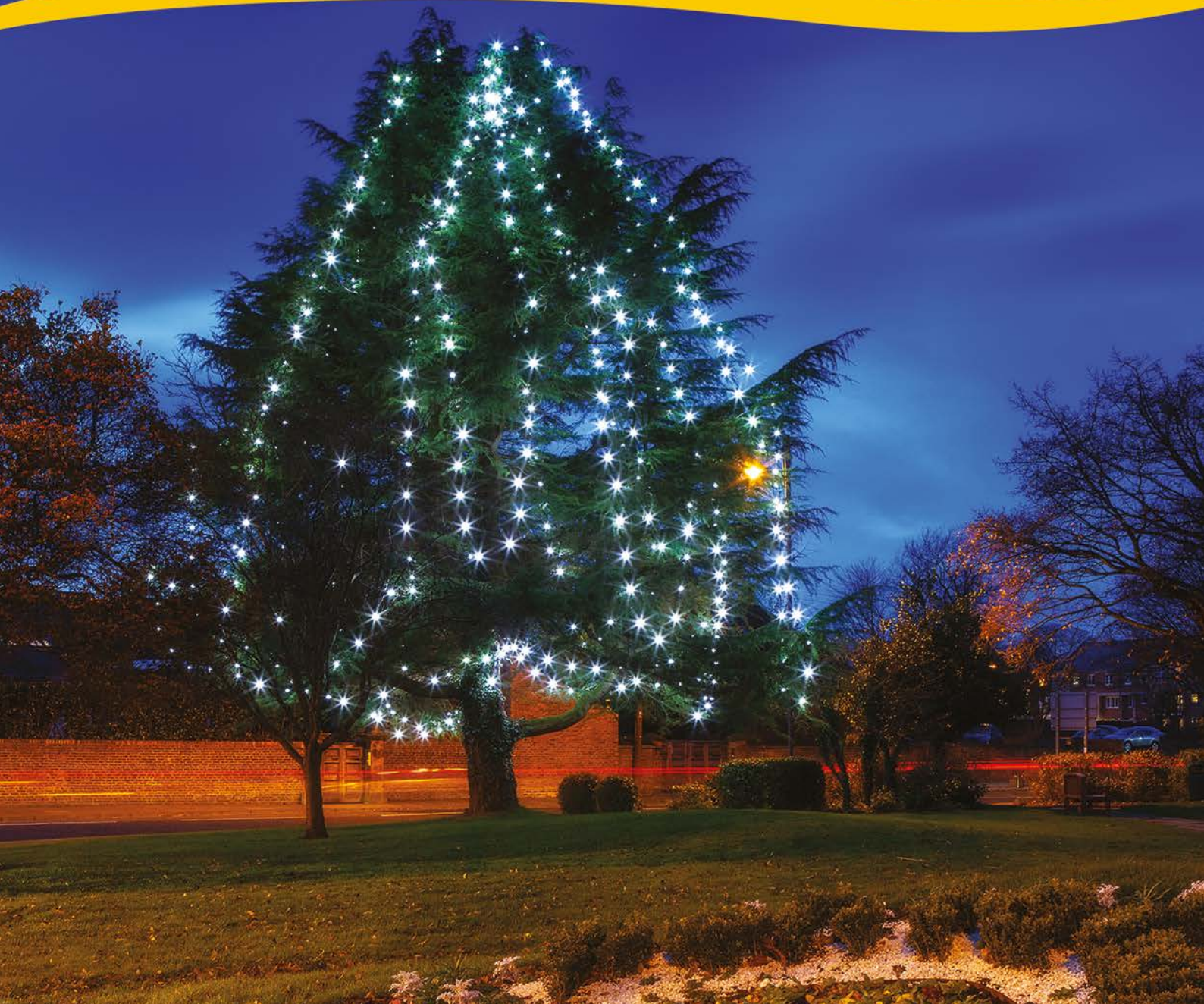


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Duchess presents Boys' Brigade's highest award to Stephen



The Duchess of Northumberland has presented the Boys' Brigade's highest award to Ponteland company member Stephen Mugford.

Stephen, 18, received the Queen's Badge at Ponteland Methodist Church's joint Girls' and Boys' Brigade Carol Service on Sunday December 8th.

The Queen's Badge is the highest award the boys can achieve and Stephen gained his by doing a Boys' Brigade skills course and completing a community sports leadership course.

Work included setting up the PA system and running power point projection during worship at the church, where his parents are Ministers. He also assisted at a church run holiday club and worked in a charity shop, took piano lessons and joined a rugby union team.

This was all fitted in around his school work, social life and time spent at Boys'

Brigade helping out with the younger sections.

Stephen, who lives in Kenton, joined the Ponteland company in 2005 when his family moved here, having previously been a member of the Boys' Brigade in Chapel-en-le-Frith. He worked his way up through the junior section then into the company section, finally gaining the status of a staff sergeant in the senior section.

Stephen, who is doing a degree in Sports Development with Coaching at Northumbria University, has two older brothers who were both in the Boys' Brigade at Chapel and his inspirational late Grandpa was a Boys' Brigade leader in Glasgow and Bristol.

Leslie Dodd, Captain of the 1st Ponteland Boys' Brigade, said: "Stephen has worked hard to get this award. I know from being his company mentor that he has had to step outside of his comfort zone on several occasions, but I can say with all honesty that it is what has made him into the man he is now.

"He certainly has grown in confidence since embarking on this course. He is also a very likeable young man, with a good sense of humour but also has a good work ethic. You can give him a job to do and you know it will get done."

Stephen receives his Queen's Award from the Duchess of Northumberland. Also pictured with his parents Antony and Fiona. Photos by Trevor Walker.

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Farewell to a president

A club president from Ponteland who received royal recognition for four decades of volunteering work has died just days short of his 80th birthday.

Roy Twelves, President of Sunderland Yacht Club, sadly passed away on Saturday December 7th.

He was an active and highly respected member of SYC for 42 years, racing his boat Carmen Maria competitively until the age of 78 and always striving to promote sailing as a sport which was accessible to everyone.

His unfailing dedication to both the sport and his club earned him recognition from the Royal Yachting Association and in 2010 he was presented with a Lifetime Commitment Award – one of the highest RYA awards given to volunteers – by HRH The Princess Royal at a ceremony in London.

A former competitive cyclist, Roy was always looking for new challenges and in May last year he abseiled off the 85ft high roof of the Malmaison Hotel at Newcastle Quayside to raise awareness and funds for the Northern Oesophago Gastric Cancer Fund.

Roy will also be well remembered in the Ponteland community for his many charitable works since moving to the area from Sheffield in 1966.

Roy was first and foremost a proud and dedicated family man, beloved husband of Brenda, father of Debbie and Nigel and grandfather of Katherine, Charlotte, Jessica and Hugh.

He was a gentleman of the highest integrity and an inspiration to many. He will be sadly missed.

Photo by Keith Robertson

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Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category. The club is actively looking to recruit young adults and has recently introduced intermediate membership categories. For information contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:
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PROJECTS REPORT

Skate Park

The skate park installation is complete other than the painting of the ramps which will be carried out in the Spring. The path and fencing works will soon be completed and it was planned to have an official opening of the facility on Wednesday December 18th subject to a ROSPA safety inspection being carried out.

Website

The new website is complete – see article below.

Civic Service

The Council considered a report setting out various options in relation to the Civic Service for 2014. It was suggested that the focus of this event should be community based with representatives of the various organisations within Ponteland being invited to a church service followed by refreshments. It was agreed to hold such an event subject to the confirmation of costs.

Volunteering

The Deputy Mayor presented a report to gauge the views of Councillors about the Town Council promoting the need for volunteers to join some of the voluntary organisations in Ponteland. It was suggested that promotional articles could be placed in Pont News and also on the council's new website. Councillors agreed that the Deputy Mayor draft an appropriate article for PNV and a budget of £450 to meet the costs of advertising were approved.

GRANTS

The Council approved a grant of £1,000 to Dalton Village Hall towards annual running costs.

DATES OF MEETINGS

The Council agreed to alter the date of the January council meeting in order to be able to meet the administrative deadline. The meeting will be held on Monday 13 January at 6.45pm.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on November 20 and its recommendations - to purchase the composite signage for Thornhill Road at a cost of £750, to request repeater signs along Thornhill Road at least at the start and finish of the school zone and 'school zone' illustrations to be added to the 20mph signs at each end of Thornhill Road - were approved.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party met on November 25 and its recommendations were approved. Following a request by the residents of Mayfair Gardens, a waste bin will be installed at the suggested location to be emptied by NCC. A bench seat at the Callerton Lane play area will be replaced with a recycled picnic bench and the seat replaced with a recycled plastic model nearer the swings. A new policy to use recycled plastic tubs/planters wherever possible was agreed. A report is to be submitted to the January Working Party meeting regarding costs for the replacement of 44 tubs with the plastic design. The Council has carried out improvements to land in front of the substation at the top of Darras Road and the Council's solicitor is to be asked to examine the registration of the land to the Council.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on December 11th.



Council launches new website

A new website has been launched by Ponteland Town Council highlighting the services it provides and signposting those offered by public sector partners.

Agendas and minutes for Town Council meetings and reports on latest County Council planning applications and decisions can now be viewed online on the Town Council website for the first time.

There are website links and contact information for schools, churches, police and leisure services and an A-Z guide of local voluntary organisations such as clubs and associations, as well as an events calendar.

You can view the latest issue of Pont News & Views and look for back copies, find out how the Town Council's budget is allocated, and local groups can apply online for grants.

Each of the 12 Town Councillors has their own contact page and the Mayor Peter Cowey has a diary showing his upcoming civic engagements, while John Turner of Ponteland Local History Society has provided a fascinating illustrated history of the village.

The new website can be found at www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk and the council is keen to hear feedback on it at enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk



Sign up to police email alerts



By PC Rob Anderson – Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between 15th November and 11th December we have had 17 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Two damages to property
- Three damages to a motor vehicles
- One theft from shop
- Two burglary other than dwellings
- Two burglary dwellings
- One harassment offence
- Three assaults
- One theft by employee
- One theft
- One theft from a motor vehicle.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the crimes and arrests were made for one of the assault offences, one theft from shop and harassment offence.

A new year and a new challenge. This year we would like to extend our Community Messaging to cover the whole of Ponteland.

In years passed we have had various community schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch but with the internet and emails readily at our disposal we have the opportunity to reach the public quicker with relevant information.

We will be visiting households to sign up people who don't receive the Community Messaging emails already.

At present we have a youth club but not enough people to run it. Volunteers are wanted for the youth club which is located in the grounds of Ponteland Middle and High School. Please contact me if you are interested and your details will be passed on to the relevant department.

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 Paul Cotterill 11th January 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison 18th January 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay Village shop
- PC Rob Anderson 1st February 10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson 1st February 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

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Mind your heads!



Members of Jill Errington School of Dance are getting their heads round to preparing for their next show in March.

Called Mind Your Musicals, the show will feature 150 young dancers and students from the school's new musical theatre classes 'Lights up'. The children are pictured here each wearing a 'different head' to dance class.

Proceeds from the show at the Peoples Theatre, Heaton, on March 15th and 16th will go to mental health charity Mind - hence the idea to wear a different hat.

Tickets will be on sale from the middle of January via the dance school, at the United Reformed Church on Broadway, Darras Hall, on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday afternoons or by contacting Jill on (01661) 610028.

Photo by Imogen Kate Photography

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What's on...

New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race

The New Year will once again start in Ponteland with the traditional Wheelbarrow Race. The historic annual event is organised by the 41 Club - an extension of the Round Table movement - with support from Ponteland Rugby Club. This year funds are being raised for The Bobby Robson Foundation and the 41 Club's National Charity, MacMillan Cancer Support. The race takes place at 12noon on New Year's Day over a mile-long course which starts and ends at the Blackbird Inn. Hundreds of spectators came along to watch and last year more than £400 was collected on the day for good causes.

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 4th.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

The January meeting of the Ponteland Wildlife Group is on Tuesday January 7th. Speaker Dave Stebbings will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Butterfly Migration - Travelling Light'. The venue is St. Mary's Church Hall in the village, the time 7.30pm and the price £2 including refreshments.

Ponteland U3A

At our monthly meeting on Wednesday January 8th our speaker is Janet Boakes and the subject 'Northumberland Care Trusts - Community Projects'. We meet at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall. Visitors are welcome. No charge. Interested in joining U3A activities? Visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring (01661) 822225.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday January 13th is Revd Peter Barham whose talk is entitled 'Churches of Northumberland'. 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 donaldfloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our first meeting for the New Year will be held on Monday January 13th. We are delighted to welcome Alan Furness his talk will be on 'Alpine plant walks around Wengen, Switzerland'. The Alpine slopes always offer lots of interesting plants, there are numerous species of Gentians, Pulsatillas and Orchids. Visitors welcome. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or on (0191) 413 2574.

Ponteland Civic Society

The next meeting of Ponteland Civic Society will be held in St Mary's Church Hall on Monday January 27th at 7.30pm when we will hear from the Hexham Abbey Centre Manager of the progress so far with the Hexham Abbey Project. The project is to restore the principal monastic Abbey buildings to accommodate much needed facilities for meetings, exhibition and interpretation spaces etc. Visitors are most welcome for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

Inner Wheel Club Domino Drive

The Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland is holding a Domino Drive at the Memorial Hall on Friday January 31st starting at 7.30pm, to include a raffle and bar. Tickets costing £8 include supper and are available from Alan Newton, Butcher, Mackley and Stevens, Optometrists or by phoning (01661) 822494. Proceeds to local charities.

February issue deadlines:

The February issue will be delivered on Monday January 27th and Tuesday January 28th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday January 10th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the February issue.



Ellyn paints the world

By Muriel Sobo

The annual Peace Poster competition run by the Lions Clubs has been won by local schoolgirl Ellyn Willsher who lives on Darras Hall.

Ponteland Middle School art teacher Vicki Harper encourages her pupils to make posters on this world peace theme and 11-year-old Ellyn produced a delicately coloured impressive effort.

Her poster was entered along with winners from other schools over the NE district which stretches from Scarborough and also includes Scottish Lions Clubs and she again came out the winner. Well done Ellyn!

She was presented with her prizes at a special assembly at school by Ponteland Lions President Anke Jackson with Head Teacher Dr Pryor looking on. They included a folding easel and paints as well as other artists' materials.

Ellyn receives her prize from Lions President Anke Jackson with Head Teacher Dr Pryor present.

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Ponteland Community High School Report

In a new feature for Pont News, budding journalists from the high school will provide a monthly report on success stories both inside and outside of the classroom.

Students produce hard hitting film for police road safety campaign

By Jess Rea

Figures show 195,723 people were injured in road traffic accidents on Britain's roads in 2012, with 23,039 seriously injured and 1,754 killed.

Such statistics sadly seem to be ever on the increase as driving becomes a necessity for more and more people.

In a bid to educate and encourage young adults to be considerate of the actions and the consequences of their decisions when it comes to other road users, students at Ponteland Community High School have produced a film warning about the dangers on the roads as part of the Northumbria Police campaign 'Road Sense, Common Sense'.

The film focuses on the impact on a young driver who was left to face both his actions - and the guilt which came with them - after he caused a major traffic accident. Students also presented a monologue and photographs as part of the multi-media project.

Six schools across the area came together last month at The Sage Gateshead for a launch event with a handpicked audience, including representatives of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, the North East Ambulance Service, six local authorities, the University of Sunderland and parents of young adults who have been killed in road accidents.

Speaking at the event, Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Vera Baird stressed



Pictured are: (back row) Sabina Iqbal from Sacred Heart Catholic High School; Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Vera Baird; Northumbria Police Chief Constable Sue Sim and Zoe McQuinn from Ponteland High School. Front row: Jack Burlison from Heaton Manor School; Martine Vrieling van Tuijl from Longridge Towers School; Lisa Joyce from Duchess' High School and Greg Doherty from Excelsior Academy.

the importance of the continuance of projects such as these: "Road accidents are a huge killer of young people and we all need to send a message about road safety to our precious young people. No one can speak to them like other young people."

PCHS student Ellie Bell, a key member of the team involved in the project, added: "I think it is necessary to make people aware, especially young people with new cars, of the distractions of driving and also the

seriousness of their actions."

The power of the voices behind the project are a mere indication to the strength of the young people in our community. They have taken an issue directly affecting them and are actively making a difference through their efforts.

The film made by PCHS students can be seen at: northumbria.police.uk/ebeat/myres/teachers/roadsense/index.asp

Outstanding show not just toilet humour

By Jess Rea

The twists and turns, trials and tribulations, heartbreak and tears of love were laid bare in spectacular style by the cast of the A level production of Willy Russell's Stags and Hens.

Set against the backdrop of 1970s Liverpool, Stags and Hens focuses on a group of local lads and lasses and their pre-marriage antics as both the stag and hen nights collide in a rundown club.

As the drama unfolds it soon becomes clear that bride-to-be Linda may be having second

thoughts after running into ex-boyfriend and up and coming pop star Peter.

Linda is torn between love, lust and responsibility all in the mix, a confusing situation which is not helped when both the bridal party and groomsmen take matters into their own hands in an upfront and honest Scouse style.

Despite the action never progressing beyond either the men's or the women's lavatories, the play gripped audiences from beginning to end. All involved put on an outstanding show, slipping easily into their roles with passion and enthusiasm as laughter ripped through the audience.

The cast of Stags and Hens got it spot on, with the zealous portrayal of the bubbly bridal party juxtaposed to the stag party who were never quite classed as cool. If anything, the limp lifeless character of Dave, who spends the entirety of the play with his head down the toilet pan, should be warning enough for all teens against excessive alcohol!

All in all, the drama students gave life to a play which carries a message of the pressures brought on by both life and society - a message which is ever becoming a realisation for many teens in our community.

Production is out of this world!



Children from Darras Hall First School put on a stellar performance at their Christmas production 'An out of this world Christmas'.

The Year 3 and Year 4 pupils performed their version of the Christmas Story, which successfully combined dance, humour and song, to invited guests and parents.

The story followed four astronauts who crash landed on the planet Zog. Here they met, befriended and explained the meaning of Christmas to the inhabitants of this new planet. In turn the new friends helped our heroes and heroines to return safely to Earth in time for Christmas.

The Three Kings are: Emma Lawson, Harriet Flook-Millican and Annabel Parslow. Photos by Keith Robertson.



Rotary Club to celebrate 50th birthday with the ladies

By Muriel Sobo

Two ladies were recently inducted into Ponteland Rotary Club. Yes, you did read that right and no, the sky has not fallen in!

The club, which is 50 years old next year, has never previously admitted ladies although worldwide there have been plenty of clubs with a mixed membership.

Suzanne Marshall and Caroline Parkinson have joined their partners as full members of Ponteland Rotary Club. They both felt that they were supporting the club's activities anyway through their men folk and perhaps they should join up and enjoy some of the benefits.

Caroline said: "The community involvement is important as well, both belonging to it and contributing to it through our own skills and time. We want to help with fundraising."

Suzanne pointed out the very good social programme they had in Rotary and hoped that more ladies would be emboldened to come forward to join. They would be very welcome.



Rotary President Peter Lowry with new members Suzanne Marshall and Caroline Parkinson

Last month Rotary sponsored a carol concert and earlier in the year there was the concert at the Airport Hotel and before that the Duck Races in the Park. These are annual occasions and part of the many events in our social calendar organised by Ponteland Rotary Club.

Next year's special events to mark the anniversary include the golf competition days and dinners - St. George's Day on Tuesday April 22nd and the Am/Am on Tuesday May 13th. Information on the events and how to join Rotary can be obtained from Stewart Blair at stewart.blair1@virgin.net or by calling 01661 822367.



Celebrating Christmas with our 100th issue

As we celebrate our landmark 100th issue of Pont News the editorial board would like to wish our readers, contributors and advertisers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

More than eight years since launch, it has been a record 12 months for the magazine with increased advertising funding bigger issues packed with local news and your views.

This month's cover shot, taken by Trevor Walker, is of the Christmas lights on Coates Green.

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Students Jess Walker, Tarn Howorth, Liesl Rana, Laura Vickers and Ambika Nepalli at the start of their trek at Bowness.

Hadrian's Wall walk to fund girls' Ghana trip

By Jess Walker, age 14

Over the October half term I walked the length of Hadrian's Wall with four other friends to raise funds towards our World Challenge trip to Ghana.

World Challenge is an organisation which allows groups of teenagers the chance to raise money for a life changing trip to a country not so well off as ours. We plan to go to the West African country next summer for two weeks to work on a community project in a local village and need to raise over £2,000 each to fund this.

Our Hadrian's Wall walk started at Bowness; we really didn't know what we were letting ourselves in for. It was raining heavily and the wind was against us but we were determined. I wore a ridiculous looking poncho most of the time to keep myself dry and bright red gaiters. You could recognise me a mile off! Even when I didn't have my poncho on I still looked silly with my bright blue coat.

Every day we would set off with our backpacks full to the brim with snacks and drinks to keep us going. Each night I felt more aches and pains and developed the worst blisters out of our group. The next morning I would have to force my feet into my boots for another day of walking. After six days we reached Heddon on the Wall. However, I felt that we should do the whole wall and after a short debate, I managed to persuade the rest of the group to walk for one extra day to Wallsend.

When we reached Wallsend, we collapsed inside the Segedunum shop, in a heap on the floor. We were all too tired to celebrate but we bought ourselves a t-shirt to show what we had achieved. Walking the wall was an extremely memorable experience but challenging both physically and mentally.

I have raised more than £700 but would be really grateful for donations – please contact me by sending an email to carrie_walker@btinternet.com

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