

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



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HQ housing plans

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‘Explosion of musical theatre’ at Dance School charity show

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Produced by Cian creative pr



Dance School puts on explosion of musical theatre and fun

By Ashley Waugh

At the tender age of three I was introduced to the school and 15 years later I am still performing with Jill Errington's School of Dance and Drama.

There are over 300 pupils dancing in the school's Ponteland and Benton classes, with ages ranging from two-year-old toddlers to 19-year-old students. With teachers trained in RAD Ballet, ISTD Modern Dance and Jazz, Freestyle Street and Hip-Hop, the talent here is immeasurable.

All profits from the school's current show Mind Your Musicals are being donated to Mind, the mental health charity which provides help and support to those suffering, or those who are close to

someone suffering, from mental health problems.

The show is written by a student of the school, Holly Dalton, who also provided the scripts for Never Ending Story in 2012 and Time Flies in 2009.

Mind Your Musicals is an explosion of musical theatre and fun for all the family which follows a grandmother and her two grandchildren through a narrative of spectacular dance numbers and songs, each recorded by members of the school.

They include Footloose, Hairspray, Do-Ray-Me, Let's Go Fly A Kite, Greased Lightning, The Lion King, Fame, The Time Warp and The Jazz Club - a tribute to Cabaret, Chicago, Dream Girls, Moulin Rouge and Burlesque.

Jill Errington, founder of the school and director of the show, said: "Each show I do is a celebration of the magic theatre with talented pupils, of whom I am immensely proud. With every show I am reminded of why I started the school."

The show runs on Saturday March 15th and Sunday March 16th, with performances at 2pm and 6pm at The Peoples Theatre in Heaton, Newcastle. Tickets costing £7 can be purchased from the URC, Broadway, Darras Hall between 3pm and 6pm Tues/Wed/Thurs, by emailing jillyerrington@yahoo.co.uk or by calling 07773 461 790.

Cover shot and p3 photos by Alan Errington

Plans for police HQ housing scheme unveiled

Plans to redevelop the Northumbria Police HQ site have been unveiled to the public in a roadshow held in Ponteland.

The force confirmed it is to lodge an outline planning application for residential development for the site on the outskirts of the village with Northumberland County Council in March.

Up to 263 homes will be built on previously developed land on the 30-acre site, with only the offices of the Chief Officer Team and the Northern Communications Centre where all 999 and 101 calls are handled remaining, following a decision by the former Police Authority to relocate most services.

The development will include a mixture of 3, 4 and 5 bed semi-detached and detached homes. The existing police HQ access off North Road will be retained and listed buildings on the site and existing trees and hedgerows along the site's boundaries maintained.

Northumbria Police said the scheme would "avoid using Greenfield land" and "reduce the pressure to release other undeveloped land in Ponteland".

More than 100 people attended the roadshow held on February 18 at Merton Hall with representatives from planning consultants Lambert Smith Hampton, traffic consultants Pell Frischman, architects Archial and Northumbria Police Estates Manager John Leslie, who said: "People were very interested to hear what the proposal involved and asked many questions, particularly in relation to the infrastructure of the site and the surrounding road network.



"Their opinions will be considered along with all the comments we receive during the consultation process which ends on Wednesday February 26. We hope the event answered any concerns or issues people had and we are grateful for all the feedback and input from residents."

If the outline application is approved, a reserved matters application will be required before any work begins to agree the specific layout and design of individual buildings.

Anyone with any comments in relation to the proposal should email enquiries@northumbria-pcc.gov.uk or write to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria at 2nd Floor, Victory House, Balliol Business Park, Newcastle, NE12 8EW.

Ponteland police station also to close due to cuts

Ponteland police station is also due to close as part of changes being made to save £46m by 2017.

It is one of 25 stations the force plans to close, of which 12 are, like Ponteland, no longer open to the public. Others include Prudhoe and Morpeth which are open to the public.

The latest Government funding cuts also mean 230 police staff posts will go in the next three years, with efforts channelled into safeguarding the numbers of frontline police officers and police staff on the beat.

Northumbria Police says it has already delivered £58m of savings since the start of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in 2010.

Police & Crime Commissioner Vera Baird said: "The Government cuts are relentless and unfair. They impact far more heavily on our police service than on many others. The Chief Constable and I are very committed to maintaining the number of police officers and staff working in our neighbourhoods."

Photo by Keith Robertson

Pele Tower beech tree to be felled

By Coun Robin Ramsay

The lovely beech tree in front of the Pele Tower has become infected and is likely to be taken down.

The infection causes decay of the roots and the likely sudden failure of the tree. The county council alerted the Town Council to this serious problem and urged them as a matter of public safety to fell the tree.

The Town Council consulted a specialist advisor who agreed with the county's

recommendation, as have others who the Town Council have spoken to.

Investigations are being made as to whether it is possible to take other measures but the general advice, so far, is that because of danger to the public felling is the appropriate solution. It is also necessary to consult their insurers with regard to public liability protection.

Obviously a replacement will be provided if it is felled but it will be a sad loss to the street scene.





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PROJECTS REPORT

Skate Park

The skate park has been opened following some temporary repairs and the Council agreed to provide two bench seats as recommended by ROSPA.

Coates Green footpath

The Council had agreed to carry out a full refurbishment to the footpath as part of this year's project list. Works will be phased to retain walking routes and access to St Mary's Church. Tenders had been received and the Council agreed to accept the lowest quote of £14,812.

Parking issues in Ponteland

Coun Richard Dodd is in discussions with the county council regarding parking and traffic issues in Ponteland, including parking of heavy articulated lorries on the roadside and the recent start of construction at the former Auction Mart site in Meadowfield Industrial Estate. The introduction of some short stay spaces are also being examined for the Thornhill Road and Merton Way car parks.

Rotary Club of Ponteland

Permission was granted for the use of the park and the provision of toilets for the Annual Duck Race on Sunday August 31. The Council also agreed to a request from the Rotary Club for the planting of a yew tree at a location to be decided in honour of their 50th anniversary this year.

Ponteland Park – clearing of ditch

The Council agreed to fund works at the area adjacent to the Scout Hut and the Memorial trees, which has been subject to poor drainage for some time, at a cost of £912. Discussions had been held with a land drainage contractor who suggested clearing the adjacent ditch may assist the problem. If this failed the installation of land drains may be necessary.

GRANT APPLICATION

A grant for £150 was approved towards the cost of the provision of a handyman service for the elderly and disabled following an application from Castle Morpeth Disability Association. Anyone wishing to access the service should call 01670 572975.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Council agreed recommendations including the installation of a waste bin near to Street Houses and also the replacement of 30 flower tubs with the recycled plastic variety.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Coun Dodd reported that the county council was currently finalising the budget and this would include the introduction of free parking in market town council owned car parks (subject to approval from the relevant parish or town council) from May 31st and the introduction of travel charges for post 16 students.

COMMUNITY PAYBACK SCHEME

The Council considered a proposal to trial the use of the community payback scheme, which would involve a group of operatives carrying out various tasks within Ponteland, one day per month. Assistance would also be given to the Friends of Ponteland Park. Suggested tasks included items such as litter picking, vegetation clearance etc.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on February 12th.

New lady golfers invited to Sunday morning taster sessions

By Barbara Russell

Captain of the Ladies Section

The Ladies' Section at Ponteland Golf Club is hoping to introduce ladies with no experience of the game by having taster sessions at the club on Sunday mornings throughout April and May.

Ladies with previous golfing experience who have lost contact with the game will also be welcome but the sessions are aimed at the beginner.

The participants would spend 1 hour each week receiving lessons from the Club Professional together with a few of the lady members. When they feel confident enough they would then be taken on the course to play several holes.

The programme is being set up to find new members for the section and to introduce them to the game of golf. They will be shown the facilities of the club house. Further into the sessions, golf etiquette and the rules of golf will be discussed to enable them to better understand the game.

Why not join other ladies and try the challenge of golf? Enjoy the outdoors and fresh air, playing with likeminded people. If Sunday is not convenient please let us know and we will try and find a day and time more suitable.

Have you moved to the area and are looking for a club to join? Do you wish to take up golf again? The Club has a varied social calendar throughout the year. Contact the Club (details below).

All equipment for the sessions will be available. The ladies of Ponteland Golf Club will make you most welcome. These sessions are free, so come along and give golf a try.

Contact Chris or Greg and book yourself onto our programme. Tel (01661) 822689 Ext 3 or 4.



Ponteland Golf Club
Ladies' Section

Taster Golf @ Ponteland Golf Club

Ladies - would you like to try the game of golf?
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All equipment supplied.

Contact club secretary to book your place.

Tel: 01661 822689 Ext 3 or 4

LADIES' TASTER DAY



Please be considerate with your parking and speed



By PC Rob Anderson – Ponteland Community Beat Manager

In the period between January 15th and February 14th we have had four crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- One burglary other than dwelling
- One harassment offence
- One assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- One damage to property.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to the crimes and the assault offence and harassment offence have both been detected.

Several complaints have been received about the speed of vehicles on Thornhill Road, Ponteland, during school times. Please remember there are two schools on

this road as well as elderly residents and restrict your speed to the required limit for the road which is 20 miles per hour.

Another school related problem we are still having is the parking of vehicles on the restricted areas of Thornhill Road, Broadway, and Middle Drive.

If you are using your car to pick up your children please be considerate when parking and don't block driveways, pavements or drop kerbs. This is unnecessary obstruction and could lead to you being prosecuted. The County Council has wardens who visit the above mentioned areas and can issue fixed penalties for parking offences on restricted areas.

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 March 22nd 9.30am - 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison March 29th 11.30am - 12.30pm at Belsay Village shop
- PC Rob Anderson March 9th 10am - 11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson March 9th 11.30am - 12.30pm Co-op, Broadway

We also have Engagement Days at these venues and dates:

- March 19th 10am to 12pm Stamfordham/Belsay/Matfen
- March 26th 10am to 12pm Merton Way, Ponteland
- March 26th 1pm to 3pm Broadway, Ponteland

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Neil retires after more than 40 years keeping an eye on us

By Muriel Sobó

He has ceased gazing into everyone's eyes! Today we have optometrists but Neil was an optician.

After more than 40 years of keeping our eyes and spectacles in good order Neil has packed up his reading charts and ophthalmoscopes and retired. He will be able to give more time to his growing family as they demand more of his attention.

He and Mary now have two grandchildren locally and another, newly born, over in Lancashire. It sounds as if he will be busier than ever.

Although not born in the North East he has lived nearly all his life in Newcastle and Ponteland and came to the village in 1968 when he and Mary bought their first house in Thornhill Road.

Neil joined forces with Mr Studdert when he was taken ill and worked in premises above Margaret's dress shop, next to present day Rialto. He soon took over the business, kept the name and moved to new premises above the NatWest Bank at the corner of Darras Road.

In 1995 there was a further move to the corner of Main Street and Brewery Lane where there was bigger exposure to passers-by and no stairs to climb for his clientele. Geoff Steven & Sons now own the business.

Neil says he has enjoyed his job and knew that he was delivering a vital service to Ponteland people. He undertook more training over the years and has seen the introduction of new technologies and computer based procedures. In Ponteland he has been a stalwart of the Rotary Club.



ADVERTISING FEATURE

A new era for opticians practice

Neil Mackley will be greatly missed by colleagues and patients alike but with Neil's well deserved retirement a new era has started for the long established opticians practice of Mackley + Steven.

Patients will still find the same friendly faces and the highest level of professional eyecare with Mark and Chris Steven who have worked alongside Neil since 2011. Mackley + Steven has become part of one of the largest independent opticians in the North of England, Geoff Steven & Sons, established in 1946 by Mark and Chris' grandfather.

To mark this new era for each of the practices in Hexham, Haltwhistle and Ponteland, a new corporate identity has been commissioned to reflect the fact that Geoff Steven & Sons is always keen to invest in new and state-of-the-art equipment and continue to modernise to offer patients the very best professional service in eyecare and health.

Over the past three years Mark and Chris have refitted the Ponteland practice and have just taken delivery of their latest investment in equipment. Over the coming months all the practices will take on the new livery through new signage and décor and in the meantime everyone will be assured a warm welcome at the Ponteland practice of Geoff Steven & Sons.

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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



More Green Belt fears and delight at the response to an article in this month's letters...

Northumberland County Council's 'Field of Dreams' fantasy

Field of Dreams is a Hollywood fantasy movie with the catchphrase 'if you build it he will come'.

Northumberland County Council seems to be operating in its own fantasy world with the proposed 'if you build it he will come' planning policy.

This widely criticised fantasy to build vast numbers of houses in the hope (for it is no more than just hope) that it will attract families and increase the labour force is fundamentally flawed.

The NCC housing numbers are regarded by at least one other neighbouring county as "very ambitious" – "challenging to achieve" and "is likely to have significant implications for infrastructure provision".

Unfortunately the harsh reality should NCC continue to live in its dream land is that this will not be a cornfield in Iowa being sacrificed - it will be our precious Green Belt.

Please NCC, wake up and smell the coffee. We will all think better of you if you accept your plans are too ambitious and to bring them back into the real world. If you do not, as far as Ponteland is concerned, this will not be a fantasy - it will be a horror story.

Tony Noble

Cheviot View, Ponteland

Delighted at response to hearing aid support article

I am delighted with the response from the article featured in the last issue and the magazine certainly has an excellent readership and response rate.

On this occasion the response was overwhelming, however, and some people were unable to access the service. I hope they will return in future months but printing my letter will, I hope, help them.

Anne Shilton

Community Support Officer, Hear to Help project North of Tyne, Action on Hearing Loss

Don't park on grass verges plea

As many will have noticed grass verges especially in this weather are being ploughed up by cars and lorries parking on them.

A very bad example is the area around the schools on Callerton Lane. Can I make a plea to all drivers to please not park on grass verges?

Coun Robin Ramsay

Chairman Highways Group, Ponteland Town Council

April issue deadlines: Delivery of the April issue will start on Monday March 31st. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday March 14th. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the April issue.



Do you want this view to be lost to housing and an industrial estate?

This is the green belt land proposed by Northumberland County Council to be deleted and replaced by high density mass housing and an industrial estate.

What a huge loss of amenity and aesthetic this would be to the wider population of Ponteland. How many of the folk who take exercise, play sport and walk their dogs in this area realise it is under threat?

Far from being of little character and already developed as has been alleged by various interested parties, this is a beautiful buffer between Northumberland and the ever encroaching Newcastle conurbation.

I am sure that everyone who lives in Ponteland loves this view as they approach the village on a sunny evening on their return from work, glad to live in a place that has such a unique character.

The consultation period may be over but the pressure on NCC should not abate until this risk of inappropriate and unfounded development has been averted.

David Walton

Cheviot View, Ponteland

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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 and not exceed 150 words.

What's on...

Fairtrade Fortnight: February 24th to March 9th

Fairtrade Fortnight is being celebrated with a 'Big Brew' at St Matthew's Hall on Saturday March 1st from 10am until 12noon and a Fairtrade coffee morning in Merton Hall on Friday March 7th. Ponteland Methodist Church will also be holding a Fairtrade event.

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 March 1st.

'Night with the Stars' ball

The Friends of Ponteland Middle School is holding a 'Night with the Stars' ball at the Gosforth Marriott on Saturday March 1st. The evening includes a three course supper, disco, live band, excellent raffle and a few surprises! Tickets costing £49pp are available from the school, with proceeds towards the all weather pitch fund. Contact pms@pontelandmiddle.northumberland.sch.uk or (01661) 824853.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

The next meeting of the Ponteland Wildlife Group is on Tuesday March 4th when Joanna Dailey will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Ospreys on Kielder'. The meeting starts at 7.30pm in St. Mary's Church Hall in the village. Entry £2 including refreshments.

Ponteland U3A

Our monthly visiting speaker on Wednesday March 5th is the Rev Peter Barham and his topic is 'Why vicars like steam trains'. We meet at 2pm in St Mary's Church Hall on Thornhill Road. Visitors are always welcome. No charge for coming. For details of our group activities visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland

Woman's Day of Prayer – St Matthew's RC Church

A Woman's Day of Prayer service is being held on Friday March 7th at 2.15pm at St Matthew's RC Church, West Road, Ponteland. Speaker: Sister Michael 'Streams in the Desert' prepared by Christian women of Egypt. Everyone is most welcome. Afternoon tea to follow afterwards in the church hall.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday March 10th is Professor Sir John Burn whose talk is entitled 'DNA Testing While You Wait'. Meetings are usually held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, at 2.30pm.

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our next meeting will be held on Monday March 10th when guest speaker George Young will be talking about alpine bulbs for the garden and greenhouse. Our meetings take place in St Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. The doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 4132574.

Our Northumberland spring show of bulbs, woodland plants and alpine flowers in flower is being held on Saturday March 29th at the Wentworth Leisure Centre, Hexham. Open to the public from 12noon to 4pm. Plant sales from 10.30am. Entry £2.50 (AGS/SGGC members free). Show Secretary Peter Maguire tel. (0191) 2840385.

Ponteland Parish Flower Show Cantonese Evening

Ponteland Parish Flower Show invite you to a Cantonese Evening at the New Rendezvous Restaurant on Monday March 10th, 7pm for 7.30pm. Tickets priced at £17 are available from Syd Cowan on (01661) 824459. Profits from the evening are in aid of the Flower Show. Tickets can be booked by telephone – why not get a table of friends together and book a table for the night?

Ponteland Village W.I.

Our speaker on Tuesday March 11th will be Michael Taylor - with his talk 'Prestwick and Beyond'. The competition this month will be a picture of Old Ponteland. Our meetings start at 7pm and are held in the Memorial Hall Darras Road. New members and visitors most welcome. Visit our Facebook page for more details: facebook.com/PontelandVillageWI

Ponteland Business Network

Ponteland Business Network's next meeting is being held on Friday March 14th at the Diamond Inn from 7.45am to 9.45am. See article on page 17.

Ponteland Methodist Church Spring Concert

For the Spring Concert Graeme and Valerie Danby will be in concert with the University of Sunderland Choir on Saturday March 15th at 7pm. Refreshments will be served after

the concert. Tickets priced at £7 are available from Syd Cowan on (01661) 824459. Tickets can be booked by telephone and picked up on the night of the concert.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Tuesday March 18th at 7.30pm at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Demonstration by Mildred Stafford of Ferryhill (A). Title: 'Dare to be Different'. AGM starts at 7pm.

Charity music night at Britannia Hotel

Kate the violinist and leading North-East saxophonist Keith Robinson present a show for all – classical and modern – at the Britannia Hotel, Newcastle Airport, at 6pm on Sunday March 23rd. Tickets cost £12 (concessions £8/under-16s £5) in aid of Cerebral Palsy are available from Mackley & Steven, 25 Main Street, Ponteland. Sponsored by the Britannia Hotel.

Ponteland Repertory Society - Teechers by John Godber: March 25-29

Ponteland Repertory Society would like to invite everyone one support their next show taking place from March 25th to 29th at the Memorial Hall. See article on page 16.

Ponteland Civic Society

The next meeting of Ponteland Civic Society on Monday March 31st at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall is the AGM followed by Stewart Bonney, Editor of The Northumbrian, our county magazine, who will speak on 'An Editor's Life' followed by the opportunity for comments and questions. Visitors most welcome, for whom there is a nominal charge of £2.

Organisations can now list events online on the new Town Council website's events calendar at: www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk/events-calendar



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Kingston Park Community Centre Tuesdays 2pm-2.45pm
Ponteland United Reformed Church Thursdays 9.30am-10-15am

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Ponteland Community High School Report

Youth Cabinet aims to get young people interested in politics

By Jess Rae

Politics is something which affects each and every one of us, yet young people in Britain today are often criticised for not taking an active role in the democratic process.

According to research, 56% of 17 to 25 year olds are not on the electoral roll. However, local students are trying to engage their peers through the Northumberland Youth Cabinet. Members come from schools across the county to act as a voice for young people.

Former Cabinet member and past pupil of Ponteland Community High School Kevin Wilson spoke about his time in the Cabinet

and how this has helped him through his post-school career.

He said: "The Cabinet means we have a voice that is heard by county councillors. It is a great way for young people to get involved in local politics, which is often the politics which has the greatest effect on our day to day lives.

"Being on the Youth Cabinet has of course boosted my public speaking and communication skills, but has also made me more level headed and pragmatic. It has meant me travelling around and speaking to young people and the Cabinet has required getting familiar with policy documents and the workings of local government."



So it seems that here in Northumberland we have a sturdy base of politically active young adults proving there is always an exception to the rule.

Youth Cabinet and former PCHS students Anna Sutcliffe, Kevin Wilson and Sarah Briggs



Netball team named regional champions

Our U16 netball team is celebrating being named regional champions after defeating several schools in a recent tournament.

Ponteland beat Central High School, English Martyrs, Polam Hall, Durham High School for Girls and Dame Allan's School to proceed to the national finals on March 15 at Whitby High School in Cheshire.

The winning team: (back row) Millie Cassidy; Charlotte Fraser; Sophie Reay; Faye Walker; (front row) Grace Lambert; Rachel Cripwell; Rhianna Telfer; Julia Elder; Sasha Hodges; Alex Reeman; Annabel Atkinson.

Come and see 'Our House'...

By Ashley Waugh

Rehearsals are well underway for Ponteland High School's annual production 'Our House', based around the music of top British band Madness.

Set in London's Camden Town (or in our case Newcastle), the show features 28 all singing all dancing students from Years 9 to 13 telling an uplifting tale of life and love, heartbreak and hilarity, good and bad, to the catchy tunes of the ska band's 15 UK top ten singles.

It's main character Joe Casey's 16th birthday night and he's treating his girlfriend Sarah to an evening in a brand new luxury apartment - the only problem is he has to break in! When the police turn up Joe

has to decide - run away, or face the music - a choice that will set the course of his life, and his love, forever.

Students have been rehearsing after school, at weekends and days during the half term. Director Alyson Burridge said: "We are so impressed with the talent the cast display and look forward to seeing big audiences. As a result of the sheer talent the main parts are double cast."

So, pick out your best Baggy Trousers and get Driving In Your Car down to Ponteland Memorial Hall, Tuesday March 4th to Friday March 7th at 7pm. Tickets are on sale from the main office of Ponteland High School and are priced at £5.

Red letter day for charity

On Friday February 7 the school was swamped by a sea of red as every student donned a red outfit in honor of the British Heart Foundation's Ramp Up The Red day.

The school joined thousands of other participants up and down the country to show support for the fight against heart disease. Activities including cake sales and sponsored silences raised £1,413.25 for the charity. A stellar effort by stellar students!

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Door to door minibus service extended

A service offering door to door transport for people in Ponteland who would otherwise have difficulty getting out and about has been extended.

A new bigger minibus has been purchased for the Ponteland Hopper service, supported by funding Northumberland county councillors Veronica Jones and Peter Jackson have for capital schemes within their wards.

Funding to operate the service for longer hours has also been secured, following a further successful bid by Janet Boakes, the Chair of Ponteland Ageing Well, together with Coun Jones and David Gambles from Ponteland Community Partnership.

The new extended service now operates on Fridays from 9am and 2pm, providing return transport from your home to destinations within the Ponteland area. It is designed for people who cannot access local bus services to attend GP/dental appointments, shopping, meeting friends or visiting the library etc, and has low floor access for baby buggies and wheelchairs.

The service is operated by community transport provider Adapt (NE) and has been set up in partnership with the County Council, Town Council, PCP, and Pointnorth Community Interest Company.

Passengers need to register as an Adapt member (£3 per year) by either contacting the charity on 01434 600599 to have a membership form posted out or by collecting one on board when first using the service.



Coun Jones said: "It is very pleasing that the Hopper has been so successful. Coun Jackson and I have been determined to ensure the purchase of a new, bigger vehicle to cope with the demand and to help those in Ponteland that make use of this valuable service. We hope it will go from strength to strength."

The cost for a door to door return fare is £3. To book a seat, please contact Adapt (NE) on 01434 600599 by 12noon on Thursday latest.

Coun Jones is pictured with the new minibus.

Ponteland Wildlife Group celebrates 40th anniversary

By Mike Sadler

Early February saw the 40th Anniversary AGM of the Ponteland Group of Northumberland Wildlife Trust.

In an illustrated address, NWT Chief Executive Mike Pratt thanked members for their valuable support over the years for the many projects the Trust had run, and spoke of the need for continued vigilance by all local residents to ensure that the wonderful wildlife of our region is sustained for future generations to enjoy.

There followed an excellent buffet provided by members, with a celebration cake made and decorated by Margaret Stainsby.

Formed back in 1974, the Ponteland Group continues to run an interesting programme of monthly talks (starting at



7.30pm on the first Tuesday throughout the winter months) at St Mary's church hall in the village.

At the next meeting on March 4th Joanna Dailey will give an illustrated talk entitled 'Ospreys on Kielder' and the last talk of this session will be on April 1st by Simon Elliott entitled 'Secret Sounds of Northumberland'. All are welcome - admission £2 including refreshments.

NWT Chief Executive Mike Pratt receives a donation of £500 from Ponteland Chairman Ian Lavelle.

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Practice launches pioneering facial treatments

Emma introduces new techniques to transform your appearance

From vampire facelifts to veneers, Higgins & Winter's new dental practitioner Emma Hand is offering a wide range of aesthetic treatments designed to transform the way you look and feel.

They include platelet rich plasma therapy, dermal fillers, wrinkle reduction, smile design and cosmetic crowns.

More commonly known as the vampire facelift, platelet rich plasma therapy is a very natural procedure which involves taking blood, separating the platelets, and injecting them back into the face to stimulate the repair of skin. It is recognised globally as a cutting edge cosmetic treatment.

And Emma has been trained by the best. After more than a decade working as a general dentist in Newcastle, she moved to Manchester where she completed a two year postgraduate course in cosmetic dentistry with internationally acclaimed Prosthodontist Dr Paul Tipton.

The mother-of-two recently returned to her native North-East to rejoin former colleague Kevin Higgins at the practice he took over with Richard Winter two years ago. Her arrival extends the range of treatments available, which also include restorative and implant dentistry.

But has Emma tried any of the treatments she advocates?

"Yes, I have had Botox and also vampire facials, and I am wearing braces on my teeth to improve my own smile. So I can definitely personally recommend them."

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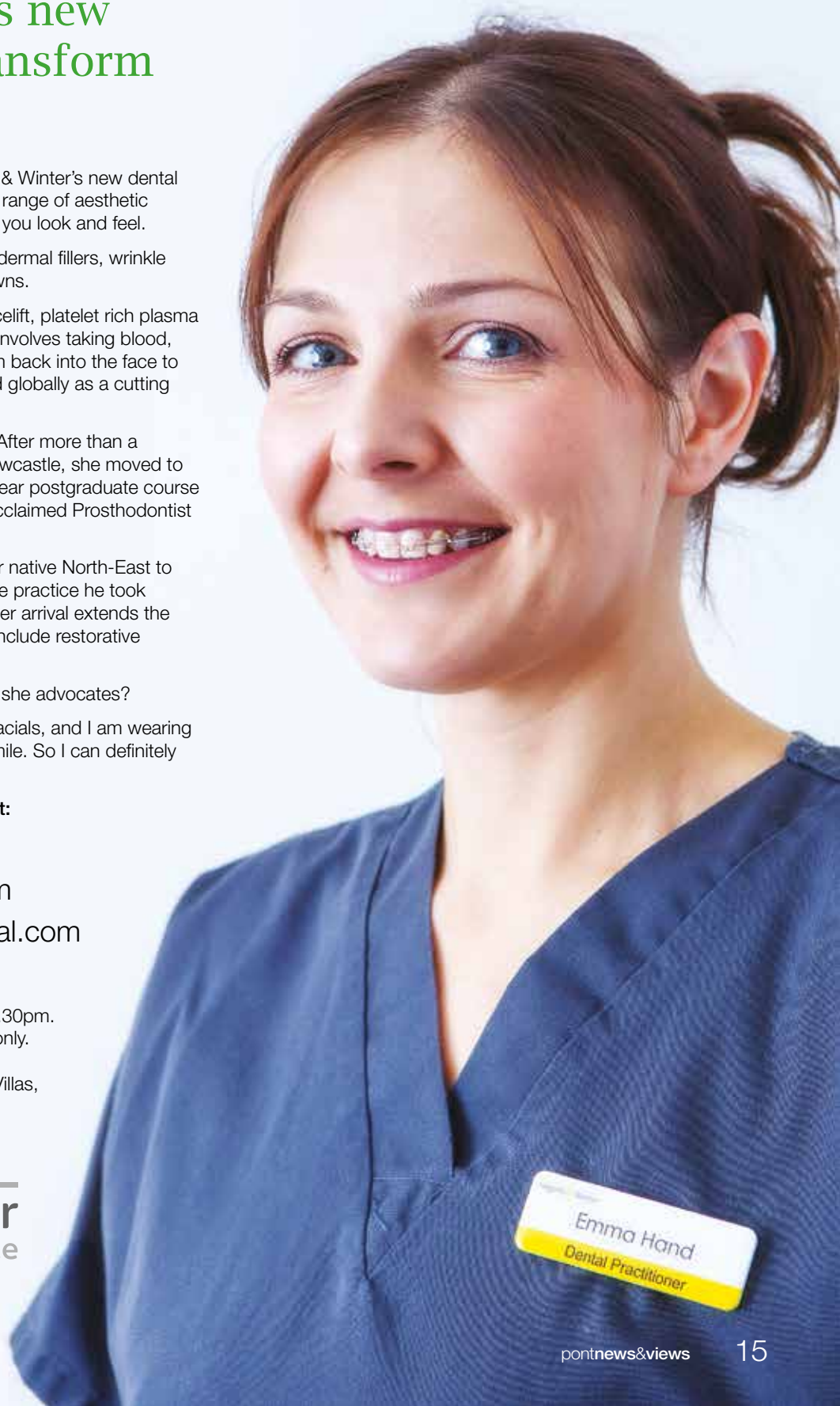
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Children in costume to bring history to life

Hundreds of children brought history to life as they dressed up and re-enacted periods and characters from the Egyptians to the Victorians.

All 400 pupils at Darras Hall First School took part in the history week, with Reception children enjoying storytelling of myths and legends, Year 1 looking at the great explorers, Year 2 finding out about Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling, Year 3 researching Anglo Saxon Times and Year 4 going back even further to the Ancient Egyptians.

Activities included investigating Tutankhamun's tomb, identifying an Anglo Saxon hall via artefacts found by archaeologists and establishing from a suitcase of objects what belonged to each great explorer.

The school's history co-ordinator Lucy Fargher said: "This week has been about giving history a higher profile, making sure it is fun and enjoyable, bringing history to life for the children."

Photos by Keith Robertson

Students become teachers in rep's latest production

By Deborah M Barry

Ponteland Repertory Society would like to invite everyone to support their next show taking place from March 25th to 29th at the Memorial Hall.



Teechers by John Godber is an entertaining comedy illustrating many of the anxieties in education today, but it also has a serious message too.

A cast of just six players switch quickly from playing various students at Whitewalls High School to playing some of their teachers at the school and between then they become Year 11 students Gail, Hobby and Salty, Mrs Parry the Head, Doug the caretaker, Mr Basford the terrifying Maths teacher, Oggy Moxon the school bully, and many more.

The cast includes Gavin Redhead who played Crabtree in *Allo Allo* and Mickey in *Blood Brothers*; Charlotte Stone who was also in *Blood Brothers*; and Stephen Stokoe who played Nanny Knickerbocker, Adam Thompson who played Prince Percy, Lucy Walton who was Fairy Flutter and Jonny Woollett who was as Jo-Jo Jangles the Jester all in *Sleeping Beauty*.

Tickets are just £8 for adults and £6 for children (not suitable for under 12s), and can be purchased online at www.pontelandrep.co.uk



Richard Coates Middle School pupils Jamie Boynton and Brogan Greenwell with the new books for Ponteland Library. Photo by Peter McCartney, Morpeth Herald.

Pupils choose new books for village library

Ponteland students ensured their favourite books were on the shelves at the village library – by choosing the new titles they wanted!

In a new scheme, Northumberland County Council allocated £250 to be spent on books local schoolchildren wanted at Ponteland Library. And four Year 8 students from Richard Coates Middle School chose 25 new books, including *Coco Caramel* by Cathy Cassidy.

Val Tyler, policy board member for community infrastructure and culture, said: "We want to involve young people as much as possible so that the books in our libraries are books that they enjoy and can help with their studies."

"The idea of letting them choose books for their peers has been extremely successful and we will be using their suggestions to buy young adult books for other libraries in Northumberland."

Notice of Application for Licence

Notice is hereby given that the trustees of Merton Hall have submitted an application for a premises licence in respect of Merton Hall Recreation Centre, Merton Way, Ponteland, NE20 9PX.

The proposed application is for films, indoor sporting events, recorded music, performances of dance and similar entertainment between the hours of 9am and 11pm from Monday until Sunday.

All comments about the application must be made in writing and sent to: The Licensing Section, Northumberland County Council, Public Protection Service, Loansdean, Morpeth, NE61 2AP, by 25 March 2014.

Details of the application can be viewed Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

Note: It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application and is subject to a maximum fine of £5000 on summary conviction for the offence.

Network with other small businesses over breakfast

By Peter Sutcliffe

Ponteland Business Network's next meeting is being held on Friday March 14th at the Diamond Inn from 7.45am to 9.45am.

The first meeting of the year was well attended with 19 local businesses present. A new format was welcomed which included informative and entertaining presentations on subjects of interest to the local business community as well as informal sessions for those who enjoy friendly banter and networking.

We already have many examples of inter-member trading and lead generation.

Future meeting agendas are to include short keynote presentations on topics of interest that could help local businesses grow and prosper. Topics to date have included the benefits of sponsorship of the Ponteland Rugby Club Beer Festival (April 25-26) and an update on the Ponteland Community Trust.

Other presentations planned include the uses of social media systems in businesses and the ways in which they can be used to grow not only your organisation's visibility but also to generate extra sales.

We always look forward to seeing you at the meeting for the whole or part of the event so that we can help each other to promote Ponteland and its businesses. Please let us know if you can attend so that catering can be organised by emailing brian@profitabilitygroup.co.uk

The entry cost is £10 to include a bacon butty or croissant, tea and coffee.



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Can you spare one Sunday to lay on afternoon tea for the elderly?

By Muriel Sobo

What do you do on a Sunday afternoon? Perhaps the family visit, you go shopping to town, visit our splendid countryside or look round historic houses.

Plenty to do but they all depend on using a car if you live in Ponteland or some of the surrounding villages. What if you live on your own, no family at hand and no car? The bus routes around Ponteland are not very user friendly and many older people cannot walk the distance to the nearest bus stop.

Contact the Elderly is a countrywide initiative to bring older people on their own into contact with each other and enjoy a Sunday afternoon, once a month, of chat and laughter at the home of a volunteer host who will lay on afternoon tea.

Hosts are only asked to host one tea party a year for up to eight people. All that is needed is a downstairs toilet, a large tea pot and a warm welcome!

The older guests are brought to the house



by a volunteer driver. Drivers are asked to pick up one or two older guests and ferry them safely home afterwards. The drivers join the party and enjoy the tea and chat too. And of course if you would like to join in on Sunday afternoons for the company and meet some new people then you too can Contact the Elderly.

In January four persons and their drivers all met up for tea with their hostess. Two guests lived in Ponteland, one in Dinnington

and another in Stamfordham. One of the ladies had been a Land Girl during the war and another was quite lonely since her dog had died but was planning to get another one. It was a very rewarding two hours for everyone.

If you wish to volunteer to be a hostess, a driver or to join in as a guest please contact sheila.ryder@contact-the-elderly.org.uk or call Sheila on 01434 672110.

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All proceeds to The Toby Henderson Trust.
Sat 29th March, Stock clearance sale at Ponteland Methodist Church Hall (next to Rook Matthews). 10am-12.30pm

Panache Ladies Fashions, 11 Main Street, Ponteland, 01661 824100

St Oswald's charity night in memory of my grandfather

By Jess Rae

Every two minutes, someone in Britain is diagnosed with cancer. Yet we never think it will happen to us, right?

Right up to the moment it hits you like a freight train; you, or someone you love, has cancer. A million and one things rush into your in an instant; but the overriding thought is who will be there to care?

This is where St Oswald's Hospice, Newcastle, steps in. Founded in the early 1970s, St Oswald's has been providing invaluable care for people in the North East with life limiting illnesses. The outstanding team at St Oswald's works collectively to provide 'holistic, multi-disciplinary care which meets physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs.'

After losing my grandfather to cancer after a stay at the hospice, I was inspired by the dedication, love and compassion of those caring for him. What's more, I was astounded to discover that each year the facility costs £10m to run; £6.5m of which

comes directly from charitable donations and fundraising. Spurred on by this and gratitude to the hospice, I set about pulling together anything I could to give something back.

And so began the planning for a charity night influenced heavily by awe and appraisal of the work of the hospice. With support from representatives at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club and Newcastle United Football Club, the night is quickly gathering momentum and is set to take place on the evening of Thursday March 20th at Newcastle Falcons rugby ground.

With live entertainment from local jazz singer Jason Isaacs alongside an auction hosted by Newcastle's own goal keeping guru, Andy Woodman, the night is shaping up to be sensational.

For more information, tickets or donations please do not hesitate to contact me at jess_rea@hotmail.co.uk or visit the just giving page at www.justgiving.com/StOswaldsCharityNight-NewcastleFalcons

Church events

By The Reverend Peter Barham

Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent, a period of reflection. There are services at St Mary's at 10am and 7pm. All are welcome.

During Lent, Churches Together in Ponteland are planning film evenings on Tuesdays. We will watch the film together, then there will be a time for discussion. On March 11th 'Chocolat', March 18th 'A Matter of Life and Death' and March 25th 'Of Gods and Men'. All at 7pm at Ponteland Methodist Church. All are welcome.

There are Lent study groups planned through St Mary's looking at a booklet called 'Build on the Rock - faith, doubt ... and Jesus'. Anyone is welcome to join us - visit www.pontelandstmary.co.uk or phone the Church Office on (01661) 824470 for more details.

Mothering Sunday is March 30th, and there is a Family Service in St Mary's with daffodils for mums at 10am.



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