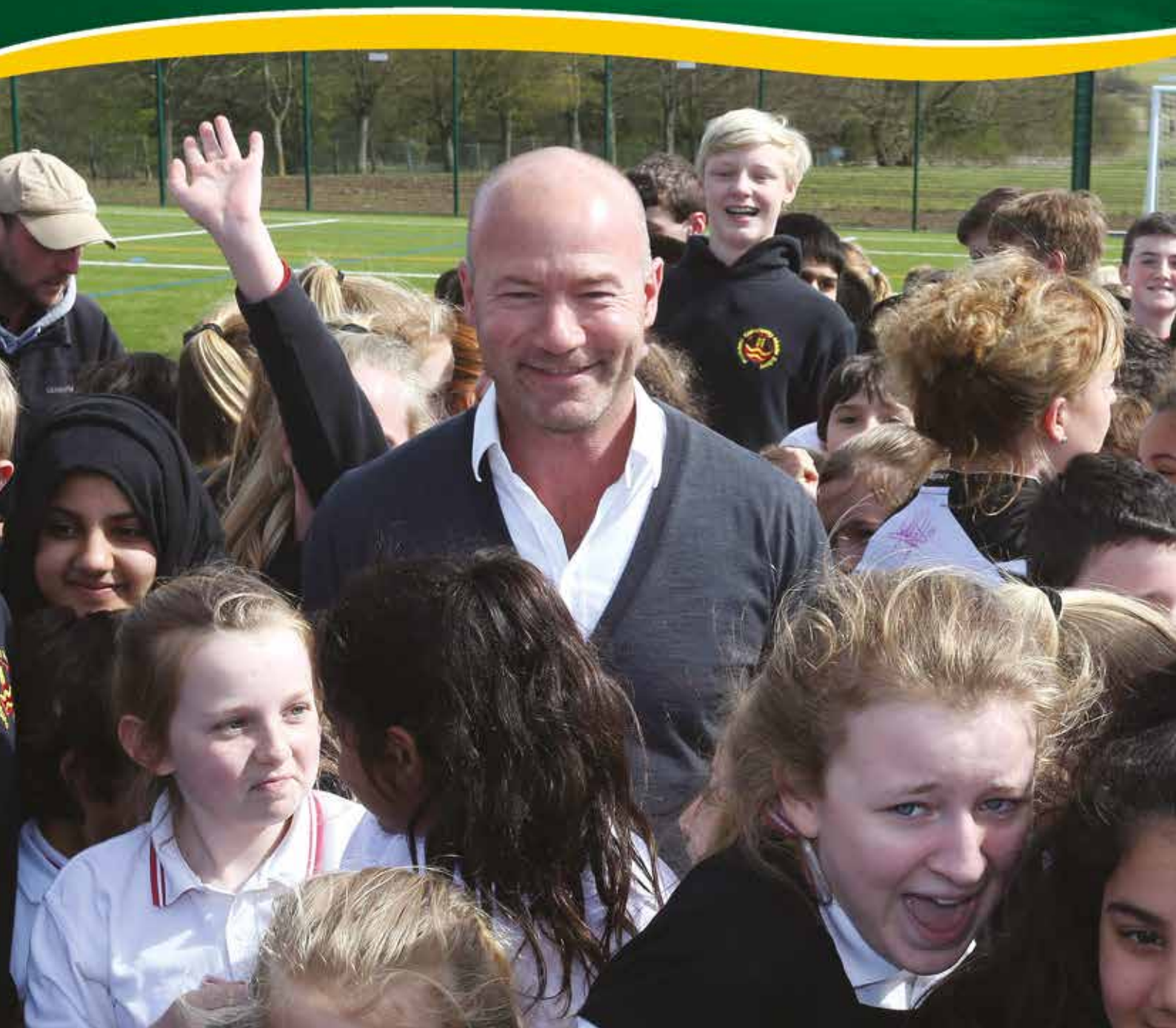


pontnews&views

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Executive flats plan
approved on appeal

Young author has first
book published aged 11

Retiring Ponteland policeman
receives civic award

Toon legend opens new community sports facility



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Produced by Cian creative pr



Eclipse that pic!

A talented teenager's interest in photography is really taking off after he took this superb shot of a plane leaving Newcastle Airport during the recent solar eclipse.

Matthew Ross, 17, snapped KLM flight 958 just after take-off on Friday March 20th from his back garden.

His interest in photography followed a trip to Dubai where he found he enjoyed taking pics, and he received his Canon EOS 650D camera as a present for Christmas in 2012. Last year he set up a Facebook page and website to share his images, but is currently too busy with his A-levels to spend much time on his new found hobby.

The Ponteland High School student said: "I live in Darras Hall just off Edge Hill and always read the magazine. I managed to snap a couple of good pictures from my back garden but this one stood out in particular. I thought you might like it and it may even come in handy when writing next month's articles!"

Are you interested in photography?

Send your pics to pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk and we will feature the best ones submitted.

Darras Hall mum takes on London to Paris cycle challenge

A Darras Hall mum-of-two is saddling up for a London to Paris cycle ride to raise cash for a charity which funded a friend's lifesaving operation.

Angie Cohen-Clark will join old friend Alli Dufosse and her pal Sallie Taylor for the 300-mile ride at the end of July.

Alli – who hails from Ponteland – now lives in Wiltshire where she settled with her husband Sean, who has recently endured two years of gruelling treatment following a diagnosis of multiple myeloma.

Sean was medevaced out of Afghanistan and given three weeks to live but, thanks to a successful bone marrow transplant courtesy of the Anthony Nolan Trust, he is now well on the road to recovery.

With Alli and Sallie, who lives in Holland, looking for an unusual way to mark their 50th birthdays this year, the idea came about to undertake the cycle ride for the charity. The trio have set a target of £13,500 and have so far raised more than £2,000.

The ride starts at 7am on Wednesday July 29th at Blackheath Common, and day one sees the three cycle to Dover, where they will take the 4pm ferry to Calais before a short ride to their overnight hotel stop.

Days two and three are of similar duration – 80 miles – but day four is shorter at 69 miles, and they hope to arrive at the foot of the Eiffel Tower at 4pm on Saturday August 1st.

Angie, 53, of Eastern Way, said: "I have never taken part in any serious cycling ever, neither had I planned to - I find myself in a state of panic most days and awake most nights! But this is my way of letting my friends know how much I care about them and how much I want to help.

"The Anthony Nolan Trust is a pioneering charity that saves lives of people with blood cancer. Every day, the charity uses its register to match remarkable individuals willing to donate their bone marrow to people who desperately need lifesaving transplants.

"Every potential lifesaver costs Anthony Nolan £100 to recruit, test, screen and maintain on the register. They receive no government funding. So, please do what you can to support - let's make a difference."

Anyone wishing to donate to Angie's appeal can do so via her Justgiving page at justgiving.com/Angela-Cohen-Clark or via text, using code ANGY65 then the amount, to 70070.



Angie Cohen-Clark out training for her London to Paris bike ride.
Photo by Trevor Walker.



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Top civic award for retiring Ponteland policeman

A Ponteland policeman who retires this summer after 30 years' service has received a top civic award.

PC Rob Anderson has been given this year's Meritorious Award by Ponteland Town Council for his service to the community.

Rob started his career in September 1985 at the age of 20 at Dishforth Police Training Centre before taking up his first post in North Shields in January 1986.

After six years he transferred to Morpeth where he stayed until November 2000, also covering Ponteland and working at the Police House with the attached office in Stanington as a Neighbourhood Officer.

His next move saw him in Blyth before he joined the Police Unit which covers the Metro system for six years. After short spells in Hexham and Bedlington, in 2009 he transferred to Prudhoe which now also covered Ponteland.

Rob's final move saw him based at Ponteland Police Station, later taking over the Neighbourhood Beat Manager's job in 2012.

Away from the beat, father-of-one Rob lives in Hexham and enjoys his lifelong hobby of wargaming, supporting AS Roma and his great love of Northern Soul music.

Following his retirement in September he plans to expand his wargaming businesses Reiver Castings and Northumbrian Painting Services – manufacturing wargames figures and other related items such as scenery and books – and travel to Italy regularly.

Rob said: "I was overwhelmed by the award I was given and certainly didn't expect it. I've tried my best to help as many people as possible while I've been in Ponteland and I see this type of posting as my chance to give something back to the community.

"I've enjoyed my time here and the residents of Ponteland have made it all the better by the assistance they've given while I've been here and by making me welcome.

"I've been lucky enough to have good support from my colleagues at the Police (and Fire) Station, in particular Jon Gray, Lee Davison, Paul Cotterill and Jill Ruddick and it's



Mayor Carl Rawlings presents the Meritorious Service award to PC Anderson.
Photo by Trevor Walker.

been difficult at times with the changing structure of the service but I will miss it.

"It's been great to work with the Town Council, ISOS Housing, Ponteland Community Partnership and all of the schools too and I have fond memories of them all."

Presenting the award, an engraved pen set and a framed certificate at the April meeting of the Town Council, Mayor Carl Rawlings said: "Rob has an air of authority and is known for a direct but fair manner. He is an approachable policeman who communicates well and he works hard to keep Ponteland a safe and pleasant place to live.

"Although he does not look old enough, we are told that it is time for Rob to retire as a policeman. It is people like Rob who contribute time and effort that make Ponteland a desirable place to live and so it therefore gives the Town Council great pleasure in presenting this small token of appreciation to Rob Anderson."

Easter egg raffle raises over £800 for local charity



Customers from Ponteland restaurant Fratelli raised more than £800 for a charity supporting disabled people in a raffle for a 10kg Easter egg.

The £802 raised has been donated to Bradbury Court (part of Leonard Cheshire disability) by St Mary's church hall and will be used on one of two current projects - a new spa bathroom and a trip to Edinburgh zoo for the residents.

The Fratelli management would like to thank all who took part in the raffle, which was won by a local family.



Witness appeal after sharp rise in assaults

By PC Rob Anderson
Ponteland Neighbourhood Beat Manager



In the period between March 17th and April 12th we have had 28 crimes recorded for the Ponteland area.

These break down to the following offences:

- Eleven assaults
- Five thefts from shops
- Two burglary other than dwellings
- Two damages to motor vehicles
- One fraud by false representation
- One possession of cannabis
- One theft
- One damage to a dwelling
- One damage to property
- One arson
- One theft of a motor vehicle
- One theft from a motor vehicle.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to these offences, with arrests having been made.

There has been a sharp rise in assaults this month. Over the Easter weekend there were three assaults in The Seven

Stars, one on Good Friday evening and two on Easter Monday evening.

If you have any information regarding these assaults could you please contact us on the below number. We take all assaults seriously and anyone found committing an offence in any of our licensed premises will be placed on the Pubwatch ban for the area as well as being liable to prosecution by the police.

We are entering the time of year when residents use their gardens more often. Please remember to take in all your tools and secure them if you are carrying out any work in the garden.

Also remind your children to pick up their bikes and toys when they are finished playing and take them indoors. If you remember to put your property away then we should be able to stop any opportunist theft.

CSO Paul Cotterill will be at The Ageing Well event at St Mary's Church Hall on Saturday May 9th. Please come along

to see him. 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:

- PC Rob Anderson May 2nd 10am-11am Waitrose, Ponteland
- PC Rob Anderson May 2nd 11.30am-12.30pm Co-op, Broadway
- CSO Paul Cotterill May 21st 9.30am-10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland
- PC Lee Davison May 23rd 11.30am-12.30pm at Belsay village shop

Engagement days for the Ponteland area are as follows:

- Merton Way, Ponteland
10am-12noon May 13th
- Broadway, Ponteland
1pm – 3pm May 13th
- Belsay 6pm – 8pm May 20th

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Executive flats plan approved on appeal

Controversial plans for a block of executive apartments in Ponteland have been approved on appeal by a planning inspector.

Galliford Try's house-building division Linden Homes appealed after their application for the five-storey block on the western part of a site at Mill House, off West Road, was turned down last year by Northumberland County Council's west area planning committee.

The site, which borders Ponteland Park, was previously developed with offices for Galliford Try.

Committee members said that the scale, design and massing of the proposed building was inappropriate and the application had not sufficiently addressed parking and highway safety issues.

More than 50 objections were lodged by local residents and organisations including Ponteland Civic Society, the Friends of Ponteland Park, Ponteland Town Council and the 1st Ponteland Scout Group, with



concerns including drainage and flooding issues, impact on wildlife, noise and light pollution.

In the appeal decision notice, planning inspector Mark Caine rejected the objections on design, environmental impact and highway safety grounds.

He said: "I do not consider that the proposal's contemporary design, appearance, size, scale and massing would be so conspicuous as to result in a dominant, incongruous, alien feature that would be out of keeping with Ponteland or its park setting."

Mill Rise will comprise 18 executive apartments – with three penthouses on the top floor. Site preparations will begin in May with construction fully underway by the summer and the first apartments ready in spring 2016.

Linden Homes' Head of Sales Kate Brooks, said: "We are delighted that this project has been awarded planning permission. This carefully considered scheme will be delivered sensitively and with as little impact on the local area as possible."

An artist's impression of the Mill Rise scheme



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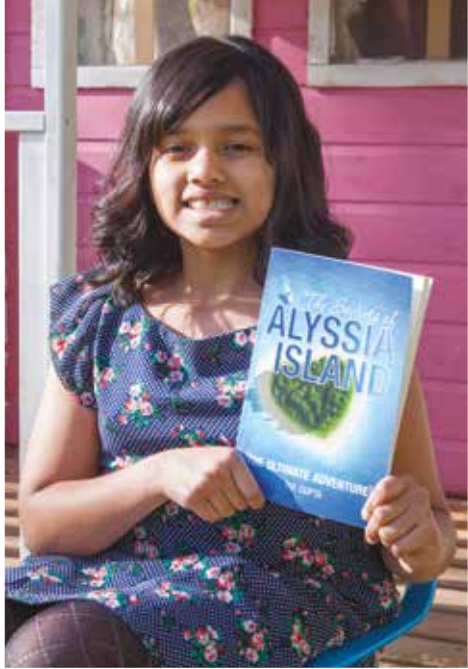
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Young author has first book published aged 11



A Darras Hall schoolgirl has had her first book published – aged just 11.

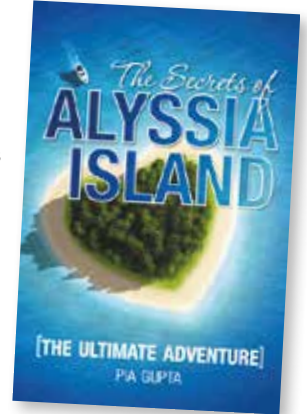
Pia Gupta's adventure tale *The Secrets of Alyssia Island*, about six friends who paddled by canoe to the mysterious destination, has been put on sale online by Amazon and WH Smith.

The Newcastle High School for Girls student, of Hadrian Court, has always had an interest in writing and hopes to inspire other children to follow her passion.

Proud father Ashwani, a consultant anaesthetist at Gateshead's Queen Elizabeth Hospital, said: "Pia is very keen to share her success story with a wider audience, in particular children of her age. She wants to inspire young authors and encourage children to use their imagination and unleash their creativity.

"Pia is still young to decide whether she would take up writing as a profession but certainly would like to continue writing."

You can purchase *The Secrets of Alyssia Island* via this link:
www.authorhouse.co.uk/Bookstore/BookDetail.aspx?BookId=SKU-000981642



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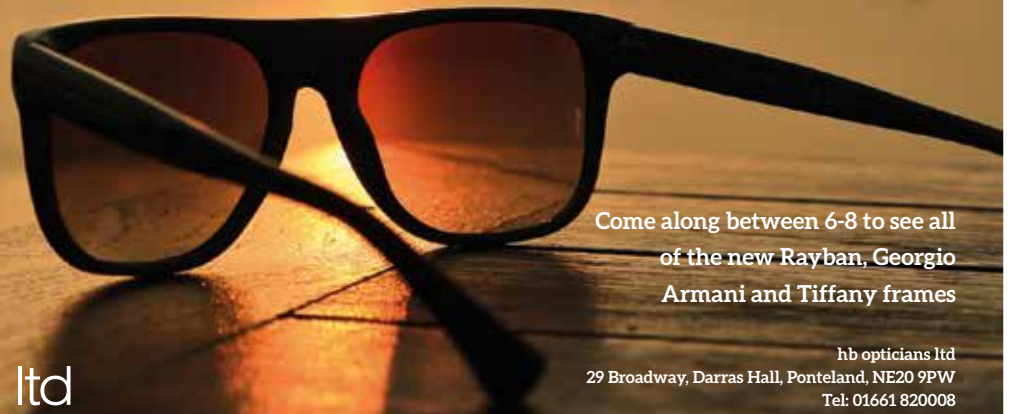
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Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



One of Ponteland's most prestigious streets is being trashed by selfish builders, according to one long suffering resident writing to this month's letters page.

18 months of noise, litter and selfish parking at the hands of mansion builders

I live on one of the few sharp bends in Darras Hall and since September 2013 I have lived next to a building site.

I have suffered workmen starting work at 7.30am making terrific noise and creating dreadful mess. There have been diggers, deliveries, stone grinders and small armies of workmen and their vehicles.

The noise and mess caused by their stone grinding has to be endured to be believed. Early morning deliveries and the never ending traffic are frightening. The workmen park wherever they feel is easiest for them - on both sides of the road on the verges and on the pavement and often blocking our driveway.

This part of Runnymede Road is a sharp bend so traffic enters this bend completely blind, unable to see oncoming traffic entering the bend from the opposing direction. This causes many problems and near misses.

They also park on the pavement, sometimes making it necessary for pedestrians to walk in the road on this blind corner. This is so dangerous for people with prams, buggies or trolleys.

The noise, the selfish parking and the abundant mess is not the only inconvenience; the workers also throw litter around. Building material packaging, food wrappers and drinks cartons are all to be found strewn around adjacent houses and the pavements and verges.

When are we going to stop this relentless conversion of houses into mansions by people who seem to then put them on the market soon after completion? So many of these houses seem to stay on the market, so why do we allow these speculative developments to continue?

We are long suffering ratepayers who will be left with blocked gutters and the destruction of our verges when the developers have moved to their new project.

Sundus Hallam
Runnymede Road, Darras Hall

Retired Guider appeals for new leaders

In 1921 the 1st Ponteland Brownie pack was registered, a very early unit nationally and by 1980 we had a Ranger Unit, six Guide companies and six Brownie packs in the village.

Now only one Guide unit, four Brownie packs (including one in Stamfordham) and one Rainbow remain. The reason is not loss

of enthusiasm from the girls - there is a long waiting list - but lack of leaders to organise and run the units.

Unless leaders can be found the future does not look promising. Helpers have volunteered in all existing units, and we thank those ladies, but leadership is what is needed.

Without women prepared to take on the units there is no future for Guiding in Ponteland. My fellow guiders from the past all had families, worked and still managed to run a unit, so please think about rising to the challenge and putting a little back into our community.

Maureen Barlow - retired Guider
Eachwick

Thanks to lady motorist who helped me after fall

I would like, through Pont News, to thank the young lady who stopped her car when I fell on Edgehill about a month ago, and took me and my friend to the Health Centre.

I don't know how we would have managed without her help, and I regret that I did not have the presence of mind to ask her name.

E Adamson
Oaklands, Ponteland

June issue deadlines: Delivery of the June issue will start on Monday June 1st and be completed by Friday June 5th. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday May 15th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or call (0191) 3408422. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the June issue.

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.

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What's on...

The Bridge

The Bridge is a different kind of church service. We are relaxed, family friendly and focus on how the Christian faith is relevant to our lives. Everyone is welcome at our services, whether you are a Christian or just asking questions. We meet on Sundays in Ponteland Methodist church hall. Some of our services are at 9.45am and some at 4pm. Dates for May: 3rd (9.45am), 10th (4pm: family service), 17th (9.45am), 31st (9.45am). For more info email us at thebridge.ponteland@gmail.com or phone (01661) 822057. Find us on Facebook as 'The Bridge at Ponteland Methodist Church'.

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday May 6th is Maureen Kesteven. Her topic is 'The National Garden Scheme'. We meet in St Mary's Church Hall at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Visitors are welcome. No charge. Interested in our activities? Come to a monthly meeting, visit our website at www.u3asites.org.uk/ponteland or ring the membership secretary on (01661) 822225. Our June meeting will be on June 3rd.

Kirkley WI

The meeting on Wednesday May 6th has a distinctly feminine focus with members looking forward to hearing Mrs Maddison reveal the history of the powder compact. In addition the monthly competition invites all attending to bring along their favourite brooch. New members or guests always welcome on the first Wednesday of the month in the Oak Room, Kirkley Hall at 7pm.

VE Day commemoration

The 70th anniversary of VE Day is being marked with services and events on Friday May 8th. There will be a short service in St Mary's and laying of flowers by the Mayor at 2pm and in the evening at 9.30pm we will be joining many other communities by lighting a beacon on the top of St Mary's. The bells will be rung for the service on Friday and at 11am on Saturday.

Stepping into Spring coffee morning

Saturday May 9th 9.30am to 12noon at St Mary's Church Hall. Come along, have a cuppa and find out about activities and groups in your area. Ponteland Hopper bus available to take you to and from the event FOC. For more information call 07706 996897.

Ponteland Bowling Club

Come and give bowls a try at Ponteland Bowling Club, Darras Road, Ponteland. Open Day and 'Bowls for Free' Sessions on Saturdays May 9th, 23rd and 30th at 10.30am until 12.30pm and Fridays May 15th and 29th from 2pm until 4pm. All welcome; equipment and refreshments provided. See website: www.pontelandbowls.com

Come and learn more about trees

A talk will be given by archaeologist, woodsman and traveller Max Adams on 'The Wisdom of Trees' at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday May 9th at 2.30pm. Arranged by Plant Heritage, entry is £2 and free to Plant Heritage members.

Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers have organised walks on the following dates in May: Sunday 10th from Stocksfield, and Sunday 24th from Rowley. People who are not Ramblers members are welcome to join us as guests for a few walks. Contact Steve Edwards on (01661) 886310.

URC Christian Aid service

There is a Christian Aid service at the URC Sunday May 10th at 6.30pm. There will be a Christian Aid collection around the town, so please be generous when the collector calls.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday May 11th is Prof John Derry whose talk is entitled 'Wellington and Waterloo'. 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 meeting on Monday May 11th will be 'Show and Tell'. Our members will bring along plants they have grown and talk about how to grow them from seed, pricking out, repotting, types of pots, watering and feeding. There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions about the plants our members have brought to the meeting. Our meeting takes place in St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Rd, Ponteland and starts at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or (0191) 413 2574.

Rotary Club Am/Am Golf Competition

The traditional St George's Day Golf Competition and Dinner and the popular fundraising Am/Am Golf Competition, both organised by the Rotary Club of Ponteland, will be held at Ponteland Golf Club on Tuesday May 12th. All proceeds to Rotary charities.

Ponteland Village WI

On Tuesday May 12th we are having our Annual Meeting with a 'Ten Decades of Baking Competition'. If you would like to enter just bring along a home baked favourite for judging on the night! We are a warm and friendly WI and welcome new members and visitors for a girly night with a difference. We meet on the second Tuesday each month at 7.30pm in St Mary's Church Hall. For more information please contact us via email: pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or on our Facebook page 'PontelandVillageWI'.

Ascension Day Choral Communion

Thursday May 14th is Ascension Day, when Christians remember Christ's return to heaven. There is a service of Choral Communion at Holy Saviour, Milbourne, at 7pm, to which all are welcome.

All Age Worship at St Mary's

Sunday May 17th at 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's - our theme this month is 'Out of this world'. All are welcome. In the evening, at 6.30pm, the choir sing a service of Choral Evensong.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

A full day workshop is being held on May 18th - for further information contact the secretary. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road, on the 4th Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm (on Bank Holidays the meeting is held the previous Monday). Membership of the Branch and the Embroiderers' Guild to open to all, whatever their level of experience is welcome at meetings and workshops. Visitor fee (£4). Contact eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or (01661) 881395.

Ponteland Floral Art Club

Ponteland Floral Art Club will meet on May 21st at 7.30pm in Ponteland Memorial Hall. The demonstrator will be Val Guest, a well respected local area demonstrator from Heworth. The title of her demonstration is 'The Pioneers and Treasure Seekers'. The cost for non-members is £7. There will also be a plant stall on this evening.

Choral Communion at St Mary's

Sunday May 24th at 10am, Choral Communion in St Mary's, which will also commemorate William Thomas Glass, George Railton and Maurice Hill, three soldiers from the village who died at Ypres on this day 100 years ago. Are there any descendants of these men still in the area? Peter the Vicar would love to make contact with you before the service (01661) 822140.

Line dancing

We meet every Wednesday at 7pm in St Mary's Church Hall. We have lots of laughs, friendship and exercise to music. The cost is £20 for ten sessions. Dancing is at Beginner and Intermediate level. New dancers are always welcome, free taster session offered. Contact Rosemary Gray on (01661) 822493.

Audio Book Group

The group is for people who have visual impairment or face barriers in reading printed books. It is an opportunity to share books, listen to different authors or old favourites, and hear other people's views. Each month members take home an audio book, then return to the next meeting for an informal and relaxed discussion lead by the group leader. We meet at Ponteland Library on the first Monday of each month from 10.30am - 12noon. Membership is free. Contact Markham@northumberland.gov.uk or (01661) 823594.

DIARY DATES:

Talks at Kirkley Hall

Friends of Kirkley Hall would welcome members of the public to two talks taking place in the Grade II listed building at Kirkley Hall. Joanne Newbury, Learning Manager of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Washington, will be talking on June 10th about the work involved in saving the wetlands. On July 15th Kay Cooke will talk about Diston Physic Garden, its heritage, key players, pioneering research and ambitions. Both talks start at 7pm and a charge of £5 is made to non-members.

Party in the Park

This year's event will be on Sunday June 7th at 1.30pm and will be opened by Rev. Hubert Jicha III from Maryland, USA. Entertainment includes Darras Hall First School, Ponteland Community Band and Jill Errington Dance School. Admission £1 (children under 5 free)

Music in the Park

The popular free annual event returns to Ponteland Park on Sunday June 28th from 2.30pm to 5.30pm. BBC weather presenter Paul Mooney is once again opening the event, with music from Rendezvous Jazz Band, North Tyneside Steel Band, Ponteland Community Band.



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The monthly Town Council meeting was preceded by the Annual Town Meeting held at 7pm attended by some 15 residents and all 12 Town Councillors. The Mayor presented his annual report for 2014-15 and he also presented the Meritorious Service award to PC Rob Anderson, the Neighbourhood Beat Manager for Ponteland, who is retiring later in the year. PC Anderson was presented with a gift and a certificate from the Town Council and he was thanked for all of his hard work and commitment to the area over the past few years (see article on p6). The meeting ended with several questions from those in attendance.

GRANT APPLICATION – PONTELAND YOUTH SERVICE

The Council approved a grant of £5,500 for youth service work in Ponteland in 2015-16.

APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM TRIAL FOR TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

The Clerk has been asked to devise a system that would allow for open access to visitors to the office on some days and appointments only on others. This would be introduced for a trial period of three months, after which the success of the scheme and feedback from visitors would be discussed.

VE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Following discussion of a report listing various suggestions to mark the 70th anniversary of VE Day, it was agreed flowers would be laid at the oak on Coates Green that was planted to commemorate the original VE Day on the afternoon of May 8th and the beacon would be lit on the top of St Mary's church that evening. It was hoped that the bells at St Mary's Church would be rung at 11am on Saturday May 9th. Schools are also being contacted to see what they had planned to commemorate the day.

It was also agreed to contact local organisations to encourage them to mark the event, and any organisation organising an event open to the whole community would receive a small contribution from the Council.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

At the Highways Working Party meeting on March 13th members agreed four new permanent speed indicator signs at Cheviot View (both northbound and southbound), Ladywell Way and North Road. They also agreed the older existing Vehicle Activated Signs were removed for assessment and repair before being redeployed in the remaining six areas. Costs of these repairs will be met from the existing budget.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Town Council agreed the following recommendations from the Environment Working Party which met on March 16th:

- Installation of metal plates on the three picnic benches in the park subject to their suitability on recycled plastic and to costs being obtained.
- The adoption of a three year rolling programme for the work of the Environment Working Party which would feed into the budget process and provide a schedule of work for three years.
- Placing one of the large rocks at Fox Covert Lane on one of the lower planters at Merton Way. Suggestions of contractors who could carry out this work would be looked into.
- The provision of a stone marker and plaque next to the U3A memorial tree in the park.

CORE STRATEGY

At the March meeting the Council agreed to write to Northumberland County Council with questions on housing numbers, possible review of

numbers and green belt deletions. The Mayor and the Clerk have since had a meeting with the Head of Planning and a Locality Officer where the various questions were raised. A report summarising the responses received was circulated to councillors. Any further action would be considered at a later date.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Coun Dodd reported that one or two complaints had been received about the changes to the car park at the back of Merton Way which would be discussed at the next meeting of the Highways Working Party. Coun Dodd will also be visiting all of the businesses in that area.

AGEING WELL MEETING

Coun Greenwell submitted a report of a meeting held on March 23rd. The Step into Spring event would be held on Saturday May 9th at 9.30am at St Mary's Church hall and free refreshments would be available. A new website pontelandageingwell.org.uk had been set up by a High School pupil and had been very well received. There were another nine towns and villages holding their own Step Into Spring events based on the Ponteland model. See advert on p18.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor's Diary

A list of events and meetings attended by the Mayor during March was circulated to the Council. The Mayor referred to the forthcoming Community Action Northumberland Spring Conference being held at Acklington Village Hall on April 28th at 2pm and councillors were invited to attend.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on April 8th.

Therapist Hayley joins as practice continues to expand

Pioneering Ponteland dental practice Higgins & Winter has further expanded its talented team with the appointment of dental therapist Hayley Story.

Hayley, who started her career in dentistry five years ago, was trained at Newcastle Dental School where she qualified in Hygiene Therapy with a Distinction.

Hayley's role is relatively new to the profession, combining the skills of a dental hygienist with additional dental services. This means that as well as carrying out treatments for gum disease or a scale and polish, she can also undertake more complex dental procedures such as routine fillings and the extraction of deciduous (baby) teeth.

This is a huge benefit to the fast growing practice, as dentist Richard Winter explained: "Hayley is a superb addition to the team. Having a dental therapist who can carry out all the duties of a hygienist as well as undertaking fillings, extractions and X-rays brings enhanced skills to the practice and gives more flexibility and choice to our patients. We are delighted to have Hayley here."

Hayley, 24, added: "I was delighted when I was offered the job and the opportunity to join such an established and successful team. Higgins & Winter is very well known in the wider Ponteland community and has an excellent reputation within the profession. I'm really happy to have been welcomed to the team."

If you would like to book a consultation contact:

(01661) 872979

higginsandwinter.co.uk

info@higginsandwinterdental.com

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Lucky escape for driver after car overturns in Darras Hall smash

A driver had a lucky escape after a car overturned in an accident in Darras Hall.

Local photographer Keith Robertson captured the aftermath of the crash, which happened at the junction of Western Way and Darras Road at 5.40pm on Thursday April 16th.

The Lexus RX 300 pictured was in collision with a Volkswagen

Tiguan and the road was closed for a short time so that oil could be cleared. All three emergency services attended and the drivers received medical treatment at the scene for minor injuries.

Police are appealing for witnesses to come forward. Anyone who was in the area at the time and saw the collision is asked to contact Northumbria Police on 101 ext-69191, quoting log number 953 of 16/04/15.



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Toon legend meets another No 9

Newcastle legend Alan Shearer saw his famous number 9 shirt recreated in human form as he officially opened a nine-a-side all weather pitch at Ponteland Community Middle School.

The former England striker urged the staff and pupils to achieve their dream of a new AW surface in a visit back in January 2013, and returned to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony on April 15th.

He said: "I had a dream to be a footballer and you guys had a dream to one day have this fantastic facility. It's great to be here to open it and to see how magnificent it is. I never had anything like this at my school when I was their age.

"I hope the community get tremendous use out of it. Use it, cherish it and if they have a dream, go ahead and achieve it. I was the lucky one, but I made sacrifices and I helped myself. If you don't help yourself, not many people will do it for you."

The new £450,000 facility, which includes a nine-a-side pitch, seven-a-side pitch and three five-a-side pitches, is the product of over two-and-a-half years of fundraising by school and the wider community and work including the creation of a new hibernacula!

An official opening party was held on April 24th including a schools' tournament, charity 5-a-side match, bubble football, Newcastle United Foundation shooting speed gun and a DJ.

Representatives from the many organisations, businesses and individuals who supported the development were invited to join the celebrations with friends and family of PCMS pupils and Ponteland United.

Headteacher Dr Caroline Pryer said: "A big thank you to all involved for seeing the dream through to fruition. We've waited a long time for a facility like this in Ponteland and the pitch truly is a facility to be proud of. Hopefully it will benefit the community for years to come."



Cover shot and photos above courtesy of Stella Pictures.



Ponteland Community High School Report

Young debaters to represent the region at national European Youth Parliament event

Young debaters from Ponteland High are to represent the region at the European Youth Parliament national session in Liverpool in July.

Our talented EYP team was selected after a day of outstanding debates and emotive speeches at the EYP North East Regional Forum. At the national session we will be up against the schools selected at all the other regional forums across the UK.

Ponteland has a proud tradition of both competing and succeeding in this debating arena with several of our ex-students now Alumni of the EYP - the Vice President this year is one of our 'old boys', Kevin Wilson.

He was very complimentary about our team, describing the speeches as 'near perfect' and was particularly impressed by Molly Hall's contribution to the French debate.

EYP prides itself on academic ability, so the resolution topics for debate were very challenging, ranging from freedom of the press and imported energy to the victims of Islamic State.

Our team members demonstrated their excellent skills in

debating and public speaking, as well as their knowledge around key issues in British and European politics. We wish them all the best for the National Session in July.



Pictured are: Elliot Barker, Michael Dwyer, Ben Eggleston, Molly Hall, Bea Holliday, Helena Grezo, Matthew Quigley, James Plumeridge and Owen Stratford.

Boys secure back-to-back rugby cup final wins

Ponteland High has won the Northumberland Schools Rugby U15 County Cup Final for the second year running with an impressive 52-10 win over Newcastle's RGS.

Given the reputation of RGS rugby and how far their team had progressed in the national cup, Ponteland High were under no illusion about how hard this final would be.

The score suggests a very one sided affair, but this result was built upon solid defence and precision in attack. RGS had plenty of the early ball, but rarely broke the gain line during a first half dominated by big tackles.

When Ponteland won possession they moved it wide and attacked the outside channel, scoring three tries in quick succession; a brace to Adam Thomson and one to Ryhs Edgell.

Man of the match Ryan Gerrard orchestrated the Ponteland back line and the strong running of Robinson and Blain in the centre was too much for RGS to handle. By half time the result was not in doubt and it was understandable that Ponteland relaxed a bit in the second half as they used their full complement of replacements.

However, Ponteland had the last word with Gowing intercepting the ball on the 10m line and scoring under the posts.

The crowd were entertained by two teams who gave their all to this game, but in the end, the strength and fitness of Ponteland proved crucial; County Cup winners for the second consecutive year.

Successful year for netball teams

Our netball teams have enjoyed a successful year, with the U14s undefeated, the U15s Northumberland league finalists and the U19s qualifying for the national finals.

U14 Netball

Year 9 have continued their winning ways by remaining undefeated in the Northumberland netball league. At the league finals they ran out comfortable winners against Berwick and then went on to put in another confident performance to beat Morpeth in the final. The girls showed great skill combined with an excellent team spirit throughout.

U15 Netball

Having topped their half of the Northumberland netball league, the year 10 team headed off to the finals on Thursday March 19th. They sailed through their semi-final against Berwick and then had to play Morpeth in the final. In a furiously fast, competitive game they held onto a two goal lead for most of the match only to see Morpeth equalise within the last minute of normal time to finish 9-9. During extra time Morpeth took an early three goal lead but a spirited response from Ponteland saw them regain their composure and pull the match back to 11-12, only to be thwarted by the final whistle. Although understandably disappointed the girls were very sporting in their defeat and excellent ambassadors for the school.

U18 Netball

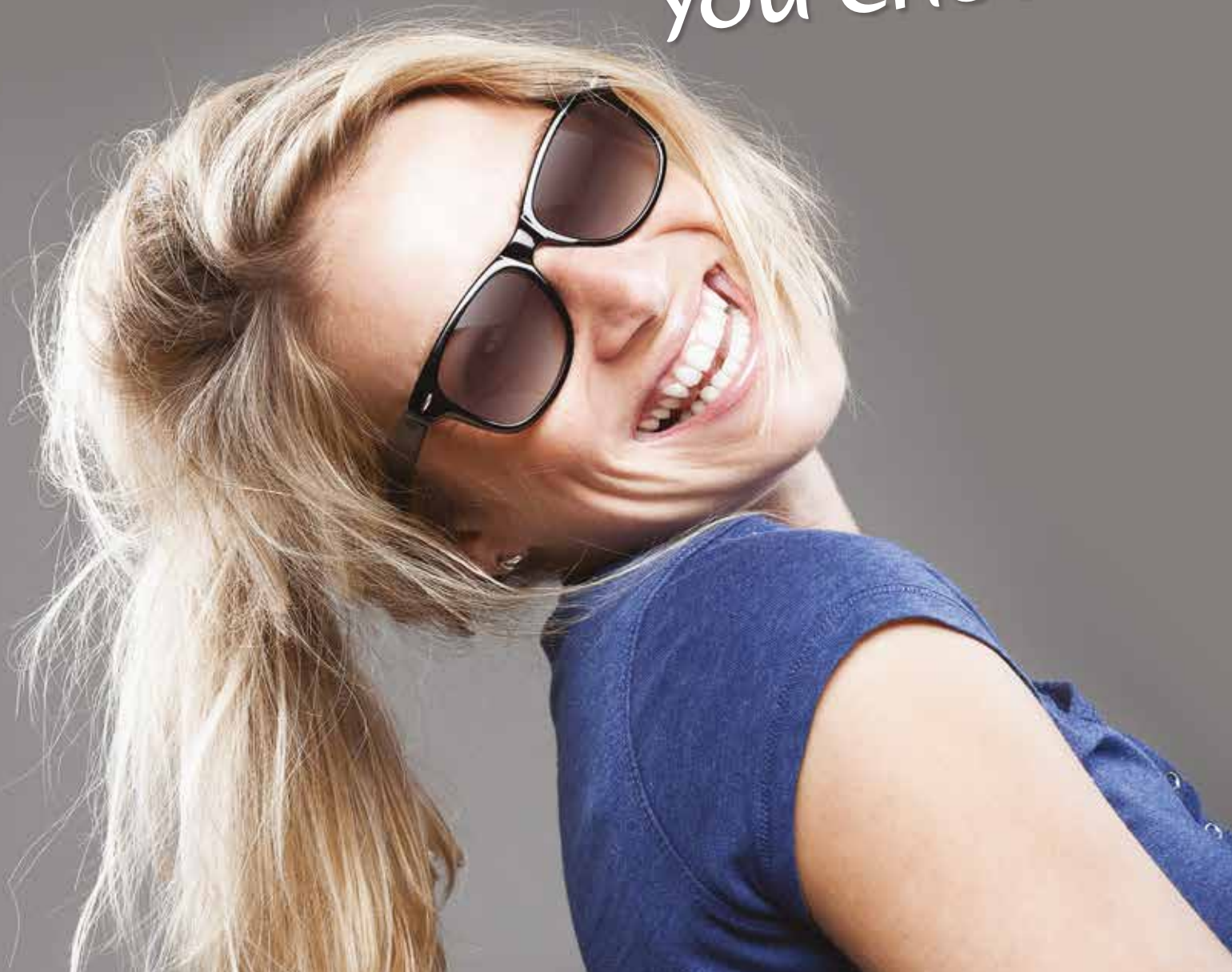
Another hugely impressive year for the players has culminated with them winning the County Tournament, County League, runners-up in the Regional Tournament and qualifying for the national netball finals for the second year running. They are a brilliant group of girls, very talented and supportive of each other.

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VE Day in Ponteland: 70 years on

By Robin Ramsay MBE



May 8th 1945 was a red letter day for everyone in Europe after five dark years.

Seventy years on, Ponteland is holding a weekend of events to commemorate VE Day.

Ponteland marked the original VE Day by planting an oak tree on Coates Green, which had been raised from an acorn grown by the children of Coates Endowed School.

It is very fitting that the 70th anniversary will be commemorated by a short service in St Mary's Church and laying of flowers by the Mayor at 2pm on Friday May 8th, which will be attended by more than 100 children from Richard Coates Middle School.

In the evening at 9.30pm, we will be joining many other communities by lighting a beacon on the top of the church.

In 1945 church bells were rung up and down the country. This year the bells at St Mary's will be rung for the service on Friday and at 11 o'clock on Saturday morning, along with many other churches and cathedrals, as a remembrance and celebration of that day.

During the week the Ponteland schools' assemblies will also remember and celebrate this day.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of Ponteland Community Partnership will be held on Wednesday May 20th at 7pm in Merton Hall.

Nominations for membership of the Executive Council, for the annual posts of Chairman and the Chairmen of the Regeneration, Transport, Environment, Neighbourhood Plan and Youth sub-Groups should be submitted in writing not later than Wednesday 6th May to: Mrs Shirley Hill, Hon. Secretary, Ponteland Community Partnership, 90 Runnymede Road, Ponteland, NE20 9HH.

We are actively seeking new members to join the Partnership and invite you to come along to our AGM. You will be made very welcome.

GUIDED WILD FLOWER WALK ON RECREATION GROUND

By Muriel Sobo

Did you know that there is a 10 acre site in the middle of Darras Hall of which half is designated a Site of Special Scientific Importance because it is one of the few remaining areas of semi-natural grassland in Northumberland?

Access to this site, called either the Recreation Ground or the Darras Hall Grassland, is between numbers 67 and 69 Middle Drive. You can walk around any time and follow the different seasons' wild flowers, but a special plea to dog walkers not to leave anything behind at any time.

The Ponteland branch of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust is arranging a guided walk on this site on Tuesday June 2nd at 7pm led by flower expert Hazel Walker. This is limited to 20 people and a charge of £2 is levied towards Trust funds.

To add your name to the list please telephone Rita Pearce on (01661) 825816.

Step into Spring: Saturday May 9th

People aged over 55 in Ponteland are being invited to an event where they can find out what's going on in the area and who's doing it.

The event is being organised by Ageing Well in Ponteland together with Northumbria Healthcare Foundation Trust, and is supported by local organisations. Ageing Well in Ponteland initially came together with the Ponteland Community Partnership and the Town Council to find the funding for the successful Hopper bus service which runs every Friday within the village.

'Step into Spring' is on Saturday May 9th between 9.30am and 12noon at St Mary's Church Hall. Refreshments are available and there will be opportunities to try out activities or just to find out more about what is on offer locally, including support services.

Ageing Well is about involving older people in their community and helping to keep them active, connected and well. The countywide programme has been recognised nationally.

The Ponteland Hopper bus will be available on the day free of charge to take residents to the event and back home again. Ring 07706 996897 to book a place.

Stepping into spring coffee morning



**Saturday 9th May
9.30-12 noon**

at St Mary's Church Hall, Ponteland. NE20 9PZ.

Come along, have a cuppa and find out more about activities/ groups that are happening locally

The Ponteland Hopper Bus is available to take you to and from the event free of charge.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus telephone 0770 699 6897.



Ponteland radio presenter wins national award

By Muriel Sobo



Geoff Lisle has been a volunteer presenter with Radio Tyneside for more than 30 years.

This service is produced for the RVI, Freeman and Queen Elizabeth hospitals; it is run entirely by volunteers and they had a seven man team out covering the Great North Run last year.

This great presentation won a Gold Award at the National Hospital Radio Awards, held last month. Geoff was a member of that team and naturally thrilled at the recognition they gained for their work.

Geoff and his family have lived in Ponteland for many years and he worked in air traffic control at Newcastle Airport, retiring five years ago. This gives him a little more time to do his radio work and as well as the patients' requests, he has an hour's programme on a Sunday evening when he plays his own selection of 50s and 60s hits and rarities.

Hospital radio is a very welcome distraction for many patients who can be going through difficult times. To have this service performed by volunteers who also raise their funds through sponsored events is a great asset. Well done to Geoff and his colleagues at Radio Tyneside!

When patients leave hospital, they can continue to listen to the station via the website www.radiotyneside.co.uk



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