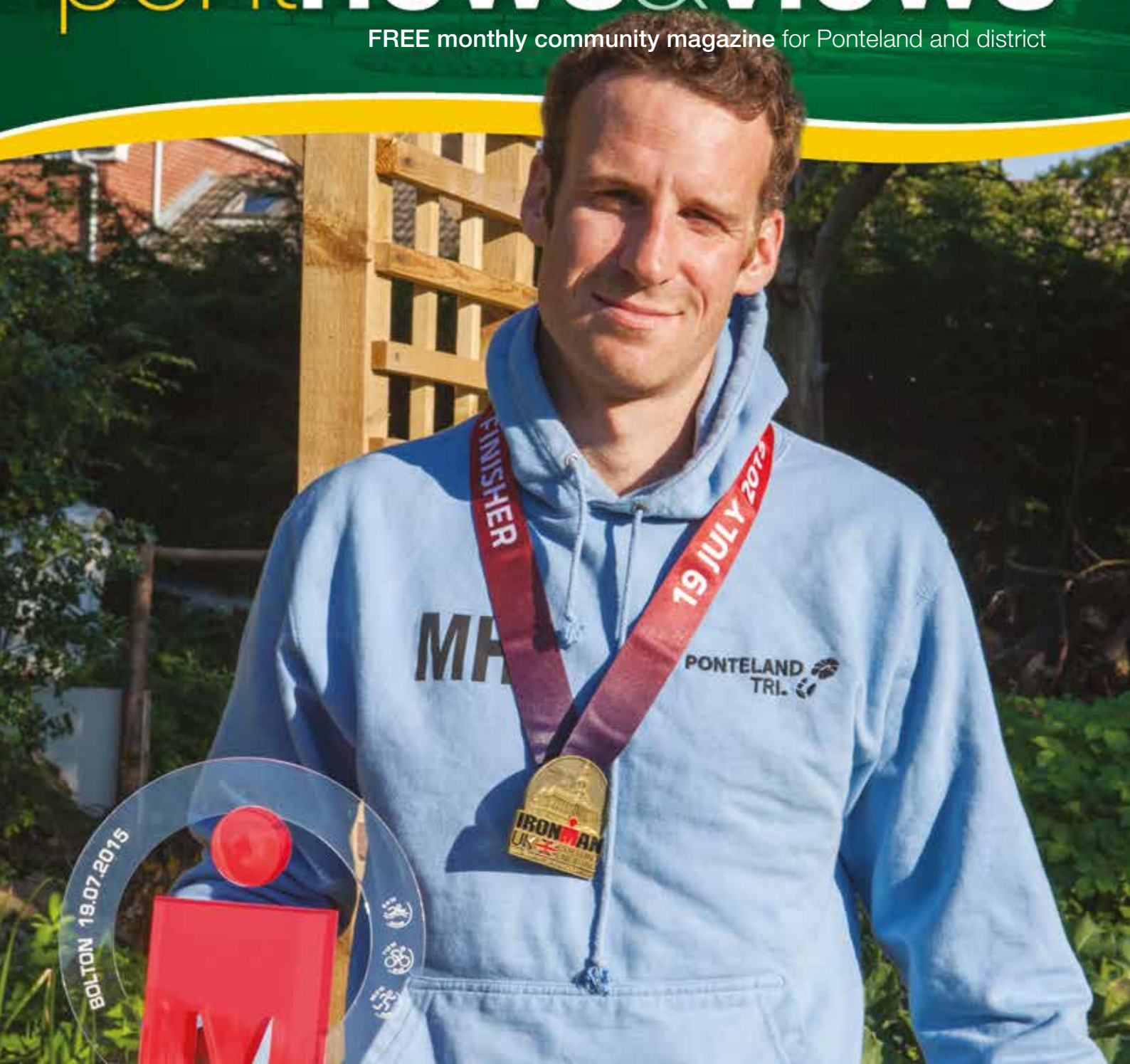


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Record A-level results
for Pont High

B&B plan sparks stag and
hen do fears

Entries sought for flower
show and duck race

Pont triathlete off to Hawaii World Ironman Championships



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Pont triathlete competing for GB in Hawaii World Ironman Championships



A Ponteland triathlete is off to Hawaii in October to compete for Great Britain in the World Ironman Championships.

Martin Hallissey, of Middle Drive, Darras Hall, qualified after finishing 3rd in his age group in the UK Ironman Championships in Bolton on July 19th.

The father-of-two, an engineer at Proctor & Gamble, is a member of Pont Tri Club and has been competing in triathlons for the past nine years.

Other successes have included winning the Kielder Run Bike Run in 2013 and 2014, finishing second in the Ponteland Triathlon in 2014, and finishing 5th when representing GB at the European Triathlon Championships in Alanya, Turkey, in the Sprint distance in 2013. He also finished 5th in his age group and 10th overall at the Frankfurt City Triathlon in 2012.

Proud wife Liz said: "It's a fantastic achievement. Martin faces a constant battle to balance full time work including overseas travel, with his very young family and also a house renovation and extension that he is undertaking himself.

"His training schedule includes 5am starts at the weekend to avoid missing out on family time, and he cycles to and from work every day from Ponteland to Seaton Delaval. He's a member of Ponteland Tri Club and has competed in the North East Harrier League for Ponteland Runners."

Martin, who is seeking sponsorship for his race in Kona, added: "It's still hard to believe that I qualified for Kona. After nine months of training, which included an unforgiving Northumberland winter, I managed to stay fit and healthy and it all came together on race day in Bolton. It's been an ambition to head to the home of Ironman for a long time and I've done it. Now let's see if I can cope with the Hawaii heat!"

Anyone wishing to sponsor Martin can contact him via email at echallissey79@gmail.com

Martin approaches the finish line at the UK Ironman Championships in Bolton.
Cover shot by Trevor Walker

Hen and stag party fears over B&B bid

Latest plans to convert two semi-detached houses into a bed and breakfast facility have brought claims from objectors it could attract hen and stag parties.

Applicant Andrew Singh, of Runnymede Road, has lodged a fresh planning application for change of use from dwelling to bed and breakfast and construction of a two storey reception/bedroom area extension for Medwyn/Westmacot in Street Houses, Ponteland.

The latest bid follows three rejected applications for redevelopment of the site – the first in 2013 for a three storey 46-bed hotel, then for a two storey 14-bed hotel last October, and most recently for a 13-bed B&B establishment in May this year.

Planning permission was previously granted in 2006 for a change of use from dwellings to bed and breakfast accommodation comprising 20 bedrooms. This facility had attracted complaints from nearby residents.

A design and access statement submitted to support the planning application by Chartered Architect W Nigel Picken acknowledged: "The previous use of the existing buildings as

bed and breakfast accommodation was largely unsupervised and attracted some complaints from residents in the locality."

The application in May was refused with reasons given being inappropriate development in the green belt, inadequate car parking and manoeuvring, and insufficient information on whether any protected species are present on the site.

The new application increases the number of car parking spaces from 13 to 14 and the accompanying design and access statement argues that the size of extension proposed is well within the guidelines for a green belt site.

Objections have been received by Northumberland County Council from Ponteland Civic Society, and seven local residents.

Two of the objectors – a local resident and a B&B proprietor – expressed concerns the facility would attract hen and stag parties and bring problems to the area. Another objector questioned whether there would be 24 hour supervision on the site.

But the applicant's design and access statement said: "The current proposal will bring a much more formal and organized use to the site with twenty-four hour staffing along with all the other benefits of a more family orientated bed and breakfast establishment."



NEW EVENTS AT POST BOX!

Live Music Saturdays - our fortnightly live acoustic music nights are the perfect way to enjoy dinner or just drinks with the laid-back sounds of local musicians.

Ponteland Ladies Dining Society - our new monthly supper club for ladies has all the essential ingredients; fabulous food, fine wine and sparkling conversation. You don't have to live in Ponteland to attend!

Post Box Book Club is open to all on the second Thursday of each month to discuss a new book over a glass of wine or coffee - starts Thursday 10th September.

Writing Wednesdays - weekly creative writing workshops start on Wednesday 9th September at 7pm. For complete beginners or more experienced writers - all welcome.

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Superfast broadband installed at Dissington Hall Enterprise Hub

Dissington Hall is delighted to announce that superfast broadband is now in place throughout our new Enterprise Hub.

With support and advice from iNorthumberland, the new installation has been delivered by Aspire TS of Gateshead and KBR Ltd of Birtley.

"The office space is filling up nicely and we know that now that we have superfast broadband the remaining spaces will be taken soon," explained Michael Brown.

Dissington Hall has been providing top quality workspace with stunning views in a beautiful Georgian building

since 2005. This installation of business-grade superfast broadband has been made possible by a group-funding bid by 10 of the professional service companies already based at the Hall.

The successful bid is funded by central government through BDUK Ltd under the GO-Digital voucher scheme, which since April has been available to most small businesses in Northumberland.

Establishing Dissington Hall as an Enterprise Hub is part of the planned exit from the wedding market and a move to concentrate on providing all the facilities that are required by small business. The Hub has meeting rooms and conference facilities and is already a thriving community of diverse companies.



Staff of KBR IT & Network Solutions Ltd Birtley on the roof at Dissington Hall



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KUMON

Fun for all the family at Duck Race and Flower Show

Two of the biggest events in the Ponteland calendar take place over consecutive weekends in September.

On Sunday September 6th the Ponteland Rotary Duck Race takes place in Ponteland Park, with the 38th Ponteland Parish Flower Show following on Saturday September 12th.

As well as the 500 ducks competing in five races, other attractions at the Duck Race event will include a bouncy slide, archery, tombola, face painting, candy floss, coconut shy, ball in a bucket and a special teddy bear stand.

Following last year's success, the programme will again include five to 11-year-olds making their own boats to race on the River Pont and the summer market will again be a feature, with the Diamond Inn supplying hot food.

Community support for the event comes from the Scouts, Girl Guides, Young Farmers and High School, as well as

Ponteland Town Council, Waitrose and many local businesses. Prizes to be won include meal vouchers and cash and will be presented by Ponteland Mayor Carl Rawlings.

Meanwhile, prize money has been doubled for the Parish Flower Show being held at the Memorial Hall the following weekend. This year there are 132 classes covering flowers, vegetables, fruit, children, cookery, handicrafts, art, wine, and photography.

Entries are open to residents of Ponteland and adjoining parishes, children attending all schools in the parishes and to members of organisations in Ponteland.

Paper schedules with entry forms are available in Ponteland Library and various other locations in Ponteland, also in Heddon-on-the-Wall, Belsay and Dinnington. The schedule can also be accessed electronically at pontelandflowershow.co.uk

Staging of exhibits is from 7pm till 9pm on Friday 11th and 8am till 11am on



the Saturday. The show is open to the public from 1pm on Saturday with the presentation of trophies at 4pm.

If anyone has any queries, please contact Syd Cowan at syd.cowan@btinternet.com or on (01661) 824459.

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Heart transplant mum holds charity ball

A Ponteland mother-of-two who along with her brother had to have a life-saving heart transplant is hosting a charity ball.

Nine years ago Claire Dobing was diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, and four years later her brother Peter was told he had the same condition. Then in 2013 their father John died of cancer, followed by a close friend's mum Pat McMillan last year.

Claire has organised a masquerade ball being held at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club on Saturday September 19th in aid of Cardiomyopathy Research and Cancer Research.

The event includes a three-course meal, disco and a raffle. During the evening Claire's youngest daughter Louise and her friend Millie will also be having their long hair cut to be donated to the Little Princess Trust to be made into wigs.

Tickets costing £35 can be purchased by contacting Claire on 07972 878004.

Businesses invited to enterprise hub launch

Businesses are being invited to the launch of a new enterprise hub at Kirkley Hall.

Disused rooms have been converted into new flexible office spaces at the Northumberland College campus, and three new workshop areas have been constructed with funding from the Rural Growth Network.

The first tenant is the National Farmers' Union (NFU), which will have a dedicated office for North Durham and Northumberland County Advisor Samantha Davies.

Businesses can view the vacant office spaces and workshops at the launch event on Tuesday September 1st from 4.30pm to 8pm, with complimentary refreshments served in the main hall and patio courtyard.

Wayne Vickers, General Manager at Kirkley Hall, said: "Our main focus is rural enterprise. We want to remove some of the existing barriers and give the support that is needed to help small businesses thrive.

"We are delighted to have the NFU as our first tenants – they are a perfect fit. We are now seeking tenants for the other fully-supported office spaces. We hope people who work from home will use our hot desks and meeting spaces to help create a rural network.

"Kirkley Hall is a fantastic place with access to an extensive rural estate, a café, free parking on site, managed reception, broadband wifi – all the things you would expect from a business centre."



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Don't offer thieves a helping hand

PC Lee Davison, Ponteland Rural
Neighbourhood Beat Manager



In the period between July 13th and August 12th there have been 13 crimes recorded for the Ponteland and outlying area.

These break down to the following offences:

- 1 burglary to dwelling
- 1 taking of a motor vehicle
- 2 thefts from motor vehicle
- 1 damage to property
- 1 damage to dwelling
- 1 theft from a farm
- 1 theft from the roadside
- 1 theft from a construction site
- 2 assaults
- 1 harassment
- 1 production of cannabis.

Enquiries are ongoing in relation to these offences with arrests made in relation to the assaults reported and production of cannabis.

There continues to be a trend for opportunist and acquisitive crime in the area. Northumbria Police have an initiative running ensuring residents do not become

a victim to opportunist crime.

Taking a few simple steps can reduce the risk of you becoming a victim. These measures apply whether at home or when leaving a vehicle unattended:

- Ensure windows and doors are securely locked.
- Remove all valuables from sight or within easy reach of doors.
- Do not leave property i.e. bicycles, gardening equipment or work tools unattended.
- Consider a tracking app for electronic items.
- Continue to report suspicious behaviour to police.

As the summer and holiday period continues, please ensure that dogs are kept under appropriate control and supervision. Many owners will be exercising dogs out of their regular routine and perhaps encountering children and/or other dogs that would not be the norm.

Necessary action can be taken by police should dogs be found to be dangerously out of control in a public place. Also dogs found worrying livestock can be legitimately shot by a farmer or landowner.

Following the retirement of PC Rob Anderson, a new face will soon be appointed to the role of Neighbourhood Officer in the town. In the interim any concerns can be directed to myself or any member of the Neighbourhood Team.

Local police surgeries will be held on the following dates:

- Saturday September 5th 11.30am – 12.30pm Belsay Shop with PC Lee Davison
- Saturday September 26th 9.30am – 10.30am Merton Hall, Ponteland with CSO Paul Cotterill.

A member of Ponteland Neighbourhood Team can be contacted on: 101 ext-69569

Email: easttyndale.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk



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Your letters

Views on Medburn housing development and an appeal by an amputee being targeted for using a disabled parking bay in this month's letters...

New Medburn housing 'woefully out of character'

I very much share the concerns expressed by David Kinghorn in your August issue about the fate of Medburn.

The village of Medburn has a unique character which derives from the fact that it was established originally to provide smallholdings for returning servicemen lucky enough to survive the rigours of the First World War.

The local plan drawn up by Castle Morpeth Council decreed that future development should be confined to single storey structures within existing holdings.

At the subsequent public inquiry the Government inspector drew attention to the special nature of the village saying that: "I would regard its transformation into a conventional residential location, even if earmarked for executive housing, as one not to be welcomed."

It is difficult to understand why the present planning regime has chosen to abandon this approach and wave through successive instalments of bog standard suburbia, woefully out of character with the place.

At the very least, before such approvals were contemplated, an up to date local plan should have been drawn up in consultation with the residents, together with an assessment of the effect development on this scale was likely to have on local services.

This would have allowed the people of Medburn to at least feel part of the process, and for suitable contributions to be sought from developers to go towards the general improvement of facilities.

John Hague

High View
Darras Hall

Town Council's objections to Medburn planning applications have been overruled

Mr Kinghorn in his letter (August issue) quite rightly raises questions and concerns regarding the increasing over development of Medburn.

Ponteland Town Council's planning committee is only a consultee

in the planning process, but meets fortnightly to carefully study planning applications and has a record of raising objections to - and commenting on - applications relating to Medburn.

As a Town Council we have objected on the grounds that Medburn is unsustainable, has poor accessibility to services and facilities and that some of the proposed properties are viewed to be an over development of the sites. In doing so we have not ignored the arguments put forward by other objectors.

However, PTC's views have often been overruled by Northumberland County Council and indeed NCC has on occasions been overruled by the Planning Inspectorate when applications have gone to appeal.

The Town Council will continue to carefully consider and respond to future applications and will endeavour to support, where possible, the views of residents.

Every fortnight the Town Council publishes on its website a list of current planning applications which can be commented on by any member of the public. Residents who are concerned about the development of Medburn may use this opportunity to make their objections or comments by letter to NCC with a copy to PTC.

Councillor Liz Thompson

Chairman

PTC Planning Committee

Amputee appeals to parents over disabled parking

When I was growing up my parents instilled in me that manners do not cost anything.

My five-year-old son attends Darras Hall First School and I drive the red Audi that regularly parks in the disabled bay opposite the school with my blue badge displayed.

I am a mother-of-three with two other children aged two and one, and I have an amputated arm above the elbow. I pride myself on living an independent life and bringing up my three children.

Since my son joined this school I have had several members of the public behave aggressively towards me in front of my children, as they believe I am not disabled or I am using somebody else's blue badge.

It is often demanded that I show them my badge or explain to them 'what is wrong with me as I have two legs'. This has resulted in my car being blocked in until I gave the driver my badge to prove my disability or, most recently, a lady blocked the disabled bay that was free so I could not park as she believed I did not have the right to park there.

This resulted in my son being left at school after the rest of the children had left as I was made late to collect him. The consequences of my son not being collected on time did not matter to the lady, who runs a well known local company - she would not move for me to park. I was fortunate the teacher kept my son and the police were involved.

Disability affects all ages and is not only specific to your legs, it is not prejudiced like the people I have met. And finally, like my parents taught me, 'if you have not got anything nice to say, keep your mouth shut'.

Rachael Wilson

Kirkley Drive
Ponteland

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Homeowners who do not maintain hedges and trees should be named and shamed

Yet again you have to remind certain householders of the need to keep hedges and trees cut back from public footpaths.

This is not only for tidiness but in places some paths are disappearing completely. This is downright dangerous - especially to children on their way to school.

Some residents never appear to have actually walked themselves on the footpaths outside their own houses. Surely for these serial offenders there should be a more proactive approach by Darras Hall Estate Committee, Northumberland County Council and/or Ponteland Town Council.

For example, a letter pointing out the need then if nothing is done within, say, two weeks an official warning that if nothing done this will be carried out by the Council and the cost added to their rates and/or a list published in Pont News of the offenders.

Peter Sutcliffe
Middle Drive
Darras Hall

Litter picking sticks available for volunteers

It was great to read about the anti-litter campaign of the Darras Hall Estate Committee and it shows that the community is focusing on reducing litter.

Ponteland Town Council supports the campaign and we currently have 12 volunteer litter pickers.

If you would like to help as a volunteer, litter picking sticks are available free from the Town Council office by ringing (01661) 825092 or calling at Unit 1 Meadowfield Court, Meadowfield Industrial Estate from 9.30am – 12.30pm, Monday to Friday.

Councillor Carl Rawlings
Mayor of Ponteland

October issue deadlines:

Delivery of the October issue will start on Monday September 28th and be completed by Friday October 2nd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday September 11th. 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 October 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.

What's on...

Ponteland Group of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month in St Mary's Church Hall at 7.30pm. The aims of the group are to bring together people interested in wildlife and to raise funds for the Trust. At the next meeting on September 1st there will be a talk about bats, followed by refreshments, then a walk around Ponteland Park with bat detectors to see what we can find. The children will love it.

Ponteland U3A

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on Wednesday September 2nd is Roger Barrell and his topic is 'Bullet Catcher'. 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 October meeting will be on October 7th.

Callerton Garden & Flower Club

We meet every second Wednesday in the month. On September 9th Susan Hall (AD) of Brotton will demonstrate 'Memories'. Visitors welcome for £5 admission (including tea and biscuits/cake).

Ponteland Parish Flower Show

The 38th Annual Show will be held in Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday September 12th. There are 132 classes covering flowers, vegetables, fruit, children, cookery, handicrafts, art, wine, and photography. Paper schedules with entry forms are available in Ponteland Library and various other locations in Ponteland, also in Heddon-on-the-Wall, Belsay and Dinnington. The schedule can also be accessed electronically at pontelandflowershow.co.uk. As an incentive to enter, the prize money has been doubled this year with no increases in entry fees (children's entries are free). Any queries - please contact Syd Cowan on (01661) 824459 or at syd.cowan@btinternet.com

Memory Café

Based at Ponteland United Reformed Church on Broadway, Darras Hall, the Memory Café is a monthly initiative supported by local people who are working towards Ponteland becoming

more understanding of dementia. Anyone who lives with memory problems or dementia is welcome, together with family members or friends. Tea, coffee and snacks are available for purchase in a relaxed setting, where you will also find a listening ear and resources to help. The next event is Monday September 14th from 10.30am to 12noon. Future dates: October 12th, November 9th and December 14th. Supported by Ponteland Churches Together and Diagonal Alternatives.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

Our speaker on Monday September 14th is Kim Bibby-Wilson whose talk is entitled 'The Northumbrian Dialect'. 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 first meeting for the new season will be on Monday September 14th. The guest speaker for the event is Susan Band who will talk about 'Growing Lilies and their relatives'. Susan, a member of the SRGC, will demonstrate how she grows and propagates her bulbs and tubers. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, and 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) 4132574. The Autumn Show is on Saturday October 10th at Cowell's Garden Centre, Woolsington, from 9am - 4pm and admission is free.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

Our meeting on Monday September 28th at 2pm is our AGM and presentation of awards. Meetings are held in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road on the fourth Monday of each month from 2pm to 4pm. Membership of the branch and the Embroiderers' Guild is open to all; everyone whatever their level of experience is welcome at meetings and workshops. You can become a member, or join us for a meeting as a visitor (cost £4). Contact eg_ne_ponteland@btinternet.com or call (01661) 881395

Ponteland Civic Society

Our first meeting of the autumn season is on Monday September 28th at St Mary's Church Hall, starting 7.30pm. Ylana First, Friend of Tynemouth Station, will talk about a 30 year journey to save an important part of the North East's Industrial Heritage from neglect or even demolition. Her talk is entitled 'Tynemouth Station - The Crystal Palace of the North East'. We look forward to welcoming members and guests (for whom there is a nominal charge of £2). All are most welcome.

The Bridge @ Ponteland Methodist Church

The Bridge is a different kind of church service. We meet most weeks in Ponteland Methodist Church Hall at 4pm. We are relaxed in style and relevant to life today. We are family friendly and there is Sunday School for kids up year 6. Everyone is welcome, whether you are a Christian or just want to find out more. Services in September: Sunday 6th; Sunday 13th (family service with bbq from 2pm); Sunday 20th and Sunday 27th. For more info email thebridge.pont or call (01661) 822057.

Events at St Mary's Ponteland

Sunday September 20th - All Age Worship at 10am has the theme 'Game-changers'. Choral Evensong at 6.30pm will include an Act of Remembrance for Charles Richardson, one of those from our village who died in the First World War. Saturday September 26th - 10am Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Church Hall. 7pm Harvest Supper and Quiz Night in the Church Hall. Sunday September 27th - 10am Harvest Festival Communion. 6.30pm Harvest Songs of Praise. Tuesday September 29th - 7pm Harvest Evensong at Holy Saviour, Milbourne.

Rotary Club of Ponteland

Rotary Club of Ponteland meet every Tuesday at Ponteland Golf Club. The meetings alternate between lunch times (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) and evenings (2nd & 4th Tuesdays). New people of all age groups and both ladies and gentlemen are very welcome. If you would like more details please contact Alan Hall on 01661 860284 or email alanhallee@msn.com



GRANT APPLICATION – ROTARY CLUB OF PONTELAND

The Council considered a grant application by Ponteland Rotary Club in respect of their plans to hold a Christmas market at Ponteland High School. Details of the various costs involved in holding this event were also reported. The Council deferred consideration of the application pending receipt of some additional information.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Following on from the recent approval of a vexatious policy, councillors discussed a draft complaints policy that had been circulated for their comments. The procedure involved two stages which were outlined within the document. The policy was agreed.

GUARDIANS COURT

A report outlining recent discussions relating to Guardians Court and the Council's responsibilities had been circulated. From recent information received it was reported that the former Parish Council had agreed to take on responsibility for the play area, the seat, surfacing, planted areas and the access gate and adjoining walls. The access gate was in poor condition and required replacement. The Council agreed to delegate responsibility for this replacement to the Clerk who would expedite the work as soon as possible.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL CORE STRATEGY

Information had been received from the

County Council regarding the next stage in the consultation process for the Core Strategy. This involved consideration of the Pre-Submission draft document and it was anticipated that the consultation process would begin on October 14th and would cover a six week period until November 25th. This consultation would be the final opportunity to comment on the content of the Core Strategy before it was submitted to a Planning Inspector for independent examination and any comments had to be related to the 'soundness' of the approach or whether it met the relevant legal requirements. The Council had been informed that drop in sessions would be held in each of the main towns and service centres in the county and details would be confirmed in due course.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

The Council considered a report in relation to the arrangements for the Remembrance Day service. Councillors were reminded that everyone who had attended the service in 2014 had been invited back to the Memorial Hall for light refreshments and it was agreed that this should be repeated for this year. It was also agreed that the parade from the Leisure Centre to the War Memorial should return to the Leisure Centre car park after the service.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

The Highways Working Party had met on July 10th. The meeting had not made any recommendations for approval but had discussed various items including the Local Transport Plan Submission for

2016-17. This was an opportunity for the Town Council to list their top three transport priorities for submission to the County Council. It was agreed that this would be circulated to all Councillors for their comments and this would be further considered at the next Highways Working Party to be held on August 14th.

ENVIRONMENT WORKING PARTY

The Working Party had met on July 27th. The Council agreed to the recommendation to replace the remaining three open top litter bins with the standard closed ones and it was noted that the funding was available from within the budget.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillor Dodd referred to cutting of verges in the more rural areas that seemed to have been delayed and he was hoping this would be discussed at Scrutiny level at the County Council. He also mentioned the resurfacing of Thornhill Road that had recently taken place.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor's Diary

A list of events and meetings attended by the Mayor during July was circulated to the Council.

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

CARERS' GROUP LAUNCHES NEW MEMORY CAFÉ

By Revd Joan Ross

After three years of offering effective support to people caring for family members with memory problems or dementia, the Circle of Support Carers' Group based at Ponteland URC on Broadway has launched a monthly Memory Café.

Meeting on the second Monday of each month from 10.30am to 12noon, the Memory Café provides a welcoming social place for anyone who lives with memory problems or dementia together with their family members or friends.

Often people have questions about how to communicate or keep safe in the home as memory declines, or how to involve more help as the need arises. The Memory Café provides a relaxed setting for a coffee, to meet friends and to find a listening ear from people who have understanding and experience of what happens day to day in these situations.

In addition, helpful information from The Alzheimers Society and Age UK is available to take away.

The Circle of Support Memory Café is an initiative supported by Ponteland Churches Together, Diagonal Alternatives and several local people who are working towards Ponteland becoming more understanding of dementia.

Memory Café dates for 2015 are: September 14th, October 12th, November 9th and December 14th. For more information contact Revd Joan Ross (01661) 823910.

NORTHUMBERLAND STRIKES GOLD IN YORKSHIRE

Blagdon firm Northumberland Cheese Company enjoyed great success at the Cheese and Dairy Awards at the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate.

Brinkburn, their ever popular mould-ripened goats' cheese, won Gold in the Speciality Goats' Cheese category.

Other winners included Bronze for the Oak-Smoked cheese in the Smoked Cheese Category, and Bronze in the Speciality Ewe Cheese category for the Redesdale.

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Relaunch planned for community partnership

Ponteland Community Partnership is holding a major relaunch as one of its most successful projects celebrates its 10th anniversary.

Next month sees the 121st issue of Pont News, exactly a decade after the first magazine – a joint project between PCP and the former Ponteland Parish Council – hit the streets.

The PCP board has organised a series of events for the partnership's relaunch, including a 'Ponteland Question Time' from 6pm to 8.15pm on Wednesday September 23rd at the Memorial Hall, as well as a BBQ and sports sessions for young people at the all-weather pitch held in August.

The partnership has also built a new website which is set to go live on October 1st at pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ponteland Question Time

This free event, marking Local Democracy Week, will see a panel chaired by former Ponteland High School head boy and creator of the European Youth Parliament UK Dan Brown and also including MP Guy Opperman, local dignitaries and three members of the PHS debating society.

The main discussion topics are: should the voting age be reduced to 16; has university

and further education become too expensive; do young people have a voice in Ponteland; and how can we bridge the gap between young and old.

The event has been supported by Dobsons Estate Agents and Cowells Garden Centre and all are welcome.

12 years serving the community

Ponteland Community Partnership was set up under the Local Government Act in 2003 as an unincorporated association of like minded volunteers who shared a common idea to identify and improve the quality of life for the community of Ponteland.

Its aims are:

- To identify activities, aspirations and projects for those who live or work in Ponteland that will improve their quality of life no matter what their age.
- To access funding and support to provide for these activities or projects.
- To work and share ideas with other like minded organisations.

Key successes have included launching Pont News & Views with the Parish Council in 2005, the Callerton Lane playpark in 2009 and skatepark in 2014.

In 2012 the partnership hosted a major community consultation event in response to public unrest about potential green belt development. This led to the launch of the Greenbelt Group and Neighbourhood

Plan Group which will influence the county council's Core Strategy – the principal planning blueprint for future development.

But the partnership is facing new challenges now, as newly elected chairman Alma Dunigan explained: "Lifestyles and expectations are very different now to when this group was set up in the early 2000s - there is a need to rethink and refocus how we achieve our goals of improving the quality of life.

"We will continue to consult with the community for ideas, opinions and seeking new projects whilst improving the communication through Pont News & Views and our new website.

"We want to develop wider and stronger links with other local organisations and would welcome new members to attend our monthly meetings - usually held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Town Council offices."

PCP is currently considering the findings of a survey carried out by the Youth Service team on what activities young people between the ages of nine to 16 would like to be provided in Ponteland and when.

It is also considering publishing a questionnaire to get ideas for activities suitable for families and the elderly to prioritise community aspirations and enable the partnership to apply for funding. PCP is keen to work with local businesses that can sponsor or support any activities, events or projects.

For more information visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

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Students make film to highlight abusive teenage relationships

Six Ponteland High School students are making a film highlighting domestic abuse in teenage relationships.

Rebecca Harrison from Ponteland, and Kate Carr, from Belsay, who join PHS sixth form in September, are in a group of 16 taking part in the National Citizen Service programme, also including ten students from Queen Elizabeth High School, Hexham, and Prudhoe High School.

As part of the NCS programme for 15-17 year olds, which aims to build confidence in young people by allowing them to meet new people and work on a group project as part of a team, the students took part in two 5-day residentials.

The first – at the outdoor activity centre Kingswood in Dearne Valley near York – aimed to strengthen teamwork and leadership skills, while the second at Ford Castle, Northumberland, included workshops and lectures from various charities and organisations.



Participants are then tasked with completing 30 hours of social action for a cause they believe is worthwhile and 'Cohort 5' chose to tackle abusive teenage relationships.

Rebecca said: "We chose to focus on domestic abuse in teenage relationships because during our second residential (we have been on both already) where

organisations came in to talk to us, we felt there wasn't much known about how domestic abuse can emerge in teenage relationships and that it wasn't focused on as much.

"We've created the film with all of us acting in it at some point, using iPhone cameras and a video camera before editing it on the computer. Before we started, we researched different charities and organisations that dealt with domestic abuse, statistics, and where people can get help.

"Our goal is to get the video shared as much as possible to ensure teenagers starting their first relationships are aware of how domestic abuse can affect them and where they can get help.

"We have a Twitter page with the username @Catch22_NCS5 where the video will initially be posted, and will be circulating the hashtag #handsdown to accompany it."

Young filmmakers: Rebecca (left) and Kate at the Ford Castle residential.

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Ponteland Community High School Report

Staff and students celebrate best ever A level results

Staff, students and their families are celebrating Ponteland High School's best ever A level results.

Overall, 30% of all entries were awarded the top grades of A*-A, up significantly from last year's figure of 23%.

Particular successes include the following confirmed and accepted places: Cambridge - Charlotte Burrin and Matthew Ross (Medicine); Oxford - Jamie Carpenter (Mathematics) and Rosie Clear Hill (Biological Sciences); Durham - Patrick Allsop (General Engineering); and Edinburgh - Emma Farquhar (Veterinary Medicine).

Other students who are to read

Medicine are: Maisie Ingram (Leeds); Bea Milligan (Glasgow) and Joe Pilsbury (Birmingham)

Over 40% of students gained A*-B grades in a wide range of courses including: Biology; Chemistry; Physics; Maths; Further Maths; English Literature; Geography; History; French; German; Spanish; Fine Art; Business Studies; Business (Vocational); Performing Arts; Sociology and IT (Vocational).

Other students are going on to study courses as varied as Accounting, American Studies, Architecture, Biomedical Sciences, Cognitive Neuroscience, Computer Forensics and Security, Computer Science,

Criminology, Equine Therapy and Rehabilitation, Fashion Communication, Geography, History, International Business Management, Japanese Studies, Law, Mechanical Engineering, Natural Sciences, Performance and Theatre, Pharmacy, Primary Education, Psychology, Spanish.

Students are also traveling near and far to continue their studies. These include all our four local universities (Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria and Sunderland) as well as some further afield such as Bath, Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, London (UCL), Manchester, Oxford, Reading, Teesside and York.

School to host first Rotary Christmas Fair

By Helena Grezo and Jolie Ince (Year 12 students)

A brand new local event will be gracing our community on Saturday December 5th as the Rotary Club of Ponteland adds to its growing number of social contributions to our area.

As the annual duck race begins to waddle ever closer, we look forward to Rotary's newest venture - a Christmas Fair designed to engage the whole community!

The Rotary Club, which aims to bring the

community together whilst benefiting local charities and businesses, is keen to attract younger members who also want to give something back to their community.

We recently spoke to Claire Stagg, a representative of a new breed of Rotarians. We were struck by her passion and enthusiasm for this exciting new addition to Rotary's presence within the community. She is hoping to create an event which will bring pleasure to local people and benefit local business.

The fair will include stalls, local food,

crafts, a beer tent (which will be monitored) and band appearances. There really is something for everyone and anyone; we hope it will offer something for all ages to enjoy.

The plan is to use the event, which will be held from mid-afternoon to early evening, to bring together families, friends and even strangers who can build connections through the fair itself, benefiting the local community and a range of charities.

We will definitely be attending, and we urge you to join us.



Brent named Musician of the Year

Year 12 A Level Music student Brent March was recently presented with the prestigious award of 'Ponteland Young Musician of the Year' by Mr S Cox, President of Ponteland Rotary Club.

Brent's musical talents have been honed over many years - he plays guitar at school, participating in the jazz band, school concerts and productions, as well as being an active performer outside of school. Brent is also one of the Music Prefects in school.

Brent said: "I am delighted to be given this award and have my musical talents acknowledged in such a way. I am also looking forward to performing in the Rotary Club's annual concert in October."

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Slight twist to Rep programme

By Lesley Eltringham

Ponteland Repertory Society has decided to bring forward its planned Spring 2016 production of Lionel Bart's musical Oliver! to November.



It will take the place of Tim Firth's The Flint Street Nativity from November 25th - 28th and Alan Bennett's version of Kenneth Graham's 'The Wind In The Willows', directed by Jonny Woollett, will be presented next March.

Director Carole Davies said: "This is a slight change from our original plan, but we want the first production of the season to be one which has a large cast and provides parts for all the members of our youth theatre The Preppies, as well as adults in the main society. We know that "Oliver!" is a much-loved and very popular musical, and it will be just what our audiences need to cheer the chilly dark days of November."

Musical Director Deborah Barry says that she is looking forward to starting work on the production: "The show features the fantastic Dickensian characters of Fagin, Nancy, Bill Sykes, Mr Bumble brought to life through Lionel Bart's music and it offers plenty of opportunities for people of all ages interested in taking part."

Ponteland Repertory needs your dog!

Do you own a dog which looks fierce but is actually the best behaved dog in the area?

As you all know the character Bill Sykes owns a fearsome bull terrier. We would love to have a dog which is calm and biddable but which looks a bit scary! He or she would be on stage for short periods with the owner close at hand and will have to attend some rehearsals near the time of production.

Does your dog fit the bill and would you like them to become a local star? If so please contact our director Carole Davies by email on caroledavies9@gmail.com or by phone on (01661) 871161.

The Ponteland Rep Preppies Youth Theatre in our last production (Courtesy of Stage Door Photography)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Rugby World Cup day at the Diamond Inn

Sports fans are being invited to enjoy the Rugby World Cup at a special event being held at the Diamond Inn in October. The Rugby Club, in conjunction with the Diamond Inn, is organising a bash in a marquee in the rear car park at the Diamond on Saturday October 3rd, starting at 11am. There are three live games being shown on a big screen - Japan v Samoa kicks off at 2.30pm, Scotland v South Africa is at 4.45pm and England v Australia follows at 8pm. The Rugby Club is providing barbecue food within the ticket price of £7.50 per head or £20 for three tickets.

Pont Charity Group concert

Pont Charity Group is holding a concert at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday October 31st starting 7.30pm. Just 4 Men return by popular demand. Tickets costing £10 are for sale at Geoff Steven opticians, 25 Main Street, Ponteland, at Stait Photography, 4 Market Place, Morpeth, and online at Eventbrite. The entertainment includes a bar and raffle with proceeds to Tynedale Hospice at Home.

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