

pontnews&views

FREE monthly community magazine for Ponteland and district



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Super-fit mum makes
Team GB glory bid

Charity champ Bruce targets final year of fundraising

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Mary-Jane with salon owner Samantha Healey

Stylish way to help hair loss children

Darras Hall schoolgirl Mary-Jane Stabler got the kindest of cuts when she went to a top salon for a trim.

Instead of her usual styling, she agreed to lose nine inches from her luscious 28in-long locks – with the aim of helping kids with cancer.

The idea was given to her by Samantha Healey and her team at Darras Hall Hair Lounge, in Broadway.

They send untreated strands of at least seven inches to the Little Princess Trust charity, which uses them to make wigs for children who have lost hair through illness.

Mary-Jane, 15, a pupil at Newcastle High School for Girls, said: “Sam usually trims a small amount from my hair each time.

“When I said I would like a little bit more, she told me about being able to donate my hair if I had a lot more taken off. I thought it was for such a good cause that it would be a great idea.”

Mum Jane Stabler added: “Samantha pointed out that if my daughter was willing to have at least seven inches cut off, then she would save the hair and donate it to the charity.

“Mary-Jane agreed immediately. She is enjoying her current hair length but may consider re-growing it to donate again.

“There are so many girls in Ponteland who I am sure would also be willing to donate hair to this amazing charity.”

As well as the specified length, other stipulations for donations include hair being of natural colour and not dyed using henna or semi-permanent dyes.

Samantha, who has supported the charity for four years, said: “It’s very thoughtful for young girls to have such an amount cut from their hair, solely to bring comfort to other girls in less fortunate circumstances.

“To raise awareness of this fantastic charity and encourage others to consider donating their hair, we offer a limited number of appointments, to under 16s, free of charge.

“These appointments are available once hair is assessed and deemed suitable.”



The moment of truth as Mary-Jane prepares for her cut



The freshly cut locks that will be used for wigs



Bruce with Marc Flaherty of Ponteland's Co-op store

Fundraiser Bruce digs deep for last cash raising bid

A Ponteland charity champ hopes to coin it in for a final time before hanging up his collecting bucket for good – but not before enjoying a special date with Royalty.

Sprightly Bruce Grant, 93, plans to call time at the end of the year on a decade of fundraising in which good causes have benefited by over £100,000.

In the past three years alone, he has raised £70,550 for seven North East charities, his latest accounts proudly show.

Although he still aims to get out and about at his favourite collecting spots, the grandfather and dad-of-two says he will be limiting his time and collecting for just two charities.

And Bruce, who received a British Empire Medal in last year's Queen's Birthday Honours for his work with the Pont Charity Group, has also been invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May.

He said: "I was collecting for charity seven-days-a-week in all weathers, that was how I got to £70,000, but that is now too much for me.

"I will be doing a little bit less but still getting out when I can to fundraise, and hopefully the weather will be good.

"I'm well aware that some people have fundraised a lot longer than I have and spent more time doing it, but I've not done too badly.

"It is my birthday on Boxing Day and that will probably be about it for me and my collecting, although I have been invited to Buckingham Palace."

Bruce, a former engineer who lives in Darras Hall, began fundraising in 2010 through church and built momentum at favoured spots in Ponteland, Morpeth, Hexham, Kingston Park and Eldon Square in Newcastle.

During the past three years, he has collected for Newcastle People's Kitchen, West End Food Bank, West End Refugee Service, Benwell Cornerstone Project, Children North East, Percy Hedley Foundation and the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

Until the end of 2020 he will go out collecting for the Royal Society for Blind Children and Tynedale Hospice at Home.

Bruce thanked his Ponteland supporters, including the Co-op store, and donors from further afield, and also Harry Banks OBE.

Mum gets on her marks for race glory

A Darras Hall mum is to fly the flag for Team GB after proving life's not a sprint but a marathon by getting super fit in her fabulous forties.

Sarah Hamilton, 46, has gone from being a casual exercise devotee to international competitor in the space of just four years.

The part-time NHS management trainer now runs, cycles and swims around three hours a day after getting the fitness bug.

So impressive is her new lease of life that she has been selected to represent Team GB Age-Group at the European Triathlon Championships in Estonia in July.

She will aim to stay the distance during a 2.5 mile swim, a 122 mile bike ride and a 26 mile marathon against competitors of a similar age.

Sarah, who is mum to Max, 14, Louisa, 11, and Sam, eight, will be supported from the sidelines by husband Scott, 46, who works in financial services.

She said: "It's important to push yourself



Sarah Hamilton at the end of the Dublin Marathon

and see what you can achieve with a bit of hard work.

"It's wonderful to be selected to represent Team GB, I'm greatly looking forward to representing my country."

Added Scott: "It all started with her desire to get fit, Sarah was always busy and active but this has taken it to a whole new level. She loves the challenge.



Sarah and husband Scott

"Sarah was over the moon when she was selected for Team GB but was also very relaxed about it and took it all in her stride. I thought it was an amazing achievement.

"She's a total inspiration, and her devotion to being fit is phenomenal. Sarah gets up to train at 6am and is often in the pool or on her Turbo Trainer bike at home. It really is like being married to Lara Croft.



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Repair costs mean drivers will have to pay to park

Hall gears up for parking charges

Motorists will soon have to pay to park at a well-known Ponteland community hub - and run the gauntlet of camera monitoring, its chairman has confirmed.

Robin Ramsay said there was no alternative at Ponteland Memorial Hall, whose car park requires essential repairs.

A vehicle number plate recognition system, operated by a regulated car park management company, will be introduced at a yet to be decided date this year.

To support the change, drop-in sessions will be held to assist users who are unable to pay by mobile phone or computer.

The Darras Road centre's car park had to close on two days last month for temporary repair work to be done.

Mr Ramsay said: "Users know it is in urgent need of repair. Temporary patching has been carried out but a major resurfacing will need to be done soon.

"Unfortunately, because of this, it is necessary for the charity's trustees to charge for use of the car park and discussions are in progress to establish a suitable system.

"At present we do not have a date for implementation but this will be this year once we have overcome some logistical problems.

"The hall's trustees are aware that the car park is well used by the community and regret the need to introduce charging. We are however trying to keep the charges as low as practicable."

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YUDAN - HEAD SEAMSTRESS

MODEST *modiste* BRINGS BESPOKE FASHION SERVICE TO DARRAS

DARRAS HALL DRY CLEANER NAV DULAI IS OFFERING A SEAMLESS NEW SERVICE TO SUIT ALL OCCASIONS.

He has appointed experienced dressmaker Yudan as head seamstress to launch Dulais Sewing Company at the shopping centre on Broadway.

The new business provides a comprehensive bespoke dressmaking and clothing alterations service, covering everything from wedding dresses to evening gowns, Prom outfits and even fancy dress costumes.

Yudan completed an MA in Fashion Design at Northumbria University after arriving in the UK from her native China in 2009 and has also run her own boutique dressmaking and clothing alterations business for several years.

Offering a made to measure service, some of her more unusual commissions included a Game of Thrones costume for a fancy dress party and an outfit for an ice skating competition!

She said: "I can take an existing costume and transform it, or you can bring in a photo or drawing and we can choose material and I can design and make your dress from scratch. "Often ladies buy a wedding dress but then lose weight in the months leading up to their big day, and I can take it in and make any other alterations they wish to make it perfect for them. "But sometimes a bride-to-be arrives with



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Dulais Sewing Company complements the other services already offered from Dulais' Broadway base – dry cleaning, wedding dress cleaning and a new laundry division.

only an idea and I take that and hand draw designs and bring in material samples for her to choose from, to create a completely unique outfit."

Nav has made some alterations of his own to accommodate Yudan and her state-of-the-art sewing equipment, also adding a double fitting room to his dry cleaning premises.

He said: "We have offered simple clothing alterations, zip fixing etc for some time but it was clear that our customers also wanted a high end bespoke dressmaking service for those special occasions.

"Yudan is a highly talented dressmaker who can turn her hand to everything - from creating dresses for an entire wedding party to altering an existing outfit for another big event such as Ladies' Day at the races.

"Girls looking forward to their school summer Prom will often worry about arriving with the same outfit as one of their friends – now we can create a totally unique dress for them.

"But we still offer a full traditional seamstress service as well, including curtains, fixing or replacing zips and tailoring alterations for men – which can save our customers a lot of money."



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Clampdown on anti-social behaviour

By PC Phil Oliver, Ponteland Neighbourhood Officer



The local policing team has been conducting regular patrols in recent weeks regarding anti-social behaviour committed by youths in Ponteland Park and on Merton Way.

This has also involved home visits and letters being sent to the addresses of the main perpetrators we have identified, some of whom we have had to take home.

These patrols will continue and we will deal robustly with any individuals identified as regularly causing problems.

Parents and guardians are advised to be wary regarding the whereabouts of their children, especially on weekends and in the evenings.

Rural crime and thefts

Operation Roland, a new initiative, has seen officers run a targeted operation to continue the crackdown on rural crime and cross-border criminals.

Officers, including those from East



PC Phil Oliver and PCSO Laura McCann at the latest community engagement event at Ponteland's Co-op

Tynedale Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT), used gathered intelligence to target key areas and carry out a number of vehicle stops and patrols.

Results have included arrests and the

stopping and seizure of vehicles in relation to poaching, drug use and other offences.

Local residents are urged to stay vigilant and report anything suspicious, and to look out for neighbours and secure any valuable property appropriately, especially in isolated rural areas.

Community engagements

Officers from East Tynedale NPT will be promoting their work and offering advice at a series of events in March.

Please feel free to attend to discuss any policing issues in your neighbourhood. They are at the following locations and times:

- 5pm-6pm on Sunday March 8 at Co-op, Broadway
- 9am-10am on Friday March 13 at Ponteland Leisure Centre
- 10am-11am on Saturday March 21 at Matten Village Store
- 11.30am-12.30pm on Saturday March 21 at Belsay Village Shop
- 5pm-6pm on Thursday March 26 at Ponteland Leisure Centre.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

My favourite case

By David Lamb, Lamb and Associates

About 10 years ago, I was having an annual investment review with Cumbrian clients Andrew and Mary.

They had spent over 30 years building their business and sold it, when they retired. Unfortunately, they were not spending their money, only living off the 'interest', because they were scared of running out.

I asked them, if they lived to age 100, how much did they want to leave? Their response was that they did not want to pay any inheritance tax (they had read this was a voluntary tax paid by those who dislike their children even more than they dislike the Inland Revenue) which, at the time, meant leaving no more than £650,000.

Using our cashflow modelling

software, we calculated that between ages 68 and 80, they could spend an extra £30,000 on average each year.

'A new car then!' was Andrew's response. And more holidays I suggested? He was all for this, but Mary was very quiet.

She stated that they had had enough of cruises and driving around Europe. I said: 'But there is a big world to be explored.' However she was still very uncomfortable. It turned out that she feared flying.

Driving home that night, I remembered that a friend had been on a flying phobia course, at Newcastle Airport. I googled this and sent the link across to Andrew.

To cut a long story short, she went

on the course in the February and by May they were in Borneo, watching the orangutans, because that had always been on Andrew's bucket list. The following month, they were in Barcelona for a long weekend with friends.

Since then, they have at least three holidays each year, and have been able to gift money to their daughters (because they know they are never going to drop below £650,000), who have now either paid off their mortgages, or will do in the near future.

At every review meeting now, whilst we do review their investments, the main question is 'How much can we spend next year?'

Talk about getting job satisfaction!

Your letters

The Editor
Pont News & Views



Builders' trucks and dog owners are criticised in this month's letters...

Works' vehicles are out of control

When will something be done about the number of vans, trucks and cars owned by workmen parking en masse along the roadside at the property they are working at?

As I type this, there are seven such vehicles parked outside an address in Edge Hill. This makes it very difficult for cars to pass safely and pedestrians and people in wheelchairs. People with prams have no chance of getting by without resorting to travelling along the road, putting them at serious risk very close to a busy junction.

I fail to understand why the police, traffic enforcement officers or someone with authority cannot step in and advise the owners of these vehicles to park them elsewhere, perhaps on a side road. Although not ideal, it would be safer for the majority of people.

Lori Taylor
Edge Hill, Ponteland

Appeal for owners to bag it and bin it

For the attention of Darras Hall dog owners - can you please make an effort to pick up your dogs' poo.

Being a regular user of the Bridal Path (or should I say 'poo path'?) and even the paths on Darras Road and Western Way, it is disappointing to see so much dog mess. Even some of the branches are 'decorated' with lovely full poo bags, swinging in the breeze.

I appreciate it can be smelly and disgusting and even rather embarrassing when the pooch decides to squat in the middle of a path, but just pick it up rather than leaving it for a six-year-old to spread it all over her shoe.

I didn't expect, when moving to Darras Hall, that I would have to hose down the soles of my child's shoes after going for a walk to the shops.

Paul Gibson
Burnside, Darras Hall

April issue deadlines: Delivery of the April issue will start on Monday March 30th and be completed by Friday April 3rd. The deadline for all copy and adverts is Monday March 16th. If you are aware of any missed properties please contact the editor at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or call (0191) 5191306. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the April 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.

Appeal to help ease conscience

On the afternoon of Monday, December 23, I had just made the final pay-in for charity, prior to the Christmas holiday, and was hurrying home as I had guests due and preparations still to do.

As I passed the church, I met a lady, her fur-lined hood tight round her head in a cold wind. She addressed me by name, and to my shame, I said, 'Sorry, I am in a hurry', and pressed on home.

Well, as you might expect, my conscience has bothered ever since. I do not have her address, so I appeal: if you should see this, will you please call for a chat.

Bruce Grant
Old Station Court, Darras Hall



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What's on...

Farm Market

Dates for Wilde Farm Market, which meets at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, are Sunday March 1st, Sunday April 5th and Sunday May 10th, all from 10am to 2pm.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

Inner Wheel, one of the world's biggest women's voluntary organisations, meets at 2pm on the first Tuesday of each month in Merton Hall, Merton Road. On March 3rd Tom Steanson will talk about 'Real Florida, No Micky Mouse'. The yearly programme includes speakers, socialising, occasional lunches and fundraising. Visitors welcome. Call (01661) 871768 or 07568 743653.

Ponteland Wildlife Group

On Tuesday March 3rd Chris Metherell will talk about the 'Isle of May Uncovered' at 7.30pm in St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road. Admission £2 includes refreshments.

Kirkley WI

At 7pm on Wednesday March 4th, Freda Thompson will talk about 'Mr Grainger's Market'. The group meets at Kirkley Hall on the first Wednesday of each month. Guests welcome, with information at kirkleywi@hotmail.com

Ponteland Community Singers

Led by Janet Walton and promoting better health for people of all ages, the group meets from 1.30pm to 3pm on Thursday March 5th and the same day weekly at the United Reformed Church, Broadway. Car parking is available, and classes are £5 which pays for refreshments. Contact Janet on (01661) 823433.

World Day of Prayer Service 2020

With a theme of 'Rise! Take Your Mat and Walk!', written by the women of Zimbabwe in Africa, this event is at 2.30pm on Friday March 6th at United Reformed Church, Broadway. Refreshments follow.

Whistling Sheep Ceilidh Band

The band's fundraising ceilidh, in aid of mountain rescue, is from 7pm on Friday March 6th at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road. Tickets are £15, or £7.50 for school age, and pie and peas is provided and bar is available. All ages are welcome, with tickets reserved from Jim at whistlingsheepceilidhband@gmail.com. The band meets on alternate Mondays after school at Ponteland High School. Information at www.whistlingsheep.btck.co.uk.

Darras Hall WI

Visitors are welcome to hear John Hawley, head gardener at Belsay Hall, talk about the year-round outdoor beauty of Belsay at the group's meeting at 2pm on Monday March 9th in Merton Hall, Merton Road.

Ponteland Senior Gents Club

From 2pm for a 2.30pm start on Monday 9th March at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road, Malcolm Byrne will talk about 'The Atomic Bomb', and the annual dinner is at Ponteland Golf Club on Wednesday

March 18th at 6.30pm for a 7.30pm start. Membership is for gentlemen over 55 and new members are welcome on the day or by calling Bill Scharadt on 0191 2421448, Alan Maidwell on (01661) 598172, or email pontelandsgc@gmail.com. Visit pontelandsgc.co.uk

Ponteland Village WI

The group's meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday March 10th at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, will include a talk on 'The Half Shilling Curate'. Subgroups include walking, monthly dining out, 'cycling for softies' and a book and film club. Information is on Facebook or by emailing pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com

Ponteland WI

'A Year Behind the Veil', a talk by Ingrid Kilner, is at 7pm on Tuesday March 10th at Merton Hall, Merton Road. A coffee morning with stalls is on Saturday April 11th, from 10.30am to noon.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

Demonstrator Karl Brunton will illustrate her theme of 'Imagination' at 2pm on Wednesday March 11th in the downstairs lounge at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road. The meeting will also include a produce stall. Visitors welcome at £7.

Friends of Kirkley Hall

At 2pm on Wednesday March 11th, Northumbrian Hedgehog Sanctuary's Liz Clark will tell how the animals are nursed back to health and released to safe areas. Entry is £2 for members and £3 non-members. Information on is 07470 708535, friendsofkirkleyhall@gmail.com and friendsofkirkleyhall.org

Ponteland Lions Club

The business meeting is at 7.30pm on Wednesday March 11th in Merton Hall, Merton Road. A charity fund bookstall is at Waitrose's Ponteland branch from 9am to 4pm on Saturday March 28th, and a fundraising dinner in support of mental health charity Mind is at Ponteland Golf Club on Monday April 6th. Contact 0345 833 9913.

Ponteland Community Partnership

Come to observe a meeting and share your ideas, concerns and expectations for improving the quality of life in the community. All welcome. The next meeting is at 7pm on Wednesday March 18th in the Bishop Merton Room, St Mary's Parish Hall, Thornhill Road. Visit: pontelandcommunitypartnership.co.uk

Ponteland Local History Society

A talk by Eleanor Hall entitled 'The Pumphreys' is at 7.30pm on Thursday March 19th at St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road. Visitors welcome at £2.

Embroiderers Guild Ponteland Branch

'The History of Embroidery', an illustrated talk by Hilary Fielding, is from 2pm to 4pm on Monday March 23rd at Ponteland Memorial Hall, Darras Road. All welcome, £4. Branch and Guild membership is open to all, whatever their experience, and they can become a member or attend as a visitor for £4. Information from Penny Ford on 01670 788278 or by emailing penelopeford636@btinternet.com

Alzheimer's Society

Find out about volunteering in Ponteland with the Side by Side service at Merton Hall, Merton Road, on Monday March 23rd, between 10am and noon, with a Free Dementia session with a Side by Side volunteer at 10.30am. Contact Alzheimer's Society on 01670 813255.

Poppies for Remembrance Drop-in

Ponteland Town Council is planning displays of knitted or crocheted red poppies for November's annual Remembrance event. Anyone who can knit or crochet, or wants to learn or teach others, can attend Merton Hall, Merton Road, on Saturday March 28th between 10am and 3pm. Please bring red and black double-knit wool and needles (3.5 or 3.75 knitting, 5.00 crochet). Patterns supplied. Some wool and needles available. Free refreshments.

Ponteland Civic Society

Local historian J Michael Taylor will speak about 'Prestwick – A Northumbrian Mining Village' at 7.30pm on Monday March 30th at Ponteland CIU Club, Merton Way. There will be a brief Annual General Meeting. Visitors welcome at £2.

Ponteland Village Bridge Club

Members meet each Friday from 6.45pm 9.30pm in Merton Hall, Merton Road. New members can join this friendly group. Information from Ann Straker on (01661) 822529.

Ponteland Ramblers

The Ponteland group of the Ramblers Association organises walks in Northumberland and North Durham on alternate Sundays and two Wednesdays each month. Sunday walks are between seven and nine miles, and those on Wednesdays from five to seven miles. Visit ramblers.org.uk/ponteland or contact Steve Edwards on (01661) 886310.

Tuesday Bridge Club

New members are invited to join a club which runs each week until the end of April. The club is at Merton Hall, Merton Road. Information from Sandy on 07935 237732.

Ponteland Writers

This is a friendly group with mixed writing ability and experience which meets from 7pm to 9pm every Wednesday in the Ladies Lounge at Ponteland Golf Club. New members welcome.



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 Ponteland Town Council

Exhibition adds focus to photographer's life and times

A Ponteland photographer's long life through the lens is being captured in a new exhibition in a village close to his heart.

Geoffrey Willey's work is featuring at the Ryedale Folk Museum in Hutton-le-Hole, North Yorkshire, until Sunday, March 29.

Born in Honley, West Yorkshire, and with a childhood in Scarborough, he moved to Ponteland in the 1960s after getting a job at Newcastle University.

He ran a photography studio in the town, often also being

present in a professional capacity at weddings and christenings.

Geoffrey helped form the Ponteland Photography Society, for which he was president from 1978 until his death in 2015, aged 103.

The exhibition, titled A Life Through the Lens, tells his story via the images he bequeathed to the museum upon his death.

Project officer Holly Smith said Geoffrey loved exploring the North Yorkshire countryside, including around Hutton-le-Hole.

She added: "With a career spanning many decades and encompassing weirdly-wonderful jobs, such as his

role as resident photographer and frogman for the government-sponsored Institute of Seaweed Research, his life certainly makes for interesting reading.

"We have around 60 to 70 images in the exhibition, and they are organised thematically so they cover some of the areas Geoffrey was most passionate about.

"These include the museum, nature, some of his most loved jobs, Scarborough and radio, but the earliest are of him as a child and those he took in Scarborough in the 1930s.

"For the museum, Geoffrey's life and photography have a deeply personal resonance. He was able to document those early days, ready for the museum's opening in 1964, offering curious glimpses into what went on.

"We're really hoping that the exhibition will capture the character of this fascinating Yorkshireman."

The museum is open daily, from 10am to 4pm, with free entry to the gallery where the exhibition is being staged.

More information is at ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk



Geoffrey Willey in action at the camera

Ojas' political star is on the rise

A year may not be a long time in politics for a Ponteland pupil voted onto Northumberland's leading young person's representative body.

For Ojas Rajkumar, 14, has much he wants to achieve, after being named one of five new additions to the county's Youth Council's 10-strong body for the next 12 months.

His ambitions are help give voice to all 11 to 19-year-olds so their views are represented and they are given opportunities to succeed equally.

And the Year 10 Ponteland High School student also wants to ensure they have support in place to prepare them for the road ahead to leading independent lives.

Ojas gained 467 votes in the annual poll, which means he won support from youngsters at schools other than his own.

He did so through a campaign of posters, flyers and online messaging - and even on polling day, he canvassed support from students during their lunch break and by visiting classrooms to talk about his main manifesto.

Three other students from Ponteland High School have been commended for taking part in the election.

Headteacher Kieran McGrane said: "Ojas joined our school in April 2019 and he very quickly made a hugely positive impression on staff and students alike. He is a very personable and polite young man with a keen sense of right and wrong.

"It has been lovely to see him get so involved in political discussions in school and beyond, and I know he will be a great asset to the Youth Cabinet."

The cabinet is an elected body which takes issues on a local level to decision makers, in order to influence change.

It develops projects based on issues they campaigned for in their election manifestos, such as themes around young people and democracy.

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Lucinda guides girls to date landmark

A Ponteland group for girls is celebrating its magical 50th anniversary - and one member has been key to its decades-long success.

Lucinda Porter joined the 4th Ponteland Guides as a Young Leader in 1971, soon after its founding on January 29 of the previous year.

She became assistant leader in 1972 and Guider in charge in 1986, a position she still holds as one of two leaders.

Lucinda, 65, has seen much change over the years, including five other Guides units in the town come and go.

Today, she oversees the welfare and care of around 26 girls, aged 10 to 15, with the 4th now the sole remaining unit.

She said: "I have enjoyed every meeting of the last 48 years, seeing how much the girls enjoy the meetings and how they much they learn and grow during their time with us is very rewarding."

Lucinda works as leader alongside Sarah Pagan, 41, who joined the 4th Ponteland in 2017 but has been Guiding since her teens.

They are now encouraging the group's



Lucinda Porter, middle, with Sarah Pagan, right, and Guides' members

members to celebrate the anniversary milestone by undertaking the '50 good deeds for 50 years' initiative.

Laboratory manager Sarah said: "The number of good deeds is the combined group target over the next year and can include things like checking on a neighbour and making sure friends at school are ok.

"We do a lot of good work around Ponteland, such as taking part in Remembrance Day events and the Flower Show, and engage very well with people.

"The Guides remains very relevant and important, giving young girls space to be themselves away from any other pressures.

"They also make lots of new friends, and gain important skills for how they live today and for their futures."

At its peak in the 1980s there were six Guides units in Ponteland, with the 4th becoming the last in 2010 after the 6th closed.

Anyone interested in joining should visit www.girlguiding.org.uk

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Dear Resident,

We have made good progress over the past month, having just completed week 66 of our programmed 85 weeks period for the construction of the Schools, Leisure Centre and Community Crescent Hub. The old fire station has been demolished and works are progressing to the external areas as well as the buildings.

During February we have substantially completed the external envelope to all areas. The buildings are weathertight, and the teaching wings to the Primary and Secondary Schools have again progressed extremely well, with the finishing trades sequentially closing out these areas. We will be looking to start the sequential close-out of the teaching wings towards the end of March, then progressively move through the Crescent areas, working in a northerly direction towards the Pool Hall.

Overall, works are progressing well, and the Project is on track for hand-over in summer 2020 as planned.

What works you will see in the next 4 weeks?

- Continue to progress M&E installations to the Secondary School.
- Continue to progress the internal fit-out to the Secondary School
- Progress external works to the Secondary School.
- Completion of Brickwork to the Primary School.
- Dropping of scaffolds to all elevations of the Primary School.
- Continue to progress M&E installations to the Primary School.
- Continue to progress the internal fit-out to the Primary School
- Continue to progress external works to the Primary School.
- Continue to progress partition works to all Crescent areas.
- Continue to progress M&E installations to all Crescent areas.
- Complete Curtain Walling installations to all Crescent areas.
- Continue to progress installation of swimming pools to the Pool Hall.
- Continue to progress installation of all services to the Pool Hall.
- Continue to progress connection of roof top mechanical equipment.
- Continue to progress installation of M&E services to the Spa and Gym areas.
- Continue to progress works to the bridgeway.
- Complete the demolition of the existing Fire Station.
- Progress with the construction of the Southern Car Park.

During the second half of March we will be commencing the roadworks that are required on Callerton Lane to allow the road and route the capacity to accommodate the traffic movements for the new campus. These works have been stipulated by NCC Highways as part of their requirements for the approval of the development. The planning of the works is currently being finalised with NCC's Highways team however, we anticipate commencing late March with the works extending over the summer period. These will affect Callerton Lane between Mayfair Gardens and Dunsgreen, and there will be a requirement for traffic management to be in operation during this period to facilitate the works. Further details as to the specifics of the traffic management operations will be issued once all aspects have been agreed with NCC Highways.

Watch Points through March

- **Daily traffic movements in and out of the site**
- **HGV deliveries with M&E services materials, Finishes materials, and miscellaneous deliveries**
- **Progression of works to the Bridgeway.**
- **Progression of required roadworks to Callerton Lane.**

CSR & Project Quick Facts

During the February half-term week, we had 7 students from Ponteland High School join the site team for a work experience week.

The Project has registered with the construction industry Open Doors Week, which runs week of 16th March 2020. We plan to conduct 2 tours per day – 9:30am and 1:30pm – from Monday 16th March through to Thursday 19th March 2020. You can register and book on to a tour at the following link: https://opendoors.construction/site/550#loc_about. This is a great opportunity to see the project as we approach the final stages and provides a glimpse of what's to come when the project is handed over this summer.



If you have any concerns or queries regarding the works, please feel free to contact us:



Roddy Graham
Project Leader
07849 098786
ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk



Andy Todhunter
Operations Lead
07773 243081
ksne.ponteland@kier.co.uk



Athletes step up a gear for sessions

Two events a month apart are helping runners in Ponteland get into their stride.

Ponteland Runners hosts its annual open evening at 7pm on Wednesday, April 1, at which beginners and seasoned runners can come together to try out a session.

And on Wednesday, May 6, the club holds its yearly beginners' group, a 10-week 'couch to 5km' programme to help running rookies find their feet.

By its end, all participants are expected to be able to run 5km, with an invite to join in the club's same distance summer handicap race a target.

People returning to running after a break can also join the beginners' group.

A Ponteland Runners spokeswoman said: "There will be a number of different group sessions available to cater for all abilities.

"Anyone who wants to give it a go can just turn up on the night, where the club's friendly leaders will be on hand to help with allocating newbies to the right ability group."

All groups will meet at and leave from the car park at Ponteland Leisure Centre, in Callerton Lane.

Further information is on Ponteland Runners' Facebook page and from Abby Dorani at chair@pontelandrunners.org.uk.

Fire service boss Paul's Royal reward

The fire chief responsible for keeping Ponteland safe has been presented with a special service medal from the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace.

Paul Hedley was given the Queen's Fire Service Medal for his work with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, which he joined in January 1987.

In that time, he has served in a variety of roles, culminating in being Chief Fire Officer for almost four years.

He received the medal for his commitment to improving safety, welfare and security and for leadership on a range of operational and community safety service improvements.

It was also recognition of his national role as the strategic lead for wildfire on the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Paul said: "As a lifelong resident of Northumberland, this is an incredibly proud moment, and one that is even more special as I'm able to share it with my family who have supported me throughout my career.

"I'm immensely grateful to all of the amazing people I have worked with over the years,



Paul Hedley with the Queen's Fire Service Medal

because it is only through their guidance, support, enthusiasm and dedication that I'm lucky enough to be here receiving this award.

"It's an honour to lead such a fantastic Fire and Rescue Service, with staff who are making a difference to people's lives every day. This award is testament to that and I dedicate it to them all."

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Emergency contacts

At a time of crisis, finding contact details for individuals and organisations can waste valuable time or be a cause of extra anxiety. The team at Ponteland Town Council has created this cut-out-and-keep list of telephone numbers and websites it is hoped you'll never have to use and there is space for you to add your personal essential contact details.

Emergency police/fire/ambulance

999

Police non-emergency

101

NHS 111

111

Gas leak

0800 111 999

Power cut

105

www.northernpowergrid.com/power-cuts

Priority register

0800 169 2996

www.northernpowergrid.com/care

Northumbrian Water

Emergency - 0800 393 084

Customer Service - 0345 733 5566

Floodline, Environment Emergency

0345 988 1188 0845 988 1188

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Weather warnings

www.metoffice.gov.uk

Northumberland County Council

8.30am-5pm - 0345 600 6400

Out of Hours - 0345 600 5252

www.northumberland.gov.uk

Ponteland Town Council

Monday - Thursday, 9.30am - 1pm - 01661 825092

www.ponteland-tc.gov.uk enquiries@ponteland-tc.gov.uk

Preparing for Emergencies - Government guidance

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-emergencies



Home health check - think....

Heating - is it in good working order? Does it need to be serviced?

Pipes - is your lagging in good condition?

Stopcock - do you know where it is in case of emergency?

Gutters - have they been cleaned out recently?

Roof - have you checked for missing or loose tiles or slates?

Fences - are they secure in case of high winds?

Car - check your tyres, top up anti-freeze, look if windscreen wipers work properly, check your screen wash level.

Flu jab - have you been advised to have one?

Personal medications - do you have a small stock in case you can't get out?

Food - do you have enough to keep going if you're housebound for a few days?



Personal contact information

The team at Ponteland Town Council has created this cut-out-and-keep list for you to add your essential contact details so they are easy for you and your family to find.

Family

.....

.....

Neighbours

.....

.....

Friends

.....

.....

Doctor Plumber

Dentist Heating engineer

School/work Insurance company - buildings

Car breakdown

Garage/mechanic Insurance company - contents

Builder

Power supplier - gas Solicitor

Power supplier - electricity Internet supplier

Electrician Others

Flood defences and Remembrance Sunday

Prior to the meeting, an Environment Agency (EA) representative gave a presentation about the proposed flood defence works for Ponteland, required to avoid further decline.

Current defences will be replaced with a piled flood wall on the south bank of the River Pont, between the Memorial Hall and Callerton Burn, a significant investment by the EA.

As a result, some trees will be removed. A detailed tree impact survey has been carried out and the EA has committed to providing five trees for each mature specimen removed.

Some will be replaced on the site of the new works, and discussions are being held with various stakeholders, including the town council, regarding sites for re-planting.

Two drop-in sessions were held in 2019 and consultation has been carried out with stakeholders and landowners. Further information will be included in a future edition of Pont News & Views.

Library consultation

Northumberland County Council (NCC) has carried out a consultation on library provision, with various drop-in information sessions held in January and February. Several councillors provided positive feedback at the Ponteland event on January 28. The library service was keen to engage with the community and also to encourage usage of the facility. The consultation will end on March 18.

Remembrance Displays 2020

Following on from the item reported in the February edition, the town council is progressing plans for three poppy displays in Ponteland during November. If permission is granted, the intention is to have a display at Coates Green, the sensory garden and in front of the Pele tower. The displays require at least 1,000 knitted or crocheted poppies, and this provides an excellent opportunity for the community and people of all ages to get involved.

Appeals for help will be made to organisations such as the four WIs, plus Guides and Scouts, Girls and Boys Brigades and similar organisations. Letters will also be sent to the four care homes with a copy of a pattern to see if they would like to get involved.

Patterns are available from the town council offices and can be downloaded from the council website.

A poppy-making drop in session will be held at Merton Hall on Saturday, March 28, from 10am to 3pm. A small supply of wool and needles will be available, and refreshments will be offered to anyone attending. All are welcome. Knitting and crochet tuition will be available.

Change of date for May meeting

It was agreed to change the date of the May Annual Meeting from Wednesday, May 13, to Wednesday, May 20.

Environment Working Party

The Environment Working Party met on January 17. It discussed the issue of the provision of water at the allotments. The

council agreed to examine the provision of a piped water supply if all tenants were in favour of this option, but this was not the case.

The suggestion for a tank of water to be placed on one of the vacant plots was not thought to be feasible by some tenants. An alternative suggestion for the provision of water butts had been made at a meeting held with tenants in November and the Environment Working Party suggested at its January meeting to make this offer to tenants. The council agreed to the suggestion.

If tenants are in favour of this option, the tenancy agreements will require some revision to confirm that the water butts remained with the plot when notice was given.

Northumberland County Council report

Cllr Veronica Jones referred to the reporting of potholes via the NCC website which was useful as the correspondent could pinpoint on a map exactly where the problem was. It is detailed here <http://mapreport.northumberland.gov.uk/potholes/>

She mentioned the ongoing budget discussions at NCC and stated that a £150m investment was being made for new schools in Ponteland, Hexham, Berwick and Seaton Valley.

She reported that the county council was now 34th on the Stonewall Index of Employers for 2020 compared to being 86th in 2019.

This report is based on the minutes of the town council meeting on February 12.



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Council Tax to increase to protect services

Ponteland householders face a rise in their Council Tax bills from April in a move council chiefs insist is needed to balance the books and protect frontline services.

It will jump by 1.99 per cent – and the Adult Care precept will increase by two per cent, specifically for use on adult social care services.

Northumberland County Council (NCC) has also confirmed it must make savings of £9.8m in 2020-21 to deliver a balanced budget.

Council Leader and Ponteland councillor Peter Jackson said there was £678.5m to spend on what he termed a “targeted” programme of investment and development across schools, housing, roads and leisure facilities.

He defended the rise, insisting NCC’s plans were more ambitious than ever and would deliver the biggest capital investment programme Northumberland had seen.

Cllr Jackson said: “In December we



Cllr Peter Jackson

launched our latest budget consultation, which set out how we aimed to balance the books and make sure we spend every single penny of taxpayers money wisely, but also deliver on our commitment to grow the economy and

look after the most vulnerable in our communities.

“Whilst our budget is about managing demand and protecting frontline services, we are still increasing our spending in vital services including adult social care and children’s services.

“There’s no doubt that demand for services has grown, with increased costs and growing pressures particularly in adults and children’s services.

“However our focus has been very much on transforming how we deliver services and redesigning these to better meet the needs of the residents of Northumberland. Our service reform needs to meet our ambitions to make sure our organisation is fit for purpose.”

“We’re determined to shine a light on all that is great about Northumberland as a place to work, live, visit and do business.

“Approving this budget gives us a chance to do this and make significant improvements, to deliver improved services and better value for money for the communities we serve, and support a thriving local economy that everyone can benefit from.”



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Still time to catch killer, say murder probe police

Detectives have made a fresh appeal for help to catch the killer of a schoolboy found dead in a ditch near Ponteland exactly 50 years ago.

Despite the passing of time, they believe there is still a chance the murderer of 11-year-old Allan Graham can be brought to justice.

He went missing after leaving his brother Dennis Baron's house in Gerald Street, Benwell, Newcastle, in January 1970.

His body was discovered a day later on an old access road near the former Callerton Grange Farm, close to Stamfordham Road between Throckley and Darras Hall.

Northumbria Police say the probe into the apparently motiveless murder has never been closed and any new forensic opportunities have been pursued.

Detective Chief Inspector Andy Fairlamb said: "This murder may be 50 years old but there are still people alive today who might have information that could lead to a major breakthrough in this case.

"This is the murder of a young schoolboy and that is a very big secret for a person to keep to themselves for 50 years. It is never too late for a person to come forward.

"People's memories may have faded but if you are responsible for the murder of a child then it is not



Allan Graham was murdered 50 years ago

something you are ever going to forget and there is still time to speak to police.

"There are genuine lines of enquiry we will continue to pursue and that is focused around tracing witnesses who were in the area at the time and going over their account.

"Many of those people may well have died but until we have traced all those individuals, and spoken to them about what they know, then this case will remain open."

Allan lived with his mother in Gateshead but on the day of his disappearance was staying at the home of Dennis and his wife, and had been sent to a shop to buy cigarettes but never returned.

A farm worker found his body, with a post-mortem revealing the boy had been strangled.

Anyone with information can contact police on 101 or fill in an online reporting form on the Northumbria Police website.

Details can also be given anonymously to independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Young learners

Success in a Lego competition was more than just another brick in a wall for talented pupils at a Ponteland school.

In fact, youngsters from Richard Coates CofE Primary School proved themselves ultra-adept with the plastic building toy – by creating a prize-winning robot.

Their design was so good it proved top class and won the Robot Design Award at Northumberland's first FIRST LEGO League Tournament, held at Sage UK in Gosforth, Newcastle.

They came up against pupils, aged nine to 16, from seven other schools who put their problem solving and team work skills to the test.

The learners were required to design, build and programme their own robots and compete in teams to solve a series of problems.

They also had to complete a landmark building challenge and present a sustainable building proposal to judges in a tournament whose theme was around building and sustainability.

The project was part of efforts to improve learning in the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths.

Lindsay Phillips, FIRST LEGO League champion for Sage UK, said: "The war on talent is immense at the moment, particularly in the North East, which is a hot bed of tech.

"If we can get kids involved in coding from an early age it means we stand a better chance of breaking down that talent wall and creating a bigger supply of brilliant minds coming into the industry."

Cllr Wayne Daley, deputy leader of Northumberland County Council, said: "This is a fantastic initiative that is helping our young people get involved in STEM activities including aspects of science, technology, engineering and maths.

"It has been brilliant to see the young people of Northumberland come together with their robots that they have spent weeks working on to compete for the first time."

Other competition categories included Core Values Award, Robot Games Award, Innovation Project Award and Judges Award.



The team from Richard Coates CofE Primary School

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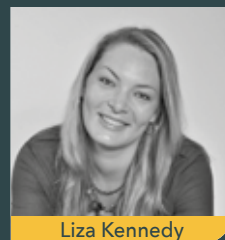
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