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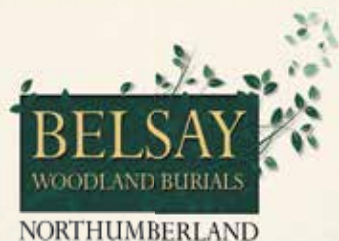


Residents demand answers over
Storm Arwen power cuts

Headteachers' anger as special
school relocation concerns dismissed

Popular watering hole closes for
£350,000 revamp

Record-breaking
ladies' time posted
as Wheelbarrow
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Produced by Cian creative pr



Chrissie and Roy Hartnell celebrate with family on their 70th wedding anniversary in 2014.

Chrissie celebrates her 100th birthday – with a curry in the village!

Sprightly great-grandmother Chrissie Hartnell celebrated her 100th birthday with a meal at her favourite Indian restaurant!

The centenarian, who enjoys a regular walk at Bolam Lake and the coast and still lives independently at her marital home in Ponteland, was joined by friends and family on January 17 to celebrate her landmark.

Christina Young was born in 1922 in Hazlerigg Village and was raised by her dad and extended family after her mother sadly died just 12 days after she was born and her Aunt, who moved in to help, died just six weeks later.

She left school shortly before WWII broke out and got a job in the REME tank repair workshops at Catterick Garrison. A dancer herself, she went on to meet Roy Hartnell at a dance where he was playing in a band which entertained the troops. After their first date a keen Roy asked her if she would marry him and Chrissie asked if she could think about it.

Christina and Roy were married on July 31 1944 and went on to have a son Keith and later moved back to Hazlerigg after having lived further south for many years.



Wartime wedding – July 31 1944.

They then moved to Ponteland in 1969, where they continued to share many happy years and in July 2014 they celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary before Roy sadly passed away the following year.

Chrissie has remained in the village and always has a smile and a chat for everyone. Up until the pandemic she would be seen getting the bus to town where she would get some shopping and sit and watch the world go by before getting the bus home.

She continues to remain a very strong independent woman living in their marital home and now has Keith, three



grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and a great-great granddaughter due anytime soon who all share the love and closeness that Chrissie remembers having as a child herself. Some of the family now live in Australia, whom she Facetimes with on a regular basis too.

Friend and neighbour Deb Parker said: "Chrissie loves to still go for walks - Bolam Lake, Newbiggin by the Sea and Seaton Sluice are her favourites. She walks with her wheelchair but insists she walks and pushes it herself! Honestly I have not met a woman like her; she's so inspirational and a joy to talk to and always has a cuddle for you."

Photos by Deb Parker, Imogen Kate Photography

PM receives Christmas card designed by Ponteland student

The Prime Minister and other members of the Cabinet received a Christmas card designed by Ponteland Community Primary School student Tara Khoshnevis.

The Year 5 pupil was presented with a 'life size' replica by MP Guy Opperman at her family home after winning his annual Christmas card design competition.

Tara's design was turned into Mr Opperman's constituency Christmas card, which has been presented directly to the Prime Minister and sent to other members of the Cabinet along with thousands of local businesses and residents.

Mr Opperman, also Pensions and Financial Inclusion Minister, said: "It was fantastic to meet with Tara and congratulate her on her brilliant design for my 2021 Christmas card. I really enjoyed seeing all the great entries from schools across Tynedale and Ponteland this year."

Tara is presented with the 'life size' replica by MP Guy Opperman.



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Special school relocation report sparks headteacher fury

A war of words has broken out between Ponteland headteachers and Northumberland County Council education chiefs over controversial plans to relocate a special school.

In November, Pont News featured the proposal to move Atkinson House School from Seghill, Cramlington, to the former Richard Coates CE Primary School site on Thornhill Road.

The site was vacated in 2020 when Richard Coates School moved to the neighbouring former Ponteland Primary School building, after this school was relocated to the new combined schools and leisure complex on Callerton Lane.

If the plans are approved, the specialist social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) school would change from being boys only to co-educational and would open in September. NCC says a new site is needed to meet increasing demand for special school places, including young people with autism.

As part of a consultation which ran from October 13 to December 1 an online questionnaire was sent to 2,016 consultees and of 305 responses, 31.5% supported the relocation and 68.5% opposed. Atkinson House staff and governors were in favour.

Both the Pele Trust, which comprises Ponteland High School and five primary schools, and Ponteland Town Council highlighted potential safeguarding issues with a shared site for the older special school students and children from nursery age to primary and suggested alternative locations in their responses.

But a report prepared for the Cabinet meeting on January 11 by Northumberland's Head of School Organisation and Resources Sue Aviston, seeking approval to move to a statutory proposal and for £250,000 for feasibility and design works, has sparked outrage.

Ms Aviston wrote: "In relation to the Trusts (sic) questioning of the appropriateness of an SEMH provision for young people located adjacent to a primary school, this demonstrates perhaps a lack of understanding of the characteristics of SEMH needs.

"...While the Pele Trust suggests that the former Hexham Middle School is available, it is significantly further west than Ponteland. The statement that the



The former Richard Coates CE Primary School, earmarked as a new home for Atkinson House School.

building is in its own grounds appears to imply that young people with SEMH special needs should be kept away from other schools and/or the public, which is disappointing to hear from another educational establishment in the county.

"...The Trust asks if it is possible to shield pupils and staff from bad language and inappropriate behaviour...any advice the Pele Trust could offer on how it manages incidents of bad language and inappropriate behaviour between the secondary age students at Ponteland High School and the primary aged children at Ponteland Primary would be welcomed by Atkinson House Special School staff."

Ms Aviston added that NCC officers would work with the Atkinson House headteacher, Richard Coates CE Primary, Little Tinklers Nursery and health and safety advisers to draw up plans for appropriate safeguarding arrangements as part of the building project.

In response, the CEO of the Pele Trust and Head of Ponteland High School Kieran McGrane accused the report of "a gross misrepresentation of the objections raised" in a letter sent to the Executive Director of Adult and Children's Services Cath McEvoy-Carr prior to the Cabinet meeting.

Mr McGrane claimed the report "fails to adequately identify any health and safety and safeguarding risks" following

concerns raised by "an extensive cohort of extremely experienced educationalists and teachers".

He added: "Safeguarding concerns raised by the Trust as to the appropriateness of an SEMH provision adjacent to a primary school is dismissed as a lack of understanding of the characteristics of SEMH needs. That statement is inaccurate and condescending.

"...The Trust cannot allow such statements and inaccuracies to be presented to Cabinet and publicised without response."

The report and recommendations were approved by Cabinet and a final decision will be made on March 8.

Responding to the Pele Trust letter, Cath McEvoy-Carr said: "As with any consultation process all stakeholders have the opportunity to have their say and feedback on proposals.

"The local authority will work with the Pele Trust and partners to ensure that any concerns around health and safety and safeguarding are fully considered and responded to in the formal consultation which is open now.

"I encourage anyone with an interest in the proposal to submit their comments, including support or objections, before Thursday February 10 when the statutory consultation process closes."

Ponteland women awarded in the Queen's New Year Honours List

Two Ponteland women have been awarded for their service to the community in the Queen's New Year Honours List.

Lucinda Porter has been awarded a British Empire Medal after 55 years' service to Girl Guiding and Bridget Stratford has been made an MBE for services to refugees and asylum seekers.

Since 1966 Lucinda has been a Guide, Ranger, Young Leader, Assistant Guider and, more recently, Senior Leader of 4th Ponteland Guides. Thirty years ago she became District Commissioner for Ponteland and currently holds the position of Division Badge Secretary.

In November 2015 she was invited to attend the National Scout and Guide Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey in recognition of more than 40 years working with Guides. And in April 2018 she was presented with the annual Meritorious Service award by then Mayor of Ponteland Coun Alan Varley.

Lucinda, 67, also works part-time for HMRC and spends much of her free time raising cash for the Guides, having collected about £20,000 over the years.

She told the Northumberland Gazette: "The letter was a complete shock, but I was really chuffed. It's nice to be honoured, but I don't do it for the recognition, I just enjoy being with young people. Girl Guiding has changed a lot over the years, but it is still good fun and the girls still learn all about teamwork, how to think independently and be more considerate of others."

Bridget is project co-ordinator for North East Solidarity and Teaching (N.E.S.T) at Newcastle University, a student-run volunteer group which helps to provide refugees and asylum-seekers with one-to-one English teaching, group English classes, sports, creative arts and local trips.

She successfully moved the group's services online following the outbreak of Covid-19, and it currently supports around 400 people from places including Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and El Salvador.



Lucinda Porter when she received her Meritorious Service award from Ponteland Town Council.

Bridget, 25, said: "It's great to get recognition but everyone I work with needs to share the credit. The people we support have been instrumental in delivering this project as well."

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Why a bucket list is essential if you are to make the most of your life

By David Lamb CFP™ MCSI

As I mentioned in my first blog in this series, financial planning is about ensuring when you are older and look back over your life you have no regrets.

Because by then it will be too late to do anything about it and you will be mourning lost opportunities.

A bucket list is an essential - and hopefully fun - way of making the most of your life. After all, as far as we know we are only on the planet once!

Make a list of all the things you want to do or experience in your life and get an estimate of the cost. Crucially, give yourself timescales - or you may never get around to achieving them.

These can be built into cash flow projections and then your wealth can be structured to fund this list, as and

when you want to tick each item off.

A bucket list does not have to be about frivolous or expensive things (we find that seeing the Northern Lights and campervans are the most popular) but could include paying for children's weddings or house deposits.

Research has shown that buying experiences is generally more rewarding than buying things. Build up the memories for later retirement.

The following example shows why a bucket list before retirement is essential.

Suppose in retirement that top of your list is a very expensive world cruise. Cash flow projections may show that if you retire one year earlier you will not be able to afford that holiday of a lifetime. But if you work for an extra year, it will be affordable.



If you retire before making your list and then decide (and cost) what you want to do, that ambition may be unaffordable. You may have regrets about retiring and it may be too late to return to work.

Knowing that you need to work that extra year will enable you to make an informed decision; is your priority to retire early or go on the cruise?

If you decide to work that extra year, at least you know why you are continuing and you will be working for a purpose. That extra year may therefore be less stressful.

Bucket lists are an essential element in financial planning. Don't look back and have regrets.

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Popular Ponteland pub closes for £350,000 revamp

One of Ponteland's favourite watering holes has closed for a £350,000 refurbishment.

Hospitality group Vaulkhard Leisure and Star Pubs & Bars are making the significant investment over the next three months at the Diamond Inn.

The refurbishment will create an alfresco terrace, which will include a 6x6 covered timber pergola and a heated decked area with trees, and a gas firepit. The exterior of the pub is also to be repainted and inside the decor and furniture will be upgraded.

Vaulkhard owns a number of pubs and restaurants across the North East, including three Bar Luga venues, Blakes, Bealim House and Castro's, and it last year acquired seven more Newcastle city centre pubs including the Town Wall, the Bridge Tavern, Offshore 44 and the Redhouse.

Now the leisure company has added to its portfolio by taking on the lease of The Diamond in Ponteland after becoming temporary managers of the pub in 2018.

The Diamond has now closed its doors for the revamp by Vaulkhard and the building owners, Heineken-owned Star Pubs & Bars, and will reopen in March in time for Mothers Day.

Director Ollie Vaulkhard said: "We know there is a real demand in the North-East for alfresco drinking and dining, especially since the pandemic started.

"We put up a temporary structure to gauge its appeal. It was very popular but sadly blew away during Storm Arwen. Our new alfresco area will be more substantial, more comfortable and atmospheric.

"Inside, it's a case of bringing The Diamond up to date. We're keen to retain the pub's classic feel and stay true to its roots, which have made it so popular among 18-80-year-olds.

"Pubs in the 90s however were different to today. The Diamond needed to evolve to reflect changing society and broaden its appeal as a result there will be more craft going forward and a wider selection of premium drinks."

The pub, built in the early 1700s as a coaching inn, also has 12 ensuite wi-fi fitted letting rooms and a function room.

Jeremy Scott, investment manager at Star Pubs & Bars added: "We're delighted that Vaulkhard Leisure has taken on the lease of The Diamond.

"They have years of experience and a great reputation for running quality pubs, bars and cafes in the North-East. The upgrade will improve the comfort for customers and bring the pub up to date.

"By the time The Diamond reopens hopefully the airport will be operating to capacity, making it an ideal location for a stopover as well as great place to socialise for the many local customers who use it on a regular basis."

Ollie Vaulkhard at the Diamond Inn



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Homeowners left powerless demand answers at meeting with electricity suppliers

Homeowners left without power for days without knowing when it would be restored after Storm Arwen met Northern Powergrid bosses face-to-face to demand answers.

The public meeting, held at Darras Hall Primary School on January 13, was one of four set up by MP Guy Opperman to provide first-hand testimony to ongoing reviews by industry regulator Ofgem and the Department for Business and Energy.

Around 50 Ponteland residents attended, alongside representatives of Northern Powergrid, Northumbrian Water and Northumberland County Council.

The storm, which struck on the weekend of November 26-28, brought wind gusts of up to 98mph which caused severe damage to homes and outbuildings, bringing down trees and power lines, demolishing fences, blocking roads and leaving paths unpassable.

The resulting devastation left 280,000 properties powered by Northern Powergrid without electricity, including hundreds of homes and businesses in Ponteland, Darras Hall and surrounding villages Medburn, Whalton and Belsay.

Many Northumbrian Water customers in the region were also left without supplies after 55 operational sites including water treatment and pumping stations suffered power outages.

Paul Glendenning, Policy and Markets Director at Northern Powergrid, told the meeting the “one in 50 years” event led to unprecedented demand on both engineers out conducting repairs and customer service operatives.

He said almost a third of the properties affected – 90,000 – had power restored within 48 hours and 20,000 customer calls were answered on Sunday November 28, compared to the usual daily call volume of 850.

Mr Glendenning also reported that the company’s automated fault reporting systems worked for 90 per cent of customers, but because of issues with inaccurate forecasting of power restoration to the remaining properties the online facility was withdrawn early the following week.

Residents from Pont View in Ponteland told him Northern Powergrid staff were insisting there was no power cut recorded for the street when they were sitting freezing and in total darkness for several days with no idea when their supply would be restored.

The firm’s engineers at the meeting explained this was as a result of low voltage damage not being picked up during repairs on the high voltage network further up the line. But Mr Opperman said communication systems had to be improved to ensure this could never happen again.

The meeting heard Northern Powergrid has paid £8.5m in compensation so far to 24,000 customers including welfare payments for hotel accommodation and food, with 1,600 claims



Friends and neighbours help a homeowner cut up a felled tree in Woodside, Darras Hall. Photo by Simon Tappin.

still being processed. Eighty per cent of claims were paid by December 24.

A huge community effort was launched in the aftermath of the storm to support residents without power. Merton Hall provided warmth, power to recharge phones and warm drinks, hot meals and snacks funded by the Town Council and food donations from Ponteland Tandoori, Gill’s Fish and Chip Shop, the Lemon Grass café, Waitrose and Sainsbury’s.

Northumberland County Council allowed the use of facilities at Ponteland Leisure Centre, including hot showers, while the Diamond Inn offered hot water, hot drinks and phone charging.

Residents who did have power brought a range of items to Merton Hall, from hats and scarves to gifts, samosas, homemade scones, mince pies and more. Meanwhile councillors toured the parish to deliver portable generators and offer other support.

Mr Opperman, whose office has been contacted by around 100 Ponteland residents, said after the meeting: “Many of my constituents want urgent answers to why their power and water supplies were not restored quickly after Storm Arwen devastated Northumberland.

“I want to thank all the residents and representatives from Northern Powergrid, Northumbrian Water and Northumberland County Council for excellent attendance at the public meeting in Ponteland.

“The discussions were productive, ensuring that my constituents had their voices heard. I will be passing on key follow-ups to the Department for Business and Ofgem reviews.”

For more information on making a compensation claim visit: northernpowergrid.com/storm-arwen

Your letters

This month a correspondent pays tribute to a well-known Ponteland couple who have sadly both died...

The Editor
Pont News & Views



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Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

Few couples can have made such a contribution to the Ponteland community

Fifty or so years ago Callerton Lane could still be classed as a lane, its edges less well defined, it meandered a little, boundaries marked by tree and hedgerow.

Within the village a small, landscaped square, flanked by the backyard wall of the Blackbird Inn, was enclosed on two other sides by the library and the health centre, important community facilities centrally located.

Both have, of course, since been cast out, the library absorbed within the new school complex and the health centre oddly relocated to an industrial estate. The courtyard itself was sufficiently well landscaped with shrub and tree planting to attract a landscape design award and was subsequently protected by a preservation order that ultimately, failed in its primary purpose.

Main Street effectively ran from the river through to the steel rail bridge that crossed over just above the Waitrose site, the latter occupied at that time by a petrol filling station and vehicle repair garage.

Strangely, the site that currently accommodates the other village supermarket, Sainsburys, was also previously occupied by a petrol filling station. We seem to have traded in petroleum spirit for groceries.

At the centre of Main Street, in premises that now house a tandoori restaurant, was Warner and Arrowsmith's hardware store and it is the passing of both Geoff Warner and his wife Dorothy towards the end of 2021 that has prompted memories of Ponteland as it once was.

For this couple were so very much part of the place, having lived here throughout their long lives and been actively involved with an astonishing range of local activities, loving the village and wanting to promote it to others.

To this end, Dorothy over the years gave some 60 talks on the history of Ponteland to a wide range of groups and organisations. She was possibly the longest serving member of the Repertory Society, performed in a number of plays and as Society Secretary during the 1960s worked to establish a continuing annual programme of productions. She was also Society President when the organisation celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2017.

They played golf, worshipped at Saint Mary's and were active members of Northumberland Wildlife Trust, Ponteland History Society, the Camera Club and many other local groups.

I think is fair to say that very few couples will have made such a lengthy and wide-ranging contribution to community activity in Ponteland.

We have to thank them for that.

John Hague
High View, Darras Hall

What's on...

Ponteland Wildlife Group

Ponteland Wildlife Group Zoom talks are held on the first Tuesday evening each month at 7.30pm. On Tuesday February 1 we have 'Projects on the NWT Reserves at Whitelee, Benshaw Moor and East Chevington' by Duncan Hutt, Head of Conservation - NWT, and our AGM. For information visit pontelandwildlife.wixsite.com

Ponteland u3a

Meetings and talks at St Mary's Parish Centre are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm. On February - AGM and refreshments and on March 2 - Northumberland National Park Rescue by Dave Waters. Membership enquiries - please call the membership secretary on 01661 824953.

Ponteland Village WI

Our next meeting will be at 7.30pm on Tuesday February 8 in St Mary's Parish Centre when the writer, dentist and funny man Ray Lowry will be the speaker. Social distancing will continue to be in place. Until further notice, we will not be allowing visitors. The sub-groups such as the Walking Group, Dining Out, Walking for Softies and Book Club are continuing. For more about us, email pontelandvillagewi@hotmail.com or look for Ponteland Village WI on Facebook.

Callerton Garden and Flower Club

At 2pm on Wednesday February 9 in the Memorial Hall, Area Demonstrator Sue Elsdon will be showing us her ideas of 'These are a few of my favourite things'. Visitors most welcome (£7).

Gatherings for Christian meditation

A monthly opportunity to gather together in St Mary's Church to explore and share a short time of meditation in the Christian tradition is being offered from February. The sessions are being held from 2pm to 3pm on the second Tuesday of each month, with the initial dates February 9, March 9 and April 13. All are welcome to this time of quiet reflection in our busy lives.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

In the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm on Monday February 14 Colin Buxton will give a talk called 'WWI experiences of some WWII RAF Commanders'.

Ponteland Local History Society

At our meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday February 17 at St Mary's Parish Centre, Thornhill Road, we have a talk by John Charleton entitled 'Tyneside and the age of revolution'. Visitors welcome £2.

Women's Day of Prayer Service

The Women's Day of Prayer Service for 2022 will be held at St. Matthew's Church on West Road, Ponteland, on Friday March 4 at 2pm. This is half an hour earlier than usual in the hope that some people will be able to join us before collecting children from school! A tea party will be held afterwards in St. Matthew's church hall to which all are most welcome.

Inner Wheel Club of Ponteland

Part of a women's voluntary organisation, we are a small club founded on friendship. Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month in St Mary's Parish Centre at 2pm, members spend social time together and hold talks, have occasional meals in a local restaurant and run small fundraising events for charities. To mark World Inner Wheel Day donations have recently been made in support of two local food banks during this difficult time. New members and visitors are always welcome, for anyone who may like to join us for further information please contact 07568 743653.

Knit & Natter Group

Knit & Natter on Tuesday afternoons from 1pm to 3pm at Ponteland Library. For more information contact Library Assistant Julie Ennis at ponteland.library@northumberland.gov.uk

Ponteland Ramblers

Ponteland Ramblers are a friendly group of local ramblers who organise walks in Northumberland or North Durham of usually about 8-9 miles on alternate Sundays and shorter walks on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. Visitors are welcome to join us for a few walks, without any obligation to join formally. For details of forthcoming walks, please visit our website ramblers.org.uk/ponteland

Dalton Carpet Bowls Club

At Dalton Village Hall every Monday between 7pm and 9pm. Come and give it a try in a friendly atmosphere - new members always welcome. Contact 07593 700332.

Ponteland Health Walks

Ponteland Health Walks meet every Tuesday at 10.30am outside Ponteland Leisure Centre. The free walks take 60 to 90 minutes on local footpaths. A good opportunity to walk safely, improve fitness and make new friends. Assistance dogs only please. Contact Gordon Allan on 07936 135469 for more information or just turn up, no notice required.

Ponteland Methodist Church

Sunday worship 10am and 6.30pm - all welcome. Monday 'Open Door' café. Tuesday Women's Fellowship and Boys Brigade. Thursday Toddlers, Men's Forum, Women's Focus. Saturday walking group. Various Bible study and House groups. Pilates. Zumba. Room hire. Contact anncooperx@gmail.com or call 01661 824347.

Ponteland in the Park returning this summer

Ponteland in the Park is to return after two years of enforced cancellation due to Covid. The organisation for the 2022 event is now approaching an advanced stage and will form an integral part of the Queen's Platinum Anniversary Celebrations. The event will take place, subject to Covid restrictions, on Sunday June 5 - reserve this date in your diary.

March issue deadlines: The deadline for all copy and adverts for the March issue is Monday February 14. Door to door distribution will be from Monday February 28 to Friday March 4. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the February issue. Please visit ponteland-tc.gov.uk/pont-news-and-views for online issues and all updates.



Ladies post record-breaking time as Wheelbarrow Race returns

Ponteland's historic New Year's Day Wheelbarrow Race returned after last year's cancellation due to Covid with a record-breaking winning time.

It is thought the event goes back to the 14th Century and has taken place just about every year in peacetime.

This year 43 teams took part, watched by huge crowds on a mild winter's day.

The Open Race was won again by 2019 winners Mark Turnbull and Julian Goodhall in 7 min 20 sec, with James Mould and Sam Olds second and Elliot Blain and Will McGubbin following in third. The second, third and fourth places were taken by teams from Ponteland Rugby Club.

The Ladies Race was won by Abi Leiper and Caitlin Flanagan in 7 min 36 sec, the fastest ever recorded time for the Ladies Race. Second were Joanne Shallcross and Alexandra Longton and third were Louisa Hamilton and Charlotte Naughton. Joanne Shallcross has now run in five of the eight fastest recorded times for the Ladies Race.

The Junior Race was won by Philip Waite and William Bush, with Cate Johnson and Millie Johnson in second place and George Forster and Ethan Turner third.

This year's marshals produced a record too! Neil Buchanan, 94, involved himself yet again, having helped with marshalling duties 'ever since he can remember'.

The Race, which starts at noon along a circular course, is organised by Ponteland 41 Club and Ponteland Rugby Club with support from The Blackbird Inn. Through sponsorship and entry fees over £3,000 was raised which will be donated to St. Oswald's Hospice and Tynedale at Home Hospice.

Anybody who would like to sponsor a wheelbarrow in next year's race should contact Andy Lawson at andrew_lawson@btconnect.com or on 07989 355 557.



Photos by Colin Morgan – leisurepics.co.uk

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Christmas campaign raises £3,000 for children's charity

A charity which supports young people with disabilities and learning difficulties has received a cheque for £3,000 from Rotary Ponteland after Christmas fundraising.

Smile For Life offers work experience placements at its Café Beam in Gosforth and has a Tuesday Club – a two hour session with accessible sports and games where new friendships are formed.

The charity provides equipment which makes the day-to-day lives of the young beneficiaries easier such as help with bedroom and garden makeovers to create an environment which is more accessible and appropriate.

It also funds experiences that enable them to make memories and challenge themselves in new and exciting ways with trips abroad.

Other work includes help with bedroom and garden makeovers to create an environment which is more accessible and appropriate for the needs of young



Pictured (l-r) are Christmas Market organiser Janet Cusworth, Josh, Cole and Lewis from Café Beam, Santa's Sleigh organiser John Cooper and Paula Gascoigne.

people with disabilities.

The money from Rotary was raised by its Christmas Market at Ponteland Memorial Hall, which was supported by 35 local craft and food stallholders and generated £2,400.

A further £600 was donated by people in Ponteland and Darras Hall who turned out in large numbers to see Santa's Sleigh in early December.

Organiser John Cooper said: "To see the excitement on the faces of the young

children and their parents too made all of our efforts with the organisation worthwhile."

Paula Gascoigne, Chief Executive of Smile For Life, said she was extremely grateful to Rotary Ponteland for choosing the charity as this year's beneficiary.

The money raised will go to help them in their mission to put a smile on the face of every disabled and disadvantaged young person in our region, she added.



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5th August - 3 Days

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12th August - 3 Days

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21st August - 2 Days

Charming Cornwall
11th September - 6 Days

Scotland & the Cairngorms
7th October - 4 Days

Killarney & The Ring of Kerry
16th October - 7 Days

Cadbury World & Midland Safari Park
23rd October - 2 Days

Harrogate Fizz & Fayre
11th November - 4 Days

Thursford
19th November - 3 Days

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For further information or if you would like us to send you a brochure please contact us on 01434 681 325 or email helen.jewitt@jewittscoaches.co.uk. More details can also be found at jewittscoaches.co.uk



Church choir launches appeal for new members

An appeal for new members has been launched by St Mary's Church Choir.

The group's 10 members lead the weekly Sunday worship - both formal and informal - and also special events and seasonal services. They also perform special concerts, sing at weddings and enjoy singing with other choirs.

The singers, led by Director of Music and Organist Warren Smith who was an organ scholar at Hexham Abbey, practise for one hour at 7pm every Thursday and also meet on Sundays at 9.15am in time for the 10am service.

The choir is open to all, regardless of previous experience or ability, and describe themselves as a friendly and welcoming group which occasionally enjoys social events. Anglican Church Covid requirements are observed and choir robes will be provided.

Choir member Christine Caisley-Farrell said: "No auditioning is required, just enthusiasm and a desire to sing together, with excellent support from our Choir Director."

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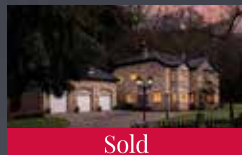
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