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NEWTON NEWS

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TESCO SUPPORT TOWN'S COMMUNITY DRAW

Tesco Managers Martin Butcher and Paul Davies hand over a 42" HD Ready Plasma T.V. to Rotary President Barry Hutchinson as a prize to be used in the Community Bumper Draw which supports Town organisations, The Great North Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support. The T.V. is one of the major prizes in the Draw which also includes a Bathroom Suite donated by Aquabliss from Darlington and a Sofabed from Furniture Factory Outlet.



Nearly £3,000 worth of prizes have been collected by the Rotary Club. Over 25 organisations including Schools and Town Centre Charity Shops will be selling tickets, retaining half of the money for their own funds. The Rotary Club take responsibility for organising the draw, obtaining the prizes, printing the tickets and dealing with distribution and administration. All the partners do is sell tickets and receive half the money as an incentive, but they will also be helping the main recipients, Air Ambulance and Macmillan.

"It is a win - win situation" said organiser Syd Howarth. "There is still time for others to get involved, just contact me on 300212 or 320901, email syd@newtonpress.net and we will register you immediately. Tickets go on sale in January and the draw will be held at The British Legion on Thursday 7th April. This is probably the biggest raffle ever held in Newton Aycliffe - don't miss out!

TOWN'S COMMUNITY XMAS SINGALONG WITH TOWN BAND

This Weekend at Xcel Centre



Last year's audience at Xcel Centre

Don't miss Newton Aycliffe's annual Community Christmas Singalong at the Xcel Centre this Sunday 12th December from 3pm till 4.30pm.

Our Town Brass Band will be playing for the popular songs and carols and Santa will be attending to greet all the children.

This annual event organised by the town's Rotary Club is in its 21st year. Town

Schools will be featured in the programme, performing special Christmas musical items.

Making their first appearance at this Concert is St. John's School.

The Xcel Church Choir and Aycliffe Musical Theatre will also perform.

A warm invitation is extended to all - admission is FREE! The Rotary Club hope to see you all there and if you have room in your car please bring an elderly neighbour. It's going to be a lovely occasion designed to get the Christmas celebrations off to a good start.

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOODHAM STUDENTS

Woodham Technology College is one of many schools across England and Wales taking part in international projects and activities to celebrate International Education Week 2010, which is championed this year by the British Council.

Students at the college have enjoyed International Education Week looking at sustainable development across the globe and its impact on global climate change.

It celebrates the work by schools and educational establishments to prepare children for living in a global society and working in a global economy. This takes many forms, including developing partnerships and projects with schools in other countries, carrying out international study visits and exchanges, online collaboration, hosting language assistants, and more.

This international dimension plays an important role in helping schools to deliver core objectives for teaching and learning and International Education Week provides a chance to reflect on the achievements of the last year.

Fostering an international dimension in the curriculum is at the heart of the British Council's work with schools, so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need to live and work as global citizens. This year the organisation presented a record 983 schools nationwide with the International School Award

– which recognises schools that do exceptional work to bring the world into their classrooms.

Woodham Community Technology College achieved the Intermediate International School Award in 2009. The college works with partner schools in France, Germany, India, Austria and America with support from the British Council, the Global School Partnerships programme, local business and industry. Another initiative is Camp Cody in New Hampshire, America where students from Woodham CTC enter a highly competitive selection programme to coach younger children for a month in the summer near Boston, USA. This year there are 6 places available, and the standard of applicants is extremely high. Students in Year 7 have just completed a full day learning about Christmas in other countries, particularly around Europe. The feedback received from the students was very positive and in fact, this is going to feature in the academic calendar every year.

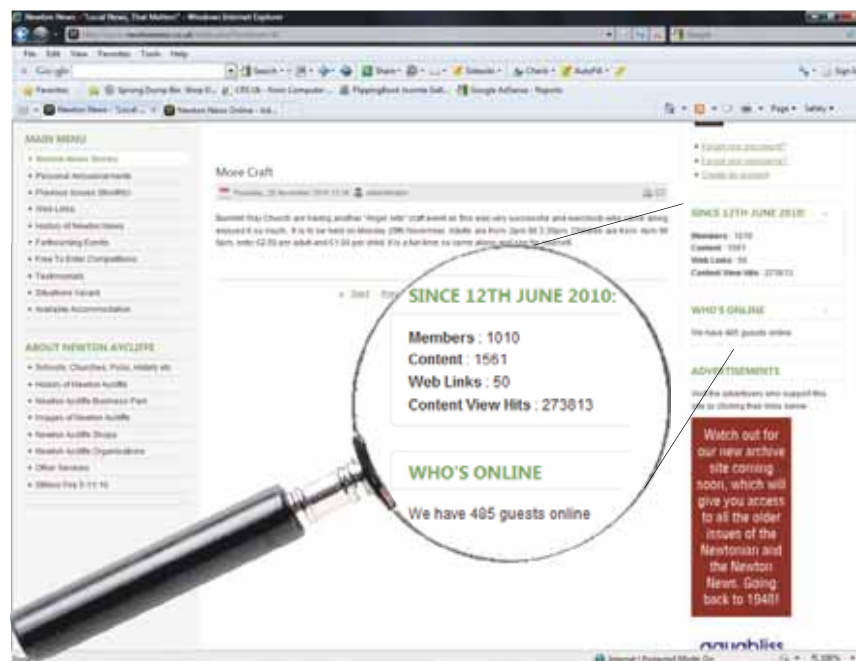
Next week we say Gute Reise und schöne Ferien! to 40 students and five staff who are taking part in a study visit to Berlin, where they will have the chance to improve their knowledge of German culture and language, as well as visiting sites that are closely linked to both the KS3 and KS4 History syllabus, not to mention RE and Geography. The trip will include a visit to the



Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, The Berlin Wall and Checkpoint Charlie as well as the Brandenburg Gate. On a lighter note pupils will also get the opportunity to visit the 365m high TV Tower with revolving restaurant, Berlin Zoo and Aquarium (one of the largest in the world) and much more. As we will be visiting Germany's

Capital City around Christmas time, we will be fortunate enough to participate in many of the festive celebrations and activities that are on offer, including the world-famous Weihnachtsmarkt (Christmas Market) which is a cultural must-see as well as providing a valuable Christmas shopping opportunity!

NEWTON NEWS WEBSITE - 8,000 HITS A WEEK! READ THROUGHOUT THE WORLD



Darren Race from Spennymoor was the thousandth person to register as a member of the www.newtonnews.co.uk website and received a boxful of goodies courtesy of Newton Press to mark this milestone.

There was further proof of our popularity on Thursday 2nd December at 2.30pm, when the Newton News website recorded a massive 485 guests online reading the latest issue all at the same time!

It is not surprising that Newton News receives over 8,000 hits a week when the site has over 1500 stories of local interest as well as all the information you need to know about Newton Aycliffe, the Business Park, shops, pubs, clubs, churches and town organisations.

Other points of great interest are an accommodation section, job vacancies, forthcoming events, history of Newton Aycliffe and archive photos of Newton Aycliffe from bygone days. Newton News are working on a new website which archives ALL past issues of the Newton News and The Newtonian from 1948 to present day. This is an ongoing project as it will take some time to scan and upload all the back issues to our server, in the meantime the site is now live and covers newspapers from the 1940's, 1950's, 2009 and 2010 and we will add more and more each week.

The Newton News is Newton Aycliffe's own community newspaper covering local issues from sports clubs, organisations, charities, schools and businesses. We only report topics and events affecting our town - this is the reason we have used the strap line "YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER" for decades and this will be evident for

all to see on our archive newspapers are held on file site. Originals of all the at the Newton News office.

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You and your child can have fun keeping up with the music and playing games while on the Dance Mats. Parents must stay with children, and pre booking is essential as there are a limited number of spaces available.

For further information or to book your place please contact Reception 300600.

Lord Heseltine at Xcel Centre

£1.4 BILLION AVAILABLE FOR REGIONAL GROWTH



Lord Heseltine visited the North East on Monday to encourage local businesses and entrepreneurs to bid for cash from the Government's flagship £1.4bn Regional Growth Fund.

At the first of a series of Road Shows taking place across



the country, Lord Heseltine met potential applicants for the Fund to advise them on the bidding process and encourage them to come forward with high-quality proposals that promise to unleash local talent and help communities in the North East to flourish.

More than 150 local businesses, entrepreneurs and civic leaders attended the event at the Xcel Centre on Aycliffe Business Park. The Regional Growth Fund has two key objectives:

To provide support for projects that can drive sustainable economic growth and create new private sector jobs; and To particularly help communities that are currently dependent on the public sector make the transition to private sector-led growth and prosperity.

Lord Heseltine is Chairman of the Independent Advisory Panel, which will consider all bids for funding and make recommendations to Ministers about which should be successful. He will be supported by Deputy Chairman, Sir Ian Wrigglesworth and a team of academics, business and civic leaders.

Lord Heseltine said: "I'm delighted to be here in the North East as an advocate for this important Fund. The Government is putting local people at the heart of decision-making, empowering them to develop their own vision for long-term local growth and allowing them to make important and innovative decisions that impact on their communities."

"The Regional Growth Fund presents an opportunity for businesses and entrepreneurs in the North East to help shape their own economic future. I hope today's road show will inspire local

people to think strategically about their area's priorities and I encourage them to come forward with compelling funding proposals that promise to deliver a positive change to the local economy; bringing new jobs and benefits to local people."

The Regional Growth Fund will operate over three years. The first of at least three bidding rounds is now open and the deadline for proposals is 21 January 2011. Further bidding rounds will be announced in early 2011. More information on criteria for the fund and the bidding process is available from <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/regional-economic-development/regional-growth-fund>.

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MOANS & GROANS

Dear Sir,
May I Thank Darren Watson for his letter: agreeing we don't want to read 'bad-mouthing' by Councillors. There are many more interesting community events to read about.
How many of our Town/County Councillors have shown concern over pensioners who can drive, and are prepared to help others, yet are housebound due to lack of snow clearance in their streets? Gritting by the County Council in all areas? What a laugh!!!!
Mrs. J. K. Blaik

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Catholic Church Members Donate £1500 to Two Charities



Over the past year the parishioners of the Catholic parish of St Mary & St Joseph's, Newton Aycliffe, have raised funds for Justice First, the Teesside based charity helping individuals refused asylum. The charity assists principally with finding legal representation

for asylum seekers and emergency support if they are destitute.

Justice First works closely with the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture as many of its clients have been the victims of horrific abuse in their homeland.

The photograph shows Kath Sainsbury from Justice First (centre) receiving a cheque on Sunday 28th November for £1,000 from parishioners Dr Ana Ramos (left) and Maureen Osborn, Chair of the parish's Justice and Peace Group.

A cheque for £500 was also presented to the Newcastle based Refugee Service to provide a week's supply of food parcels for its clients. Last year the parish raised £13,500 for the Blessed Gerard Hospice in Mandeni,

Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa that assists patients suffering from HIV/AIDS.

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Xmas Fayre

Burnhill Way Church are having their Christmas Fayre on 11th December. It will be packed full of things to do and buy.

It will start at 10.30am and finish at 1pm. There will be pie and peas lunch served from 11.30 till 12.30pm. Come along and join in the Christmas cheer, all are welcome. Wishing all our friends old and new a Merry Christmas.

Snow on Car Roof is an Offence

Brian Poole of Simpasture Driving School asked Newton News to warn drivers that the Police will be stopping cars with excess snow on their car roof.

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SAFER SEATING FOR BABY & TODDLER GROUP



Thanks to funding from County Durham Community Foundation, money has been used to pay for 30 junior chairs and 6 booster seats. The grant was made from the TK Tallent Fund, which is held with the Foundation. About 40 Children from Newton Aycliffe, Woodham and Aycliffe Village are benefitting from our safer seating because they enjoy 'the craft table', 'snack time is brilliant' and 'everything is well thought out' said parents at our AGM. The group meets at Neville Parade Methodist Church on Monday and Thursday mornings. To avoid disappointment please ring first if you are interested as we have a waiting list. For more information ring Ena on 01325 311025 or Emma on 01388 772898.

Planners May Cause Aldi to Withdraw

The County Council met this week to give formal planning permission for the new Aldi Store in Newton Aycliffe Town Centre, but amazingly the officers are recommending refusal! The reason they give is that one wall of the premises is too bland. The reaction from Aldi is to withdraw and cancel their plans to open a store here.

Bob Fleming Leader of the Town Council is astonished and hopes Councillors on the Planning Committee will reject the officers recommendation and allow the project to continue. The only problem is that the committee is made up of 15 County Councillors where only three come from Aycliffe. It is quite possible the other 12 may not even have visited our town.

As readers can imagine a lot of lobbying is taking place and it is hoped common-sense will prevail. Readers can also imagine a planner, sitting at his desk looking at the drawings and deciding that one wall of the store is unacceptable. If the officer had visited the site and taken note he would see that one bland wall would not look out of place in our town centre

COUNCILLOR NOT PREPARED TO BE QUIET

Dear Sir,
I am heartily sick of sanctimonious letters from people saying how sick they are of Councillors writing to the Newton News. The Town Council takes more than £1 million a year from the people of Aycliffe (the County Council takes ten times that amount) – do people really want Councillors so bland that they never disagree about how it should be spent? Or would they prefer Councillors (as one writer suggested) to conduct all their business in backroom cabals and never go to press to inform or seek the support of the public?

Great Aycliffe Town Council is full of caring Councillors – Independent and Labour – who want the best for Aycliffe. OF COURSE they are going to clash from time to time. In such a situation of competing visions, correspondents who moan: 'Why must I be disturbed by arguing Councillors' are akin to naive children who intone: 'Why can't the nations of the world be friends'. Their censorious letters are a form of censorship, which seeks to suppress by means of a withering stream of disdain. Politics – the way our society is governed – MATTERS. In the past, people suffered and even died to get us our freedoms, but apparently now some amongst us have become so delicate that a difference of opinion over the most minor local matter is an affront to their sensibilities. Anyway, I will not be told to shut up. I came to Aycliffe in 1974 determined to try to be good and to do good – and first as a teacher and lately as a Councillor I have striven continuously for the people of Aycliffe. I am proud to speak out for the people I represent, and to campaign for the best deal for Aycliffe. And I am sure that every other Councillor who writes in the Newton News feels the same way. Councillor John D Clare

Editorial

TACKLE BAD WEATHER LOCALLY

Adverse weather conditions have cost the country £millions in lost production as employees arrive late or even fail to turn in for work. Once again we are caught out by snow and appear not to learn from past mistakes in dealing with severe weather. Cold snaps in the past have been shrugged off as freakish, but when you get two bad winters in a row it is time to ask relevant questions. There has to be a more positive approach to the immediate problem outside people's homes when bad weather occurs. **It is pointless having clear main roads if the bulk of the population cannot get of their own street!** And it is not just the problem of people getting to work or urgent appointments - it is also affecting services such as meals on wheels and ambulances attending clients. The bad weather has caused chaos with many cancellations of events, not to mention the danger to life and limb to pedestrians walking on ice and snow. A complete rethink on the strategy of tackling sudden snow and ice is required. Perhaps a more local solution is called for, placing the responsibility in the hands of the Town Council. They would know better than pen pushers in County Hall where to prioritise and be in a position to respond quickly to emergency situations. All they need is the resources to purchase equipment and temporary labour to deal with the situation. Could this involve work for local unemployed able bodied people? Most residents would not argue with paying a few pence more on their Council Tax to be relieved from the problems we have experienced over the last two weeks.

TEACHING ENTERPRISE IN TOWN SCHOOLS



Young Enterprise is currently working with Aycliffe Primary School and have three programmes due to start in January. They are seeking other schools to join the scheme. Young Enterprise is building a connected world of young people, business volunteers and educators, inspiring each other to succeed through enterprise. The programmes empower the next generation with the confidence, ability and ambition to succeed in a rapidly changing global environment. The primary activity is class based and delivered by a volunteer from the local business community. The duration of the programme and commitment needed from the volunteer is an hour a week for five- weeks. The volunteer delivers the activity supported by the class teacher. If anyone is interested in getting involved please contact Laura Gillespie, Corporate Relations Officer, Young Enterprise North East. T: 0191 4959500 M: 07739 524973 www.yene.org.uk Young Enterprise is the UK's leading enterprise education charity. Together, we are building a connected world of young people, business volunteers and educators, inspiring each other to succeed through enterprise. Were you in a Young Enterprise Company at school? If so, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch by joining our Alumni Network at www.young-enterprise.org.uk/alumni

“Saturday Night Live”

THE TURBINIA

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Saturday 11th December “Thyn Lizzy”

‘Just got back from the THYN LIZZY gig at the Sandy Outdoor Tent. All I can say, is Phil Lynott dead? I don't think so... Jeeezus H Christ, the dual guitars were incredible and the drummer was outstanding and I was totally humbled by Glenn on bass. ‘Don't believe a word’ was cool, with a blues intro (5 minutes long) and then the usual version to finish it off was such a contrast and skilfully done. ‘Boys’ was great and ‘Dancing in the moonlight’ with Kenny Sax guesting was sublime as was the ‘Kayleigh’ inspired ‘Emerald’. Awesome guys, made my hellbent weekend!’ - gig pit review

Saturday 18th December “Bullet”

RIFFS MAGAZINE review, TURBINIA 2007: ‘The prognosis from tonight's performance is definitely a thumbs-up - passion, energy and excitement are what BULLET deliver and watching the crowd at the TURBINIA go crazy for them, then it's obvious they are on the way up very quickly. BULLET seems to have got it right and given the odd break or two could seriously be set to worry some of the more established bands - Watch out for BULLET, they could just have your name on them’. Tracks by: Guns n Roses, Pearl Jam, Def Leppard, Bon Jovi, Iron Maiden, U2, Ozzy, Foo Fighters, Velvet Revolver and more

Saturday 25th December - NO BAND

For more information on bands go to www.turbiniapub.co.uk or 313034

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Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe

Christmas Santa Route

SANTA WILL BE VISITING THESE AREAS

(Weather conditions permitting)

RAISING FUNDS TO PROVIDE FOOD HAMPER FOR NEEDY FAMILIES IN OUR AREA AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Monday 13th December	5.30 -7pm	Heighington, Twinsburn Road Areas, Bay Horse and George & Dragon
Tuesday 14th December	5.30 -7pm	Woodham, Pemberton Road and Closes
Wednesday 15th December	5.30 -7pm	Cobblers Hall, Ropemoor Way and Closes
Thursday 16th December	5.30 -7pm	Oak Tree, Greathead, Mellanby Crescent Areas
Monday 20th December	5.30 -7pm	Central Avenue, Bousfield, Defoe, Washington Crescent & Closes
Tuesday 21st December	5.30 -7pm	School Aycliffe, The Chestnuts
Wednesday 22nd December	5.30 -7pm	Bluebell Way, All Estates
Thursday 23rd December	5.30 -7pm	SilkinWay/Westmoreland Way Areas

Honda Made for Santa



Dear Sir,
Because of the recent snow I was unable to get any work done, so the kids and I built our very own snow buggy. It was designed and made by Dad Tim, Sophie aged 10 and Katie aged 8 who all live in Pease Way. Merry Christmas to Newton News readers - The Leadbitter family

FORMER SCOUT LEADERS CELEBRATE 50 YEAR MARRIAGE



Former Scout Leaders in the town, Fred and Alex Winwood, celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary on the 3rd December, 2010. To mark the occasion our Town Mayor, Dorothy Bowman called on the couple at their home in Henson Grove to bring the best wishes of the Town Council.
The couple first met in 1952 at a Road Safety session in the former Beveridge Hall. Fred originally came from Coxhoe and Alex had moved back to the area with her family to find work, from Edinburgh.
Fred was a time served Draughtsman/Engineer working for different firms in the area and Alex worked in the Accounts Office. While Fred was at Thorns and Alex at Eatons they were both made redundant so went into business as a Boarding Kennels and Rescue Centre at Eldon Hope for 20 years before Alex retired due to ill health and they moved back to Newton Aycliffe.
They ran the Scout Group at St. Clare's for 16 years and helped 100's of youngsters enjoy scouting activities including camping at Moor House, near Durham.
Alex and Fred are both members of the Indoor Bowling Club. Fred a very talented carver, spends a lot of time on his wood lathe making high quality pots and bowls and whittling animal sculptures.
They have a son, Brian, married to Andrea and a Granddaughter, Daniela. The family came together to enjoy a celebration meal at Walworth Castle.

Woodham Students Beat the Weather, Learning from Home

Even though the bad weather has closed hundreds of schools and colleges throughout the North East, students at Woodham Community Technology College in Newton Aycliffe are able to continue to learn from the comfort and safety of their own homes. Thanks to the Colleges' cutting edge Virtual Learning Environment, teachers can upload and mark lessons, study tasks and resources from home, giving students the opportunity to continue their learning experiences even though the college site is closed. All members of the dedicated teaching staff have been logging into the site before 8am, uploading specially created lessons for students, which students can access immediately on either their computers or phones. Throughout the day this work has then been marked online and feedback received by students.

On Wednesday alone, the Virtual Learning Environment received over nine and a half thousand hits, compared with only 900 on the previous Wednesday when the college was open. On Thursday morning, when the college was again closed, the site was first accessed by a student beginning their learning at 6.04am, with a further 2,200 hits before the college would have normally opened at 9am. As there are no forums or chat functions available within the site and the fact that a separate section of the college website is used for notifying parents of College closures, these hits are purely for learning purposes.

Jon Tait, Director of Student



Support commented "As a specialist Technology College we see our Virtual Learning Environment as a hugely significant tool in enhancing the learning experiences for all of our students. We strongly believe that learning should not be limited to just the classroom and that our students can continue to learn way past the normal college opening hours".

Being able to learn at home has been extremely important over the last few days when schools have been forced to close due to the severe weather across the region. Children and parents do not have to venture out into the treacherous conditions safe in the knowledge that their children are still being educated in the safety of their own home.

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ST. CUTHBERT'S WAY NEWTON AYLCLIFFE

Greenfield Activities

There are plenty of FREE fun activities at Greenfield Community and Arts Centre leading up to Christmas:
Monday 20th December: make your own Christmas tree decorations from 1pm to 3pm for 8-14 age group.
Tuesday 21st December: there are 2 Dance Mat sessions with Katy Milne 10.30am to 12pm or 1.30pm to 3.00pm for 8-14 age group.
Wednesday 22nd December: Make your own Christmas Wreath from 1pm to 3pm an activity suitable for all the family.
Thursday 23rd December: Make your own Christmas stocking 1pm to 3pm with the help of Donna Walton - a fun activity for all the family.
Friday 24th December 1pm-4pm Sing-a-long to your favourite Christmas tunes with John Melvin with Mince Pies at the interval - suitable for all the family. You MUST pre book your free place. Contact 01325 379048 or email info@greenfield-arts.co.uk

THANKS LIBRARY

As a regular visitor to our town Library, I would like to thank all the staff for managing to stay open during the very bad weather conditions. Well done!
Neil Sutherland

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STUDENTS RAISE OVER £1800 FOR CHILDREN IN NEED



Friday 19th November saw the return of the annual Children in Need fund raising event at Woodham Community Technology College. The College has been raising money for the charity for the past four years, under the supervision and organisation of Jenny McLean, Student Welfare Officer. This year surpassed all previous attempts of fund raising, in regard to the effort of the students, teachers, staff and parents. The whole school actively participated in the event, in terms of sponsored silences, fancy dress and the sale of raffle tickets in order to win a cake made by Chef Linda Vipond. In addition to the raffled cake, other treats were made and sold during break time; this alone made £115, which all contributed towards the

day's fundraising effort. The day was a resounding success, being both fun and constructive in terms of raising money and awareness for the cause of Children in Need. Throughout the day, students were witnessed braving the cold dressed in their pyjamas, as cave people/soldiers, participating in other activities such as sponsored car washes and a charity netball game of students versus teachers. The students made a massive effort in both raising money and in their positive attitude towards the event; they were a huge credit to the College. As a result of the huge success of the Children in Need event hosted by Woodham College, the students, teachers, staff and other contributors managed to raise a very impressive, and record-breaking amount in excess of £1800. This is



a remarkable achievement that exemplifies the fantastic commitment of our students.

CLEARING SNOW FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED

Dear Sir,
The elderly people in Hopelands Court Heighington have an average age of 80 yet no effort has been made to clear the paths so that neighbours can visit each other in case they need help. If there were to be an

emergency an ambulance could not get down. As resident's cars are scattered all around the road to the front of the building. It is a disgrace and although passable for some cars is very dangerous. We realise the Council workers cannot be

everywhere at once however you would think the Parish Council would place some priority for the elderly as I understand these conditions are worse than anything we have had for many years.
J. M. Gowland
Hopelands Court

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Clothing Retailer

All the shops, staff and the Town Centre Management in Newton Aycliffe Town Centre would like to wish everyone a very, very merry Christmas. To help you celebrate we are offering one lucky reader the chance to win £250 which can be spent in any of our many shops here in the centre.

All you have to do to win is locate one "Christmas Gold Star" hidden somewhere around the town centre, fill in the "Find the Christmas Golden Star" leaflet and return to: Newton News Office, Taylors Newsagents, Town Centre Management Office by midday on Wednesday 22nd December 2010. The Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor Dorothy Bowman will then draw the winner on Thursday 23rd December. Good luck to everyone and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Newton Aycliffe Town Centre.

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There is a single gold star in a hidden location around the Newton Aycliffe Town Centre. In order to win a £250.00 shopping voucher, you must find the star, fill in the entry form and hand your entry into Taylors Newsagents, Town Centre Management Office or Newton News Office.

Closing date: Wednesday 22nd December 2010

1st Location

Name

Address

Telephone

[You can also enter online at \[www.newtonaycliffe.com\]\(#\)](#)

See terms and conditions on page 2

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1. Not open to anyone under the age of 18.
2. Can only be spent in the town centre shops, cannot be used in the Town Centre Management Office.
3. Cannot be used to purchase alcohol, tobacco or gambling.
4. No cash equivalent available.
5. Management retain the right to amend the rules at any time.
6. If the "Star" is not found, the competition will be closed.

e Town Centre

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AYCLIFFE FC CAN'T BE PROMOTED WITHOUT ANOTHER £10,000 STAND

Aycliffe Manager Allan Oliver has issued a plea to local businesses to support a fundraising effort for a new stand. Aycliffe are currently four points clear at the top of the Northern League second division, but will not be able to step up to the first division without further ground developments.

They have to raise £10,000 to fund another new stand if they're to achieve their ambition of winning promotion this season, but they have only four months to do it.

Oliver said: "We set out to improve on last season's ninth-placed finish but after adding to the squad with some quality players we're enjoying a better season than we'd envisaged.

"We're not counting our chickens and there's still a

long way to go yet, but if we finish in the top three at the end of the season we'll automatically go up, and it would be foolish of us not to make provisions for that.

"It would be a crying shame if we were to finish in a promotion place and not be able to go up because of our ground, which we think is one of the best settings in the Northern League and is certainly our biggest asset.

"We need to raise an additional £10,000 by the end of March next year so we're appealing to all our fans and the business community to get behind what will need to be one huge joint effort."

In line with strict ground grading rules set out by the National Football Association, a club must have covered accommodation for at least 200 spectators, of which 100 must be seated, to play football in the Northern League's first division.

With their 113-seater stand already in place, Aycliffe must erect a terraced stand to accommodate 100 standing spectators before the deadline of March 31 next year.

Aycliffe are launching a new development fund to help reach their target, with a number of fundraising initiatives planned, aside from their week-to-week running costs.

More than £30,000 has been

spent on ground developments in the last year, the majority donated by Aycliffe Sports Club. That's on top of the original £320,000 spent to redevelop the ground in the first place, provided by grants from the LIP Fund and the Football Foundation.

The £10,000 quote for a second stand is the cheapest of two quotes. Aycliffe are asking fans and businesses to help through advertising, sponsorship, donations and events, while bucket collections are also being planned for home games at Moore Lane.

Anyone who'd like to help the club, or to make a donation, can contact Secretary Steve Cunliffe on 07872 985501 or email stecunliffe@aol.com

Aycliffe aren't expected to play another game for a while yet due to the snow. They were due to entertain Thornaby at home this weekend and go to Whickham next Saturday, but both games remain seriously in doubt.

Fans will be updated via the usual channels: the club's official website, facebook, their free SMS text service and nonleaguezone.com

www.newtonaycliffefc.co.uk

Xmas Civic Service

The Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor Mrs. Dorothy Bowman, will host a Civic Carol Service on Sunday, 19th December 2010 in St. Clare's Church, St. Cuthberts Way, Newton Aycliffe, at 6.00 p.m.

The Service will be attended by Civic Dignitaries from the surrounding areas and Councillor Mrs. Bowman would also like to cordially invite members of the public to join her in this celebration of Christmas.

Refreshments will be available in the Church Hall following the service.

Young People's Centre Nears Completion



Cllr Claire Vasey was on hand to put in place the last piece of the roof on the new state-of-the-art secure services building for young people at Aycliffe.

In a 'topping out' ceremony the Councillor joined young people, architects and Durham County Council officers at the new building, due for completion in May next year, where she sealed the last part of the roof to make it waterproof.

Youngsters housed at the current facility chose a selection of their favourite food, made a DVD about their day-to-day life at the centre and chose a selection of recent local events, such as footage of the snow, to place in a time capsule to give future generations an idea of life in 2010.

Cllr Vasey, portfolio holder for children and young people, said: "It's a fantastic honour to be able to say I put in place the last part of the roof on this wonderful state-of-the-art facility which will benefit young people for

years to come."

The build is due to be handed over in May and the first young people will be accommodated in August. It will hold forty two youngsters and comprises four "standard" house units, a high dependency unit for drug detoxification and other severe problems, and a "step-down" or "leaving care" unit for young people about to become independent. The build is the only one of its kind in England, and is state-of-the-art.

AGNEW CENTRE NEWS

Two Christmas FREE tasters for Early Years Drama sessions by DEBUTOTS will take place on the Wednesday 15th December at 10am to 11am for the 6 months to 2 years and on the Thursday 16th December at 1-30pm to 2-30pm for the 3 to 4 years olds.

To book your place on either or both then ring Tara or Paul on 01325 317380 or 07976 674 934.

For those booking a place for a regular place starting in January on the Taster Day will receive a special rate.

Two special volunteers who live in Morrison Close have shifted over 3 tons of bricks, stones and general rubbish from our site into a skip, saving the Centre in the region of £150. A big thank you from all at the Centre goes to Glen Causer and Andrew Mitchie.

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sbh on Santa Fun Run



Jodie Robson (Bullock), Lesley Baxter, Karen Gibson, Peter Camp and Sue Walls along with Cana and Lucy.

On Sunday 5th December four employees from the financial services section of Sedgefield Borough Homes (sbh) and Jodie Robson from Bullock braved the snow and ice to join in the fun to raise money for the Butterwick Hospice in Bishop Auckland. Over 200 adults and children dressed up as santa, including dogs, ran or walked twice around the lake at Sedgefield's Hardwick Park.

Peter Camp ran the route in an impressive time of 15 mins and came 3rd. Karen, Sue, Lesley and Jodie took a less energetic stroll around the lake. Lesley's dog Cana and Sue's dog Lucy also joined in the fun. Lesley Baxter from sbh said "It was a great day and enjoyed by all. I can't wait till next year."

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A HAIRY WAY TO FUNDRAISE



Employees at the 3M site at Aycliffe have collected around £2,000 for charity in a hair-raising way. They took part in "Movember", the month-long worldwide moustache-growing challenge to increase awareness of prostate cancer and bring in additional funds to help fight it. Ten men at the Heighington Lane site – which makes respirators for worker safety – were sponsored not to shave their upper lips for the month and their efforts were boosted by the support of colleagues who organised fundraising events for the Prostate Cancer Charity. 3M moustache growers and supporters - (left to right): Hanna Seaver, Paul Dobson, Stephanie Heaviside, Phil Bouic, James Townsend, Fraser Shearer, Ben Smith and Donna Gowland with Peter Lee in the front.

County Council Festive Opening Times

Durham County Council is advising residents of changes to opening times during Christmas and New Year.

Main civic centres and customer access points will be closed from 2pm on Christmas Eve until 8.30am on Wednesday, 29 December, and from 2pm on New Year's Eve until Tuesday, 4 January.

Offices will be open as normal from 8.30am to 5pm on Wednesday, 29 and Thursday, 30 December.

In the event of an emergency outside office hours, residents should call the following numbers:

Main switchboard 0300 123 7070

(an answering machine will offer a range of options)

Social Care Direct 0845 8 50 50 10

(call this number for any child safety, social care or welfare concerns)

Highways Action Line 0191 370 6000

Residents can also sign up for updates on changes to services and severe weather warnings via Twitter by following @DurhamCouncil.

Other council services will be open as follows:

Social Care offices

Closed from 4.30pm on Christmas Eve until 8.30am on Wednesday, 29 December.

Closed from 4.30pm on New Year's Eve until 8.30am on Tuesday, 4 January.

Green Lane, Spennymoor, will close at 2pm on both Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve but telephone support will be available in case of emergency.

Welfare Rights and Macmillan advice lines

Closed from 3pm on Christmas Eve until Wednesday, 29

December.

Closed from 3pm on New Year's Eve until Tuesday, 4 January.

An advice line providing helpful numbers will be available outside these times.

Leisure Centres

Closed from 4pm on Christmas Eve until Wednesday, 29 December and closed from 4pm on New Year's Eve until Sunday, 2 January.

All centres will be closed on Monday, 3 January and will reopen on Tuesday, 4 January.

Museums, Galleries and Theatres

Locomotion: The National Railway Museum at Shildon Closed from 4pm on Tuesday, 21 December until 10am on Tuesday, 4 January.

DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery

Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day only. Open from 10am until 4pm every other day, with free entry on Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Gala Theatre, Durham

Closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day only. Opening times vary on other days. For more information visit www.galadurham.co.uk

Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Closed from 1pm on Christmas Eve until 10am on Tuesday, 4 January.

Durham County Record Office

Closed from Friday, 17 December to Tuesday, 4 January.

Killhope, the North of England lead Mining Museum and Binchester Roman Fort are currently closed for the winter, other than for pre-booked events.

Libraries: Early closing on Christmas Eve.

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New Beginners Course



Trophy winners from Isle of Man Karate Federation Annual Competition.

Newton Aycliffe Karate Club is based at Neville Parade Community Centre and has been established for over 30 years with five Black Belt Senior Instructors, each with over 25 years of martial arts experience.

The club practices Anshin-Ryu Karate, which is Wado-Ryu based and offers both an effective form of self defence and an enjoyable way of keeping fit.

The club welcomes students of all ages and abilities from 7 years upwards. Training is Tuesdays 7pm until 8.30pm and Sundays 11.30am to 1pm. Sessions are a very reasonable £2 for children (Up to 17 years) and Adults £2.50. Yearly membership is £15, which includes insurance and registration with the Federation, with clubs throughout the North of England.

The New Year's Beginners Course starts Tuesday 12th January 2011. First lesson is free, with three monthly belt gradings. For further information email naanshinryu@o2.co.uk or contact Andy on 07999 501 379. Also check out our website www.newtonaycliffeanshinryukarateclub.blogspot.com or Facebook – Newton Aycliffe Karate Club.

Xmas Singalong

St. Andrew's Church Aycliffe Village will hold a Sing-along in the Village Hall on Monday December 13th at 7pm. Carols and Entertainment, Coffee and Mince Pies - Do join us.

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www.darlington-fc.net

Darlington FC are offering the perfect Christmas present for fans this year with a cut-price half-season ticket.

The 11-game offer, which begins with the visit of promotion rivals Fleetwood Town on Boxing Day, enables supporters to make significant savings on match tickets. "The second half of this season is going to be crucial," said Quakers boss Mark Cooper. "Having more fans inside the Arena getting behind the lads will have a massive effect and I can't stress enough how appreciated it would be by the players, and how important it could be. Our fans have a huge, huge part to play. They could hold the key to this club getting back to the Football League. Let's do it together." Darlo's 11-game ticket includes massive home games against Wimbledon, York, Mansfield and Rushden & Diamonds, as well as the visits of Fleetwood, Barrow, Kettering, Eastbourne Borough, Cambridge United, Altrincham and Bath City. An adult XI-game ticket costs

just £144, which works out at just over £13 per match and represents a total saving of £54 if paying match-by-match at the 11 remaining home games.

The Over-60s ticket is £90 (£8 per match, saving £42) and the Under-16s ticket is £45 (£4 per match, saving £10). The Ron Greener adult ticket is £171, Ron Greener Over 60s £117 and the Ron Greener U-16s is just £72.

Managing Director Graham Fordy added: "We've maintained the value of the original season ticket while also making the half ticket an attractive option and, at the end of the day, all of the money will go towards the manager's budget so we can make a strong push for the play-off places in the second half of the season."

Fans have until Friday December 24 to take advantage of the prices. Matchday prices at the Arena are £18 adults, £12 concessions and £5 under-16s and under-10s. The half season ticket is available from the club now, or call the ticket office on 0871 855 1883.

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CHOPPER Style bike (Rhino), red with silver mudguards, suit child 8-12 years, good condition, £40. Tel 07563 262810
NEED An old domestic appliance removing? Can't wait for the Council? Tel. 321 678.

Births

TAYLOR Paul and Heather are proud to announce the birth of their first Grandchild on 28th November 2010. "Felicity Alexandra". Well done Laura and Alexander. She is beautiful

Accommodation

HOUSE SHARE. Aycliffe Village Green, own living room, large bedroom, shared kitchen/bathroom, rear garden. Ring for details 07798 860 593

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FESTIVE ISSUES OF NEWTON NEWS

Thursday 23rd December - Christmas Issue
Deadline: Tuesday 22nd December

Friday 7th January 2011 - New Year Issue
Deadline: Wednesday 5th January

Advertisements can be placed at our agents:
WALKERS at Simpisture,
NEWSFORCE in the Town Centre
or online at www.newtonnewsads.co.uk

Office Opening Times

Closing 3pm on Thursday 23rd December
Skeleton Staff in attendance until reopening on Tuesday 4th January 2011 at 8.30am

SCHOOL SPORT PARTNERSHIPS MUST STAY, DEMANDS MP

Phil Wilson, MP for Sedgefield, has called on the Government to reverse its decision to stop all funding to School Sport Partnerships after the success of the partnership in Sedgefield which he believes is typical of the 450 schemes around England.

The Government has decided to abolish the £162 million budget set aside for the partnerships replacing it with a £10 million budget to run an inter school Olympics. The move would see the loss of hundreds of jobs, lead to the collapse of the partnership network with thousands of children deprived of access to sport competitions and a healthy lifestyle.

Phil Wilson MP said: "I have received dozens of letters from pupils, teachers and sports organisers who are concerned about the Government's approach. Sedgefield Schools Sports Partnership is proof the scheme works. For example, the number of children doing two hours of PE and school sport per week has increased from 23% to 86% in the past 5 years. The number of pupils taking part in regular intra school has increased from 30% to 70%. The average number of sports clubs has increased from 3 to 12.

The success of the partnership proves the Government has got it wrong. The government knows it has a problem when pupils are writing to their MP. I understand the Government is reviewing its original decision. Children up and down the country want to know what that means. I've written to Michael Gove MP, the Secretary of State for Education with copies of the letters I've received from

pupils asking him to save the School Sport Partnership, not only in Sedgefield, but around the country."

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NEWTON NEWS require reliable paper deliverers to add to our reserve list in all areas of the town. Paying from 4p per paper (+ extra for more than 12 pages and leaflets), rounds vary in size from 150-600. Call 300 212 today.

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Applications are invited for the above post which is part of the small finance team within the Council.

The post holder will be responsible for the preparation of the Council's internal audit plan in accordance with professional standards and for carrying out internal audit reviews in respect of all Council services and systems in accordance with the plan.

They will also be expected to provide support and guidance to Members and Service Managers in the development and maintenance of an effective system of corporate governance and internal control within the Council.

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 5 GCSE's, including English and Mathematics, an accountancy or audit related qualification such as AAT, together with at least three years' experience within an internal audit setting, preferably in a local government environment.

A full driving licence is required.

For further details or an informal discussion about the post, please contact the Finance Manager, Dan Austin on 01325 300700 or by email at Daniel.Austin@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Closing Date for Application:
Friday 21st December 2010

Application packs can be obtained by telephoning 01325 300700, e-mailing: info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk, or from the Council website: www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk



Charity Christmas Party

On Sunday, 19th December from 2-5pm at the Jubilee Community Centre in Shildon a Charity Children's Christmas Party will take place. Come along for a fun packed day, bring your friends and family along - we have loads to do, including: facepainting, bouncy castle, food, disco, party games and a visit from Santa and Buzz Lightyear.

For the adults there is a raffle

at a small cost as well as cakes and biscuits for sale. This is a **TICKET ONLY EVENT** - £5 per child, all proceeds go to a wonderful charity, "The Clic Sargent" (caring for children with cancer).

For more information or to book your tickets phone Laura on 07731 467 406 (limited spaces available so book early to avoid disappointment)

A BAD WINTERS TALE

Dear Sir,
A pensioner clears snow from the front of his bungalow taking five hours as his partner is disabled and needs a clear way for her wheelchair. Later, an able bodied person from up the street park their car so the disabled pensioner cannot get parked. The disabled woman cannot use her wheelchair as it is in the boot of her car which is blocked in by the other car.

Why can't the younger person park near his house and clear his snow away? The disabled lady missed an appointment as her car had to be parked a long way from the house and her wheelchair does not work in the snow.

Why are people so selfish and thoughtless? They are just lazy, expecting others to clear snow for them to come along and take the space.

Unhappy, Wasington Crescent

In Memoriam

REGINALD DALTON 12th December 2009. You were so tragically taken from us into the care of our Lord a year ago. We are so lost without you. We miss your laughter, generosity and love. No amount of time will heal the pain that we have all felt this year. Rest in Peace until we meet again in Heaven. Schat, Michael, Jan, Lynne and all the family.

STEPHEN PARKER 12th December 2004. Close to my heart you will always stay, loved and remembered every day. Love always, Margaret xxxxx

STEPHEN PARKER 12th December 2004. If tears could make a stairway, and memories a lane, I'd walk right up to Heaven and bring you home again. From your loving Daughter Susan and Grandson Shaun xxx

ENID PARKER 17th December 1995. Loving memories we have locked in our hearts, you shall not be forgotten because we are apart. From your loving Daughter Susan and Grandson Shaun xxxxx

HAZEL YOUNG. It's been three years since we lost you Mum, it feels so long ago. I wish so much that you were still here with us. Love you forever, Carol, Gary, Donna, Stuart, Gary-Dean and Chantelle xxxx

LENDNUM "Terry", 12-12-2002. Beautiful memories treasured forever of the love and happiness we shared together. Loving Husband John and family

JOHN GASKARTH 13th December 2001. Dad. The years are passing fast, but our memories will forever last. Always in our thoughts. Your loving family xxx

DICKINSON James Robert (Bob). 10th December 1991. The special years will not return, when we were all together. But with the love within our hearts, you will walk with us forever. Thinking of you always. Loving Wife, Peggy and all the family xxx

RITA THOMPSON 11-12-2008. Dear Sister and Auntie. Your presence we miss, memories we treasure, loving you always, forgetting you never. Doris and family xxx

JOHN CASSIDY (Cass), 12-12-1987. Memories of a loving Husband and Dad. Unseen, unheard, but always near. Still loved, still missed and ever dear. Doris, Family and Grandchildren xxxxxx

JOYCE MARSHALL Died 14th December 2002. A dear Wife, Mother and Grandmother. Sadly missed, but in our hearts always. Love, Wilf, Gary and Sue xxx

STEWART (Steve) 25/8/1961 to 14/12/2009. A year has passed and you are missed so much. Dad and Babs

STEVE STEWART 14th December 2009. Another month, another year, another smile, another tear, another winter, summer too. But there will never be another you. Love you always, Mam xxx

ALBERT ROBINSON 17th December 2003. In memory of my loving Husband, Father, Grandad. Albert, who left our side seven years ago. The tears in our eyes we can wipe away, but the ache in our hearts are here to stay. Miss you always. Loving Wife, Marjorie and family

Thank You

JOE ROBERTS The family of the late Joe would like to thank everyone for their cards, condolences and kind words recieved on their sad loss. Special thanks to the staff of Shafto House, Pease Way Surgery and the British Legion. Also thanks to The Co-Operative Funeral Service and the Reverend Julie Wing.

ALAN HODGSON (Big Al) would like to say "Thank You" to all the "AMAZING" people who braved the weather to turn up for his surprise 50th on Friday 3rd. I thoroughly enjoyed the night with excellent friends and family from near and far, many had travelled from Bishop Auckland area, Darlington, Newcastle, Brighouse and Liverpool. I was completely "caught out" (I know it was at the Cricket Club) and did not ever imagine this could happen to me. Very well done Angie, Leyanne, Joseph, Mavis, The Lads and others who secretly organised it all. (Over 40s presentation my a***). Most very important thanks also go to the bar staff and Isabelle for the very tasty and fantastic spread she put on.

Birthday Remembrance

MARGARET KELLY 12th December. Love and miss you so much. Paddy xxx

WENDY GRAHAM 12th December. Happy birthday to my lovely Wife and happy Wedding Anniversary on 9th December. Love and miss you always. Love Charles xxx

WENDY GRAHAM 12th December. Birthday wishes sent to a special Sister. You are always in our thoughts. Love, Kay, Mandy and family xxx

Obituary

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GEORGE HEAVISIDE Died suddenly on 30th November 2010. A loving Husband, Dad and Grandad who will be sadly missed. You've only just gone, but you will always be in our thoughts. We hope you know how much we love you. You made us the people we are today, strong and compassionate. You will always be in our hearts and cherished forever. We will never forget you. Love, Margaret, Cara, Shell, John, Kieran, Ethan and Lily xxxx

DOROTHEA COOPER (Dot). Died suddenly on 3rd December 2010. Loving Mother to David, John, Peter and Sharon. Funeral details to follow in the Northern Echo

Congratulations

Chris Jones



Happy 21st Birthday
12th December 2010

Chris have a great day. Lots of Love Mam, Dad, Ryan, Keiran, Grandad, Grandma all Aunties and Uncles xxxxxx

Leighton Bowmer



Happy 1st Birthday

All our love, Mammy and Daddy xx

Happy 1st Birthday

Brother. Loads of love, Paige, Brooke, Lauren and Kaci xxxxxx

Margaret Taylor



Happy 50th Birthday

14th December 2010

Lots of love from Mick, Spen, Curt, Jeannie and Bubbles "Should have gone to Specsavers"

Lewis Connor



Happy 1st Birthday

12th December 2010

Happy 1st birthday to our special little man. Love you lots and lots, Mammy, Daddy, Abbie and Erin xxxxx

Colin Bell - Happy 50th Birthday



Happy birthday to my lovely Husband. Love you loads my sweet. My love always and forever, your loving Wife, Sharron xxxxxx

Betty Gowling - Happy 65th Birthday



You are the most caring and loving Wife, Mam and Grandma in the world! We all love you so much Bet, Booboo, Betty Boop, G'ma!! The coffee's are on us! Love, hugs and kisses, Dave, Marie, Geoff, Becky, Kirsty, Michelle, Warren, Ben and Pebbles xxxxx

Joanne Dobbin



Happy 18th Birthday

8th December 2010

Love from Mam, Anthony and Thomas. You can go in the pubs now!! xxxx

Wilf Marshall



Happy 80th Birthday

Best wishes Dad on the 16th December. Lots and lots of love from Sue, Andy, Gary, Linda and Grandchildren xxxxxx

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Alice Springs



Happy 21st Birthday

10-10-10

to our beautiful Daughter on your 21st birthday. Lots of love from Mam & Dad xxx

Bonny and Clyde Cunningham



PhotoAds are suitable for any announcement and are preserved forever on our website www.newtonnews.co.uk

We are currently working on an archive site which will bring you ALL the past issues of the Newton News as far back as 1948!

Consider the Pedestrian

Dear Sir,
It's nice when people clear their drives so they can get their cars out, but please don't pile the snow on the pavements! Please think of the pedestrians who have no car and have to walk everywhere. Mountains of snow either side of the drive on the pavement is a hazard. It is a selfish attitude to take when they can shovel the snow onto their gardens. I found a prime example of this is in Thurlow Grove.
J Johnson

Biggest in Town?



As happened last year our readers are competing for the biggest snowman in town and this is the first entry from Tina in Hatfield Road. Can you do any better?

Planning! Not That You Would Notice!

Dear Sir,
On Saturday 3rd December I battled my way out of Beechfield to drive to Darlington. Travelling through the Business Park via Whinbank Road, which was clear, I see a County Council snowplough/gritter clearing the level side roads. Is this logical? From Pease Way to Beechfield is around 250 yards with the road dropping 50 feet and includes three right angled corners which have made the road impossible to negotiate in snow. If the main Business Park roads are clear workers can get to their place of employment. **This is fine if they could get out of their own streets!** On the following Monday after a severe overnight frost the roads were covered with ice and snow. A snowplough is seen driving down Beechfield at 1pm. followed 15 minutes later by another; both are hired contract vehicles. These, unfortunately make little impression as the blades bounce off the compacted surface. The only evidence of their passage is the deeply indented tractor tracks, which make the surface even more difficult to drive across. What is the logic behind all this I ask myself?
Ian Cutter

NATIONAL AWARD COMES TO DURHAM



County Durham Youth Offending Service (CDYOS), has won a prestigious national award for its work to reduce first time entrants to the youth justice system. The service won the Justice award at the Children and Young People Now Awards 2010. The award, now in its fifth year, has become the gold standard for everyone who works with children, young people and their families. The Pre Reprimand Disposal (PRD) won the Justice Award for being the initiative that has made the biggest contribution to improving the chances of young offenders or those at risk of offending. The panel of young judges commented that it gave young people a chance to improve themselves and be proud of what they can do. Young people who enter the criminal justice system for low-level offences risk limiting their

employment chances. CDYOS and Durham Constabulary developed and implemented the PRD to give young people a second chance to avoid being criminalised. The programme is voluntary and offered to young people who would otherwise receive a police reprimand for an offence. With the PRD, young people are assessed and a series of options, including family support, is considered. Chief Constable Jon Stoddart from Durham Constabulary said: "This demonstrates that policing is not about chasing targets and missing the point, but about doing the right thing to get the right outcome." Introduced in May 2008, the PRD has been incredibly successful and has helped with a 71 per cent reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system from 1129 in 2007/8 to 324 in 2009/10.

Labour "Stitch Up" Control of Council

Dear Sir,
When it comes to advocating political debate John Clare surely has more than a foot in his mouth. If he was really keen to carry out a debate, he could start by allowing the Great Aycliffe Independents as much time as he uses to allow an adequate response to his speeches in Town Council meetings. I look forward to tracking the progress of his own initiative to open up debates on local politics. In last week's Newton News there was an announcement of the official registration of the Great Aycliffe Independents Party with the UK Electoral Commission. Cllrs Gittins and Hewittson opted not to join us, so we are not responsible for comments attributed to them. Trying to play off Independents against each other is a non too subtle political tactic. But then Labour have been non too subtle in the past when one Independent Councillor turns out to be still a member of the Labour Party; nor how Labour wooed Independent Councillors to either vote with them, as mentioned in the letter last week, or defect and join the Labour Party. One of the aims of the GAI is to help clarify for voters which Independents are acting as an opposition. Opposition means to oppose - not rubber stamp Labour Party policy. Nor will I subscribe to the comment that "Independents do not have the power to change a single thing". I can empathise to an extent with the way Labour have abused their powers to stitch up control of Town Council committees leading to frustration for certain

people. To change that situation requires voters to change from apathy, to actually voting for more Great Aycliffe Independent Town Councillors. But since John wishes to go back to 2007, then readers will surely be aware of what happened next. Perhaps it should be put in election material that Labour intend to increase Council Tax. When it comes to making exaggerated claims or misrepresentation in election literature from many comments I have heard, the Labour Party surely excels. Such comments by Counc Clare bear real similarity to the "pot calling the kettle black".
Kenneth Stubbs,
Secretary (GAI)

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