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Don't Miss This Spectacular Community Event

The 20th annual Christmas Community Concert organised by the Rotary Club is being held in the new Xcel Conference Centre on Sunday 13th December from 3pm - 4.30pm.

This is the first event to be held in this exciting new facility for the town and region. The spectacular complex seats 1200 people and will offer state of the art stage lighting and sound. The general public will be admitted free of charge and may view the building and all it offers from 2pm - 5pm. They can also enjoy refreshments from the coffee bar and other restaurant areas.

Eight schools are taking part in the Concert at 3pm. including Woodham & Greenfield Colleges, Vane Road, St. Mary's, Woodham Burn, Byerley Park, Sugar Hill and Aycliffe Village. Also appearing is the highly talented Xcel Church Choir.

This spectacular event is not to be missed and the Newton Aycliffe Pipe Band will welcome everyone to the premises

with our Town Band playing for the popular hymns and carols, sung by the audience. Civic dignitaries and Councillors will be in attendance including the Mayor and our M.P. Phil Wilson and his partner Margaret.

Admission is free, but there will be a raffle and a retiring collection for the town's needy families and soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Readers are urged not to miss this opportunity to be present at the opening event of the Xcel Conference Centre on the Business Park on the opposite side of the road to the Waste Transfer Depot.

J & C Coaches have very kindly offered transport to the event with regular trips leaving from St. Clares Church in the Town Centre from 1.45pm. This is a great community occasion and readers are requested to bring the whole family and if you have room in your car, bring a neighbour. Let's get this Christmas off to a great start!

WOODHAM CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Musicians at Woodham Community Technology College are making their final preparations towards the festive concert which takes place on Wednesday 9th December at 7.00 pm in the main school hall.

This is one of many concerts run by the Music Department. These provide performance opportunities for the school's extra curricular ensembles. The audience will be entertained with a variety of festive numbers from the Instrumental Group, Jazz Band, Vocal Groups and numerous smaller ensembles.

The school Samba Band will yet again capture the attention of all with their uplifting and vibrant performance. The Aycliffe and District Wind Band featuring a variety of schools in our community will

also be performing. We really hope that you can come and join us. Tickets cost £3.00 for adults and £1.50 for

concessions, which includes seasonal refreshments. Please contact the school on 01325 300328 for more information.

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BAGS OF TROUBLE

Readers are complaining that bags of clothing left for charities to be collected are being taken by a different charity than that for which it is meant. One reader left a lot of clothing outside her front door specifically for the YMCA. They called, as arranged, but someone else collecting bags in the area had taken her bag. Some houses in the town receive empty bags on a regular basis from a number of charities, appealing for unwanted clothing, stating they will be calling back in the next few days to pick up their bag.

It is quite clear they don't check the bag is theirs and that is unacceptable. The bags are clearly printed which charity is making the appeal and it seems to be a "free for all" attitude by the collectors. Perhaps a better method would be to have a collection point in a nearby car park on a specific day and time to which donors could take their bags to the van.

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COLLEGE STAFF & STUDENTS RAISE NEARLY £1000 FOR CHILDREN IN NEED



Photo of Pudsey with Bishop Auckland College students who helped raise £965.39 for children in need, the most the College has raised for the charity than ever before. Students from all parts of the College and even the nursery children took part in the fundraising.

Drive to Find More Youth Workers FESTIVAL AT AYCLIFFE YOUTH

Youth workers from many different backgrounds are already making a difference to the lives of young people in County Durham and thanks to a massive recruitment drive, many more are set to benefit. Durham County Council is looking for enthusiastic people to make a difference to the lives of the county's young people by volunteering in the youth work sector.

Posters will be placed across the County giving details on how to get involved.

Ellen Guest, 27, became interested in working with young people several years ago and has spent the past four working for Durham County Council in the Sedgefield area. She said: "It was whilst studying for a degree in social policy and criminology that a module on helping young people with problems tempted me to change career path.

"I'm so glad that I went down that route as it is very gratifying working with young people. "I hold a drop in session in Sedgefield. "It's mostly mixed sessions but occasionally I will work with, for example, a group of girls tackling issues such as body image."

Ellen is based at Sedgefield Community College and works alongside 13 to 16 year-olds tackling issues such as drugs,

alcohol and bullying but occasionally younger children seek her help and advice.

She said: "Youth work is definitely rewarding and there are no two days the same. "I can be rock climbing one day and kayaking the next but it is so fulfilling being there for these young people, when they are at such an impressionable age."

A festival, organised by Great Aycliffe and Middlesbrough Partnership, will take place on Friday December 18 at Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre from 6pm until 9.30pm. Information on youth work and also information on activities for young people will be available. Look out for recruitment drive posters in council premises across the area.



Ellen Guest

Credit Where it is Due!

Dear Sir,
We would like to thank Peter Beatty and his committee of Neville Community Centre for the Presentation of Badges to ex Service men and women.

It was wonderful to see 45 ex service personnel receive their badges and to have the opportunity to speak to them about the service they gave to their country.

Well done to all the volunteers for an excellent afternoon and a magnificent buffet. It was a credit to Peter and the committee. Peter is a true hero himself!

George & Maud Gray

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WOODHAM STUDENTS SEND XMAS PRESENTS TO TROOPS



Students from Woodham Community Technology College began the festive season early as they prepared a parcel of Christmas presents for the troops fighting on the front line in Afghanistan.

Following a PCC lesson on Remembrance Day, the students of tutor group 9LD and 9SR took the initiative to collect toiletries, books, magazines, sweets, biscuits and playing cards to be sent to their heroes. Each student also wrote a letter to a soldier.

The students watched an excerpt of the Remembrance Day parade broadcast by the BBC in which, Drummer Kilcullen played the Last Post filmed at Camp Bastion. Students decided that they would like to extend their gratitude and admiration for the soldiers who are away from home this Christmas. Their teacher, Mrs L Drew, who is a friend of Dmr Kilcullen, says "I cannot believe how deeply involved our students were throughout this project. You could have heard a pin drop when they wrote the letters." Some of the students wrote about their parents' and grandparents' experience

of war and a few expressed their interest in joining the forces. "Their letters were heartfelt and sincere. We hope

our troops enjoy their special parcel and that it puts a smile on their faces this Christmas" Mrs Drew added.

Thefts Putting Lives at Risk Battery Stolen at Middridge



A recent spate of thefts across County Durham is putting motorists' lives at risk. Thieves have repeatedly targeted temporary traffic management systems across the county

operated by the County Council's contractor Premier Traffic Management. They steal the batteries operating the lights leaving Durham County Council Highway sites without any safe traffic management. County Council Highways Operations Manager, Mark Readman, says the situation is extremely serious, "Over the last three months over 100 batteries have been stolen from sites. Not only has this cost the contractor £10, 000 but frankly these thieves are putting motorists' lives at risk. The batteries have very limited alternative uses too they really are specialist batteries for these systems."

Cabinet Member for Strategic Environment, Cllr Bob Young, is asking residents to help. "We take a great deal of pride at the new Unitary Authority in providing first class services. These reckless actions are jeopardising people's safety and could result in a serious accident. I would ask anyone with any information about this to let the police know." Motorists are asked to report any suspicious activities to the police as a matter of urgency by contacting Durham Police on 0345 60 60 365 or ring Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Official vehicles will have Premier Traffic Management or Durham County Council branding. The locations that these thefts have arisen more recently are: Evenwood/ Cockfield, Coundon, Etherley Lane, Middridge, Gainford, Cassop and Brancepeth.

Parking Bay

Durham County Council are constructing a Parking Bay in Hield Close, Newton Aycliffe. Lane restrictions will be in place from 25th November to 11th December.

XMAS FAIR

COME EARLY If you want to hear the singing of the children from St Francis School at the Burnhill Way Christmas Fair this Saturday 5th December. Come early because they have two bookings that morning. The children will be singing shortly after 10am - so come along and enjoy the entertainment, get your bacon buttie, let the children meet Santa, and enjoy all the stall and fun of the fair!

NEVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE NEWS

We were delighted to host the Presentation of Veterans Badges last Saturday. Our hall was full of ex Service men and women with their families. (see report elsewhere).

It was very successful with 44 veterans receiving badges in recognition of their service. The badges are awarded to any person who have served in whatever capacity and for any period of time. National Service personnel are also eligible and should not hesitate in registering next time.

Many thanks to all who helped in any way to make this such a memorable afternoon. Would you like to sponsor a Christmas Tree in memory of a loved one? You are invited to provide a decorated tree and display it in the Centre. If you are interested please ring 313924 and speak to Peter.

COMICAL NATIVITY

A chance to see the comical nativity "Angels on High" performed by a cast of young and not so young of St. Clares Church.

There is one performance only on Sunday 13th December, beginning at 3pm. Admission is £4 per adult, £2 per child, which includes light refreshments, so come along and be reminded of the reason for the season!

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GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN COUNCIL

**Dates and Times of Statutory Meetings
of the Town Council and its Committees**

Wednesday 9th Dec. 2009

Policy & Resources Committee - 7.15pm

QUESTION TIME

A period of up to 15 minutes has been set aside for electors to ask questions at the Recreation, Environment and Policy & Resources Committee Meetings. Written questions must be received by the Town Clerk at least 5 clear days prior to the meeting. Oral questions may be asked at the meeting which relate to an agenda item or is a matter for which that committee has responsibility. Agendas/Reports are available on the Council's Website on the Friday afternoon preceding the meeting (www.great-aycliffe.gov.uk).

The press and public are cordially invited to attend.

The Public Entrance to the Council Chamber will be open 30 minutes prior to the commencement of the meeting.

Shildon Panto on Tour

After a successful couple of days at the Shildon Civic Hall, Centrestage are moving down the road to the Ferryhill and Mainsforth Community theatre to perform their annual pantomime, this year being Cinderella.

The cast had a great laugh at Shildon and are really excited about the extra project this year and performing at a different venue. There will be all the usual fun, laughter, singing and dancing going on as they perform to the kids and adults who come to the show. So come down to the fantastic theatre in Ferryhill Station and see if Cinderella gets to go to the ball and meet her Prince Charming.

There will be all the usual characters including Dandini, the wicked Stepmother and her absolutely gorgeous (ha ha ha ha) daughters. The kids will love to dance, and help the lovely Buttons throughout the show as well as the King and Queen's odd job men. Chip and Chop will also add the comedy element to this great family show.

The show starts its 4 day run on, Thursday 10th December at 7.30pm and continues on Friday 11th at 7.30pm before doing the weekend matinees on Saturday and Sunday at 2pm. Start the Christmas celebrations by coming and supporting a local community group, and let us entertain you for a great couple hours of fun. The prices for this great show are £5 adults and £3 for the kids. Don't delay book your seats today. Please telephone 01388 774838 or 01325 313363 to book your tickets or you can get more info and book tickets on the web at www.freewebs.com/centrestagetheatre or go to our facebook page Shildon Centrestage. So from

Cinderella and all the cast from CentreStage may we wish you all a Merry Christmas and hope to see you at the Theatre for this superb show.

LETTERS

Indepndence Explained

Dear Mrs. S. and those who may be similarly interested in the union of Independents in the town.

There is no need to go into print asking questions which could have been clarified by sending an e mail to the Leader Terry Hogan @ terryhogan23@rocketmail.com. In case it was not possible to contact us may we take the opportunity to enlighten everyone.

We are not ashamed of what we are trying to do and are absolutely sincere and genuine in our passion to breathe new life into local politics. I have volunteered to assist in their cause freely in my limited spare time.

In answer to the questions how can Independent Councillors become a Party and the headline, "contradiction in terms," and how can an independent be in a party at the same time.

I would suggest that it is very naive to think we would want to be in a political party. We are currently saying we are like-minded people - not a political party. But we have agreed to set ourselves an aim as Independent Town Councillors. Kenneth Stubbs Secretary (GAI) kennethstubbs@rocketmail.com

AYCLIFFE DANCERS IN NATIONWIDE MEDALLIST OF THE YEAR CONTEST



Below are the results of the competition held at Blackpool Winter Gardens on 7th and 8th November, 2009:
6-10 years Stardance - Solo: Reagan Henn - 1st Place
Daniela Winwood - 4th Place
10-13 years Rock n Roll: Annis Race & Kalya Shaw - 4th Place

Well done to all who took part and thank you to the parents for their continued support. Anyone who has an interest in joining Lee Green Dance Centre, please contact Caroline Race on Tel. No. 07949 911642. Our classes include Freestyle Disco, Street, Lyrical

Slow, Rock n Roll, Acro, Ballet and Tap. Adult classes are also available including Salsa, Hip Hop and Aerobics. Bryan and Brenda Thomson of Lee Green Dance Centre and Caroline Race, Dance Teacher and Choreographer.

Light up a Life Service

A Memorial Service for bereaved families and or supporters of Butterwick Hospice is on Sunday 6th December at 3.30 pm in St Clare's Church. Everyone is welcome and Baubles will be available for the Service.

P.A.C.T. Meeting

Police & Community Together

The following meetings are to be held on Wednesday 9th December 2009.
Woodham Ward at the Woodham Community Centre at 6pm.
Greenfield/Midddridge Ward at Aycliffe Evangelical Church, Ladybower at 7pm.
These meetings give you an opportunity to discuss any problems you may be having in your area relating to any form of ASB. We look at ways of tackling these problems and report back to you at the next meeting with our results. There will be representatives from the police, council wardens and county councillors.
Everyone is welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.
PCSO 6859 Mike Welch
Newton Aycliffe Beat Team
Tel: 0345 60 60 365

CHURCH YOUNGSTERS DONATE £378 TO WEST AFRICAN POOR



Xmas Sale

A Christmas Sale is to be held at St.Clare's Church Hall on Saturday 12th December from 10am --12noon. Come along and buy your Christmas Cake, Christmas Pudding and Mince Pies, all home baked. Many more home baked Cakes and Pies ready for Christmas. Tombola, Books and Crafts, Raffle. Refreshments available. All Welcome.

Festive Quiz

The Oak Leaf are holding Christmas Eve and New Years Eve Quizzes starting at 8pm. Entry by Ticket only £1 (money raised goes on prizes). Free food for each team and spot prizes during the night. Special Offer Drinks. Tickets from the bar. For details Tel 300600.

Last Sunday the Primary Children of The Church of Latter Day Saints presented a cheque for £378 to the West Africa Trust. They had collected the money over the past year almost quadrupling the amount they gave to the charity last year. The primary group have become very interested in helping the poor children in Africa after hearing what difficulties they have and the deprived standard of living they endure.

Syd Howarth received the cheque on behalf of the Trust and said how grateful he was to the children, telling them the money would go towards providing clean water and education - two of the main aims of the Trust.

Trust Member Barbara Connors-Fowler presented a certificate and thanked the children for their generosity. Both Trust members had enjoyed the Sacrament Service given by the children beforehand and remarked on the quality of their readings and singing.

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Proud Day for 45 Ex- Service Personnel at Veterans' Parade



Last Saturday, Neville Parade Community Centre hosted the second annual presentation of Veteran's Badges to ex-Service Men and Women.

Peter Beaty and his wonderful volunteers were rewarded with a large turnout of recipients and their families. The Commanding Officer at Catterick Garrison, Colonel Nick Millen presented the badges in the presence of our M.P. Phil Wilson and Town Mayor Mary Dalton.

It was a splendid occasion with the dignitaries welcomed by Piper Cameron Dulston and a Guard of Honour provided by the town's 1407 RAF Cadets. After the ceremony the cadets led by Flight Sergeant Ray Fendley gave a superb

drill demonstration finishing with a salute to Colonel Millen who later complimented the cadets on a job well done.

Newton Aycliffe Inner Wheel, the Women's Institute and the Centre's volunteers, Norma, Maureen, Margaret, Elsie and Jim, in the kitchen, provided a magnificent buffet which was appreciated by everyone.

Our M.P. was present and assisted with the presentation. He said: "The awarding of the veteran badges scheme set up by the Government has been a great success. Saturday's event was the second organised by Peter Beaty and I would like to personally congratulate and thank him for all the hard work he puts into these occasions. Peter does a great deal in the local community and I know he is well respected by all".

It was a fabulous event bringing the community together to recognise those who have given service to their country in peace and war. There were some very proud ex-forces personnel and some equally proud relatives and friend who came away with a warm feeling of gratitude toward those who had made the occasion possible.



Greenfield Students Visit the Sage



The Creative Media Diploma course has started well at Greenfield School Community & Arts College. The new qualification, which is equivalent of 7 GCSEs is being taught at Greenfield in conjunction with Bishop Auckland College, King James Community Arts College, St John's RCVA Technology School and Sixth Form Centre.

Throughout the course students experience working with employers in 'real' situations and experience learning outside the classroom. To date students have visited The Sage, The Baltic, The Theatre Royal, Bradford Film and Media Museum and The Bowes Museum. At present the students are preparing for a performance which will take place in the New Year.

Nice Gesture for Town's Carers from Care Homes

Aycliffe Care Centre, Defoe Court Care Centre & Roselodge Care Centre are offering a FREE service to carers in the community this Christmas.

DO YOU NEED A BREAK? But are unable to due to caring for your loved ones at home

If the answer is YES 3 care homes in the town are offering a free service to care for your loved ones during the day. All you need to do is call any of the Southern Cross homes in Newton Aycliffe to arrange this service.

Beth Robinson, Aycliffe Care Centre, 307262
Lynn Lant, Defoe Court Care Centre, 316316
Elaine Henman, Roselodge Care Centre, 304156

Rector Replies to Councillor's Letter

Dear Sir
 Councillor Hewitson wrote concerning the closure of the Toddler Group at St Clare's as a result of a rent increase and her sadness at the loss of the facility in the town. I don't know if Councillor Hewitson who has been helping at the group, is fully aware of the facts.

The Group has paid a peppercorn rent for the past nine years. The new rent suggested is £3.75 an hour – some might still call that a peppercorn rent! Unfortunately, the Group also became aware that they were not insured, and have therefore to also budget for this at £65 per year. The church offered to help them make the adjustment with a staged increase whereby the new rent would only be fully payable in 2011, and this would be alongside the current facility of paying yearly in arrears. By anyone's standards that is still very generous.

The group charge £1 per session with an average of 10 – 14 people attending (their figures). Members are provided with a very well run play session, tea, coffee, juice and biscuits in a warm, dry and easily accessible hall – excellent value for money. However in addition to this, they have been providing a birthday cake for individual birthdays, an Easter Egg at Easter, a Christmas party with a gift and a summer picnic - at no extra cost. It is these treats, as they were

described, which would prove difficult to continue without some financial adjustments. The group was offered help in applying for grants for some of the treats and offered the use of the premises free of charge to hold fundraising events. I also suggested that parents/grandparents might be willing, if asked, to help out with some of the treats and I know from past experience of running such groups that this is often the case.

St Clare's is home to several community groups who enjoy good facilities at favourable rates, but we also have to be realistic in a difficult economic climate, not least for the comfort and benefit of those groups. We all have budgets, not many of which have remained static and we all have to try our best to manage them paying for essentials first. The bills we have for maintenance, repairs and utilities for the hall are not charged at peppercorn rates.

The Toddler Group are most welcome to stay here, and had actually accepted the offer given, but suddenly changed their mind and have chosen to go. We do indeed wish them well and I certainly echo Councillor Hewitson's thanks to Anne and Lily for their sterling work through the years; they will genuinely be missed. I would also add my thanks to the Church Ladies who have also helped at the group for the

past 9 years.
 Picking up Councillor Hewitson's concern about the loss of the facility, anyone wishing to start a Toddler Group can contact me at St Clare on Saturday mornings

between 10.00 am – 11.00 am., or leave a message for our Halls Secretary, Mrs Judith Donald, on 01325 321711.
 Yours sincerely
 Revd Linda Potter
 Rector of Great Aycliffe

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Christmas Appeal 2009

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It offers you the opportunity to help those much less fortunate than yourself by purchasing gifts in your own name, or those of your relatives and friends - gifts that will be truly appreciated for years to come, not just thrown away on the Christmas scrapheap or tucked away in a corner of a cupboard.

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If you wish to make a donation in your own name, then you will be informed that your wishes have been carried out. If you cannot afford the full amount suggested, the Rotary Club will make sure that your contribution is combined with others for the nominated project.

Sadly there will always be disease and hunger somewhere around the world, but these projects will bring lasting happiness to those you help. Together we can make Christmas a time for people all over the world to celebrate and enjoy.

CHILDREN WITH AIDS ... £20

Peter and Maureen Wood (ex Newtonians) retired to Kenya 2 years ago and joined the local Rotary Club. One of the major projects for the club is helping children orphaned by AIDS (accommodation, medication and food).

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TOWN ATHLETE RACES FOR GREAT BRITAIN IN EUROPEAN CONTEST

Kate Avery from Newton Aycliffe has been selected for the Aviva Great Britain and Northern Ireland Team for the Under 20 women's race at the European Cross Country Championships in Dublin on Sunday 13 December. Kate has been a member of double Olympic champion Dame Kelly Holmes' 'On Camp with Kelly' mentoring and education initiative for talented young middle distance athletes, supported by Aviva, since 2008. Kate secured her selection for Dublin by finishing second in the Under 20 trial race at the McCain Liverpool Cross Challenge on Saturday 28 November. She completed the muddy 4.4km course in 14:58, just two seconds behind winner Emelia Gorecka, and this followed another second place in the first McCain Cross Challenge race of the season in Gateshead on 14 November. Her selection for the European Cross Country ends an excellent 2009 for Kate and her coach Bob Ashwood. She began the year by finishing 25th in the IAAF World Junior Cross

Country Championships in March and in the summer took the silver medal over 3000m at the European Athletics Junior Championships with a time of 9:13.68 which places her top of the 2009 UK Under 20 rankings and second on the European rankings. Her performances in 2009 also earned her an 'On Camp with Kelly' Outstanding Achievement Award. Dame Kelly said: "It has been great to watch Kate progress this year and I would like to congratulate her on her selection for the Aviva GB Team for the European Cross Country Championships. I am sure that she will put in another great performance in Dublin." Kate recently attended an 'On Camp with Kelly' Get-Together at University College Birmingham where the athletes learnt about the importance of good nutrition for physical and mental performance from Dame Kelly and celebrity chef Ainsley Harriott. After Ainsley demonstrated how to cook some quick, cheap and healthy meals, the athletes were able to try their hand at preparing the dishes themselves.



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AIR, SEA & ARMY CADETS AT OTTERBURN CAMP



Over a wet and windy weekend in November 2009, Newton Aycliffe Cadet Force organised and managed over 120 members of the Cadet Movement at Otterburn Camp, Northumberland; to study for their BTEC Diplomas. The tri-service effort included members of Hartlepool Sea Cadet Corps, North Shields SCC, Cleveland ACF, Newton Aycliffe ACF and eight Squadrons from Durham and Northumberland Wing Air Training Corps. The weekend was managed by Staff Sergeant William Oliver, County Vocational Qualifications Officer & Colour Sergeant John Fay, VQ Officer - Music. A team of adult staff and senior cadets facilitated both courses from each of the services. William said "this was a positively successful weekend, all cadets worked extremely hard and I am proud of what was achieved". This was the first Cadet Tri-Service event of its kind for BTEC Diplomas, in both Public Service and Music. Each Diploma is equivalent to 4 GCSEs grades A* to C. Cadet Commandant of Newton Aycliffe ACF Colonel Chris Tearney said "It is a real

pleasure to see the cadets and adults from all three services working together towards such an important outcome". Colonel Martin Passmore - Regional Operations Manager for CVQO said "I am delighted that, for the first time, cadets from all three services have come together to progress their BTEC diplomas in Public Services and Music. This is a wonderful achievement which will see these young people gaining an extra 4 GCSEs". Martin Passmore and Gil Singleton - Music Operations Manager for CVQO verified the weekend. The Cadet Movement is preparing to celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2010, a year to be known as Cadet150. Cadets from all three services will host regional and national event, including open events in shopping malls, sailing and climbing expeditions and a March down The Mall in London to tea with Her Majesty The Queen, Patron of Cadet150. Anyone wishing to become a cadet and be part of the movement should check out www.cadet150.org

Sewerage Upgrade at Nature Park

Essential improvement work to upgrade the sewerage network begins soon in the Travellers Green area of Newton Aycliffe. The £240,000 scheme, which starts on Monday, 30 November will take up to twelve weeks to complete, and will involve constructing a new, screened combined sewer overflow, installing 30 meters of new sewer pipe and upsizing 55 metres of pipe at Aycliffe Nature Reserve adjacent to Travellers Green. They will not be working over the two-week Christmas and New Year period. Combined sewer overflows are consented by the Environment Agency to discharge wastewater into watercourses in times of very heavy rainfall, to protect properties and surrounding land from flooding. This work will improve the water quality of the River Skerne. Between 2005 and 2010 £85 million is being invested to upgrade and screen 481 combined sewer overflows throughout the region, which will further improve river and bathing water quality. Construction traffic will need access to the sites where improvement work is being carried out and to the site compound, located in land adjacent to Travellers Green near Newton Aycliffe Nature Reserve. There may be some noise and disruption during the course of the work but every effort, will be made through careful planning, to minimise any inconvenience.

Xmas Event with Free Food and Santa

Woodham College Christmas Family Morning

Woodham Community Technology College will be holding a Christmas Family Learning Morning on Saturday 12th December 2009 from 10.30 until 1.00 p.m. Santa Claus will be arriving at 11.00 a.m. and he will have a small gift for every child. There will be a whole host of activities on offer, including Face painting, Art Workshops, Circus skills, Papercrafts, Let's Get Cooking, Hair braiding. Children can write their letters to Santa and will receive a reply in time for Christmas. Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided. For further information, please contact Marie Oswald, Community Development Co-ordinator on 01325 375482. Please come along and join us, we'd love to see you - bring your family, EVERYTHING IS FREE!!

Councillor's Role

Dear Sir,
I question the right of Councillor Revd Mike Dixon on his attempt to involve himself in the politics of Durham City and the statue of Lord Londonderry. I have to inform Counc Dixon he was elected by the West Ward of Newton Aycliffe as our County Councillor not Durham City! He was elected two years ago to serve the West Ward and over nearly two years I wonder what he has achieved. Name & address supplied
ED: Mike's response to this is to make it clear he has a County wide responsibility on planning which is non-political. He was assigned to the committee dealing with planning in our County's capital city. All County Councillors have a responsibility for issues affecting the county as a whole. As for his work in the West Ward Mike says he is happy to stand by his record. He said he is also keen to talk to the correspondent and any other elector at any time to explain his position on any topic. Tel: 0191 3833000.

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Unfair Bank Charges

In response to the Supreme Court ruling on Bank Charges, leading financial claims company BrunelFranklin.com, issues the following statement.

Michael Goldstone, Chairman of BrunelFranklin.com, said: "The ruling may well be thought of as a blow to consumers who feel the banks should return their excessive charges without any further delay. However this case has been rumbling on now for some time and the fight is certainly far from over.

It is well possible that there will be other challenges to what most fair minded people believe to be the ridiculous charges levied. If the actual cost of sending a letter and processing an unpaid item is in the region of £2.50 - £5.00 as many commentators believe, natural justice dictates that levying charges of up to £39.00 would constitute profiteering in most people's minds, absolutely 'unfair', I would say.

"Most fair minded people agree that the charges have been unfair. Now it may only be a matter of time before true justice prevails and the charges are ultimately deemed unfair, by whatever route. In the meantime, the Stay on hearing Bank Charges claims has, we are told, been lifted. Consumers who believe they have claims against what they believe to be unfair charges, should continue to lodge their complaints. If the legal and other arguments continue, the date at which you lodged a complaint may become significant in the future. To avoid the double injustice of effectively being time-barred at some future date, consumers need to act now to lodge claims that may eventually be heard."

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WILKINSON GETS 'MESSY' WITH LOCAL CHILDREN'S HOSPICE



The Wilkinson store in Newton Aycliffe is continuing its work within the local community with a £300 donation to Butterwick Children's Hospice.

Butterwick's is part of the national charity, Children's Hospices UK, which provides care and support free of charge to children with life limiting illnesses and their families. Every year it must raise £800,000 to ensure the children are able to enjoy all the facilities and care available at Butterwick Children's Hospice. With that in mind, Wilkinson was eager to contribute to the hospice.

The money has been spent creating an arts and crafts room at the hospice. Last week, Steph Wood, fundraising officer at Butterwick Children's Hospice visited the Wilkinson store in Newton Aycliffe to collect a vast array of goods such as paints, crayons, pens and art materials to help kit out the new 'messy room' at the hospice.

Steph said "We are grateful to Wilkinson for the donation, the children are made up with all the new supplies for the 'messy room'. They all love taking part in arts and crafts sessions and can't wait to start using all of the new materials."

The service, based in Stockton-on-Tees, is staffed by skilled and experienced professionals and trained volunteers. The key focus of the hospice is to ensure each child enjoys their stay while their family members

take a break from round the clock caring responsibilities.

Kay Armstrong, store manager at Wilkinson Newton Aycliffe explained: "We hope the children will have hours of fun playing with all of the new materials in the new arts and crafts room."

"Butterwick Children's Hospice does such an amazing job helping young children and their families and we just wanted to help give something back to the local community." Still a family owned firm after 75 years of trading, Wilkinson is committed to Britain's high streets and is an active supporter of local charities, community groups and care organisations, this latest donation is testimony to this.

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Paul Trippett
Senior Case Worker to Phil Wilson MP

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Heighington residents were sad to hear the local Newsagent will no longer deliver newspapers. This will be inconvenient for a lot of customers who cannot easily get to the shop. They are hoping some other method will be introduced to ensure they get their dailies and Sunday newspapers delivered.

CUBBY SALE

The Sale of Work Day is one of the major means of fund-raising for The Cubby. This year the event was held on 24th November and I would like to formally offer my thanks to all who gave their support, in particular Tesco and Wilkinsons for their kind contributions. The Cubby will only be able to continue providing a service with this type of support. Keith Bell

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Profiting from Other Peoples Waste

Dear Sir,
Recently I took various items to the Re-cycling Centre on the Business Park. I noticed a

bird table in a very dishevelled state and thought with a bit of tender care, and a lick of paint, I would be able to revive it to

its former glory and put it pride of place in my garden. I asked the "refuse-attendant" if I could take it away as it had been dumped by its previous owner for whatever reason. He told me he couldn't give it away and would sell it for £5. As I had only £2.75 I offered him this and he phoned his boss, presumably, who also agreed the sum of £5 for someone's cast off. I returned later with the money to buy the bird table.

In this day and age, sending less and less rubbish to landfill, I thought the authorities would

be keen to encourage re-cycling of waste. The spirit of re-cycling is strong as people see it as doing their bit to save the environment, as well as saving money in this volatile climate. Why is it necessary to profit from waste? Is it to boost the minimum wage of the workers who often refuse to work there on a Sunday? If not, I would just like to know where the money from the sales end up. Do the people of Aycliffe and the surrounding areas benefit in anyway? Jeff, Newton Aycliffe.

Selling Goods at the Tip is Illegal says Inspector

To answer the query, firstly a bit of background information; the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Newton Aycliffe is owned by Durham County Council and the management of the site is contracted out to Premier Waste Management Ltd. They in turn sub-contract the site out to a third party operator.

The sale of goods on the site is forbidden (illegal) in accordance with the Waste Management License that is issued by the Environment Agency. So the site operatives should not have been selling goods to the public in the first place, but members of the public are not expected to know this. All occurrences that we are made aware of are investigated and I will be forwarding details of this occasion to Premier Waste Management for follow up.

We have a monitoring team who regularly visit all the sites across the county to perform inspections. We try to prevent the sale of goods, but obviously, they don't sell anything in front of the inspectors so it is very difficult for us to prevent it altogether as we can't be present at all the time. The site operatives have salvage rights under the terms

of their contract with Premier. This means they are allowed to salvage items from the site, remove these items and sell them on later.

We encourage the site operatives to recycle, salvage for re-use and compost as much as possible. An incentivisation payment is paid by Premier to the third party operator the more they recycle.

Jo Lane, Waste Performance Team Leader, Strategic Waste, Neighbourhood Services, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UQ Email: jo.lane@durham.gov.uk Tel: 0191 3836407 / Mob: 07747 486719

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HUSTLE TO GET A JOB!

School-leavers in north east should be prepared to be flexible and 'hustle' to get first job, says UK recruitment body

With reports claiming that one in five teenagers could be receiving unemployment benefits by the time they are 21, school-leavers in the north east who will be looking for work following this week's A level results need to give themselves the best possible chance of entering the jobs market. The UK recruitment body, the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) has outlined some key pieces of practical advice for school-leavers in the north east region to help them get into the jobs market which include being flexible, building up their CV with personal and work-related achievements and being prepared to 'hustle' to get opportunities in this competitive environment.

For those entering higher education, it is equally crucial to keep an eye on future job prospects by complementing their academic studies with work-related experiences over the next few years. Commenting on the overall outlook for school-leavers on the back of this week's A level results, Kelly Adamson, REC Director for the North East Region, says: "School-leavers are entering the jobs market at one of the bleakest times that we have seen in many years. However, the feedback from professional recruiters is that there are still opportunities for those seeking to get a foot on the career ladder. Temporary work and internships can provide the first step into the world of work and help to build up the practical skills that can make a real difference in an extremely competitive jobs market. School leavers choosing to go on to higher education should supplement their studies with practical work experience

in order to be in as strong a position as possible when it comes to kick-starting their professional lives.

"For those planning to jump straight into the jobs market, flexibility and persistence will be vital. A carefully thought through and typo-free CV is a good start and young job-seekers will need to demonstrate the life skills and attitudes that employers are looking for."

Kelly also stressed: "Jobseekers should also take advantage of the support that is available from the numerous recruitment professionals in the north east and local Jobcentres in order to get that crucial first foothold into the world of work."

"Looking ahead, the labour market of the future will increasingly be geared towards higher end, highly skilled jobs. This is why we must encourage continuous development and on the job training as well as helping school leavers to choose the best possible academic or vocational training options".

Based on the feedback from recruitment professionals, the REC has issued the following advice for school-leavers:

Build up your CV - Internships, work experience, voluntary work and temporary placements are crucial ways of building up your CV and experiencing the practicalities of the world of work that can make a real difference in an extremely competitive jobs market.

Consider vocational training opportunities - These can provide a way into specific industries where there is likely to be an increasing demand in the coming years, e.g. engineering.

Weigh up the pros and cons of pursuing the university route - It is worth considering the option of getting into a particular sector or industry 'at the bottom' and working your way up.

Manage your own expectations - Nobody gets the perfect job straightaway but all work experiences are useful and will build generic skills such as communication, teamwork and time management.

Get the right support - Use as many sources as possible to get the guidance and support that you need to get that first job. Talk to careers services, recruitment professionals and people who already work in the industry you are targeting to get the inside track and build up useful contacts.

Get the basics right - Proof-read and perfect your CV to make sure it is free of mistakes. Prepare well for interviews and practice with a friend if you can. Think about things that you have done that aren't necessarily work related but highlight positive attributes and personal achievements.

Understand what employers are looking for - Use the internet to do your research and speak to people in the industry to learn more about the employer you are being interviewed by and the skills they are looking for.

Don't be afraid to 'hustle' - Job-seekers who are prepared to chase employers for work-placements or for guidance on upcoming opportunities are often respected for their tenacity and desire as these are key qualities that employers look for in a candidate.

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Births



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Energy-saving light bulb technology has gathered considerable pace over the past few months with manufacturers worldwide racing to design and produce the perfect next generation light bulb that not only saves money but looks good too.

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(www.ecopromotion.co.uk). These new bulbs are different from any other energy-saving light bulb on the market in that the design has successfully overcome the difficulties of producing a bulb with the classic shape of a traditional incandescent light bulb yet is coupled with the energy-saving benefits of compact fluorescent. Newly developed by GE engineers and scientists this latest technology features a T2 CFL Spiral which incorporates startlingly miniaturised electronics. Protected by over a dozen patent applications the new GE Energy SmartTM is truly in a class of its own.

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SIMPLE STEPS TO STAY WARM THIS WINTER

With the latest figures from the Office of National Statistics showing the highest number of excess winter deaths for nine years, Age Concern and Help the Aged are urging older people to make sure they are fully prepared to beat the threat of fuel poverty and keep warm during the colder winter months.

The Charity, in partnership with British Gas, has produced a free Information Booklet offering essential advice on managing fuel bills, insulating your home and applying for benefits, as well as a free thermometer to help monitor room temperature. The Booklet includes the following advice about keeping out the cold:

CHECK what you're entitled to: contact a local benefit advisory service to see what financial support is available. Older people who receive a low weekly income may be entitled to Pensions Credit, Community Care Grants and Budgeting Loans (available for items such as bedding and heating) and

Crisis Loans which may occasionally be given for fuel costs.

INSULATING YOUR HOME: this can have a significant impact on energy bills. Loft insulation will prevent heat escaping through the roof and insulating the hot water tank will slow down the amount of heat loss.

KEEP MOVING: Any physical activity from walking to the shops to doing housework is good for the circulation and warms you up. If it's very cold outside, try to stay active indoors.

STAY WARM: the recommended room temperature is 21°C, but older people should not hesitate to increase this should they feel cold. Anyone exposed to a cold environment for a long period of time is at risk of hypothermia.

Older people who are concerned about weathering the winter are advised to call Age Concern and Help the Aged on 0800 1692 081 to order a free Information Booklet and find out what support is available.

Greenfield to Host Comenius Project



Comenius is a project involving four partner Countries, including Majorca, France, Germany and Greenfield, UK.. The project is designed to break down barriers and stereotypes, share ideas about global issues and to be creative, have fun and make new friends. I have been involved in this project for the past two years and have been lucky enough to make visits to Germany, Majorca and France. Our latest visit was to Limoges, France, in November, where we experienced a different type of culture and made new friends. Our project title is “Energy” therefore during the visit we explored ideas and contexts about this theme with our European partners. I am really looking forward to the finale event in March which we are hosting at Greenfield College. Sixty young people from our European partners will be coming from Monday 15th March - Friday 19th March 2010. We are looking for Greenfield families to host our international students during a week of exciting opportunities! This project has had a positive affect on my life, it has made me think from different perspectives and different angles. The experiences I’ve had of the different cultures have made me who I am now. The project for me is a very important one, as it uses ideas from all of our partners to make a big difference. All I can say is, thank you for the opportunities and I recommend this it to everyone! If you are interested in being involved and would like to host a student please contact Katy Milne on 01325 307 147 or email: katy.milne@greenfieldschool.net

By Daniel Martin in final year at Greenfield

LUCKY BIKE WINNER



Flynn Hoggarth being presented with his prize bike by Mayor Mary Dalton this week. Flynn was the lucky winner of the draw for this bike following the October holiday sports courses.

GAMP SPEND £150k ON LOCAL PROJECTS



The Great Aycliffe & Middridge Partnership Board and Forum have both met within the last 7 days progressing various projects to enhance our environment and bring enjoyable youth activities to the town. The total cost will be in the region of £150,000 and includes a pot of £25,000 for local groups to bid for financial support for their own projects.





THE TURBINIA

* Saturday Night Live *

The Very Best of Rock - Normally NO Cover Charge

Saturday 21st November

“Graham Russell”

100% Biker Review reads: “The entertainment on Saturday night was courtesy of the brilliant Graham Russell, just one bloke and a multitude of guitars, but boy can he play . . . whatever they paid him he was worth triple that! It was a brave booking by the club, just one bloke and guitars on a Saturday night but that marquee was buzzin’, he really did the business” 2nd 100% Biker Review reads: “The headline was the excellent Graham Russell and his Guitars, I really cannot say anything about this bloke that hasn’t already been said a million times before . . . stunning, bloody stunning.”

Saturday 12th December - “F.M.”

“Was this our best mid week pub gig ever? . . . Probably !!!
What can I say about F.M., this was rock and metal utopia, a classic journey through the rock and roll hall of fame. They did the lot, Kaiser Chiefs, Foo Fighters, Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Guns and Roses, Led Zeppelin and much more. How long have F.M. been around now? Many a year and on this performance many a year to come. Thanks lads you were awesome”

For more information on bands go to www.turbiniapub.co.uk
or 319700 Free Function Room - Free Disco/Karaoke

XCEL CHURCH HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

These are history making days for Xcel Church. After 22 years in Woodham Village the Church is moving out. This Sunday is the last Service for them in their current venue. As from Sunday the 13th December they will be hosting Church in their brand new home, the Xcel Centre.

The Church has grown steadily during its 40 year history since Jack & Pansy Dickenson first started the Church in 1967 and moved around Newton Aycliffe before settling in their own venue in Woodham in 1987. This next exciting adventure for Xcel Church sees them stepping into their future in the new Xcel Centre - a £5million Conference Centre on the Aycliffe Business Park.

Senior Pastor John Greenow said ‘We are excited about the move. We have outgrown this venue and are looking forward to growing into the new space. It is especially great that the first event being held at the Xcel Centre is the Aycliffe Community Carol Concert which will provide all of Newton Aycliffe an opportunity to come and see what the venue has to offer.’

The Xcel Centre will be open on the 13th December and includes full conferencing facilities including a 1200 seater auditorium & exhibition hall, Little Cubs Day Care & Jacksons Coffeehouse proudly brewing Starbucks. Log on to www.xcelcentre.com for more information about the Centre. For events hosted by Xcel Church over Christmas please check out xcelchurch.com or ring 0845 4505871

Thank You

THANKS VERY much to the kind person who handed in my cash card at Tesco’s on Wednesday. So grateful for your honesty. Margaret Cox

NEWTON NEWS

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Obituary

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WILSON 24th November, peacefully in Sedgfield Community Hospital, Sybil, aged 85 years of Newton Aycliffe. Dearly loved Wife of John, much loved Mam of Ruth, dear Mother-in-Law of Phil, loving Grandma to Sophia and her Husband Paul and a devoted Great Grandma to Owen and Georgia. Also a special friend to Kathy. Will family and friends please meet for Service in St Clares Church, Newton Aycliffe on Tuesday 8th December at 10.30am to be followed by interment in the West Cemetery, School Aycliffe.

CROFT In loving memory of Denize Croft who sadly passed away on the 27th November 2009 at North Tees Hospital aged 41. Mother to Anthony, a beloved Sister and Aunt - Funeral to be held at St. Edmund’s Church, Sedgfield. Please contact James Croft for details on 07729 460 232. All friends welcome

ROBERT MORRELL Died 26th November. Loving Husband to Agnes, Father to Thomas, Roberta, Julie, Stephen, David and a loving Granda and Great Granda. Funeral at St Clares Church on Tuesday 8th December at 2.15pm and afterwards at the Big Club xxx

Congratulations



Ollie Coulter

Look Who’s Four! - Happy 4th Birthday
To our very special little boy. Love you to the moon and back. From Mummy and Daddy xx

OLLIE COULTER To our little star, Ollie. Happy 4th birthday. Love, Gran and Grandad xx

JOHN WARD Happy 50th birthday! Have a great time in Scotland. Lots of love from all the family xxx

WARD John and Hazel, congratulations on your Pearl Wedding Anniversary. Love, Helen, Nicola and Rachel xxx

CLAYTON FACINILLE Happy 1st birthday to our gorgeous Nephew, love always, Auntie Michelle and Uncle Colin xx

CLAYTON Happy birthday from your big Cousin, Cameron xx

JOSHUA JAMES Happy 1st birthday to a very special Grandson. Love and hugs from Nana and Grandad xxx

JOSHUA JAMES Happy 1st birthday to our Nephew. Love from Uncles Liam and Mash xx

JOSHUA JAMES To a special little boy on your 1st birthday. Love and kisses Auntie Claire and Uncle Neil

STEPHANIE CUMMINS Happy 18th birthday, 30th November. Enjoy your party. Have a great night. Lots of love, Mam, Dad, John, Gemma and Kyle

JAYDEN BLACK Happy 18th birthday, 10th December. Lots of love, Mam and Luke xxx

BUTTLE SOLIEL Congratulations on attaining a Degree, BSc Crime Scene 2:1. Good luck in the future. Love, Grandma, Grandad and Andrew



Lesley Owen

THE BIG 50
9th December 2009
Lesley - my love to you always on this very special day. From Dave x
Mam - We hope you have a fab 50th. Love, Stu and Sammi xx
Lesley - Best wishes on your 50th birthday. Love always, Mam xx
Lesley - Enjoy you 50th. Love and best wishes, Charlotte x
LESLEY - Have a fab weekend away (I’m sure we will), HaHa. Love, Melanie, Ian and Stacey xxx
Lesley - Happy 50th birthday. Love, Joanne, Lauren, Sophie and Luke xx



Joshua James

Happy 1st Birthday
To our special little boy, happy 1st birthday. We love you very much. From Mummy and Daddy xxx

Property Wanted

WANTED 2 or 3 bedroom house in local area to rent and/or buy. Please call Julie on 07971 278250

Birthday Remembrance

ANNE HURST 7th December. Remembering our beautiful Mum and Nana, today and every day. The love you gave us will remain in our hearts forever xxx

CHRIS PAPE 9th December. Remembering a special Brother and Uncle on your 50th birthday. Love, Margaret, John, Hannah and Sam xxx

Council Signs Commitment to Rubbish & Recycling

It is hoped residents in County Durham will benefit from better services as Durham County Council becomes one of the first local authorities to commit to better waste and recycling services. The authority have pledged to try to ensure residents receive a waste and recycling service which is value for money and meets their needs. Councillor Bob Young, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure, said: "By signing up to this commitment we are reinforcing the message to our residents that we are committed to providing them with a waste and recycling collection service which is right for them. Coupled with the extension of the Green Waste Scheme, this commitment will help in our constant drive to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill."

Councillor Brian Stephens, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, said: "The commitment makes it clear what residents can expect from our service and we hope it will improve residents' satisfaction with it even further."

The Waste Collection Commitment is based on research into what people like and dislike about their existing services and issues that are important to them. Research has highlighted regular and reliable collections and clean streets after collections are top of the list. The commitment has been developed by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and It sets out ten points which the council will meet in delivering in its service. These are:

- 1 Explain clearly what services residents can expect to receive,
- 2 Provide regular collections,
- 3 Provide a reliable collection service,
- 4 Consider any special requests that individual households may have,
- 5 Design services and carry out collections in a way that doesn't produce litter,
- 6 Collect as many materials for recycling as possible and explain what happens to them,
- 7 Clearly explain service rules and the reasons for them.



8 Tell residents good time about changes to services, even temporarily,
9 Respond to complaints,
10 Tell all residents about this commitment to collecting waste.

COUNCILLORS DONATE TO LOCAL PROJECTS

Councillors Sarah Iveson and John Moran have made cheque presentations to the groups shown in the photographs below: The Whitehouse, Aycliffe Village, Peter Beaty from the Neville Parade Senior Citizens and St. Mary's School for the development of a new garden.



Grandad (95) and Grandson Receive Veteran Badges

The Presentation to Veterans last Saturday at Neville Community Centre brought Grandad and Grandson Michael Benson and Ray Lambert together to receive their badges. Ray was born in Darlington in 1915 He worked as a time served bricklayer for British Rail and met his wife Olive in the late 1930's. Ray joined the Marines in the second world war serving on the MTB boats on the south coast of England and also trained as a Commando. He was posted to Burma in 1944 missing the birth of his first daughter Patricia. He returned from the conflict in the Far East in 1946. Another daughter Denise was born in 1949. Olive and Ray continued to live in Darlington while Ray worked at Cummings until retirement, moving to Aycliffe in the early 70's. Grandson Michael was born in 1964 and went to St Marys School and then on to St Johns at Bishop Auckland. Inspired by his Grandad's war record he joined the Army in 1980 at the age of 16. He was posted with the Royal Artillery. in Germany and then served in Northern Ireland. He left the Army in 1988 to work in the Transport industry. He was recently married to Diane.





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Come On Ron!



Pagebet, held a nationwide Roulette tournament on 21st and 22nd November. Each contender received 5 chances to get the highest score having a free £20 go on the roulette game over 5 minutes. The 3 top scores in each shop were asked to play in a Regional Final held on 28th November in their local shop. Ron Hall from Defoe Crescent who had never played the game machine before was the highest from 12 shops and won a 32" T.V.. Everyone is now wishing him luck in the Grand Final where 12 players go head to head to win a trip for 2 for a week in Las Vegas. The Final is on 5th December and Pagebet are hoping for a big crowd in their shop to cheer Ron on. The Manager Andrea and all the staff wish Ron the luck he serves.

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