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Week Ending 4th April, 1997

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"Don't Let Newspapers Sway Your Election Judgement" says Student of Politics

Dear Sir,
With the General Election less than six weeks away, I am sure many residents of Newton Aycliffe will be contemplating who is worthy of leading our country into the millennium. Some will stick with their traditional party, some will say it's time "for a change" and many with very little interest in politics won't vote at all. Which is a shame. The right to vote is your chance to make a difference, your chance to have a say, yet many people dismiss this privilege. For democracy to be successful, it requires the participation of the people so that a political party can seek to from a government to represent them. In giving that party your vote,

you are giving them permission to represent you and provide a better county for you to live in. You are also letting them shape a country your children will be born in, educated in and hopefully, employed in. As with every General Election, our national press has taken a strong interest, and The Sun's decision to back Tony Blair surprised many people, especially due to the paper's pro-Tory stance over the years. Indeed, they claimed it was "The Sun won't win it" back in 1992 when Neil Kinnock was defeated by John Major. You may even remember the front page lead on polling day, Thursday 9th April. "If Kinnock wins today will the last person to leave Britain please turn out the lights", it declared.

You would be stupid to believe that The Sun, Britain's best selling national daily newspaper with a readership of approximately 10 million, doesn't have considerable

influence over its readers, especially concerning politics. But don't be fooled by the support why are showing to Tony Blair. It seems that this decision isn't one the Editor and his team of reporters took one day in their news conference. As you may be aware, The Sun is part of the News Corporation group, who own over two thirds of national newspaper circulation in this country. Their Chief Executive is a man called Rupert Murdoch, a wealthy Australian businessman who also owns half his country's newspapers, as well as the Fox Television network in America; the people who produce The X-Files. Murdoch also has a 40% shareholding in BSkyB, and is currently the 13th richest American citizen with a personal wealth of over £250 million. Tony Blair recently flew to meet Murdoch in Australia. The financing of this trip

(funded by Murdoch but not declared by Blair on his list of parliamentary interests) may get you thinking. Following his meeting in Australia with Murdoch, Tony Blair announced that a Labour government would have no plans to impose stricter guidelines concerning the control of commercial digital broadcasting. The words 'convenient', 'agreement' and 'business' spring to mind. Just remember next time you read your newspaper; think about the message it is trying to get across. Top-class subjective journalism, or high profile businessmen flexing their media muscles? By Simon Clayton, Politics Student, Newton Aycliffe

High Tax for Nothing

Dear Sir,
I fully agree with Tony Moore about it being time to abolish the Town Council. It has no powers at all but collects a very high Council Tax. I pay that Tax and get nothing in return, what little they do could be done by Sedgefield Council and we could get rid of this monstrosity. It is now time to save this town some money rather than waste it. Yours faithfully
C Birkbeck

Parish Meeting

Dear Sir,
Readers of your paper who are residents of Heighington Parish are invited to attend the Annual Parish Meeting on Thursday 10th April 1997 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, Heighington. The venue is wheelchair accessible. This is an opportunity for parishioners to hear of the work carried out on their behalf during the previous year, as well as for the Parish Council to listen to the views and concerns of parishioners, who may speak if they wish to do so.

Special items include: Policing; Neighbourhood Watch; and the Night Call Out Service.

Any suggestions for the celebrating of the Millennium will be welcomed. The Parish Council hopes that the meeting will be well attended by and of interest to, parishioners. Yours faithfully
Ann Le Druillenec
Clerk

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WINNERS OF WOOLWORTH'S PAINTING COMPETITION



The winner of the Woolworths Hunchback competition was Clare Smith aged 7. Clare is pictured with Assistant Manageress Jo Pattison and runner-up Rachel Dix, who is also aged 7. Meanwhile winner of the Mothers Day competition was 8 year old Olivia Sykes. She's pictured with her mum. Olivia's picture won first prize, which was a box of chocolates for her mum and a bouquet of flowers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT WAS UNSOUND

Dear Sir,
I refer to three letters published in 'Newton News' dated 27th March last.

1. I almost entirely agree with Mr. Upton's views.
2. I agree in general with Mr. Moore's views.
3. I almost entirely disagree with Mr. Clare's views. (The provision of parks & cemeteries are certainly important sociologically).
The (Heath) local government act of the seventies W.E.F. 1st April 1974 was, in my opinion, an odious and unsound statute.

I thought then that it would create, as time passed, immense difficulties and I believe my assessment has proved correct. I hold that men & women interested in local affairs should serve as Councillors FREELY without receiving any benefits other than minimal expense reimbursement. In the higher strata (not Town nor Parish Councils) vast amounts are spent on attendance allowances. I do not agree with such wastage nor indeed with party politics in local government.

I served on my parish council (quite a large one) in a holiday resort area of East Anglia for a number of years. I withdrew from participation there on also declined to stand for re-election in 1974, to the district Council of which I was a member also. Those decisions I found naturally disappointing but logical (as a matter of conscience) with the introduction into local government of rewards (financial) and party politics. Yours faithfully
J. J. Haynes

Letter to the Editor TOWN RATES MORE INJUST THAN POLL TAX

Dear Sir,
I would like to say how much I agree with the author of last weeks front page article, concerning local government expenditure.

It seems to me that rate payers are suffering a great deal more injustice than the opposers of the poll tax ever did.

How can it be considered just, that people just seven miles away pay almost £500 less for equivalent banding's and with no less services than the residents of Aycliffe.

When we first bought our properties they were not really in the luxury bracket, we purchased when the self build schemes were in operation and the properties were modestly priced.

Because of the inflated values of the property boom we are now faced with paying year on year ever increasing local taxation.

How long do the Councillors think we can go on paying what amounts to as much as a small mortgage, when our incomes are practically static.

Eventually we shall be priced out of our homes. It seems to me perhaps all rate payers should withhold their rates and make it difficult to collect, as the poll tax protesters did, then maybe we would be listened to. In fact I am greatly surprised there has not been more of an outcry.

I do not altogether blame our local government, I think the Council Tax scheme was always flawed, however there should be equality in what people are expected to pay, it should not depend on where one lives.

If the article in question is to be believed there are a number

of ways efficiency savings could be made, every workplace in the Country has had to make them, why not our Councillors.

It is quite ridiculous to purchase community housing from such a price bracket as £125,000. There are any number of very hard working and worthy people who cannot aspire to such expensive houses, and whilst one would not wish to place handicapped people in hovels, there must surely be a less expensive way to house three people in a respectable and comfortable fashion.

I also agree that expenses should be kept to a minimum and not exploited. Something should be done or it won't be long before there will be a mass exodus from the area, in fact I know people that have decamped for just this reason. If there are people out there who are in agreement please take the opportunity to let our voice be heard also, it may help.
M J Phillips (Mrs)

"1,2,3 SUCCESS THE EASIEST DIET"



Weight Watchers in Newton Aycliffe are celebrating a huge 4,000lbs weight loss since January on the easiest diet ever - new 1,2,3 Success.

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Free registration offer closes 17th May so come and share the Weight Watchers success and join your local class. Contact Weight Watchers on 01642 615317 for further details. Photo shows leaders from Newton Aycliffe & Darlington celebrating 1,2,3 Success.

COUNCILLOR'S Letter MATHS ON TAX MUST BE AT FAULT SAYS READER

Dear Sir,
I am writing in response to the letter of John D Clare of the 27th March in your paper. He states that the rates are lower than that of Shildon & Spennymoor for the second year running, I was lead to believe that Mr Clare was a school teacher, he must not teach maths, because my grandchild of 6 years can read and is able to tell me that Aycliffe rates are higher than the other two.

Two weeks ago I received my Tax bill from the Borough Council, it states as follows:
Aycliffe - £1,016.063
Shildon - £448,137
Spennymoor - £888,789.

It also give last tax years amounts for 96-97:
Aycliffe - £986,250
Shildon - £399,828
Spennymoor - £639,380
Aycliffe Tax is approx. 1/3 more than Spennymoor and almost triple that of Shildon. Come on Mr Clare, throw away your calculator and get back to pen and paper or chalk and slate, because 2+2=4. No wonder the Town Council meetings are lively if they are laughing at your mathematics. May I also state in Mr Moore's defence he can only attend as a Councillor at the meetings he is allowed to vote on, so it goes without saying for you Mr Clare to attend 50 meetings you are on more committees than Mr Moore, hence your attendance of 50 nights to Mr Moore's 14 nights.

So Mr Clare if you want to put a letter in our Town paper, put the truth. Aycliffe does pay more than Shildon and Spennymoor and why not let the people know that, because you moved to Woodham, your hopes were to fight the by-election for the seat on the District Council, you would of been paid attendance. 50 district meetings would not of left you much time to teach or brush up on your maths would it.

But even the Labour Party did not want you, they went for the

man with experience Mr Alan Gray - Congratulations Mr Gray and best of luck. All I can say now is, good luck also to Mr Moore, at least you call a spade a spade and I shall always vote for the person, not

the party, after all, local Councillors are voted on by the people for what the people want and not for a Councillors own ego.
An Aycliffe resident
name & address supplied

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"Heartbeat" Bus available for Star Appearances



When Andrew Johnson and his friend Nick reached the age of 18 they had to move to an adult workshop for the handicapped and away from the Paddock Special Project in Kirkleatham Village. Staff and colleagues organised a going away birthday party and Aycliffe Bus Preservation Society sent its Heartbeat bus to make a special day even better.

Andrew has been a fervent Heartbeat fan for some years and he was delighted to see a star of the show arrive at his party. John Bennett, from Stokesley and Bus Society member, arranged for the bus when he found out that Andrew (far left) was nuts on Heartbeat.

The Society is always willing to support local events and organisations who would like to have a vintage bus come along to their event should contact Ian on 01325 317657 or John 01325 312656.

"Councillor Moore Does Not Promise What He Cannot Deliver"

Dear Sir,
Having on numerous occasions, read columns from local politicians, whom it would seem attain pleasure in attempting to discredit Councillor Tony Moore, I feel that I must comment in regard to this person, with whom I have held a professional relationship with, over a number of years. As a previous Local Government Officer of many years, I have maintained close contact with Councillor Moore regarding numerous issues affecting the social wellbeing of residents of Newton Aycliffe and their families.

It is my belief that Tony Moore is one of the few individuals serving the public today, who wholeheartedly supports their individual needs, though adopts a pragmatic approach in seeking appropriate solutions.

Councillor Moore does not make the fatal mistake of promising everything if he can supply nothing, though is honest with his electorate and retains his overall objective in serving their needs.

I have no doubt that should Tony Moore have adopted a locally supported political persuasion, he would not have to endure this habitual onslaught of childish ridicule from persons who may wish to consider whether their overall aim is to serve the people of Newton Aycliffe, or to spend their time attempting to tarnish Councillor Moore's reputation. Should it not be the electorate who decide Tony Moore's future in politics, which in my opinion looks far more secure than many others.

I have wholehearted respect for Councillor Moore, and hope that he is willing and able to serve the people of his ward for many years to come.

Yours sincerely,
N. Savage

Former Housing Manager

New Name for Brigade

Durham County Fire and Rescue Brigade adopted a new title on April 1st.

It will now be known as County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Brigade, reflecting changes after Local Government re-organisations which have led to the formation of a combined Fire Authority made up of representatives of Durham County Council and the new Darlington Unitary Authority.

Chief Fire Officer Alf Thompson said: "The title of the Brigade may have changed but there will be no change in the service provided to the public and the level of response, efficiency and effectiveness will be maintained as at present".

Letter to the Editor

DETERIORATION AT HORNDALE

Dear Editor,
Being a resident in Newton Aycliffe for a number of years, over the last few years I have seen a sharp deterioration in the Horndale and surrounding areas in Newton Aycliffe.

Properties are left vacant for long periods of time, even though the Council say, there is a shortage of vacant properties.

They allow vandals to run riot and have a free hand to do what they please.

The streets are strewn with litter and broken glass - welcome to the Bronx - it is as if the Council and Police have given up on these areas and turning a blind eye to the whole situation.

Being a victim of vandalism and harassment myself, I feel

that the Council and the Police should work together and crack down on these youths that are causing damage to these properties and causing distress to the tenants.

Being a Council Tax Payer, it seems to me, along with other that the Council seem to think that there only responsibility is to empty the dust bins once a week.

The longer they leave the problem the worse it will get and the way things are going, it will get to a point of no return so residents and tenants will take matters into their own hands.

'Parents' do you really know where your children are right now - and what they are doing!

Yours
A concerned resident

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TUESDAY: (7-9pm unless stated)

Astronomy for Beginners
Cake Decoration/Sugar Craft
Italian Intermediate
Painting and Drawing
Computing (intro to PC's)
OCN Basics (6-8pm)
Word Processing (Leads to RSA1, 6-8pm)
Natural History



WEDNESDAY:

Basic Education - Dressmaking
Floral Art (fresh material)
Yoga (6-7.30pm)
Youth Football Training (NAYFC)
C.L.A.I.T. - Basketball
Pottery & Ceramics



THURSDAY:

Aerobics (6-7pm) - Decoupage
Dried Flower and Craft Work
Egg Decoration/Pergamano (parchment)
Holiday Spanish
Music (Learning the guitar)
Word Processing (RSA 2 & 3)
Gymnastics (5-11 years, 6-8pm)
First Aid (St John Ambulance) (7-9pm, begins 17-4-97)



Many courses are FREE or attract funding to allow us to support a remitted fee structure. Contact Frances Vickerstaff between 6-9pm (Tues, Wed or Thurs) or Susan Mouyiassi during school hours

UNDER 16's BEAT SOUTH CLEVELAND

Aycliffe U16's entertained South Cleveland Boys for the second week in a row.

Aycliffe put Cleveland under the hammer the previous week with a 6-0 drubbing and were hoping to do the same again last week.

Aycliffe started the game with some good football and could so easily have been two up within five minutes but for poor finishing.

Cleveland took the lead when Scott Brassell only tapped the ball back and a Cleveland forward ran in to score.

Aycliffe were on level terms within a minute when Daniel Plews ran through and drilled the ball into the roof of the net, 1-1.

Aycliffe were playing well enough to be in front but the score stayed 1-1 at half time.

The second half was only two minutes on when Daniel Plews made a good run through, his shot was only pushed into the path of Louis (Sniffer) Martin, who tapped in for Aycliffe's second.

Aycliffe defence were once again keeping Cleveland well

and truly out of the game, the midfield were dominant and the Cleveland defence could not do anything with the speedy forwards.

In the 64th minute Aycliffe increased their lead when Simon clay shot from the touchline and the ball lobbed the goalkeeper into the far corner.

Two minutes later Louis Martin received the ball in his own half, ran 65 yards and slotted it past the keeper, 4-1.

In the 70th minute Scott Brassell tackled from behind and the referee awarded a penalty, Chris Wilson had no chance, 4-2.

In the 75th minute Scott Brassell made little amends for his two mistakes when he ran through and calmly hit it into the far corner of the net, 5-2.

In the 78th minute Chris Wilson made an excellent save when he went down at the feet of a Cleveland forward.

The final whistle went with Aycliffe 5-2 winners. Once again it was another excellent performance by the whole team and difficult to pick a man-of-the-match.

The forwards ran well, the midfield linking up, the goalkeeper made some good saves, the defence solid and so, for his determination and consistency, man-of-the-match goes to Daniel Chadwick.

Easter Coffee Morning

There is to be an 'Easter Coffee Morning' in St Clare's Church Hall on Saturday 12th April from 10am to 12 noon.

There will be a home-made cake stall, tombola, raffle and a second-hand bookstall. A cup of coffee or tea with a scone for only 50p. Everyone is welcome.

Proceeds are for Church Funds.

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Due to constantly increasing business and future summer work we are now looking to recruit staff to work at the Gretna Green.

Full and part-time positions will shortly becoming available
Staff are required to work in restaurants, wacky-warehouse, kitchen and bar (cleaners also required) and must be willing to interchange jobs.

We are now looking for staff to apply to go on file for employment in the near future.

Please write with brief details to:

Mr D. Hawsworth, Gretna Green,
Great North Road, Newton Aycliffe

(Please make sure you enclose a contact telephone number)

Obituary

Death of
Town's
Popular
Photographer



BRUCE EDMONDSON

A well-known local figure has lost his long battle against coronary heart disease.

Bruce Edmondson, of Burnynghill Close, School Aycliffe, was first diagnosed with heart trouble in 1979, but his will-power and natural exuberance got him through several heart attacks and quadruple bypass surgery in 1983.

Previous to that, Bruce was a sports all-rounder and actually met his wife Judy whilst out with the town's cycling club.

Back in the 60s/70s, Bruce worked for Bakelite on Aycliffe Industrial Estate, but left to enrol as a mature student before qualifying as a teacher for pupils with special education needs. He retired on medical grounds but, never one to sit back, Bruce set up as a freelance photographer and spent many years working for Newton Press.

In the 60s, he was very involved with the folk music scene, running folk clubs before moving on to play with Nebula at concerts and on radio.

Never one to let his disability affect his outlook on life, last year Bruce took Judy over to Tobago to swim in a 'topical fish tank' above a coral reef as a Silver Wedding celebration.

Closer to home, Bruce will be remembered for his professional competence and jovial demeanour as a wedding photographer, as a past committee member of Aycliffe and Woodham Golf Clubs and as a competent 9 handicap golfer.

He was a well-respected, friendly and caring man who will be missed by many.

Ken Spearan

Family
Church
Service

There will be a Family Eucharist Service at St Clare's Church on Sunday 13th April, commencing at 10.30am.

The theme for this month's service is 'The Good Shepherd'. A warm welcome is extended to all, but especially young families, to come and share in this short, informal, all-age service.

Refreshments will be available in the hall afterwards to which everyone is invited.

MANAGEMENT
CHANGE AT
ST. TERESA'S
HOSPICE

St. Teresa's Hospice in Darlington have named two new members of their management team ahead of the launch of their new appeal after Easter.

Dr. Trevor Birnie will join the Hospice from April as medical director and Mrs Jane Bradshaw, currently fund-raising manager, will expand her duties upon the retirement of Mr Roderick Burt later this month.

St. Teresa's had plans accepted for the construction of a new bedded unit last year and an appeal launch is planned in Darlington's Market Square in Spring. The appeal will be the largest ever launched in Darlington with the objective of raising funds for the development of Hospice services in Darlington, South Durham and North Yorkshire.

Hospice Chairman Dr. Roger James paid tribute to the service of Mr Roderick Burt and welcomed the new medical director to the team. He said "I am delighted Dr. Trevor Birnie has joined St. Teresa's, his expertise in palliative care is well known and he will bring a specialist knowledge to the team and advise the trustees on the medical aspects of future developments."

"Roderick Burt has provided marvellous support to St. Teresa's, he joined at a time when we needed stability and guided us through the difficult process of planning for our new bedded unit. His contribution to the development of the Hospice movement in Darlington cannot be overstated."

Mr. Roderick Burt, added "I have found the last three years at St. Teresa's Hospice amongst the most rewarding of my professional life. I have attempted to retire from work three times now but each time a new challenge comes along. This time I am looking forward to a summer of cricket and supporting the Hospice movement. I wish the new team the very best in the ambitious and exciting plans which have been formulated and I am sure the future of the Hospice is secure and certain in the years to come."

Dr. Birnie is currently a GP in Darlington and has recently completed important work at the RVI in Newcastle relating to palliative care.

Mrs Bradshaw is a professional fund-raiser with many years experience in the voluntary sector. Before joining St. Teresa's Hospice in August 1996 she worked for the NSPCC.

"DO YOU WANT
KNOWLEDGEABLE
OR IGNORANT
COUNCILLORS?"

Dear Sir,

I ask ratepayers to hear the other side to the story about Councillors' expenses.

In the olden days, all politicians were rich people, because only they could afford the time and expense.

Repayment of expenses allows ordinary people like me to get involved in politics, to represent ordinary people like you.

As for conferences, the world becomes more complicated every day, and we have to keep up with it.

Ratepayers can either have Councillors who are up to date and know what they are talking about - or they can have ignorant Councillors, who sit around talking nonsense!

It would be interesting to know what conferences Mr Moore has attended, to keep himself up to date.

There are strict rules about expenses. Town Councillors get expenses only for work done outside Great Aycliffe which has been approved by the whole Council.

The amounts are set by the government, not by the Councillors and people must always remember that expenses are a repayment of money already paid out.

Looked at properly, expenses are not a Councillor's 'get rich quick' trick. They show how much work a Councillor has done for the Council outside Great Aycliffe.

Tony Moore draws no expenses because he does nothing.

With thanks
Billy Blenkinsopp
Town Councillor

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AYCLIFFE BOY
TAKES NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP



Sean Denham, (14), travelled to Birmingham on Saturday 22nd March to box in the National Schoolboy Boxing Championship final.

Sean trains under Les Gibson at the Youth Centre, Central Avenue and attends Woodham Comprehensive, his opponent in the Final was Ashley Squires from Essex.

Sean won in the second round to be National Champion and first choice to box against a South African schoolboy team in April.

Aycliffe ABC would like to thank Billy and Terry from Thames Butchers for their Sponsorship of Sean.

41 COUPLES FROM
DURHAM WILL HAVE
TEA WITH THE QUEEN

Forty-one lucky couples from throughout County Durham, Hartlepool and Stockton, north of the Tees, will be celebrating their golden wedding anniversary in style this summer.

They have been chosen to attend a special Royal Garden Party being held at Buckingham Palace in July by Her Majesty The Queen and HRH Prince Philip to mark their own 50th wedding anniversary.

A total of 472 eligible couples who were married in 1947 applied to the Lord Lieutenant of County Durham for one of 41 invitations allocated to the County.

In total, 40,385 British and Commonwealth couples applied for 4,000 invitations!

Sir Paul Nicholson, Lord Lieutenant of County Durham, said that to ensure scrupulous fairness, the draw was made by computer at Durham County Council's County Hall Headquarters, programmed for an even spread over the Unitary and District Authorities within the County.

The successful couples have been notified in writing and will receive their invitations direct from Buckingham Palace in early June.

"I know that many other couples will be disappointed at not receiving an invitation, but the overwhelming response meant that applicants only had a 1 in 10 chance of being successful", he added.

"Nevertheless, I should like to thank every couple for applying for an invitation, and extend to them all my congratulations and best wishes on their golden wedding anniversary this year."

Evening
Walks

**Sunday, 20th April
Bishops Park**

A 4 mile route to include Bracks Wood and the parkland to the east of Bishop Auckland. Meet 2pm at the Auckland Walkway car park, just off the A688 opposite the turn for Auckland Park.

Note:
Fortnightly Wednesday evening walks will commence in May. Please contact Joe Wild for details. Please wear boots or strong shoes and carry waterproof clothing on these walks. Further details from Joe Wild on 01388 774493.

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LIONS CLUB
DONATES £1000
TO HOSPICE



Members of the Darlington Lions Club visited St Teresa's Hospice recently and presented Medical Director Trevor Birnie with a cheque for £1,000.

The Darlington Lions Club have now raised a total of £5,000, raised specifically for the Hospice Education Unit.

Accepting the cheque on behalf of St. Teresa's Medical Director Trevor Birnie said, "Our education facilities contribute to a better understanding of Palliative care, enhance communications skills and improve knowledge of issues relating to terminal illness".

He added, "We are grateful to the Lions Club for recognising the important work of education at St. Teresa's and thank them for their continued support".

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"BLAME IT ON THE
LABOUR
COUNCILLORS
WHOMEVER THEY ARE"

Dear Sir,

I must congratulate the impoverished John Upton for his excellent piece of misgarded, (garbage is perhaps too strong a word) and selfish statements last week. There I was, one moment conservatism was rapidly going out of fashion, when suddenly along comes the voice of the people.

The people who couldn't care less about you or me just so long as I'm all right Jack, and if I'm not, blame it all on Labour Councillors wherever they may be.

Now I have no idea whether Mr. Upton is of any political persuasion or not but the statements he made in his letter imply exactly that. But before anyone jumps to conclusions, I am not a councillor of any description with an axe to grind. No I'm just an ordinary working class man who has lived in this town now for 12 years.

12 years in which a Labour Council has been gradually sucked dry by a Tory Government. Oh yes, blame the local council by all means, after all, it wasn't GATC who wanted to sell the Town Centre to some Dentists, it wasn't GATC who wanted to introduce Council Tax now was it! Council Tax: Mr. Upton makes some inspired observations regarding that. Average tax is increased by 6% where as ours is up 14.7%, a point that we hardly missed when we got our bills. But does Mr Upton live in the real world or no? When the Council Tax was introduced, it was because of the failure of the Poll tax remember! Because of that it was set at low levels to pave its way, but with the hidden attention of cutting back money to Councils every year with the knowledge that Labour Councillors would then be forced into situations where they had to make reductions in services to the public whilst the amount we paid went up rapidly.

Mr Upton may not like it and I don't like it and the rest of you may not like it but we have to live with it. And I for one will not blame my local council for something that is not their fault but is Tory Party policy. Notwithstanding that when the final figures were released to local Councils, Durham's is the worst hit. It also seems a bit of a coincidence that Tony Blair's constituency is in this area. Too much of a coincidence!

Reading Mr Upton's letter he points out that the tax in Band D is much higher in Great Aycliffe than most other areas and he is also a Pensioner himself. Most Pensioners can't afford a band D home, they are lucky if they can afford a Band A home, so I assume he is wishing to make an attack upon the council for wasting our money.

So lets look at some of these points he raised. Why should pensioners have an annual outing at the taxpayers expense? He says he would sooner have the £100 that could be saved. Where he gets the imaginary figure of £100 from I have no idea. Because any savings made would have to be shared amongst all Council tax payers in G.A. and he would be extremely lucky if the amount saved amounted to 2p off his bill. Would you object to your 2p giving 24 hours of pleasure to old age pensioners? Some of whom can not afford a trip round the town centre never mind elsewhere. Or does the fact that he couldn't care less about others affect his viewpoint a little? A view that is also not a majority view obviously.

Why should so much as £5 be spent on a single Firework? Well Mr Upton, the idea is that by holding a fireworks display it helps reduce the amount of accidents dealt with in hospitals, (which cost the taxpayer a dam sight more each year) and reduce injuries to children and Adults alike. I believe the cost of the last display was approx. 67p each. Yet another fantastic expense to be compared against the immeasurable pleasure it provides to those who attend and the health and safety it provides.

Of course, ensuring someone's child doesn't lose an eye or worse because of fireworks is not worth the meagre amount it costs him, which only shows how compassionate he really is, or misinformed.

As for the suggestion by the Lone Ranger, Mr Moore, as to the abolition of the Town Council, if the Town Council is of no value, me-thinks the man and his compatriots protesteth too much.

If, as he says it is time to do so, why does he insist on still being involved in council business. Why not just stand down Mr Moore, prove exactly that, that councils are not worth having, or are the only councils worth having the ones you sit upon only to be constantly outvoted week after week, which probably explains more about your dissatisfaction than anything else.

I await your reply Mr Moore.

Yours sincerely
Kenneth Stubbs

Letter to the Editor
CONFERENCE
EXPENSES

Dear Sir,

Town Council Labour members made a virtue of criticising District Members' expenses, including 'Conferences'. They said, unlike Big Brother, they claimed no such expenses. Now many of them are Borough Labour Councillors, we hear no such protests. Why the silence?

I checked S.B.C. Conferences List for 1995-96. A comradely 'Closed Shop', Labour Party only. £11,590.97 was claimed for Conference Expenses. 1995-96. Aycliffe Labour Councillors claiming were: E. Elmer - Glasgow - £30

J. Fleming - Bournemouth - £430.92

G. C. Gray - Harrogate - £273.16

M. D. Locklin - Torbay - £543.48

J. Moran - Harrogate - £279.20

J. R. Tomlinson - Bournemouth - £431.62

When many workers earn less than £200 to keep families on. Will Aycliffe Councillors justify these costs to Taxpayers?

Should they brag about £50 spent on each rocket on Bon Fire Night, when pensioners were paid £58 to live on? Will they justify these Conference expenses to those paid £29.50 a week Y.T.S?

First past the post for BOTH Councils was Cllr. W. Blenkinsopp, GATC, on £711.68 at Brighton.

Aycliffe's runner-up, Cllr M.D. Locklin, SBC, on £543.48 at Torbay. Beaten by a short head into Third place, on £511.68 at Brighton was Cllr. J. Hogan, GATC.

Change from Old Labour? Or, any change left in Taxpayers pockets? Don Fraser - Woodham & Aycliffe Nth Wards

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Cycles

New Head for Greenfield Centre



The Greenfield Centre wish to welcome Frances Vickerstaff as the new Head of Centre to The Greenfield Centre based at Greenfield School.

Frances, a local girl, has had previous experience in developing further education courses and community activities when she was last at the Centre five years ago.

The Centre has a number of courses/activities scheduled for the new spring/summer season.

Enrolment is Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th April - from 6.30pm - 8.30pm.

Please feel free to come along for a chat, see what we have to offer and we would welcome ideas/suggestions as to possible future courses.

FIGHTBACK BY AYCLIFFE UNDER 11'S

Aycliffe U11's - 5
South Park - 2

The penultimate game of the season saw Aycliffe in shock after only 18 seconds when South Park walked through the defence to score.

For the next five minutes Aycliffe struggled to string any passes together and had to wait until the eighth minute before Michael Carr slotted home an equaliser.

Then within two minutes Brendan Hindle flicked an Adrian Clark corner over the keeper for 2-1.

Aycliffe were now playing a more controlled game and scored two more before the break.

The third came from Clark as his 25 yards chip gave the

keeper no chance. Goal no. 4 was created initially by Ryan Stonehouse. His superb ball caught the defence square and Carr's cross from the left was met brilliantly by Ryan Wilson who slid in to smash the ball home.

After the restart Aycliffe were caught napping as, once again, South Park scored in the first minute, only this time it was a more respectable 36 seconds.

The opposition had very few chances after that and the seal was put on the win when James Black's drive was parried to Jonathan Robinson who followed up well and tapped home no. 5.

Craig Cherrie was awarded man-of-the-match for his excellent defensive work.

ORMESBY TOO GOOD FOR AYCLIFFE

On Sunday 23rd March Newton Aycliffe Under 12's travelled to North Ormsey in the League.

Newton Aycliffe started off brightly and were rewarded with a goal when Tarling ran on to a pass by Bowtell and placed the ball passed the advancing keeper.

North Ormsey never let Aycliffe relax and got their equaliser just before half time.

Aycliffe started well in the second half with Cairns going close. Aycliffe introduced Byrne at Half time. Aycliffe were then caught on the break and keeper Turnbull was unlucky to parry the shot, but to see the rebound go in.

Aycliffe then brought Jones and

Bates on and started pressing for the equaliser when Tarling was put clear, but the keeper came out to make a good save at his feet, with Tarling going down and the ball running loose. Penalty was the cry. - No! Play on, a long ball up field and Aycliffe were caught, the attacker ran onto the ball and calmly placed it passed the advancing Turnbull.

Final score 1 - 3 to North Ormsey.

Team - Turnbull, Bates J, Craggs, (Jones), Vickerstaff (Byrne) (Bates C), Thorne, Craddock, Wright, Bowtell (Laing), Cairns, Tarling, Peddely.

Subs: Dickinson

Hard Luck Lads!

Letter to the Editor Special School Appeal for Help

Dear Sir,
Walworth School, Bluebell Way, Newton Aycliffe is a special school catering for children with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

Our boys and girls are aged between 5-16 years old and we have a residential unit for some of our primary aged children. In June this year we are taking a group of 15 children to France on a cultural visit and for some of the party it will be a trip of a lifetime.

To enable this visit to happen we are having to subsidise the

costs quite heavily through fund raising efforts including a Grand Summer Raffle.

We would like to say a special thank you to Mr Chris Hutchinson of Sanyo Ltd. who presented the school with a microwave in assembly on 14th March. This will be our first prize in the raffle.

Our thanks also go to Flymo who donated a Mini-Trim and the Blacksmiths Arms who have donated a meal for two.

Please keep those donations coming in - every little helps.
Darryl Gregory
Acting Headteacher

Book on Life of Local Serial Killer

A best selling book on County Durham's most infamous serial killer is to be re-launched - on the anniversary of her hanging. Mary Ann Cotton was credited with probably 14 victims - some say as many as 20 died at her hands.

She was finally accused and arrested in West Auckland for the murder of her stepson and hanged on March 24th, 1873.

Now a popular book called Mary Ann Cotton, which charts her life and sorry end, is to be re-launched at Bishop Auckland Town Hall on the anniversary of her death.

Sunderland-born author and journalist, Arthur Appleton, wrote the first full length book about her in 1973 but it went out of print.

Demand for the story of her life,

trial and botched hanging was such that Durham County Council's publishing arm, County Durham Books, decided to republish the title last December.

Priced at £9.95, it has been popular in local book shops and libraries sparking the re-launch attended by Arthur Appleton at 7.30pm on Monday, 24th March.

The book maps out the life of Mary Ann Cotton from her birth in the pit village of Low Moorsley, near Hetton-le-Hole, through countless County Durham villages, to Sunderland Infirmary where she worked as a nurse, to Penzance where she moved on marriage and then back to West Auckland where her fate was sealed.

Redundant Flymo Worker Starts own Business



John Reidy (55), who is married with two daughters aged 26 & 28, had worked without being unemployed for 40 years - 18 years retail with Horticultural Sales/Service outlet Chichester, West Sussex, then he joined Flymo in 1973, based at Watford and living at Luton. He moved to Darlington in 1977 due to the centralising of all Flymo operations at the Aycliffe site.

After leaving Flymo he decided to take a six month break to catch up on all the DIY jobs at home.

John was in the last three at interviews for Lawnmower and Garden Machinery Adviser for the new large retail outlet at Stockton (B&Q).

He realised there was little chance of a job in the local area so he decided to look at the possibility of starting up on his own, servicing Lawnmowers/Garden machinery. He contacted retail sales outlets like B&Q, Great Mills, Dickens Garden Centre, Strikes, Home Base etc., who all indicated an interest and a need for local service.

He has now set up as an authorised Flymo, Briggs & Stratton and Tecumseh repairer and he will also repair most other makes. (Additional Agencies possible in 1998).

He attended a Business Venture Training Course at Morton Park, resulting in an enterprise grant being approved and he opened for business on 10th March, 1997.

The operation is intended to offer a service/parts supply for popular makes to users in the area of Darlington, Aycliffe, Sedgefield, also a service to large/small sales outlets in the area for products either sold or returned to them.

The operation will be staffed by John and his wife for the first year. His wife will continue lace making and teaching but on a reduced scale. He has no intention of making the business the largest in the area, preferring to maintain a personal, affordable, cost-effective service to local users of garden machinery.

The business is based at Unit 15, Whessoe Road, Darlington, Co Durham, DL3 0QP - or can be contacted by Tel/Fax on 382888.

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