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Printed & Published by Newton Press, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 6DX. Tel: (01325) 300212.

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COUNTY COUNCIL START MAJOR CLEAN-UP OF TOWN SUBWAYS



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Readers will remember the row that developed last year over the town's subways when Counc. Tony Moore called for them to be sealed up.

He and a number of residents were concerned that the filthy, unlit underpasses were not being used because of the anti-social behaviour by youths who congregated thereabouts.

The were complaints of hooliganism, drinking, drug-taking and intimidation. People thought it better to close the subways to get rid

of these problems.

Our columns were used to argue that the value of the underpasses, in road safety terms, outweighed the problems of their abuse by youngsters.

Everyone agreed the subways were dirty and a group of youngsters, from the Youth Centre, encouraged by the town's Rotary Club, offered to adopt and clean a couple of subways as part of a community service project. They wrote to the County Council for permission last October and have just received Council agreement - 5 months later.

But they can claim success in bringing the matter to the Council's attention and getting Councillors to take action on the problems of all eleven subways in the town.

The County Council have installed new lighting around, and in the subways, and this week began to treat them all with anti-graffiti paint.

The local and community police will patrol the areas to deter vandals and the subways will be regularly maintained by people carrying out Community Service Orders.

The Youth Centre group have been given a subway for their project and the whole community is being encouraged to get involved in keeping the subways open, clean and used for their

intended purpose in providing road safety to local residents. Congratulations to Tony Moore who first highlighted the problem on behalf of residents.

Thanks also to the Youth Centre members for their public spirited action which in the end has produced very positive results.

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Drive With the T.A.



124 Recovery Company (REME) Volunteers, based at Northfield Way, Newton Aycliffe are now the proud owners of a brand new Dual Control Vauxhall Corsa Car. The Territorial Army Unit is one of the first in the north east to be given its own training vehicle to teach recruits to drive. This dual control car will now compliment the 4-ton truck and the 27-ton Recovery Vehicle, all of which are being used to train part time soldiers to drive. The photograph shows the units own instructors (left to right) WO2 Rutherford Pt. Henderson, SSGT Brown, Pt Askew and Cpl Balcombe. If you would like to earn extra money, learn a trade, and learn to drive and meet other people - why not join us now? We currently have vacancies for Vehicle Mechanics, Recovery Mechanics and Clerks. Training will be given to suitable candidates. Hone us now to arrange an informal interview on 312739 or call in any Wednesday evening.

LEARNING HOW TO MASSAGE

MARCH IS FOR MASSAGE You've heard of the Mad March Hare? Well, during the month of March, Footze Natural Therapy and Training Centre is going mad on massage. The Centre is pleased to announce the arrival of tutor Kevin Bradley MIRMT (Ath)

(Rfx) MGPBT DTM ITEC from the Reade College of Massage in London. Kevin will be working at Footze until the end of April both as a therapist and a tutor for the postgraduate courses on offer during March. Kevin is trained in both Swedish and Lymph drainage massage and offers a 'STRESSBUSTER' treatment for £12. This is a stimulating but relaxing massage concentrating on the neck, shoulders, back and scalp. According to Kevin this treatment is ideal as a lunch time pick me up. March is also the start date for the I.T.E.C. diploma in massage led by tutor Jennifer Grogan for people wishing to learn how to massage professionally. AND... not to be missed... is the Massage Marathon on Friday 20th March 5.00-9.00 p.m. when all treatments are being offered for £5.00 as part of a fund-raising venture. Bookings are being taken now on Darlington 363433.

TABLE TOP SALE & COFFEE MORNING

There is to be a Table Top Sale in St Clare's Church Hall on Saturday 28th February from 10am to 12 noon (STRICTLY NO TRADERS PLEASE). Tables are £5 each and must be pre-booked by contacting Mrs Bennett on 312030 as soon as possible, as numbers are strictly limited. Coffee/tea and scones will be available and there will be the usual home-made cake stall.

"COUNCIL TOO COSTLY" SAYS COUNC. MOORE TO MINISTER

Below is a letter Tony Moore has sent to the Minister responsible for Local Government:

Dear Minister
As a serving member of Great Aycliffe Town Council, I am deeply concerned that the electors are not getting value for money from the Council. Although the Town Council represents its population of 28000 it has no greater powers or responsibilities than any Rural Parish Council. Nevertheless, it sees fit to employ a Chief Executive and Director of Parks, Cemeteries and Recreation. It is hardly surprising that the wage estimate for the coming year is £260,000. I was shocked to learn that the budget for this year is set at £1.8m - in my submission a ridiculously high amount for a Parish Council. Many of the functions, such as the recreation centre, golf course and parks could be taken over by Sedgfield Borough Council and lessen

the burden to the council taxpayers of Aycliffe. Surely democracy would be better served by splitting the town up into four or five small parishes. In the neighbouring village of Middridge, they chose to have their own Parish Council at a considerable lower cost to the taxpayers of that village
Yours sincerely
Cllr Tony Moore

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HONESTY APPRECIATED

Dear Sir,
As indicated in my last letter, my intention in writing was to identify the person who handed in my lost wallet. I wished to thank him or her for their honesty as it contained my pension.

I regret their has been no response, and as Somerfield staff were concerned, I have decided to make a donation toward their in-house charity. Yours faithfully,
JPW

Shrub Planters Wanted

Volunteers are wanted for some countryside projects in Sedgfield Borough in March 1998. All projects are suitable for children, if accompanied by adults. Tools provided, no experience necessary:

Sunday 1st March
Shrub Planting
Woodham Park
Planting a variety of indigenous shrubs (hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dogwood etc.) adjacent to the recently constructed Great Aycliffe Way. As well as enhancing the landscape of the area the project will help to create a valuable wildlife corridor linking South Agnew Plantation to Woodham Burn. Meet at 10am on the new footpath in Woodham Park just off Woodham Way. Finish about 12.30pm

Sunday 22nd March
Tree Planting
Byerley Park
Introducing a variety of trees and shrubs into an area adjoining the new Great Aycliffe Way. Meet at the end of Staintondale off Greenfield Way at 10am finish at 12.30pm. For more information please contact Graham Clingan at Sedgfield Borough Council on 01388 816166 ext 4487

Shop Raised Over £1000

Dear Sir
The staff of John Eliot footwear would like to thank all of our customers for helping us to raise money for the "Dreams Come True" Charity. We have succeeded in reaching the splendid sum of £1032 for 1997. This money will help to make the most treasured dreams of seriously and terminally ill children come true. We have received a certificate from the charity headquarters which is on display in our shop. Once again, many thanks to friends and customers
Anne Harland
Assis. Manager

Letter to the Editor IN PRAISE OF COUNC. MOORE

Dear Ed.
Once again we read in our community paper of a tit for tat slanging match by one of the Town Councillors because of scrutiny via one of our towns respected citizens and public servants.

Councillor Moore is a very fine and upstanding member of this community and has done more work for Newtonians than any other. I am more than certain that Cllr Moores intentions were honourable and public spirited and feels duty bound to report back to the community regarding Council business, be it Town, Borough, or County. No one more so over the years has been more accountable than himself and he has no

objections to being under close scrutiny when it comes to affairs of public office. I t sound like Cllr. Moore has struck a nerve in the Town Council over their precept and has disclosed some rather interesting facts. I for one welcome Cllr Moores interest in the local community budget and am glad of his willingness to inform us of such things that would otherwise go by, totally unnoticed. Well done Cllr. Moore. Not all of us have the opportunity to attend such meetings and ask such direct questions of the Town Council and, are grateful that independents such as your good self do.
Regards
D. Stocks
Thornton Close

Huntsman Out of Cup

Half Moon Rangers 3 Huntsman 0
In association with J&C Coaches and Blenheim Furniture. Huntsman's ASE cup love affair ended last week as they fell at the first hurdle to Half Moon Rangers writes Martin Walker. Huntsman beat the Darlington side in last years final under Stuart Hodgson's strict regime - so it was sweet revenge for Half Moon, who will be more than pleased with the result. They far from controlled the game - putting the ball in the back of the net dividing the teams - but they rarely looked pushed at the back and they seemed to have the run of the ball and lady-luck on their side. They took the lead in the first half with a sweet free-kick, despite the off-side cries of the Huntsman faithfuls. At half-time, the visitors were by no means out of it - but they made sure of that after the break. It wasn't going to be their day and no matter how much they tried to muster a goal, they only found the woodwork or the in-form keeper standing in their way.

Upex Squash Leagues

Steve Heslop continued his winning way by again taking this month's Upex Squash Leagues
He was closely followed by Mick Anderson who has been putting in some good performances lately. Nigel Blenkinsopp and Gary Hall fought for third place but it was finally decided by the flip of coin falling in Nigel's favour. John Ward, Kevin

Greenall and Mick Jewett were all promoted to the Premier. The winners of this months Upex Squash Balls are as follows:-
Kev Martin, Linda Luke, Tony Devlin, Alan McPhee, Gordon Wake, Terry Dady, Norman Bennett, Tim Hall, Pamela Barrow and Mick Sanderman. Anyone who would like to join the Upex Squash Leagues can do so by contacting the Sports Complex on Aycliffe 300600.

Co-ordinations HOUSEHOLD LINEN SALE

on Thursday 26th February, 1998
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OPEN DAY AT ITEC

ITEC North East, one of the regions leading providers of vocational qualifications, is holding an OPEN DAY on Tuesday 24th February for young people who are considering a future career in Business Administration or Information Technology. ITEC North East provides NVQ and Modern Apprenticeships in these subjects through work experience with local firms. Last years results speak for themselves: 100% of ITEC trainees qualified and 94% walked straight into jobs on completion of their course. Anyone is welcome to attend the open day and it will give the opportunity to find out about the courses offered at ITEC, view the facilities and meet the staff. The centre is open from 10am until 7pm. ITEC North East, Technology Court, Bradbury Road, Aycliffe Industrial Park Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 5DA Tel: 01325 320052

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TOP CHEF'S PROTEGE TAKES OVER "THE COUNTY"



In the short time Andrew and Deborah Brown have been tenants of "The County" the village pub has been transformed.

Andrew, protege of the famous French Chef Raymond Blanc, has brought a quality of food never seen in this area before. Andrew worked with Andrew Blanc for 3 years, first under a scholarship he won and then as an employee at Raymond Blanc's Restaurant.

On the 19th March Raymond is spending a day at the County, helping Andrew to promote his establishment as the finest eating house in this area.

Andrew wants to impress people with the quality of food and service offered at the County. "Every meal is freshly cooked - we use no frozen food and we offer a varied menu guaranteed to please," said Andrew. You won't get a better Sunday Lunch anywhere than

at the County, the flavour, presentation and quality of all our meals cannot be beaten" added Andrew confidently. Andrew is new to cooking and changed his career after finding he enjoyed preparing food when he had to cook meals for his pregnant wife. Deborah is from Darlington and Andrew is a Scot. They have been married 6 years and have two children with another on the way.

The couple always wanted to come back to the north east and when the "County" was among the list of tenancies offered, they took it immediately, knowing it had great potential.

A very high standard has been set at the County to attract the right clientele. Andrew hopes people will come and see the quality of food available. Lunch: 12-2.30pm Monday - Sunday. Dinner 6.30 - 9.30 Tuesday - Saturday. Book a table by ringing 312273

COUNCIL BLAME GOVERNMENT FOR 15.6% RISE IN TAX

Council tax bills for 1998-99 may leave householders in County surprised and puzzled - and understandably so, said Durham County Council Leader Don Robson.

For with inflation running at around 3.6%, and the Authority's spending for next year set to rise by just 3.3%, people will find it difficult to understand why the County Council's share of the Council Tax bill may have to rise by 15.6%!

Coun Robson told a meeting of the Authority's Policy Committee that for the second year running they would have some difficult explaining to do. But he said simple arithmetic provided the answer, it did not take a financial wizard to see the blame lay squarely at the Government's door.

Coun Robson said:

"The Government has set our spending limit for 1998-99 at £350.927m. The Government has allocated us Revenue Support Grant £157.247m towards that cost.

The Government has determined that our income from Non Domestic Rates - which will also help meet that cost - will be £103.201m.

We estimate we will receive a further £715,163 from the overall Collection Fund Surplus to offset the cost.

Straightforward maths shows there is a shortfall in funded expenditure of £89.757m, and we have nowhere else to turn.

That figure equates to a Band D Council Tax of £633.87, a sum which is £85.41 or 15.57% more than the current year's demand. Police, District Council and Parish Council precepts will also need to be added to the figure before an overall Council Tax bill can be calculated.

"The fact of the matter is that the Government has set our spending limit at what it believes is a reasonable figure, but it is not prepared to give us an appropriate level of grant towards it" said Coun Robson.

"It seems happy for the burden to fall on the Council Taxpayer of County Durham and for the County Council to take the blame, even though we have cut our spending by more than £3m to keep our planned spending increase to 3.3% - which is within the current rate of inflation."

The Committee agreed that the proposed County Council budget for 1998-99 of £350.921m and the Authority's proposed precept of £633.87 should go forward for final consideration by the full Council next Monday, 23 February.

Letter to the Editor SUPERMARKET EXPLAINS PROBLEM

Dear Sir,

I was very concerned to read in the *Newton News* last Friday (13/2/98) a letter from a customer at our Somerfield store here in Newton Aycliffe. The incident to which the customer referred occurred on Friday 6 February when our computer systems suffered a major 'crash' which resulted in the failure of all of our checkouts during the busiest period of our week.

At the time we had over 200 customers in the store and so our main worry was to ensure the minimum inconvenience and disruption to them.

We were able to operate the tills independently but this meant that we could not credit Premier Points to customers. Customers were offered a £2.00 voucher and were able to claim their missed points on production of their till receipts on their next visit to the store. Our staff handled the incident with great professionalism and many shoppers who were in the store on that day have commented how well the staff coped.

I was therefore very sorry to hear that your reader was dissatisfied with our actions and that he has taken such a negative view of the store. Somerfield has been in the town for over eighteen years and we are confident that our dedicated staff offer our customers a very efficient, friendly and professional service.

I do not feel it is fair to judge the store and our staff on a single 'crisis' when we did everything within our power to compensate our customers for the unavoidable inconvenience.

I would be more than happy to speak to your reader and to address any specific concerns if he would ask for me on his next visit.
Colin Gourley
Deputy Manager
Somerfield Newton Aycliffe

Excellent Service From Somerfields

Dear Sir

In reply to a letter you published last week re-badly managed supermarket in the town centre. May I say something in the store's defence. The supermarket in question is obviously Somerfield as they are the only store in the town centre that issue point cards. I have used the same store for numerous years and have found excellent service and value for money and find the new improved store very customer friendly.

The new store layout is far superior to any other in the locality. Somerfield have invested very heavily in this store when everyone else has been leaving in droves. The store is well lit and spacious and the products on offer are in keeping with any other major retailer within the district.

There is a good selection of fresh produce and bread is baked on site from their own bakery. I recall the incident last week when their computer system crashed and the points system was halted. I spoke to the Duty Manager Mr Gourley who, without hesitation apologised and gave me a £2.00 voucher to spend in the store and said if I retained my till receipt his staff would credit the points on my next visit.

Yes the points system is an inducement to shop within the store, something that is operated by most successful retailers. It is a form of loyalty reward and a very successful one. Most petrol companies, department stores and high street chains operate very similar schemes.

Finally Somerfield employ over 150 staff, making them one of our main employers. Some of their staff have been with the company for almost 20 years and if the management was that bad they would not have hung around that long. I for one am very pleased with the service offered and would be sad to see the loss of such a successful business within the community.

Name and address supplied.

In aid of improved facilities for Disabled at Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre

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SEDFIELD - 6 Front Street	01740 622411	CHESTER-LE-STREET - 70 Front Street	0191 3873495
SHILDON - 63 Church Street	01388 777000	SUNDERLAND - 25 Vine Place	0191 5677711
NORTHALLERTON - 96 High Street	01609 780800		

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SPECIAL JOB LOOKING AFTER "SPECIALS"

DURHAM Constabulary's latest civilian recruit is going from a life on the ocean wave to dealing with a new 'wave' of volunteer police officers.

Ian Parks, a former chief petty officer in the Royal Navy, is the force's first full time liaison officer for the Special Constabulary. His new job comes after spending 22 years in the navy, during which time he served all over the world, mainly in administrative roles.

Ian's time at sea included service on ships such as HMS Hermes, HMS Torquay and the new Ark Royal, and he was also based for a time at NATO Headquarters in Belgium at the height of the Cold War. In his spare time he completed two years as a volunteer member of the RAF mountain rescue service, and attended many emergency call-outs.

He left the navy last April and came to Durham initially on a short-term contract with the personnel department. But he moved into his new post after the force advertised for someone to deal on a permanent basis with Durham's 180 part-time officers. "My role is really to act as a focal point and draw all the strings together. It's going to be quite a challenge," said 40-year-old Ian.

His task will be to recruit and retain more 'specials', and offer advice to Durham's local police commanders on how they could best be deployed. He recognises one problem is that many volunteer bobbies join the ranks for a relatively short time to "test the water" before applying to join the regular force.

"In a way we become victims of our own success. A number of people like the taste they get of policing being a 'special' and go on to become regular officers. We just have to live with that," said Ian.

"But we are seeing the first fruits of recruitment drives put in place by the force late last year, and a government-led awareness campaign last month to raise the profile of specials led to dozens of enquiries from people in County Durham" he added.

Born and raised in Kent, father-of-five Ian lives in Newton Aycliffe with his wife and family. A holder of the British Empire Medal, he is waiting to hear if his own application to become a 'special' in Sedgefield has been successful.

Durham currently has 180 special constables and is actively looking for more. Potential new recruits must be aged 18-50, be of good character and of reasonable health and fitness. Specials have broadly the same powers as regular officers, and undergo a series of training sessions spread over three months before they join their full-time colleagues on a wide range of duties.

Anyone interested in joining the ranks of Durham's volunteer bobbies can contact Ian Parks on: 0191 375 2123.

SLINKY SAM'S SUCCESS



Sam Small who was voted Miss Slinky 1997 by the Neville Parade Church Hall Class, 5pm and 7.30pm. After losing 3st, 9lbs, has gone on to be voted target member of the year 1998.

Angela, Sams consultant says "Sam got to target after losing 4st 2lbs on the 22nd of December 1997. After only 8 months on the plan. It was the best Christmas present she could have ever given herself. Sam says "I joined Slimming World on the 21st April 1997 after my mother took a photo of me bathing my baby son. When I saw the photo I was horrified, that was the turning point in my life. I lost 6lb in my first week and by 4 weeks I'd lost a stone. The healthy eating plans are so flexible. I have free foods all day using my sins for treats such as Chinese takeaway, chocolates, crisps and the occasional drink. I no longer have to plan my life around food, I plan my food around my life".

Sam goes on to say "I would like to thank all my friends at Slimming World for voting for me and to Angela my consultant for believing in and supporting me".

Letter to the Editor "Not Everyone Receives Flowers"

Dear Sir,

Re: "Councillor gets it wrong again"

I read with interest the article of condemnation of Councillor Moore, (not for the first time I might add by John D. Clare); in last week's Newton News; and although I support neither of their political views, would like to take J.D.C. to task on his claim in his 3rd Paragraph, where he said:- , and I quote "The civic functions budget also pays for things like the carol service and flowers for couples celebrating their golden wedding."

We celebrated our golden wedding anniversary last

year, and know of at least three others who received letters from Buckingham Palace, (because it coincided with the Queen and Prince Phillip's) but none got flowers from the Town Council.

Incidentally we were not expecting flowers from the Council; although the Newton News gave us a good write up; but my point is; if these are the sort of replies Councillor Moore gets from an irate John D. Clare, then in my mind it leaves a doubt about the credibility of his other remarks-

Yours

W. GORDON SCOTT

Change of Name for Church Council

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the Great Aycliffe Council of Churches, it was decided that the name should be changed to:

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN GREAT AYCLIFFE

The officials elected were:

Chairman: Rev Jeffrey Spencer (Neville Parade Methodist)

Vice-chair: Mr Terry Anderson (St Mary's)

Secretary: Mr Francis Leonard (St Joseph's)

Treasurer: Mrs Marion Anderson (Burnhill Way Methodist)

Please note that, should you need to contact the new secretary of 'Churches Together in Great Aycliffe', Mr F. Leonard's address is 20 Honister Place, Newton Aycliffe.

I should like to thank you for your cooperation in publishing articles during my term as secretary of the Great Aycliffe Council of Churches.

J. M. English

Hydro M.D. New President of Petrochemicals



Norsk Hydro ASA has appointed Geoffrey Richards to the position of President of its Petrochemicals Division, with effect from 15 February 1998. Mr. Richards, currently Managing Director of Hydro Polymers UK, succeeds Hakon Langballe who retired last autumn due to health reasons.

As Managing Director of the PVC manufacturing facility, Mr. Richards has led an extensive restructuring and investment programme since his arrival in 1992. Hydro Polymers Limited celebrated 50 years of PVC manufacture in 1997, with the inauguration of a new £35m resin plant expansion and the company is now the largest single-site PVC compounder in Europe.

After completing an honours degree in English Language & Literature from Durham University, Geoffrey Richards spent 15 years in marketing management in the automotive industry, primarily with Ford.

He joined Hydro in 1983 as the Commercial Director of their then newly acquired U.K. fertiliser business. He went on to become Managing Director, before moving to Hydro Agri Europe's headquarters in Brussels, where he held Vice Presidencies in fertiliser marketing and business development.

He is to become the second non-Norwegian Divisional Director in Norsk Hydro, and the first to be based in Norway.

Pending the appointment of a successor, Planning & Systems Director David Summerbell, will assume administrative responsibilities.

LETTER Budget Questions

Dear Sir

In last week's edition of Newton News, Councillor Clare criticised Cllr Moore and suggested that he 'did not understand the budget information sent to him'. Perhaps he doesn't; perhaps he does - but he is a lot nearer the truth than is Cllr. Clare.

Last year I closely examined the estimates of the Town Council in respect of the current year (1997/98). Although the precept was not for 'nearly £2m', the estimated planned expenditure was.

An amazing £472,352 was brought forward from the previous years accounts. It was this brought forward figure which effectively reduced the precept.

The fact is, the planned expenditure as outlined in the estimates for 1997/98 was £1.775m. And that's a lot nearer to Cllr Moore's figure of £2m than Cllr. Clare's 'barely £1m'.

Councillor Clare informs us that £50,000 was not budgeted for the 50th Anniversary celebrations. This money was put aside in June 1996. Fine; then no doubt he can explain why another £50,000 was included in the estimates for 1997/98.

That figure formed part of the precept for 1997/98 and now he says that it is not in the budget. So, what has that money been spent on?

Over recent years the Town Council has developed this sleight of hand to a fine art. In the estimates they say one thing; in the budget the money raised through the precept is planned to be used for something else. Newtonians should be concerned about this.

If the spending of our money is so arbitrary, is there a need for it to be spent at all? How can the Town Council morally justify taking from us nearly £2m more than is required?

Let us hope that Cllr. Clare can demonstrate his understanding of the estimates and the budget for 1997/98 by answering these questions.

Yours sincerely
David R Warren
Lowther Drive

New Road Layout

The new Mini Roundabout on Greenfield Way is catching a few people out with its particular design. There have been a few minor bumps where drivers have failed to follow the line of the roundabout.

Kerbs have been placed in the roadway to deflect vehicles around the mini roundabout and drivers are warned to watch out for them or they may suffer damage to wheels.

The whole idea is to reduce speed on this busy road and a new 40mph limit is also in force.

People have complained about the new layout, and lack of warning signs, but the police are quite happy with it and advise drivers just to slow down and the roundabout is then quite safe.

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CHEMISTS EMERGENCY ROTA

Sunday 22nd February 1998
12noon-1pm - Woodham Pharmacy
Sunday 1st March 1998
12noon-1pm - Hancock & Ainsley



JANE SHEPHERD

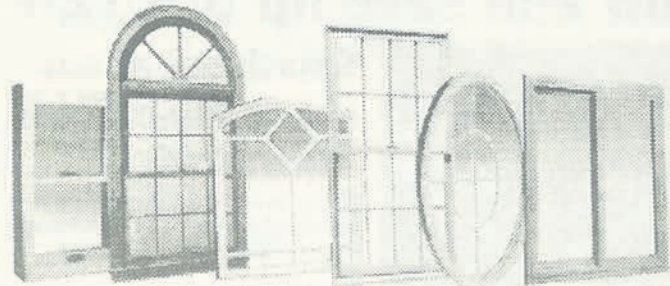
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SHOPS TACKLE SHOPLIFTING

Shoppers in Newton Aycliffe are going on the air with state-of-the-art radios in a bid to tackle shoplifters. Shopkeepers in the town centre's main precinct have been issued with a shop watch scheme and will be using radios with which they can instantly contact the police to relay a warning to other shops should it be necessary. Crime prevention officer, PC Neil Langthorne, said "We had a pilot scheme using radios in more than a dozen shops for a two-week period and most of the traders who took part decided they wanted the security of having radios all the time."

A team of shoplifters is operating in the town centre, there is a problem with mobile makers, it just takes a radio message and everyone involved in the scheme is aware of the situation. The message is also passed to the police and it means we can monitor the situation and take action if required. We are aware that groups of criminals are coming into

the area from Teesside and Tyneside to target shops in Newton Aycliffe and the radio link will help us tackle the problem". PC Langthorne added "The scheme has helped forge a partnership between the police and traders in the town. It has also been beneficial in that it has brought the town centre traders together and a forum is planned so they can meet with the police regularly to discuss any difficulties they may be having".

GOLF CLUB A.G.M.

Oak Leaf Golf Club are holding their Annual General Meeting on Thursday 26th February from 7.30pm at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex Function Room.

B & M

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APOLOGY FOR POOR TREATMENT

On hearing about the Borough Councils intention to bring bailiffs in to collect rent arrears, we were contacted by a resident with another side to the story.

Mr. Blair, a registered blind amputee, with diabetes, had to enter hospital for his other leg to be amputated. During his 8 week stay all but £49 of his benefits were stopped, including rent and Council tax to the Borough.

Both he and his daughter informed the Borough of his hospitalisation, but the demands for rent and tax kept pouring through his letterbox and as he wasn't at home, they went unanswered.

He came home to a mountain of bills, letters, demands for payment and worst of all, a threat of the bailiffs. Mr. Blair was terrified and he and his family tried to get the Council to listen to his plight. "I have never been in debt before in my life, yet the Council staff were unsympathetic and I found their attitude abrupt and not very nice" said Mr Blair.

They insisted he had to pay and Mr Blair, who had his benefits restored, came to an arrangement where he pays a sum each week to reduce the debt - just to keep the bailiffs away, while the matter is sorted out.

"It is very distressing to come home after a serious operation to a situation like this and, I think there should be someone available, who has some compassion, to talk to people who have genuine reasons for not paying the rent and tax" said Mr Blair.

Reply from the Council:

Mr. Blair is a long-standing and valued tenant and we thank him for bringing this matter to our attention.

As he says, his rent account went into arrears due to his reduced entitlement to Housing Benefit when he was in hospital. Our letters were a genuine attempt to resolve the situation.

However, if we had realised the full extent of Mr. Blair's health problems, we would have tried to speak to him in person, rather than sending him our standard letters.

We have apologised to Mr. Blair for the way he was treated and are reviewing our procedures to try and ensure this does not happen again.

Anyone with rent arrears, in genuine financial difficulty, should contact the Housing Department on (01388) 816166 and we shall try to come to an arrangement to deal with their situation.

Steve Bray
Housing & Estates Manager
Sedgefield Borough Council

VICTIM SUPPORT WEEK EVENTS

Staff and volunteers at Victim Support, Sedgefield District which is based in Newton Aycliffe, plan to hold a series of events during Victim Support week, beginning Saturday 21st February 1998. It is likely that everyone reading this article, will have either been a victim of crime themselves or will know of someone who has. The trauma experienced by innocent victims can have a long term effect on people's lives. Victim Support employs two paid workers and a team of trained volunteers who offer free, confidential support and advice to both victims and their families.

As a registered charity it only receives a small annual grant from the Home Office to fund one paid worker. All additional costs such as volunteer expenses and

additional running costs have to be raised through donations and fund-raising appeals.

Sue Hayles, Scheme Co-ordinator said "Victim Support Week is an ideal time to highlight the work of Victim Support, to recruit more volunteers and to raise much needed funds for the Scheme. It's also an opportunity for the local community to show they care about victims of crime by supporting their local Scheme."

Planned events during the week will include: raffle of a new child's bicycle (age 4-6) plus other excellent prizes at Somerfield Supermarket on Tuesday 24th February (the winners will be selected from the tickets sold only on that day), display stands and volunteer recruitment desk on the same day, and a Fancy dress Pub Crawl around Newton Aycliffe on Friday evening 27th February. Anyone interested in joining the pub crawl, should contact the office before this event.

Several other organisations, clubs and businesses will also be organising their own fund-raising events on behalf of Victim Support. It does not have to be anything elaborate or grand - perhaps raffle a bottle of wine between staff, organise a coffee morning or hold a "casual dress day" for staff.

If anyone is interested in organising an event or would like to make a donation, please contact the office on 319263 between 10am and 12noon Monday to Friday. The office is situated in the town centre at 4 Beveridge Walkway. Victim Support, Sedgefield District would like to take this opportunity of thanking customers of Somerfield Supermarket for nominating them as the chosen charity to receive a donation from the sale of their Scratch Cards.

Youth Choir Launch C.D.



The Youth Choir at Woodham's Christian Life Centre have produced a 10 track CD Album entitled "Reach Out". It contains very striking musical numbers performed to the very high standard we have come to expect from this accomplished group of youngsters. The album would grace any collection and are available now for £13.50p inc post and package. Write to: CLC Album Orders c/o 42 Pemberton Road, Woodham Village, Co. Durham. DL5 4UN. Please make cheques payable to CLC YOUTH CHOIR.

BUY BACK OUR TOWN CENTRE

Dear Sir

In answer to the front page letter in 30th January's issue, I think she was looking at the town centre through rose-coloured glasses.

In my opinion the town centre "sight" (eye-sore) should be compulsorily purchased back from the greedy London-based landlords, who have probably never seen it for donkeys years.

It should then be levelled completely, along with that monstrosity they call the Leisure Centre and given to a developer who would do Newtonians a favour and give us a town mall like the Cornmill in Darlington, only better. And with other amenities like a cinema, bowling alley etc.

Somerfields should go too! Their prison walled supermarket goes well with the Courthouse and Police Station.

The state of the town centre has been talked about for years, along with the Avenue School Site and nothing has been done.

I've lived on this town for 40 years and watched with dismay its decline, but that probably fits the policy of Labour run Councils nationwide.

Name and address supplied

Stevens Newsagents

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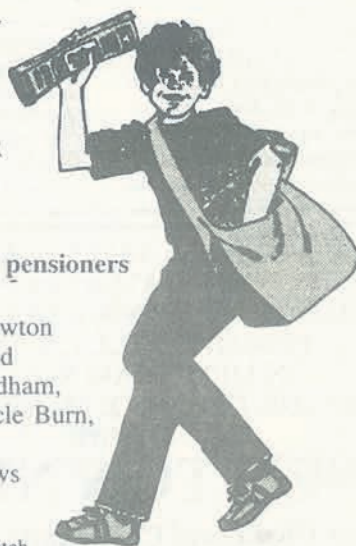
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Cancelled

A Table Top Sale due to be held at St Marys RC School on Saturday 28th February has been **CANCELLED**

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Thank You

ANDREW BURDON Thank you for making me the happiest person on our wedding day, 27th February 1998. Sian
JULIE BOWMAN and family wish to thank friends for their kind condolences, cards and flowers received during their recent sad bereavement
NATASHA Thank you for the most beautiful baby daughter in the world. All my love Paul
McARDLE - SWIRES Natasha and Paul thank you for our beautiful granddaughter, born 17-2-98. All our love from her grandparents

JEAN THOMPSON wishes to say thank you to everyone who sent cards, flowers and get well wishes during my recent stay in hospital. Also a special thanks to my friends for their visits and support since my coming home

GRATEFUL THANKS to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and our Blessed Lady for prayers answered MRH

MAY THE Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world, now and forever. To be said six times a day for nine days and your prayers will be answered - MRH

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PINK, GREEN or blue quality dralon suites, brand new catalogue returns from only £230. Also quality second hand from £70, free delivery call anytime 01325 262775 or 0973 520074 (M)
SPINNER (Creda) excellent condition, hardly used £40 Tel 01325 315081
3 SEATER settee (red) plus matching arm chair, very good condition £50. Electric organ (2 keyboards), excellent order, £75. Single divan with headboard £10. Small kitchen table and 2 chairs £8. Buyers to collect Tel 313924

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SEED Potatoes, various varieties, 30p a lb, seeds 50p a packet, Paraffin £1.80 a gallon, multi-purpose compost 80ltr £3.50 a bag, plus all gardening requirement, Parkin Ness Tel 304022

NORFROST chest freezer 27" w, 27" d, 4 years warranty, immaculate condition, £100 ONO Tel 307996

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Congratulations

Julie Maguire



Our little Julie is 30
(25th February, 1998)
Sweet as a child.
What happened?
Happy birthday,
love from all at
Thames Butchers

Sheila Pinkney



23rd February 1998
40 and desirable,
but still can't cook

Sheila Pinkney



The BIG 40
23rd February 1998
Cooking should be fun
Housework should be too
but whipping Derek into
shape is surely enjoyed by
you. Happy 40th birthday
from your workmates
with a sense of humour

Emma Chamberlain



18th Birthday
19th February 1998
From a beautiful baby
to a beautiful young
lady, happy birthday,
love Mam, Dad, family

Emma Chamberlain



Happy 18th birthday,
best wishes for the
future, all my love
Jonathan XXX

Photography

S.J.A. Wedding photography
and portraits, done in the
comfort of your own home.
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LYNDSEY BLACK Happy 14th birthday, love Firthy XX
FIRTHY Happy birthday, love Ali, Coxy and Kyle
TRACEY FIRTH Happy birthday, love Nigel, Brenda, Mam and Dad X

LYNDSEY BLACK Daughter of the much loved and missed Rena Humble. Happy 14th birthday today, 20th, February, have fun love Jeff & Amy Sture
TONY KITCHING You're just too long in the tooth, happy 40th birthday, love Pat

TONY KITCHING Happy 40th birthday, love Fiona
TONY KITCHING Happy birthday Dad, love Tony and Rikki

TONY KITCHING Happy 40th birthday, who ate all the pies, guess who?

UNCLE TONY Happy 40th birthday Love Joanne and Kayleigh

YOUNGHUSBAND Happy 18th Helen (21st February) hoping all your dreams come true. Lots of love Mam, Andy and Kev XXX

YOUNGHUSBAND Congratulations Helen on your 18th birthday, loads of love Emma, Paul, Paula and Anthony XX

DAD Happy birthday, lots of love Ian and Paula

CELIA DICKENSON Happy 80th birthday on 21st February, best wishes Margaret and Stan

MICHELLE WATSON happy 18th birthday love Steven

MICHELLE WATSON Have a really happy 18th Michelle, all our love to you as always, from Mam and Dad XX

MICHELLE WATSON Happy birthday Michelle, 21-2-98. Lots of love from your two favourite brothers Richard and Stephen XX

MICHELLE WATSON To our grand-daughter Michelle. Congratulations and lots of love on your 18th birthday from Nana and Granda XX

MICHELLE WATSON Happy 18th Michelle with lots of love from all your Aunts, Uncles and Cousins XXX

BURDON Sian and Andrew congratulations on your wedding day, February 27th 1998. Love and best wishes Mam, Dad and Simon

KIRSTY MURRAY 24-2-90. Hip Hip Hooray, my little girl is eight today. Happy birthday Kirsty, love Daddy & Adele X

BARROW - HAY I am very happy and proud to announce the safe arrival of my first beautiful grandchild, "Caitlin" to Michael and my daughter Sharon. Lovely niece for Simon and Shaun. Love always Mam XX

LEE GRAY Congratulations on your 18th. Health and happiness always, love Grandmam and Grandad XX

HAPPY 18th Lee, lots of love Auntie Shirli, John and kids X

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BEDFORD High top camper (1985) taxed and tested with tow bar, bike rack, 2 awnings, large gas bottle, cooker, engineer owned £550 Tel 311108

1985 METRO CITY B reg. taxed, tested £225, good tyres Tel 312493

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In Memoriam

JOE HOBSON 22-2-1993. Never more than a thought away. Sadly missed. Love Jean and Auntie

RENA HUMBLE 25-2-95. A special mother, fiancée, daughter, sister, will always be missed by many, love Jeff, Lyndsey and Amy Sture

JOHN AARON HUGHES 22nd February 1992. The days are long and lonely without you in our lives, our thoughts are always with you. We keep you in our hearts, it seems like only yesterday that you left us broken hearted. But we know you are always with us, soon we'll be together again and never parted. Love never ending, Mam, Dad, Nan, Garry, Paul, Vicky and family

GEORGE INNERD Died 21st February 1991. Thank you for the years we shared, the love you gave, the way you cared. Silent thoughts of times together. Hold memories that will last forever. Loving wife Renee, son Andrew and Julie. Gentle Jesus up above please give Dad, all our love, God bless XX

DRYDEN - TENNICK Loving memories of Michael and his dear friend Paul, died together February 25th 1989. In our hearts they will always stay. Mam, Dad, Philip, Peter, James and Nanna

STUART FERGUSON Died 17th February 1996. You have not really left us Dad, nor have you travelled far, just entered Gods own garden and left the gate ajar. Loved and longed for always. Daughter Irene and Grandsons XXX

JACK PARKINSON 21-2-97. Treasured memories today and always. To us you were so special, what more can we say, we only wish with all our hearts that you were here today. Truly loved, never to be forgotten from loving wife Ray, daughter Brenda, son-in-law Ken, grandsons John, Bryan, Tony and Andrew, Kathleen and Charly. Gentle Jesus up above, give our great Grandad all our love. Loads of love from Jason and Keiran

HOUSE EXCHANGE FROM 2/3 GCH and garage, quite cul-de-sac. Honister Place TO similar old part of town, good cash payment on completion, family commitment forces change Tel 01325 308094

Wanted

BEST CASH PRICES
For antiques, old & modern furniture, tables, chairs, drawers, china cabinets, dressers also old china, linen, clocks pictures, jewellery etc.
HOUSES CLEARED
(01388) 608042

HOUSE CLEARANCES
FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

TELEPHONE: P.B. Removals
(01325) 321058

BEST PRICES PAID

3 PIECE Suites, fridges and cookers wanted, cash paid Tel 01388 608042 anytime

WANTED 4 or 6 old dining chairs, high straight backs, must be sturdy, but appearance not importance Tel 01388 775143

UNWANTED Bric-a-brac, household furniture and goods, will collect Tel 313924 (in aid of Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre Appeal)

WANTED Bass Drummer or someone willing to learn. For the Newton Aycliffe Royal British Legion Pipes and Drums contact H Clephane 300140

SIXTH FORM College student or similar required to collect cash, must be honest and reliable. Sunday work 12-4pm, twice a month. For more details contact Box No: SUN124, c/o Newton Press, St. Cuthberts Way, Newton Aycliffe

JobCentre Vacancies

Manageress
£18,000 pa
40 hours pw flexible

Required to manage small private care home with three mal- residents. Mentally ill, aged 18-44 years. Duties include day to day running of the home

Qualifications: RMN or equivalent, 2 years experience preferred but not essential

References required. Urgent vacancy

Bookkeeper £4 per hour
35 hours per week

Experienced bookkeeper required for a local factory. Duties involve Basic bookkeeping, sales and purchase ledgers, bank reconciliations, up to trial balances. Must be computer literate, use of SAGE is essential must be flexible regarding office duties involved.

P/T Sales Assistant
Wage negotiable
16 hours per week

Mature, reliable sales assistant required to work for local shop. General duties will involve serving customers, dealing with cash, displaying stock and generally keeping shop area clean and tidy. Applicant must be flexible regarding hours of work and be willing to work during school holidays when required.

P/T Catering Assistant
£3.88 per hour
Various hours term time

Catering assistant required to work for local school. Duties will involve washing dishes, setting tables, serving food and possibly helping to prepare meals. Hygiene cert would be advantageous but not essential.

P/T Cook
Wage negotiable
Hours flexible

Cook required to work for local pub, duties will involve basic cooking, making sandwiches and general kitchen duties. Applicant must have City & Guilds 706/ and a basic food hygiene certificate. Essential to have own transport.

Home Care Worker
Wage negotiable
Hours TBA

Home care workers required to work for local company. Applicant must have previous care experience. NVQ qualification would be an advantage. Duties will involve looking after the elderly in their own homes. Own transport preferred and own phone. Essential urgent vacancy

Computer Programmer
Wage negotiable
Mon-Fri 8.30am-5.30pm

Computer programmer required with experience in C computer programming Pascal, Delphi and windows. Should also have experience in programming micro controllers. This will be hi-tech work with a degree of confidentiality.

WANTED

If you have any unwanted goods, bric-a-brac, etc, suitable for a table top sale please consider donating them to the Youth Centre who are raising cash to provide improved facilities for the disabled at the premises.

Please contact Peter Bea on 313924 if you can help. He will be pleased to arrange collection of the goods.

Accountancy

G.N. ARMSTRONG
M.A.A.T., A.C.C.A.
(Member of Association of Accounting Technicians)

Advice given and work undertaken by a qualified accountant. All aspects of accountancy and bookkeeping, cashflow, projections, forecasts, V.A.T. corporation personal taxation (s assessment etc.), re-financing capital investments, system analysis and procedures. All your business to realise its potential. Satisfaction guaranteed at a very reasonable price. No too small or large.

Tel: (01325) 3094 or 0467 351009

Aycliffe's 50th Anniversary Community and Industrial Fair Saturday 20th June 1998

As part of the Town's 50th Celebrations the Rotary Club are organising the Fair which is to be held at the Leisure Centre from 10a.m. to 4p.m.

All Clubs, Societies and Voluntary Organisations are invited to take part in the event by having a stall or putting by on a display of their activities. The event is specifically to enable organisations to publicise their Club or Society, talk to the public and hopefully attract new members.

If you wish to take part please can you complete and return the application form. Space will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis so please do not delay too long or you could well be disappointed!

APPLICATION FORM

To The Rotary Club of Newton Aycliffe c/o 30 Highside Road, Heighington Village, Newton Aycliffe, DL5 6PG

Community & Industrial Fair, Saturday 20th June 1998

We wish to:-

1. Take a stall
2. Take a space and put on a display of activities on the stage
3. Not take a stall but put on a display of our activities
4. We may wish to attend and will advise you nearer the time, but understand that space may not be available.

Please tick as appropriate

Name of Organization.....

Contact Name..... Position in Organization.....

Address.....

Telephone no. Daytime..... Evening.....

Purpose of organization.....

If planning to put on a display, brief description please.....

The Rotary Club reserves the right to decline applications.

RUGBY

Prudhoe Hospital 15
Newton Aycliffe 10

Aycliffe were forced to play a much weakened side this week as many key players were missing through work or injury.

The lads that took the field deserve great credit for a spirited performance which saw a big improvement in the lineout. Indeed, Aycliffe won every put in to their own line. Throwing in for the first time this season, Peter Sheen was deadly straight though occasionally throwing too high for Kevin Greathead at the front of the line with seasoned veteran Tommy Cooper playing at scrum half. Darryl Petit was provided with some passes which had spectators commenting on his tactical awareness. Garry Bowers played as if there was no opposition as he jinked this way and that in a selfless display of committing the opposition defence to tackling him while releasing the ball to put his own players in space. Aycliffe again scrummaged well and it was following a succession of powerful drives in the home sides twenty two that Cooper picked up the ball at the base of the scrum and dived over the line to score a memorable try.

By this time Prudhoe had themselves already scored three tries of their own. Aycliffe fought to the end and deserved their second try of the game in the dying minutes. This one was scored by the every present Davy Balcome who touched down in the corner after some brilliant interpassing between Sheen and Cooper presented him with a well earned try. Next week we're on the bus to Consett - meet at 12noon. Thanks to sponsors Great Leaks Chemicals.

THAI BOXING

Bishop Auckland College was launched as the National Development Centre of Excellence for Muay Thai the national sport of Thailand on 10 July 1997.

As part of the College's ongoing development with the International Amateur Muay Thai Federation (I.A.M.T.F.) the English Muay Thai squad will be training at the College on 21st February 1998 from 11.30am to 3.00pm.

The team are preparing for the first European Championships organised by the I.A.M.T.F. the Federation mandated by the Government of Thailand to promote the traditional art of Muay Thai throughout the world.

The European Championships are being held in Calafell, Spain from 29 March until 4 April 1998. Thirty teams from all over Europe will be competing. For further information contact Keith Black or Sean Dooney on (01388) 443000 ext. 2251

RACE NIGHT

A Race Night is being organised by the Oak leaf Golf Club for Junior Funds, to be held at the Cumby Arms, Heighington on Thursday 19th March. First Race 7.45pm, £2 admission including a pie, peas and chips supper with a free draw after each of the 8 races. Ring Alan Courtney for your ticket Tel 01325 317762.

RUSH FOR STALLS AT '50th' FAIR

Over half the stalls available for the town's 50th Anniversary Indoor Community Fair on the 20th June have been booked and those organisations who have not yet applied may be disappointed if they don't do it soon!

The form is on the back page, so if you want to take part in this marvellous event, get your application in to the Rotary Club who are organising the fair and also the Industrial Fair which runs along side it in the adjacent hall.

Very soon industrialists will be invited to book their space to exhibit the goods they produce. A few have already indicated they will be participating.

Thanks to the Borough Council, who have given the Leisure Centre premises free of charge, there is no cost to any exhibitor at this event.

The aim is to show and celebrate what Aycliffe has achieved in 50 years.

The Rotary Club is organising the Fairs and the Service of Thanksgiving, which is being held as the final event of the 8-day celebration on the 28th June, as their contribution to

the 50th Anniversary.

They acknowledge the help of the Borough and Town Council and the Rector of Great Aycliffe, Bill Broad.

Subject to other pressing duties our MP and Prime Minister, Tony Blair is expected to visit both events.

The Service will be a glittering affair with singing led by the Town Band. As space is limited admission will need to be by ticket, and a fair means of distribution is being devised to ensure a good cross section of the community is represented at this historical occasion. More details soon.

SUPPER DANCE

A Supper Dance, organised by the Rotary Club is being held at Heighington Village Hall on Saturday 14th March 8 pm till midnight. A live group will play for all types of dancing including "Line" with a caller. Tickets are only £6.50p inc supper. (Bring your own drink). Available by ringing 321621, 300212, 312022 After hours: 301710.

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Free Tracking Check with every pair of tyres purchased and fitted
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includes oil and filter (castrol GTX)
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OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Monday - Friday 8am-6pm
Saturday 8.30am-4pm • Sunday 9am-4pm

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(EG Escort rear silencer - inc vat)
With Two Year Warranty

Brake Pads fitted from an incredibly low **£19.95** (inc vat) (EG Fiesta)

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WITH FREE RETEST

Free Winter Safety Check
Free Antifreeze Check • Free Brake Check

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THATCHAM CAT 2 IMMOBILISERS fitted from **£99.95** (inc VAT)
GEAR LOCK MULTI-LOCKS (car transmission lock) fitted from **£175** (inc VAT)
TOAD ALARMS (ultrasonic, twin remote, 6 tone siren, panic) fitted from **£176.25** (inc VAT)
MAYSTAR REMOTE ALARMS fitted from **£65.00** (inc VAT)
THATCHAM & SOLD SECURE Alarm Systems also available on request

LOCKING WHEEL NUTS (Ford) **£20.70** (inc VAT)
LOCKING WHEEL NUTS (non Ford) **£19.95** (inc VAT) to suit most vehicles

SPECIAL OFFERS

STOP LOCK ORIGINAL (steering wheel lock) **£24-£27** (inc VAT)
STOP LOCK AIR BAG (steering wheel lock) **£34.00** (inc VAT)
CLARION RDS Radio Cassette with 6 disc CD changer **£299.99** (inc VAT)
CLARION CD TUNER **£190.94** (inc VAT)

ALLOY WHEELS - OZ - BBS - ALESSIO - MOTORSPORT
7x15 WHEEL PACKAGE (x4) Wheels and Tyres, Balanced to fit VW, Vauxhall etc **£489.00** (inc VAT)
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COMPUTERISED 4 WAY WHEEL ALIGNMENT INCLUDING ADJUSTING TOE/TRACK SETTING WITH PRINT OUT
from **£29.38** (inc VAT)

SPORTLINE leather steering wheels with fitting kit **£150.00** (inc VAT)
REAR SPOILERS Ford and non-Ford (with or without LED brake light) and spring lowering kits to suit most vehicles - ask for details
AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS CHECKED & RECHARGED (any vehicle)

SAPPHIRE CARPET MATS (x4) to suit most Fords **£23.47** (inc VAT)

HOLIWAYS

MAIN DEALER

Horndale Avenue Aycliffe Industrial Park - Tel 300003