

THE VILLAGE VOICE

Issue No 1 Volume 12

Lanchester, January 2011

For contact information, see page 2

CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS



The ever popular Carols on the Green was very well attended in sub-zero temperatures. The picture shows the Lanchester Brass Band who played so well even though they must have been so cold. Full story page 8



Pictures from the Playgroup Christmas Party showing Santa with both knees full and children from Nursery and Reception classes at the EP School Christmas party watching the magic show. See story on page 2



Carol singers from St Bede's Sixth Form gave a lovely rendition of carols and seasonal songs in the centre of the Village, raising money for Willow Burn Hospice. Music teacher, Mr Robinson, was the Conductor. Students also walked around the village distributing Christmas hampers (organised by Miss Seaward) to the elderly, especially those who have been unwell.



Dear Village....

The views expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of the newspaper, the editor or persons working for the newspaper. The editor retains the right to cut or otherwise amend any letter published. Letters must contain your name, address and telephone no., all of which may be withheld at your request.

Dear Village Voice
My faith in human nature is restored since I have been ill over the period of this bad weather. The help I have received from people has amazed me and it has spurred me on to write this letter to the Village Voice.

My thanks go to my neighbours Norman and Pauline Lamin who have always been there for me; Brenda Jefferson, my little helper; my good friend Heather Muir who has helped with little jobs and has been lovely company. A young man called Kevin gave me his phone number and told me to ring at any time if I needed help. Hazel Gaskell knocked on my door offering help which

she then gave me. Mavis Datta asked me to phone her if I needed help. Thanks also to my many friends who phoned to see that I was alright.

My thanks also go to Roy Sunley who has delivered my medication no matter what the weather. Also to the District Nurses and Intermediate Care Team who are still helping me and without whose support I could not manage.

This support is so important when you live on your own and my family, who normally help, could not get to me because of the bad weather. These offers of help take me back to the old values we had years ago, after the war, when we looked after each other.

I am overwhelmed at this wonderful kindness and felt I just had to let people know what a wonderful village we have with so many caring people.

My heart felt thanks to you all.

Mary Dew

THE VILLAGE VOICE

IT'S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

Dear Village Voice

This year Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club will be celebrating its centenary.

Several events are planned for the coming year which will highlight the history of the club since 1911. With this in mind, the club would like to appeal to anyone who has had any past associations or connections with the club and may be able to lend any memorabilia, photographs or any anecdotal experiences they would like to share. At the end of the season, in September, the club is holding a Centenary Dinner and it is hoped that members and past members will be interested in attending and rekindle some old memories.

If you can help in any way or would like further information on events, please contact Dennis or Jane Laycock on 01207 520278, it would be much appreciated.

Many thanks Jane Laycock

For Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club

Dear Village Voice

I wish to sincerely thank all family, friends, Methodist Women's Fellowship, Amigos' four teams of helpers for prayers, calls, cards, gifts and flowers received following my unfortunate accident on 25th November 2010.

Recovery seems slow but eventually I'll get there.

Best wishes to everyone

for 2011. Thanks to the Village Voice for this opportunity for conveying my thanks.

Lillian Spraggon

COMMUNITY DRAW

The winning number in the Community Draw for December 2010 is 56. The draw was made by Mrs Smith of the Gym.

MAGIC IN THE AIR

Magic Andrew is the name of a very talented magician who attended the Christmas party of the Nursery and Reception classes on December 14th in the EP School. His main skill was in the way he engaged the children's attention for a whole 40 minutes. He established an excellent rapport with them from the very beginning and the children watched in rapt attention throughout all the clever things that he did. He promised he could make anything happen with his magic wand and he did make all sorts of things happen. Sometimes he

needed a little help and chose children, who were all clamouring to be chosen to do this. He even involved several teachers in his magic tasks, much to the enjoyment of the pupils. Santa Claus and Rudolph featured in his routine to add some Christmas magic and Magic Andrew is to be congratulated for making the afternoon a truly Magical Experience. He was also present at other parties in the school with the same success and I am sure we will be seeing Magic Andrew again in the future.

Brenda Craddock

To contact the Village Voice

By email:

lanchestervillagevoice@yahoo.co.uk (please include Village Voice in the Subject line).

By post:

The Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB.

To advertise:

Contact John Hurran, Advertising Manager, by post at the above address. Telephone: (01207) 542998

Email: villagevoiceadverts@talktalk.net

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NEW TREASURER FOR VILLAGE VOICE

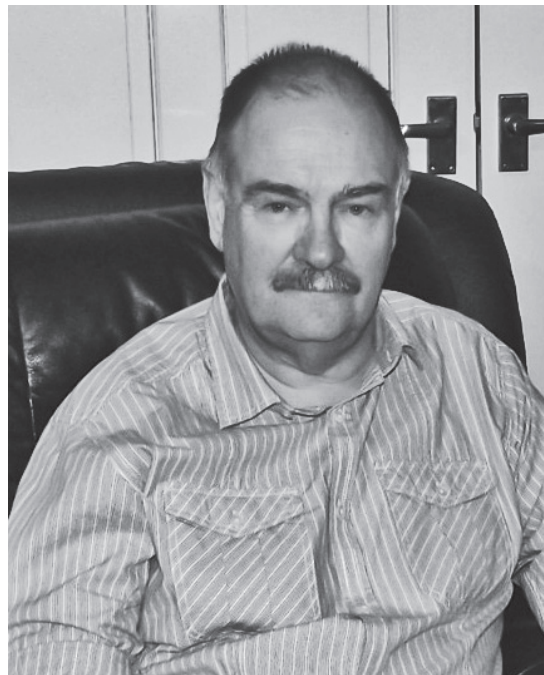
The Village Voice Management Committee welcomes Ken Todd as the new Treasurer after the retirement of John Gray. Ken has lived in the village for the last 25 years and feels it is time to put back something into the community. He has traced four generations of his family who lived in the village and close surrounding areas.

Ken comes to us with a varied and vast experience of business. He began life after university in the science field but then trained as an accountant, subsequently managing the accounts for a group

of twelve stores. He has also worked in the computer industry and has had experience of writing programmes. In recent years he has been running his own businesses. Ken took over as Treasurer on January 1st and we wish him every success in his new voluntary post which we are sure he will enjoy.

At the same time we say a fond farewell to John Gray. John is a founder member of The Village Voice and in the early days worked with the company as a photographer. When a Treasurer was needed John stepped into the

breach. He almost escaped for a couple of years when family life and other projects made him extremely busy, but when the call came again some three years ago John said he would help out on a short term temporary basis. The fact that he stayed in his second term of office for three years shows his dedication and loyalty, as this was a period when the paper was rapidly expanding and the workload was increasing. The management (friends) would like to thank John for his service and wish him a happy, healthy, and more relaxed life in the future.



Ken Todd, recently appointed to the voluntary post of Treasurer for The Village Voice

A MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE ...

Happy New Year.

As I headed back to Parliament I reflected on a number of notable events that happened at the end of last year or during the holidays - the tuition fees debate, the Oldham and Saddleworth by-election and receiving a polling card for our own by-election to Lanchester Parish Council.

I had been notified that although 50 MPs had put in to speak in the tuition fees debate I would be called. I sat in the Chamber throughout the debate, in which many impassioned speeches were made, but did go outside once and was shocked by what I saw. We knew, in the chamber, that there was unrest and violence outside and had received texts telling us that Parliament was 'shut-down' with no way in and no way out, but I was unprepared for what I saw. It was dark, the air was full of acrid smoke and odour, I could see fires and flares going off. The noise was awful, the sound of

shouting, police dogs barking and helicopters overhead. I could see lines and lines of police in riot gear. I found the experience frightening, more so because we have not seen this kind of violence on our streets for such a long time. The vote when it came was very close and so extremely disappointing for me. I campaigned against tuition fees long before coming into Parliament but what is happening now, with students being asked to pay up to £9,000 a year in tuition fees is, in my view, both economically and morally short-sighted and just plain wrong! To add insult to injury when I was finally able to leave Parliament, between two lines of riot police, there were protestors screaming 'Tory scum' at me.

I spent time in Oldham and Saddleworth over the holidays. Canvassing and leafleting, for those of you who have never tried it, are good for bringing you down to earth and for the thigh and calf muscles!

We are now facing our own by-election in Lanchester. I resigned from the Parish Council because I am now in London Monday to Thursday, and can no longer attend Parish Council meetings on a Tuesday evening nor give this excellent organisation the time it deserves. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as a Parish Councillor and thank you for giving me the opportunity. I wish the next Parish Councillors well.

I am looking forward to the next session of Parliament but still enjoy my time in the constituency best. The work in Parliament may be important at a national or strategic level but my work locally is about helping people and that puts it all into context.

Best Wishes
Pat Glass MP,
1 Gledstone House,
26 Newmarket Street,
Consett, Co Durham,
DH8 5LQ
Tel: 01207 501 782
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E-Mail: pat.glass.mp@parliament.uk

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PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 15TH DECEMBER 2010

Cllr Johnson welcomed two representatives of Trinity Medical Properties Limited who have proposed the surrender of the Parish Council's lease in part of land adjacent to Park House Surgery with a view to extending the building. Cllr Mike Wardle gave Members a report regarding the proposal for the redevelopment of the Lynwood House site. The Lynwood Company will be the parent body and lease space to the partner organisations. Proposals for the site include:

- (i) A medical centre to incorporate the existing Park House Surgery GP practice but to provide sufficient additional space for a wide range of additional treatments;
- (ii) The medical centre to incorporate the existing Lanchester pharmacy which would provide a

range of additional wellbeing clinics which it cannot provide at the present time due to space constraints by sharing consulting rooms with the surgery;

(iii) Shared space and offices available to local community groups;

(iv) Creation of 20 bed nursing unit for adults and older adults with long term mental health problems, together with an 8 bed nursing unit for women giving a total of 28 beds;

(v) Creation of 29 two-bedroom sheltered apartments for the elderly by Derwentside Homes.

The centre will meet the health and social care needs of residents of Lanchester and the surrounding area. At the centre will be a Bistro which will also operate as the reception area and which will be the focus for health promotion and

take-up of services. Cllr Wardle believes that a decision with Durham County Council will be made in the near future. However, the rep of the Trinity Medical Properties pointed out that the application for a grant, available for either project, must be made by the end of March and he would appreciate a decision on the surrender of the lease as soon as possible. He also pointed out that Park House Surgery would have to repay a large sum of money to Trinity if they were to vacate that building. It was agreed that a decision would be deferred for a little longer or until the decision of the County Council is known.

Time Bank. Cllr Johnson introduced the Development and Sport Worker, Chris Tindale, who is currently working on this project in

Lanchester. Mr Tindale explained the project (see advert below). He said leaflets have been delivered to some parts of the Parish and will be included in the next Newsletter. Mr Tindale will link up with Sue Charlton, Development Officer for Farming, Wildlife and the Environment and will set up a meeting in the village.

Police Report. Dwelling burglary 3, Theft 2, Criminal damage 2, Anti-social behaviour 11. Operation Livorno, tackling street drinking, is continuing. The report stated that an estimated 4000 people, about twice the usual number, attended the annual firework display at the cricket club on 6th November and dozens of vehicles were parked illegally, many of which became stuck in mud. Warning notices were put on the windscreens of the worst offenders, eg those parking at junctions. There were incidents of large groups causing rowdy behaviour and two incidents of fireworks being thrown but there was no injury or damage and the Police kept a visible presence until the majority had left. Councillors agreed that next year, along with the donation to the Lions, a letter is sent reminding them of their responsibility for traffic and of parking.

Correspondence. Durham consultations on the following were considered: School Admission Arrangements September 2012/13; Update on the development of an Academy in Consett.

Maintenance Progress Report. Members considered the report prepared by the Lead Officer and it was agreed

that thanks should be sent to the County Council for the work done on clearing paths and roads in the village. Mike Gladstone stated that the pass for the village bus would continue. Thanks were also to be given to David Maddox, village handyman, for the work he had done.

Budgets 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.

These reports, prepared by the Lead Officer were given to Members for discussion. It was agreed that at least one year's expenditure ought to be held in reserve. Members are reluctant to increase the precept but this year the Parish Council may not receive the usual £6,000 from the County Council and there will be the expense of the forthcoming Parish Council election. Cllr Burton also pointed out that Central Government may, in the future, prohibit an increase in precepts. A decision was postponed until the January meeting.

Questions from Members. Cllr Mrs Gray asked what could be done about the state of the pavements due to the amount of snow and ice. It was suggested that the Head Teacher of the schools contact the County Council and that the incumbents of the three churches contact Action Line.

Cllr Mrs Gray also stated that St Cuthbert Care NE has appointed a Community Development Worker to look at facilities to be used by the socially needy.

The problem of Bede College students parking in the nearby estate was discussed and it was decided that this matter would be taken to the School Governors on behalf of the Parish.

North Durham

Time Bank

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There will be a face painter there to occupy children while you find out more about the Time Bank.

For more information contact Chris Tindale on
(0191) 3844801
or e-mail christindale.cvs@btconnect.com

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 11TH JANUARY 2011

Police Report: Burglary 2, Anti-social behaviour 4, Theft 1, Criminal Damage 2.

PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings: 23rd February, 23rd March, 27th April, 25th May and 22nd June, all at 7.15 pm for one hour at Lanchester Community Centre. Police will no longer attend Parish Council Meetings but will attend PACT meetings with other agencies and give their report at PACT. Members agreed that this is disappointing as they believe that the Police can learn far more by attending the Parish Council meetings.

Correspondence: Members had previously received letters from Durham County Council in relation to a consultation on North Road, Durham and also with regard to the Green Belt of the City in relation to site assessment. One of the 6 sites under consideration is at Sniperley and Members that this would impinge on the nature reserve in that area, would leave an extremely narrow green belt strip and would seriously affect traffic flow. The Lead Officer is to send a response to County Council.

LINK. The latest newsletter and information was given to Members. Cllr Burton informed Members that present funding will cease in April and it will be another year before the next funding starts so he is hoping that the County Council will provide funding in the meantime.

Area Action Partnership and Parish Council Committee: priorities were Road Safety continuing but as observation not action. Old People were the top priority and the AAP is looking at ways to assist. The Gateway project for

Lanchester is still under scrutiny. The Young People's Group is looking at ways to put in money and more progress has been made during the past 12 months.

The PCC had looked at the Speedwatch project, where and how it had been used and had asked for a report from the Police to see if the project warranted to money spent on the cameras.

Policies: The following Parish Council Policies were discussed with comments as follows:- Health and Safety - accidents and 'near-misses' should be reported and investigated.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults - there should be a second designated contact person and the Police telephone number should be on file. Equal Opportunities - approved. Public Participation - this is displayed in the Conference Room and was approved.

Precept: Members considered the report which had been prepared by the Lead Officer and after lengthy discussion it was reluctantly agreed that it should be increased by 2.5%. Although some Members felt that residents might find an increase difficult to meet in these hard times, the withdrawal of the usual £6,000 grant from the Council, the possibility that an increase may be banned in the future plus rising costs generally and inflation forced Members to make this decision. Fortunately the County Council has agreed to make a one-off payment this year of £3,000 towards the cost of the election.

Chairperson's Announcement: The date of the election is to be 3rd February and the five candidates are as follows:-

Maureen Bennett, IND
Malcolm Clarke, LAB
Catherine Mulvie, LIBDEM
Alan Myers, LAB
David Reece, LIBDEM

Questions from Members: Cllr Mrs Gray reminded Members of the St Cuthbert's Care NE meeting which would focus on the housebound and vulnerable elderly.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 8th February at 7.15 pm in the Conference Room, Park House. Stephen Reed, **Chief County Planning Officer**, will answer questions and **ALL RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND.**

PARISH COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING 21st DECEMBER 2010

Planning Applications. Members considered the following:- Application to vary Condition 3 of Planning Permission to enable part of garage, stable and storage building to be used as a residential annex with external alterations at Woodlea Manor, Browney Bank, Lanchester.

It was resolved that members object to the application as a detached residential development in the open countryside. If approval was to be given, a condition be made that it can only be used as an annex to the main dwelling and not as a separate residential dwelling.

Erection of a new-build 4 bedroom detached dwelling with integral garage on vacant plot within residential estate on land to the north west of 12 Ashdown Grove.

Members of the public spoke and raised concerns and objections to the application, similar to those raised at the meeting on 12th October.

RESOLVED. That Members object to this development for the following reasons:

(i) this is a significant enlargement of the previous, now expired planning application which Members feel they are unable to support;

(ii) the proposed development is too large for the small plot, the scale of the proposed development being inappropriate to the size of the plot;

(iii) although the aboricultural report states that no trees are to be removed, this does not concur with the plans and Members would object to any trees being removed;

(iv) there is concern over distorted pruning of the trees to enable the development to take place and would request that the County Council produce a separate aboricultural assessment;

(v) the design of the dwelling is not sympathetic to surrounding dwellings;

(vi) Members refer to the village Design Statement part 19 4A.

Members were informed that there had been a revised plan submitted for this application which they considered to be much more sympathetic in design and size. It was recognized that the plan was much closer to the original design from Shepherd Homes and felt that the revised plans addressed many of the concerns regarding size, trees, design etc that the previous designs had raised.

RESOLVED that Members support the application subject to building materials being consistent with those of surrounding dwellings and the County Council undertake an aboricultural assessment to ascertain that no trees will be removed and that the trees will not be affected by type development.

Decisions of the Planning Authority. The following planning applications had been approved by Durham County Council:

30% crown reduction of three birch trees at 16 Woodlands, Lanchester. Crown thinning by 20% of three ornamental cherry trees at 14 Lee Hill Court, Lanchester.

Demolition of existing timber dwelling and replacement with two bedroom stone-built dwelling (resubmission) at Woodlea, Lanchester. Crown reduction by 20% of two maple trees and pruning of the horse chestnut tree at 5 Lee Hill Court, Lanchester.

Application to vary condition 7 of planning permission to increase number of bays, improve vehicle circulation routes and disabled bays at King's Head Hotel, Lanchester.

Proposed tree works to five trees and felling of two trees on Village Green, Lanchester.

Felling of two ash trees, crown reduction of one sycamore tree and three ash trees, crown thinning of two sycamore trees at 14 Railway Street, Lanchester.

Advertising consent for the erection of Parish Notice Board and two Horse Riding signs on Village Green, Lanchester. Application for improvement to the Village Green including recreational footpath, guardrails, dog waste bin and tree seat on Village Green, Lanchester.

Demolition of current hospice building and erection of a new 6 bed hospice with associated offices, day care facilities and wellbeing spa with associated landscaping (resubmission) at Maiden Law Hospital, Lanchester Road, Maiden Law.

NEW MANAGERS FOR THE QUEENS

Keith and Lesley Sharpe, from Brandon, took over as managers of the Queen's Head just after Christmas. They both have had previous backgrounds in sales and recently retired from a gift and coffee shop business in Chester le Street which they had owned for about ten years.

After a few months 'resting', the challenge of a running a pub seemed inviting. Keith had previous experience as a chef and they felt a need to be amongst people again. All was settled within a few days after a recommendation from friends who run another establishment in the McKenna Group. Eager to start, they are now at the Queens and



Keith and Lesley Sharpe behind the bar of the Queen's Head

would like to give a warm welcome to everyone. While Keith will be providing Sunday Lunch and Evening Special Menus, Lesley

will be busy cooking a tremendous variety of scones for Afternoon Teas. Whilst patrons are enjoying their meals in

a traditional pub atmosphere, they will be able to keep up with the news, reading newspapers which will be provided daily.

Keith and Lesley's aim is to bring back a community spirit to the pub and once more fill the tables with people who enjoy eating out.

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RAILWAY PATHS PLAN

d3-associates & Southern Green Landscape Architects have been appointed by Durham County Council to undertake a plan of the railway path network that runs through the West Durham area. The aim of the masterplan is to provide improvements which can be made to this valuable community resource so that it is enhanced for generations to come.

The paths are a network of walkways that cater for multi-users (cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders), and lie adjacent to many towns and villages along the way.

It is felt that this network is a resource which is currently underused. The partners are therefore seeking to develop a plan that will tie the paths into communities and act as a place to explore, exercise, and enjoy no matter what age you are. They also feel that the local residents of

the towns and villages should be involved in developing ideas for the plan and its future.

As part of this process we would therefore like to understand what the local communities views are on the area at present and to gain an understanding of how they think the paths network could be developed for present enjoyment and for generations to come.

If you would like to fill in a comments form to note down your ideas then this will be available to download from www.d3-associates.co.uk. Please send your returned forms or general comments to emma@d3-associates.co.uk. Alternatively comments boxes will be situated in local community venues if you would prefer to use this method. Lastly for an informal discussion about the project please contact Emma on 01434 610434 before the end of February 2011.

new image

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DISAPPOINTMENT ONCE AGAIN FOR THE BRAES OF DERWENT HUNT

Members of the Braes of Derwent Hunt and their followers met at the Queen's Head on the Monday after Boxing Day. It was not possible to bring the horses for the second year running, as the conditions were too atrocious and too dangerous for them to be included. In spite of this, many members turned out and enjoyed the hospitality of the Queen's Head with drinks in the car park, with the hounds gathered in the corner. However, there were few bystanders this year. At the appointed time for the start of the Hunt, Alan Chapman, Master, made his brief



Hounds set off through the village towards the direction of Kitswell Road with Simon Kenny and James Mason looking after them.

enthusiastic speech hounds set off through the village under the guidance of Huntsman, Simon Kenny, and James Mason, to follow trails in the Sawmills area.

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ROTARY AWARD FOR ALL SAINTS

All Saints Primary held a special assembly to greet Consett Rotary members, Ian Forster and President Bill McMaster. They were there to present a cheque for £50 as part of their Community Award programme. Mrs McKenna, the Head Teacher, led a lovely assembly to bring out and to make sure that the children understood the word 'community'. By the

enthusiastic raising of hands in answer to probing questions there was no doubt that they did fully understand. Bill McMaster continued in a similar theme with a brief speech outlining the aims of Rotary. He particularly made reference to their 'Youth Programme', before presenting a plaque, cheque, and certificates to the Year 6 Buddies.

The latter have done such a wonderful job in the school since September, especially with the younger children during the last few harsh winter weeks, even going as far as arranging a Christmas Party for them. The award was very well deserved and the whole school showed their appreciation with a huge round of applause.



Ian Forster (left) and President Bill McMaster, with the Year 6 Buddies who received the Consett Rotary Community Award.

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EP CAROLS (NOT) ON THE GREEN



EP carols on the Green - but held in the warmth of the School hall due to the adverse weather conditions. Mrs Carson with cups of chocolate.

Once again pupils and staff united in making a lovely evening on Monday December 13th. It was the occasion of 'Carols on the Green' which is now held every year on the approach to Christmas. The village green is the usual venue for this occasion but because of 'Greenland' conditions it was held in the school hall. The pupils sang some lovely carols and parents had booklets with the words of the carols printed so that they could join in. Some of us have sung the carols for many, many years but they never lose their appeal, especially when they are

sung by children. After the carols, hot chocolate was available and was made very special by having pieces of marshmallow floated on the top of it. Not a drop of anything was left in the cups! Brenda Craddock



'This is delicious' was the general consensus about the cups of hot chocolate.

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AMIGOS CHRISTMAS PARTY



A festive King's Head where the staff provided a lovely meal for the Amigos



A delighted Betty Calland receiving a gift from Santa

On the last Friday before Christmas we always have the Amigo Christmas Party. This year we may have been experiencing some very unprecedented treacherous cold and

icy conditions but it didn't stop the intrepid Amigo members and helpers from gathering at the King's Head on Friday December 17th to enjoy a celebratory Christmas meal together. As usual the King's Head staff were wonderful and a lovely meal was enjoyed by all. We then joined in a few games of Bingo with one of our number, Sue Ward, winning a bottle of wine. As we were sitting waiting for pudding at the end of our main course, the unmistakeable sound of sleigh bells could be heard, swiftly followed by the very welcome appearance of Father Christmas with his sack of presents. Amigo members returned home full of goodwill, festive cheer and with Christmas gifts. A happy end to 2010.

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CAROLS ON THE GREEN

Despite the sub zero temperature people came in their hundreds to celebrate this ever popular occasion on the Village Green organised by Churches Together. After a very brief introduction, Canon Peter Waterhouse handed over to David Hughes who led the service in his own inimitable style. He told the story of the Nativity bringing out the significant 'turning points' as the story evolved, linking the latter to appropriate carols. He read the Christmas Message from the

Christmas Cards distributed to every household in the village and reinforced the invitation to the congregation to come to services to be held in the three churches during the Christmas period.

Reverend Gavin Hume read the lesson from the Gospel of St Luke and Canon Bob Spence concluded the service with the Christmas Blessing. Lanchester Brass Band should be congratulated on their superb performance in really freezing conditions. The congregation sang with

enthusiasm and with encouragement from David who kept everyone right with his instructions over the microphone. The children aged up to 'year 4' came to the front and sang a lovely rendition of 'Away in a Manger'.

The service went very quickly, despite the cold. The large crowd, the lighted Christmas tree, and the lights on the trees on the green, with the Parish Church in the background, reflected a wonderful village which has a solid community spirit, where we are all fortunate to reside.



Some of the Children aged 'up to Year 4' who gathered together to sing 'Away in a Manger' at the Carols on the Green event.

Gardening in February

This month is probably not the best in the garden but, looking on the bright side, it only has 28 days and is the darkest hour before the dawn. The snow and ice has probably kept you, like me, inside but our gardens have suffered. Now is the time to catch up and enjoy some much needed fresh air.

Borders

Snowdrops, for me, are the harbingers of spring and you can rely on them to welcome the new season no matter what the weather. Once flowering is over it is time to divide any congested clumps. Snowdrops, planted when their leaves are still green, establish more successfully than dry, dormant ones. Also, in February, continue to refirm any plants in your borders that have been lifted by frost. In mild, wet weather, check for slugs

and pick off any that you find on vulnerable plants. In my borders begonias provide me with a beautiful show all summer and February is a good time to plant their tubers in pots keeping them just moist until the first shoots begin to show.

Vegetables

February is a good time to cover part of your plot with polythene or cloches to warm the soil for early sowings. You can sow several crops this month. Vegetables that can be sown in pots in a greenhouse or on a windowsill to transplant later include onions, leeks, celery, cauliflowers and Brussels Sprouts. For many of these it can be useful to sow them in 'root trainers' to encourage good root growth before transplanting. You can also sow tomatoes indoors at 60-70F for

raising in a cool greenhouse but care must be taken not to let them go 'leggy' in the spring. Additionally chilli and sweet peppers can be sown and raised in this manner.

General Tasks

If you have not already done so, general tasks that you might consider for this month include: ordering seeds and summer bulbs by mail-order; giving your flower pots and seed trays a good wash; cleaning algae and moss from paths and drives; sending petrol mowers for their annual service; sprinkling gritty compost over lawns; and ordering seedlings and young plants for pots and bedding displays. If you can't get outside you can tidy your shed and don't forget to clean and oil your tools if you haven't already done so.

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OLIVIA ARRIVED AND SO DID THE SNOW

Our friends Sylvia and Barrie Brown Smith from Seaburn rang to ask if we would look after Olivia, Sylvia's Guide dog, for a few days, as they were going to one of their son's in London; we said yes. Then, on Wednesday the 24th of November, Olivia arrived. Within hours the snow came. We had said we would take Olivia back home on the following Wednesday. But when Wednesday came and went, we still had her and all the snow and even the following week. Olivia finally got back home on the 12th of December. A few days stretched to eighteen. It is lovely to have her, hopefully next time it will be in the summer. But she did love playing in the snow.

Alan and Elaine Williams



Olivia, who is Sylvia's Guide dog, enjoys a bit of fuss being made of her but keeps her eye on the camera - just in case.


PAULINE AND LULLI



Whoever said a dog's life was bad? Lulli, a Miniature Yorkshire Terrier, being thoroughly spoilt by Pauline Stewart as she goes shopping. Pauline is 'dog sitting' for daughter Karen over the Christmas period



Lulli looks very happy sheltering from the snowy conditions and keeping her toes warm.



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ENVIRONMENTAL TIP OF THE MONTH

Hasn't it been cold? If anything will find out those leaky points in your home, it's a freezing gale. Go round all your doors and windows and feel around for cold spots. You'll soon find out where the draught is getting in. Foam insulating strip works wonders around older frames. Floorboards also allow in plenty of cold air, especially if there is a cavity underneath. Mash up old newspaper in water and use it to fill in gaps. With energy prices rising again, measures like this are good for the pocket as well as the planet.

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ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

The school hall at the EP School was buzzing with busy-ness on Friday December 10th. It was the Christmas Fair and staff and parents were setting up the stalls for selling a multitude of lovely things. As always in this school a very happy atmosphere prevailed, with everyone intent on making it a happy and profitable event. The most striking thing was the pride that the pupils were

feeling about the things that they had made themselves for their stalls. These included mincepies, biscuits, Frangipan cakes, lollipops, Christmas decorations, Christmas gift tags, and knitted dollies clothes. The pupils had also made several guessing game boards eg 'How many sweets in the jar?' and 'Guess the name of the teddy'. Parents and friends had organised two

long tables of Tombola Prizes and there was a stocking filler stall which did very good business. The bottle stall was different from the norm. All the bottles were wine bottles wrapped in Christmas paper but they were not all bottles of wine. Some of them were full of water. Some you win and some you lose! My luck was in that day! Face painting is very popular with little ones and the face painting ladies never stopped making a number of children into various and realistic little characters eg Spiderman and Shrek. Helen Bell who owns Top Shop at Burnhope had an excellent stall made up of Christmas hampers and baskets, which she had filled with all sorts of goodies. Many of the things she was selling were hand made by herself and were most attractive.



One of several guessing games

The organisation of the fair was as always first class and even behind the hall in one of the classrooms and supervised by a member of staff, activities were set out for children who wanted a rest from spending or walking round stalls.

A Christmas Fair is not complete without a visit from Santa Claus and a queue to see him grew and grew until he arrived. We thought he might have got stuck in the chimney or been caught kissing mummy under the mistletoe but no, he arrived

with a Ho-Ho-Ho and a beaming face, endearing him to all the children and parents as well. All the children at the school had been very good that afternoon, as they always are, and so Santa promised all of them just what they wanted this Christmas!

This Christmas Fair provided us with Christmas Cheer which was just what we all needed after such atrocious weather and the attendance was excellent. There was goodwill in abundance, and so much evidence of thoughtfulness, kindness and generosity on all the stalls, and selfless giving of time and effort on behalf of all the pupils, staff and parents. All the ingredients for a very happy Christmas were there on that lovely afternoon.

Brenda Craddock



Verity visits Santa

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS



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ALL SAINTS CHRISTMAS FAIR



An extremely busy Sweet Tombola Stall run by Fiona Draper

The postponed All Saints Christmas Fair finally took place on Thursday 9th December, during school time. It was scaled down to some degree with the Parish Centre not being used. However, the support was incredible. How all the adults and children managed to cram

themselves into the hall and one classroom was beyond belief. Every single stall was busy, especially the Sweets Tombola run by Fiona Draper, where people were three or four deep queuing for tickets. There were so many different inviting stalls

and a popular raffle. Everyone seemed to be working flat out but enjoying themselves at the same time.

The whole afternoon was a tremendous success. The atmosphere was very seasonal, and the Grotto tucked away in the corner was exceptionally busy. Santa must have been worn out such was his popularity. Children

were excited and there was plenty for them to do with various games and nail painting for the girls. Refreshments were available, with £1 for a hot dog looking very good value and most appetizing.

At the beginning of the Fair Head Teacher, Mrs McKenna, said "I would be very happy if we made half of what we took last year".

In the event, the total raised was £2246.46, so the Head, staff, and 'Friends of the School' would like to extend heartfelt thanks to all of those who kindly made donations and helped in the preparations which enabled them to raise this incredible sum.



Amelia and Isabel cuddle up to Santa clutching their presents

NEW FRIENDS FOR ALL SAINTS' SCHOOL

The Christmas Fair was the first event held under the auspices of the new Friends of All Saints' Primary School: previously the Parent Teacher Association. A recent change of committee membership enabled the PTA to take the decision to convert to the Friends of All Saints. The PTA has been extremely successful and thanks must be given to the outgoing committee for all of their hard work and achievements. In the past they have enhanced the children's school experience by purchasing a variety of resources, most recently the exciting new outdoor play equipment in the form of a Pirate Ship which is so well loved and used by the children during break times.

The aim of the Friends of All Saints remains the same as that of the PTA

and the goal for this year's fundraising is to acquire some staging so that the children can follow up on last year's successful presentation 'Archie's War'.

The one great difference that becoming the Friends of All Saints has made is that we can open up our committee meetings and membership to all interested parties from the community so if you are a grandparent, a former pupil or parent or simply an expert fundraiser with lots of ideas we would love you to join us.

Our next meeting will be held in the school on Wednesday 2nd February and all are welcome. If you are interested in attending or simply have some suggestions for fundraising activities please don't hesitate to contact us on lanchesterallsaints@durhamlearning.net telephone 01207 520435.



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KEYSTAGE 1 NATIVITY PLAY

It is amazing how well children can present the Nativity Story. The Year 1 and Year 2 children, performing the Nativity

Play on December 14th in the EP School, are only 6 and 7 years old but they love the stage and they love having something to do and say. They are not inhibited by doubt in their ability or fear of not getting things quite right and so you have a spontaneous and very entertaining and sensitive presentation. This play had, as always, been very well directed with careful attention to detail and obviously the children were very happy performing it, which is very infectious for the audience. This Nativity Scene was an important part of this play which was called 'The

Christmas Awards'. Every child in stage 1 and 2 classes had a part to play. There were a number of categories included in the awards, namely Christmas cards, Christmas trees, Christmas dinners (the biggest turkey you have ever seen) Snowmen, Santa's elf helpers and the characters of the Nativity Manger Scene. All the entrants were dressed appropriately by the ingenuity of the staff and in turn presented themselves on stage to be 'judged'. The action of the play was interspersed with some lovely singing by these enthusiastic children who knew every word.

The climax of the play was when the angels appeared to the shepherds urging them to go to the stable over which a very bright Star was shining. It was also the Star which the Three Wise Men later followed. This Star topped the list of the Christmas



Mary and Joseph with Baby Jesus

Awards because it represented the baby Jesus bringing Light to the world. Lara Duffy portrayed this star very eloquently and poignantly in word and song. Every word she sang or said could be heard very clearly

and her singing was beautiful. It was indeed a star performance. Indeed this could be said of all the children in this delightful production. The audience will remember it for a long time. Well done everyone! Brenda Craddock



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LANCHESTER E P SCHOOL VISITS COIMBRA, PORTUGAL

Four lucky staff and pupils had the opportunity of a lifetime when they visited Coimbra in Portugal in November. Mrs Davis, Mr Taylor, Mrs Grayson, Mrs Startup along with Cameron Pearson, Oliver Bartles-Smith, Ellen Barnett and Emily Dewar all set off from Newcastle Airport for their adventure on Sunday 21st November. This visit was the first of eight which will take place as part of their Comenius Project. The project, which takes place over two years, involves 8 schools from different European countries (Portugal, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Poland, Holland, Spain and England) and will mean the whole school will have the opportunity to learn, first hand, a traditional dance and song from each country, along with a far greater understanding of each country's culture and traditions. During their time in Coimbra, they had the unique opportunity of spending three days in a school for 9 - 16 year olds in Taveiro. The welcome they received was second to none with the whole

community involved in welcoming their European guests (26 in total from all 8 countries). The first day was spent learning a little about each other's schools. This was followed by a tour of the school and the opportunity to talk with the pupils (in English of course!) The four English children were treated like celebrities! They were surrounded by the Portuguese pupils who were exceptionally keen to hear all about England, footballers and just to have the opportunity to speak and hear some 'real' English. In the evening a super concert was held, along with the opportunity to sample some real Portuguese home-cooked food. The following day involved being taught a Portuguese dance and song as well as seeing the sights of Coimbra and enjoying a traditional Portuguese meal. Octopus was the local delicacy sampled by all!! The song and dance were rehearsed again on the final day before everyone departed for home. The journey home was to be the only slight hitch for the group. They were due back just as the bad weather began

in the North. After returning to Gatwick, their plane to Newcastle was delayed and then cancelled. After an overnight stay in the Hilton at Gatwick, their flight the following morning took off and then returned to Gatwick due to a problem on board. Weather conditions were worsening at airports across the country so after abandoning Mr Taylor at Gatwick Airport to make his own way home, the rest of the party hired a seven-seater car and Mrs Davis drove the tired group home. Quite an adventure for all involved! Greece at the beginning of March beckons soon.....

The whole school is now busy learning the dance and song - the aim is for 250 pupils all to perform it at the same time.

All the Europeans will be visiting our school during the last three days of term - 13th-15th April. The highlight of this visit will be a ceilidh held in the school hall on the Wednesday night - all are welcome to enjoy an evening of traditional English dances, joined by friends from another seven countries!

NATIVITY continued from page 14



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A BIT OF BRASS

It was a delight to be in the EP School on Wednesday morning, December 15th. It was all to do with Brass Instruments. Mr Senior who teaches how to play a brass instrument had arranged for his pupils to demonstrate their skills to the whole school. He had also brought along a group of players from St Bede's School and together they gave a delightful short concert of carols and Christmas music. What a joyful sound it was! The solo performances were excellent. Mr Senior involved the audience in the concert by asking them to join in with some of the songs and carols; Jingle Bells being a firm favourite. At the end of the concert the applause showed how much the efforts of the instrument players were appreciated. Their performances were certainly Top Brass.

Mrs Davis, in thanking the players for their performance, drew attention to the skills required to play an instrument. It is a definite accomplishment and the availability of lessons within the school is open to all pupils. Mrs Davis herself is a talented musician and in encouraging the pupils, she is once again demonstrating her ambition for every child in her school to develop to their full potential.

We are fortunate to have a Brass Band in the village and it is always looking for new members. It would be a joy to have some of these talented youngsters as members of the Lanchester Band. Age is no barrier and young and old(er) would be made very welcome particularly if they play a Trombone!

Brenda Craddock



Talented brass instrument players

CHRISTMAS CRAFT SESSION IN THE LIBRARY



Daniel, Matthew, Sophie, Dylan, and Max proudly show off their Christmas place settings

During the school holidays, Lanchester youngsters always have

a wide range of activities available in their local Library. A few days before Christmas, a craft session gave them an opportunity to produce some lovely festive decorations. The session was led by the Library's own Janice, always an expert with coloured pens, scissors and glue sticks. Because it was so close to Christmas, everyone was excited and wanting to share their plans and wish lists. Attractive place settings in the shape of Christmas trees and angels were crafted first, each named for a family member and ready for the dinner table on the Big Day. Then cardboard Santas were cut out and

coloured in to hang as festive wall decorations. Patience, care and steady hands were needed, but the results were worth all the hard work! Everyone chatted excitedly as they worked, contributing to a happy holiday atmosphere.

The youngsters of Lanchester can always be sure of a very warm welcome in the Library. Not only does it offer a world of books to interest everyone, but during breaks from school, there is always a full programme of events on offer, so come along and find out about the opportunities for learning new skills, making friends, and having fun!

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A MERRY MUSICAL CHRISTMAS FROM ALL SAINTS

Young musicians from All Saints and Saint Bede's came together to celebrate the spirit of Christmas in a special Musical Assembly, just before the end of term. All the children from the Primary School, together with their family members gathered in the school theatre, and were welcomed by the Head Teacher, Mrs Karen McKenna.

Mrs McKenna spoke of the strong musical tradition within the Primary School, which saw so many young people developing a love of music, and the skills which they carried with them into later life. Several of the young musicians

performing at the assembly with the Secondary School group began their musical careers with All Saints, and it was pleasing to see this progression. The very appreciative audience then enjoyed some familiar and well loved festive music. Mr Senior from Saint Bede's led their brass musicians into a rousing march, followed by Christmas favourites such as 'Frosty the Snowman,' 'Rudolf,' 'Oh Little Town of Bethlehem' and 'Oh Come all Ye Faithful', with full vocal support from everyone present.

Mr Senior then introduced a group of beginner brass musicians from All Saints, who were performing in public for the very first time. Other youngsters played piano and guitar, with the audience enjoying



Mr Senior leads the young brass musicians from All Saints

Christmas classics 'Silent Night' and 'Deck the Halls.'

All the young people deserve praise for their hard work and commitment, and a big "Thank You" for sharing their Christmas Assembly with us!

LIONS PUB CRAWL

The now well established 'Pub Crawl' took place on Friday 17th December, in the freezing cold with temperatures sub zero. Five Lions took part, rattling their collecting boxes with some enthusiasm. The warmth of Lanchester's watering holes certainly made up for conditions outside as did the generosity of all the patrons. The Lions would like to thank proprietors of the King's Head, the Queen's Head and the Social Club for



Cousins - Jessica Hardy, Emily and Rebecca Walker met Santa Claus as they were having a Christmas meal with their respective families.

allowing them to collect, total raised was an excellent £185 which will go into the Welfare fund.

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CHRISTMAS EVE FANCY DRESS



Talking Heads with Jeni and staff looking good in their 'Pink Ladies' attire.

New Image with Mary and the staff looking great in their hired fancy dress for Christmas Eve.



NEW YEAR'S EVE CEILIDH



Angels of the North Ceilidh Band at the popular New Year's Eve Ceilidh in the Community Centre, organised by the Wildlife Group.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Venison (or Beef) Casserole

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 carrots, roughly chopped

¼ of a turnip, roughly chopped

1 onion, roughly chopped

2 celery sticks, roughly chopped

oil and butter for frying

1 garlic clove, crushed

½ kg venison or beef, cut into large chunks

2 tbsp plain flour, seasoned with salt and pepper

1 tbsp redcurrant jelly

225ml dry red wine (Rioja is good)

225ml beef stock

sprig of thyme

bay leaf

Method

1. Heat oven to 180C/fan160C/gas 4. Fry the vegetables in a little oil and butter in a heavy-based casserole for 4-5 mins until golden. Tip in the garlic and fry for a further min, then set aside.

2. Put the meat into a plastic bag with seasoned flour and shake to coat. Add a little more oil and butter to the pan, then fry the meat over high heat, stirring now and then,

until well browned. Don't crowd the pan - cook in batches if necessary. Set aside with the vegetables.

3. Add the redcurrant jelly and wine to the pan, and bring to the boil, scraping up all the bits that have stuck to the bottom. Pour in the stock, then add the thyme, bay leaf, meat and vegetables. Season if you like and bring to the boil. Cover and transfer to the oven for 1½ hours or until tender. Remove from the oven and check for seasoning.

THURSDAY CLUB CHRISTMAS MEETING

Just a few stalwart Thursday Clubbers braved the near Arctic conditions to attend the Christmas workshop, but it was worth it, what a wonderful night we had.

Joan set away the proceedings with some very innovative floral displays including 'one she'd made earlier', for the raffle. Then Olive continued with a more formal arrangement. Jean

Hunter gave a lovely vote of thanks and raffle prizes were won by Dorothy Douglas and Joyce Thomas. The evening was nicely rounded off with a cup of hot chocolate topped with cream and

festive mince pies. A most enjoyable end to what has been a memorable 30th Anniversary year. We look forward to 2011, starting off with our New Year Party on January 20th. Subscriptions, held

at the 2010 level of £10, will be due and our new programme and all information on the Thursday Club can be found online at www.communitate.co.uk/ne/lanchestercommunitycentre.



Giving Eileen a lot of encouragement

CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

It was a very cold, damp and icy evening, but the freezing weather conditions did not deter the audience from Lanchester and beyond in attending the concert a "Celebration of Christmas", this year held in Lanchester Parish Church on 20th December.

This annual musical celebration featured a mixture of well known Carols, sung by the choirs and audience as well as several contrasting pieces from both the Lanchester Male Voice Choir and the Choral and Operatic Society. The structure of the concert also allowed it to be interspersed by readings from the leaders of the three respective local churches allowing the story of Christmas to be told in scripture readings.

As ever there were many excellently presented items throughout, but a few stood out as highlights above the rest. One was when the Lanchester Male

Voice Choir, conducted by Harry Carr, sang an arrangement of "When a child is born". This arrangement clearly showed the choir at ease and able to show off their unique blended and balanced sound. The arrangement also highlighted the different sections of the choir (from tenors to basses and back again). There seemed to be a Cliff Richard theme to the proceedings with renditions of "Saviour's Day" and "Mistletoe and Wine" from the Choral Society and LMVC respectively.

The Choral and Operatic also excelled in a rendition of "Mirabile Dictu" from the recent Manchester Carols, the music harking back to medieval style with strident harmonies and driving rhythms executed with much aplomb.

The evening culminated in the Choral Society and LMVC joining forces (conducted by David Hughes) to perform the glorious "Unto us a Child

is Born" from Handel's "Messiah". The music had many moments lifted by the augmentation of the LMVC, but also the singing of the ladies of the Choral Society helped to build up the dramatic tension in the fugal sections and crescendos punctuating the music. The evening was rounded off as it began with Canon Peter Waterhouse giving the final blessing to the celebration.



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Heads

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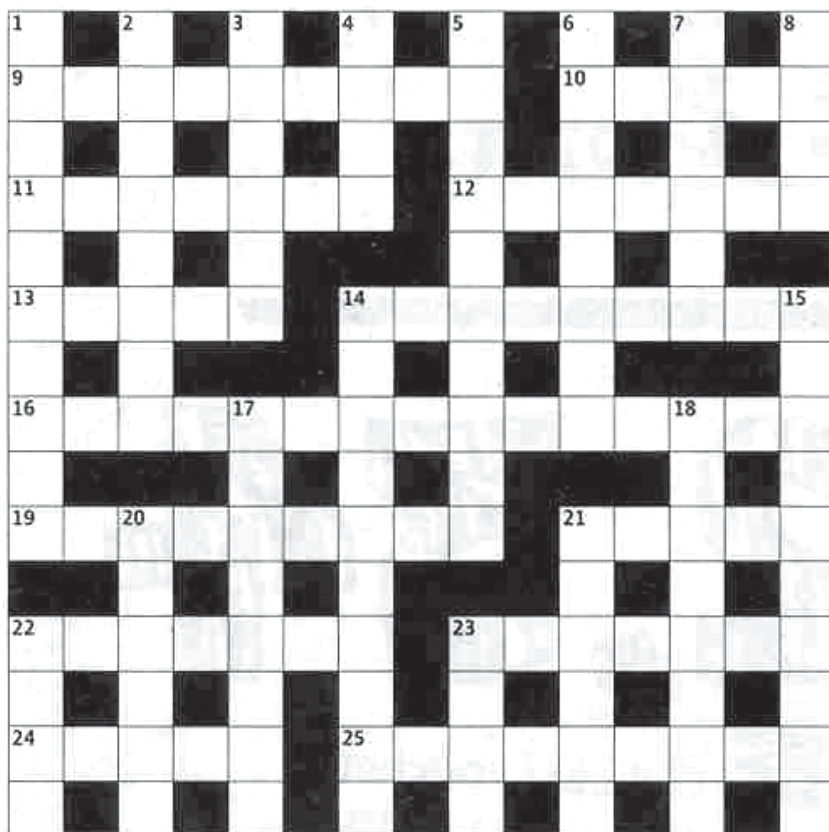
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CROSSWORD 57



ACROSS

9. Rust (4,5)
10. Perfect (5)
11. Nonconformist (7)
12. Facility (7)
13. Make rotten (5)
- 14,21 down Change white Artex pipes cover up (5,4,4-2)
16. Star of 1975 Spielberg blockbuster (5,5,5)
19. Down source (5,4)
21. Light brown (5)
22. Make rotten (7)
23. See 8 down
24. Stupid (5)
25. In receipt of bribes (2,3,4)

DOWN

1. 90° (5-5)
2. Order pig to do prison sentence (8)
3. German man of letters (6)

4. Essential element (4)
5. Hungarian composer (4,6)
6. Dead (8)
7. Twins in New Age ministry (6)
- 8,23 across Latino nappy for B listers' Christmas job (4,2,5)
14. Fatigue (10)
15. Full bodied dance routine! (5,5)
17. Armoured reptile (8)
18. Blockage on the Nile (5,3)
20. Humble churchman takes me inside (6)
21. See 14 across
22. Goes with a hoop, horse and tail (4)
23. Greek letter found in Cypriot archive (4)

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD 56

ACROSS

1. Denise Lewis
9. funeral
10. grenade
11. symphonic
12. ensue
13. Tyke
14. belly dance
16. comestible
19. used
21. salvo
22. not shared
24. Ecuador
25. in Nepal
26. hands on hips

DOWN

1. don't make me laugh
2. north
- 3,15. silence is golden
4. logical
5. week-ends
6. Stars and Stripes
7. offset
8. delete
15. see 3
16. cosset
17. innards
18. Latvian
20. diddle
23. Hindi

Name _____

Address _____

Please send your entries (by deadline date on back page) to The Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0PB.

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CROSSWORD 56

There were 18 entries in last month's competition.

Congratulations to Kathleen Bell of Greenwell Park who was the winner in the draw and will receive the £10 prize.

Try your luck with John Wilson's latest challenge.

SUDOKU

There is just one simple rule in Sudoku. Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box. See next month for answers.

5					2	4		
	4						5	
		6	3					7
		9						8
7		3				1		
				5	4			3
6			1	7				
		1				6		9
8						3		

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WI NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Our first meeting of 2011 took place on Monday 10th January. Despite icy conditions underfoot, 24 of our members and our speaker were able to come for the New Year party.

Our president Jennifer Macdonald welcomed members before telling us the sad news that Lilian Downs, a very valued, supportive and committed member for many years, passed away very suddenly over Christmas. She will be greatly missed.

Jennifer then presented Maureen Clarkson with flowers for her 80th birthday.

In our 2011 programme an extra meeting has been added, a visit to Knitsley Farm for a Butchery/pork pie/bakery demonstration on Monday 21st March at 7.00pm.

Pat Cotrell and June Wallis won the raffle and the competition winners were Shirley Lamb first and Pat Cotrell second.

Then our speaker Janet Tulip gave her talk called 'The Gift of Life', how donating our organs can save or change so many lives. Janet's own granddaughter Laura aged just 17 became very ill with a virus which attacked her liver, she received a new liver with only hours to spare. Two years later



Compere Shirley Mair, Shirla (Shirley Lamb), Anna (Ann Carr) and Jenna (Jennifer Macdonald), the belly dancing three.

Laura became ill again and this time it took 13 months before another liver became available. Thanks to the two unknown donors Laura has recovered and is now a physiotherapist at Sunderland Hospital helping others. Janet explained to us about the NHS Organ Donor Register, tel 0845 6060400 and how one donor can give life and hope to several people. Just thinking about being a donor is not enough, to make a difference we need to sign up and let our families know our wishes. This was a very moving, uplifting and informative talk.

The entertainment was a hitherto unknown group called Eastern Promises who were introduced by Shirley Mair (wearing a very fetching blue outfit). Three veiled ladies entered very demurely, charmed

snakes from a basket before suddenly bursting into a powerful pulsing chant and casting aside their veils revealed president (Jenna), vice president (Anna) and hostess (Shirla) as the belly dancing three. They had never been seen like this before (and never again) with long hair flowing and hips moving they performed a sand dance, solos and circles and invited the audience to join in before covering their heads to demurely leave the room. (They are waiting for the phone call from Simon Cowell to appear on Britain's Got Talent.)

We then enjoyed our delicious faith supper and finished with a Chinese Raffle. We would like to thank everyone for making this such a enjoyable first meeting.

LADIES WHO LUNCH

For our Christmas lunch we travelled out to The Badger at Ponteland which is, like the Co-op, 'GOOD with food', and especially so this Christmas. Their menu of either a 2 course for £13.95 or a 3 course for £15.95 was excellent value. We arrived on a particularly cold day and were welcomed by a lovely roaring log fire which had our table right next to it - perfect start that

continued with warm welcoming staff serving a super meal. We sampled for starters, foie gras parfait, prawn cocktail and roasted garlic mushrooms, main courses were guinea fowl supreme with roasted root vegs, turkey Christmas dinner, organic salmon and an 8oz rump steak with a mushroom and chestnut cream and chips, for puds we had a very large raspberry sherry trifle,

Christmas pud with cognac ice cream and a cheese board. There is a most welcoming ambience about the Badger, it's a very easy place to be and was a great choice, as we all agreed, we'd had a super lunch and a great start to the festivities. Having had our meal out on December 22nd, we were most definitely into the Christmas spirit.

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ANSWER TO LAST MONTH'S SUDOKU

3	2	9	8	1	6	7	5	4
7	8	5	4	9	3	1	2	6
4	6	1	7	2	5	9	8	3
2	5	3	1	6	8	4	7	9
1	7	4	2	3	9	8	6	5
6	9	8	5	7	4	3	1	2
8	4	7	3	5	2	6	9	1
5	3	6	9	8	1	2	4	7
9	1	2	6	4	7	5	3	8

Tennis Coaching

The tennis club season officially starts at the beginning of May on the grass courts but, prior to this, indoor junior coaching in Croft View Hall will begin on:- Monday 31st January 2011 for 9 weeks
Sessions 4.30 - 5.30 pm
Under 8 years
5.30-6.30pm 8 to 10 years
Due to the size of the hall, numbers will be limited to 12 players per session. For any further details on these sessions please contact Dennis on 520278/0796049442.
From Monday 4th April, the coaching will transfer to the hard courts behind the college for 3 weeks and then to the grass courts at the club on 9th May.
Leisureworks are also providing coaching at Croft View Hall on Wednesday evenings from 5 to 6 pm from 19th January (Tel. no. 01207 218873 for further information).

Sunday Bridge

The next Bridge afternoon will be on Sunday 6th February in the Dining Room of the Community Centre at 2 pm. Price £3 to include tea/coffee and biscuit.

Short Circuit Walks

5th February, 10.30 am, Monkseaton to St Mary's Island, 6 miles. Meet at Monkseaton Metro, NZ348722.
19th February, 10.30 am, Weetslade Country Park to Big Waters, 5.5 miles. Start at Weetslade Country park, west of the B1319, Great Lime Road, NZ260723.
All enquiries to the Walks Co-ordinator, David Moore, tel 0191 2852925 or email marytmoore@greenbee.net.

The Village Voice Page 22

History Society Durham City and More

Discovered Photographs
The discovery of more illustrative photographs adding to the 17,000 plus already held by Michael Richardson who is making a welcome return to Lanchester History Society, on Friday, 4th February.
Michael's presentation will centre mainly on the history of Gilesgate taken from updated archives which continue to expand as more discoveries are made. Most of these new finds have arrived from a variety of places, such as auctions, wills, old photography shops, families and friends, and from all parts of the country. Michael's problem now is finding time to maintain the catalogue!
The talk will take place as usual in the Community Centre at 7.30 pm where a pleasant and nostalgic evening is promised.

Open House

All are welcome at the Chapter House on Thursday 3rd February for a sandwich lunch between 11.30 am and 1.00 pm.

The Midweek Walking Group

We began 2011 with a walk to the Granary Café, East Knitsley, and will continue to walk on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from outside The Methodist Church, usually at 9.30 am. Do please feel free to join us. Some copies of the booklet of the Group's 2010 Walks are still available from Ian Andrew (telephone 520664) for a suggested donation of £3 per copy to raise funds for Willow Burn Hospice. To date £127.55 has been raised. Thanks to all who donated.

Social Club Entertainment

Saturday 5th February, SONYA, Popular Singer
Saturday 12th February, MARY MAC, Great New Vocalist
Saturday 19th February, KARAOKE
Saturday 26th February, MIKKI LAWTON, Incredible and Classy Singer

Wildlife Group

On Tuesday, 8th February, at 7.30 pm in the small hall of the Community Centre, John Grundy will talk on 'Grass Snake and Habitat Management'.

Flower Club

The next meeting on 23rd February at 2.00 pm in the Community Centre will be the Annual General Meeting followed by a talk: 'Weddings' by Miriam Holmes.

Paradiso Club Social

The next Social will be held on Sunday 6th February at 7 pm in the Main Hall of the Community Centre.
Refreshments, raffle and a chance to see the film 'Les Vacances de M Hulot' directed by Jacques Tati.
'A classic comedy described as one of the funniest films of all time. The eccentric M Hulot goes on holiday and creates chaos in his wake. A film which celebrates the humour and absurdities of everyday life!'
Anybody is welcome to join the Paradiso Club £5 membership pa. Entry to the Social is £2.50. Do come. You will be amazed by the superb newly installed cinematic equipment at the Community Centre. There is a huge screen, great sound system, in fact it is just like a real cinema!

WHAT'S ON?

WI

Our next meeting is on Monday 7th February in the Community Centre at 7.00 pm
The speaker will be Margaret Beck with her talk 'Bosom Buddies and the competition will be something pink and frivolous. We are serving soup and a bun with home made ginger wine, followed by a sales table. Please bring any items for the stall on the night.
If you have been thinking of joining us, why not come as a visitor - you will be assured of a warm welcome.

Mothers' Union

The next meeting is on Wednesday 9th February, 7.30 pm in the Chapter House, when Stephen Burt will give a talk entitled 'Dora Greenwell, the Lanchester poet'.

Valley Walk Conservation

We plan to have a day of ACTION on Sunday 13th February, working with the Durham Countryside Rangers.
The task will be improving access to the railway path by cutting back, strimming, and raking off a public footpath which enters the site. We may also do some fencing, depending on numbers!
Time 9.45 am - 2.30 pm. All volunteers welcome, even an hour of your time will be very valuable. All necessary equipment provided, just wear tough shoes and bring refreshments if you will be staying over the lunch break.

Meeting place - Malton picnic site. Please walk or cycle if at all possible, car parking is limited there at present due to the Malton Bridge works. Hope to see you!

A Nightingale Sang

Lanchester residents Paul Monaghan and Lisa Short play father and daughter in this play at Chester le Street Community Centre from 8th to 12th February, at 7.15 pm. For tickets, tel 0191 3883778 (£6 and £5).

Spring Concert

English Choral Classics
On Friday 11th March Lanchester and District Choral Society will present a programme of well-loved English choral music with guest soprano soloist Jessica Holmes. The programme will include Coleridge-Taylor's vivid setting of Longfellow's poem 'Hiawatha's Wedding Feast' with Richard Woods singing the tenor solo, as well as Vaughan Williams' beautiful arrangement of 'Serenade to Music'. This piece based on Shakespeare's words from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was originally written for 16 famous soloists at a Prom concert in 1938 but has now been transcribed for full chorus. Also featured in the concert will be music specifically written for coronations including Handel's 'Zadok the Priest' and Parry's anthem 'I Was Glad'. Handel's music will again feature in famous choruses from Judas Maccabeus and Samson. This glorious music will raise the roof of the Methodist Church where the concert will be performed. We look forward to seeing you there. Tickets are available from any society member or 01207 521458.

Lions Carnival

The 2011 Lions Carnival will take place this year on Saturday, June 11th. More details will follow later.

KALA PATTAR AND BACK, FOR WILLOW BURN

I fulfilled a long held ambition in November 2010 when I trekked through the Himalayas in Nepal to Kala Pattar, a ridge looking across to Mount Everest and down onto Everest Base Camp. I travelled to Kathmandu, and then into Lukla airport recognised as being the most dangerous airport to fly into due to flights having to skirt the edge of mountains before dropping onto the short runway which has a 60 metre slope.

The trek team, made up of eleven trekkers, a head sherpa, or Sirdar, three other sherpas and nine porters, followed the route of the Dudh Khosi River through pine forests for a day before starting the climb up to Namche Bazaar, at 11,300 feet it is the largest village on the route to Base Camp.

On our first acclimatisation day we climbed up to the Everest Hotel and enjoyed our first spectacular views of Everest from its terrace. We stayed in 'tea houses' along the route with bedrooms that I describe as 'plywood bed boxes': each box only holding two small single beds and a kit bag. The beds were wooden frames covered by a very thin mattress. I was really warm in my sleeping bag even though I woke most mornings to rub ice off the windows to enjoy the fantastic mountain scenery.

A very memorable day was spent at the Mani Rimdu festival at Thyangboche monastery watching the monks dressed in ceremonial robes and masked dancers celebrate. Everyone, especially the old women and young children, let out roars of laughter during a comedy

play involving an old sherpa and someone acting as a fool.

The highlight of the trek was climbing to the top of Kala Pattar which, at 5545 metres - 18,200 feet, looks down onto Base Camp. The views across to Everest and the rest of the mountain range are spectacular, and we were fortunate to be blessed with clear blue skies on every morning and through most days. The climb was exhausting and I was one of only half of the group that made it to the top. I lost 10% of my body weight whilst I was away.

Our return route took us high over the Cho La pass across a glacier and into another valley, then onto Gokyo. The weather changed and we descended past the Gokyo lakes in falling snow, but it all added to the wonderful experience. We had a taste



John Marrin, on the top of Kala Pattar with Mount Everest behind

of village life in Khumjung where we visited a very old monastery and a school founded by Sir Edmund Hillary. I watched a local farmer ploughing his field with a wooden plough pulled by a yak, his two daughters following him picking up the few potatoes that were raised to the surface.

As well as fulfilling an ambition, I did the trek to raise funds for Willow Burn Hospice. Over £3000 has

been raised to date, and if anyone would like to help me to support Willow Burn please catch me or Linda in the street or donate on my JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/johnmarrin. Also, I would be pleased to show photographs of life in the high Himalayas of Nepal and share my experiences to formal groups: just contact me on 07970916229.

John Marrin

THE VASELINE DIARIES (part 3)



Another tyre change and still only at Lands End!

The epic journey starts. Can Dave and Stu make it?

Twitter entry:

Friday 13th. Day 1. Mishaps before we started. Change inner tube twice. Stu fell over (drive of B&B).

Journal Entries:

Fri 13th

7am: Time to get up. Don't feel as if I've slept. Stomach in knots. If the hills we climbed to get to the B&B are anything to go by, I'm in trouble.

7.45am: THE START!

Can't bloody believe it.

Another puncture. Same wheel different inner tube. It's a conspiracy to prevent us even getting started.

8.30am:

Sign the book at the Lands End Hotel. Met up with a young marine

who, in 7 days has just completed the ride in the opposite direction. He advises we eat flap jack. Lots of flap jack.

9.30am: Finally we get started. After numerous nervous wees and several water bottle replenishments at the hotel (well the advice was to stay hydrated), we set off! Woohoo!

9.33am It's raining. We stop and put on our luminous shower-proof jackets. Whose idea was

it (mine or Stu's) to get matching jackets?

4pm Lost, somewhere near Truro! Having sought the advice of some helpful but clearly clueless local, we have found ourselves circling not for the first time a clump of trees next to a small ford at the bottom of a steep hill. The only way out is to climb the

other side. But, which one is the other side?

We appear to have stumbled into a basin, surrounded on all sides by steep winding roads - 'Hill Hell!'

We agree to ask a driver for help just as a farm truck trundles up. I slow up and wave, and, forgetting my feet were attached to my pedals, fell

off in front of the vehicle. Not an advisable tactic for stopping someone.

6.30pm Made it! 64 miles of hill after hill. I was expecting Scotland to be bad but I can't believe this. Cornwall must have been made using a huge sheet of giant bubble wrap! My legs are done in. Only another 14 days to go!

SINGAPORE TO HONG KONG ON TWO WHEELS

Seb Coady a young graduate from Neville's Cross, Durham is currently undertaking a solo 3500-mile, 100-day charity cycle ride across south-east Asia. Seb is the grandson of Lawrence and the late Clare Coady of Lanchester. He is aiming to raise a considerable sum of money for Cancer Research UK having lost a number of family members to cancer.

Seb left his home in Durham on the 25th November and plans to arrive back in the UK in the middle of March. He was inspired to undertake the challenge by Mark Beaumont's book 'The Man Who Cycled the World'. He said "I read the book and found it really interesting. I'm quite sporty and active and wanted to do something a bit different which people hadn't done before".

He will be cycling through Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and China to Hong Kong travelling alone and carrying all his own luggage with him.

He is undertaking the ride on a 2010 Specialised Sirrus Sport cycle and plans to cycle up to 35 miles a day. If you would like to sponsor Seb please visit www.justgiving.com/sebastiancoady.

"TENNIS DENNIS" WINS NATIONAL AWARD



Dennis Laycock with his Volunteer of the Year awards

Following the success of Lancaster Lawn Tennis Club's award for Club of the Year from Derwentside District, it was the turn of Dennis Laycock to be nominated and win the Durham and Cleveland LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) prize

for Senior Volunteer of 2010. This was in recognition of his commitment to the sport of tennis.

Following this award, Dennis was automatically entered into the National LTA Volunteer of the Year competition and was

honoured to be the winner for the Northern Region.

Dennis, or 'Tennis Dennis' as he is affectionately known to the juniors he helps coach, has played a central role in the club's recent successes. These have included achieving Clubmark status

in 2009, increasing membership, especially in the junior section, and forming links with local schools and clubs for tennis coaching. On a personal level, he has also attained the Level 2 coaching qualification in 2010.

As a reward for winning the National Award, the LTA provided two tickets to the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals at the O2 Arena London in November.

Unfortunately Dennis was holidaying in New Zealand at the time and was unable to attend but

the Club coach, Michael Hume, who has also been an inspiration in the club's development, received the award on Dennis's behalf.

In 2010, the Veteran men's team, captained by Dennis, were successful in their league winning all their matches in their group.



Dougal Reed collecting the winners shield for the Veterans men's team from Margaret Baron, wife of the County President.

LANCHESTER TABLE TENNIS FOR ALL AGES

The Lancaster Table Tennis Club began meeting in October 2009, supported by funding from Durham County Council.

We have three tables and all the necessary equipment, two specialist coaches and plenty of space! Often one table is given over to the younger players (6 -14 years old) who are learning the basics of the game, while the second and third tables are used by our more advanced teenagers and adults of all abilities. All players receive coaching, whatever their ability. The emphasis is on learning the game in a fun environment.



Members and coaches of the Lancaster Table Tennis club which meets on Wednesday evenings at the Community Centre.

Our coaches are Frank Clarke and Harry Robertson. We meet on

Wednesdays from 7.00pm -9.00pm in the small hall of the Community Centre. We

charge £3.00 per session (adults) or £2.00 (under 16's and concessions). Come

and give it a try! We are always keen to welcome new members.

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NEXT DEADLINE

Please send any **articles** for the next Village Voice by 15th February. The deadline for **adverts** is 13th February.

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