

the Village Voice

Issue No 3, Volume 25

Lanchester, March 2025



Young people of
Lanchester out and
about this month

Top: E.P. School, ski residential, 33 children,
staff and parents in the French Alps.
Above: KoG's community litter pick
Far left: Boys' Brigade on their 8 mile walk.
Left: All Saints' nursery children enjoy
spring planting in the outdoor area.

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STOP PRESS – Greencroft Forest Park

As this month's edition was going to print, it was announced that the Greencroft Forest Park is going ahead with preparations over the summer. Tree planting will start in November.

This was after the Forestry Commission "screened the Greencroft woodland creation project under the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. The Forestry Commission determined that it is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore our consent under these regulations is not required. We took this decision on Tuesday 4th March 2025".

Full report in next month's edition.

From our councillor:

As I have mentioned in previous columns for this magazine, as County Councillor one of my greatest privileges has been to support a number of important community groups located in and around the villages of Lanchester, Burnhope and Castleside. However, a particular organisation I have been proud to work with is Willow Burn Hospice, located just outside the village on the bank up toward Maiden Law. At the beginning of January, it was great to catch-up with their Chief Executive, David Barker and Carol Hagri, Head of Clinical Services, at the hospice which has served the area since 1989. Its mission is to "deliver hospice care of the highest standard to our patients and those important to them – now and in the future."

Death is always a challenging matter that is hard to confront – but that is perhaps all the more so in a world in which life has become healthier and longer, and premature end of life has become mercifully rarer.

But all too often it does, and the culture of professionalism, tranquillity, and calm the hospice offers, underpinned by its outstanding staff and trustees, situated on the picturesque edge of Lanchester valley helps reduce the pain it causes.

The project that Cllr Mike McGaun and I have been able to fund in recent months is the installation of a series of chairs for the day centre at the hospice, which is going to be refurbished in the next few months. This will enable patients to recuperate and rest after treatment and when coping with their health condition, supporting people to live well with their illness.

That said, this only represents a small part of the overall funding of the hospice. Whilst the work the hospice does to help people is vital, its work is only partially funded by the taxpayer, with approximately half of its income sourced from the commitment of local volunteers and supporters to fundraising – such as sponsored events, legacies and charity shops (with a new one hopefully opening in Lanchester soon).

The annual "Light Up a Life" event the Hospice organises each year in the run-up to Christmas is a key event, as local (and more distant) people come together to remember the people the hospice has supported since being set up by Irene Mortimer and Valerie Davison three and a half decades ago. The event shows not only the importance of a peaceful end to life but also the way in which that experience frames our remembrance of those we can fondly only hold only in memory.

Should anyone wish to find out more about what the hospice does, how to donate, fundraise or volunteer for the hospice, please get in touch using the following details: info@willowburnhospice.org.uk

Doug Oliver



Above: David Barker MBE, Chief Executive of the Hospice, with Doug Oliver



New Signing for Willow Burn Hospice – Will O'Burn at Your Service

On 14 February, new recruit Will O'Burn joined Team Willow Burn following a number of misdemeanours in the hospice gardens.

Willow Burn Hospice is renowned for its beautiful gardens but over the years there has been a mystery surrounding our disappearing roses. The team have had our suspicions for some time but early in 2025 they found the culprit, when he came to the door with a completed volunteer application form to say sorry for eating the special flowers.

Mr O'Burn said: "My name is Will O'Burn and my family and I live in the Willow Burn Gardens. We just love to eat roses, all of the roses we can find but we've heard it makes the Willow Burn gardeners and visitors sad. So, to say sorry for our snacking, I have signed up as the newest recruit to the Volunteering Team. Will O'Burn... at your service."

Will O'Burn has joined the team at Willow Burn to break down barriers for children and young people when visiting the hospice with a loved one, joining as a member of the community or when accessing bereavement counselling. Not only will he help to fundraise and raise awareness, but he will bring smiles and positivity to everyone who meets him.

When the team at Willow Burn decided to introduce a mascot to the brand, friend of the hospice, Helen Heath, was their first choice of illustrator (Helen and her family pictured above with Will). Helen has created Will O'Burn in memory of her lovely mum, Eileen Turner.

With a BA (Honours) in Graphic Design from Nottingham Trent University, Helen developed a strong eye for colour, layout, hand lettering and visual hierarchy—skills that naturally flow into her passion for illustration. She has collaborated with top publishers like Bloomsbury, Orchard Books, Egmont, and Scholastic. Beyond commissions, Helen teaches design and illustration, leads workshops, and co-runs a greetings brand established in 2013.

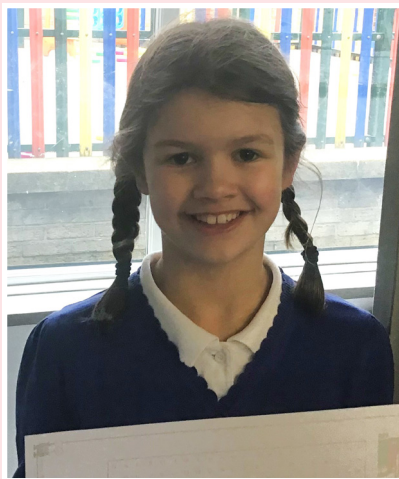
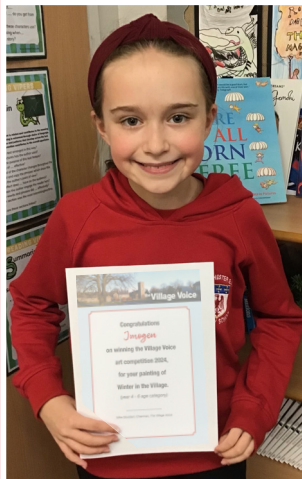
Will is very excited to meet all of the community who support Willow Burn Hospice. To invite Will O'Burn to appear at your local event or children's group, please contact Rachel Quince or Ali English on:

01207 529 224 / info@willowburnhospice.org.uk

Rachel Quince

Deputy Chief Executive & Head of Fundraising and Marketing

Willow Burn Hospice



Village Voice Art Competition Winners

The winners of the Village Voice Art Competition: **Winter in Lanchester** received their prizes and certificates.

Well done!

Left: Imogen Moralee,
Middle: Sophie Moore,
Right: Evie Garside

Grandpa's Fish Bar

After much social media publicity Grandpa's Fish Bar opened on Wednesday 5th March. The Fish Bar was declared open by Anna Foster of Radio Newcastle at 3:30 which was great timing as a great number of schoolchildren were in the large queue which formed. About 20 cones were given out free and the children eagerly grabbed them. Anna conducted some interviews while she was there for her radio programme and the Northern Echo streamed it live!



Top: The large queue
Above: Anna
interviewing a young
customer! Right: Anna
eating a chip



Trees for Lanchester

Our group of tree planting volunteers have been busy again planting over 1200 tree saplings this winter. We planted in freezing fog and on gloriously warm bright days, whenever we could gather enough volunteers. Our star planter was young Max who should be commended for his hard work.

All our trees are native British trees mainly gifted from a sister group of an energy company called "I Dig Trees" but also many grown from seed at our tree nursery tended by our volunteers.

This year we have experimented with growing trees more densely on a site in the Browney valley. This method has been shown to encourage more rapid growth and capture more carbon. A dense thicket should develop after a few years which should become a home for birds and insects. We are looking forward to seeing how our "Tiny Forest" performs over the next few years.

If you'd like to join us for a few hours of planting, there are always plans afoot for further digging. But also, we are looking for new places to plant so if you're a landowner and have a space for some native trees do let us know. As well we're keen to expand our tree nursery and looking for hawthorn, hazel, oak, rowan, crab apple seedlings. Do let us know if you have any growing in your garden.

'Trees for Lanchester' is an initiative of the Lanchester Partnership Environment Group. If you'd like us to collect seedlings, view land with a potential for planting or to join the digging

squad please contact us on: lanchestertrees@gmail.com or text Sonny on 07817369160.

Sonny Shepherd



Remembering...



Harry Carr 16th December 1938 - 24th January 2025

Harry grew up in Leadgate and always spoke fondly of his childhood, enjoying walks in Port Woods with his dog Rex, holidays in Blackpool, enjoying sports - football, running, cricket. He trained as a mine surveyor before retraining as a maths teacher and working at Pelton Roseberry Comprehensive School

Education was important to him, and he loved helping others succeed, tutoring many young people through their GCSE and A Level maths. He also enjoyed his time leading music, was a Boys' Brigade man, working his way up the ranks to Captain at Leadgate Methodist Church. Harry married Jean in 1965, a proud husband, dad, grandad and great grandad.

Harry and Jean moved to the village in 1970 and brought their children, Graeme and Helen, up here. Harry was involved in many aspects of village life: a faithful member of Lanchester Methodist Church, where he served as treasurer for several years and played keyboard in the worship group until not long before he died. He played trombone in Lanchester Brass Band, led the Male Voice Choir, enjoyed being part of the art group and helped out as organist at All Saints' CofE Church for a season. Music was both a gift and a passion and he enjoyed many years directing the band for the Youth Connection theatre group. He encouraged young people in their music and loved to see them stepping up to play at church and in Youth Connection.

Harry had a great sense of humour, he was always ready with a joke, even when he was so very poorly in hospital he was heard to quip "I dread to think what I'll be like when I'm old"! He was fun to be around and never took himself too seriously. He will be remembered for supporting his beloved Rotherham United.

He was a keen gardener and enjoyed working on his garden and also spending time sitting in the garden. He would be heard saying "this is the life". Helen remembers eating peas from the pod and snowball turnips fresh from the ground. He enjoyed food - especially Ravello's potato skins! He cooked an amazing barbecue and loved to entertain.

Harry was a people person, a connector. He loved chatting with people on any subject - sport, politics, music. He looked for connections with people, common ground - it was his superpower. He would engage people he met in conversation then remember for the next time he met them so he could easily converse with them again. He knew his own mind but was open to hearing the opinions of others, enjoying a debate and discussion.

The family have been inundated with sympathy cards speaking of his kindness, gentleness, positivity, enthusiasm. Saying that he was a man of integrity, a loving man with a big heart, a joy to know. All of this is true, and so much more. He was a good man who lived a great life. He loved God, loved people and loved life.

Helen Perumalla (Née Carr)

Monday Art Group

The Monday Art Group has been busy recently.

In February, we had an enjoyable session on Neurographic Art led by member Jean Hodgson, and then we painted snowdrops in celebration of spring.

A collection of pictures by members of the MAG is on exhibition at the Willow Café at Willowburn hospice and will continue throughout March.

We are a small friendly group who meet on Monday mornings at the Community Centre.

New members are most welcome. Contact tojimrafferty@yahoo.com for details.

Jim Rafferty

Below: Jean Hodgson and Sophia Miller study some of the Neurographic art pictures produced by MAG members.



Thursday Club

We have been entertained by the new estate agent in the village - Mr Simon Bourne, who didn't disappoint in appearance or delivery.

He was dressed in a tweed jacket and his distinctive hat. He is tall with a ready, easy smile.

Then we heard how the younger Simon was successful in business with his bespoke shoe company. Until Covid!

To cut a long story short, he has survived depths of despair and nearly lost everything and now is rising again as an estate agent here in the village - look out for the duck!

If you want to know more about this, he has written a book about his route to recovery, confidence, happiness and success in his new business.

Jan Vasey

Still Going Strong at 90!

Despite having just celebrated her 90th birthday, Jean Surtees of Deanery View is still participating and enjoying the keep fit class at the Community Centre on Wednesday evenings. A fun hour with exercise to music. Jean also regularly walks up and down the village and loves tending her garden.

Her birthday on 1st March was spent celebrating with a family lunch at the Cantonese Restaurant at Iveston, she was joined by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The ladies of the Keep Fit class also had a celebration for Jean, albeit a little later in March, with Afternoon Tea at Lanchester Garden Centre. Lots of calories to be worked off in class! Thanks to the staff at the Garden Centre for lovely tea and friendly attentive service.

Jean is a wonderful example of keeping active into our later years.

Keep Fit, Keep Healthy, Keep Happy.

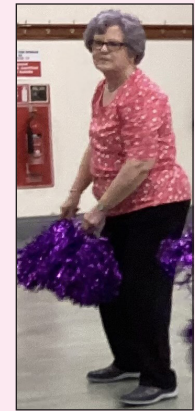
Liz Laycock



Left: birthday celebrations at the garden centre.

Below left: the keep fit class with Jean

Below: Jean in action!



Lanchester Flower Club

Member of the National Association of Flower Arrangers Society

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 26th February 2025 in Lanchester Community Centre. We quickly progressed through the official procedure of the A.G.M. The reports from Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer were duly read. The committee was elected on mass.

We then enjoyed an interesting talk from Glynis Grainger all about the young Prince Phillip. I am sure many of us thought we knew all about Prince Phillip's early life, and as he matured. Especially as he became the husband of late Queen Elizabeth 2nd and lived a very public life. But my goodness Glynis had so much more to tell us. What a wonderful storyteller. We hope she will visit us again in the near future. We then enjoyed tea/coffee and biscuits and the usual friendly chatter.

Lestrine Kelly



What a start to 2025!

We've just listed a stunning barn conversion just outside Lanchester—an absolute must-see, especially if you're looking for a smallholding or paddock for horses.

Further afield, I'm thrilled to announce that we've been instructed to bring seven incredible new developments to the market in nearby Hamsterley. What a location if you are seeking your escape to the countryside!

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Poppy's walks

Good day readers and this month's walk lasts exactly one hour, so is manageable for most of you I would imagine.

It starts at Coach Lane, Witton Gilbert, which is either a short car or bus ride away. The Human parks in a lay-by

close to the entrance to woods - just off the village Front Street - and then we walk along Coach Lane towards the village church. At the church we turn right and go downhill along a rutted track which eventually runs alongside fields. At the foot of the track is a small footbridge over the River Brownie. We cross the bridge and then turn right, continuing to walk alongside the river. Eventually we come to a steep incline which takes us onto the Lanchester Valley path. We turn right there and cross another bridge, a stone one this time, and walk in the direction of Langley Park.

We follow this path for ten to fifteen minutes, with the river way down below on our right. After a while we come to a crossing of paths near what used to be a railway station. The old station house still has the words Witton Gilbert on the side and there is also a very old sign visible which seems to warn against railway trespassers! I believe it is at least 60 years since there was a railway there but at the station house, we turn right, and this leads us onto Wallnook Lane where we turn right again.

We pass a house on our right called Centurion House which the male Human explains wistfully used to be a pub many years ago. We follow the lane across a stone bridge which is now open to pedestrians and cyclists only - this is called Wallnook Bridge - and continue walking until we get to the main road into Langley Park, where we turn right and reach the roundabout next to the filling station/car showroom.

We cross carefully at the crossing in front of the garage then walk along the footpath back towards Witton Gilbert. For about five minutes we are walking alongside the main road, so I am kept firmly on my lead, but then the path branches off through woods and we enter Witton Gilbert in front of a row of houses called Park View.

We continue to walk through the centre of the village before turning right into Coach Lane again and back to the car. There is still time for a quick wander into the woods which are particularly attractive at this time of year before we head back to Lanchester.

While segments of this walk have appeared in previous routes I have described to you, this is a new circular walk which I am delighted to share with you.

Lanchester Women's Insitutue

Lanchester Women's Institute met on Monday 3rd March. President Marie welcomed 35 members and 3 visitors, and told us about upcoming events including our summer outing, the 100th birthday celebration being arranged for November and another fashion show in July.

Raffle winners were Gladys Robson and Barbara Sproat. Barbara was presented with a bouquet of flowers for her 90th birthday.

Speaker for the evening was Carol Dean who told us about Ann Boleyn and her life from growing up in Hever Castle, marriage to Henry 8th and tragic beheading. Tina gave the vote of thanks then members enjoyed refreshments while chatting with friends.

Tracey Dobson



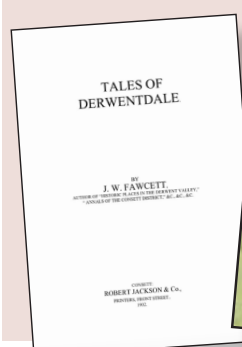
Local History Society

We met on 7th February to be entertained by Paul Heatherington of Shotley Bridge. His topic was 'Legends of North East England'.

Tales of Arthur and the Giants Cor, Con and Benand Mug! Paul had us traipsing all over North West Durham exploring legends and possibly some supporting myths. The theme seemed to centre around individuals who physically were amongst the tallest and strongest of the community they lived amongst. JW Fawcett's "Tales of Derwentdale" and the communities of Edmundbyers, Muggleswick, and down the Derwent valley featured significantly. The Giants Cor, Ben and Con lived in caves respectively in Corbridge, Benfieldside and Consett. These guys communicated by whistling and shared tools by throwing them the miles between caves. It's claimed that a miss shot by Con aiming for Cor hit the ground forming a hollow in the ground then called Howden this being near Con's cave which was at Howden's Gill!

Lanchester even got into the story with a plaque "in memory of John and George Maddison of Hole House near Alansford in this Parish". The Monument was erected by their only sister Eleanor, the wife of Thomas Greenwell of Broomshields in the Parish. A good session was enjoyed by all.

Marian Morrison



Plans for a solar farm at Burnhope have been refused following pleas from residents

The proposal for the site was voted down by Durham County Council's planning committee on March 5 with councillors supporting local concerns about the scale of the solar farm and loss of landscape.

But the refusal was not unanimous, with some committee members claiming the development was essential to achieving the county's net zero ambitions. The authority previously approved the solar farm in March 2023, but a judicial review brought by Burnhope residents ruled the approval "unlawful".

The applicant, Lightsource bp, resubmitted its application for the 92-hectare (227-acre) site last year and said it had improved landscaping to minimise visual impacts.

Up to 14 fields were set to be overlaid with panels, including areas near the Chapman's Well nature reserve.

The applicant is expected to appeal against the decision.

Neil McKay

Boys' Brigade Report

Leading up to the half term break we covered drawing caricatures which was led by one of our senior boys, Arnaud, congratulations to him on a great night. We planted spring primroses and after returning we had Welsh themed pancakes as it was St David's day.

Saturday the 8th March saw eight of the older boys and three of the leaders join forces with boys from Gateshead and Chester-Le-Street to tackle an 8 mile walk. We started in absolutely gorgeous weather, from the car park at Blanchland, walked up towards Slaley Forest and then turned left to complete the circular route back to the car park. On the way the more observant spotted a lot of frogs in a very shallow pool and a few grouse. The grouse were not a surprise as we were walking across a grouse moor covered in heather, some of which had been burnt to provide new tender shoots for the grouse to eat and the heather not burnt would provide cover for nesting birds.

A very challenging uphill route to start with and the downward part on the last leg were covered very comfortably by the lads. Great training for the DofE when they start it later this year. Our thanks must go to David, a member of the Boys Brigade Mountaineering Club, from the Gateshead company who organised the walk. A great time was had by all with no sore feet.

Eric Hepplewhite



Top right: Planting the spring primroses
Top left: The pancakes soon disappeared
Right: Reuben Weir with a Chinese dragon
Above and front cover: 8 mile walk



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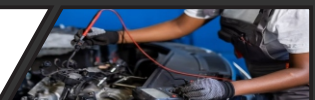
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Lanchester Parish Council

Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Ordinary Meeting 14th January – approved

Committees – Finance, Development & General Purposes Meeting 29th January - approved

Cricket Club

Members of the Cricket Club attended the meeting. They gave us an update on the Cricket Club and issues they have had. The Parish Council to work with the Cricket Club and help with any issues where possible and have regular updates with the Club.

Police Reports

Members were updated on the recent PACT report for December.

Durham County Councillors

County Cllr D Oliver provided an update on the following areas of work:

Visit with Traffic Management Officer about the parking problems in the village – a possible consultation about parking will hopefully be issued.

Bus Services – some of the issues with buses being cancelled are down to the cold weather, electrical problems.

Planning – Greencroft forest development still ongoing.

Fly tipping seems to be increasing in the village, if anyone has any issues to contact Doug and he will try and help. Doug to find out if Peth Bank is scheduled for a litter pick.

Lanchester Partnership – Trees for Lanchester Project

The Clerk received a complaint from a resident about some trees that have recently been planted. Lanchester Parish Council has no involvement in this project. The Clerk to send all correspondence to Lanchester Partnership.

Solar Planet Walk

The contractors to set up a meeting with us next week to give us an update.

Planning Update

The Councillors were updated on a number of planning applications. A second letter to further object to application DM/24/02481/ OUT 140 lodges. A letter to be submitted to the Forestry Commission about the Greencroft Forest Development.

Internal Audit Arrangements

Members considered and reviewed the policy. Mr Gordon Fletcher to be the internal auditor – approved.

Risk Assessment Schedule

Members considered and reviewed the policy – approved

Newsletter

Councillors considered the newsletter – approved

Financial report – approved.

Accounts for Payment – approved.

Lanchester Curiosities,

By Matthew James

The Ritual

Lanchester Curiosities opens once again for business. Last time, I spoke about Magick and the consequences to those who wield it...

Sometimes when locals do start to become suspicious of me and my shop, it's when my magick is at its weakest, I worry that this will be it for me. That this will be the final village that I am able to do this and soon, I will be finally caught! Lanchester might just be my downfall...

But, I know that it means it is time for me to perform The Ritual to replenish my magick...

I can't tell you how or what it is I do (I can't be giving away everything can I?) but The Ritual is something I dread doing, something I put off for as long as possible until the very last minute. Like a lot of you will, for chores you cannot stand to do...

If you've been following closely, you know that I help give souls to him. I do it simply with transactions within my shop, Lanchester Curiosities. The shop also holds the place of The Ritual to top up my magick.

It must be done at night! When the shop is closed, so no one will come in and no one will see. Sometimes The Ritual can have consequences, out of my control...

You see, dear reader, the shop opens a gateway.

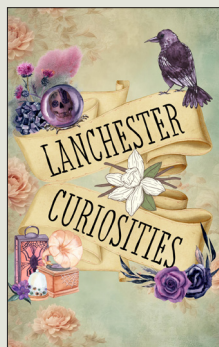
A gateway I need to travel through in order to perform The Ritual and top up my magick...

Soon you will know why I need to do it in secret, I hope you'll come back, dear reader. Just don't be too scared when you do!

I'm afraid I must close the shop for now.

Won't you pop in again, same time and same place, next month?

All of Matthew James' work can be purchased on Amazon or via www.matthewjameswriter.com.



Christening

Bertie Philip McCready was christened on Saturday 1st March at All Saints' Parish Church by Reverend Lesley Sutherland. Bertie had been due to be christened in March 2020, before Covid struck. This was followed by a lovely reception with friends and family at Crinnions, Lanchester.

Bertie is the son of Gemma and Philip McCready who volunteer for delivering the Village Voice in Foxhills Crescent.



Hours cut at the Consett Empire

Council bosses in Durham plan to cut the hours of Consett Empire in a bid, they say, to make the venue more viable. Critics point out that Durham County Council recently spent £470,000 on repairing the roof and say the 500 seater venue is "an asset not a problem."

The county council say some cinema performances are poorly attended and the rise in National Insurance also means cost-cutting measures are needed.

It is proposed to close the venue on Tuesdays and reduce the hours during other days.

The Empire currently shows a wide range of films - all modern releases - as well as hosting a wide variety of live performances, including a hugely successful panto.

Cabinet member Elizabeth Scott said: "We are doing the right thing to protect the long-term future of the theatre and ensure the council is not wasting taxpayers' money by opening on days when nobody visits."

But Labour county councillor Kevin Early argued that reducing opening hours would be a backward step, and more should be done by the authority to make the venue "more viable."

"It is an asset not a problem, it is a cracking little theatre," he said.

Neil McKay



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Police Report

Some issues from February as reported by Paul Egan, PCSO – a quiet month. Wednesday, 12/2/25, Jet Service Station A691 Lanchester, theft of fuel, male in motor vehicle makes off without paying. Three persons detained in connection with theft investigations ongoing.

Friday 14/2/25, Road Related incident, Long Edge Lane, vehicle is reported to have hit a deer. Officers attended, and the deer died of injuries, and the relevant team contacted to collect the animal. Any incidents of this type please stay at the scene and contact Durham Police on 101.

Saturday 15/2/25, Criminal Damage, Manor Grange, a property had its windows spray-painted. Officers attended, ongoing investigations, anyone with information in relation to the incident should contact Durham Police on 101.

Tuesday 18/2/25, Criminal damage, Millfield Lanchester, a property had its front windows smashed, officers attended the property, which was unoccupied, and the landlord had the property secured. Ongoing investigations if anyone has information in relation to this incident contact Durham Police on 101.

Sunday 23/2/25, Kings Head Hotel, at 00:26 a male was noticed throwing a fluid like substance into the rear yard kitchen area of the hotel. Investigations are ongoing if anyone has information in relation to this incident contact Durham Police on 101.

KoGs update – THANK YOU!

Hello readers!

Our members took over the coffee morning at Lanchester Methodist Church on Saturday 15th February as the first challenge in their latest fundraising event “10 in 10”.

10 in 10 was an event that saw our members take on 10 different challenges and activities in 10 consecutive hours (with a break for lunch and tea!).

The coffee morning was crazy busy, and all of our cakes, biscuits and bacon sandwiches went down a storm! – thanks to all who came and joined us.

Once the coffee morning was over the hard work began. We started with a group heading out into the village to do a litter pick for the community along by the Jet garage and St Bede's. We also tasked members to sand and revarnish the inside and outside of the Church porch, Polyfilla, sand and repaint the walls next to the kitchen entrance in church and fix the backs of some of the church chairs.

We had Julie Platten join us for a basic first aid lesson and had an EXCELLENT lesson in Hapkido – A Mixed Martial Arts by James which we all LOVED (thank you both). Our other activities included an hour of running in a circular route in the church, a building challenge and we ended the whole event with a 1-hour nonstop disco – but not as you think. We danced non-stop to songs such as the Macarena, 5678, YMCA, Saturday Night, Cha Cha Slide, the Birdie Song, I Am The Music Man and many more on a constant loop!

We've managed to raise over a staggering £600 (with donations still coming in!) from the day as a whole! All the money raised will go straight back to KoGs' funds to keep the costs as low as we possibly can, help towards our future trips and residential weekends and of course the renewal and replacement of games and craft activities.

KoGs runs on a Monday evening (term times) in the Methodist church from 5pm – 7:30pm and costs £3 per week/£30 per term inclusive of a two-course meal, drinks, games, drama, crafts and much more. Your first week is free so if you're in school years 4 to 6th Form and want to try it out, please come and pay us a visit or contact Laura on 07428500059 or email kidsofgod@hotmail.co.uk.

Please note that you do NOT have to have a Christian/church/religious background of any kind to come and join us EVERYONE is welcome at KoGs! We hope to see you very soon, and once again on behalf of our leaders and all of our members – THANK YOU!

Laura Cole

Far right: taking part in a bridge building challenge
Right: KoGs members working hard in the kitchen for coffee morning
Below: Worn out!
Front cover: community litter pick



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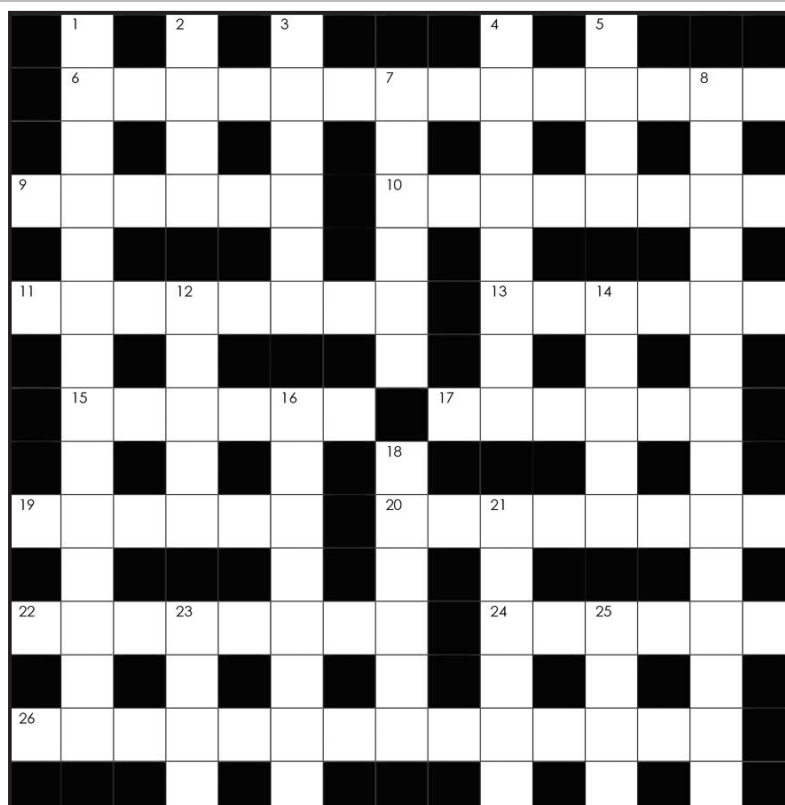
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Across

6. Word describing a person like you or me (14)
 9. Fastening device (6)
 10. Rooms sometimes used by 6 Across (8)
 11. Participant or guest at an event (8)
 13. Call on for support or inspiration (6)
 15. Cake topper (6)
 17. Flag flown by a ship (6)
 19. Town by the Trent renowned for brewing beer (6)
 20. Do business by buying or selling (8)
 22. Loyal and steadfast supporter (8)
 24. English city sometimes visited by 6 Across (6)
 26. Body of water spanned by the Severn Bridge (7,7)

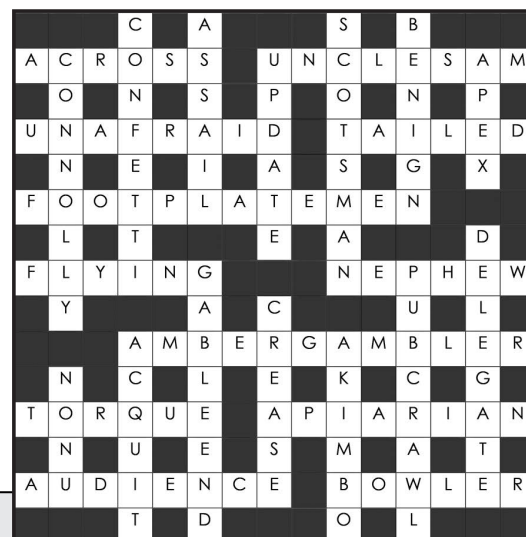
Down

1. Musical instrument (8,6)
 2. Female relative (4)
 3. Attached like a poppy (6)
 4. Term for the process of scraping or wearing away (8)
 5. Type of sporting organisation (4)
 7. Avoid or abstain from (6)
 8. Area in front of the goal on a hockey pitch (8,6)
 12. Expel by force (5)
 14. Blood vessels (5)
 16. This lot are always protesting (4-1-3)
 18. Not moving or changing (6)
 21. Unconcerned with right or wrong (6)
 23. Unable to find one's way (4)
 25. Supply with money (4)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Friday 10th April 2025** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution 205

There were 22 entries of which 20 were correct.

The winner, pulled out of the hat, is Helen Hedley

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Dear Village Voice,

Both Luke Akehurst MP and Councillor Doug Oliver are right to raise the issue of the buses (Village Voice February 2025), and I am sure that we are all grateful for the work that they and others are doing. The return fare has gone up to five pounds (it would have been six if Jamie Driscoll had not run Kim McGuinness so close for Mayor and was not clearly planning to stand again), but the Durham Day Rover ticket is still only four pounds, so if your journey would not involve leaving County Durham, then buy that. Of course, there does actually have to be a bus at all. Over, then, to our MP and to our Councillors.

Yours faithfully,
David Lindsay

WHAT'S ON - March / April 2025

Scottish Dance

Scottish dancing takes place every Friday 7.30 to 9.30 in the community centre and complete beginners are very welcome, contact Elizabeth Grayson on 0191 384 4836 for more information.

Pie, Peas and the Piano Man

Lanchester Community Cafe is running an event on the 5th April in Lanchester Community Centre. Our evening of hearty food and fabulous entertainment will start at 6pm and continue

until late. The Piano Man is an amazing Elton John/Billy Joel tribute act playing classic tunes from the 70s to present day. A traditional pie and peas supper will be served between sets and we'll finish the night with a disco. We have a fully licensed bar stocked full of very reasonably priced drinks. This is a ticketed event and booking is essential. Tickets are just £12 and these can be bought in Lanchester Community Cafe, by emailing lanchester.communitycafe@gmail.com or by calling us on 07999801722.

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City Theatre

'Educating Rita' by Willy Russell, a comedy, will be performed by Durham Dramatic Society at The City Theatre, Fowler's Yard, Durham, DH1 3 RA from April 6th to April 12th. Frank is a disillusioned English tutor, and Rita a 26 year old hairdresser who wants to know 'everything'. She embarks on an Open University course with Frank as her tutor. In this delightful comedy they each learn something from each other'. Tickets £9.50 from Durham Gala box office on 03000266600 or www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk and follow the link for tickets. Concessions £8.50 Sun/ Mon/ Tues. Performances Sunday/ Saturday matinee only 2.30 pm, Monday-Friday 7.30pm. Next production "Loot" a comedy by Joe Orton. 29th June to 5th July.

Easter Monday Egg Bowling

The usual egg dying in the traditional way organised by the Lanchester Wildlife Group. Come and take part at Pace Egg Bank. Bring along raw egg/s (white shells might show the die better). Meet on Monday 21st April at 10am behind the Bridge (AKA The Green School and the Woodlands). Free, but please make a donation.

Kings Head Socials

Join us on our coffee socials to meet like-minded people for coffee, cake & a chat. No need to book, just come along. Parents & Carers after the School Run - Wednesday 9-10:30
Seniors Over 60's - Wednesday 10:30-12
Parents of Babies & Toddlers - Thursday 10:30-12

Lanchester Choral Society: Finale!

Lanchester Choral Society's concert on 23rd May in the Methodist Church will be a special occasion as it marks the retirement of its conductor David Hughes after 53 years at the helm. It will feature popular choral items as well as a semi-dramatic presentation of Gilbert and Sullivan's Trial by Jury. We have invited soloists who have appeared with us recently including Elizabeth Woods, Anna Foster, Hilary Ions, Andrew Fowler, Paul Smith, and Ian Gray. Definitely a concert not to be missed! Ticket information in April Village Voice.

Willow Burn: Meet the Author Event with Local Author Susan Gray

Location: The Willows Café, Willow Burn Hospice, Howden Bank, Lanchester, Durham, DH7 0QS

When: Sunday 13 April 2025, 2pm

Join us for afternoon tea as we welcome Local Author Susan Gray. Susan Gray lives with her husband in Consett. She has a son and daughter, both married, two granddaughters and a grand dog. After a career in primary teaching, Susan embraced retirement fulfilling her ambition to travel, attend Wimbledon and write a novel. She enjoys reading, walking, crafting, doing puzzles, catching up with friends over a coffee and being a gran. Susan writes romantic mysteries set in the North East in the 1920s and has three published books; 'Spanish House Secrets', 'Blossoming of Truth' and her newly released novel 'Hope on Hope'.

Ticket price of £15 includes afternoon tea for one, meet and greet with Susan and hear her inspirational writing journey and her motivations to become a writer as she presents her inspiring talk 'You Are Never Too Old to Follow Your Dreams', plus a raffle, tombola, games and more. Tickets can be reserved with: Ali English at aenglish@willowburnhospice.org.uk / 01207 529 224

Thursday Club

The next meeting of the Thursday Club will be held in the Main Hall of the Community Centre on April 17th at 1.30pm. We shall be having a talk from Steven Palmer - The Bee Man..

Paradiso Social Club

Sunday 13th April 2025: 'Mary Queen of Scots' "Margot Robbie and Saoirse Ronan excel as wily foes in Josie Rourke's striking take on the rivalry between Elizabeth I and her Scottish cousin" (Mark Kermode in the Guardian). In this historical and biographical drama, Mary Stuart's (Saoirse Ronan's) attempt to overthrow her cousin Elizabeth I (Margot Robbie), Queen of England, finds her condemned to years of imprisonment before facing execution. Lanchester Community Centre, 7pm refreshments and raffle. Film starts at 7.30pm. Members: £4, Non-members: £5. Annual membership: £5

Lanchester Library

Library Book Club

On Monday April 28th at 2.30 to 3.30pm, the group will be discussing 'What July Knew'

by Emily Koch. 'It is a brilliant, emotional, domestic thriller that really leaves a mark' (Sarah Collins Bookworm Wordpress.com). It is set in the 1990's, I am not sure if everyone will enjoy this, but I am looking forward to it. Will the group have divided opinions, time will tell. You never know what topic will emerge in our discussions! *Thursday Book Club* On Thursday April 17th from 4.00-5.00pm, this group will be discussing 'The Fault in Our Stars' by John Green. This book gets 4 plus stars, it is a Goodreads Choice Award and Winner for Readers' Favourite Young Adult Fiction, 'I fell in love the way you fall asleep: slowly, then all at once.' Readers must decide and give their own opinions. If you would like to join this group, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.

Pins and Needles will meet up on April 3rd from 10-11.30am. Bring along your wool, thread, needles and patterns and share your makes and get advice too. Do you like knitting, crocheting? Everyone is welcome, enjoy. *Scrabble Group* meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30 pm. Do you enjoy this word game and want to get on the Triple Word Square? Come along and enjoy the company. *Rummikub Group* meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 1.30 to 3.30pm. A great strategic but simple game with tiles that are always changing. It is a very enjoyable game *Children's crafts* are available every afternoon and Saturday. Different crafts, ideas and materials are set out in the library for children to be creative, pop along with your children and enjoy.

Lanchester Methodist Church

Coffee Mornings

Coffee mornings are held every Saturday at the Methodist Church between 10 and 12. If you would like to organise a coffee morning for your organisation, please contact Judith Brown on 521898.

Wellbeing walk

Every Monday at 1pm on the village green next to the war memorial. Walk lasts up to 90 minutes, all welcome. Just turn up before 1pm and introduce yourself to a leader. www.durham.gov.uk/walkdurham or call 03000 262539.

History Society

We will be meeting on Friday 4th April to hear what Anthony Atkinson has to tell us about Clementine Churchill and on

Friday 2nd May to hear what Dave Shotten has to tell us "Who stole the treasure of St Cuthbert?". We meet in the community centre arriving at 6.45 for 7.00 start. There will be someone to get you through the entry security system till 7.00 so please be prompt. All are welcome.

Playgroup

Every Friday at 9:30 at Croft View Halls. Find us on Facebook, 'Lanchester's new playgroup'.

The Lanchester Community Orchard Work Sessions

We meet regularly to maintain and care for the orchard. Come and join us to find out more and help look after the trees. There are jobs for all ages and we always stop for coffee! New members are always welcome. For all our work session dates please visit the What's On page of our website lanchesterorchard.org

Lanchester Hiking Group

Meets at 10am every second Wednesday. Walks are about 5 miles long within a 30 minute radius of Lanchester – lifts provided. For further details please call Helen Thomas on 07712425623 (or email hdbthomas@live.com).

Lunch Club

The next meeting of the lunch held at Lynwood House will be 8th April 12pm start all welcome.

Monday Art Group

We are a small friendly group who enjoy painting and drawing, and come together to learn, and give each other support in making art. We meet each Monday in the Community Centre from 10.00am to 12pm with an occasional demonstration by visiting artists or our own members. New members are most welcome. Contact tojimrafferty@yahoo.com if you would like further information.

Wildlife group

Tuesday 8th April at 7:30pm, room 3 Community Centre. Please be on time due to the security system. Rachel Hepburn, Building Diversity.

Vintage Tractor Club

Meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm in Lanchester Social Club.

Flower Club

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 23rd April in Lanchester Community Centre main hall at 1.30 pm. A practical demonstration by Marion Hinchley "Midelino Madness". Everyone is welcome. We will all be given

a vase, some flowers and foliage, Marion will then show us what to do. Then hopefully we can all go home with a small floral arrangement.

Lanchester Partnership Friends of Longovicium

After a two month lay-off our first meeting of the year will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 27th March in the Community Centre. The main subject for discussion will be the possibility of applying for a Lottery Heritage Fund Grant. For what purpose? How much? What could we do to enhance the history of Lanchester? This will obviously be a long-term project. Information on the Friends and our work may be obtained from Mrs. M. Williams, tel: 01207 520063 or from Rodney Hawkins email at hawkins_15@sky.com. Our website provides details of our work and investigations to date, see www.longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com (note there is no dot between couk). You can also find us on Facebook Friends of Longovicium where we have up-to-date information if available.

Musical Memories

Join us for music, refreshments and Easter fun activities. 2nd April 2025, 2pm, Lynwood House, Durham Road, Lanchester. Musical Memories is a fun, friendly and stimulating music group using the ability of music to improve your brain activity, wellbeing and mood. We welcome people living with conditions that affect memory. For further information email lanchesterdfc@gmail.com

Social Club

5th April Ronnie Richmond
12th April David Bryan
19th April Laura Cairns
26th April Kris Wish

WI

Our next meeting is Monday 7th April 7.00 pm in the Community Centre, topic for the evening is Pasta Making with Karen Auty. Visitors are always welcome to join us, if you would like further information please contact us on lanchesterwi@talktalk.net

Red Cross Coffee Morning

The Red Cross are holding a Coffee Morning on Wednesday 2nd April 10.00 to 12.00 in the Methodist Church. Please come along to enjoy homemade cake and a chat with friends while raising funds. A raffle will be held in the shop.

Ladies who lunch

We have just enjoyed one of the best lunches of all time.

We were back at the Steel House Bistro - Derwentside College's in-house training facility for catering. The college has recently been voted No 1 College in the North East for Student and Employer satisfaction. After our lunch, you can understand why and totally agree.

Lunch is two courses for £11.95 and three courses for £13.95. And such an innovative choice of menu.

Of course, it's not all about the food. The bistro itself is lovely, and Angelo and his students give a warm welcome to all.

Our meal had been pre-booked so we were soon enjoying for starters, French onion soup with cheese croutons; baked gnocchi in a cheese sauce with wild mushrooms; and mini pork pies with homemade piccalilli.

Mains were plaice in breadcrumbs with mushy peas, tartare sauce and chips and beef stroganoff with oven baked rice and crispy potatoes. Desserts were cherry, pecan and buttermilk pudding with buttermilk ice cream; lemon verbena posset with spiced berries and shortbread; ginger burnt cream with East Yorkshire sugar cakes.

An exceptional meal on every level - in delightful surroundings and in good company made for a most convivial lunch time.

If you haven't already discovered the hidden gem that is the Steel House Bistro for yourself, we can only recommend that you make the discovery asap.

We are already booked in for our next visit.

The Gourmet Girls



All Saints' Roman Catholic Church Music and Ideas Night

Another great social event was held on Saturday 15th February in the Parish Centre. So much musical talent was on show; all our own parishioners. Father Charles and Father Edih were there and Father Edih also sang a beautiful Nigerian rendition of The Lord's Prayer.

We also asked everyone for suggestions for this year's social calendar. We received an excellent response.

Some would like a repeat of some of our events. There were also some wonderful ideas for new events. So, all in all a productive and entertaining evening.

The picture is of all who entertained us. I am sure you will recognise many of our stars. A big thank you to everyone: entertainers, workers and our lovely audience.

A special mention to Heraldo Biasi who is our excellent steering Chairperson of our social group.

Lestrine Kelly



Springtime in Lanchester

*captured by
Keith Brown
(Editor)*



From the House

I'd like to start this month's update with a thank you to Lanchester Parish Councillor Alison Gray for having me along to canvass locally with her. Although it was a chilly day it was great to chat to so many Lanchester residents about the issues impacting them.

I recently visited Willow Burn hospice and was very impressed by the quality of the care and facilities offered at the hospice.

It was clear to see how dedicated the

staff and volunteers are to supporting patients and their loved ones. Hospices are vital services within our community, and I will do all I can to support them.

Along with many residents of Burnhope, I objected to the solar farm and was pleased to hear that Durham County Council have now refused the application. The solar farm is not in keeping with the surroundings and this is a positive outcome for Burnhope and Lanchester.

It was an honour to be asked to unveil a plaque commemorating Janet Box, a devoted community activist who was instrumental in getting Burnhope Community Centre opened. The centre is a pillar of the community and Janet will be fondly remembered for her work and commitment to the area.

Cancelled bus services continue to be an issue across the constituency. I met with Go North East and have made clear repeated service failures are not acceptable. I have also raised the issue in Parliament and will continue to monitor the situation. If you are being impacted by poor bus services, please contact me on the details below.

If you are a constituent in need of help or advice, then please do not hesitate to email me on luke.akehurst.mp@parliament.uk, call me on 0191 371 8834 or go to my website www.lukeakehurstmp.co.uk.

Best wishes

Luke Akehurst, Member of Parliament for North Durham



Lanchester Medical Centre: Patient Participation Group

Spring is good for health and wellbeing

Spring brings warmer weather, the trees in bud, beautiful blossom, spring flowers blooming all to make us feel more joyful looking forward to another year.

Spring gives us hope

Hope and optimism make life more enjoyable and are thought to make us more resilient against things like stress and anxiety. An optimistic outlook on life helps recover from illness quicker.

Spring helps us to feel happier and energised

We all enjoy increased daylight, sunshine and warmer temperatures that spring brings. More hours of sunlight cause our brain to produce more of the mood-enhancing chemical serotonin, which makes us feel more alert, energised and happier!

Spring encourages us to become more active

It is more beneficial to exercise in fresh air and natural light, as the days get lighter, longer, and warmer we are more encouraged to start doing outdoor activities, going for walks, playing some old-fashioned garden games. Join an exercise group, Pilates, Yoga or even a Step class.

Spring is a great time to get busy in the garden

Gardening has a positive effect on our health. It not only helps keep us physically fit but can also significantly improve our mental health and wellbeing. Research has found that smelling flowers or weeding can decrease blood pressure, increase brain activity and produce a sense of wellbeing.



Lanchester Medical Centre

Spring sunshine tops up our Vitamin D

Vitamin D is a unique vitamin that most people don't get enough of; a deficiency can cause health problems. Some vitamin D comes from our diet, but 80% comes from sun exposure.

From about late March/early April to the end of September, most people should be able to make all the vitamin D they need from sunlight on their skin.

Spring is a great time to review your diet

The warmer spring weather is the perfect opportunity to ditch the winter stodge and enjoy fresh, spring produce, asparagus, beetroot, broccoli, kale and spinach. British fruit will soon be in the shops, apples, pears and rhubarb.

Spring is the season to feel fabulous and healthy, take time to slow down, relax, hug a tree, walk barefoot in the grass, smell the flowers, or simply sit outside with no devices and enjoy the sights and sounds of spring.

Ref: Journal of Environmental Science and Technology; Vitamin D NHS



Community Centre News



Here is your latest news from your Community Centre

What's Coming:

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 9th April at 7pm in the conference room, everyone is very welcome.

What's New:

New tables and chairs in meeting room 3, the cafe area.

Become a Supporter of Your Community Centre:

Volunteer to be our Treasurer, we really need help with this!

Become a friend and donate £24 a year.

Volunteer to help out with our garden or in the office.

Follow us on Facebook, click and share posts.

Join our committee.

Donate good books for us to resell.

Pop your spare change in our loose change boxes that are in reception.

Come along to events we hold.

Fundraise in the Great North Run for us.

Room Hire:

Are you planning a family event or business function? We have 2 amazing large halls to hire from as little as £15.20 per hour; 2 small meeting rooms from £9.70 per hour; a conference room and a larger meeting room. We are a great place to hold any parties and functions.

Fitness 4U:

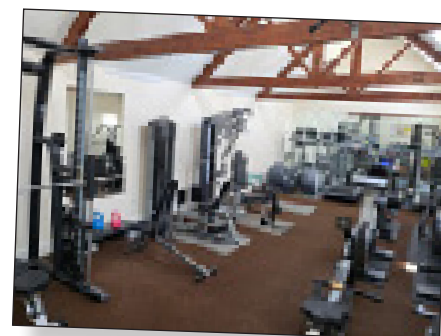
We have a new treadmill and a new multi gym. Our gym is open: Monday to Friday 7am - 9pm;

Saturday and Sunday 9am - 4pm. No contracts and it's only £19.50 a month.

The office is staffed Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-1.15pm. On Tuesday and Thursdays, it's 9am-3pm. If you have any enquiries about any of the activities or clubs available or you want to know more about hiring our brilliant venue, please get in touch on 01207 521275 or drop in and have a chat it will be good to meet you!

To keep up to date with what's going on check out our Information Point; follow us on Facebook 'Lanchester Community Centre' or check out our website - <https://lanchestercc.co.uk/> or scan the QR code for our website.

Marie Murphy



Lanchester All Saints' Catholic Primary School

It is wonderful to see signs of spring in the air. Our Nursery pupils have enjoyed taking part in the RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch and have learned a lot about the birds in our local area. Our pupils in Reception class have produced some detailed observational drawings of daffodils highlighting their colour and simplicity. In Year One, the children visited Hartlepool Naval Museum to complement their learning on seafarers and how ships have changed over time. Our oldest infant class have enjoyed celebrating their learning about the Victorians this half term. Their class assembly revolved around the positive impact the Victorian era had on our lives today (including the individual impact made by Queen Victoria, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Dr. John Snow, Dr. Barnardo, Lord Shaftesbury and Emmeline Pankhurst) and they developed their understanding by undertaking workshops at Beamish Museum, which we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep. Year Three loved their visit to Sunderland Winter Garden earlier in the month and were complimented on their behaviour and the standard of our knowledge; they also enjoyed leaving school to take part in a basketball competition. Year Four have recently returned from a two-night stay at the Youth Village. They stayed in a chalet and enjoyed lots of activities related to spirituality and character formation. Year Five are currently planning for their residential trip to Northumberland where they will explore our local area and learn more about their heritage. Each year, the pupils love this time away with their friends and we all know the sea-air does everyone good! Our Year Six have recently finished a project designing their own robots. They began by researching useful robots currently available in the UK. Next, they came up with ideas for problems that robots could possibly solve. Then they designed their robots by sketching and considering materials and electrical circuits. They used an electrical kit to create circuits that could be used in their robots. Finally, they used Tinkercad to create online 3D designs of their robots. There's always so much learning taking place...and we wouldn't have it any other way!

Frances Stephenson
Head Teacher



Top: Year 6 using Tinkercad
Above: Year 6 enjoying World Book Day
Left: Year 2 Victorian assembly
Front cover: Nursery children enjoying the outdoor area



St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College

We are very lucky to have so many incredible performers here at St. Bede's so we were exceptionally proud that two of our students, Helena Ritson (Year 13) and Rhian Fernandes (Year 11) competed for the prestigious James Etherington Music Award.

Both students were absolutely fabulous on the night! Congratulations to Helena who was awarded third prize and the Bob Watson Special Award for her performance on piano. Well done to Rhian who was runner-up for her mezzo-soprano performance. This is a fantastic achievement; we are very proud of you both!

Catherine Hammill
Head Teacher



Right: Caption Helena Ritson
and Rhian Fernandes

Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

We have enjoyed a wonderful few weeks in school with so many exciting things taking place across school. Our Early Years children are absolutely thriving in such a wonderful and spacious environment. Whenever I show prospective parents round, they cannot believe the space we have – both inside and out. The outdoor area is always being developed, and our woodland now has to be timetabled, it is so popular! If you are looking for Nursery provision for your child, please contact the Office to come and look round. We recommend you come during the school day so that you can see our children in action! It is also good for you to see the wonderful relationships across school too. We are very flexible in our offer and provide 15 hours across mornings, afternoons or 2.5 days as well as 30 hours across all 5 days. We also have childcare from 7.30am until 6pm for those working parents who need it. Please contact the School Office on 01207 520436 or: school.office@lanchesterep.net for a visit.

During February our children studied different world religions in RE including Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. We enjoyed visits to the Central Mosque, the Reform Synagogue as well as the Hindu Temple in Newcastle. We were also thrilled to welcome Rabbi David to school to talk to our Year 5 children. These visits really helped our children to bring their learning to life and learn so much about what life is like for Muslims, Jews and Hindus in Britain today.

World Book Day was at the beginning of this month, and it was great to see so many children (and staff!) get into the spirit of the day! We do often wonder how appropriate it is to ask children to dress up, but they always have the option of non-uniform or pyjamas too. However, some of their costumes are absolutely immense – all credit to the parents who obviously get into the spirit of the day too!

We had a wonderful ski residential at the end of February. 33 children, staff and parents enjoyed a fabulous week in Alpe d'Huez in the French Alps. Again, we had some beginners and some children who had skied before but they all made immense progress during the week and enjoyed some magnificent scenery. It is Dubai next when 8 children head off to enjoy a trip of a lifetime. During our time there, we will visit two partner schools as well as going up the Burj Khalifa, a desert safari and a visit to the Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi. What a week they are going to have!

Mrs Jane Davis,
Head Teacher

Top: World Book Day – T-Rex
Right: World religions
Front cover: The ski trip



Changing Shop Fronts

New shop signs have appeared in Lanchester over the last month, hopefully indicating good things to come!

Ged has commissioned a new sign for Lanchester Hardware showing that it has been around for 100 years!

Grandpa's Fish Bar replaced the old Lanchester Fish Bar sign, and this has already opened (see story on page 3). Osteria and Ravellos Italian Delicatessen signs mean that these two shops will come back to life very soon as new eateries for Lanchester.



Lanchester Bowling Club

Season Review: The One That Shouldn't Have Been

Anybody who says they don't like winning is fooling themselves. According to experts, winning releases a hormone called dopamine which is linked to feeling pleasure - so the more you win the better you feel.

Whilst there are some games you deserve to win, perhaps the most satisfying are the ones you shouldn't have won but did. One such game was in the friendly fixture against Birtley where the team of Sharon Dunn, John Sanderson, Stuart Lee and I were up against it from end one. We had never played together as a team before and the Birtley team quickly and efficiently built up a good lead.

Even though we started to chip away at their total with four ends to go, by the time we got to the final end we were still trailing by two shots. To make matters worse, after both teams had bowled five woods each, Birtley had four woods surrounding the jack, penning it in; so effectively we were six shots from even getting a draw with only three bowls left!

As Big Al said to Little Norm in "The Beiderbecke Connection": A beautiful game bowls: simplicity, elegance and a touch of the unknown. It was at this point that Stuart created the "unknown" by producing the shot of the match. Releasing his wood, it travelled at pace in a slight curve up the rink eluding the opposition's guarding bowls and smacking into the jack. Released from its prison, the jack scurried towards the back of the rink where, for once, we had bowls waiting and we were now holding at least two shots.

Thankfully their number three's final bowl was short. I bowled my first wood using my backhand. It curved perfectly around the

pack and actually hit the jack, nudging it even closer to our bowls, meaning we were now winning. Their skip did nothing with his first wood and with my final one I managed to follow a similar track to my first, so it too counted. Only their skip could prevent us from gaining what would be an unlikely win. Learning from my bowls, he bowled the same line as I had. I held my breath as it rolled up the rink and arced around the short woods. Luckily, however, he hadn't bowled it quite hard enough and, although he reduced our score by one, we were still holding three and so won the game by one wood. The dopamine was certainly working by the time we sat down to tea. After all for twenty ends we were losing, by the end of the all important twenty first we had won.

Bob Cuthbertson



Left: Sharon Dunn who played the lead
Right: Stuart Lee who bowled the shot of the match

Tennis News

Following a recent application to Derwentside Trust for Sports and Arts, the tennis club is very happy to share our good news, the club has been successful in their bid to secure funding to provide additional free tennis coaching.

The coaching programme is a very important part of what the club has to offer, encouraging people of all abilities from across our local community to experience tennis, possibly for the first time, or to build on existing skills, or perhaps encourage some to return to the sport after many years away.

This grant was one of 33 awards provided to sports organisations, amateur theatre groups, and community associations across the local area. A fund of £50k was provided from the dissolution of the former Derwentside Trust for Sports and Arts, known as Leisure works.

A spokesperson from the trustees quoted: "We are extremely happy to use this fund to support a huge range of organisations with a reach across the former Derwentside District Council Area. Our decision to fund these organisations recognises the immense work of volunteers across the area and how much difference even a small amount can make to these organisations".

If you are interested in taking part in these free coaching sessions, dates will be announced very soon, please check our website or Facebook page for updates.

A date for your diary - come and join us on Saturday 29th March between 10am - 12noon for our coffee morning at Lanchester Methodist Church.

Spring is definitely in the air, and it will soon be time to open our doors for the grass courts season 2025!

We have a special reduced price membership for all new members this year, this includes individuals and families. Please visit our website for all information on membership, our coaching programme, and much more!

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/lanchesterlawntennisclub>

Barbara Ridley

