

pontnews&views

FREE monthly magazine for Ponteland and district

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***Work starts on
£6m school***

***Under-age drinking:
police warning to parents***

***Full list of spring adult
education classes at PCHS***

Round Table in crisis

Bumper letters page

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Parents warned over under-age drinking

By Jon Gray Community Beat Officer Ponteland

No house burglaries have been reported in Ponteland/Darras so far this year, apart from one incident when a car key was taken from behind an open door and used to steal the car. The car was found abandoned later the same day, near Throckley.

A house was broken into in Tranwell recently. Although not in our area, it is not that far away. A farm building was broken into in Ogle, with tools being stolen, and a building site was entered at Prestwick, with various items stolen from it.

The Care Village, North Road, Ponteland, reported a burglary to one of their sheds, in which gardening tools were stolen. Damage was caused to two parked cars overnight in Ponteland – the offences not being linked. A promising line of enquiry is being followed up for one of them.

Minor damage has been caused to the Bellway office building behind the Pele tower in the centre of the village, I suspect by youths playing with a football in the car park. The advice is to keep out of the car park - the area is being watched.

There has been a slight rise in the amount of drink that has been taken by us from teenagers under-aged around Ponteland. The increase in underage street drinking is a national problem, and has made TV news coverage recently.

The majority of parents around here are prepared to take action to stop their children doing this but, concerningly, there is a sizeable minority who would ignore the

issue, with the complaint that their kids are being "picked on" and there is "nothing to do".

We receive reports that some parents buy cans of beer for their around 14 yr old children, obviously thinking it's acceptable to allow them to drink and then wander about the area, some distance from their homes, up until the late hours of the weekend nights.

Fine, if you don't mind your kids becoming alcohol dependant by the time they're 19, or you want to see them hospitalised or get involved in trouble, or end up at a police station. They are your gene packets, your future investments.

Another problem is that they are a nuisance to the majority of their peers, who don't want to drink, whether by trying to persuade them to drink as well, or by assaulting lone individuals, when alcohol fuelled, and with an advantage ratio of at least five to one.

As said, the vast majority of parents will try to address this problem but be aware, if you allow your children to hang around the streets, some distance from home, there is this minority about. They are targeted by us, or "picked on" as their parents would put it, but it is ultimately in their own interest.

There are people who can help through the high school. It could be argued that, nationally, younger people do not see a particularly good example set by older people when it comes to drinking. A very complex problem.



By John Hunter

A group of young people are appealing for business support for their bid to bring a skate park to Ponteland.

A visit was made to Prudhoe skate park, recently planned by young people there, in late December to give the group an idea of what is achievable. A group of 16 young people attended the visit, taking with them a variety of bikes, boards and skates.

On Thursday 12 January two of the group members, Adam Jeffrey and Josh Browell, took part in a presentation delivered to Ponteland Parish Council.

The group continue to meet every Monday evening at the leisure centre from 6.30pm

DEMO SALE

		List Price	Saving on New	SALE PRICE
55 plate	Ka 1.3 Design 3-door. Panther black, 4,000 miles	£7,745	£2,000	£5,745
55 plate	Fiesta 1.25 Zetec Climate 3-door. Black or silver, 1,500 miles	£10,545	£3,000	£7,545
55 plate	Fiesta 1.25 Zetec 5-door. Silver or black, 1,000 miles	£10,545	£2,535	£7,992
55 plate	Fiesta 1.4 TDCi Style 3-door. Choice of 3, 6,000 miles	£10,145	£2,707	£7,438
05 plate	Steet KA Luxury (+Hardtop). Silver, 6,000 miles	£15,650	£4,255	£11,395
05 plate	NEW MODEL Focus 1.4 Studio 5-door. Colorado red, 6,000 miles	£11,845	£2,895	£8,950
55 plate	NEW MODEL Focus 1.6 LXAC 5-door. Colorado red, 3,000 miles	£13,645	£3,650	£9,995
55 plate	NEW MODEL Focus 1.6 LXAC 5-door. Rosso red, 3,000 miles	£14,245	£3,750	£10,475
05 plate	NEW MODEL Focus 1.6 TDCi LX Estate. 8,000 miles	£15,945	£4,000	£11,945
55 plate	Focus C-MAX 1.6 TDCi Style 5-door. Machine silver, 3,000 miles	£15,925	£4,000	£11,925
54 plate	Mondeo 1.8 LX 5-door. Honour Green, 13,000 miles	£16,150	£8,185	£7,965
05 plate	Mondeo 2.0 Ghia X Automatic. Rosso red, 6,000 miles	£20,950	£6,000	£14,950
55 plate	Galaxy 1.9 (130ps) Ghia DVD. Metropolis Blue, 5,000 miles	£26,310	£7,355	£18,995
55 plate	Ranger Thunder 4x4 (inc Tail Box). Blue over silver, 4,000 miles	£19,900+VAT		£15,750+VAT

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to 8pm. A further meeting will now take place on Thursday evenings in the upstairs room of the Blackbird. This meeting will not be as formal and is open for any young person to attend to gain information, advice or start their own project.

The group of skaters are planning several fundraising events over the coming months including a bag pack at Somerfields on Saturday 18 February and a sponsored 50-mile walk from Carter Bar to Ponteland.

Public support for the young people when they are taking part in these and future events would be greatly appreciated. We would also be most interested to hear from any local business that would be prepared to sponsor the group during their walk.

Latest NEWS

from Ponteland Parish Council



Public questions

Two questions had been received from residents. Question one queried whether the Parish Council had any influence at all over the location of the Library. The Chairman stated that both the Parish and Borough Councils would be consultees in relation to any application relating to the library. An opinion could therefore be submitted to the County Council when a planning application was lodged. The area would benefit from improved library facilities and the opportunity was available to have an improved service for residents of the Parish. Question two asked whether arrangements had been made to monitor traffic flow from Meadowfield on to the A696 West Road from 13 February 2006 when the new Health Centre opens. The Chairman replied that he did not know the answer to this query. However, it would be checked and the residents would be advised.

Presentation by Ponteland Community High School

The Chairman welcomed Stephen Prandle (Headteacher), John Hunter and George McCreedy to the meeting. Two pupils from the High School, Adam Jeffrey and Josh Browell were also in

attendance to participate in the presentation, which related to the future of the Ponteland Youth Service and a request for support from the Parish Council through financial assistance.

Ponteland CCTV

A further date of 14 February 2006 had been received for the installation of the fifth camera.

Report on recent planning decisions

30 West Road - deferred for site visit.

Telecommunications mast at Callerton Lane - refused.

The Planning Appeal for 17 Runnymede Road had been dismissed.

The NCC Planning Committee had agreed parking in front of residents properties at Prestwick Road Ends become residents parking only.

Applications for grants

Dalton Village Hall - A grant of £600 is to be made to Dalton Village Hall.

Budget 2006/07

The Parish Council is to precept the sum of £136,842 on Castle Morpeth Borough Council for the year 2006/07.

Date for April meeting

The April meeting is to be held on

Wednesday 12 April at the Memorial Hall.

Recognition of award to Michael Taylor MBE

The Chairman referred to the award of the MBE to Michael Taylor which was much deserved. It was agreed to send a letter of congratulation to Mr Taylor and a bouquet of flowers to Mrs Taylor.

Coates Green - Commemorative Stone

The commemorative stone had been placed on the site next to the oak tree on Coates Green. A small event had been held on 20 December involving pupils from Ponteland First School and three RAF veterans from World War II. Tony Plumb from Ward Brothers had supplied the stone and the Council wished to express their thanks and appreciation for his generosity.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas lights had been a great success again with the exception of Broadway shopping centre. The Clerk was asked to contact the County Council regarding the problems in that area.

Vandalism - Verger's Cottage

The Chairman referred to a recent spate of vandalism at the Parish office resulting in broken windows, smashed signs and cutting of the telephone lines on more than one occasion. The police had been informed.

Planning

It was reported that the County Council had approved outline permission to build a fire station at Pegswood. Work would only be carried out after work had commenced on the Pegswood bypass.

Car Parks - Ponteland

The Borough Council had started work on the car parks in Ponteland.

Northumberland County Council report

Councillor Charleton reported that road improvements in Ponteland had been delayed until 2007/08 due to the utilities works being carried out. The improvements to Limestone Lane would be carried out next year.

Letter from Ponteland Scouts

Information had been received from Ponteland Scouts relating to their recent experiences participating in the Tall Ships Race. Councillors were invited to visit the Scouts on a Wednesday evening at the Scout Hut. It was agreed that Councillors would visit the Scouts on an evening in early January. It was also suggested that a letter be sent to Richard Walker thanking him for his hard work with the Scouting movement in Ponteland.

The above report is based on minutes from the Parish Council's meetings in December and January.



George celebrates his centenary with a nice cuppa

Former tea salesman George Nicholson celebrated his 100th birthday with family and friends the way he knows best - over a nice cuppa.

The great-grandfather has enjoyed a long and happy retirement since leaving the family business Davison & Pickering Ltd back in 1965.

"I've been retired longer than I was in work," he joked.

George was born on January 30, 1906, one of four siblings whom he has all outlived. Brought up in Jesmond, he commissioned the building of his home in Runnymede Road, Darras Hall, in 1933 and has lived there ever since.

Married to Gwenneth for 35 years, he has two sons, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

After serving his apprenticeship with Travers in London in the early-1920s, George returned to the family food wholesale business, based in Stowell Street, Newcastle. He specialized in tea and coffee blending, and drove all over the region, before progressing right through to become a director.

In the 1930s he trod the boards with Ponteland Repertory Society, and was a member of the Bowling Club until he hit 90.

George added: "The secret to a good life is a good wife. I also have a good, healthy appetite, good food, and I like a good cup of tea."

Congratulations George.

Round Table could fold

Last ditch bid for new members

It has raised more than £100,000 for good causes over the past five decades. But unless new members can be attracted soon, Ponteland Round Table will fold.

This would rob the community of thousands of pounds worth of funds raised each year and mean a new organizer would be needed for the annual Wheelbarrow Race.

Malcolm Dunn is one of only three remaining members. Working with chairman Paul Makepeace and Mark Benn, he oversees events such as the Annual Sportsmans Dinner to raise cash.

They meet every second and fourth Monday at 7.30pm at the Blackbird Inn.

One of the problems is the Round Table upper age limit which sees

members retire to the '41' Club when they come of age. This has accounted for the departures of six members over the past year.

Malcolm, of Edge Hill, juggles his position with his full time job running a motor dealership and family life with his wife Suzanne and their three daughters. He said: "I joined 13 years ago, when there were 25 members. Now there are three. Yet the '41' club has over 40 members and is thriving."

Round Table was founded in Norwich in 1927 and the National Association of Round Tables of Great Britain has more than 1,250 members. Anyone aged between 18-40 can join.

If you want to find out more, contact Malcolm at maldunn2@aol.com or on (01661) 872468.

Work starts on new first school

Work on Ponteland's £6.1m new first school has been officially launched with a sod-cutting ceremony.

The 300-pupil school, being built on the site of the existing Middle School, will be ready by February 2007.

The new building, funded by Northumberland County Council, is designed by the authority's design partner the Northumberland Alliance and built by construction partner Gleeson Building.

It will have eight classrooms, a 26-place nursery and will feature sustainability and energy efficient measures including solar panels installed onto the hall roof to assist with the heating of domestic hot water and earth tubs to provide natural ventilation.

There will also be a teaching block and sports facility with eight changing rooms for pupils and two larger changing rooms for team sports available for the Middle School. The sports block will also double as a community facility.

Both schools are being provided with extensive new playground facilities incorporating an outdoor safe play area to the nursery, amphitheatre, orchard, school

garden and outdoor dining area.

They will also benefit from the introduction of a multi-use games area (MUGA), three new football pitches, a running track and long jump and high jump facilities constructed to Sport England standards.



Cover Shot: Pictured at the launch are Lynn Blain, headteacher of Ponteland First School and her predecessor Mike Lawler, with pupils Max Lillico, six, Joshua Nixon, four, and Ruby Bartholomew, eight.

News in brief...

PONTELAND SENIOR GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

The Spring speakers are: February 13 Norman Dunn - What Fettle; March 13 Malcolm Byrne - Dreadnoughts; April 10 Neil Donald - Scouts & Tall Ships Race; May 8 Prof. John Derry Wellington - The Iron Duke. The Senior Gentlemen's Club meets on the second Monday of every month at the Memorial Hall - 2pm for 2.30pm. Following the speaker's talk, tea and biscuits are served. The present subscription is £5pa. For further information please contact the Club Secretary Spenser Mullins on (01661) 820754.

PONTELAND WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We shall be holding a Fundraising Coffee Morning on 4th March in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, between 10am and 11.30am. Entrance fee 50p to cover coffee and scones. Attractions include a raffle and stalls selling cakes, plants, books and bric-a-brac. All are welcome.

BOROUGH COUNCIL DECISION MAKERS COME TO PONTELAND

Castle Morpeth Borough Council's Executive Board is holding its next meeting at Merton Hall, Ponteland, on Thursday March 2, starting 6pm.

MOUNTAIN BIKE FOUND

The Parish Council's Contractor found a mountain bike on Council land in December. This was reported to the Police, but has not been claimed. If you think this may be your missing bicycle, please contact the Parish Council office on (01661) 825092 (weekdays, 9.30am - 12.30pm).

PONTELAND FLORAL ART CLUB

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road at 7.30pm. Visitors are very welcome and we charge £3.50 or £6 for area demonstrator or a national demonstrator. The flowers are raffled and coffee is served after the demonstration.

PONTELAND URC SALE

Ponteland United Reformed Church is holding its annual sale next month. Nearly new clothes, linen, books, hardware and bric-a-brac are all on offer. The sale is being held at the church on the Broadway, Darras Hall, on Friday March 10 from 10am-4pm and Saturday March 11 from 10am-11.30am. Admission costs 20p and tea and coffee will be on sale.

CALLERTON GARDEN & FLOWER CLUB

Our meetings are held in Ponteland Memorial Hall on the third Wednesday of the month. The next meeting is on Wednesday 15th February when Mrs Marjorie Moore will demonstrate 'It's a Wonderful World'. Visitors are very welcome. Cost £3.50.

Your Letters...

The Editor
Pont News & Views

Philip Ham's letter in last month's magazine generated so many responses we will have to publish some next month.

I'm afraid I have to echo the views of Mr. Ham in the Pont News & Views of January. I welcome development and regeneration of the village centre but this does not mean placing as many overpriced flats in the space as possible. The current Government focus is towards family accommodation - in the form of lower density housing, should you not be following Government guidelines on this matter too?

The two real plus points for the village centre at present are the availability of a number of small shops - we are very well served by large supermarkets with Tesco Extra not far away and Somerfields in the village, the second plus being the parking available. The reductions planned in conjunction with the number of flats increasing demand upon that parking does not give us a positive future, the vast majority of users of the village do not have access to the sort of ideal public transport required to make them leave cars at home. If the parking is not there, then they will not visit and any retail developments will suffer. The plan to relocate the library and split the centre was rejected for good reason - one not discussed was that the transfer would have meant significant numbers of the public having full access to school grounds - something not generally considered a good idea these days.

In summary to make a success please consider: 1) at least the same parking as at present; 2) a focus on small specialists shops as we have available now - they are the ones that can continue to operate in the shadow of the supermarket availability in the area.

Steve Easton

Langton Court, Darras Hall

I completely agree with all the points made by Mr Philip Ham in his letter. I would like to add: 1) If more housing was put on the Bellway site, surely this would cause more traffic problems. Vehicle access onto the A696 beside the Pele Tower will need to be wider, and will probably need a second roundabout in the Village. This is likely to cause traffic jams when being negotiated by Army convoys on route to Otterburn, and make exiting the existing supermarket difficult. Ponteland may not have a bypass, but we may soon need one!

2) I understood that the proposed development was based on the size of the Parish in 2010 being 100 houses more than at present. Is this basis realistic? [40 houses

were demolished and replaced on Darras Hall alone in 2005. See Darras

Hall Estate News letter]. I accept

that this was an initial attempt to seek the views of the community, and hope that the process continues.

Red Halkyard

Darras Hall

I am writing to say that I agree with everything that Philip Ham said in his letter published in the January magazine. I went to the school and looked at the four options and did not like any of them: I do not think that the library should be removed from the centre of the village. The church hall needs parking next to it. Ponteland does not need another supermarket, we already have Somerfields, a couple of butchers, a baker and a greengrocer. In addition, I do not think we need a community centre and social club as we already have the church hall, Memorial Hall, Working Men's Club and over 60s club.

Daphne Bass

Errington Road, Darras Hall

I read your magazine with interest and heartily endorse the letter from Mr Ham in the January issue. His opinions are much the same as mine, expressed in my letters to Coun Scullion in July and August. An opportunity was given to offer our opinions in a form issued, to be returned by August 27. I also attended the 'walk-in' at Merton Hall. It was a complete waste of time because of the complexity of the subject to be assessed in a small crowded room. I made a further visit to the UR Church hall, which was better but still extremely complex. May I congratulate you on the success of your magazine.

H Porritt

Birney Edge, Darras Hall

I have read your article in Pont News & Views and wanted to write a letter to give you my thoughts. At present, parking in the village. Even at relatively quiet times like mid-morning on a weekday, it is not easy to find a place. Without the Blackbird car park (which is not strictly public parking) it would be impossible. At busy school times it is an horrendous situation. And yet the plans seem to be ignoring this and reducing parking places whilst building offices, which will increase the need for parking. This is my main concern. Also, we have had a supermarket in Merton Road and it closed. My choice would be Option 1, although I do not think Ponteland should have any more housing development.

Margaret Richardson

North Grange, Ponteland.

I agree with Mr Ham's letter, published in the January Pont News & Views. There is no magic in financing public spending by selling off a site which is valuable because of its convenient location and moving public facilities to cheap but remote places. It is something we are likely to regret in the future. There should also be some caution over building on the car parks. This now seems usually adequate but includes public use of some privately owned car parks. If the public spaces are cashed in it will be hard to resist development on the private ones. Shops, churches and schools would all suffer if this happened. Spending on Merton Way shops would be welcome but their wholesale redevelopment should only be contemplated if it can be achieved without making a gift of

other land to a developer. Otherwise we may be better off with the present buildings which will only prosper if they remain accessible and in the middle of public space. A further supermarket would dilute trade at the existing shops further rather than bring trade back from the much larger out of town outlets. We do not need a new community centre in competition with the existing halls and a wider review might be appropriate. The consultation could also have usefully included the new school site on Thornhill Road. We learned last week that the proposals to change Cramlington over to primary and secondary schools are now to be done on a 'minimum refurbishment' basis. If that happened in Ponteland we might see primary pupils put in the Coates building to produce what would be one of the UK's largest primary school sites with 700 - 800 pupils. I can only support Option 1 out of the four suggested.

Mike Brown

Woodlands, Ponteland.

I was pleased to read the article about the Government Inspector who rejected an appeal to build a two story emporium on Runnymede Rd in place of a bungalow. Having lived on Darras Hall for over 50 years I have been amazed and saddened at some of the demolition & rebuild projects that have been going on in the last few years. It would appear the Darras Hall Estates Committee have lost their bite, and a lot of this new build is more for commercial gain than keeping Darras Hall a private quiet residential estate. It is becoming more like an estate in Hollywood, where the one object is to who can build the biggest, brashest house in full view of the other residents. I look forward to the next news sheet.

Alan Frame

Eastern Way, Darras Hall

Thank you for your recent publication, very interesting. May I, as a resident of Darras Hall express my views regarding the appalling condition of the road surfaces in our area. I am an experienced driver and I do not go 'charging' about, but recently I have had to have my car, which has only done about 30,000 miles, fitted with a new sub-frame, followed two months later by a rear off-side coil spring! The mechanic, in response to my query, stated that they had quite a number of cars with suspension trouble from the area, due, he said, to the farm tracks they had instead of roads! I can only agree. I have already registered my complaint in various areas but still nothing is done. I can only think of some banner waving or a residents' march against the Council as an alternative, but I do not think this would be viable. Can anyone suggest where we may apply pressure, to whom, and how? I shall be very interested in any replies.

Sid Stephenson

Middle Drive, Darras Hall

What do you think?

Email:

pontnewsandviews@tiscali.co.uk

or write to:

Editor, Pont News & Views,

5 East Boldon Road,

Cleadon Village,

SR6 7SH.

ADULT EDUCATION

at Ponteland Community High School

We are pleased to inform readers of the following programmes which will be starting at the High School in the near future:

SATURDAY PROGRAMMES:

Presentation Using Powerpoint

Spread over the following three weeks: Feb 11; March 4; March 18.

E-Mail With Yahoo

Saturday March 11

Digital Cameras

Saturday April 1

Standard fees are £12 for a single Saturday (10am - 4pm), and £27 for Powerpoint.

COOKERY DEMONSTRATION CLASSES:

Thursdays 7-9pm. All courses are five weeks, and cost £22 each.

Good Food:

Starts March 2

Far Eastern Cookery:

Starts April 27

Summer Food:

Starts June 8

LIP-READING SKILLS AND COPING WITH HEARING LOSS:

There are still opportunities to join this free programme which runs on Mondays from 6-8pm during the Spring and Summer terms.

INTRODUCTION TO COUNSELLING:

We are delighted to offer for the first time this basic course for those who may wish to progress to higher-level counselling courses, to be offered from September, or who simply wish to develop their 'People Skills'. Monday,

7-9pm for 15 weeks; starts Monday March 6. Fee £55.

Also new to us are the following Hospitality Awarding Body courses designed for people currently or intending to work in the service sectors:

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A popular knowledge-based qualification which will provide insight into managing relationships with customers and colleagues, and prepare people to cope with difficult working situations. Tuesdays 7-9pm for 4 weeks; starts Tuesday March 7. Standard fee £12.

FOUNDATION CERTIFICATE IN FOOD HYGIENE:

To be offered in the Summer Term. Details available upon request.

FIRST AID (APPOINTED PERSON'S CERTIFICATE):

Tuesday 7-9pm for 8 weeks; starts Tuesday March 7. Standard fee £25.

A HOUSE IN FRANCE:

Monday 7-9pm for five

weeks; starts Monday March 6. Fee £20.

INDIAN HEAD MASSAGE:

Monday 7-9pm for 6 weeks; starts Monday March 6. Fee £23.

DUTCH FOR BEGINNERS:

Thursday 7-9pm for 10 weeks; starts Thursday March 2. Fee £30.

PC REPAIR, MAINTENANCE & UPGRADE:

Tuesday 6pm-8.30pm for 10 weeks; starts Tuesday March 7. Standard fee £37.50

WORD PROCESSING - LEVELS I, II & III:

Tuesday 7.30pm-9pm for 15 weeks; starts March 7. Standard fee £35.

We also have ongoing programmes in English, Maths, and English for Speakers of Other Languages which learners may join at any point in the year, and where tuition can be arranged to suit individual availability. Contact Brenda or Chris for details.

To find out more about any of these programmes, please speak to a member of the Adult Learning Team in school on (01661) 820431.



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Rob Taylor
Branch Manager



This improvement in our success for our clients can be put down to two reasons; firstly we have worked exceptionally hard to improve every aspect of our service and marketing to now offer an unrivalled selling process. Secondly the market and confidence has improved greatly.

2005 was well documented as a tough year to be selling houses and that was true. This was even more evident in Ponteland and Darras Hall due to our high property values. However, over the last few months and with a lot of hard work, the confidence in buyers has returned and we have seen properties start to sell in all price brands throughout the area.

This all means that we should be feeling very positive about 2006 with more houses selling and Sanderson Young intend to be the leading agent helping more buyers and sellers achieve

their dreams. That said we aren’t going to start selling houses overnight, it will still take a lot of hard work and every marketing tool available which means home owners should think very carefully about your choice of agent.

The cheapest deal is certainly not always the best. Would you take your expensive car to a back street garage? Probably not, so why would you jeopardise maximising the selling price on your home? I strongly believe Sanderson Young are here to make a difference and that we are able to offer all our clients an unrivalled bespoke service that gives the best chance of achieving the best price in the right timescales to suit them.

To find out more about how we can make the difference to you this year please contact us in Ponteland on **01661 823 951** or email me at **rob.taylor@sandersonyoung.co.uk**



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