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Police hunt supermarket scooter thief

Warm tributes paid to 'local hero'

Ponteland wins bunch of In Bloom awards

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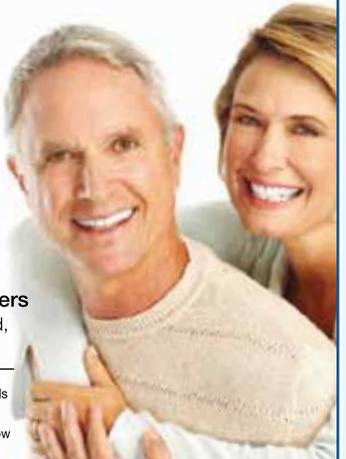


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Pont News and Views is published by Ponteland Town Council in conjunction with Ponteland Community Partnership. If you would like to submit an article, feature or advertise in the magazine, **please note the new contact details** for Pont News: **Tel:** (0191) 3408422 **Mob:** 07954 157939 **Email:** pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk **Write:** Cian creative pr, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH

Produced by Cian creative pr



Park festival raises awareness of new charity

Families enjoyed a festival in the park to raise awareness of a pioneering new charity which aims to offer free legal advice to seriously ill patients.

LegaCare will offer free professional advice in areas including employment, debt, matrimonial and guardianship issues, lasting powers of attorney and wills.

The first of its kind in the country, the service will be available to people in the region who have a life limiting condition and have an income of less than £30,000, so cannot afford expensive legal fees.

Insurance claims solicitor Margaret Kirby came up with the idea after her father Brian was diagnosed with myelodysplasia, which destroys the immune system. During

hospital visits the legal concerns patients with terminal conditions faced were highlighted.

Margaret aims to raise £400,000 this year to establish the charity, which is backed by Prof Stephen Singleton, Regional Director of Public Health, St Oswald's Hospice, Dr Quinby (formerly of the Local Medical Committee), and Prof Edwin Pugh, Consultant in end-of-life care for NHS North East.

The event at Ponteland Park was opened by Mayor Robin Ramsay and included live bands, gifts, stalls, tombola, raffles, bouncy castles and slides, magicians and games.

Margaret said: "We organised this event to raise local awareness for the desperate need for a charity which is aimed at helping vulnerable people of the North-East."

Anyone interested in donating, sponsoring, or volunteering should contact Katy Knox at kknox@legacare.org or on (01661) 867019.



Main pic: Children enjoy the family fun day at Ponteland Park. Above: Margaret Kirby is pictured (centre) with Volunteer Julie Liddle and Community Fundraiser Karen Scott. Photos by Trevor Walker.

Five years bringing you the news and views

By Chris Jennings, Editor



Your community magazine Pont News & Views celebrates its 5th anniversary this month.

And having had the pleasure of editing each and every one of the 61 issues to date, I thought I'd indulge in a little look back at the history of the publication.

The first issue back in October 2005 laid the marker for the quality, editorial-led publication Ponteland Parish Council and Ponteland Community Partnership wanted to produce for the community to replace the monthly Neighbourhood Watch bulletin and the Council's quarterly magazine.

It included articles on work starting on the new first school, progress on the build of a new health centre, the start of consultation on a village centre regeneration blueprint and our first what's on guide.

Since then we have covered all the major events and issues to affect the parish, including the flooding in September 2008, and promoted local organisations and businesses alike. Regular features include the letters' page, What's On guide, and police column.

The variety of community events the parish enjoys, including the Civic Service and Parade, Party in the Park, Duck Race, Wheelbarrow Race, Flower Show and biennial Church Flower Festival, give us plenty of photographic opportunities.

Before we started the venture, questions were asked whether we would have enough news to fill an 8-page monthly magazine. Well, thanks to excellent contributors and support from the business community, we now have a 16-page magazine which is never short of copy.

The publication has been supported with a grant from the Parish Council (now Ponteland Town Council) from the start, but we are glad to report it is now fully funded via advertising. So it truly is free to readers.

If you have any suggestions for improving your magazine, please email me at pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or write to Editor, Pont News & Views, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH. I'll be happy to include them in next month's letters' page.

PONTELAND REPERTORY SOCIETY PRESENTS PANTOMIME CINDERELLA

Ponteland Repertory Society is presenting the pantomime Cinderella in the Memorial Hall, Darras Road from Wednesday December 1 to Saturday December 4.

Evening performances start at 7.30pm and the Saturday matinee is at 2pm. Tickets cost £8 for adults and £6 for children, and are available from Alan Newton (Butcher), 10 Merton Way, Ponteland, telephone (01661) 822985.

LADIES' EVENING TO RAISE CASH FOR CHILDREN'S CHARITIES

A ladies' evening, including a 3-course dinner, fashion show by House of Fraser and entertainment by BBC Radio Newcastle's Sue Sweeney and Foxx, is being held at Newcastle Marriot Hotel, Gosforth Park on Thursday December 2.

Tickets costing £40 can be obtained from Pat Harbottle at pat.harbottle@btinternet.com or on 0191 286 9628. Cheques are to be made payable to NSPCC/Childline Ponteland and posted to Pat Harbottle, 10 Woosington Park South, Newcastle, NE13 8BJ.

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MEL ARMSTRONG

At the start of the meeting, the Mayor referred to the very sad death of Councillor Mel Armstrong. Mel had been a member of the Town Council since 2007 and he made a big impression during his time with the authority. He also served on the former Castle Morpeth Borough Council and then on the County Council where he worked hard for the people of Ponteland. The Council stood for a minute's silence in tribute to Mel.

MARKET IN MERTON WAY

The Council felt this had been a great success and wished to pass on their appreciation to Keith Gray from the County Council for coming up with the suggestion to expand the former Farmers' Market and for implementing it so successfully. *See article on p9.*

GRANT APPLICATION – 02 PROTEST GROUP

It was agreed to give a grant of £250 to this organisation on the understanding that this was a one off payment and the Council would treat any further application of this nature on its merits.

PROGRAMME OF WORKS REPORT

Ponteland Park Tree Management Plan

It was hoped to be able to award this contract in the next week.

Slope Protection

The project is complete subject to some minor planting works to be carried out later in

the year. A presentation showing the progress and completion of the works was shown to Councillors, who were told there had been numerous favourable comments received in relation to the finished project. *See article on p14.*

Timber Footbridge

The works are complete. An appropriate structural engineer has been engaged to carry out an assessment of the two bridges.

Fencing at Twizell Place Play area

The contractor is due to commence work in the very near future.

PONTELAND CIVIC SOCIETY – REPORT ON STREET CLUTTER

It was reported that the Civic Society had kindly produced a report for the Town Council in relation to street clutter. Making a number of recommendations, it dealt primarily with A Boards, untidy areas, duplicated/damaged/obscured road signs and the conservation area. The Council agreed to consider the matters raised by the relevant Working Parties (Highways and Environment), submit a report on by-laws to a future meeting, submit a separate report on implementing a characteristic appraisal of the Ponteland Conservation area to the full Council, and hold discussions with local businesses over aspects that will affect them, particularly portable advertising and general cleanliness.

CHURCH CLOCK FLOODLIGHT – ST MARY'S CHURCH

The church clock floodlight was broken and

it was agreed to fund repairs of £450 as the Council currently funds the running costs.

HIGHWAYS WORKING PARTY

Following a meeting of the Working Party on August 26 with representatives of the County Council Highways department, it was recommended that the Town Council request a study of the traffic flow in Ponteland to see if flows could be improved by various measures. This was agreed.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

Councillors Mrs V Jones and P Jackson raised several items relating to the County Council. The problem of required budget savings is a major issue for the county council at the present time. The required savings have virtually been made this year with rationalisation of staff, redundancies and early retirement of officers. A review of the management structure has been carried out. A further £30m of cuts is required for next year and this will undoubtedly have an impact on front line services. Councillors are working hard to try and minimise the impact on Ponteland and an analysis of essential and non-essential services is being carried out. The planning service in Northumberland has been rated as the worst in the country by the Audit Commission and work is now ongoing in an attempt to improve this situation.

This report is based on the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on September 8.

Warm tributes paid to 'local hero'



Warm tributes have been paid after the sudden and unexpected death of a popular Ponteland councillor.

Mel Armstrong, who represented Ponteland East on Northumberland County Council and Ponteland Town Council, died in North Tyneside Hospital on August 30. He was 63.

He leaves wife Eileen, also a Town Councillor, and daughters Catherine and fiancé John, Bernadette and partner Phil, Amelia and grandson Lincoln.

Coun Armstrong, a director of his own waste and haulage company who lived in Prestwick, was a keen biker and his funeral cortege was accompanied by members from the Geordie Chapter, Harley Motor Bike Owners Club, on the way to Prestwick Cemetery.

The civic service at St. Matthews RC Church in Ponteland was attended by the Chairman of the County Council Marcia Bircham, Leader Jeff Reid and Conservative Group Leader Peter Jackson, the Mayor of Ponteland Robin Ramsay and the Mayor of Hexham Terry Robson.

Mel was a big Newcastle United fan, enjoying their 6-0 thrashing of Aston

Villa at St James' Park just a week before his death, and the service ended with the club's adopted theme tune Local Hero by Mark Knopfler – his mobile phone ringtone.

Daughter Catherine said: "He was an exceptional husband, dad, grandad and friend to all. He was always known to have a big smile and even greater presence and he was loved by the whole community. Obviously the family are devastated at his death. We loved him dearly.

"We appreciate the kind words, prayers and support during this difficult time. We were overwhelmed by the turnout at his funeral and wish to thank everyone for their generosity; we raised £1,079.23 in charity donations for The Royal British Legion."

Coun Ramsay added: "We are all going to miss Mel very much. Although he had only been a town councillor since 2007 he has made a tremendous contribution to the running of the council and in his role as a county councillor he stood up for Ponteland's interests.

"As a person he was tremendous. When he came in the room he brightened up the place. He was a big character in many ways."

A further tribute came from Coun Reid, who said: "Mel was a man so many of us admired and respected as a genuine person, above party politics, and he will be very sadly missed."

A by-election is due to be held during the autumn for the vacant seat.



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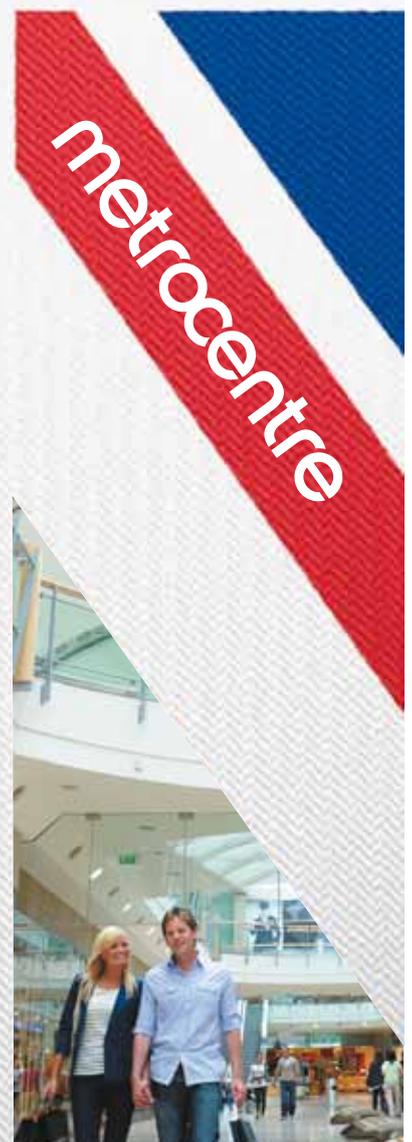
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Appeal after Waitrose worker's scooter stolen from car park

By Inspector Kevin Oates
East Tynedale Neighbourhood Inspector



Total Policing

Crime has fallen significantly in Ponteland over the summer.

Only seven crimes have been reported in the month to September 15, as follows:

- One shoplifting
- One burglary dwelling
- Two vehicle thefts
- One burglary shed
- One assault
- One arson.

Three people have been arrested for these crimes and a further suspect is recorded on CCTV for the shoplifting offence.

Sometime between 4.20pm and 8.15pm on Saturday September 11, a SYM VS 125cc motor scooter reg NK56 MVA (silver colour) was stolen from the car park of Waitrose, Main Street, Ponteland.

The scooter was attached by a chain and padlock to the central trolley bay by the 19-year-old male owner, who is an

employee of Waitrose. Also attached to the scooter was an ULTRA black motor cycle helmet (red and orange trim) and two pairs of gloves.

Staff at Waitrose have stated that they were very busy that evening and that there were a number of vehicles in the car park right up to closing time, when the scooter was missed by its owner. It is very possible that someone will have seen the scooter being removed by the thieves.

If any readers have any information regarding the offence, could they please contact police on 03456 043 043.

If anyone has any information about any other crime or anti social behaviour in the Ponteland area, you can pass this to local Neighbourhood Beat Manager Paul Henery or Ponteland Community Support Officer Jill Ruddick.

Alternatively, come along to the next Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS)

meeting at Ponteland Memorial Hall on October 5 at 9.30am, when I will be in attendance with an LMAPS officer.

You can also report via Northumbria Police website at www.northumbria.police.uk or telephone Northumbria Police on 0845 3030900 or call anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

NEW ISSUE OF PONT ISLAND NEWS PUBLISHED

Ponteland Local History Society has published the latest issue of the bi-annual Pont Island News.

A summary can be found at <http://www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com/PIN10.pdf>

The publication is supplied free to members of the society and others may buy a hard copy for £3 from the society's chairman John Turner, who can be contacted at johnpat.turner@btinternet.com

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New home for expanded market proves hit with shoppers

THE newly expanded and relocated Ponteland market proved a hit with shoppers on its first day of trading.

The traditional farmers' market, which has been held in the Memorial Hall for the past 10 years, has been turned into a general outdoor retail market and moved to Merton Way. It has also moved days from a Saturday morning to full day Friday.

The first market on August 27 saw 11 stalls trading goods ranging from clothes to jewellery, cakes, fish and farm produce.

Ponteland Mayor Robin Ramsay visited the market and said it had got off to a very promising start: "It has really made the place come alive and the response from traders has been magnificent.

"I understand more have already expressed an interest in coming next month. It is early days but it looks like this is proving a much more popular timing and venue for the market, and expanding the variety of stalls has obviously helped."

The revamped market will be held on the fourth Friday of each month, from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

Ian Lindley, county council executive member for neighbourhood services, said: "I was very pleased that the new format for this market worked so well, and that it was positively received by the local community."



Coun Ramsay is pictured at the inaugural outdoor retail market. Photo by Trevor Walker.

The next market is being held on Friday October 22. For more information contact Markets Manager Keith Gray at keith.gray@northumberland.gov.uk or call 01434 652419.



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Gordon Barr, The Evening Chronicle

The Blackbird is extremely proud of its latest review... receiving 5 stars from Gordon Barr, writing for The Evening Chronicle's restaurant column, who also had this to say about his experience...

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Your letters

The child (un)friendly facilities at Ponteland Pool, a fresh appeal to inconsiderate dog owners and more comment on a retirement apartments scheme in this month's letters...

Appalled at service from Ponteland pool

Today (25/08/10) I visited the swimming pool at Harpers in Ponteland and can honestly say I was appalled by the service this establishment provides.

I turned up at 11.15am with my 13-year-old daughter and three-year-old granddaughter in the hopes of spending some time having fun in our local pool. I duly paid the £6.50 charge, but then the receptionist dropped this bombshell.

Unfortunately it transpires that the pool closes to children at midday to allow the adults swim session and does not reopen until 1.30pm. By the time we would have taken to get changed we would only have had 30 minutes in the pool.

I was also informed that the toddler pool was closed anyway due to a lack of lifeguard facility until 2.30pm. When I questioned this situation I was ignored and on asking for my money back I was rudely spoken to by the receptionist who virtually threw my money back at me.

Whilst I understand the safety issue in having a lifeguard on duty for the toddler pool, at the time of us visiting there were only two other people using the entire pool, so surely this guard could have monitored both pools. On busier times they could employ another guard.

Also I cannot understand why they would close the pool to children between midday and 1.30pm during the school summer holidays when this is the time most children would want to be using it. People with toddlers struggle to get out of the house in the morning for the early toddler pool session at 10am, especially if they have more than one child.

The management of the facility may want to redress this policy as judging by the lack of people using it, they cannot be making a profit – make it more children friendly and allow families to use it at sensible times of the day in the holiday periods.

Not everyone can afford to/want to go to the big leisure pools. I for one like to support local amenities but after today's fiasco will be

thinking otherwise towards the local pool.

Brenda Walton
Thornhill Road
Ponteland

* Pont News & Views contacted the pool operator Leisure Connection and Contract Manager John Dyson said the firm "will review the summer holiday programme for 2011".

Ponteland would be an even more desirable area without dog fouling

I would like to discuss Ponteland being considered as a highly desirable area.

Firstly I would like to support the views of Claire Anderson, Parklands, (Issue 59 August 2010) "Not dirty dogs but filthy owners". It is bad enough the problem being in public areas but even worse when in a person's garden. I've had to remove dog dirt on more than one occasion from our relatives' home in our street.

The irresponsible dog owner problem has not ceased despite several letters and dog bins. The matter requires to be taken a step further and we require to see active dog wardens patrolling the area and dogs banned from many public areas.

This may aggrieve responsible dog owners but dogs are banned from the beaches of North Tyneside and other areas and it may be that they shouldn't be allowed in areas such as the park, or even residential streets once there has been an ongoing problem in the area.

People will agree that when one spots a dog fouling when an owner takes their pet on a walk, that the owner can usually be observed picking it up. If it isn't picked up, a toot of the car horn is a start, although the culprits are harder to catch.

As a member of "Pushy Mothers" who regularly does a buggy workout in the park, myself and our group are sick of stepping over dog dirt. Perhaps responsible dog owners, whom I am aware there are many, could start a campaign. After all, if dogs start to be banned from public areas, it will affect them.

It is a community responsibility and as residents we can take action in many ways. My family live beside a grassed area where children in the community enjoy playing, particularly long games of football for which my son has shared his goal posts. It is only a safe area after checking it for dog dirt, which I reluctantly do.

I've placed our own personal bin on the grass twice with nappy sacs for owners who may forget to take a plastic bag when out walking their dog. The bin has been observed by dog walkers and there has been evidence that this has been at least a little effective.

However the next time I see dog dirt on the street's playing area, or in our garden or near to, I won't remove it, I'll report it.

So come on let's improve things. There was positive action taken on a vicious racist attack, family bar meals have started at the Blackbird, there are plans to provide supported housing for older people on the derelict old school site, plus the market has started on Merton Way: great stuff. Let's also eradicate dog fouling! Thank you for listening.

Jane Darling-Smith
Rowan Drive
Ponteland

Finish for retirement apartment scheme still under discussion

Geoff Brown's observations with regard to the visibility or otherwise of Ponteland Manor put me in mind of the old music hall song that contains those immortal lines:

With a ladder and some glasses
You could see the Hackney Marshes
If it wasn't for the houses in between.

Anyway, the good news is that the County Planners are in discussion with the prospective developers of the Home for the Frail and Elderly with a view to getting this rather large building constructed in a facing brick that is more in keeping with its stone built neighbours.

Fingers crossed.

John Hague
High View
Ponteland

Letters on all issues are welcomed by Pont News & Views but the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. The Editor reserves the right to amend any submitted letters for legal or other reasons. All letters submitted should include the writer's name and address.

November issue deadlines: The October issue will be delivered on November 1 and 2. Deadline for all copy and adverts is Friday October 15. Businesses should be aware that all bookings for advertisements must be paid in full by the deadline to ensure placement in the November issue.

What's on...

North East England Group of the Alpine Garden Society

Our Autumn Show of alpines, rock plants, and bulbs is on Saturday October 9 at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Plant sales start at 10.30am and the show is open from 12noon – 4pm. Home made refreshments are available all day. Entry £2 (AGS/SRGC members free). The other side of a problem is an opportunity – is an intriguing title to our talk on Monday October 11 by Vic Aspland, a chartered chemist by profession but a horticulturist by inclination. Our meetings take place in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road. The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. The charge to visitors is £2 per meeting. Details from Terry Teal at t.teal@btinternet.com or 0191 4132574.

Ponteland Senior Gentlemen's Club

The Monday October 11 speaker and topic are Air Commodore (RAF ret.) Ian Forster - The Battle of Britain. Meetings are held on the second Monday of every month in the lounge of the Memorial Hall at 2.30pm. Membership is open to gentlemen aged over 55 who are not in full time employment. The annual subscription is £10. For further details contact Donald Lloyd at donaldflloyd@sky.com or on (01661) 872661.

Ponteland Library launches audiobooks at coffee morning

A new way of 'reading' by actually listening is being launched with a coffee morning at Ponteland Library from 10am to 12noon on

Friday October 15. Called Playaway, the next generation of preloaded audiobooks is a way of listening to a book on the go. For more information, contact Kim Herring at Kim.Herring@northumberland.gov.uk or on (01661) 832540.

Field of Hope for Ponteland

The Friends of Ponteland Park have been approached by the local Marie Curie Cancer Care Association to assist with the creation of a Field of Hope in Ponteland Park. This entails the planting of massed daffodils, the emblem of Marie Curie Cancer Care, and we need your help. The planting of more than 4,000 bulbs will take place in Ponteland Park (adjacent to the Memorial Hall Car Park) on Saturday October 16 between 10am and 2pm. We need assistance on the day with ground preparation (please bring a spade) and all donations for Marie Curie Cancer Care will be gratefully accepted either on the day or through leaflets which are available in local shops. Please help us to make this a truly successful event both for Ponteland and Marie Curie Cancer Care. Contact FOPP Hon Sec on (01661) 823766.

Ponteland Local History Society

In a change to the printed programme, the October topic and speaker are Restoration of the north wall of St. Lawrence's Church, Warkworth - Andrew Weber on Thursday October 21 from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland.

Ponteland Market

The third outing for this new venture, replacing the former monthly farmers' market at the Memorial Hall – from 8.30am to 4pm on Friday October 22 at Merton Way shopping centre.

Ponteland Embroiderers' Guild

The next meeting is on Monday October 25 at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland, from 2pm until 4pm. We have a talk by Mrs Cia Bosanquet entitled From Thread to Cloth. Coffee or tea and biscuits follow the talk. There is a small charge for visitors who are very welcome. For further information or queries please contact Sheila Armstrong, tel no (0191) 2667873.

Ponteland Civic Society

The topic for our meeting on Monday October 25 is What a Character - Managing Change in Conservation Areas. Speaker Jules Brown introduces the concepts and options for the way forward of Conservation Areas and Character Appraisals. Ponteland does not have a Character Appraisal and its Conservation Area lies down one side of Main Street. Can we learn more about what this means for us and how we can deal with or change this situation? From 7.30pm to 9.30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Thornhill Road, Ponteland.

October events at St Mary's Church: see p14

If you have an item for the What's on column, please email pontnews@cian-pr.co.uk or write to Pont News & Views, 5 East Boldon Road, Cleadon Village, SR6 7SH.

Flower show growing in popularity

There were 124 classes, over 300 prizes up for grabs and entrants of all ages.

From chrysanthemums to carrots, ugliest vegetable to oil painting – the Ponteland Parish Flower Show had them all, with classes for flowers, vegetables, cookery, handicraft, wines, photography, fruit and children.

The packed presentation ceremony saw 22 trophies, salvers and cups awarded by dignitaries including the Mayor of Ponteland Robin Ramsay.

The ever popular show was held at Ponteland Memorial Hall on Saturday September 11.

Cover shot: basket of vegetables by Gillian Melton.

On this page: vase of dahlias by Maria Shuttleworth and the show table.

Photos by Trevor Walker.



Ponteland wins bunch of Northumbria in Bloom Awards



Mayor Robin Ramsay, Coun Joyce Butcher and Coun Liz Thompson are pictured with the silver gilt award. Photo by Barry Pells.

Ponteland picked up a nice bunch of awards at the annual Northumbria in Bloom competition.

The Town Council won a silver gilt for the third year running, and special awards also went to Cecil Court (gold), Bowling and Tennis Club (silver gilt) and The Smithy (silver). They were presented at a ceremony held at The Oakwood Centre in Eaglescliffe, Stockton, on September 13.

The Town Council would like to thank its sponsors: Rotary Club of Ponteland, Ponteland Golf Club, Newcastle International Airport, Dobbies Garden Centre and Henry Robert Hairdressers.

Thanks also go to students from Ponteland Community High School, who helped enormously with the rockery outside the Pele Tower, and the Friends of Ponteland Park for their great contribution to the park.

The In Bloom working group was chaired by Coun Joyce Butcher, with other members Councillors Eileen Armstrong, Archie Cave, Alan Mee and Liz Thompson. The Town Clerk Kath Mavin, contractors Ian Clough, Derek Sherlock and Michael Champion, and all the residents who helped with the litter picks were also thanked by Mayor Robin Ramsay. Full report and pics next month.



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Centres in: Ponteland, Jesmond, Sunderland & Durham

Multi-talented Norman celebrates centenary with saucy toast

Multi-talented centenarian Norman Bains brought the house down as he entertained fellow members of Ponteland Golf Club at his birthday toast.



Norman tees off with Golf Club Chairman Prof John Murray CBE and Coun Ramsay

To roars of laughter the father, grandfather and great-grandfather of two explained his secret to a long and healthy life: "...no alcohol, no smoking and no sex... until I reached 14!"

The sprightly 100-year-old is clearly a man of many talents, having been a keen amateur boxer, wrestler and weightlifter in his youth, and a skilled artist, pianist and photographer who had his own studio in Newcastle.

Born in Newcastle on September 5, 1910, he also ran the family credit drapery business - started by his father John - in the city until retiring aged 70, as major retail outlets started introducing their own store cards. Norman was also an RAF radio operator during World War Two.

He lost his wife Rita to emphysema in 1981, and five years ago son Steve and his

wife Ros moved back into the Bains family home in The Oval, Woolsington, to help 'look after' Norman. Instead, they found the kitchen was out of bounds - Norman is still today the main cook in the house.

Steve, 54, said: "He's remarkable. When I was courting with Ros about 30 years ago dad astonished me by giving me a demonstration of how to do one-armed press ups. He must have been around 70 then!"

As well as the celebration at the golf club, where Norman was presented with a bottle of his favourite malt whisky by Mayor Robin Ramsay, he also enjoyed a five week visit from daughter Diane, 65, who has lived in the US for 40 years.

A member of the club since 1976, Norman became a life member in 2000.

PONTELAND UNITED REFORMED CHURCH'S CHRISTMAS FAYRE

This year's fayre is being held on Saturday November 13 at the church on Broadway, Darras Hall.

Doors open at 11am and admission is free. All the usual attractions, including: bric-a-brac, raffle, gifts, jewellery, Christmas cards, cake stall, produce/preserve stall, cafe, barbecue, tuck shop, bottle tombola, floral decorations, books and CDs, children's games to play, linen and toiletries, face painting, games and toys. Music is provided by Sandy and Friends.

Do join us for an enjoyable family day-out. Contributions to all stalls welcomed. Contact L Donald on 872728 or F Milligan on 823489.

Bric-a-Brac sale: Part 2 of the Christmas Fayre takes place on Saturday November 27 from 10am until 12.30pm, same venue.



Ponteland Golf Club

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Golf North East, 2008

Both playing & social memberships are currently being offered at Ponteland Golf Club. Membership categories start from the age of 10 and there is a range of payment options currently available for both ladies and gentlemen. There is currently no waiting list for ANY category.

To discuss the available options and fees, or for further general information, please contact:

Secretary Greg Waugh at:

secretary@thepontelandgolfclub.co.uk

Tel: 01661 822689



Summer fun for children at Ponteland Holiday Club

By Ann Cooper

For four mornings at the end of August, 32 children had fun at the Lighthouse Holiday Club at Ponteland Methodist Church.

As well as making a huge lighthouse out of junk, a beautiful large paper collage lighthouse, the children made items to take home - a clay tea light holder, a decorated star biscuit, cress in a lovely pot, a brightly coloured candle, a miniature lighthouse and many other art creations.

Games, refreshments, stories and singing ensured a good time was had by all.

Similar activities continue in Ponteland at MESSY CHURCH on the second Saturday of each month (4pm - 6pm). For details, contact Hannah Middleton on 07503 185854.

Annual Duck Race raises £2,250 for charity



Photo by Trevor Walker.

More than £2,200 was raised by generous donations at Ponteland Rotary Club's ever popular 'Duck Race'.

In glorious sunshine, with watching spectators including Newcastle United goalkeeper Steve Harper, Mayor of Ponteland Robin Ramsay started the first race of the highly prized yellow ducks on their journey along the River Pont.

Other attractions included face painters, a traditional fairground organ and a display by the Northumberland Mountain Rescue Team.

There were also demonstrations of Rotary's own ShelterBox and AquaBox, which are doing so much to alleviate human suffering in disaster stricken countries such as Haiti and Pakistan. The Rotary Club of Ponteland has recently sent six ShelterBoxes and four AquaBoxes to such countries at a cost of £4,000.

Organiser Eric Marshall said: "Very grateful thanks are due to the generous sponsors, those who bought a duck, those who helped on the day and in the weeks and months before the event to ensure its success and, perhaps especially, to those who lined the banks of the River Pont to cheer their duck or boat on its way."

October events at St Mary's

The Harvest celebrations are spread over two weekends this year.

Saturday October 2 at 6.30pm - Harvest Festival for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution. All are welcome to join the farming community for this special service and a ceilidh in the Hall afterwards. The preacher is the Reverend Dr Dagmar Winter, Diocesan Officer for Rural Affairs.

Sunday October 3 - Harvest Festival Family Service with our new Penguins

children's group at 10am. On Sunday October 10 at 10am we have Harvest Festival Communion with Eric and Sandra Reed, our link missionaries. The service is followed by a Harvest Lunch.

Saturday October 16 at 10am - short service of Blessing of the Marie Curie Field of Hope in Ponteland Park before the planting of daffodils.

Sunday October 24 at 6.30pm - all the churches come together for a Bible Society Service at St. Mary's. All are welcome.

Sunday October 31 - we will be writing to all those who have lost loved ones this year to a Service of Remembering at 6.30pm. But everybody is welcome - there is no time limit on remembering. There will be space, peace, an opportunity to light a candle, and the names of those we love will be read out. If you have a name you would like us to remember, please write it on the list in church, or contact Maureen in the office at office@pontelandstmary.org.uk or on (01661) 824470.

Ponteland High celebrates its 'A' class as GCSE results announced



Twelve Ponteland High students celebrated straight A grades in this year's GCSE exams.

Student Sadie Bartholomew achieved a magnificent 11 A* grades across all of her subjects.

Eleven other pupils scored straight A* or A grades: Adam Barker, Jack Davies, Gemma Fawcett, Imogen Garner, Trishna Gill, Zoe Hall, Rachel Morgan, Laura Murphy, Emily Ong, Hannah Stoddart and Anna Sutcliffe.

Of the 260 youngsters sitting exams this year, 82% achieved 5 A*-C grades, against a national average of around 69%, while 62% of Ponteland High students attained 5 A*-C including English and Maths.

Headteacher Stephen Prandle said: "Our GCSE students have done very well, and they and their teachers deserve congratulations for all their hard work. Parents deserve praise, too, because the help, encouragement and support they provide are invaluable."

PONTELAND SKATEPARK PLAN SET TO MAKE NATIONAL TV

Earlier this month Ponteland Community Partnership submitted a £50,000 funding bid for Phase 2 of the Playpark Project - the Skatepark - to ITV's People's Millions Big Lottery Fund.

We have been shortlisted and hope to appear on the ITV programme later in the autumn. This programme is a competition, and we will need everyone's support as success depends on the outcome of the public vote.

You can all help us achieve the reward of a skatepark that the young people of Ponteland have been waiting for over 25 years. We will keep you informed about broadcast dates etc in Pont News.



Fox Covert Lane path reopened

As many users of the Park will be aware, the retaining wall at Fox Covert Lane has been completed and the path re-opened.

The path has been closed since February due to local slips which rendered it dangerous for users.

This scheme has been nearly four years in preparation in order to stabilise the slope and avoid the recurrence of such events. This included not only the technical investigations and design but lengthy and detailed environmental reports and considerable amount of discussions with the Environmental Agency.

Hopefully we can now put this particular problem behind us for 50 years or more! The finished wall fits naturally into the scene and once the grass has re-established itself it will feel as if it has always been there.

The design and management of the works were carried out for the Town Council by Scott Doherty Associates from Durham. The contractor was Metcalfs from Penrith and the wall cost £70,000.

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