

the Village Voice

Issue No 2, Volume 25

Lanchester, February 2025



Flying Saucers over Lanchester?

No, the explanation is simpler than that! They are spectacular lenticular clouds and were photographed by Paul Deaville of Ashdown Grove on 17th January. According to the Met Office website, they are called lenticular clouds from the Latin "altocumulus lenticularis" which means "like a lens".

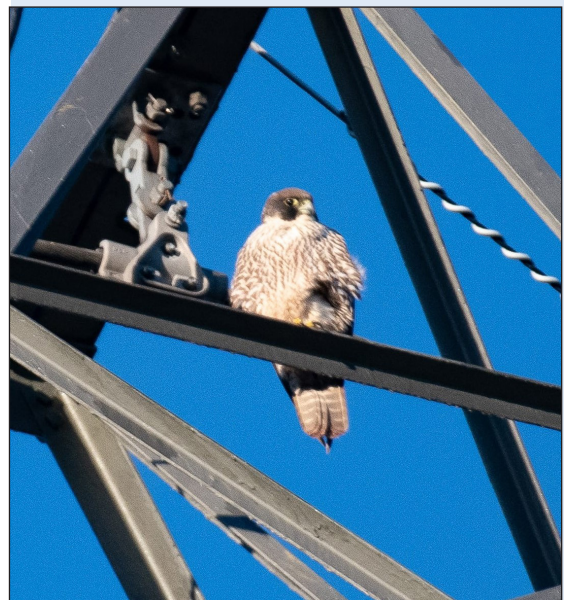
"These strange, unnatural looking clouds sometimes form downwind of hills or mountains. They are quite unusual in the British Isles but do occasionally occur. They look a lot like the traditional shape of flying saucers in science fiction, and real lenticular clouds are believed to be one of the most common explanations for UFO sightings across the world."

There, you learn something new every day. Many thanks to Paul for the photo.



Local Lanchester resident, Peregrine Falcon in the air and resting on a pylon

Photographs by Ian Appleby (full story on page 16)



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From our councillor -

In January and February, a large number of residents have got in touch with me about buses – or rather the lack of them – asking me for help. Whilst most buses are run commercially – with Go North East (GNE) being our key operator for routes to Durham or Tyneside – it's clear that public funding and our local authority, Durham County Council, have an important role to play in promoting this lifeline through funding, route setting and school transport.

All parties agree with this public role in commercial buses – because whilst you need bus fares as a critical part of the funding stream to keep services open – buses need some public support for the wider social benefits provided by getting people to work, hospitals, shops, as well as friends, family and everything else, who might otherwise not, particularly the very old, the young and those on low income.

Bus use has been suffering for years with the rise of the private car and the undoubted flexibility that gives, but this was made much worse by the lockdown and the pressure that put onto services as people stayed home – and then changed work, shopping and social habits afterwards.

The last Government did a lot of active work to support buses, using about £2 billion of public money in the three years after Covid, bringing in funding like the Bus Recovery Grant and the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

This allowed money for local routes like the No 6 to operate beyond what might just be commercially feasible. This issue was taken to central Government in part because our last MP, Richard Holden, served as buses minister from October 2022 onward. It was under him that the £2 bus fare cap was brought in, benefiting bus routes and customers alike. The current Government continues to provide significant public funding for buses – though it has increased the £2 cap to £3 nationally.

GNE, like other companies such as Arriva, had experienced issues with driver shortage and maintenance back in 2021-22 when I first joined the Council, as we were coming out of lockdown. But I am very worried by recent delays which affect all sorts of residents and have made this clear to GNE.

To that end, I have been in close contact with GNE, residents and the Parish Council on this and I have also offered to work with our MP to lobby GNE. However, I continue to welcome resident feedback on buses as I need to know what is going on; as always, you can email me on douglas.oliver@durham.gov.uk

Doug Oliver



On the buses – sometimes!

Whether the reason is clapped out vehicles, cold weather or staff shortages, complaints in Lanchester have been growing around the reliability - or lack of it - of the local bus service. Even the intervention of our MP Luke Akehurst has yet to spark an improvement in the services to Durham, Consett or Stanley.

Residents have reported buses failing to turn up on a regular basis as they try to get to work in time. The peak time for non-attendance seems to be between 8am and 9am - the very time commuters are trying to get to work - and one theory is that the buses have been taken off their normal routes for school runs at that time.

Bus users in Lanchester and the wider community had to endure weeks of frustration at the back end of 2023 due to a strike by Go North East drivers. Now the frustration is caused by constant cancellations.

In January Mr Akehurst said: "I have written to the Managing Director of Go North East to share my concerns around the reliability of buses in the area following the cancellation of several services this morning.

"Constituents have let me know that they fear losing their jobs as a result of being late or unable to get to work. I have asked Go North East what action they will be taking to improve things."

Go North East (GNE) has blamed extreme cold weather for the removal of a number of buses which left passengers unable to commute or make hospital appointments and businesses paying for taxis.

But staff told the BBC that defective vehicles are rushed back into service while some newer buses were being sent to sister firm Go North West.

The company said it was "conducting an in-depth review" with the aim it "never again falls short of keeping a full fleet on the road at all times".

Neil McKay

From the House



Since the beginning of the year there has been some positive news for Lanchester and the surrounding areas. Firstly, funding was confirmed to rebuild Shotley Bridge Hospital by 2030 as part of the New Hospitals Programme. The new hospital will provide a range of services, including sixteen inpatient beds and diagnostic and chemotherapy services, among other much-needed services.

Secondly, 'Project Gigabit', which will bring gigabit-capable broadband to 1,200 premises in North Durham, launches this year and Lanchester is set to be one of the places to benefit from new and improved broadband.

I have been dealing with a spike in correspondence relating to bus service cancellations and will be meeting with the management team at Go North East to talk about their plans for improving things. A large number of constituents have written to me regarding their constant struggle to get to work or school and things must change. I am aware that Lanchester in particular is served solely by Go North East and this will be raised during the meeting.

In Westminster, as well as representing the constituency, I have been appointed to the House of Commons Finance Committee, which has responsibility for scrutiny of the House of Commons budget. I voted for The Renters Rights Bill, and I served on the Bill Committee for the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill. I have asked oral questions on our defence procurement system, and on safeguarding measures in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and I spoke during the debate on the UK submarine fleet and in favour of proportional representation in a debate on the voting system.

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 new website www.lukeakehurstmp.co.uk.

Best wishes
Luke

Luke Akehurst, Member of Parliament for North Durham



New Hospital at Shotley Bridge

The long-awaited construction of a new hospital will begin within the next five years, the government has announced.

Regional health officials have received confirmation that the proposed Shotley Bridge Hospital will be built after years of delays.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting announced in Parliament last month that the new Consett facility is within wave one of the revised New Hospital Programme.

He added that construction was expected to start between 2026-2027.

The 16-bed in-patient rehabilitation ward, outpatient services and urgent treatment centre would replace the current facility in Shotley Bridge. It would be located on Derwent View, Genesis Way, Consett, opposite the large Tesco store.

Neil McKay

Lanchester Flower Club

Our first meeting of 2025 was a lovely day out at Beamish Park Hotel. Our belated Christmas meal was attended by 20 ladies. We enjoyed an excellent meal, looked after by such pleasant staff.

A picture quiz was enjoyed (such wonderful prizes!!!) along with plenty of chat and friendship.

Lestrine Kelly

World Day of Prayer March 2025

The local ecumenical service for 2025 World Day of Prayer is to be held on Wednesday 5th March at 1:30 pm in Lanchester Methodist Church.

All are welcome to come along.

The theme is "I made you wonderful", based on Psalm 139. The service has been inspired by the Christian women of the Cook Islands, a tiny island nation, in the Pacific Ocean.

All are also invited to join us on Saturday 1 March, for coffee from 10:00 until noon, in Lanchester Methodist Church.

Donations from both the coffee morning and at the service on 5th March are used to support the ongoing work of World Day of Prayer in the UK and towards projects run by Christian charities around the world.

Local WDP committee



Local History Society

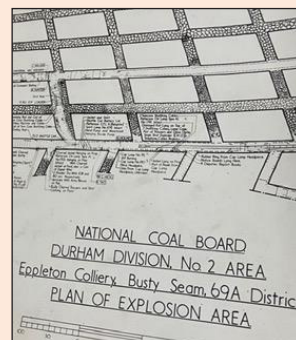
We met again in January for our now annual Show and Tell event. We were not disappointed by the items brought to the meeting. Maps are always a good conversation starter and that continued to be the case this year. One we inherited this year kindly donated by Mavis Datta, a former member, and was reprint of a Plan of Lanchester Fell as rode and ambulated Monday July 15th 1754 by the Order of the honourable and Right Reverend Richard Lord Bishop of Durham.

Another was the Plan of the 1951 Explosion area of Eppleton Colliery Busty Seam 69A (Hetton Le Hole). This document annotated with all the locations the items as they were recorded by the surveying team involved with the colliery investigation. The notes on the document were an incredible insight to the fastidious investigation and its findings about this tragedy where, sadly, nine men lost their lives.

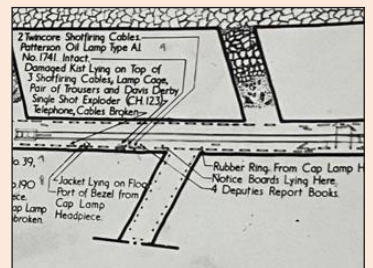
From a completely different walk of life we were presented with a beautifully delicate collection of shoes. These were in a range of materials, glass, porcelain and metal detailing the many styles from the past.

One last offering was an 1893 Consett Iron Company Description of the Works published by Mawson Swan and Morgan Newcastle upon Tyne. This was an illustrated book, and those illustrations were produced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company. You can view the whole book online at archive.org, a great internet archive for historical research.

Marian Morrison



Below: Records of the investigation into the explosion at Eppleton Colliery
Bottom: The collection of shoes



All Saints' Parish Church News

As part of our plans for a musical 2025, our choir at All Saints' parish church is now recruiting. Sopranos, altos, tenors and basses are invited to join us to sing a wide range of music for our Sunday morning services and at our special services. We rehearse on Thursday evenings from 6-7pm, so if you're interested, come for a taster and meet our choirmaster and members!

Plans for this year include a series of evensongs to celebrate the Northern Saints, culminating in a very special service for All Saints' Day in November.

We're also looking forward to hosting the choir and some of the clergy from the Cathedral as we host Deanery Evensong for Mothering Sunday on 30th March at 3.30pm, and to welcoming Consett Brass Band for a concert of sacred and secular music on Saturday 12th April – a great way to start Holy Week.

If you'd like more information, or a chat about joining the choir, please ring Rev'd Lesley on 01207529166! Lesley Sutherland

Jewellers exceed £25,000 raised for Willow Burn through diamond necklace gift

The donation of a diamond necklace worth £3000 will see a kind-hearted jewellers smash through the £25,000 mark raised for Willow Burn Hospice celebrating a special anniversary.

The Newcastle branch of Berry's Jewellers is continuing its support of the hospice by sponsoring the charity's annual fundraising ball at Beamish Hall Hotel on Friday, March 31. A gala dinner will be held to mark the hospice's 35th anniversary. As a main sponsor, Berry's has donated the main prize for the raffle by gifting the hospice an 18ct White Gold Baguette and Round Brilliant Cut Diamond Square Halo Pendant.



David Nicholson, the store manager at the Newcastle store based on Grey Street, said: "Willow Burn Hospice is a charity close to the hearts of our family after the amazing care and support my late mother Ann Johnson received there during her illness.

"We couldn't speak more highly of the wonderful nurses and wider team at the hospice to make her last days as comfortable as possible, and that is why we're so keen to support the great work they provide across Derwentside.

"Berry's is delighted to be again sponsoring the hospice's fundraising ball as a way of saying thank you and ensuring that many more people can receive the personal touch the caring nursing staff provided to my mam.

"Our diamond necklaces are popular products in our Newcastle store, and we're pleased to be offering it as a special prize in the raffle – so buy your tickets to avoid missing out."

Rachel Quince, the hospice's Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Fundraising and Marketing, said: "Willow Burn Hospice continues to provide much-needed end-of-life and palliative care for people with incurable illnesses through a range of holistic day care, inpatient services and family support and bereavement counselling services.

"The hospice has developed and expanded significantly over the past 35 years, and it is thanks to the likes of Berry's Jewellers and all our supporters who give generously to ensure more people from across Derwentside can benefit from the care our amazing nursing staff and wider team provide.

"We are so grateful to David and the team at Berry's for their ongoing contributions, and we hope to see many of our great supporters at the ball on March 21."

Tickets for the raffle are priced at £10 each and can be purchased at Willow Burn Hospice, or online at <https://willowburnhospice.enthuse.com/diamondraffle>.

A limited number of tickets to the Willow Burn Gala are still available. Anyone interested should contact Rachel at rquince@willowburnhospice.org.uk. **Rachel Quince**

Above: David Nicholson, the Newcastle store manager of Berry's Jewellers, donates a diamond necklace to Rachel Quince, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Fundraising & Marketing at Willow Burn Hospice.

Business opportunity

There is a real opportunity in the centre of the village to develop a new business service. A long lease will become available later this year. Equipment is available and it can be used

for a range of outlets.

Further information

Ring: 07551951041



Willow Burn at the Pavilion

On Monday 10th February Willow Burn held a Chinese Banquet at the Pavilion Restaurant in Iveston. The Pavilion provided the banquet at a low cost to the charity and any profits from the event go to Willow Burn. The event was sponsored by Lloyds Bank and hosted by Paul Jackson, the Honorary President of Willow Burn. The event began with soup, the usual starters and then the crispy duck pancakes. The raffle was drawn and a mini auction held. Finally, the main courses appeared. There was plenty for everyone!

The restaurant was packed with tables from: Elidis Transport, Clayton Glass, Rock and Roll Campers, Urban Base Estate Agents, Lanchester Tennis Club, Lanchester Wine Club, ACE Contractors, the Tuesday Ladies, Ashdown Bikers and the Village People! Paul was there with his three sons and partners.

The event raised £2,520 for Willow Burn.

Above: l-r Dianne O'Neil from the Newcastle Building Society, Michelle from the Pavilion and Paul Jackson

Thursday Club

Following the first weeks of the year, our group met on the 16th of January in the Community Centre for a wedding themed afternoon. The weather kindly gave us a break - the ice melted which made it safe to venture out.

Members had fun looking at each other's wedding photographs while trying to work out who was who. Some were easier than others.

There were also two quizzes: one finding partners for celebrities and royals and the other one had dates for those weddings to find.

This proved trickier.

The wedding march by Wagner played out from an iPhone to add to the atmosphere.

Our clever members quickly spotted the "deliberate mistake" on the partner sheet and when the answers were given, we had tea and biscuits and a good catch up with our friends.

This session replaced the original planned one as the author Pat Barker was too ill to attend. We wish her better health and hope to book her later in the year when she feels able to tell us about her work.

Our next meeting is February 20th when we have the pleasure of welcoming Simon Bourne to sell us some houses! You never know!

Jan Vasey

Lanchester Community Orchard Winter Events!

Despite the cold, stormy and snowy weather we have experienced over the last two months, we've still been able to celebrate our winter events!

On a very windy evening just before Christmas, orchard members gathered to celebrate the Winter Solstice. We shared songs, stories, poems and mulled cider despite the wind's best effort to blow everything away. On Saturday 11th January we held our annual Wassail in a snowy orchard. Tradition says that by making lots of noise, tapping the trees and giving them cider and bread we can hope to have a good crop of apples in the autumn. Many thanks to our Green Man, all the musicians and everyone who came to wake up our trees!

If you like being outdoors, contributing to our village environment, coffee and cake, then come and join us on one of our work mornings to find out more. All our information is on our website www.lanchesterorchard.org. We'll look forward to meeting you.

Eleanor Johnson

Lanchester Community Orchard



Above: Celebrating the winter solstice
Right: Wassailing

All Saints' Roman Catholic Church

The first week in February has proved to be a very busy week, for All Saints' Catholic Church and St Teresa's church.

Father Vernatius Edhi joined us from Nigeria on January 30th. He will be joining Father Charles Ejeji living in the presbytery and attending and working with Father Charles and Deacon Peter in All Saints' Church and St Teresa's church. He was welcomed at St Teresa's on Saturday night and All Saints' Church on Sunday morning.

Father Vernatius has provided a bit of background to who he is and what he has been doing:

"I am pleased to introduce myself as Rev. Father Vernatius Edih. But friends call me Father Edih. I was born on 12th October 1974 in Nigeria. I completed primary, secondary and tertiary education.

After my ordination as a Catholic priest on 19th August 2006, for the Diocese of Orlu, I have had the privilege of serving in many capacities. This includes serving as a parish priest for 11 years and, most recently, as the principal and manager of a renowned all-boys secondary



school with 256 students (all live in dormitories).

I have visited the UK twice in 2007 and 2008. I am now delighted to be in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle for my pastoral experience, and I would be grateful for all your prayers.

As someone accustomed to Nigeria's warm climate of around 33 degrees I must admit that I'm finding the cold here quite challenging! However, with God's grace, I will adapt soon."

Also, on the Saturday evening at All Saints church the social group held a Pie and Peas and social ideas night. A big thank you to Hanley's who provided the lovely pies and peas. All good feedback and no complaints from more than 30 attendees. Father Edih and Father Charles joined us enjoying the pie and peas. We all enjoyed an excellent quiz thanks to David Smith. It was BYO for the drinks so all had a lovely evening with plenty of chatter. The evening also produced some very good ideas for other social functions.

Thank you to all who attended, worked on the night and the organisers.

Lestrine Kelly

Left: Father Edhi

Lanchester WI January and February Meetings

President Marie welcomed 15 members and 2 visitors to the January meeting and told us about upcoming events including the Annual Council Meeting on 26th March, quiz competition and the birthday event in November. Raffle winners were Alma Kelly and Rhoda Joyce. The speaker was Dawn Knight, a Community Safety Officer for the Police and Crime Commissioners Office; her position is funded by the Home Office to combat anti-social behaviour and build confidence in ways to report crime. Tina Naples gave the vote of thanks then on a very cold evening soup made by committee members Marie, Tina and Janis was enjoyed by members.

February

President Marie greeted 30 members and 3 visitors to the Women's Institute meeting on Monday 3rd February, and told us about future events and a special event to celebrate our 100th birthday in November.

Flowers were presented to Christine Gibson for a special birthday. Raffle winners were Elaine Mee and Tracey Dobson. The speakers were from Puppy Training for Guide Dogs for the Blind including Jeena and her guide dog Diamond, who was very well behaved.

The vote of thanks was given by Marie, then refreshments were enjoyed while chatting with friends.

Tracey Dobson



Right: Jeena and her guide dog Diamond



Poppy's walks

Good day readers and for this month's walk I joined supporters of Willow Burn Hospice.

Its staff had organised a fund-raising walk aimed at stressing the benefit - both physical and mental - of fresh air and exercise. I could have told them

the benefits myself if they had bothered to ask me!

Humans paid £5 each to join the walk, although they could add more if they wished, but dogs went for free. Which is how I found myself with my two Humans and around 35 others as well as a smattering of dogs gathered in the freezing car park off Newbiggin Lane one icy cold Sunday morning in January.

By now you will know that I am Poppy, a Patterdale Terrier who enjoys telling you about the walks I lead my Humans on. Before we set off walking a nice lady from Willow Burn thanked us all for coming and said the walk had raised over £1,000 for the hospice. Well, I am all for helping a good cause but by now I wanted to get started. We still had to hang around for a group photo before finally setting off.

We walked along the line past the old railway platform and crossed Station Road before heading in the direction of Malton. After a short while we veered off into Dora's Wood which was excellent walking because the cold temperatures had made the ground firm underfoot with an absence of mud. (Not that I mind mud, but it means I have to get sluiced down in the garage on returning home before I am allowed back in the house.)

We eventually left Dora's Wood by rejoining the railway path,

walking under a large metal pipe and climbing a short flight of steps. We carried on walking in convoy towards Malton and crossed the car park at the picnic area before turning right and walking across the bridge over the River Browney. The walk took us along to Malton and we turned right to pass in front of the row of houses there, before going left and along a footpath leading to a nature reserve. We had to cross a stile there - there were quite a few stiles on the walk - and passed through the nature reserve.

After crossing another stile, we turned right and walked along a narrow footpath through a wood to yet another stile. This led us into a field which we climbed, quite a steep incline, before going through a small gap into the hedge into another field. We walked diagonally across this field and came to some farm buildings. These are known as Biggin Farm I believe.

We turned left into one of the farmyards which we crossed and passed through a gate. This led us to another public footpath which took us downhill past a barn filled with haystacks on our right and back to the railway path. By this time, we were nearer Langley Park than Lanchester. But by turning left we headed back through Malton and then Lanchester.

Of course, the bare bones of this walk fails to mention the countless offshoots for curious dogs like me to explore in the woods on either side of the railway path.

But two hours after setting off we were back on Station Road, Lanchester and I think most of the walkers thoroughly enjoyed the experience. I certainly did.

Lanchester Community Cafe Fundraiser for Henry Dancer Days

Being community focused is the primary goal of Lanchester Community Cafe, based inside Lanchester Community Centre. Over the past few years, the cafe has raised thousands for local charities and groups, with the newest beneficiary being Henry Dancer Days after a community poll on Facebook. The fundraiser took place on 1st February and was a great success. Patrons enjoyed a set five course meal using surplus ingredients that were lovingly prepared by Stuart and his team. At the end of the meal, patrons were asked to pay what they felt the meal was worth. In total, the event raised a fantastic £533.

Stuart and the team would like to thank everyone who attended or supported the event.

A very special mention to Hanley and Sons Butchers for their support too.

Keep an eye out for our upcoming events. We'd love for you to join us.

Michael Martin



Guests at the fundraiser: Left front - Liz; Left back - Val; Right front - Jan; Right middle - Gladys; Right back - Judith

Lanchester Parish Council Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 14th January 2025 at 7.00pm

Minutes – Annual Meeting, Ordinary Meeting 10th December – approved

Police Reports

No police report this month as a new PCSO has been appointed for Lanchester. Clerk to set up a meeting with the new PCSO so we can be introduced. Send the new PCSO details to all Councillors.

Howden Bank – Double yellow lines

Councillors discussed that now there are yellow lines at the bottom of Howden Bank vehicles are now parking on the grass verges instead to try and avoid the yellow lines – the Clerk to write to Maxine Stubbs and make her aware of the situation and see if she can help rectify the problem.

Greencroft Forest Park

Councillors were provided with an update.

Precept Report 2025/26 – Following a discussion, it was agreed that the precept be set at £80508.04 for 2025/26.

Financial report – approved.

Boys' Brigade Report

After a lovely Christmas break, we all returned to Boys' Brigade in the middle of January. However, before all the boys returned, the badminton team had the English final of the national competition to attend at Northampton alongside eleven other teams from all over England and Wales. Only nine teams were present on the day, so we played in three groups of three with the winner of each group going into a final playoff with the top two going through to the UK final. We were grouped with 1st Kempston and 1st Yate in the first groupings which we won, so moved to the final grouping with 37th Nottingham and 1st Barnet (B). We overcame Barnet but lost to Nottingham and as runners up we now represent England and Wales in the UK final which this year will be held at Rickmansworth on Saturday 15th March 2025. Congratulations to our team of Arnauld and Louis Lefoyer, Logan Smallwood, Reuben Temple and Nathan Kendrick and best of luck in the final.

Normal BB started by making the year numbers for the notice board and then we baked some cakes for a coffee morning that we ran at the Methodist Church to raise funds for our annual camp. This proved to be an extremely successful day with around £270 being raised so thank you to all who attended.

We then celebrated the Chinese New Year by making patterns or putting Chinese writing on metal cans. Filled with water and frozen, a pattern was then stuck to the outside of the can and holes made with a hammer and a nail. A tea light was placed inside the can, and it proved very effective with some great results.

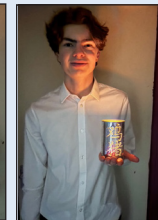
We are still recycling ink cartridges and old BB jumpers that are no longer required. If anyone would like further information regarding the Boys' Brigade, please contact any BB leader or email LanchesterBB@hotmail.com.

Eric Hepplewhite



Left: Lanchester BB Badminton Team l-r Logan Smallwood, Arnauld Lefoyer, Reuben Temple, Louis Lefoyer and Nathan Kendrick

Below: celebrating Chinese New year with lantern making.





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Virgin Media – Lightning fast until it stopped – twice!

After all the disruption and the incredibly hard work from the team installing the cable in the streets of Lanchester, I was looking forward to high-speed internet for the first time in the village.

After I was connected last year, all went well with consistent high speeds and no interruption that I was aware of. That was until Saturday January 25th when the service stopped, and we were without internet. Virgin Media kept sending update texts until it was fixed the next day in the afternoon. I thought, well these things happen, and communication was good.

However, this was just a rehearsal for a much bigger outage later that week. On Wednesday 29th January the service failed again, which Virgin Media confirmed. I had a series of texts that day, and early on Thursday, saying that they were working to fix it. Then the messages stopped. I contacted them by Chat and, although the system was showing no outages in the area, they confirmed that there was indeed a problem with “some” connections in Lanchester. He said the latest he had was that the system would be running again at a date in the past (!) and acknowledged that was wrong and registered me for compensation.

Facebook was alight with complaints about Virgin Media and the difficulty in getting any information from them. Any times given for restoration of the service came and went! Some people contacted Virgin Media to cancel their service and were told that it would

cost them £400 to leave. At one point somebody complained that the text communication system was not working, and they were told that the technical team supporting this did not work on a Sunday.

Eventually, as if by magic, the system was restored on Wednesday 5th February and a message pinged in from Virgin Media saying we were reconnected.

Next thing is compensation. Their terms and conditions say that they will pay out £9.76 per day of outage after 48 hours. People are now trying to confirm that they will get compensation from Virgin Media but it's proving a struggle as they didn't seem to realise that some parts of Lanchester did not have service despite being told so by many people. What to do next? If you're dissatisfied, then you can switch (but at a cost before your contract ends) however Virgin Media are the only providers of fibre internet to our homes at present. So, you would have to switch back to low-speed “fibre to the cabinet” with copper wires to your house from the cabinet. Openreach have said that they have plans to connect Lanchester with fibre in the future but have not given a firm date and it's definitely not in the next 12 months. Quite a dilemma. Are you staying or leaving?

Keith Brown

Lanchester Curiosities -

By Matthew James

Magick and Those Who Wield It

Lanchester Curiosities opens once again for business. Last time, I spoke about Magick and locals going missing...

“Four Now Missing In Lanchester” reads the headline for the front page of the local paper. There's more than four missing, but that's all they know for now.

The police have been in and questioned me, about the shop and what I do. They asked me where I am from and what made me come to Lanchester in the first place...

I answer honestly, and completely. I tell them everything, from being a shopkeeper, to discovering I could have magick abilities, but having to make a deal with... Well, him. I tell them about harvesting souls to please him to keep me in the lifestyle I have become accustomed to.

The shocked looks on their faces is a sight to behold! Yet, they stand up and walk out of my shop without remembering a single word I had said nor what they had been doing. They walk away, never remembering, but always unsure about the strange shopkeeper in the Curiosities shop. Somewhere in their minds is a strange fever dream of my confession...

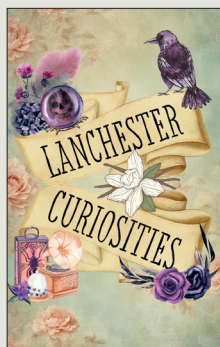
You see, dear reader, with my way of life, I need to be able to protect myself. Usually I get noticed and people soon catch on that the link between the missing people is me and my shop. But my magick can keep me going for a long time, even in a small village like Lanchester.

It's such a perfect place for my wicked deeds, maybe soon I will let you in on all of my secrets...

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.co.uk



Dear Lanchester Residents,

I would like to thank the anonymous resident who wrote to the Village Voice in the January edition to highlight her concern about the footpath beyond the end of Ford Road just outside the village.

Thanks to Keith, from the Village Voice, who has helped me reach the resident directly. I have flagged this matter and asked for it to be dealt with the seriousness it deserves by the highways team responsible for these matters.

Given the size of the Lanchester ward – which stretches about twenty miles from the edge of Weardale and also includes Muggleswick, Castleside, Burnhope and Holmside, as well as this village – I cannot guarantee every matter will be immediately fixed, but I am working to ensure the Council takes it seriously.

If any resident wants to get in touch about any matter, please email me any time on:

douglas.oliver@durham.gov.uk

Doug Oliver

Dear Village Voice

On a Sunday early in November I fell over the kerb outside Spar. I didn't know at the time, but I couldn't move and had broken my hip.

Anyway, Wendy who was opening the Spar at the time raised the alarm. John was very helpful and kept coming out to see how I was.

Also, there was a man called Ian who stayed with me until the ambulance came.

I would like to thank them all very much for their help and concern.

C Cassell

Greenwell Park



Annual Litter Pick

Are you ready to help us for this year's Litter Pick? Around 40-50 people will be getting together on Saturday 15th March from 9 til 12.30 to clean up Lanchester ready for spring.

As an added bonus the Community Cafe will be giving away free 'Breakfast butties' to all those who help. So that's sausage, egg or bacon butties for FREE.

So please turn up to help.

Chris Coates



Above: You could be lucky this year!
Right: Some of last year's haul!



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Charity Visit to Uganda

Many of you will remember when the Watoto Children's Choir visited Lanchester Methodist Church in March 2020 and how wonderful they were. Now that we have retired from our careers, and also 12 years of fostering, we will be travelling to Uganda and Tanzania in September 2025 to volunteer as part of a team with Baby Watoto. We are also hoping to visit some Compassion Charity projects.

Baby Watoto cares for babies found abandoned on the streets, orphaned or whose families simply cannot care for them and are just an incredible group of people with so much love for these children.

We have a list of items that would be gratefully received particularly for the babies. We have already started to collect items to fill two large suitcases capacity 25 kg each but thought it might be worth asking to see if anyone would like to contribute/donate. The items need to be lightweight and not too bulky and if at all possible, clothing should be new or in very good condition (ages from birth up to 2 years). Here are some suggestions:

Baby sleepsuits/pyjamas

Baby bodysuits

T-Shirts and Shorts

Socks

Baby shoes

Baby carriers/slings/wraps

Any other lightweight clothing for boys and girls.

We are also taking out games for some of the older children:

UNO, Phase 10, Playing Cards, Twister, Yahtzee, Jenga, Skipping ropes, Colouring books and pens etc.

Any help collecting such items would be gratefully received. If anyone would like to donate, then please feel free to contact us via email mj.jm@hotmail.co.uk and thank you for taking time to read this.

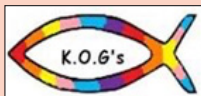
Mark and Julia Lloyd

About Watoto Baby

Many babies in Uganda are orphaned or abandoned, often found at bus stops, churches, hospitals, and even found by the side of the road. Some of our babies come to us with serious medical conditions or have been abused or neglected and suffer from physical and emotional trauma. Others just need lots of cuddles, clean nappies, warm milk and a nanny who loves them. Regardless of how they come to us, we provide the love and care they need to grow up healthy and whole. Our goal is to help our babies bond, develop and thrive—knowing we're raising Africa's future pilots, lawyers, builders and leaders.



KoGs update



KoGs is a Christian based youth group that is for school years 4 to 6th Form.

We offer a range of activities including: 2 course meals, games, messy games, day trips, evening trips, residential weekend trips, crafts, drama, cell sessions and much much more!

We start at 5pm to 7.30pm, Mondays during school terms (and some half terms), at Lanchester Methodist Church.

The cost of the sessions is £3 per person weekly or £30 per person a term, but your first week is free! All activities (excluding additional trips) and your weekly meal is included.

We are holding a fundraising event called SUPER TEA-ROUPER which is an ABBA themed traditional afternoon tea with a screening of MAMMA MIA! the musical after the afternoon tea, with hot and cold drinks throughout the event.

It will take place at Lanchester Methodist Church on Saturday 8th March from 4pm.

Tickets cost £8 per person and £5 for children under 10 years old. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased via the contact details below.

All the money raised at the events will go towards helping keep our subs as low as we can, our upcoming trip to Seahouses and crafts and activities we provide week to week.

For more information contact : **Laura & Peter Cole on 07428500059 / 01207 654291 Kath Jones – 07704160449**

or email kidsofgod@hotmail.co.uk

We also have a Facebook page if you'd like to see more or get in touch with us that way, www.facebook.com/kidsofgodlanchester

We hope to see you soon!

KoGs Leaders


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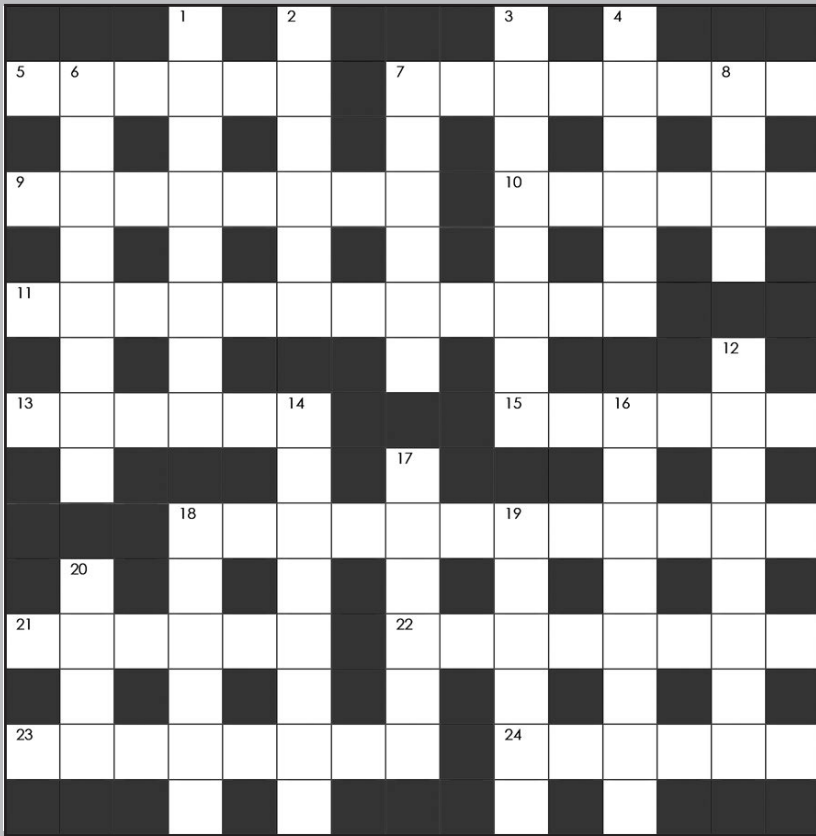
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CLUES CROSSWORD 205



Across

- 5. Direction of left hand clues (6)
- 7. Personification of the United States (5,3)
- 9. Calm and brave (8)
- 10. Followed (6)
- 11. Drivers of 13 Across and 3 Down (12)
- 13. And 3 Down. A3 locomotive number 4472 (6, 8)
- 15. A sibling's son (6)
- 18. Person who takes a chance at the lights (5,7)
- 21. Force causing rotation (6)
- 22. Relating to beekeeping (8)
- 23. Gathering of listeners or spectators (8)
- 24. Person making deliveries at Ashley Park (6)

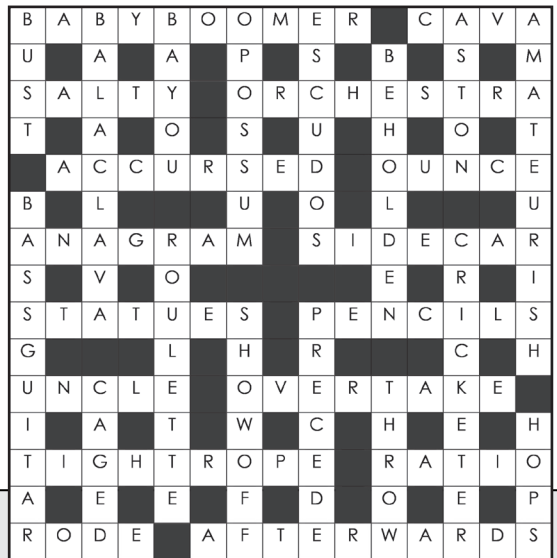
Down

- 1. Thrown at weddings (8)
- 2. Attack physically or verbally (6)
- 3. See 13 Across
- 4. Not malignant (6)
- 6. Billy the Big Yin (8)
- 7. Renovate or improve (6)
- 8. Highest point (4)
- 12. To pass responsibility down the line (8)
- 14. Triangular section of wall supporting a roof (5,3)
- 16. Drinking tour (3,5)
- 17. Where deliveries are made and received at Ashley Park (6)
- 18. Declare innocent in court (6)
- 19. Hands on hips and elbows out (6)
- 20. Language or behaviour considered uncultured by some (3-1)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Friday 7th March 2025** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution for crossword 204
 There were **22** entries of which **19** were correct including one with no name and address!
 The winner, drawn out of the hat, was **Sheilagh Angus**.

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Lanchester Social Club News

A warm welcome to our new, existing and future members to our first Social Club bulletin in the Lanchester Village Voice. This bulletin will be a monthly opportunity for the Lanchester Club to speak directly to its members. If you have any suggestions on events we could promote, let's have your ideas.

2024 ended well with a great Christmas and New Year. Your committee is working on ideas for spring and summer, keep checking on this bulletin page for regular updates. Don't forget, you can book the concert room for private parties, weddings, birthdays and anniversaries, check with our steward Ross for availability.

Important reminder - it's subscription renewal time and we have decided to extend the deadline to the end of March. Please ensure that we have your up to date personal details including an email address if possible. This information will only be used by the club and will not be shared with any other organisation.

March Musical Attractions for your diary

- 1st March the great songs from David McKenna
- 8th A welcome back to a great vocalist Danielle Derbyshire
- 15th the fabulous voice of Ellie Caille
- 22nd Clair Page A very talented Lady
- 29th The great voice of Darren Batey

Sport

We will also continue subscribing to Sky Sports to show as many Premiership and Championship games as possible, as well as Champions League matches.

We also have a very successful Darts and Dominoes team that participates in the Consett and District league. We're always looking for new talent, so if you fancy yourself as the next Luke Littler, get yourself down to the club and our team captain will be glad to meet you. **John Sanderson**

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Thursday Club

The next meeting of the Thursday Club will take place in the Main Hall of the Community Centre on March 20th at 1.30pm. It will be our 45th birthday party and we shall be having a table top Treasure Hunt led by Sam Simpkins.

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.

Christian Aid Soup Lunch

12th March, midday - 2pm (Please note that this is a Wednesday - we have changed the day from a Friday so that it does not exclude the same people all the time). Tickets £6 available from Judith Brown 01207 521898, Dianne Emerson 01207 520817, and Kathleen Bell 01207 521793 .

Paradiso Social Club

Sunday 9th March 2025: 'The Banshees of Inisherin' "a flawless tragicomedy of male friendship gone sour". (Mark Kermode in the Guardian.) This multi-award winning, dark historical comedy explores how two lifelong friends find themselves at an impasse when one abruptly ends their relationship, with alarming consequences for both of them. Starring Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon, Barry Keoghan. 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 March 24 th at 2.30 to 3.30pm, the group will be discussing 'Our House' by Louise Candlish. This book has been made into a drama on TV, a psychological thriller. It has mixed reviews, but will the book be better than the TV drama? Will the group have divided opinions? Time will tell. You never know what topic will emerge in our discussions! *Thursday Book Club*
On Thursday 20th March from 4.00-5.00pm, this group will be discussing

'The Secrets of Rochester Place' by Iris Costello. The Monday book club enjoyed this read, covering the second world war and an evacuee from Guernica and set in Tooting, London. It has a good story line and underlying plot. If you would like to join this group, pop into the library and speak to the librarians. *Pins and Needles* will meet up on March 6th 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 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 March 7th, when Richard Pears returns to enlighten us about The Fenwick Four. That's the four local worthies on the facade of the Northumberland Street aspect of the Newcastle store. Please remember that we have to negotiate

the security system. Talks start at 7.00 so please try and get there for 6.45 so we can get everyone settled for the start of the talk.

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).

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

Wednesday 12th March at 7:30pm, room 3 Community Centre. Please be on time due to the security system. Hedge laying: a talk by local hedge layer Burt Hunter. Come and learn about the importance of hedges in the landscape both historically and currently. Burt will be showing photos and videos of hedges laid by himself and others, displaying some of his tools and giving an insight into the inherent dangers of hedge laying.

Vintage Tractor Club

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

Annual Village litter pick

Sat 15th March, 9.00 -12, meet on the Village Green. All welcome, love the place you live in and help us tidy up the village!

Flower Club

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 26th March in Lanchester Community Centre at 1.30 pm. The demonstrator will be Christine Ogle, her theme "This and That". Everyone is welcome.

Lanchester Partnership Friends of Longovicium

We will unusually not be having a meeting in February this year, so the next meeting of the Friends of Longovicium will be at 7.30pm on Thursday 27th March in the Community Centre. Information on the Friends and our work can be had from Mrs. M. Williams, tel: 01207 520063 or from Rodney Hawkins, email hawkins_15@sky.com. We have an extensive website at www.longoviciumcouk.wordpress.com (note no dot in couk) and recent images are posted on our Friends of Longovicium Facebook site.

All Saints Parish Church

23rd March 3pm Northern Saints Evensong; St Cuthbert
A wonderful service of sacred music and readings to celebrate St Cuthbert 29th March in association with local florist, Lanchester Lily and Rose, two floral workshops for Mothering Sunday. 10.30-1pm, make an arrangement in a floral china teacup, a perfect gift, with light refreshments and all materials provided, or 3-5.30pm, make an arrangement in a teacup and saucer, and enjoy a delicious afternoon tea. For details and to book, please ring 07845560222. 30th March Deanery Evensong for Mothering Sunday with Cathedral Choir

Musical Memories

Join us for music, refreshments and fun activities. 5th March 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

1st David McKenna
8th Danielle Derbyshire
15th Ellie Caille
22nd Clair Page
29th Darren Batey

Lunch Club

The next lunch held at Lynwood House will be 11th March 2025, 12 o'clock start, all welcome.

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 lanchestercommunitycafe@gmail.com or by calling us on 07999801722.

WI

The next meeting is Monday 3rd March at 7.00 pm in the Community Centre, the speaker is Carol Dean with her talk "Hever Castle and the Boleyns". Visitors are always welcome to join us; if you would like any further information please contact us on lanchesterwi@talktalk.net.

Ladies who lunch

A belated review of our 2024 Christmas lunch

We had our Christmas meal at the beautifully decorated Beamish Park Hotel, where we were warmly welcomed by lovely staff who had us seated with menus in no time at all. Christmas Fayre was 2 courses for £25.95 or 3 courses for £29.95, or the main menu was also on offer.

We sampled for starters: prawn cocktail topped with Marie Rose sauce and croutons; roast parsnip soup with chives and creme fraiche. Mains were Beef bourguignon, creamed mash, roasted root vegetables and herb and leek dumplings; turbot with broccoli, puréed turnip, green beans and potatoes; butter roasted Beamish turkey served with all the trimmings and real turkey gravy. Desserts were Christmas pudding with brandy sauce; winter berry pavlova with vanilla Chantilly cream; chocolate Genoise sponge with dark chocolate ganache; poached pear in mulled wine with vanilla ice cream; spiced apple tart with vegan vanilla pod ice cream. All followed by lattes, cappuccinos and chocolates.

All our meals were piping hot, beautifully presented and promptly served, along with cheery Christmas music and lovely crackers.

By the time we had finished our meal we were most definitely in the Christmas mood.

As one of our number said, 'Absolutely Fabulous!'

The Gourmet Girls



VE Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations

The 8th May this year is the 80th anniversary of VE Day celebrations and the Parish Council would like to hear from anyone who has experiences of this time in 1945 that we could share with other residents.

Please contact the parish clerk with any information.

lanchesterparish@btopenworld.com

Eric Hepplewhite

Wildlife Notes

A heart-warming wildlife rescue story was brought to our attention recently. The subject of the rescue was the majestic Peregrine Falcon, once heavily persecuted and impacted by pesticides in the food chain and still persecuted by some people today.

Peregrines are the fastest bird in the world; they often hunt by tracking their prey in flight from above and going into a diving stoop, reaching speeds of up to 200mph. This species' strongholds are the uplands of the north and west, most major cities, and rocky seacoasts, where they can find their main prey of medium-sized birds such as wildfowl and pigeons. In the winter they often move from coastal cliff areas and quarries to estuaries and lower coastal areas.

Peregrine falcons are similar in appearance to Kestrels, but are bigger, with darker grey feathers on the back and a barred/striped breast, depending on sex and age. Look out for the broad, pointed wings and a short, square tail that is generally fanned when soaring, as well as the striking yellow ring around their eye.

Local wildlife photographer and contributor to Wild Notes, Ian Appleby, was recently notified about a bird that had taken up residence on farmland in Lanchester. He managed to identify the bird as a peregrine and took some brilliant photos with the farmer (see below), after the bird had become accustomed to the farmer doing his livestock check on his quad bike.

Ian then saw a post in the New Year during the period of hard snow and wind, about an injured peregrine found in Cornsay Colliery. It turned out to be the same bird. A real team effort ensued, with the rescue of the bird by Cornsay resident Gail, advice being sought from 'Paws for Thought' wildlife rescue centre in Sunderland and help from a local Falconer. The bird was also identified via a numbered ring on its leg, through the British Trust for Ornithology; this revealed that it was a wild peregrine, ringed in Cheshire as a nestling last summer.

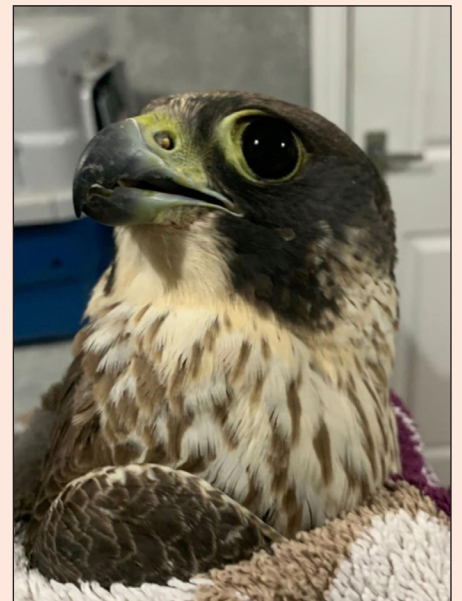
The British Trust for Ornithology, and their nearly 3,000 registered volunteers across Britain and Ireland, play a crucial role in monitoring bird populations and help to inform efforts to protect them.

The bird was named Phoenix by Gail's son Reece; she was nursed back to health and subsequently released back to the area of Lanchester which she'd temporarily made her home. Thanks to the knowledge, care and efforts of local residents, a Peregrine lives on in our local community of wildlife, to bring joy and wonder to those taking some time out in the landscape to observe what and who is around us.

From our wildlife correspondent family

*Front cover photos: Peregrine falcon in the air and on the pylon
by Ian Appleby*

This page: close up photos by Gail



Lanchester Medical Centre: Patient Participation Group

Eye Care at the Surgery with MECATS

Minor Eye Conditions, MECATS, is a newly introduced triage service pathway to direct you to local help for minor eye conditions. All providers of MECATS services bring specialist knowledge and expertise using the latest ophthalmic equipment, ensuring that patients benefit from this NHS enhanced eyecare service.

The surgery is often the first point of contact if you have a problem with your eyes, here the reception team use MECATS to navigate you to the best service to deal with your eye problem.

Referral to a Minor Eye Clinic- If you have an eye problem listed below you will be referred to a local Minor Eye Clinic where you will have a consultation with an expert with a wealth of experience in ophthalmic healthcare.

- Red Eye, possible conjunctivitis in adults and children of any age
- Sore or painful eyes or if they are sensitive to light
- If your eyes are uncomfortable, feel gritty, itchy or dry
- If your eyes are discharging or sticky
- Any lumps or bumps in the vicinity of the eye
- Watery eyes
- Contact lens stuck in the eye
- Any foreign body in your eye or scratches
- Suffering from flashing lights or seeing floaters in your eyes or patches in your eye where you cannot see
- Double vision



Referral to Eye Casualty- For eye problems outside the remit of MECATS, listed below, you will be referred to an NHS Eye Casualty department who have the expertise and facilities to treat these problems.

- Any severe pain in your eye
- Injuries caused by chemicals
- Sharp trauma injuries
- If you have had recent eye surgery

Referral for Cataracts- once an optician has diagnosed cataracts, the optician writes to the surgery asking for a Cataract Referral for the patient. On receipt of the opticians' report, the patient is referred to a Cataract Service of their choosing. All cataract referrals are made by the surgery.

Ref: <https://primaryeyecare.co.uk>

.....
• **Change to Mental Health Crisis Phone Number**
• **The dedicated mental health crisis team phone line**
• **has now closed and all contact in a mental health**
• **crisis should be via 111 selecting mental health**
• **option. The calls are directed to the same place as**
• **the old 0800 number.**
.....



Community Centre News



Here is your latest news from your Community Centre

What's New:

There is a new treadmill in the gym, and we are waiting for the arrival of a new Multigym too.

What's Coming:

- Enterprise Roadshow for enterprising mums on Wednesday 19th February 9.30am to 2.30pm
- Afternoon Tea event, 29th March, 4pm to 7pm more details to follow.
- New children's Creative group coming in September
- 80's Night in October.

Did you know?

We sell second-hand books in our reception area for just 80p

Become a Supporter of Your Community Centre:

The Community Centre is self-funded, it is not financed or run by the council, it is owned by the village.

One of the many ways you can help us with our operational and maintenance costs is by becoming a 'Friend'. Donating any amount or joining our 'Friends' scheme (£24 donation for the year), helps us with the ever-increasing costs of maintaining this lovely old building. It keeps it looking in good condition so that users feel welcomed and happy to book our rooms for their events.

To join or donate, call in, email or give us a ring, the staff are always happy to help.

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.

Lanchester All Saints' Catholic Primary School

We've had a great start to 2025 in All Saints' and we can't believe how quickly time is flying! We have many opportunities for children to take a leadership role in school life and many extracurricular opportunities available for pupils.

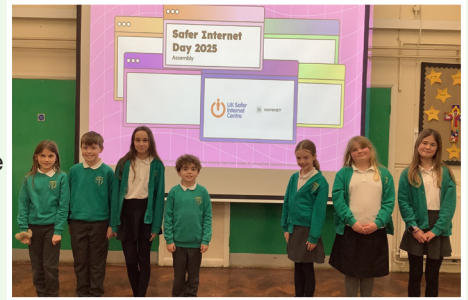
In January, our Year Four pupils have been working with the NHS on a decider skills course which introduces them to a range of different techniques that can be used to manage emotions. The practitioners who are leading the course said our pupils had the best singing voices they'd heard from a Year Four class!

Across the whole school, we are having a push on keeping a positive mental attitude, fostering a growth mindset and trying to be resilient in the face of challenges! Our School Council are working with the Outdoor and Sustainability Education Specialists to help us ensure that we're mindful of our carbon footprint; they are due to complete some work in a couple of weeks in relation to renewable energy. Our Computing Leads took the initiative to work with the whole school to warn them of the dangers of online scams and how we can identify scams and take steps to protect ourselves from them. Max, our quiz master, made sure to check everyone's understanding, asking, "Does this seem too good to be true?"

Our swimming team came third in Derwentside's swimming gala. Fourteen of our Key Stage Two children were confident and skilled enough to represent our school and were complimented on the support and encouragement they showed each other. This term, our two House Captains of St. Aidan's House (our House of Perseverance), Martha and Freddie, took it upon themselves to organise a cake sale for Willow Burn Hospice. They raised just under £200 for a wonderfully worthy cause. That week, our fencing team showed off their prowess, performing what they'd learned with their foils linked to an electrically charged scoring machine.

We love to welcome families and visitors into school; most recently our Year Five pupils shared what they'd learned about forces, our Year Six pupils demonstrated what they'd learned in D&T (how to use a sanding block, screws, a drill, screw gun, batteries, a square and a saw), Computing (made websites), Music and Dance (We Will Rock You) and our Reception and Year One children welcomed a great team from Durham University to learn more about Chinese New Year...it's certainly been a busy few weeks!

Frances Stephenson



Top right: Safer Internet Day
Middle right: The swimming team
Bottom right: Chinese New Year celebrations

St Bede's Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Swimming Success!

We were delighted to hear that Joe Edgar in Year 13 at St Bede's has been selected to represent Team England at an international swimming competition taking place in Sweden in March. Joe and his family have had many a 4am start to get to training and competitions but it has proven to be well worth it! We are immensely proud of Joe and wish him the best of luck in March!



Joe Edgar

'Serve to Lead'

The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) is a world-leading military training academy where all officers in the British Army are trained to take on the responsibility of leading their soldiers. During training, all officer cadets learn to live by the academy's motto: 'Serve to Lead'

We are delighted that Lachlan Shaw (Year 13 student at St Bede's) has passed the selection for a scholarship and been granted a place at Sandhurst for officer training. This is testament to Lachlan's dedication not only to his studies but also to the valued contribution he has made to our school, Sixth Form and to the wider community.

Congratulations Lachlan, we are all immensely proud of you!

Children's Commissioner Ambassador

Congratulations to Lucas Wainwright (Year 12 student at St Bede's) who has been invited to be one of the Children's Commissioner's Youth Ambassadors. As part of his role, Lucas has also joined a newly created SEND panel. This panel will help ensure that the Government and the Education Select Committee will understand the voices of young people when they think about how to improve the SEND system.

Lucas recently travelled to London to meet with the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, and begin his work as an ambassador and will travel to London again on the 3rd April to participate in a 'Festival of Childhood' at the Museum of Childhood. Lucas's selection to the panel is richly deserved thanks to his engagement in Youth politics and we are sure he will be a great success in his new role!

Catherine Hammill
Head Teacher



Lachlan Shaw

Lucas Wainwright with
Dame Rachel de Souza

Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

January has been a month of highs and lows for our school. On 16th January, 10 children and 3 staff flew off to New Delhi to visit our new partner school. They received an incredible welcome from the 1600 primary children, spent 3 days in the school as well as having a wonderful day trip to the Taj Mahal. These children are aged 9-11 and it really is quite incredible to believe that they have had the opportunity to go somewhere like this.

We then had a group of our Digital Leaders visit London and spend two days at the Bett Show at the Excel Centre where they trialled lots of new technology as well as being interviewed for the international company Wonde. They also managed to fit in a trip on the London Eye and a visit to the West End to See 'Back to the Future'.

Our Year 5 children have had an amazing experience taking part in a production of 'The Fairy Queen' at Consett Empire Theatre. They took the part of the sprites and sang their little hearts out! The Age of Enlightenment Orchestra combined forces with the orchestra from Consett Academy and Durham Youth Choir also performed along with professional opera singers. What a wonderful cultural experience this was for them all. It was lovely to see their apprehension turn to great anticipation and enjoyment!

January is always a tough month and our Friends of the School transformed 'Blue Monday' – supposedly the most depressing day of the year – into 'Bright Monday'. Everyone was asked to come to school with a dash of colour and were greeted at the gate with bubble machines and notes of kindness. It really was the best way to start the day!

However, for the first time in years, we have also experienced some vandalism in the grounds of our school. Our wonderful woodland area has been damaged with fires started, wood stolen and a shed broken into. Our Reading Shed has also had unwanted visitors on an evening too, with soft furnishings burnt and ruined.

It is so sad that these deliberate acts of vandalism have not only cost the school money, but also had such an impact on our pupils. Our children were shocked, saddened, upset and very angry when they heard what had happened.

I would like to thank everyone for their support following my post on 'Lanchester Past and Present' Facebook page and for the names I have been given of individuals seen in the woodland on an evening. These names have been passed onto the police but I ask that you all remain extra vigilant when walking your dogs past our school in the coming weeks and months. Thank you.

Mrs Jane Davis , Head Teacher

*Top: Digital Leaders visit to London
Middle: Year 5 children taking part in the "Fairy Queen"
Bottom: EP pupils visiting the Taj Mahal*



Cricket News

The Club had some fantastic news this month, when they found out that Mae Deaville had been recruited to the Durham Women's Academy squad.

17-year-old Mae becomes the first player from the Club to be registered with the Academy and everyone wishes her well on her journey. Durham secured one of the franchises to take Women's cricket to the next level and the Academy squad will provide back up to the senior squad. Mae started playing cricket at Lanchester in 2008, following older brother Tom and cricket mad Dad, Paul. Mae, along with Lucy Houghton and Annie Lee all played together and were signed up to play at Leadgate Ladies as they were short of numbers, as well as playing in their age group at Lanchester.

Their appearance for Leadgate Ladies drew some news interest and the girls appeared on BBC news interviewed by Dawn Thewlis. Mae remained in the County squad each year and picked up their Player of the Year at under 15 level despite being 14 at the time. Mae was snapped up to play for North East Warriors and Northern Diamonds which were the precursors for the Academy squad.

At Lanchester, Mae has continued to play age group cricket alongside the boys under the tutelage of Stu McPhail and has played senior cricket for the seconds and thirds.

Bowling is her strength, but the County coaches are working on her batting, and she is an outstanding fielder.

Chair, Neil Graham, stated that the Club was extremely proud of Mae's achievement which was down to her own dedication and hard work but also demonstrated the Club's commitment to girls' and ladies' cricket.

A final word, a big thank you to Councillor Doug Oliver who used some of his members allowance to purchase five new bench seats for the ground.

Andrew McConnell

Right: Mae Deaville



Lanchester Bowling Club - Dedication Season Review: The One(s) That Got Away

Arriving at Durham City Bowls Club, we were greeted by the sound of a rhythmic drum echoed by cheers from the river side as a dragon boat and its supporters journeyed downstream. The warm August sun was pleasant, and we looked forward to helping our A team out; Durham City were their greatest rivals for the top of the table in the SW Durham League and we needed to slow their charge.

Sally Laverick, John Vickery and I were drawn on a centre rink and I recognised the skip we were playing against - he had played for Wolsingham in the past and also played for Pelton Fell in our local league. On his day he was a good player with a reputation for being loud; in fact, I remember him giving me a headache when we had played Wolsingham, and I wasn't even on the same rink!

The early ends were nip and tuck. Their lead was a bit wayward, but their second was keeping them in the game with her straight woods. Living up to his reputation, their skip spent his time sitting on the green edge smoking, complaining to me about the selectors getting it wrong or shouting at his teammates. He wasn't, however, playing very well. It was about end fifteen when things changed in what was a tight game. We were already two up when I played my last wood around the back of the pack to nestle just to the rear of the jack, giving us three. Congratulating me on playing the perfect



shot, their skip played his final wood with some force, but without any accuracy. Its trajectory was taking it towards the adjacent empty rink when it collided with a stray bowl at the front of the pack shooting it towards the jack scattering bowls as it went. The outcome was instead of us getting three shots, Durham got one.

We'd already had one wick go against us earlier in the match and there would be another before the end of the game; a game we ended up losing by two shots. They say you can't beat luck and winning three ends by having huge ricochets was definitely luck. To rub salt into the wound the match on the rink next to ours was a tie after twenty ends. On the final end Lanchester were sitting one shot with just our skip to bowl. The rules say you don't have to take the final shot, but, against the advice of his number two, the skip did. The inevitable happened and he knocked one of their woods to the jack thus losing the game and two points.

Thankfully the third rink won easily, and we drove away with four points although it should have been all eight. To add insult to injury before I could drive away, I had to wait for one of their players to move his car which was blocking the exit. That player? Yep - the loud skip!

Bob Cuthbertson

*Top: John Vickery
Below: Sally Laverick*

Tennis News

Representatives of Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club were excited to attend the annual Durham & Cleveland Tennis LTA Awards held at Hardwick Hall Hotel on Saturday the first of February. A whole host of awards were presented for clubs, coaches, players, schools, universities, and of course volunteers. There were lots of very deserving nominations and winners, so we were extremely proud when our very own "Tennis Dennis" won the Harry & David Thomas meritorious Award 2025 - in recognition of outstanding service to the game of tennis.

For readers who don't know Dennis...here's a snippet from the nomination submission: "For over 30 years, Dennis has been the life and soul of Lanchester Lawn Tennis Club. Dennis has worked relentlessly to ensure the success of the club. He is affectionately known in the village as "Tennis Dennis" as he has taught many of the children in the village how to play - some of whom are now adult members of LLTC. It is without doubt that Dennis has done a great job of encouraging the next generation to play tennis. In addition to being the secretary and face of LLTC, Dennis has worked tirelessly behind the scenes, putting into practice his lawn-keeping skills for three decades to ensure access to impeccable grass courts for all players. Dennis has kept the club going through hard times, dealing swiftly with storm damage to the clubhouse, and the other challenges that have arisen during his 30 years of leadership. And in addition to all of this, Dennis has sought to secure the best possible resources for LLTC, seeking funding and resources to provide the best facilities for club members. Dennis quite simply is LLTC, the club is what it is because of his tireless work for the last 30 years".

Well done Dennis, another award for the trophy cabinet!!

In other news, LLTC committee met for the first time this year, with some changes to roles and responsibilities, and plenty of exciting plans for the 2025 season including a special offer in place for new members joining the club this year. Visit our website for all information on membership, our coaching programme, and much more!

<https://clubspark.>

lta.org.uk/

lanchesterlawntennisclub

Barbara Ridley

