

the Village Voice

Issue No 1, Volume 25

Lanchester, January 2025



Christmas in Lanchester 2024

Above: Drone shot by Michael Bland showing the lights on the village green.

On the top left is Eric Hepplewhite's well-lit house, and the Kings Head on the right.

Other photos are from the Christmas Carols on the Village Green.



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Bale snowman: We featured the Newbiggen Hay Bale Snowman last year, but this year he's had his moment of fame featuring on Tyne Tees ITV news. Created by Jess Simpson and Nicola Heron and their families.



Christmas in Lanchester *(continued)*

Top left: Santa's bus. Photographed by David Filmer

Top & middle: Santa's tractors

Above: Two of the seasonally decorated vintage tractors from the Lanchester Vintage Tractor Club's Boxing Day run.

Local History Society

We met on 3rd December for our winter social where a small gathering enjoyed a shared buffet and free raffle for the Martin Roberts new edition of Pevsner County Durham. While enjoying the food and refreshments teams participated in a North East based quiz. As there isn't much to report about the evening, we were all so well behaved, even if there was team rivalry. I thought you may enjoy trying a few of the quiz questions.

1. Who was the Radical Liberal Politician who founded Tyneside's Chronicle newspaper and was once a friend of the Italian nationalist Giuseppe Garibaldi?
2. What can be found in the weathervane of the market cross at Barnard Castle?
3. What does the Weardale ballad "The Bonny Moor Hen" commemorate?
4. Who was the North East lead singer immortalised by John Lennon as the "eggman" in "I am the Walrus", and what was the name of his band?

Quiz answers on page 8

Marian Morrison



First (and maybe last!) snow of the winter.

We have some readers' photos of the snow on 5th January, 2025.

Far right: Snowman and his dog made by Tom, 5 years old, and his dad Robert Nilsen.

Other photographs have been sent in by David Filmer

Fundraiser for Pact House

We would like to say a big thanks to the generous people of Lanchester and district who supported our fundraiser at the Methodist Church on 21st December. We raised £430 for Pact House.

With gratitude

Alison Gray and Pat Glass

Right: Alison Gray (left) and Pat Glass



Festive Thank You from Willow Burn Hospice

The team at Willow Burn would like to extend a huge thank you to our incredible supporters for their commitment and dedication to Willow Burn Hospice.

The festive season didn't start off as planned with our Nurses Christmas Fair sadly cancelled due to the wintry weather and treacherous road conditions but, in true Willow Burn spirit, you didn't let the hospice down.

On Monday 27 November the hospice held a Festive Pop-up Market in place of the Nurses Christmas Fair and, thanks to your enthusiasm and support, particularly from Maiden View, we raised an incredible £3,500 from stalls, sales of festive treats in the Willows Café and the raffle. This is quite an accomplishment for a cancelled fair.

The team would also like to send a heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined them for Light up a Life Service at All Saints Parish Church on 1 December. Your presence, as always, made this remembrance event truly special. Thanks to all those who helped put together this year's event – special thanks to Reverend Lesley Sutherland at All Saints Parish Church, to the wonderful readers and to our musical performers; Consett Brass and Lanchester Young Singers. The Light Up a Life campaign and services raised a phenomenal amount of £8,600 for hospice care in Derwentside.

Your support means the world to the Nursing and Care Team at Willow Burn Hospice and to patients and their families, not just at Christmas but every day. Thank you all for all that you have done and continue to do, to support your local hospice.

Rachel Quince

Allotments Available

The Lanchester Allotment Society, which has been in existence for over 100 years, is situated just behind Durham Road at the bottom of Peth Bank, just opposite the parish church. We are a sociable group who enjoy a good chat as much as a good dig. At the moment we have a couple of plots available for new members, these are typically half size plots which we feel are of sufficient size to provide a good crop without being too large to handle all for a very modest annual fee.

If you would like to apply for a plot please contact Jean Dougherty on 07964 473510.

Vintage tractors out on Boxing Day

The Lanchester Vintage Tractor club was out again on their Boxing Day run. They started at Newbiggen. It was a beautiful, but very cold, morning. There were 26 tractors including 9 guests. The club raises money throughout the year and then shares the total raised between Willow Burn Hospice and the Great North Air Ambulance in March of each year. This run raised £360. Before the tractors set off there was a presentation of the Thomas G Stoker Memorial Trophy for the best tractor. This was presented by his grandson John Michael Wilkinson (helped by his son John Thomas who picked the winning tractor!). The winner was Tom Dowson with his Fordson Dexta tractor with a Duncan cab.

The tractor is seen in action ploughing in the picture below.



Left: Tom Dowson receives his trophy from Michael Wilkinson, with son John Thomas. Above: Tom Dowson using his winning tractor to plough – obviously much earlier in the year!

Vacancy for deliverer

Due to the retirement of a deliverer after many years' voluntary service, we have a vacancy for a deliverer for Alderdene.

This consists of delivering 35 papers every month. Anybody can apply but would suit somebody who lives in Alderdene if possible as it makes it easier for me to endeavour to keep deliverers local if possible. Please let me know soonest so you can be enrolled onto the pension scheme.*

Please contact 01207 520291 to apply - interviews to be held January.

Mike Stoddart

**joke*

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Upcoming tree planting sessions in Lanchester

The 'Trees for Lanchester' initiative is part of the Lanchester Partnership Environment group, and we are gearing up for this year's tree planting season.

Volunteers from the Parish have already planted approx. 6000 trees on 11 local sites since March 2021, and will be planting on 4 more sites in the Parish over the next couple of months.

We source native broadleaf trees via 'The Conservation Volunteers' and the Lanchester Orchard Tree Nursery, and from residents who have collected and grown trees from locally sourced seeds.

The aims of 'Trees for Lanchester' are to:

- reduce the collective carbon footprint of the Parish
- support increased biodiversity
- enhance enjoyment of the local landscape for residents

We will be planting trees on 4 new sites in Lanchester Parish on the following dates: Sunday 12th January, Sunday 26th January, Sunday 2nd February and Sunday 16th February.

Anyone who would like to join us and either learn how to tree plant, or put existing skills and experience to use, is very welcome! Please contact us on: 07737 547 476 for more details.

Hazel Bloor

Right: planting underway and previous planting site.



All Saints' Roman Catholic Church

On the evening of Sunday 15th December a wonderful musical Christmas Concert was held in church. Consett Brass and Lanchester Band together played some fabulous music and many Christmas carols. The performance was conducted by two able musicians, Marc Jackson and James Draper. Marc Jackson in true storytelling mode related the Christmas story, reminding us all of the true meaning of Christmas:

the birth of Jesus and the celebration of the message of love, hope, joy and peace to all mankind.

Marc also mentioned how the two bands, Lanchester Band and Consett Brass, are linked. In 1973 Marc's

father David founded Consett Brass; it thrived and included David's wife Lorraine and David's father Eric. Around this time, a Brian Heppenstall contacted David, as he was looking to start a brass band in Lanchester where he lived. One or two players from Consett brass practised in Lanchester Community Centre and very quickly a Lanchester Band was formed. So quite



fitting in 2024 they played together for our lovely Christmas Concert.

As we know Lanchester Band has had many leaders over the years. I am sure many of us know Mark Draper who has been a steadfast advocate of Lanchester Band for many years. I think it is only right to say a big thank you to all these

musicians who give up so much of their free time, to entertain us with lovely music not only at Christmas but at many different functions over the year.

After our music evening, mulled and ginger wine along with mince pies,

shortbread biscuits, tea and coffee was served in the parish centre. Finishing with chatter and friendship.

It was such a wonderful evening we intend booking the two bands for a Christmas Concert in December 2025, a definite one NOT to miss.

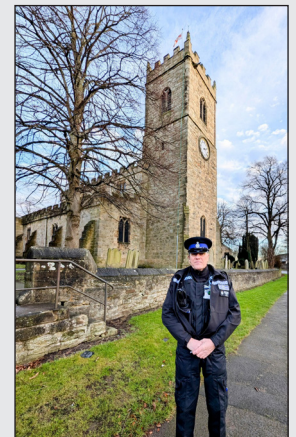
Lestrine Kelly

New PCSO for Lanchester

Hi! Can I take this opportunity to introduce myself, PCSO Paul Egan 30494, the new PCSO for Lanchester. I recently joined Durham Constabulary in November and have been posted to Consett station. I have been working closely with PCSO Connor Milner 30136, who has been the PCSO for the last year, to get an understanding of the current concerns in the Lanchester area. I intend to work closely with the community to try and resolve problems and work with our partner agencies to make Lanchester a better safe place to live and work. I will also be working closely with PC Katrina Joyce 9103 in tackling local issues.

I have already been out on foot patrol in Lanchester getting to know the local area and speaking with people and local shop owners. Patrolling on foot in the community is going to be a routine occurrence, I intend to proactively police and spend time on patrol in the local area getting to know your community and any issues first hand – so please come and say Hi and discuss any issues you have if you see me out and about. I am looking forward to the challenges ahead and, with the support of the local community, we hope to make a difference. To report an incident call 101 or in an emergency 999. However, if you have any questions or concerns you wish to discuss please just send me an email at Paul.Egan@durham.police.uk

PCSO Paul Egan





Poppy's walks

Good day readers and the walk I am about to describe to you takes place at the seaside. It has long been a family tradition for my Humans to spend New Year's Day at South Shields and get the benefit of some VERY bracing sea air. But because the weather forecast

was so grim for January 1, they decided to go on the Sunday beforehand.

Either way I am always eager to get onto the beach.

As you will know by now, I am Poppy, a Patterdale Terrier who enjoys sharing with you the walks I lead my Humans on. So, we piled into the car and made our way to South Shields, about 45 minutes drive away. The male Human drives along the riverside route and turns right at the Sea Hotel along Ocean Road, and then right again up Lawe Road.

We park on the Lawe Top. This is a wonderful expanse of green with panoramic views over to the mouth of the River Tyne, and ships at sea beyond the harbour piers. But I am more concerned about exploring the scents of a new place. We walk around the Lawe Top taking in the views and then proceed towards an area called Beacon and a roundabout. There is a pub called the Harbour Lights on the roundabout but for once the male Human does not suggest popping in for "a livener."

Instead, we turn right and into North Marine Park at a gate which says Beacon entrance.

I am allowed off my lead to explore the undergrowth but after a short while we turn left down a short flight of steps.

We then cross a road opposite a hotel called Little Haven. We

walk into a courtyard full of strange looking chubby figures, about 20 of them and on our visit, they were dressed in colourful scarves and hats. This is apparently an art installation, but I am afraid some of my male dog contemporaries use the figures as props to cock their legs. How ill mannered!

From the Little Haven courtyard, I am always eager to get onto the beach, which we do in due course, and I run along it with an occasional paddle. When the beach runs out, we have reached the pier, and we walk along it a short way before branching to our right.

This takes us on a path with sand dunes on our left and the rear of the fairground on our right. There was a skating rink in the fairground when we visited, but I chose not to participate. After a while we see a pub called The New Sundial on our right and we turn past it and across the main road. This takes us into another park, South Marine Park.

It is dominated by a large boating lake and also has a very noisy miniature steam train running around the perimeter. I know it is noisy because I could hear its whistle on the Lawe Top. We walk around the lake, and I am expressly forbidden to chase the ducks.

We then cross another road back into North Marine Park and walk the low path back through it until we reach the Beacon entrance again. Although for us it is now the Beacon exit. We walk back along the Lawe Top to the car. The walk took about 90 minutes and was very enjoyable as a change of scenery.

Happy New Year in a Happy New Home

The past few years have brought their challenges, both personally and professionally, but taking over your local sales and lettings agency in 2024 has truly been a transformative experience for me and my family. It's been a privilege to serve this wonderful community, and I'm looking forward to what 2025 has in store.

The beginning of the year is one of the best times to put your house on the market, as it's when buyers are most eager to make their dream move a reality. If you're considering selling, I'd love the opportunity to help.

As someone who not only works in Lanchester but also calls it home, I can confidently say that no one is more passionate about the village than me. At Bourne & Co, we combine local expertise with industry-leading technology, a five-star rated personal service, and a highly engaging social media presence (check out our videos on Facebook!).

Together, these tools ensure your property gets the attention it deserves. We operate on a no-sale, no-fee basis, and I genuinely take every home sale personally! I close my eyes most nights thinking about how I can help you. That's the difference between simply listing your home, and truly selling it.

And don't forget, or if you didn't know, we also offer a full lettings management and/or tenant finding service. We pride ourselves on high service levels and take all the stress away from renting your home including maintenance, legal compliance and finding responsible and professional tenants.

If you're ready to take the next steps, give us a call on 01207 529 900, or Whatsapp me personally on 07450 642 976.

Here's to a fantastic 2025 and thank you all for your support.

**Warm regards,
Simon Bourne**



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Christmas Show at Beamish Hall

Schools from the local area, SLP (Stanley Learning Partnership), recently performed at Beamish Hall Hotel for family and friends. Hosted and directed by Ellie Caile, the 10 schools from the trust provided two nights of entertainment, singing and dancing to our favourite Christmas songs.

Lanchester resident Ellie writes “On behalf of SLP I would like to say a huge thank you to all local businesses that kindly donated raffle prizes for our show. All funds raised go back into the trust to help us provide opportunities such as this. We received very generous prizes from ‘Hanley & Sons Family Butchers’, ‘Bellissimo’, ‘GM Beauty’, ‘East Stanley Working Men’s Club’, ‘The Louisa Centre’, ‘REEVO Coaching’, ‘Demanded Streetwear’, ‘Chester-Le-Street Leisure Centre’, ‘The Jolly Drivers’ and many more. The trust managed to raise £1245, and we couldn’t have done it without your support. Thank you! I am very proud of all the children that took part in Frosty Fest, it’s a great opportunity for them all and we love to see all the schools come together.”



Top: Sophie Brooke-Maddison Stanley Primary School
Middle: Pupils across the trust
Left: Host and Director Ellie Caile and CEO Mark Stewart, also a Lanchester resident, with Santa

Sponsored content

Japanese Head Spa Durham: A Global Wellness Trend, Rooted in Our Local Community

Lanchester is a village with a strong sense of community and fortunate to have access to such a wide range of locally owned businesses, from shops, pubs, restaurants and cafes to beauty services, this village is rich with passionate, hardworking people who pour their hearts into what they do. It’s within this community that Japanese Head Spa Durham has made its home.

Above Amari Salon on Front Street, Claire Hill, senior NHS nurse and owner of Lanchester Aesthetics, and Carrie Eyes, former NHS diagnostic radiographer and owner of Nani Laser and IPL, are proud to call Lanchester home. Our healthcare backgrounds instilled a commitment to supporting well-being. We’ve seen the toll that stress and modern life take on both body and mind and actively searched for upcoming treatments which could help.



When we first learned about Japanese head spas, we were captivated; luxurious rituals incorporating precise acupressure techniques with the amazing sensations of various hair tools, gua sha and expert massage, all inducing ASMR (autonomic sensory meridian response) giving that deep sense of blissful relaxation. Designed to rejuvenate the scalp, relax the mind, and restore balance, often it is most rewarding for those struggling with stress and overwhelm. However, research shows how exclusive they can be: largely confined to inner cities and priced accordingly. Our first thought was, why shouldn’t our community have access to this, too?

After much planning and hard work, including training at a top London spa, in October 2024, Japanese Head Spa Durham was launched—the first of its kind in the Durham area. We’ve taken a global sensation and made it local, affordable and infused with the kind of personal touch you can only find in a close-knit community like ours. The feedback on our little oasis of calm has already been humbling. Clients have told us how much lighter they feel, how deeply they’ve been able to relax, and how transformative the experience has been. For us, that’s the most rewarding part. Whether you’re curious about head spa treatments, looking for a moment of calm, or simply wanting to support local businesses, we’d love for you to stop by.

With gratitude, Claire Hill & Carrie Eyes Co-Founders, Japanese Head Spa Durham.

Above: Carrie Eyes (left) and Claire Hill



Japanese Head Spa DURHAM

Here in Lanchester!





A Japanese head spa ritual blends massage, deep cleansing and ASMR, deeply relaxes and restores a sense of wellbeing while invigorating and rejuvenating hair and scalp health. Experience a sensory experience like no other right here in Lanchester at the first Japanese Head Spa in Durham!

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Bliss
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**3 Front Street,
Lanchester,
above Amari salon**



Paradiso Social Club members celebrate Christmas

Despite horrible weather, brave members of the club turned out in force for the Christmas party. Members settled down in a lovely warm room with Christmas music playing in the background and delicious Christmas refreshments, including mulled wine, mince pies and Christmas cake.

The "Christmas Films" quiz was a great opportunity to work together and chat to other members.

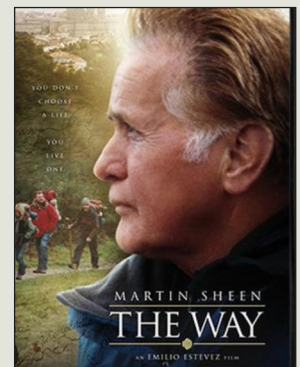
After the raffle, everyone settled down to watch "The Way", a comedy drama starring Martin Sheen, Emilio Estevez and James Nesbitt. This thought-provoking film showed a father heading overseas to recover the body of his estranged son who died while travelling the "El Camino de Santiago". He decided to take the pilgrimage himself, and, on his journey, he meets four other pilgrims from around the world. Unexpected and, often, amusing experiences along the way depicted a wonderful journey of broken people searching, finding, healing and loving. Members thoroughly enjoyed the film and left with a warm feeling on a cold night.

On February 9th members will be treated to the Academy Award nominated drama romance, Past Lives, in Korean and English. In Korea, Na Young, a girl and Hae Sung, a boy are schoolmates and good friends. Na Young moves to Canada and then to New York with her parents. Hae Sung continues living in Korea, does his engineering course, goes through a short spell of military service and then takes up a job. Meanwhile in New York, Na has changed her name to Nora, made a name as a playwright and is happily married to Arthur, an American. Both keep in touch periodically through video chats where they talk of their past and general stuff. Hae visits Nora in New York. What has the future in store for Nora and Hae and their relationship?

See listings for details.

New members are very welcome at any time.

Helen McCree



Top: Members with refreshments
Left: Quiz sheet
Above: The film watched by members this month

Lanchester Community Orchard Wins Environment Award!

Below: l-r Paul Shepherd, Chris Davies, Sonny Shepherd and Jessica Highfield of category sponsor Cummins

On Thursday 5th December, we attended the County Durham Together Awards on behalf of the Orchard Group. We were nominated in the Environment category by a person unknown and believe it or not we won!! It was a great evening recognising the contribution of some very inspiring and humble people working in the voluntary and care sectors.

It also reflects what all of the orchard members have achieved in the orchard over the last 14 years from the early vision and establishment, the stewardship of Lanchester Partnership and the enormous amount of hard graft that makes the orchard a success. Everyone's efforts during our regular work sessions which maintain the orchard have allowed us to achieve so much environmentally and socially and have made the orchard a lovely place in which to meet and just be in. A huge thank you to all orchard members for all your hard work and friendship and to everyone who has supported the orchard over the years- it's humbling to be recognised in this way and thank you to our nominator.



Lanchester Community Orchard is located on Newbiggin Lane at Margery Flatts and is open to everyone to visit. From an empty field, there is now an established orchard producing organically grown fruit every year and contributing to the biodiversity of our environment. If you like being outdoors and good company (and occasional cake) and would like to find out more, you can join us on any of our work sessions; we meet on the second Saturday morning of each month and twice a month during summer months. You can also visit our website www.lanchesterorchard.org to find out more. Everyone of all ages is welcome and you don't need to know any specialist knowledge. Come on up and have a look round any time!

Answers to the quiz on page 2

1. Joseph Cowan Junior. Photo courtesy of David Simpson.
2. Two bullet holes resulting from a shooting competition between a soldier and a gamekeeper.
Photo courtesy of The Durham Cow.
3. A battle between the Bishop of Durham and poachers of his land.
4. Eric Burdon and the Animals.



Lanchester Choral Society Charity Christmas Concert 2024

Lanchester Methodist Church was the setting for the Choral Society's annual Christmas Concert in aid of Willow Burn Hospice, on Friday 20th December.

The choir were ably supported by guest soloists Anna Foster, Paul Smith and Ian Gray, and the Male Voice Choir.

The programme was a festive mix of traditional carols, readings, and other Christmas favourites, with a touch of humour thrown in and, of course, audience participation.

Anna Foster of Radio Newcastle was her usual delightful self and her exuberant personality shone through her singing of such classics as "It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas" and the "Virgin Slumber Song".

Paul Smith's rich tenor voice filled the church with a beautiful rendition of Schubert's "Ave Maria", and he later switched into comic mode with a highly entertaining version of the "12 Days of Christmas" supported by the choir, which the audience thoroughly enjoyed.

Ian Gray, a regular bass soloist with the choir, entertained us with "White Christmas" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and featured as a soloist in a number of the choir carols. Paul and Anna joined with the choir and sang solo parts in a particularly memorable performance of the much loved "O Holy Night".

All three soloists joined with the choir to bring us the "Cat and Mouse Carol", a little known carol which had been arranged in 4 parts for the choir by Bill Gray,

The Male Voice Choir, conducted by Peter Bridgewater, provided us with a well-balanced contrast of harmonies in their versions of the "Sussex Carol" and "Pianola Play" accompanied by Noreen Bridgewater, as versatile as ever on the piano.

The choir, conducted by David Hughes, were well balanced and performed a varied programme of well known and loved carols and Christmas choral pieces

The choir and soloists were well supported by Paul Conroy on the organ who provided sensitive accompaniment throughout.

The evening ended with the audience joining the choir in "O Come All Ye Faithful" followed by the choir and soloists wishing us all a very merry Christmas with a rousing chorus of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

The concert raised £550 for Willow Burn and played to a capacity audience whose extended applause recognized the excellent musical quality of the choir and guests alike.

A truly memorable and enjoyable evening to put everyone in the festive spirit.

Margaret Gray

Top right: Choir and soloists conducted by David Hughes with some of the audience in the foreground

Middle right: Lanchester Male Voice Choir conducted by Peter Bridgewater, accompanist Noreen Bridgewater.

Right: l-r Ian Gray, Paul Smith and Anna Foster



Thursday Club

At our last meeting we were treated to a delightful afternoon of song from the combined choirs of Lanchester EP School. Brought over by and conducted by their lovely choir mistress Janet Knighton.

The music was mostly very modern up to date songs that most of us hadn't heard - but we thoroughly enjoyed hearing them - and hearing them sung so well.

They closed their repertoire with a compilation of songs from the First and Second World War period - songs they felt we would be able to join in with. Which we could - we tried not to feel too old and ancient!

Once the children had had some refreshments and gone back to school, we finished our afternoon with a faith nibbles session as we got ourselves sorted out for our December Christmas meal and paid 2025 subs ready for the coming year.

What a lovely afternoon we had.

The Thursday Club sends all good wishes for 2025 to all Village Voice readers.

Olive Simpkins



Lanchester Medical Centre: Patient Participation Group

Better Health- want to feel fitter and healthier?

Then the NHS Better Health website is just for you. <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health>

Making healthy lifestyle choices to improve well-being can sometimes seem overwhelming.

Log into this free website to show you how small changes can make a big difference.

Topics include:

Lose weight – 12 weeks of constant support to help you set goals, plan meals with healthier food choices, record your progress and receive advice about calorie counting, portion size and healthy meals.

Get active – Try Active 10, which tracks your steps and records every minute of your walking and/or Couch to 5K, a running programme for absolute beginners.

A general recommendation to stay fit and healthy is to partake in moderate intensive physical activities for 20 to 30 minutes every day or at least 150 minutes every week. Sounds daunting? Find an exercise you enjoy and give it a try.

Quit smoking – NHS Quit Smoking app gives lots of motivation, tracks your progress and provides daily support and even tells you how much money you're saving. To increase your chances of quitting completely, Better Health recommends getting free expert help and support from your local stop smoking service.

It is never too late to quit smoking, even if you've tried before, the health benefits are almost instant. In 48 hours, all the harmful carbon monoxide is flushed out of your system, after 28 days you're five times more likely to quit for good.

Drink less alcohol – NHS Drink Free Days app puts you in control by tracking your intake, setting a weekly unit target, sending reminders and celebrating your achievements. Better Health has lots of tips to support you when cutting back including swapping to lower strength or non-alcoholic drinks, sticking to a budget and varying your activities, so you avoid drinking. UK guidelines recommend no more than 40 units of alcohol each week spread over three or more days. (40 units = 6 pints of 4% beer or 6 x 175 ml glasses of 13% wine).

If you drink more than these levels, cutting back can have a huge benefit for your health and your bank balance.

There is no safe drinking level.

Whether you'd like to lose weight, be more active, quit smoking for good or reduce your alcohol intake, these websites offer support to improve health and well-being.



Lanchester Parish Council

Notes from the Ordinary Meeting held in Lynwood House on Tuesday 10th December at 7.00pm

Minutes – Annual Meeting, Ordinary Meeting 12th November – approved

Police Reports

Members were updated on the recent PACT report for November.

Correspondence

Flower beds and biodiversity – A request was received from a resident asking if we can look into the biodiversity of the flowerbeds in the Village. The Clerk to forward the letter to Durham County Council and find out their views and policies regarding this.

Manor Grange Play Area

Councillors were updated that the old swings at Manor Grange will be removed and the ground reinstated – information received.

Christmas Light Switch on Event 2024

Councillors discussed the recent event. Considering the weather the event still had a very successful turn out – information received.

Biodiversity and Non-Designated Heritage Assets Supplementary Planning Documents Consultation

Councillors were updated on the consultations, no response needed from the Parish Council at this time – approved.

Planning Application – Councillors considered the planning application 'proposed 3 bedroom detached dormer bungalow dwelling DM/24/02843/FPA' – information received.

Budgets 2025/26 – Councillors considered the report of the Clerk - approved

Financial report – approved

Accounts for Payment – approved



From the House

I would like to start by wishing you all a happy and healthy 2025. It has been great meeting Lanchester residents at my advice surgeries, and I hope to see more of you in 2025. If you would like to attend a surgery, please contact me on the details below to book an appointment.

The final months of 2024 were busy; I have been making my way around local schools and recently launched my website where I will be posting regular news. You can also

use the site to contact me and sign up to my newsletter. You can visit the site by going to www.lukeakehurstmp.co.uk.

In the wider constituency I have been working to prevent the closure of Chester-le-Street Post Office; I have launched a petition, spoken to the Minister for Postal Affairs, and have raised the issue in Parliament. I recently visited the Nissan Plant in Sunderland as they

are a key employer in the area; it was interesting to see where my family's last two cars were made!

In Westminster, as well as voting on important issues such as the Assisted Dying Bill, I served on the Bill Committee for the Armed Forces Commissioner Bill, which is setting up a watchdog to look after the welfare of service people and their families. I am also introducing legislation that would give police greater powers over seizing off-road bikes that have been involved in Antisocial Behaviour.

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.

Luke Akehurst, Member of Parliament for North Durham



From our councillor -

Education is the future, and few issues raise more justifiable passion in Lanchester and across the country. It is something that national and local government follow closely, and there is correct concern following the disruption caused by school closures during the pandemic.

I think it was the biggest issue of concern for one of my previous bosses Richard Holden, former MP for North West Durham. He worked at the Department for Education before he was elected, and I was able to visit dozens of schools from Consett to Crook to Weardale when I worked for him.

In my time on the County Council, I have been able to visit each of the schools in Lanchester, as well as working with governors Mike McGaun and I have helped nominate governors to local schools, like Ossie Johnson at Lanchester EP, David Smith at All Saints Primary School, and Judith Robson at Castleside Primary. I have also been able to visit each of the local schools and established a good relationship with Mrs Hamill and her team at St Bede's. A particular highlight has been supporting Richard Holden's successful initiative to bring in Lanchester EP to the School Capital Fund, allocating extra money for its future reconstruction with a more modern design. Since then, I have been working with headteacher Mrs Davis where I try to ensure funds come forward and are used in line with what her team would want to work in, and what would have best access for pedestrians and for parking.

Since July 2023, I have served as a Governor at Burnhope Primary School and it has been great to see the way the headteacher Mrs Bryson's team instils their aims of ensuring the pupils "Be Kind, Have Courage, and Show Respect" and it was interesting to discuss the school's performance with Ofsted during the November inspection which it received continued praise, sustaining the positive outcome it gained in 2019 from its previous Good Ofsted report.

At a national-level Britain has made good progress in recent years, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study and PISA rankings showing some good progress since the pandemic, ahead of most European peers, but behind leaders in East Asia. The National Tutoring Programme was a very useful initiative to provide extra tuition for pupils, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds after the pandemic, worth £1billion over four years, but it's not been continued, and the impact of the pandemic surely lingers on.

Nothing can be taken for granted in education. I welcome local feedback from parents and those working in our schools because I am always keen to learn about learning.

Please do get in touch at any time.

Douglas.oliver@durham.gov.uk

Doug Oliver



Above: Richard Holden (former MP), Doug Oliver (County Councillor) and Cllr Ted Henderson, who is Durham County Councillor's Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services.

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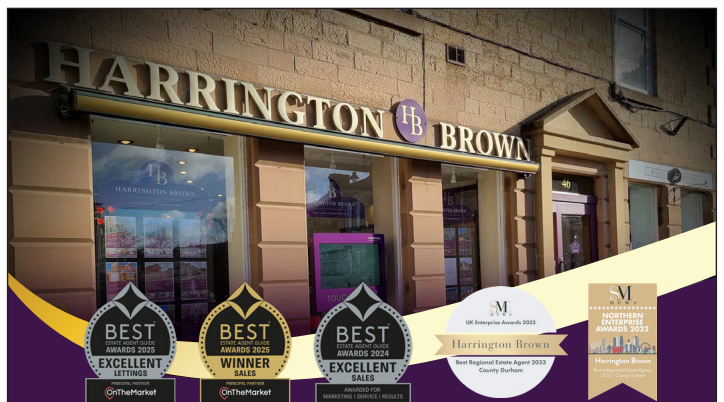


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Lanchester WI Christmas Meeting

On Monday 2nd December Lanchester WI held their Christmas meeting. 37 members and 6 guests enjoyed entertainment by the Appalachian Cloggers, and delicious food provided by members.

We look forward to welcoming everyone to meetings in the New Year.

Tracey Dobson



Musical Memories Christmas Party 2024

What a wonderful afternoon!! Guests were welcomed with mulled wine and settled in to catch up with old friends. There were activities including a wordsearch, Christmas colouring and a Christmas quiz.

Then it was time for Christmas songs; a lovely, seasonal Christmas tea; and Christmas carols. Larry and Jim Rafferty (a volunteer) looked very festive and enjoyed a good sing song.

Pat Bell (below left) was the winner of best Christmas outfit and Roz Baker (below right) won the Christmas Quiz (for the 2nd year in a row). Everyone left with a gift and a smile on their faces.

Musical Memories is a fun, friendly and stimulating music group which meets once a month. It is run by a group of local volunteers. Music is recognised for its ability to improve brain activity, wellbeing and mood. Everyone who attends loves music. Some people come on their own, while others come with family members, friends or companions. We also welcome people living with conditions that affect memory.

Our next session is on 5th February at 2pm with a Valentine theme - new members very welcome.

Do you know someone who might enjoy Musical Memories but needs some help to attend? Could you provide transport or possibly accompany someone who doesn't want to attend alone?

Venue: Lynwood House, Durham Road, Lanchester

Date: the first Wednesday of each month at 2pm

For more information contact us at:

lanchesterdfc@gmail.com.



Lanchester Art Group's Christmas Challenge

The subject was based on a Dickens theme with member Steve Stevens as the model.

The members voted Alan Cummings' portrait as their favourite.

Chris Davis

Below: the group with their finished work

Right top: the model

Right below: The winner by Alan Cummings



Dear Village Voice

I have contacted the council on several occasions about the state of the footpath as you walk from the last house along Ford Road heading towards the garden centre.

The footpath is covered in years of detritus from leaves and soil that has covered half of the ground. Walking along here you literally have to walk on the edge of the path. Terrifying on such a fast narrow busy road! Over 25 cm of the path is covered.

Some of the path is covered in rubble left by the council when they patched up a large hole created by a tree that fell down in a storm.

The fence is falling down. Plastic building site fence remains here from the repair.

It really makes arriving at the village from this direction look extremely scruffy.

Please see attached photo that I took in the summer. It is impossible to push a pram etc along here.

Name withheld but given to the Village Voice



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Lanchester Curiosities - *By Matthew James*

A Penny For A Soul

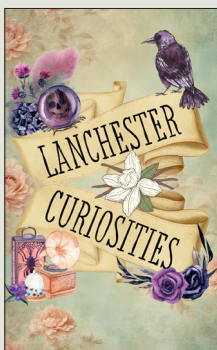
Lanchester Curiosities opens once again for business. Last time, I warned you to read the terms and conditions, this time you'll see why... I am pleased to tell you that my shop, Lanchester Curiosities is thriving! I have all the locals coming in and exploring the shop, amazed at the items I have stacked high on wooden shelves. Some items remind them of their childhood such as toys and games, whilst others are more practical in what they desire, like medicines – but every person who comes in always gets what they want and for a very low price too.

“Is that all? Are you sure?” they'd say, too happy to realise that it isn't the only price they pay for their item as they leave my store.

You see, I am a shopkeeper. But, I am also a soul harvester. And Lanchester is full of souls ripe for the picking!

It's that age old wisdom – if something is too good to be true, it often is. Customers come into my shop and expect to be wowed with wonders they wish for and leave with just that. Only, it comes with a price. And that price is their soul. It says so on their terms and conditions on the receipt I am sure to give every customer. Don't believe me? It's already started happening. Locals have been going missing already. It's not me taking their bodies. I just collect their souls as payment for the gifts I have. My gifts are naturally, private. But I may share some of the magic with you sometime... 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




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The Monday Art Group

The Monday Art Group finished its programme for the year with its traditional jigsaw painting, which was chosen and organised very well by member Georgina Hodgson. The pieces were painted by the members who had not seen the overall design, and then assembled to become a lovely colourful picture of a hare in winter. The session was great fun and followed by our Christmas lunch at Ravello's, which was also very good.

We look forward to more days of friendly art activity in the new year. **New members are very welcome. Contact tojimrafferty@yahoo.com**
Jim Rafferty

Right: the group with their finished work
Below: the finished artwork.



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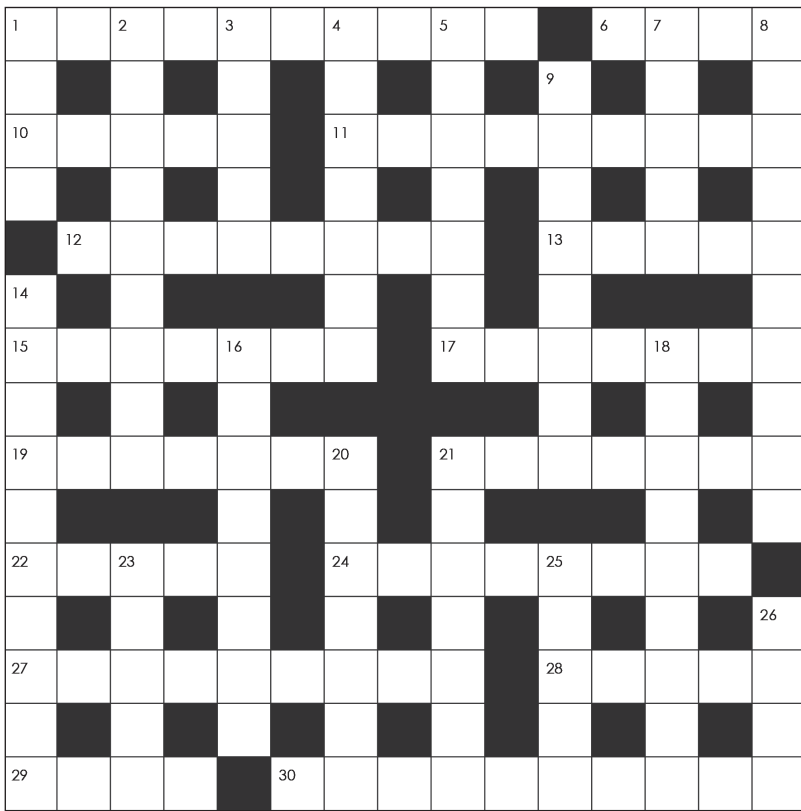
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CLUES CROSSWORD 204



Across

1. Member of the generation born in the mid-20th century (4-6)
6. Spanish drink (4)
10. Brackish (5)
11. Carthorse makes music (9)
12. Doomed or ill-fated (8)
13. Sixteenth of a pound (5)
15. A type of clue like '11 Across' (7)
17. Motorcycle attachment (7)
19. Stationary items (7)
21. Stationery items (7)
22. Pawnbroker (5)
24. Pass (8)
27. Acrobat's walkway (9)
28. Quantitative relationship between two numbers (5)
29. Travelled by horse (4)
30. At a later time (10)

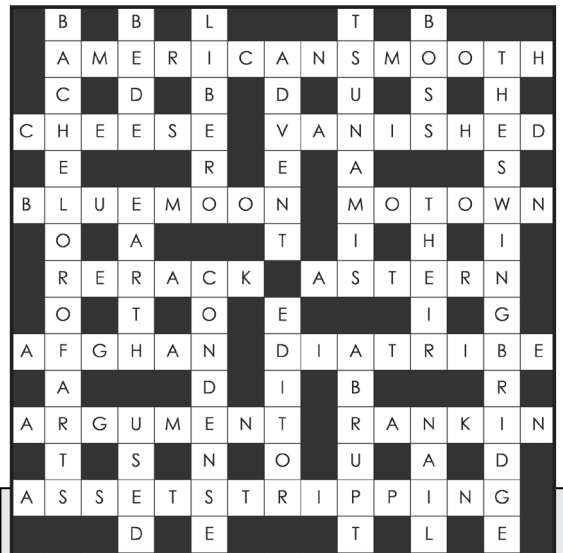
Down

1. Bankrupt (4)
2. Item of winter clothing named after a battle (9)
3. Southern U.S. term for a body of marshy water (5)
4. Small marsupial (7)
5. They were once spent in Portugal (7)
7. Area of Birmingham (5)
8. Done with a lack of professionalism (10)
9. Indebted or obliged (8)
14. Paul McCartney plays it left-handed (4,6)
16. Game of chance (8)
18. One who helps with the Lord's work in NW8 (9)
20. Display with pride (4,3)
21. Come before (7)
23. Imprisoned (5)
25. Fling or hurl (5)
26. Beer flavourings (4)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send your completed entries for the £10 prize draw by **Wednesday 6th February 2025** to the Village Voice, c/o Lanchester Community Centre, Newbiggen Lane, Lanchester, DH7 0HY



Solution to Crossword 203
There were 18 entries this month, 16 of which were correct. The winner, drawn out of the hat is **Martin Joyce**.

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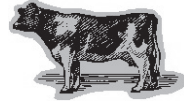
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Monday Walking Group

The Lanchester weekly Monday walking group celebrated its third anniversary this month. It was one Monday in early January 2022 that around 40 walkers gathered on the village green for the first walk.

Now the regulars number around 15 to 20 but newcomers are always welcome. All you have to do is turn up on a Monday shortly before the 1pm start and introduce yourself to one of the leaders.

The leaders are volunteers, but the initiative is run by Durham County Council and is aimed at improving health and well-being for all who take part.

The walkers had a two week break over the festive period but met after a Monday walk in December for Christmas lunch at the King's Head.

The walks resumed again on January 6.

Oh, and well-behaved dogs are welcome!

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Paradiso Social Club

Sunday 9th February 2025:
Past Lives
Academy Award nominated drama romance in Korean and English.
"This is a story of lost love and childhood crush, the painful and dangerous access to the past given by digital media, the roads not taken, the lives not led, the futile luxury of regret. And it's a movie that speaks to the migrant experience and the way this creates lifelong alternative realities in the mind: the self that could have stayed behind in the old country, versus the one that went abroad for a new future.... It's a must-see".
The Guardian
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 February 24th at 2.30 to 3.30pm, the group will be discussing 'Garden of Lost and Found' by Harriet Evans. A family drama set in both the 1800 and 1900's, the novel's title refers to a painting within the story. Will the book stand up to its beautiful cover? Will the group have divided opinions, time will tell. You never know what topic will emerge in our discussions!
Thursday Book Club
On Thursday February 20th from 4.00-5.00pm, this group will be discussing 'Coming Home to Island House' by Erica James. 'Erica has written an engaging and entertaining historical family drama that begins in the summer of 1939 and takes in the declaration of World War 2 and its early beginnings' (a reviewer on Goodreads). If you would like to join this group, pop into the library and speak to the librarians.
Pins and Needles will meet up on February 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 is welcome, enjoy.
Scrabble Group meets the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm to 3.30 pm. Do you enjoy this word game and want to get on the Triple Word Square? Come along and enjoy the company.
Rummikub Group meets

on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month from 1.30 to 3.30pm. A great strategic but simple game with tiles that are always changing. It is a very enjoyable game
Children's Crafts are available every afternoon and Saturday. Different crafts, ideas and materials are set out in the library for children to be creative, pop along with your children and enjoy.
Borrowbox now has newspapers and magazines, click ePress, look for extra news and comment and find the magazines that fit your lifestyle.

Musical Memories

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

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.

Lunch Club

The next meeting of the lunch held at Lynwood House will be 11th February 2025, 12pm start, all welcome.

History Society

We will be entertained by Paul Heatherington on Friday 7th February at our normal time of 7.00, but as usual we need folks to be prompt so you don't fall into the trap of being locked out by the Community Centre security entry system. Paul will be

talking about "Cor! King Arthur, Ben, Con & Mug: Myth, Legend & Fact". It's a tale about what was found in discarded waste material at the top of the Busty seam at Saint Pit Delves Lane. Our 7th March meeting will be at the same time and place, the speaker will be Richard Pears on "The Fenwick Four". This talk will expand on the lives of the 4 Newcastle worthies immortalised on the facade of Fenwick's Department store Northumberland Street in Newcastle. Do come and join us, everyone is welcome and we are quite a friendly group.

Lanchester playgroup

Every Friday at 9:30 at Croft View Halls.

City Theatre

And Then There Were None', the classic 'whodunit' by Agatha Christie will be on at The City Theatre Durham, DH1 3 RA, from Sunday 2nd February until Sat 8th February 2025. "10 strangers are invited to a remote island by a mysterious host, but could they all actually have something in common?" Tickets available now from the Gala Durham on 03000266600 or www.durhamcitytheatre.co.uk and follow the link for tickets. Performances Sunday and Saturday matinee only at 2.30. Monday to Friday 7.30. Tickets £9.50 with concessions £8.50 Sun/Mon/Tues.

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

"Adders up North" by Henry Barrett, Conservation Officer for the North Pennines National Landscape Team. Tuesday February 11th at 7:30 in Room 3 at the Community Centre. Please be prompt re the security system.

WI

The next meeting is Monday 3rd February at 7.00 pm in the Community Centre, the speaker is Margaret Robertson with her talk "There's nowt so queer as folk".
The following 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.

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, 9.30-12, meet on the Village Green. All welcome, love the place you live in and help us tidy up the village!

Flower Club

The next meeting is on Wednesday 26th February, which will be the A.G.M with a talk by Glynis Grainger on "Young Prince Charles". Lanchester Community Centre main hall, 1.30 pm.
The following meeting is on Wednesday 26th March, the demonstrator will be Christine Ogle, her theme "Midelino Madness". Lanchester Community Centre main hall, 1.30 pm.

Willow Burn

Willow Burn Gala: Celebrating 35 Years of Treasuring Lives
We are celebrating 35 years of Willow Burn Hospice with a huge party you won't want to miss!
Date: Friday 21 March 2025, 7pm until midnight
Location: Winter Gardens, Beamish Hall, Beamish, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 0YB
Dress Code: a 35 year celebration is marked with jade, so this year our dress code is black-tie, green and sparkle.

Hosted by Alfie Joey, live music from Borderland, drinks reception, three-course meal with wine, raffle and live auction. The Willow Burn Hospice Gala 2025 will be a true celebration of all that has made Willow Burn what it is today. Tickets are £55 each, tables of 10 are £550. Sponsorship (including two tickets) is £500. Sponsorship (including table of 10) is £940.

Willow Burn President's Chinese Banquet

Pavilion restaurant, Monday February 10th at 6:30pm. Price £40 in aid of Willow Burn Hospice. Tickets Paul Jackson 07957871106.

Lanchester Partnership Friends of Longovicium

As an experiment, the October meeting was held in the afternoon instead of the evening. Unsurprisingly there were very few attendees so we've decided to go back to evening meetings. As some of us are now finding it difficult to travel in the dark it has been suggested that we cancel January and February meetings. This idea is yet to be discussed so watch this space. It would give us all more time for private research. Information on the Friends of Longovicium and our work may be obtained from Mrs. M. Williams, tel: 01207 520063, or from Rodney Hawkins email: hawkins_15@sky.com. Much of our work is published on our website www.longoviciumcwk.wordpress.com. (Note no dot in 'couk') You can also find us on Facebook.

New owners for the Lanchester Fish Bar

We reported in November's Village Voice Henry hung up his apron and retired as owner of the Lanchester Fish Bar.

It's great to report that new owners Rich and Aidan Weatherburn have taken over the premises and are planning to open mid-February 2025. They are currently giving the premises a major refurbishment prior to reopening.

The shop will be called "Grandpa's" as Rich and Aidan's grandfather was very fond of fish and chips – in fact it was his favourite meal. Sadly, he died some time ago. It will be a family run business with the brothers, their wives and their mother all working in the shop. They have advertised for part-time staff and have had a great response, and recruitment is closed for now. Hopefully it will provide employment for local people. The menu will be a "back to basics" fish and chip shop menu using beef dripping evoking memories of our "childhood chip shop". Food will be sourced locally wherever possible.

The image to the right was given to Rich by his wife and shows the brothers either side of their grandfather.

There will be a grand opening – look at Facebook for updates!

We wish them well and will be along to sample the fish and chips!



Wildlife Notes

As the first month of the year draws to a close, the annual RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch takes place. Since 1979, people have been counting the birds in their gardens, balconies or parks as part of the largest citizen wildlife survey in the UK, and its results have illustrated the decline of garden birds.

In the past 50 years, the UK has lost 72 million birds that have not been replaced by new generations, equivalent to losing 4,000 birds a day. This is reflected in the fortunes of our garden birds. The average count of Starlings has gone down by 82%, Song Thrushes by 80%, Chaffinches by 68% and House Sparrows by 57%, despite being the most counted bird for 20 years running.

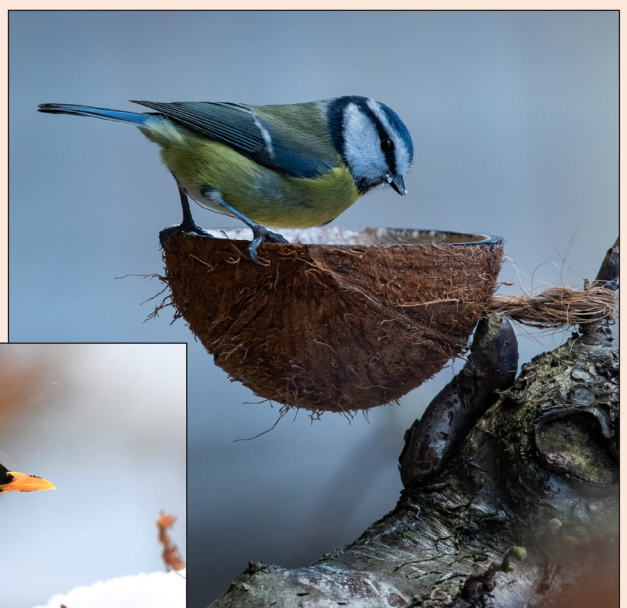
The decline in birds has been caused by many factors, from habitat loss, pollution and climate change to the spread of intensive farming, disease and fewer cavities in houses, which limit nesting and feeding opportunities.

To take action, easy steps include cleaning garden bird feeders to reduce the spread of illness, letting some areas of grass in gardens or on roadsides grow longer, and avoiding cutting back plants for winter, to provide places to nest, feed and shelter from predators. Other helpful steps include avoiding the use of herbicides and pesticides in your garden, as well as growing fruit and berry bushes, and avoiding the use of artificial turf.

And, of course, you can participate in the Big Garden Birdwatch from the 26th to the 28th of January 2025. It only takes an hour of your weekend, during which you note which birds and how many of them land in your garden, then submit your results via a short online form to the RSPB.

Anyone can sign up for free on their website. The results will be published in spring, and every submission helps to monitor the health of our UK bird population and bring about initiatives to save our garden companions.

From our wildlife correspondent family



Photographs: Ian Appleby
Top: Starling
Above: Blue Tit
Left: Blackbird

KoGs Review of 2024 - what a year 2024 has been!

We have had such an amazing year, from our homeless awareness month and big sleep out fundraising event for the homeless at the start of the year, to our crazy weekly meetings, long weekend residential trip in Seahouses in May, Disney on ice and everything in between!

We finished our year off in true KoGs form with our annual Christmas film and PJ night. This year's film was Disney's "The Santa Clause" and with a MEGA KoGs Christmas party the following week which, as always included a full Christmas dinner, party games with prizes, a (not so) silent disco and everyone receiving their 2024 gifts – a personalised KoGs fleece blanket! KoGs (Kids of God) is a Christian based youth group that meets in the Methodist Church on Monday evenings and is open to everyone inside and outside of the village from all and any religious backgrounds including those with no religious background at all!

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! From 5pm to 7.30pm, Mondays during school terms. The cost of the sessions is £3 per person but your first week is free!

(All activities and your weekly meal are included).

We have so much happening at KoGs in 2025!

So, if you're looking to get in on our action, come and join us!

We are hitting the road again in May and heading back to Seahouses with more than 25 of our members for a jam-packed long weekend full of fun, laughs and memory making – we can't wait!

We have two fundraising events planned for this year.

Our first will be titled

"10 in 10" which will be a sponsored event seeing our members take part in 10 different activities and challenges in 10 consecutive hours on Saturday 15th February, so if you see us out and about, please stop and say hi to us!

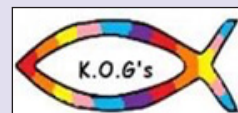
Our second is an event called "Super-Tea Rouser" which will be a ticketed event at Lanchester Methodist Church from 4pm on Saturday 8th March and is an ABBA themed afternoon tea event that will be served by our members with a screening of MAMMA MIA the movie afterwards! Tickets will be on sale from 6th January and will cost £8 per adult and £5 per child under 10 years.

Please contact us for tickets!

For more information contact Laura & Peter Cole on 07428500059 / 01207 654291 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

Laura Cole



Community Centre News



A very Happy and Healthy 2025 to you all from the Staff and volunteers of your Community Centre.

This is always a time for making resolutions about improving our health and fitness, expanding our interests, learning something new and meeting new friends. Your Community Centre is the ideal place for you to do this; we are local, friendly and have great facilities! There are lots of activities and events to choose from for all ages, abilities and interests and all in the heart of our lovely village. Call in and see what's on offer.

What's New:

Gym offer - 4 months for the price of 3

Offer available until Feb 28th and applies to new members having an induction in January or February. Payment for 3 months must be made prior to induction. Membership is just £19.50 a month or £15 for ages 16-17yrs. Gym is open 7 days a week.

Hapkido and Kumbo Taekwondo, open to all age groups. Contact 07871437694 for more information.

First lesson is free, then after that price will be - under 16s £2 and over 16s £5 per lesson.

What's Coming: • Musical nights • Raffles • Dog show • Christmas fayre

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

The month of December passed with the blink of an eye in school with our Nursery, infant and Junior Christmas productions setting us up nicely to remember the true meaning of Christmas in amongst all the hustle and bustle. We welcomed hundreds of audience members over two days and raised an outstanding £770 for charity. Our pupils then decided what to spend this money on (gifts included sending pupils to school, providing shelter and paying for more trees to be planted in the Amazon) and we sent our orders to the World Gifts campaign. We had group singers, solo singers, rounds of singers and songs that sounded like they'd come straight from the West End – the shows were a massive hit!

When the pantomime came to town (Aladdin this year), our children enjoyed putting their feet up and enjoying the performance. As usual the children (and staff) loved getting involved!

Our Christmas parties were a great success with Father Christmas joining us in the morning and Olaf coming along to enjoy the fun in the afternoon. Between carols, Mass, drumming and brass performances, Christmas gift making, pantomimes, parties and productions, we held an afternoon tea for parishioners and sang some festive favourites at Willow Burn and Lynwood House. Like the words from the film Elf, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is by singing loud for all to hear," and I am convinced that our pupils did this to everyone they encountered during this festive period.

Now school is a little calmer, and more normal practice has resumed, there's still lots to be grateful for and loads to look forward to! We hope your 2025 has started off well and you have lots of good things coming your way this year!

Frances Stephenson
Head Teacher



All Saints' Primary rated outstanding

I am absolutely thrilled to share that we have been judged as **OUTSTANDING** in all areas of Catholic Education. Here are some of the incredible comments from the inspectors:

- The school is 'simply filled with joy'.
- School leaders are visionary, passionate and ensure each and every child is valued and loved as a unique person.
- The relationships with parents, parish and community are very strong, and the school is regarded as a place of inclusivity. Everyone is welcome.
- Pupils demonstrate respect for personal dignity and acknowledge the values of other faiths.
- All are welcome regardless of faith or background, and diversity is celebrated.
- The dedication of the staff is truly commendable; they act as role models, demonstrating respect and kindness towards pupils, parents, and colleagues.
- This ensures that every pupil, particularly the most vulnerable, feels valued and included in the school environment.
- Parents express glowing feedback; they appreciate the inclusive and supportive atmosphere that the All Saints' school community provides.
- Pupils in all year groups thoroughly enjoy their learning experience at All Saints'; the engagement in learning across the school is commendable.
- Teachers and teaching assistants effectively support pupils with complex needs, enabling them to consistently produce high quality, creative, and original work.
- There were numerous examples of outstanding practice being evidenced in lesson observations and pupils' books.
- The respect and reverence displayed during spiritual occasions are exemplary.
- The values of respect and reverence are central to life at All Saints'.
- Witnessing the pupils' singing was a particularly moving experience.

We hope you have enjoyed reading a little more from our inspection report. I am certain that All Saints' will continue to grow from strength to strength. Thank you to you, our families (including grandparents, friends and parishioners) for the continued kindness and support you show us.

Mrs. Frances Stephenson
Head Teacher



Lanchester Endowed Parochial School

Christmas in our school was as busy and as wonderful as ever, once we managed to eradicate the germs and bugs that hit our younger children. In the penultimate week of term, almost half of our Reception children were absent with various viruses and we had no alternative but to postpone their nativity. Thankfully, they nearly all recovered in time for them to take place a week later – and it was well worth the wait! Our Nursery children enjoyed re-telling and singing the Christmas story, whilst our Reception children performed 'A Wiggly Nativity' with great confidence and gusto. Key Stage 1 performed 'Bethlehem Bake Off' with amazing talent and personality while Year 6 took to the stage in the Methodist Church with 'The Stars Come Out at Christmas'. They were truly magnificent and managed to shake off any nerves and embarrassment to ensure they delivered a truly wonderful show! All three musicals re-told the Christmas story with a totally different slant but were equally memorable.



Our Year 3, 4 and 5 children took to All Saints' Church for their Christingle and Carol Services. The concentration, articulation and confidence of them all resulted in two very special services in front of a full church.

Now we turn our attention to 2025 and everything the year will bring. One of the first major events taking place is the Royal Shakespeare Company performing an abridged version of 'The Tempest' in our school. This will take place on Thursday 13th February at 6pm in the school hall and is open to the community. Tickets are on sale at a cost of £5. Please ring or email the school office to purchase tickets: 01207 520436 or: school.office@lanchesterep.net This is a huge coup for our school and we hope that they will be performing to a packed hall!

Mrs Jane Davis , Head Teacher



Cricket News

November is the time of year for League Presentation Nights. Whilst not winning any senior trophies this season, we did have one person nominated for an award and that was Simon Kennington, our first team scorer. He was in the running for scorer of the year and to his and everyone's delight who was present from Lanchester, Simon was announced as joint winner along with his mentor, Rene Grosvenor. In the photograph, Simon can be seen receiving his award from former Durham head coach, Geoff Cook. Simon has been a scorer at the Club for many years following a forced retirement from playing cricket and has made continuous progress culminating in winning this award.

Andrew McConnell



Lanchester Bowling Club - Dedication A Pleasant Evening and Trophies Too

A good atmosphere, good food and good company is all you need for a great night out. That's certainly what thirty plus members and guests of the bowling club had when they met on a chilly Thursday evening for the annual presentation evening.

This year it was back to Ravello's for the ceremony and, as usual, they welcomed us with open arms. The restaurant was full, but at 7.30 the first starters were delivered to the tables and very tasty they were too. For the next hour and a half all that could be heard were the voices of those enjoying good conversations and even better food. Pizzas, pastas, fish, steak and chicken were all consumed along with some delicious sweets eaten by those with room left after the large starters and mains. I'm not a great lover of sweets but I've got to say that the torta della nonna was an excellent choice.

Once the plates were cleared and hot drinks were served, the presentation ceremony took place with former DCC councillor Ossie Johnson presenting the trophies. Ossie is a former member, so we were pleased when he and his wife accepted our invitation to be guests of honour. Normally Mike Stoddart, our chairman, would assist the guest of honour, but this year Mike won two trophies, so Joe Newton successfully did the honours.

Mike's languid bowls style helped him win the Club Championship and the Three Wood trophies. Trophies were also presented to Adrian Evans for comprehensively winning the Club Handicap and Andy Travis who won the Round Robin competition. David Friesner was one half of the Pairs Trophy winners with Jeff Hockaday being unable to attend as he was on holiday. Jeff also won the Two Woods competition. As the finals were played in September, obviously the recipients of the trophies were known well in advance. One trophy, however, The Most Improved Player, is decided by the management committee and is a closely kept secret. This year's deserving recipient was Andy Travis whose hours of practice paid off.

Thanks to Richard Hall (Secretary), Mike Stoddart and John Halsey for organising the evening and for the staff at Ravello's for making it so enjoyable. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all our members, family and potential new members a happy new year. Not too long now before the new season starts.

Bob Cuthbertson



*Top: Caption Mike Stoddart with Ossie Johnson
Above: Caption Andy Travis, Kristo owner/chef of
Ravello's, Ossie Johnson, Mike Stoddart, Adrian
Evans and David Friesner*

Sunrise - Photo from Morris Ward of a sunrise as seen from the Pastures.



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