CONSETT MAGAZINE

APRIL 2018

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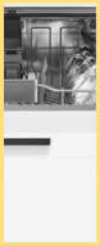




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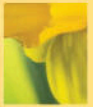





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Welcome

Hello and welcome to your free April edition of Consett Magazine,

Spring is almost in full swing.

Did you know April is named after the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite? In the Roman calendar, the fourth month April is spelled Aprilis, meaning "to open." Festivals which were planned for April included Parrilla, a day celebrating the founding of Rome.

We're bringing you another packed issue this month starting with another fascinating local history piece from Brian Harrison on pages 4 & 5. Lorraine Weightman looks back at her Easter memories on page 6. Leslie Rutherford looks at the history behind the naming of a local estates on page 10. Saltburn-by-the-Sea is this month's Place to Go on page 12. On page 13, Mrs. B. Storey sent in some fantastic pictures of the heavy snow from a storm in 1947. Read about the snow angels of 2018 on page 15.

A special thanks goes out to Bazza Davison for submitting this month's front cover image. If you'd like to see your image on the front cover in April, send your best Springtime photographs (we're thinking lambs, more daffodils, and rabbits; but we'll let your imagination go wild!) to editor@consettmagazine.com

We hope you enjoy Consett Magazine and remember to visit consettmagazine.com for even more local stories, history, news, articles, videos, and photographs.

Have a wonderful April Consett!

Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy,
Firefly New Media UK
and everyone who makes
Consett Magazine possible.

PS - As many of you may already know, Consett Magazine is published by local media firm Firefly New Media UK; but did you know Firefly are on the lookout for some amazing people to join their team? If you are a UX/UI Web Designer, Media Advisor, or Graphic Designer see page fifteen for more information and how to apply for all the opportunities at Firefly.

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Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
Frank Bell
Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
Christina Stubbins
Alex Nelson
Mrs. B. Storey
Megan Potts
Leslie Rutherford

The Front Cover

Thanks to Bazza Davison
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LORDS AND OWNERS OF CROOK HALL, CONSETT

By Brian Harrison

Crook Hall is a truly ancient estate having even been mentioned in the Boldon Book in 1183 in which the entry simply states "Cruketon pays four marks.". The name of the land owner was not mention but it was known at this time to belong to the ancient line of the De la Ley family who were the Lords of Witton. Witton-Gilbert actually derives its name from its ancient lord, Gilbert de la Ley, a Baron of the Bishopric of Durham from 1158-1180. Not long after this point Gilbert gifted Cruketon and all of his land south of the Brune; the river Browney at Lanchester; to the church of Durham. At this time the place was simply known as Crooke and was predominately woodland used for hunting and timber.

By the time of the Bishop Hatfields survey in 1345-1381, the "Vill of Crokhogh" along with 100 acres arable and arid woodland was owned by Sir John de Kirkby. The wording Vill seems to indicate that by this time a Hall and possibly a small hamlet now existed in the area. It is believed that one of Sir John's heirs past on the estate to Roger Thornton. Roger was known as the Dick Whittington of Newcastle having believed to have started life as a poor country boy. He arrived in Newcastle with nothing and became the richest merchant in the towns history as well as being the Lord Mayor 3 times. An old saying in Newcastle was "At the Westgate came Thornton in with a hap, a halfpenny, and a lambskin". At the time of his death in 1430 it stated that "He died seized of the manor of Croke, alias Stokerley Croke". An interesting addition to the name.

Crook with Stockerley now passed to his son Roger the younger. Roger died in 1449 with no male heirs and so the estate now passed to his daughter Elizabeth the wife of Lord George Lumley. George was the grandson of Lord Ralph Lumley who was beheaded due to his part in the Epiphany Rising, a failed uprising against Henry IV of England between 1399-1400. The estate passed to George's son Lord Richard Lumley who had possession in 1511.

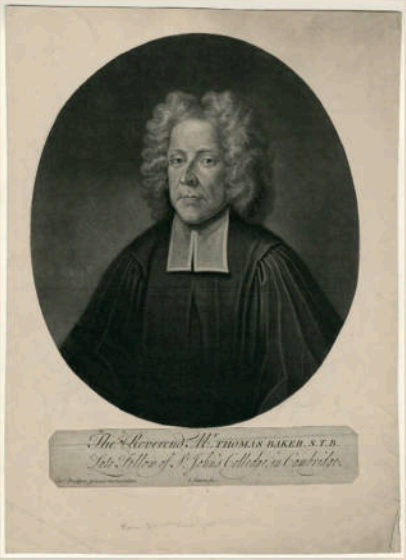


By the year 1566 we know the estate was now owned by Ralph Vasie who conveyed the messuage of Crook with Stokerley to Robert Blenkinsop. 5 years later in 1571 Vasie and Blenkinsop then sold the estate to Robert Hull of Ousterley, Co Durham. After 17 years Robert then sold the estate on again this time to William Shaftoe on 9 Nov 1588. The estate stayed in the Shaftoe family for more than 40 years when in around 1630-35 the "Vill of Crook, near Ivestone" was granted to Sir George Baker. The Baker family were a well established family, Sir George's son Thomas becoming a world renowned scholar. The family rebuilt or remodelled the Hall in 1716 to the building which most of us would recognise from a picture we would see today.

Crook Hall became a Seminary of the Douai Monks from 1794 till 1808 after they had sort refuge in England during the French Revolution. The use of the Hall had been given to them by the Baker family.

However, it was a later member of the family, another George Baker who also first exploited the coal in the area, sinking a mine in 1839 at the Stockerley House Pit a few hundred yards from the Crook Hall, and toward Stockerley House itself which lay further down toward Boglehole. A wagon way was constructed directly from the pit to the new Iron Works, were two new rows of miners cottages had been built, Red Row and Blue Row. The Stockerley House Pit head shut down in the 1870's, replaced by the new Crookhall pit head at Delves Lane.

Crook Hall itself although still owned by the Bakers had not been lived in for decades and was purchased by the Consett Iron Company in the mid 1870's. The Hall continued to decay until the building was purchased by James William Fawcett, a highly renowned local historian, in the late 1890's. He removed the stone and had a smaller version of the Hall rebuilt in Lanchester on Ford Lane, now known as West Park.





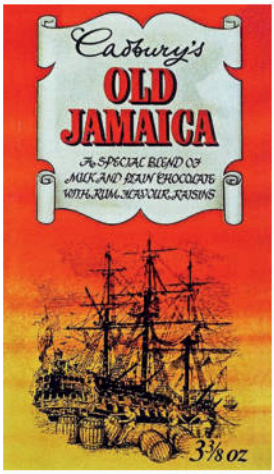
A MOVEABLE FEAST

Historically Easter is a time to look forward to after the rigours of fasting in Lent. Hot cross buns on Good Friday, a slice of Simnel cake on Easter Saturday evening after the vigil and a lovely roast lamb dinner to enjoy on Sunday. Christian western churches celebrate Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon that occurs after the Spring equinox on March 21st, so it can fall anytime between March 22nd and April 25th every year, making it a 'movable feast'.



Which reminds me of the time the electricity stopped working at our home one Easter Sunday morning.

The leg of lamb was resting and the prepared vegetables were peeled and ready to go on the stove. Creamy Yorkshire pudding batter waited patiently as the apple pie baked and simmering custard filled the kitchen with vanilla goodness; when there was a click and the television went off. After trying all the light switches we knew there was no power and then came the sudden realisation that we couldn't finish cooking.



As an extended family living in different houses we always tried to spend significant days together and we had already arranged to visit Auntie Rose's for Easter tea. However with this emergency, it was my job to run through the streets to tell her and my uncles what had happened. Of course she invited us to eat with them.

Not wanting the food to go to waste we decided to move our feast to Alexandra Street. Living in Henley Gardens meant we had to negotiate a couple of main roads in Consett, but we surreptitiously planned our route through the side streets.

Luckily most people were tucking into their Sunday lunch so the town was empty as we loaded my Mam's shopping trolley with pans and dishes and I carried the lamb joint in my domestic science basket from school - with the plastic budgie cover over the top - being very careful not to spill the precious juices needed for the gravy. My Dad and brother brought up the rear carrying Easter eggs, apple pie, custard and gifts for my Auntie and Uncles. It probably looked like a scene from Lord of the Rings as four figures walked in single file over the station bridge in the snow, heads down to protect their faces from the wind blown sleet.

On arrival a blazing fire greeted us from the kitchen as we unloaded our fayre.
I set the table, happy we were all together. Lunch was magnificent and true to form afterwards my family recited poetry and told stories of yesteryear while they toasted each other with tipples from the sideboard. We exchanged gifts. I'd bought everyone the grown up chocolate 'Old Jamaica' while I was happy with my Smarties egg and 'Spirit in the Sky' single.

Although I loved family time I was desperate to put on Pick of the Pops with Alan 'Fluff' Freeman. The highlight of the week when you could hear the charts, so I slipped away as my family dozed. Relieved 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' had reached Number 1, I realised it was time to set the table again for tea as we hadn't even touched the apple pie!

"We ate well and cheaply and drank well and cheaply and slept well …"
Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast

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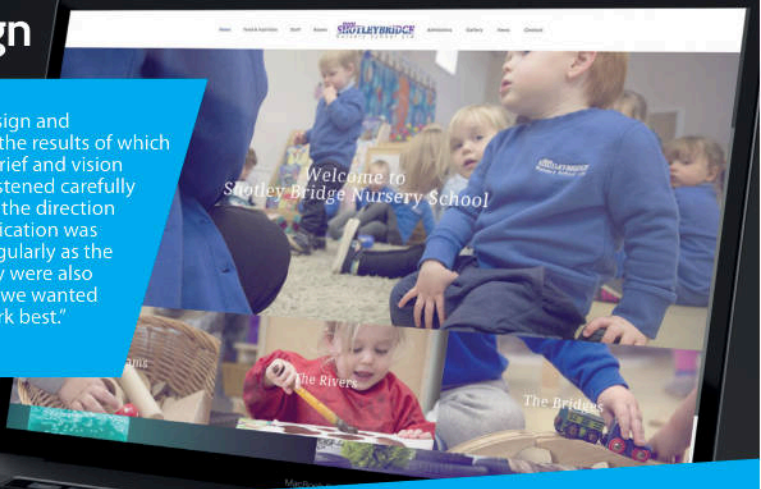



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What's in a Name?

By Leslie Rutherford

A little knowledge of place-names, people and their history can add greatly to enjoyment of the local area.



In Medomsley there is a housing estate called Handley Cross and it provides an example of how a curiosity about a name may lead to a diverting meander through local history. The estate is built on what was a general sawmill but earlier it had been a specialised pit-prop woodyard serving the Derwent Colliery opposite. However, before the woodyard the site had been graced by Medomsley Hall which served as the vicarage. When coal was removed from the seams underlying the Hall, in the 1930s, the vicarage moved to Glebe Farm, later Glebe Cottage, opposite what is now Bishop Ian Ramsey School.

But why is the estate called Handley Cross? When the estate was built in the 1990s the developer, Cousins, advertised it as "Manor Wood". But the copse adjoining Bishop Ian Ramsey School is correctly named "Manor House Wood" because it is associated with the nearby 1877 Manor House which served as the mine manager's residence. A local man suggested that the estate be named Handley Cross after the title of a novel by Robert Smith Surtees, the early Victorian squire, who lived at Hamsterley Hall. This Hall may be reached, on foot, by public paths via a track to the side of the estateheading north-east past Southfield Farm.The route reaches the road between Long Close (Medomsley) Bankand Burnopfield near Pont Burn Bridge. The right-of-way passes over a bridge, on the drive to Hamsterley Hall, known as Handley Cross Bridge because it was built by Surtees using royalties from his novel. The drive reaches the road at a gate-house and passes through stone pillars with Prince of Wales Feathers and very elaborate ironwork (all "listed"). The gates are absent but it is anticipated that, following restoration, they will be returned.

The author R.S.Surtees, who died in 1864, has a recently restored headstone in St. Ebba's churchyard, Ebchester. He wrote a series of "sporting novels" featuring his passion for foxhunting. What many consider his finest novel, Handley Cross (1854), is claimed to be based on the development of Shotley Bridge as a "Spa Resort". The Spa opened in 1838 and Shotley Bridge has many fine buildings from that era. Jonathan Richardson, who erected Shotley Park (now a care home) in 1842, was the Spa's entrepreneur. Charles Dickens visited Shotley Spa in 1839 and he was an acquaintance of his contemporary R.S.Surtees.

Jonathan Richardson was also a major force in the establishment of the iron industry in Consett following the discovery of iron ore at "Number One" by John Nicholson (originally the site was No.1 Coal Pit). The Derwent Iron Company of 1840 undoubtedly contributed to the decline of Shotley Spa and it is "ironical" that Jonathan Richardson should have played such a big part in two such contrasting ventures.



Antique Valuations

An antiques and collectables valuation event will be happening soon. The experts of Lockdales Auctioneers will be providing free valuations on Tuesday 17th April, 10am to 2pm at Delves Lane Village Hall, Delves Lane, Consett, County Durham, DH8 7BH (small free car park, plenty on-street).

Valuing: Coins, jewellery, watches, stamps, banknotes, medals & militaria, antiques, clocks, pens, gold, silver, pre-1900 documents/books & maps, cigarette-cards, postcards, pre-1960 sporting programmes & tickets, vintage toys & comics, scientific instruments, swords, bayonets and de-activated antique firearms. No appointment necessary at this event.

You will have the option to consign goods to auction (subject to terms), or accept a cash offer if you wish.

We recently broke the British record for a Rolex Submariner watch at auction. On 11th October 2017 we sold a c.1964 example with orange numerals for nearly £280,000 including premium. This achievement was reported in the national media. The owner consigned the watch to auction at one of our events in the east of England. Many other star items have turned up at our events and we look forward to meeting the public in Cornwall.

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Places to Go: Saltburn-by-the-Sea

We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started
and know the place for the first time. T. S. Eliot

I began this series in 2002 in a single publication with an article on Saltburn, then the destination of most southbound trains from Chester-le-Street. Indeed, for many years we had a staff summer outing to this town of 6,000, one of the first railway resorts.

In 1858, while walking along the coast path towards Old Saltburn to visit his brother Joseph in Marske, the railway builder Henry Pease saw a prophetic vision of a town arising on the cliff and the quiet, unfrequented and sheltered glen turned into a lovely garden. The Pease family owned Middlesbrough Estate and had control of the Stockton and Darlington Railway which first opened in 1825. The S&DR agreed to develop Henry's vision by forming the Saltburn Improvement Company (SIC) and the railway line was extended to the town in 1861.

Land was purchased from the Earl of Zetland, and the company commissioned surveyor George Dickinson to lay out what became an interpretation of a gridiron street layout, through which the railway ran to the very centre, now Station Square. With as many houses as possible having sea views, the layout was added to by the so-called Jewel streets along the seafront—Coral, Garnet, Ruby, Emerald, Pearl, Diamond and Amber Streets, said to be a legacy of Henry's vision.

The town was developed by the railway company and the SIC, and after securing the best positions for development, money was raised for construction by selling plots to private developers and investors. Most buildings are constructed using 'Pease' brick, transported from Darlington by the S&DR, with the name Pease set into the brick. The jewel in Henry Pease's crown is said to have been The Zetland Hotel with a private platform into which carriages could be shunted, still visible to this day behind the apartment block into which the original Hotel has changed.

I last visited Saltburn on 5th March as the thaw was melting the previous week's heavy snowfall with my stepdaughter Melissa. We went for a wander round the clifftop, delighted in the architecture of the town centre, and found a tiny and rarely open vintage shop called Polyester. We enjoyed an excellent lunch in Coco and Rum, a Thai restaurant on the south side of Station Square, where we both had a good lunch including drinks and coffee for £31.75. The coconut soup with chicken was delicious.

Saltburn is famous for its pier, illustrated, and the Cliff Lift that rises south from the pier to the top of the town, saving a walk up or down the steep hill. Or it would if it were operational, but at the moment the two lift cars are away for repair. Each car on its separate track counter-balances the other with the descending car given extra weight to raise up the ascending car by use of water in a tank. For regular visitors it looks quite odd to see the inclined railway with no passenger cars, but I am told they will be back in operation for the summer season.

Trains run to Saltburn on the line from Middlesbrough and Darlington (twice an hour daytimes) and Bishop Auckland (hourly). Connections are available from Durham, Chester-le-Street, Newcastle and Cramlington at Darlington, and from Sunderland at Middlesbrough. Day returns are available from most stations in the north-east. The original station building is no longer used as such – trains terminate just to the left of the picture instead. Alex Nelson

The Snow of 1947

By Mrs. B. Storey



Photos were taken during the 1947 storm. One at the bottom of Hunstanworth Bank, you can just see the top of the telegraph pole, and local men trying to dig out the bank above Hunstanworth. Desperate days followed, hardly any food or fuel to be found, but brave men walked to Carterway Heads to try and obtain food and fuel. This went on for weeks.





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By Christina Stubbins
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STICK INJURIES

Now the days are getting warmer and the nights are getting longer, people are spending more time outdoors with their pets. If you throw sticks for your dog or your dog manages to find their own stick to play with, they could be in real danger.

'Stick injuries' are a common presenting complaint at veterinary practices at this time of year and can cause all sorts of damage including broken teeth, lacerations of the tongue and back of the mouth and even damage deep inside the neck where there's lots of important structures like nerves and blood vessels.

Worse still, if you don't know your pet has been injured at the time, weeks later painful abscesses can develop at the site of the injury which may mean a prolonged course of medication, or even repeated surgery, for your pet.

The best way to avoid any problems is to NEVER THROW STICKS, you can use balls or toys to amuse them instead! If you think your pet has been injured by a stick while out a walk, please seek immediate veterinary attention.

http://princebishopvets.co.uk/client-advice/

'Beast from the East'
no match for Consett's Snow Angels

By Megan Potts

The Beast from the East certainly made its presence known, bringing with it some of the most treacherous road conditions we've seen in years. But this could not deter the people of Consett and surrounding areas, who rallied together to fight it off with a bit of elbow grease and community spirit.

People came out of their warm houses and into the storms and blizzards to help each otherclear the streets, to aid their elderly neighbours and to give cars a push to help them along their way. But it didn't stop there, as we know there are many examples of people going the extra mile to help others in need or in danger. Brothers Simon and Barry Cartmell, of the Traveller's Rest pub in Consett are two such individuals.From the first signs of hazardous road conditions, they stepped up and posted on social media offering their assistance to anyone in need. They have been a vital source of help to many people, ensuring that vital medication was delivered to people in need and elderly and disabled people did not go without food and supplies when they couldn't get safely out of their homes.

Meanwhile in Shotley Bridge the community came together in operation 'Get Her to the Church on time'. Dozens of volunteers worked tirelessly throughout Wednesday morning to clear the bank leading to St Cuthbert's Church in time for the wedding party to arrive. A nice day for a white wedding – and one way to make sure the happy couple will never forget their big day! Social media has also been used to share invaluable information about the road conditions and advise others on how to stay safe, showing that those who could not help physically were still thinking about others and doing what they could to ensure their safety.

They say we are a friendly bunch up North, and after this week it would be hard to argue. It's times like these that prove that in Consett we are a force to be reckoned with, and make me so proud of where I come from. I hope that although the weather is – dare I say it – on its way out, we continue to show our generosity and help each other out here and there.Give yourselves a hearty pat on the back, shake hands with a neighbour, high five a dog, celebrate in any way you like, because you are amazing, Consett people!

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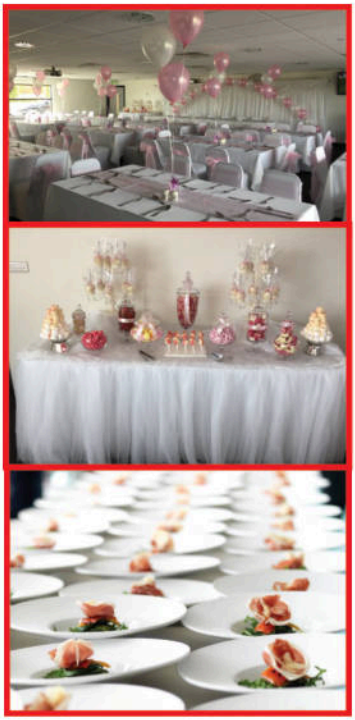

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