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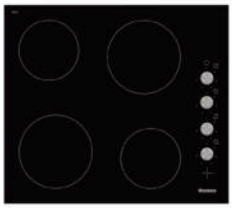
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Happy New Year Consett Magazine readers,

In many places around the world people stay up late to see the old year out and the new year in. Almost everywhere in the world church bells ring, horns toot, whistles blow, sirens shriek, and of course fireworks go bang! That is, until 2020 made it problematic for obvious reasons for people to congregate and celebrate together in large groups or parties.

This year we hope you've all been able to safely see in the new year with your closest family and friends, even if it was just a quick chat on the phone, zoom, or facetime to wish each other all the best of the year ahead.

They say change is the universal law of nature. The old has to give way to the new. Yes, the year 2020 has left us and has made way for the year 2021. But what will this new decade bring?

If 2020 has shown us anything, it's that there are things that may not be under our control. From just one human the covid-19 virus was able to spread throughout the planet, quickly and furiously infecting 70 million humans and killing more than 1.6 million people.

We think it's a bit of a metaphor that something so small and insignificant in size can spread from just one human being to millions of others so quickly (in under 12 months). Perhaps positive change in 2021 could come about just like this too? In much the same way the virus was able to spread, perhaps from small random acts of kindness we can spread positivity, look after our loved ones, and make Consett and indeed our planet a better place to live in for the decade ahead.

I was just thinking about how many decades I've lived in now, it'll be 5 decades I've had on this planet. I've lived in the 80s, 90s, 2000s, 2010s, and now the 2020s - and yet I'm 34 years old. I've seen a lot of change in the world in my short time on earth, and if there's ever a prediction for what may lie ahead, it is to "expect the unexpected". There is always change, and I can't help feeling that 2020 is just the beginning of a more connected planet - where we increasingly rely and demand services and products brought directly to us through mobile applications - and interaction between humans happens predominantly via the internet. My hope is that we're able to continue to prosper, improve health needs, and become more environmentally conscious of our planet as individuals and in our local and global communities; and hopefully we can all get together this year for all the missed events like ceremonies, weddings, baby births, birthdays, parties, and all the good times with family and friends which are dearly missed.

If you'd like to place an ad, publish a story or send in your photograph for the front cover next month - contact us on 01207 438 292 or email editor@consettmagazine.com

Warmest wishes for 2021,

Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy and all the people and businesses who make the free Consett Magazine possible every month.

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SCAN ME

The Front Cover

The front cover this month is by **Barry Tupper.**
Send any drawings or photographs to:
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Consett Heart - Heritage and Arts Centre. By Brian Harrison

In one of my recent articles I wrote about the St John Ambulance Hall Consett and our fight to save it for future generation's. The newly formed Consett & District Heritage and Arts Community Interest Company (CaDHA CIC), founded in October 2019, was set up by a dedicated group of volunteers for this very purpose, as well as to provide a Heritage and Arts Centre for the area. Our first job was to stop the sale of the hall and have it classified as a building of community interest, which we did. This gave us time to start the ball rolling and to find the initial money needed to buy the hall. Our fund raising initially started off well with many fantastic people donating, but unfortunately it just wasn't enough.

However, after lots of wrangling and meetings, CaDHA CIC have now taken possession of the former Ambulance Hall in John Street, Consett with major assistance from the Project Genesis Trust. The group now have a 25 year lease and officially received the keys to the Hall on 16th October 2020. The present circumstances of lock-down's due to this terrible pandemic are not ideal and are certainly not how we foresaw our initial start-up.

Our CIC have been in a type slumber, other than for planning for the better part of 5-6 months. However, we have now jumped into action. We have started the processes to get the building ready for activities to begin. There are still quite a few hurdles to overcome, such as final safety checks, fire regulations and so on, all of which are in hand but have been slowed down due to the present situation. Money is also a major factor as you can imagine.

As a group we are having meetings regularly to make sure we keep things moving forward. We have started applying for grants and have already had some generous donation's, but are also actively seeking more as well as other revenues of income.

The old ambulance hall is a fantastic space and we plan to make it into a centre of excellence, not only benefiting the local area but also to help bring in people from much further afield.

The Ambulance Hall was built initially in around 1934 by local subscription and donation's and the land being donated by the Consett Iron Company next to its purpose built telephone



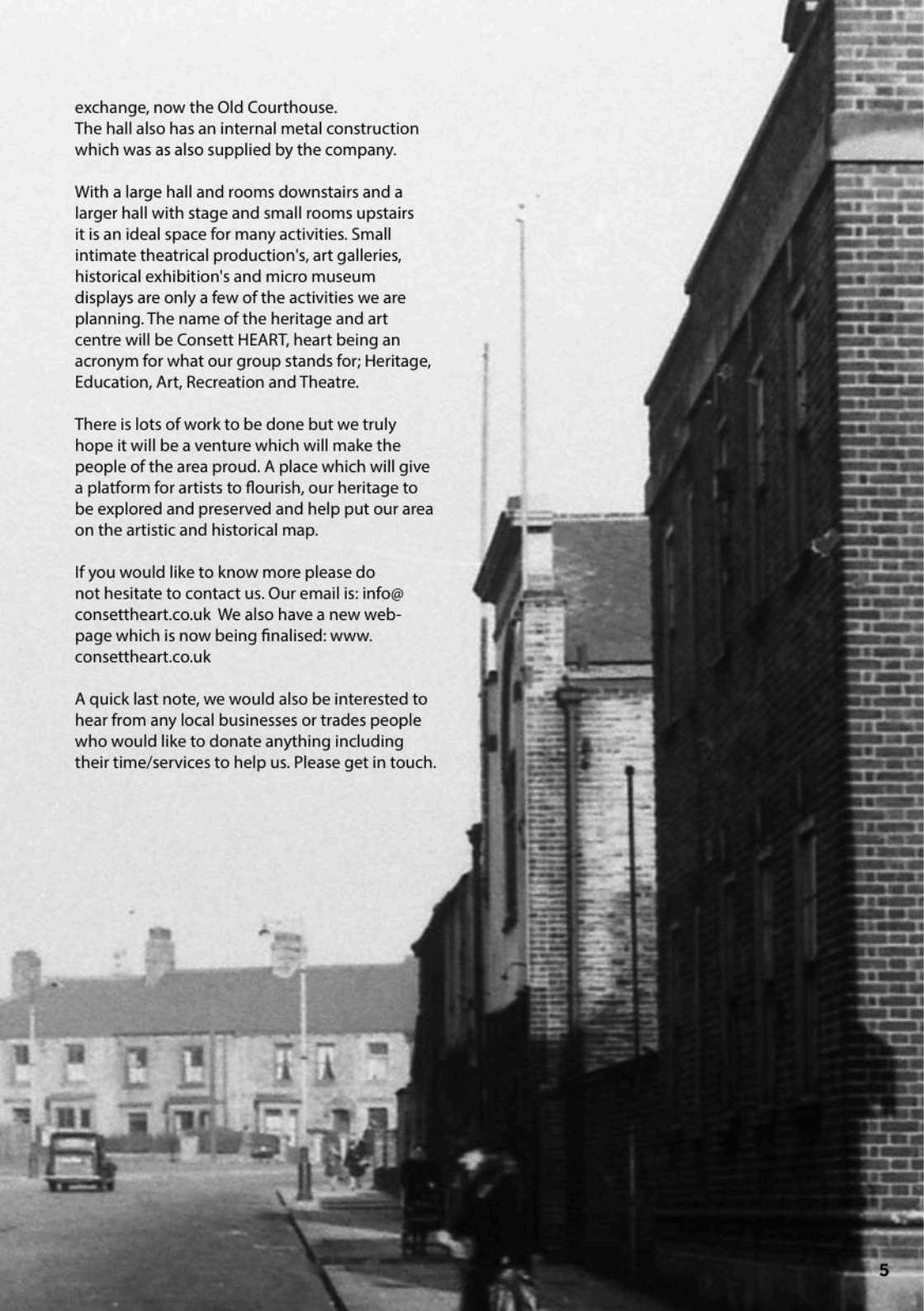
exchange, now the Old Courthouse.
The hall also has an internal metal construction which was as also supplied by the company.

With a large hall and rooms downstairs and a larger hall with stage and small rooms upstairs it is an ideal space for many activities. Small intimate theatrical production's, art galleries, historical exhibition's and micro museum displays are only a few of the activities we are planning. The name of the heritage and art centre will be Consett HEART, heart being an acronym for what our group stands for; Heritage, Education, Art, Recreation and Theatre.

There is lots of work to be done but we truly hope it will be a venture which will make the people of the area proud. A place which will give a platform for artists to flourish, our heritage to be explored and preserved and help put our area on the artistic and historical map.

If you would like to know more please do not hesitate to contact us. Our email is: info@consettheart.co.uk We also have a new web-page which is now being finalised: www.consettheart.co.uk

A quick last note, we would also be interested to hear from any local businesses or trades people who would like to donate anything including their time/services to help us. Please get in touch.



Discovering the Land of Oak & Iron



Covering an area of over seventy square miles, the Land of Oak & Iron follows the beautiful steep sided valley of the River Derwent from its source at Gibraltar Rock to its confluence with the River Tyne and wraps around to Prudhoe, further west along the Tyne valley. There are tranquil rural villages in the upper reaches of the valley, with busy residential and commercial areas around Consett and Prudhoe. It is easy to forget that the woodlands and river once provided the fuel and energy that powered the industrial revolution.

The area has an abundance of natural woodland, rare and iconic wildlife and a heritage to be discovered. However, the natural beauty that you see today was not always as tranquil as it appears. Not so long ago the area hosted a world-leading iron and steel industry in various forms from the 1690s up until the 1980s; in the early 18th Century Shotley Bridge was the heart of British sword making; and Winlaton Mill was home to the iron works of the great industrialist, Ambrose Crowley. Such industry attracted wealth and culture to the area, including the Earls of Strathmore at Gibside



Hall, the artist Thomas Bewick, and the poet Tommy Armstrong. The area is famed across the globe for the local traditional rapper dancing.

The Land of Oak & Iron Trust is a group of enthusiastic volunteers who focus on the preservation of the heritage, culture and landscape of the area, building on the fantastic work done by partners and volunteers during the four-year, Heritage Lottery funded, Land of Oak & Iron project. Our volunteers work on cultural projects with young persons; map the landscape and history of the area; revive out-of-print books; and, through links with Durham Wildlife, help to manage local woodlands. The results of much of our work will be available at the new Heritage Centre at Winlaton Mill; the Lodge in Blackhill; the Tyne Riverside Café at Prudhoe, and also online at **www.loit.org.uk**

We aim to encourage and inspire the community, young people in particular, to protect the natural environment and heritage; and to celebrate, and participate in, the culture and traditions of the Land of Oak & Iron.

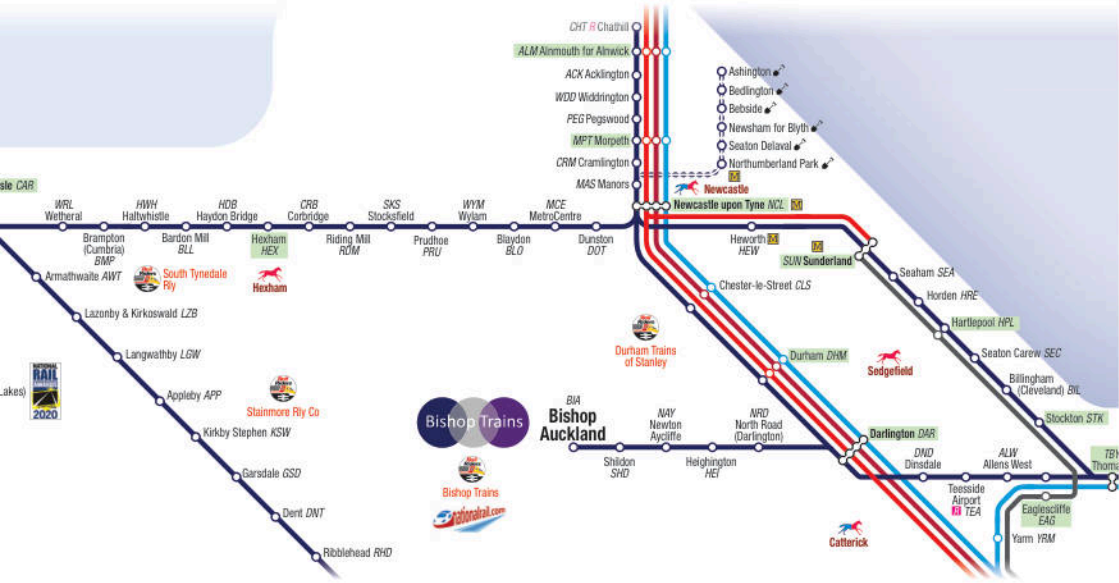
Calling potential rail users of Consett!

Proposals are afoot to link Consett to the rail network again.

There are two other schemes for reopening in the north east: the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne railway and the Leamside Line, which have been promoted for years.

Meanwhile the network is accessible at Durham, Chester-le-Street, Newcastle and Gateshead MetroCentre.

(By the way, think how you get a railway line from Swalwell Rugby Club over the A1 and round the back of the MetroCentre - it won't be cheap!)



But Consett might get on the next edition of the map in 2021

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Written In The Stars

- By Lorraine Weightman

The Stargazers among us were directed by astronomers to look out for what has been dubbed the 'Christmas Star' - also referred to 'The Star Of Bethlehem' - on and after the winter solstice in December 2020.

Jupiter and Saturn, the two largest planets in our solar system are in conjunction and aligned together to give the illusion of one large star. This is a rare event and it's last equivalent occurrence was in the Middle Ages, nearly 800 years ago in 1226.

If you were lucky enough to observe or know about this celestial spectacle at this seasonal time, you would no doubt be reminded of a journey undertaken by three wise men who followed a star from the east - over 2000 years ago - to worship a new newborn king.

It is said that The Romans who had conquered and ruled the majority of the known world at that time thought the star was about them, and they put an image of it on one of their coins, next to Caesar Augustus.

The Epiphany - which translates as manifestation or revelation - is celebrated on January 6th as a Christian festival; commemorating the arrival of those wise men, or Magi at the stable in Bethlehem. Some accounts passed down through the ages proclaim that it took these travellers 12 days to reach their destination; the reason we keep the celebrations going, while waiting their arrival!

However in most Nativity scenes, picture and plays - especially in schools - the visitors make an appearance well in advance of that. Along with the shepherds, the animals and the holy family, they arrive offering their gifts, to complete the story in usually less than half an hour!

It's no wonder timescales are confusing, yet as with everything, stories get added to over the centuries and the way we celebrate is dictated by our lifestyles.

You can't blame our ancestors for embracing the twelve days of Christmas and enjoying a final last fling of partying and revelry on the eve of the Epiphany; after all they had been - unlike us - fasting for over four weeks in Advent. So in the grand scale of things, staying home as we have been asked to do is not such a big ask.

So this Twelfth Night, I'm going to settle down with Shakespeare, and raise a glass to the old and look to new beginnings, while remembering past times when my family were growing up.

There was always healthy competition in the household among our three children.

An older brother, who set the bar for his two younger sisters, gave them the incentive to try and succeed when he challenged them to a task. Never keen to lose, he managed to manifest the odds in his favour most of the time, so the girls had their work cut out!

After festive celebrations in school they decided to test each other's knowledge of the Christmas Story and were asked to come up with something that no one else knew. Being four and half years of age, desperate to prove herself and determined to win the competition with her superior knowledge of the story; my youngest daughter threw her gold card onto the table by proclaiming:

'And anyway, I know where the wee three kings live; it's in the song we learnt at school'

Her siblings - giggling at her pomposity - demanded that she enlighten them with her newly found knowledge, and waited patiently for her answer.

Triumphantly, believing in herself, she carefully wrote down the words on a piece of paper, then holding it up as the ultimate proof, she exclaimed excitedly,
'Aur Ree Enn Tarr'
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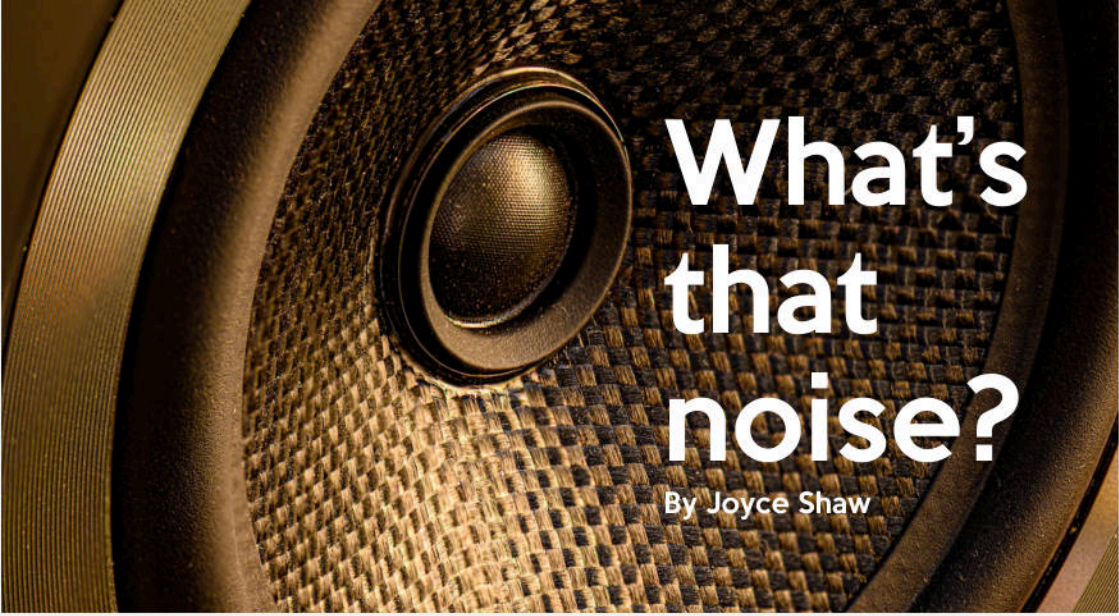
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What's that noise?

By Joyce Shaw

Sue, my neighbour came running over to me. "I can't stand this noise" she said. When I stopped to listen I agreed. There was a dull loud hum in the air when I stepped outside. It was even worse in her house and I was determined to get to the bottom of this.

I phoned Owen, our local councillor who gave me the environmental health officer and he rang them himself. Meanwhile I took Sue down to the new building estate on the Genesis project land. I was looking for a pile driver as this seemed to be the cause of the noise. Of course there was nothing when we arrived. I asked a driver of a big lorry and he didn't know what was a pile driver so this didn't help!

When we got home, the environmental officer arrived and of course there was no noise…. nothing to hear anymore. However, the officer was very good and said he would visit the site for himself.

On return he told us that he hadn't found anything either but to keep in touch as soon as we heard anything again.

I mentioned it to my other neighbour, and he wondered if it may have been his hot tub, out in the garden as it could make a humming sound when the tub was in action.
No, it wasn't this either!

Later that night…at 12.45am I couldn't sleep because of the noise. I worried that it may be in my house and so turned off the central heating..still the humming continued. I rang my neighbours as I felt that something could happen if I didn't act on it.

My neighbour across the road came straight over in her dressing gown and Sue arrived fully clothed. No, they couldn't hear anything in the porch, or the living room or the kitchen. I took them upstairs and I could hear it in the bedroom…but they couldn't! Was I going mad…was it just me?

I wasn't too well with a virus which was making me feel low and very tired. I decided to take a visit to the doctor……when I mentioned the sound I was hearing…he had the answer! I had tinnitus and this is what created the humming in my head! I was offered further investigation but I knew this was something I just had to live with now….I found that if I moved my head from one side to the other, the sound would cease!!!

My comment to the doctor was…."I know you'll think I'm neurotic and when I leave this room I bet you'll have a great time putting this down on the computer"!!!! Needless to say he just smiled and assured me it was OK.

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Looking After an Older Pet

On average, dogs live for around 12 years and cats for around 14 years, although many will live much longer than this. As your pet gets older, there are many things you can do to ensure they live comfortably and happily during their later years:

1) Consider switching them onto a senior diet which will better suit their changing dietary requirements

2) Take them for shorter walks, more regularly, and keep them active at home with toys and games

3) Keep an eye on their nails. They're likely to need trimming more often as their exercise levels reduce and cats use their scratching posts less

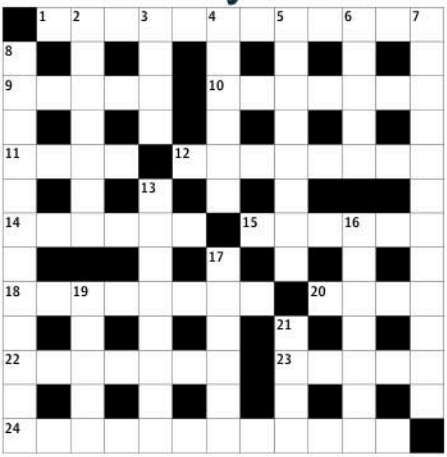
4) Keep an eye on their eating, drinking and urinating habits. If there're any changes, book an appointment with your vet

5) Lots of older pets will develop arthritis which is often worse in the winter months.

There's lots of things that can help with the discomfort and stiffness arthritis causes including anti-inflammatory medication, laser therapy, physiotherapy and joint supplements. Speak to your vet about which options will be best for your pet.

princebishopvets.co.uk/client-advice

Puzzle Corner January 2021



Across

1. Without hesitation (5,3,4)
9. Jack __, Surrey and England batsman, d.1963 (5)
10. In the wrong (2,5)
11. Consideration in dealing with others (4)
12. Serpico star (2,6)
14. Journey by air (6)
15. Exceptional intellect (6)
18. Legendary vanished island — mythical place (8)
20. Highest point (4)
22. Promising (7)
23. Strong and sharp (5)
24. Showy fuss (6-6)

Down

2. Japanese-style portable grill (7)
3. Gained altitude (4)
4. Land used for crops (6)
5. Beaten (8)
6. Virgin companion of the Muslim faithful in Paradise (5)
7. Sweet-smelling gas, N2O (7,5)
8. Sign of cowardice (5,7)
13. Appreciative (8)
16. Place in danger (7)
17. Slain (6)
19. Highest capital city in the world (2,3)
21. Popular music from New Orleans (4)

Answers for December

M	E	G	H	A	N	■	T	H	A	T	I	S		
U	■	O	■	M	■	S	■	Y	■	I	■	T		
G	A	R	M	E	N	T	■	D	I	N	A	R		
A	■	G	■	N	■	A	■	R	■	Y	■	I		
B	R	E	E	D	■	G	R	A	N	T	E	D		
E	■	■	■	E	■	E	■	■	■	I	■	E		
■	W	O	R	D	S	F	A	I	L	M	E	■		
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S	P	E	E	C	H	■	O	R	W	E	L	L		

Answers for this puzzle will be published on the same page next month.

BuZZila

'Hey guys, hope your all doing well and staying safe during this time! As most of you will know, the names Jamie, I'm better known as BuZZila.

I'm a Trance music producer, composer, resident radio DJ & presenter, founder of the Buzzin' Records independent record label, former DJ in Ibiza & recent opening DJ at Goodgreef. Firstly, I'm hoping to embark on my first UK wide tour once things start to get back to normal, after three regional tours it seems the next best thing to do in my career. Secondly I've got my first ever debut album coming out later this year, titled LEGACY, and this will be available in all online stores & a limited amount of CDs in local shops, hopefully just in time for Christmas.

Thanks for all your support so far this year, both to my own team & the incredible support of my friends, family & fans, and for the journey around the world that is yet to come!

Don't forget to follow my official social media pages including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter & my Soundcloud page. Best wishes to you all, and good luck for 2021, BuZZila.'

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Richard Holden MP January Statement

The 12th December marked one year since I was voted in as the first ever Conservative MP for North West Durham. I can hardly believe it has been a year since the election and I think most people would agree that this past year has been an extremely unpredictable and challenging one.

Despite the difficulties we have all had to face this year, it has been the greatest honour of my life to represent North West Durham on the national stage. From my summer surgery tour to spending weekends in my patch, I've met thousands of people and visited well over a hundred businesses, charities and local institutions – from schools to jobcentres to farms to local pubs and many more. I've hosted the Health Secretary, a DWP Minister, the Party Chairman in the constituency and shown them some of the amazing things that North West Durham has to offer. Getting out of Parliament and back to the constituency is always the best part of my working week.

I'm very proud to be able to say that I don't think I could have done more for the area if I had tried. That's what it's all about for me – working as hard as I can to ensure that I can prove that electing me was the right thing to do.

Being the first ever Conservative MP for North West Durham certainly has its challenges, but it is fantastic that expectations are so high, and people are excited about and expecting real change – and rightfully so. The overwhelming response tor the work I have been doing has been positive, and I could not have asked for a more welcoming and friendly constituency. One of the things I love is that all my constituents are happy to challenge me and hold me accountable for the work I am doing and how I am delivering for the area – this is how it should be and MPs should be challenged to ensure that they are doing all they can for their constituencies.

The overwhelming message I've been getting, whether it's about my work on getting funding for a new community hospital to replace Shotley Bridge, or on my campaign to improve our local transport, or on my constant campaigning for more investment in the area to improve our local economy and local opportunities, has been that people are desperate for much-overdue change and an MP that cares and delivers for the area.
Probably the most rewarding part of the job is helping local constituents with personal problems they face – and we've had some real successes.

The Prime Minister cares about the North East and recognises that it has been left behind and that this needs changing – and fast. The Government has responded remarkably well to me being pushy and demanding for our community which, as the MP, I should be. There is a real focus on the levelling up agenda from education, to health, to transport, to getting more police on our streets.

I want to sincerely thank all my constituents for making my first year as the MP such fun, such hard work, and such an unforgettable year.

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