CONSETT MAGAZINE

JUNE 2018

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Welcome

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

Dear Consett,

The weather has been really nice these last few weeks and we're hoping that its going to continue throughout the summer! Everything always looks better in the sun, be it the flowers in you your back garden, that pint of beer or cider you've just poured or the squeaky clean car in the drive! Sunshine equals fun time.

In this issue we have our regular history favourites from Brian Harrison on pages 4 and 5, As well as Lorraine Weightman's piece on pages 8 and 9.

We'd like to remind our readers that they can visit Consett Magazine's website for even more local news!

As always, we're very interest in everything you do! If you've got a great story, image, or video that you think might be interesting to other Consett Magazine readers then please email us at editor@consettmagazine.com

Don't forget to visit the Consett Magazine website for the latest news and special promotional offers that can promote your business in the North East.

We get over 30,000 unique visitors to our website giving your business a great opportunity to get your story our there! We also publish every story onto our social media and GoogleNews and AppleNews giving you a potential international audience! Call 01207 438292 to find out more!

Kindest regards,
Barry Kirkham, Marco Elsy and everyone whose contributed to this months magazine!

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Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
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Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
Christina Stubbins
Alex Nelson
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Megan Potts
Leslie Rutherford

The Front Cover

Thanks to Valerie Winter
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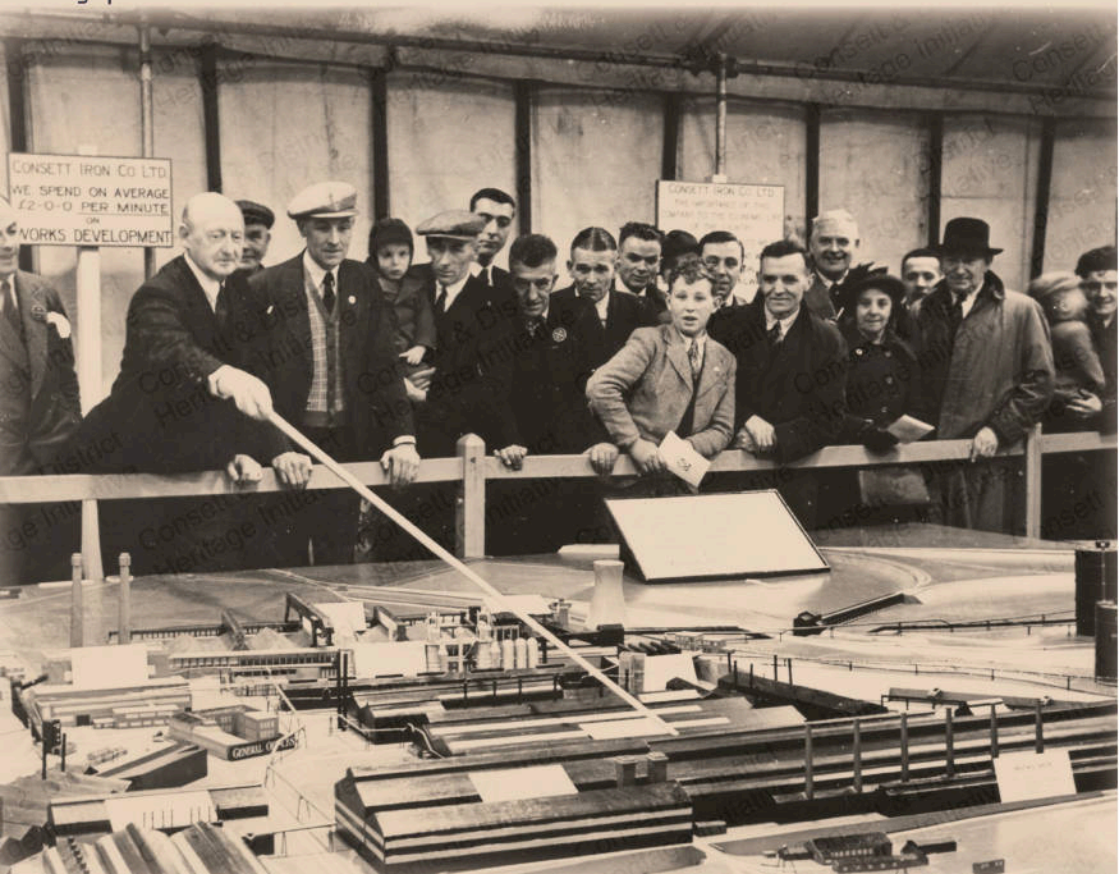
CONSETT EXHIBITION & SHOW

By Brian Harrison

Like every northern area Consett and district had its share of tradition's, from the archetypal northern Pigeon fanciers, Whippet Racing and right down to the yearly Leek Shows. But nothing compared to the Consett Exhibition and Agricultural Show. There had been numerous Agricultural shows over the decades prior, but this was to become a staple of Consett life

The Exhibition itself was initially the concept of 3 local committee's (it seems that everything had a committee of sorts back then) who got together with the idea to stage a exhibition and show to help promote local food and wares. The committee's were The Parks, Allotments & Open Spaces. At a town meeting held at the beginning of 1948, it was decided that the very first show would be held in September of that year. They raised awareness locally as well as further afield and with the backing of the then Consett Urban District Council and a hefty contribution from the Consett Iron Company they were set.

Initially set up in Sherburn Park the show became an instant success. Within 8 years it had become so successful that they had to find a much larger venue. So in 1956 the exhibition crossed the road to Bell Vue Park. This would be its home for the next 2 decades. Farmers, local breeders, horticulturists and the lay gardeners all flocked to the show from across the North to show their best cattle, sheep, dogs, flowers and vegetables. There was also spectacles of excitement such as the high



board fire diver, the Large guns from the military units that would display, the dozens of marching jazz bands and all the side attractions.

I have no memories of the show at all, but see the excitement and fond memories in the peoples faces who tell me the stories, my mother and her family included. The fancy dress competition is one my mother remembers fondly as she made the costumes for her and her younger siblings. One thing that did seem to come up each time people talked about it was the terrible weather that seemed to plague the exhibition most years. I suppose that is a bit like Consett's standard Bank holiday weather and what makes Consett, Consett.

At the start of the 1960's the show became considerably more Industrial based, although the agricultural side was still evident. I suppose the major benefactor at this point was the Consett Iron Company who also put on spectacular shows within the exhibition each year, so it was an inevitable outcome. By 1966 there was trouble on the horizon and it seemed as though the CIC would have to pull out due to the expense and its other commitments. So in that year the CIC having normally taken up a full tent themselves shared a tent with the other industrial exhibitors and removed their major funding.

Mr George Robson the shows organizer at that time was not put off and persevered and with some convincing got the Council, along with a few local businesses, to foot the initial bills. However in 1971 the exhibition took another massive step back. Due to the torrential weather over the 2 days of the Exhibition it had to be abandoned making a loss of £1,500. It was a hard hit but the Council reasoned it out that the cost only worked out at "the equivalent of one-thirty-fifth of a penny rate", which was nothing to "sell Consett and help put it on the map."

The Exhibition never really recovered, although it did run for several years after. The luck and finances finally ran out. Before the end of the decade Consett Exhibition & Agricultural show was no more and was now simply happy memories and welcome stories shared by the older generations.



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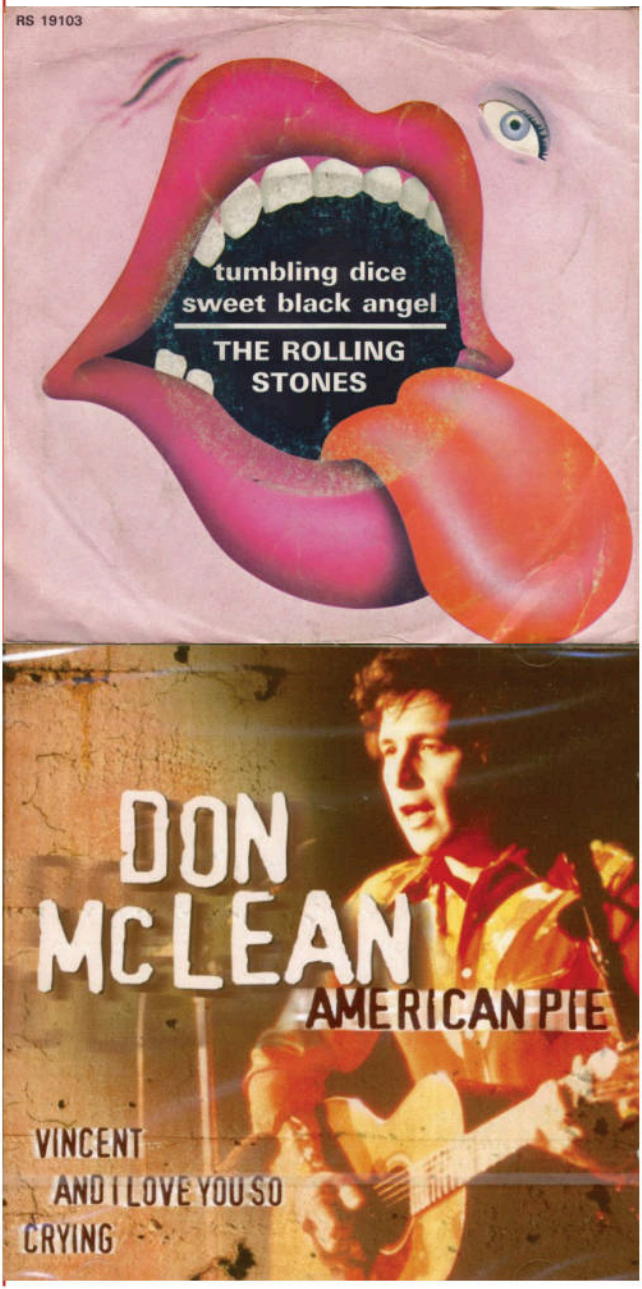
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SUMMER SOLSTICE



The beginning of the astronomical summer is known as the summer solstice, often called by it's other name - midsummer.

It occurs when the sun reaches its highest position in the sky and the earth's axis is at it's full tilt towards the sun. This northern solstice happens as the sun is directly over the Tropic of Cancer in the Northern Hemisphere. Consequently the earth receives the most daylight of the year making it the "longest" day.

With exams done and dusted the school had arranged a thanksgiving retreat at Minsteracres.

Some of us were familiar with this setting as we had visited from being very young, especially in Summer when the Annual Fayre was held on the first weekend in July.

Consett folk had a very special relationship with Minsteracres as many people volunteered their skills and services there to help build the retreat house, converting it from old stables.

The bus was leaving from school on Friday afternoon and we were all prepared for a prayerful fun filled weekend.

Minsteracres has a magic all of its own. The wide expansive grassy fields, with the contrasting giant redwood trees that dominate the drive up to the great house, create a

feeling of calm and serenity, even to a bus load of excitable teenagers.

We were shown around the retreat house after we had been allocated rooms on the first floor and were given a welcome talk with tea and biscuits in the lounge.

With an hour to explore before Mass we marvelled at the huge murals on the dining room and lounge walls painted by local artist Sheila Mackey. Then a quick walk around the house enjoying the opulence of the parlour and ballroom.

After dinner and and an open discussion about our aspirations for the future after leaving school, it was time for bed.

As with all first nights anywhere, everyone gets a little giddy and going to sleep was certainly not on our minds.

Congregating in one room with two guitars and a huge bag of Maltesers, we planned a singalong.

The sound of a group of young people gently humming to the chords of Don McClean's 'Vincent' and 'American Pie' would suggest to any listeners that we were comfortable in our new environment, creating a perfect end to our day.

Early on, one of our bright sparks suggested that as it was midsummer, why didn't we stay up all night and greet the sunrise over this beautiful tranquil place and celebrate our connection to the sun and earth.



With everyone in agreement we stocked up on provisions and pillows, singing along to the two guitarists extensive repertoire.

As the night progressed, halfway through 'Sylvia's Mother' and just before 'A Whiter Shade of Pale' some dropped off explaining that sleep deprivation was not on their agenda. Yet the stalwarts remained, secretly willing the sunrise to hurry up.

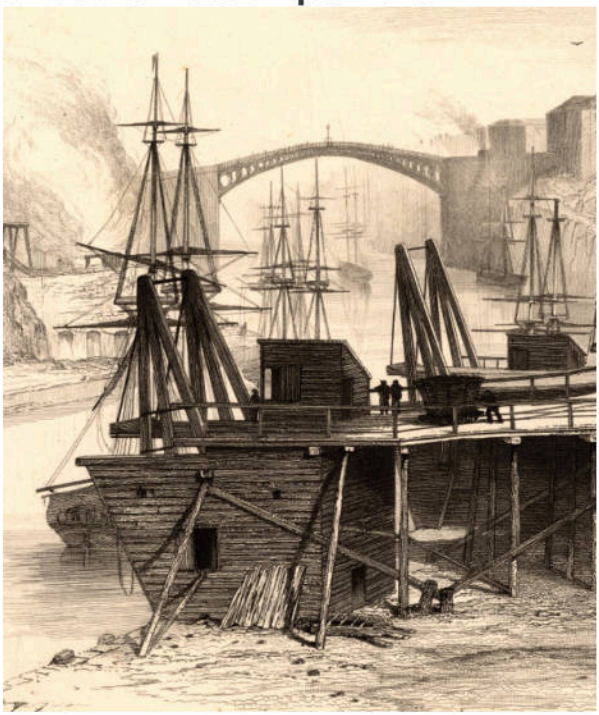
As we built up momentum, belting out David Bowie's 'There's a 'Starman' waiting in the sky' after doing all the Mick Jagger actions to Tumbling Dice, we were stopped in our tracks by a strong knock on the door and ordered out.

However with hindsight, over 40 years later, no one - least of all Father Mark - could be blamed for gently suggesting it was time for bed at 4am, as he'd already had the longest day!





Map the region's shipping history ahead of Tall Ships 2018



People can discover how the shipping industry shaped the North East ahead of the Tall Ships Races 2018 in Sunderland.

Durham County Record Office pu on an exhibition in Washington this half term, as part of the Tall Ships celebrations.

The sessions focused on a map drawn up for the River Wear Commissioners in 1819, at a time when shipping was vital to the local industry. Before railways came into operation, ships were responsible for transporting coal from the growing Durham Coalfield.

There was a display looking at the area around Biddick Ford and there was a chance for children to make and decorate paper boats.

Dawn Layland, education and outreach archivist, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for people to discover more about the region's rich shipping heritage, while the craft activities mean the whole family can get involved."

The display and craft sessions are being run by the record office in partnership with Sunderland City Council's Washington Area Committee.

Further information about the record office can also be found at: **durhamrecordoffice.org.uk.**

Public invited to see giant artwork take shape

Members of the public are being invited to see a very special artwork being created during the half term holiday.

During the past few weeks, hundreds of people have been submitting messages to Durham County Council describing why they are proud of their connections to the area.

And now their words are being brought together by artist Kara Strachan and her colleagues in four large mosaic-like images.

When brought together, the canvasses will form one single picture – measuring 12 metres long by two metres high – and celebrating the very best of County Durham.

Members of the public are being invited to see the wall taking shape during the half term week by visiting one of four host venues.

As well as watching the artists at work, visitors will have a final chance to contribute their message and see it being added to the wall.

On Tuesday, 29 May to Thursday 31 May, Kara and the team working ed on the wall at Beamish Museum and in Millennium Place, Durham.

On Friday, 1 June they will move to The Witham at Barnard Castle and Dalton Park in Murton, where they will be hard at work until



Sunday, 3 June.

Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council, said: "We're very pleased that so many people have shown their support for this unique project by sending us their messages for inclusion in the wall.

"Our area has so much to offer and its clear from the hundreds of messages we have received that people are extremely proud to be associated with County Durham.

"I'm sure the finished message wall is going to look very impressive and I'm very much looking forward to seeing it."

Each panel of the wall, which is being developed as part of the council's Celebrating Durham campaign, will showcase a different aspect of the county.

The first features Seaham's much-loved Tommy statue looking out to sea as the sun rises over the stunning Heritage Coast. This skyline drew viewers from around the world when it was the subject of a live broadcast on Facebook earlier this year.

The county's rich history, heritage and culture is represented in a collage of images which features Lumley Castle and the Emirates Riverside Ground at Chester-le-Street, which next year hosts Cricket World Cup matches. A coal truck from Beamish Museum in the foreground serves as a reminder of the county's mining roots.

Also featured is Durham Cathedral, part of the World Heritage Site. As well as being one of the county's most popular visitor attractions, the cathedral also plays a central role in Lumiere, the UK's largest light festival, which is held in historic Durham City.

Completing the image is High Force in Teesdale. Located in the North Pennine Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – recognised as the darkest mainland AONB in the country – Teesdale's skies make it the perfect spot for stargazing.





Places to Go: Durham for Crook Hall

It's not often I find a new route in the centre of Durham City that I have never walked before, but today I discovered Sidegate. Not the car park of that name by the River Wear, but the narrow roadway with original stone setts which runs down from the A691 Framwellgate Peth towards the river. Let's assume that you arrive in Durham by train (which many readers will not do, being in Durham already). From the northbound railway platform walk alongside the railway line towards the station car park, cross over the A691, and turn left and left again down the steps, and left again under the bridge.

Observe the interesting monument to the water supplies of the 1450s, and go past the entrance to Fram Well House and the abandoned Main Street USA building, left down a few steps and straight on down Sidegate with houses either side which soon widens out to meet Framwellgate Waterside by the Radisson Blu Hotel. You've avoided the whole of the Milburngate redevelopment and it's only a few more steps to one of Durham's most charming tourist attractions, Crook Hall. After my visit this morning I was at a business lunch in the 35-day old Indigo hotel on Old Elvet (aka Old Shire Hall), and I took a straw poll on who had ever been to Crook Hall. Barely one-third had, which proves that old adage that people often fail to visit places on their doorstep.

But Durham resident or not, if you have never been to Crook Hall, you're missing a treat. Mediaeval hall, Jacobean and Georgian buildings, lovely gardens with plenty of things to discover including a few resident ghosts, so it is said. There's a proper green circular maze you can really get lost in, so take this page and use the photograph to help you get out! There's a pond to sit by to watch the wildlife, and afternoon teas can be had in the tearooms and upstairs, and at the café by the entrance. The picture shows the view of the Cathedral, truncated by the white sleeve on the top of the central tower, which I am told should be coming off in January 2019. Keith Bell, who owns the property with his wife Maggie, has written an interesting book on their two decades at Crook Hall entitled "Blood, Sweat and Scones".

Whilst in the area of the railway station, take time to also explore Wharton Park, on the west side of the tracks, created by William Lloyd Wharton (1789-1867). He lived nearby at Dryburn, (where the hospital is today). He inherited the land on which the park and railway was built, in 1857. William Lloyd Wharton turned the rough land north of the railway into a public park (presumably paid for from the proceeds of selling land to the railway) and had the mock castle (the Battery) built as a look out over the railway and the city. There's a café too in the grounds of the park open 10-4.

After restoration in 2015, the Park was re-opened by the Duke of Kent in 2016 and it has its own café and grounds. An enjoyable day out can be had in Durham without even including the river banks, the Castle and the Cathedral for which it is most famous. I must also recommend the Hotel Indigo for lunch! Off peak day return fares from Cramlington are only £9.60, or £11.30 from Thornaby, one-third less if you use your railcard, and fast trains from Newcastle to Durham take only 12 minutes

Alex Nelson

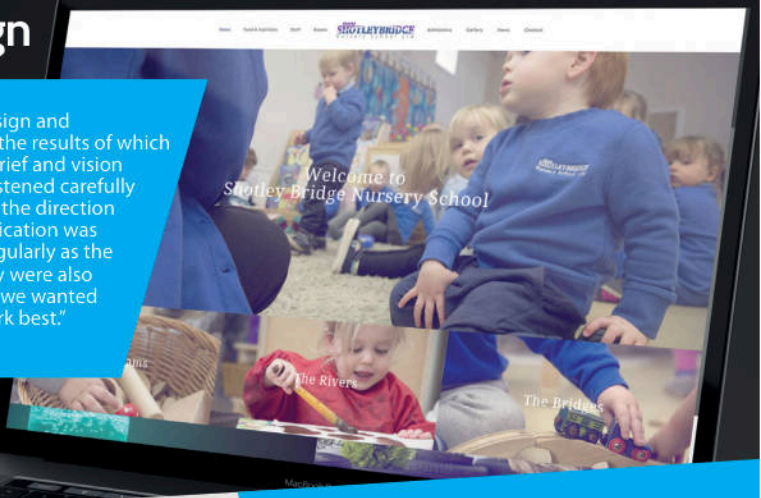
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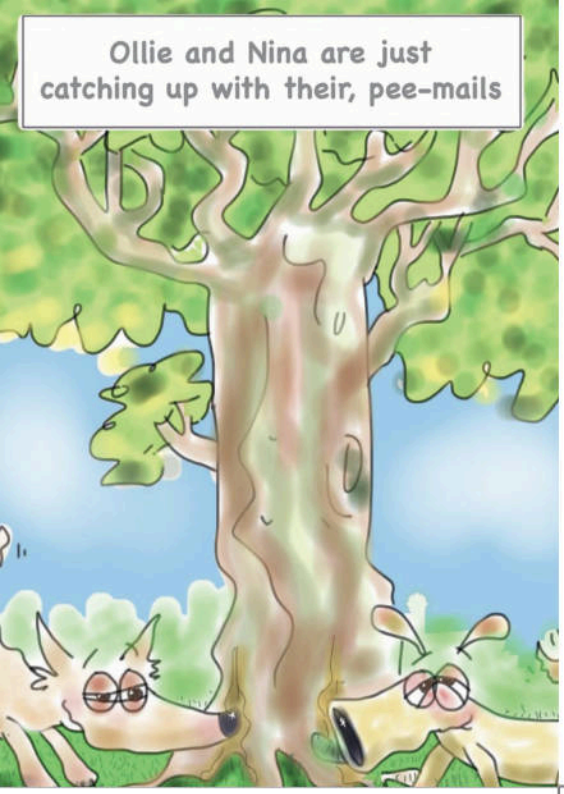
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"We've just received the brochures and they are fantastic! Thank you so much."
- Mrs. L. Bowery - Co-Director

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By Christina Stubbins
Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

DIETARY ADVICE FOR RABBITS

Rabbits are becoming increasingly popular choice for families, with an estimated 1.5 million kept as pets in the UK (PDSA Animal Wellbeing report 2016).

However, rabbits should not be viewed as an easy or low maintenance pet and ensuring they are fed the right foods is really important when it comes to keeping them fit and healthy.

Rabbits have an unusual digestive system which means they will eat their soft, moist droppings (caecotrophs) straight from their bottoms to extract more nutrients from the food they have eaten and they will also pass hard, dry droppings which are not re-ingested.

Good quality hay and/or grass should make up the majority of their diet as this keeps their digestive system functioning properly and keeps their teeth from overgrowing. Fresh leafy green vegetables and herbs can be fed daily with very small amounts of nuggets/pellets (or none at all).

Fresh water should always be available in a bottle and/or bowl. It is important to never change your rabbit's diet quickly, and if they stop eating or passing faeces, call your vet straight away as this can be a sign of a serious illness.

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





Ann Dixon, a volunteer walk leader at Esh Winning, said she has seen many participants greatly improve their wellbeing and fitness as well as making new friendships.

"I've been a leader for about four and a half years and it's a real privilege to be involved in an activity which helps people with their physical and general health," she said.

"It's great to see people of all abilities spending time together and enjoying each other's company, all while making the most of the stunning countryside we are lucky enough to have on our doorstep."

Walk Durham offers free, short group walks throughout the year as part of Ramblers Walking for Health, England's largest network of health walk schemes, which is funded by players of People's Post Code Lottery and Macmillan Cancer Support.

The full timetable of walks is available at **durham.gov.uk/walkdurham**
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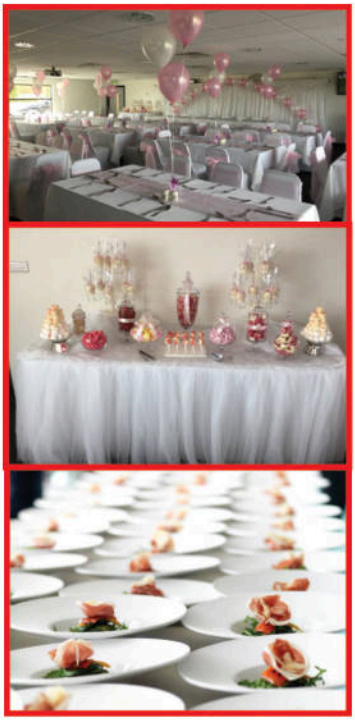
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