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MAY 2018

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Welcome

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

Dear Consett,

I love the Consett atmosphere when it's getting closer to Summer. The anticipation, the excitement, and the wonder about when the sun will finally greet us for longer than just a few hours/days/weeks / but when it finally does arrive, I urge you to welcome the warmer weather and get out and enjoy it. All around us you'll find some of the most magnificent views, spectacular sights, and great feeling views available in the entire world.

While we hope we've all seen the last of the snow, it's always neat to make the most of the warmer weather and get out an enjoy the surrounding that's we mostly take for granted. Here in Consett we're on the doorstop of the Derwent Reservoir, the Pennines, and many more natural wonders. If it's not something you're used to then we'd fully urge you to take an interest in the world around us.

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 fro the latest news and special promotional offers that can promote your business in the North East.

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

PS- if you'd like to advertise your business to 10,000 + in Consett next month just call us on 01207 438292

Contributors

Brian Harrison
Barry Kirkham
Marco Elsy
Frank Bell
Neil Sullivan
Lorraine Weightman
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Mrs. B. Storey
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The Front Cover

Thanks to Dale Hazell
If you have a photograph you would like to share, then send it across and it could be your photo we use - send any photographs to:
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MEDICAL PROVISIONS IN VICTORIAN ERA CONSETT

By Brian Harrison

In the Victorian period in Consett and surrounding area's it was down to the old town Doctor to see to all the medical needs. On the whole this was a quite an archaic system, with many operation's taking place in peoples homes, on kitchen tables and the like. However, Consett was no normal town and by the sheer number of people flocking to the area in the mid 1800's if became necessary to create a dedicated building, especial for the needs of the Consett Iron Works.

The Renton family were a massive influence in the health and well being of the people of the area. John Renton was born 1812 in Midlothian, Scotland. He was a M.D. and Surgeon graduating from Edinburgh University. He settled in Shotley Low Quarter in the late 1830's and married Mary Siddell. They had quite a large family, around 11 children of which most lived to adulthood, not a mean feat in those days. Two of the son's, William Matthew Renton and George Renton, both also took up the family business and become Doctors.

The Iron Works and Coal Mines owned by the Consett Iron Company (and Derwent Iron Company before that) like most industries in those days, did not have the best of safety records. An initial infirmary was set up to deal with accident and emergencies some time in the 1850s-60s. However, it was simply 2-3 cottages knocked together and was known to be located on Church Street, Consett across from where Christ Church would soon stand. In the 1870's an inspection by Dr W.M. Renton made it very clear that the premisses were completely unsuitable for purpose as well as being unsanitary. So he along with his brother George and other local doctors of the area took up these concerns with the CIC board. By 1874 an advert was placed in the paper looking for quotes to start building in the following year, but unfortunately problems lay ahead. Due to high costs and strike actions at the time it took a further 4 years.





The infirmary eventually opened in 1878 to great admiration from across the North East and gratitude of the local workman. It was ran by Dr William M Renton along with a qualified Nursing staff. It was also attended by other local doctors such as Dr Marchbank and William's younger brother Dr George Renton. The new facilities were built on Parliament Street Consett, now the site of the YMCA, and featured up to date facilities including room for 12 patients and also rooms for the nursing staff.

The area was also lacking another important factor, the need of an ambulance service. Unlike now this general meant conveying people via stretcher or cart. It was Dr George Renton who this time sprung to the challenge founding and setting up the St John Ambulance Association in Consett Iron Works. The service became a great success and was rolled out across the area both for the Iron industry and coal mines of the CIC.

On 13 April 1889 the members of the St John Ambulance Association gathered in the CIC works pay office in order to present Dr G Renton with a handsome travelling case valued at over £10. The event was well attended and it was hard for everyone to get in. The gift was to show the appreciation of all the Consett Iron Company workman for him founding such a worthwhile organisation and giving up his time to train them. The bag was presented by Mr Thomas Harrison of Templetown, a member of the association and also a highly respected voice of the workers, being one of the first Union leaders and members of the Workers Socialist Labour party (one of my ancestors of which I am proud).

The Infirmary lasted for many years until around the early 1920's when it was no longer viable due to the new facilities in the area and so closed its doors. Dr George Renton passed away in 1899, leaving at least one son to carry on his work, Dr Ralph S Renton making him the 3rd generation of Doctors to look after the needs of the people of the area. Ralph went on to run a practice in Blackhill as well as becoming honorary surgeon of the Consett Hospital until he took up the call to arms during WWI. For his dedication and services during the war he was awarded the Military Cross in 1918.



The Infirmary, Parliament Street, Consett

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COLOURAMA



TIME is ticking for people wanting to register for early bird prices to take part in Durham City's most colourful charity run of the year. Colourama will return to St Leonards Playing Field on Saturday 16th June and the popular 5k colour run looks set to be as bright, fun and messy as ever!

Alongside a variety of bright coloured non-toxic, washable powder paint being showered upon participants, Colourama challengers will get to take on an assortment of fun obstacles, including cargo nets, hay bales, tunnels and a waterslide.

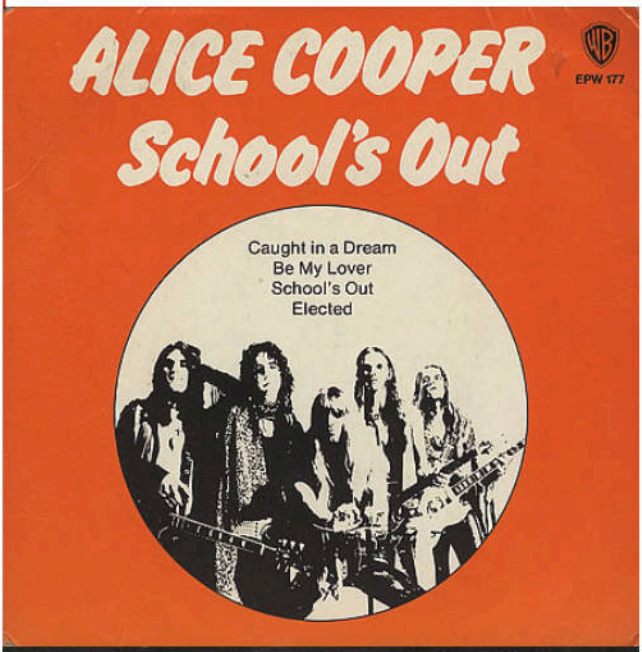
This summer marks the 4th year for the colourful fun run which helps to raise vital funds for people with advanced illnesses in County Durham.

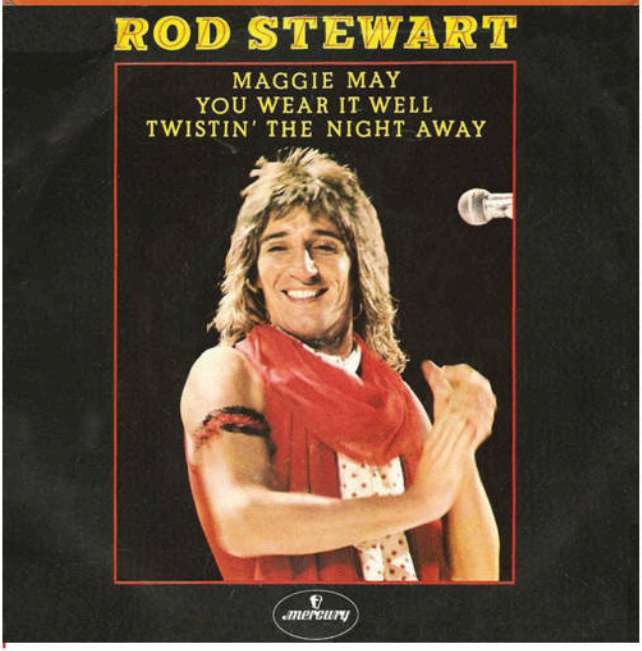
Jade McArdle, Senior Community & Events Fundraiser at St Cuthbert's Hospice said: "Colourama has fast become a date for the diary for families and friends looking for a fun charity event for the summer.

"People can take the course at their own pace, whether that be walking, jogging, sprinting or even skipping hand in hand over the finish line."

Last year's event saw over 1,000 people take part.

SCHOOL'S OUT





It was almost the end of the school year and we were preparing in May to take exams in June. The teachers worked tirelessly cramming information into our already fact filled heads trying to ensure we passed with flying colours. Yet as any 15 or 16 year old knows there are other distractions from study that gently wean students away from books.

This was our fifth year at English Martyrs, a reasonably new secondary school in Leadgate which housed pupils from all the feeder primary schools in Blackhill, The Grove, Moorside, Consett and Brooms.

The teachers were strict but always fair and over the years managed to guide us not only through the curriculum, but as trusted members of the football and netball teams, with the addition of the choir and drama group, where we participated in concerts and shows for the local clergy, governors and parents.
I can still remember all the words to 'Back to Sorrento', 'Funiculi Funicula' and 'Santa Lucia'. My only gripe would be that as first years in the front row we had to kneel on the stage throughout the whole show, which must surely be a contributory factor to my now arthritic knees. Still, kneeling was our speciality as we had experienced plenty of practice in church.

By our fifth year the navy blue uniform was adapted to fit

into the fashion of the day, so after our skirts were measured in Assembly and passed the inch above the knee test, they were quickly rolled up at the waist to just below the derrière! We'd sing Rod Stewart's 'You Wear It Well' to each other laughing and posing as we passed in the corridor between lessons.



At break times most of us huddled in the doorways as we felt too 'old' to run round the yard with the younger kids. In addition we would be on lookout duty for those who contributed to the the steady stream of 'No 6' smoke emitted from behind the bins in the tech block. If any of them heard us singing 'Clear White Light' by Lindisfarne, then they knew there was teacher close by.
Knowing that some of us would be in work in a couple of months, while others planned to go on to sixth form at St Bede's in Lanchester; at lunchtimes we planned on making our final days in the school memorable.

Most people thought that drawing on your uniform with biro and felt tips would suffice with maybe a couple of smashed eggs and a head full of flour. But the more enterprising were looking for something more dramatic. Various ideas were passed around verbally or scribbled on little pieces of paper during revision lessons and hidden in blazer pockets. Blocking the toilets was rightfully rejected by everyone, as was messing about with Bunsen burners in the Science Lab, but a few others were given some credence.

As the days passed the excitement grew. Stifled giggles and knowing winks abounded as the plan took shape around the top three suggestions. There was a whole class of 30 in the know and the voting was due to take place after lunch the day before we left.
The dining hall was up a flight of stairs at the back of the main hall and the older kids served food to the younger ones on tables of eight.
During our 4 previous years in school we had to eat what we were given. Now, as prefects, if you were so inclined - as some were - you could give out meagre portions and save the largest slice of cornflake tart and the skin on the custard for yourself!

Finally with all the votes cast the day arrived and inspired by Alice Cooper's song of the same name the whole school was out in the playground for 30 minutes, lined up in classes with each form teacher doing a head count and a roll call. And when questioned not a single person knew who had taken the little hammer to the glass on the fire bell!

Care Home gets a visit from Mrs Brown's Boys

Stoneleigh Care Home in Stanley, County Durham, had a visit from TV comedy star Mrs Brown's lookalike, Brian Lewis, a great-granddad from Leadgate.

Having been a carer himself, he knew a couple of the team. Everyone was delighted with the special visit and some had to do a double take as Brian bears an uncanny resemblance to the lead in Mrs Brown's Boys.

He made sure to visit every one of the Residents who were in their rooms and then sat in the lounge with the rest for a cup of tea, a slice of cake and had a good old chinwag.



"He looks so much like Mrs Brown, the resemblance is incredible! He had such a great sense of humour and we loved how he joked around with us"

Susan Dodds, Deputy Manager at Stoneleigh, commented:

"Brian is in his 70's and still actively volunteers in the local community, specifically with Alzheimers as his late mother suffered with it. He does charity runs and shows to raise money for this and Marie Curie."

Jack Benson, The Life of a Victorian Fellow



The year is 1850 and Jack Benson sits alone in the hovel that functions as his home and contemplates on the wretchedness and misery of his life. With no appreciation, discernment or interest in conducting a normal life that is composed of honest endeavour, he concocts a plan that will transport him from his present life of impoverishment, squalor, and misery of existence, along a path that that will guide him to the fulfilment of the needs and desires that his dreams declare he deserves.

As time expends itself in its own inimitable fashion, Jack's attitude and values begin to modify into the realm of hitherto unknown qualities of integrity, ethics and morality. When Jack eventually commits to the mutual attraction of a lady, he begins to like himself, for the first time in his life, and, with this knowledge, he craves to improve on the blank canvas of his mind.

The story takes Jack and his friends along a life that existed in an interlude of the world that was known as the Victorian era. This was a period that was characterised by an economic explosion of activity, national change in numerous directions, the development of refined sensibilities, and a period when the British Empire expanded into the largest realm of governed authority that has ever been known to mankind.

The story is told by Jack, in the first-person perspective and, as you will surely grow to like him, you will never be quite sure of just what, exactly, will happen next.

A brief portrait of the Author, Alf Smith

I was born in 1950 in the small coal-mining village of New Brancepeth, located five miles from Durham City. After leaving school at the age of 15, I worked mainly in factory jobs until joining the Army in 1973 and served in Germany, Cyprus and UK for the next 8 years. I then joined the ranks of the expatriate worker and worked on a variety of administrative contracts in Saudi Arabia until 2000. During this period, I was present for the whole of the Gulf War, the death of a King, the bombing of the US military complex near Dhahran, and the revolt and arrest of women as they staged a car sit-in within the middle of Riyadh. Since my return to UK, I have worked primarily in an administrative capacity, working on contracts in conjunction with Durham Council, The National Police Training Centre, the NHS, Durham University, the Bishop of Durham, and, for a year, as the Durham City Ambassador for the BID (Durham Business Improvement District). I also worked for a year as the curator of the extremely large, prominent, established Victorian building located in Old Elvet that is called the Old Shire Hall. I have always been sports-minded and represented the Army at football and tennis. The sports that I played in Saudi Arabia were racquetball, horse-riding, golf, tennis, darts, snooker, and road-running (culminating in the completion of the Saudi marathon). I now reside in Consett with my American-born partner Louanne and spend my time watching sport, walking my border collie named Sasha, and writing. The novel that I have just published was done at the urging of Louanne, as I had previously written hundreds of pages about horse-racing, history, remembrances of the past, and poetry.

The book can be obtained by visiting Amazon Bookstore and typing Alf Smith or Jack Benson into the search area. The cost of the book in Kindle form is £1.99.





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Places to Go: Aberdeen

Aberdeen is 255 miles north of Newcastle by rail, about the same as London, but fares are cheaper because there are plenty of trains competing for your custom. At the age of 56, I am too young for the over-60s Senior Railcard, but I am eligible, even as a resident of England, for the Scotrail Club 50 card which gives a discount on journeys within Scotland. In the spring they offered a special open return fare of £17 in standard class, bookable on the day, so I booked an advance ticket to Edinburgh for a Saturday in mid-March and, once there, bought a return to Dyce, just north of Aberdeen, for £17. I had considered going to Thurso and Wick to get best value for my £17 but there was not a suitable itinerary available for such a long journey, and I discovered a cheap flight with Loganair from Aberdeen on the Monday morning back to Durham Tees Valley in the last week before the end of the operation, so I thought that would be an interesting quick way back home.

The train provided a lovely journey up the coast, a couple of hours sightseeing in Edinburgh on the way, more coastal scenery north of Dundee and then a cheap room in the Station Hotel on arrival in Aberdeen.

A swanky modern hotel it is not, but it is perfectly comfortable and ideally close, as the name implies, to the railway station. Indeed half of it was originally the head office of the railway company based in Aberdeen, which had a grand staircase, and it is now managed by the Newcastle-based Cairn Group. An economy single room was only £75 for TWO nights, with a delicious optional breakfast at £9.50 extra. I arrived to find there was a Jazz festival on so I booked the Blue Lamp venue with two bands playing on Sunday night.

Sunday morning after breakfast I went to the Episcopal (Anglican) cathedral of St. Andrew's in the city centre, to a 1045 service which happened to be on Mothers' Day and the Mothers' Union were preparing a special lunch for the congregation, to which I – as a visitor – was warmly invited. Well I don't need to be asked twice for a free meal and it was full of African specialities made by the ladies of the very international MU branch. In the afternoon, I found the VisitScotland iCentre on Union Street very helpful, and went to the Maritime Museum. Many of the free museums are open on a Sunday afternoon. It was very good on the history of the harbour, dating back to 1136, and the modern oil and gas industry, including the 1988 Piper Alpha disaster. Then I walked down to the city beach and enjoyed coffee on the front by Codona's amusements, and back for the jazz.

On Monday morning, early bus 727 to the airport to find my flight was first delayed, then cancelled, so using my return half of the £17 train ticket I got back to Edinburgh, only having to buy a single from there to Newcastle. Good news - I was eligible for a €250 (£217!) compensation payment, so the whole trip has paid for itself!

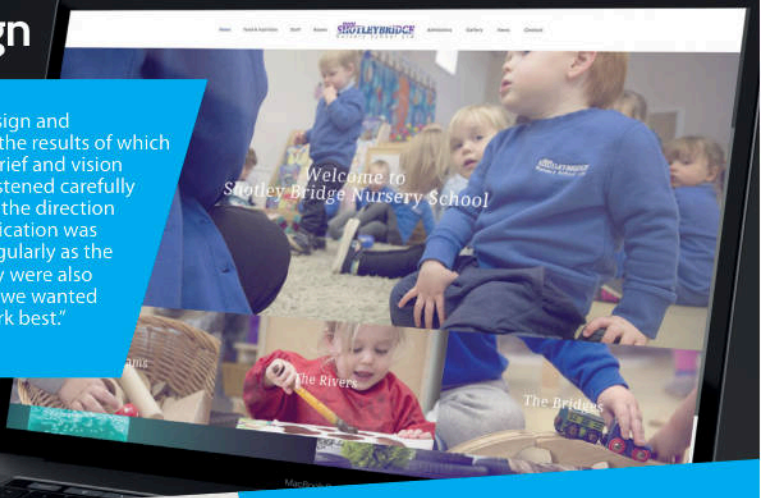
To thank you for reading this far, let me confide that TransPennine are running their popular Club 55 promotion (for one or more passengers over 55) from Sunday 22nd April to Saturday 19th May 2018. They are offering OPEN RETURNS valid for the day or up to one month from the outward journey for only £21 standard and £41 in first class, across Northern England.

Visitscotland.com

FireFlyNewMedia Presents: SHOTLEYBRIDGE Nursery School Ltd

Website Design

"We worked with Firefly on the design and development of our new website, the results of which are fantastic and perfectly fit the brief and vision that we wanted to achieve. They listened carefully to our needs and fully understood the direction that we wanted to go in. Communication was excellent and we were updated regularly as the website began to take shape. They were also quick to make any alterations that we wanted and advised us on what would work best."
- Mrs. L. Bowery - Co-Director





Logo Design

"The service we received from Firefly was efficient, professional and friendly. We are so impressed that we are currently working on a second project with them."
- Mrs. L. Bowery - Co-Director

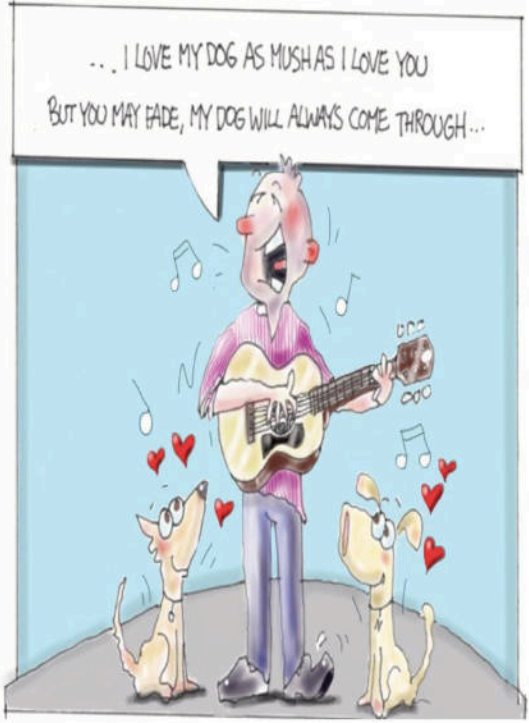
Brochure Design & Print

We were asked to create a brochure to promote the nursery and its fantastic facilities. We applied the new style we'd created making heavy use of the great photography that we were provided.

Shotley Bridge Nursary was delighted with the results and so were we.

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





Ollie and Nina love a Cat... Stevens song!

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By Christina Stubbins
Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital

VACCINATIONS

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For dogs and cats, a primary course is typically recommended when your pet is a puppy or kitten, or if your pet's vaccines are out of date. This consists of two vaccinations given two to four weeks apart, depending on the vaccine used.

Rabbits only need one vaccination for their primary course before they are fully protected. Your vet will then usually recommend a booster vaccination every year to ensure your pet stays protected. Alternatively if you have a dog, you can have a blood test that will check the level of antibodies in their blood and if the levels remain high enough, your pet will not need a booster vaccination that year.

You will need to do the blood test every 12 months and currently, it is not possible to check for Leptospirosis antibodies so as a minimum, your dog would require this vaccination each year.

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





£700,000 for Pothole and Road Reparis

An extra £700,000 of council funding will be invested in improving the condition of roads around County Durham over the coming year, it has been revealed today.

Cllr Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council, announced the additional funding at a meeting of the authority's full council in Durham.

The cash will enable additional resurfacing works to be carried out, repairing damage caused by the recent bad weather, especially in relation to potholes.

The funding is in addition to the £1.3 million recently announced by the government for pothole repairs in County Durham in 2018/19 and brings the council's funding to £5.7 million for this financial year.

Taking into account the £10.2 million already confirmed by the government, it means the council has a total budget for highways repairs in 2018/19 of £17.2 million.

Cllr Henig said:

"We are well aware that maintaining the condition of the county's roads is a priority for many of our residents. That's why, year after year, we have worked to protect our budget for this area and provide significant investment from the council in addition to the grant received from government.

"However, while we welcome the additional funding from the Government, we rely on the Department of Transport for the majority of funding for road repairs and this money is simply not enough to cover what has become a major backlog.

"The problem has been exacerbated by the long and particularly cold weather and, while the additional resources we are announcing today will go some way to help, as a council, we are simply not able to fill the funding gap.

"We would ask the Government to look again at the funding they provide to local councils for road repairs and look to provide more appropriate levels of support."

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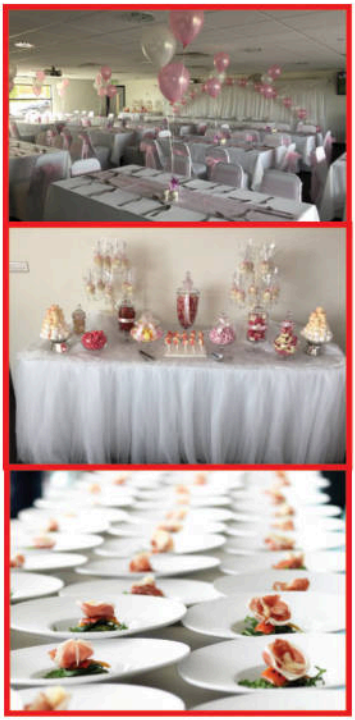

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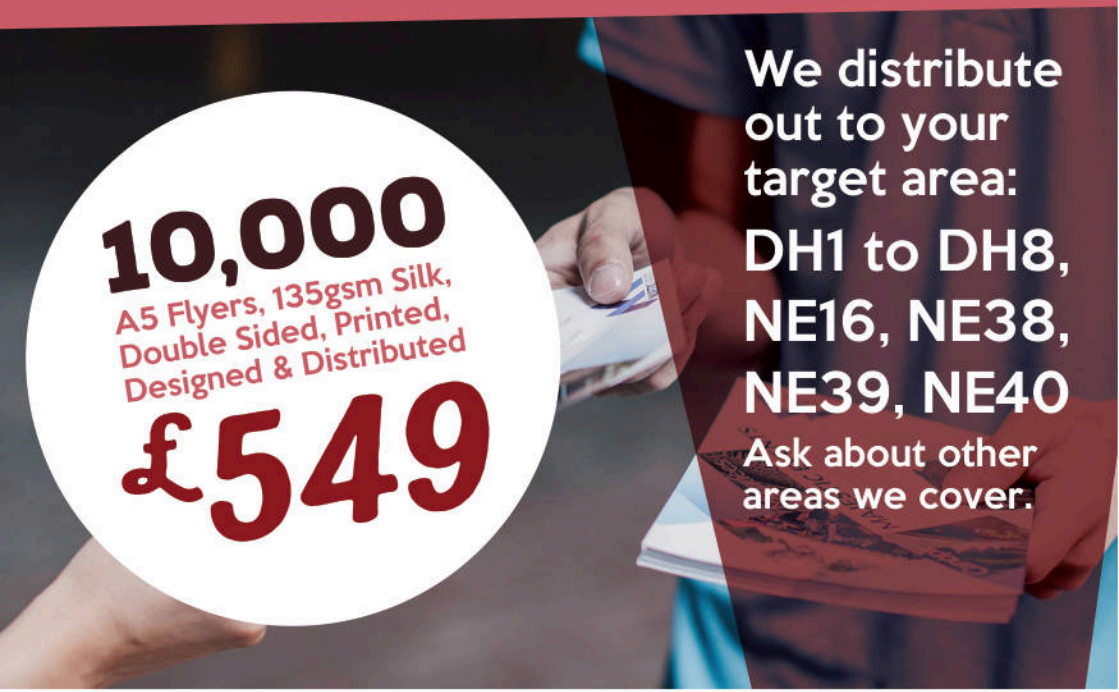

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