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NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY FOOT AND MOUTH

ON THE 14 January, the day before Northumberland was finally declared a foot and mouth free zone, the County Council's five day Public Inquiry into the disease opened at County Hall.

The 9 strong panel was composed of County and District Councillors and officers and chaired by an independent Chairman, Professor Michael Dower.

Each of the nine sessions spread over the five days concentrated on a key theme and the participants were invited to take part in round table discussions with the Inquiry Panel members.

Susan Cross, Project Co-ordinator, Northumberland Rural Stress Initiative



at the discretion of the Chairman, members of the public were invited to take part, either by submitting a written question or making a small statement.

The Community Council's Rural Stress Initiative had submitted a report which reflected the impact of the disease on the support agencies working together to relieve distress in the agricultural and rural community.

for access to up to date, accurate information to minimise people's stress; the need for financial advice for the self-employed and small businesses; and the strength of working in partnership with agencies across the spectrum to provide a single access point for advice, information and support.

Susan Cross, the Co-ordinator of the Initiative, was able to expand on these points when she was asked to attend the sessions which had as part of their themes 'Communications, information, advice, guidance, public relations' and 'Pastoral care and support'.

Other members of the Rural Stress Network were in attendance at other sessions. Judith Hampson, Rector of Allendale, was able to give a graphic account of the impact of the disease upon every aspect of life in the Allen Valley.

Network members feel that the Inquiry provided a useful public space for people to express and have recorded their grievances, as well as exploring a way forward.

The Panel aims to publish their report in February and hopes it will be submitted to the Government's Lessons Learned Inquiry, as well as helping to secure Government support for recovery efforts in the County.

Post script : A post Foot and Mouth Service is to be held in Hexham Abbey on Tuesday 14 May 2002. The event will bring together all those affected by the events of last year - farmers, businesses, DEFRA officers, vets, slaughter-men - to allow a chance to reflect and grieve, give thanks and move forward.

EDUCATION REVIEW: It's your chance now

THE LEA IS NO STRANGER to financial challenges. A way of trying to address that hardship is through PFI (Private Finance Initiative) which would allow private funding to be secured to support a structure strapped for cash.

The proposed PFI scheme is based on improving "the sufficiency, suitability and conditions of school buildings in Berwick and Ashington, which if modernised, would support a significant improvement in educational achievement".

The review, conducted by Mr John

Continued on page 2

BIG FARMING SHAKE-UP

A RADICAL and far-reaching transformation of Britain's food and farming industry is recommended in a new report, published in January. The Policy Commission on the Future of Food and Farming, under the chairmanship of Northumberland farmer Sir Donald Curry, was set up by the Government in the wake of the Foot and Mouth Disease crisis.

The report, which extends to 150 pages, calls for a wholesale shift in policy and funding programmes from the direct subsidy of food production, to support for wider rural development and environmental protection and enhancement. Farming, it says, needs to be re-connected: in an economic sense, with the market and with the wider food supply chain; and in a social sense, with the public as a whole.

The implementation of the Report is not going to be easy, especially in a sector of the economy which is both financially and psychologically depressed. Nevertheless, the Report is refreshing and optimistic. It does look to build on local assets and crucially there is a lot in it which is appropriate and sympathetic to a remote and largely upland county like Northumberland.

Copies of the report are available on the Cabinet Office website: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/farming

ACTIVE SUSI

As Community Development officer for Tynedale Council Susi Goncu works closely with the staff of the Community Council. Giving funding advice is one of the many ways in which she supports community groups in Tynedale.

combination that created eight millionaires - unfortunately she doesn't know any of them!

Ever active Susi participates in the sport of Karate. For the past ten years she has been training with the Kokoro and Matsu Karate Clubs in Newcastle. In October 2001, Susi was among 17 members who went down to the English Sangaku Karate Association National Championships held in Preston.

Avid readers of Community News may remember the series on 'Sport in Village Halls' to which Susi contributed an article on Karate Following that article a karate club was started at Sir James Knott Memorial Hall in Heddon on the Wall. This club is still going strong.

(Like Mother, like son. It is not often that we get to feature a mother and son in separate articles in the same issue of Community News. We can just see Susi bursting with pride as she reads the article 'Making a difference - they certainly did' on the back page. Community artist Jaz Goncu was part of a team of volunteers and development staff that turned Matthew Murray's idea into a reality.)



Susi Goncu with Philip Scofield

Spring Into Lesbury Village Hall

The date for the Spring General Meeting of the Community Council of Northumberland is Tuesday afternoon 30 April 2002. Our guest speaker will be Sir John Riddell, Lord Lieutenant for the County. Amongst other things Sir John will be talking about the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the forthcoming celebrations planned. The meeting will be held at Lesbury Village Hall which will be open from 2.00pm to enable those attending to enjoy a cup of tea and conversation before the start of business at 2.30pm.

# NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND - NEW PROGRAMMES

THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND (NOF) is one of the five National Lottery Distributors, and receives 9p from every £1 spent on ticket purchases to support education, health and environment projects.

NOF is keen to raise public awareness of the Fund and its seven new initiatives.

Margaret Parker has been appointed as the Fund's North East Regional Officer. One of her first tasks is to develop working relations with the Fund's key partners which include the voluntary sector development agencies such as the Community Council of Northumberland. Margaret has already met with staff within the Community Council and is working with partners throughout the region to ensure we all benefit from NOF's programmes.

The current round of initiatives is worth £1.5bn across the country. Programmes which are now open include:

PE and sport in schools which aims to bring about a step-change in the provision of sporting facilities for young people and the wider community. Nearly £3m has been allocated to Northumberland through this programme.

Activities for young people, based around adventure and other challenging activities. In Northumberland this scheme will provide £270,000.

Help for childcare projects including supporting capital projects predominantly benefiting pre-school children and long term sustainability of projects, particularly in disadvantaged areas. To date over £770,000 has come to Northumberland through this programme.

Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities which supports groups in understanding, improving and caring for their local environment.

NOF has also joined the Awards for All Scheme, providing grants of £500 - £15,000 for small-scale projects throughout the region.

In addition, the next few months will see new programmes for:

Reducing the burden of coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer by providing access to high quality services, facilities and prevention programmes.

## Increased Insurance Premiums

Parish councils, village hall management committees and other community groups who need to carry insurance should be aware of the anticipated rises that will take place when they next renew their cover.

Factors affecting the anticipated increases are:

- A hardening insurance market both before and since the attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001.
- A number of flood claims resulting from the very wet Autumn of 2000.
- The continuing increase in the number and cost of public liability claims.

It is possible that policyholders will be faced with 20% increases and they are advised to budget for increases in that region.

This level of increase is likely to be implemented by all insurance providers. The information in this article is provided by Aon Limited who state that increases are anticipated for policies under the scheme with Cornhill Insurance renewing on and after the 1st June.

Projects that provide effective palliative care, support and information services for children and adults suffering from cancer and other life threatening conditions.

Activities to transform communities, including projects which enhance the quality of life of local communities or expand community sector waste reuse, recycling and composting or renewable electricity generation projects.

If any of these initiatives relate to projects that your community is involved in or hoping to set up then you can find further information on the NOF website at [www.nof.org.uk](http://www.nof.org.uk) The site has more details on all their grant programmes plus a comprehensive database of awards made so far which may give your group a clearer idea of whether their project would meet the funding criteria of NOF.

For copies of application forms or other publications, or any enquiries on the initiatives, call the enquiries line on 0845 0000 121.

## Community News On Line

Misplaced your copy of Northumberland Community News? Not enough copies to go around your group? Northumberland Community News can now be viewed on line at [www.ccn.org.uk](http://www.ccn.org.uk)

## VITAL VILLAGES OF WEST TYNEDALE

The Community Council of Northumberland, working in conjunction with the Haltwhistle Partnership Ltd., is giving three public presentations on Vital Villages in February.

The first will be at Lambley Village Hall on Thursday, 21st February 2002, the second at Greenhead Village Hall on Monday, 18th February, and the third at Henshaw Women's Institute on Monday 25th February 2002. All are from 7.00pm to 9 pm.

The Vital Villages scheme is run by the Countryside Agency and includes offering grant support to help find out from the community what its main issues are. Thereafter the Countryside Agency can offer a range of advice and funding that will help local communities. This includes assistance in developing an action plan to tackle local issues; grants that support projects that improve or introduce new services; and financial help for small transport projects.

## Environmental Assistance

From January 2002 Northern Rock Foundation is making a change to one of its grant programmes, 'Living in the North East', to include applications from organisations working on public spaces and environmental projects which benefit a wide public.

Although the primary concern of Northern Rock Foundation is with people who are in some way disadvantaged, the Trustees believe that the Foundation is has a role to play in making the North East a better place for all the people who live here.

The Northern Rock Foundation is therefore inviting applications from charitable organisations that help to contribute to the cultural and environmental well-being of the region.

For an informal discussion or more information about this programme please contact Sue Vaughan at northern Rock Foundation on 0191 284-8412.

# NORTH EAST PATIENTS RECRUITED AS HEALTH WATCHDOGS

PATIENTS AND CARERS across Northumberland and north Tyneside are being recruited to help set up two new health watchdog bodies.

Local Community Health Councils in collaboration with two NHS Trusts are taking a lead in setting up some of the first Patients' Forums in the area and are hoping that they will pave the way for others to follow.

Patients' Forums are new organisations proposed by the Government to give patients, carers and the public in general more say in local health services when the Community Health Councils are abolished next year. Their job will be to find out what people think about local NHS services, to monitor these services and to work closely with NHS organisations to improve them. Each Forum will be made up of 15 to 20 volunteer members who will be specially trained to carry out this role.

Jill Gillett, who is co-ordinating the project on behalf of Northumberland and North Tyneside CHCs, said that to ensure a smooth transition into the new arrangements the CHCs had got together with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust and North Tyneside Primary Care Trust to pilot the Patients' Forums a year early. The Northumbria Patients' Forum will monitor all the services provided by the Trust, including its community services and the hospitals at Hexham,

Berwick, Ashington and North Shields, whilst the PCT Forum will cover all family health services (GPs, dentists, opticians etc.) provided or commissioned by the PCT in North Tyneside.

"By starting up the Forums now as pilot projects, new patient and carer representatives will gain a lot of experience before the organisations go live in March 2003. They will also have the chance to experiment and develop the Forums so that the kind of bodies set up in March have to some extent been tried and tested. We will be keeping the Department of Health informed about how we get on," she said.

Chief Executive of North Tyneside PCT, Pam McDougall said "This is a very exciting time for the NHS with a lot of changes taking place and it's crucial we make sure patients are at the heart of it."

Potential recruits are urged to get in touch as soon as possible. "No experience is needed, just a few hours to spare a week and a genuine interest in improving health services. Full training and support will be given and all out-of-pocket expenses will be paid," said Jill.

Please call Jill on 0191 258 1056 for an informal chat about what membership involves or for an information/application pack.

*Continued from page 1*

Williams of Sheffield Hallam University, made two main recommendations:

The review identified surplus places as one of the key issues. It recommended that the County Council develop and adopt a strategy for reducing the level of surplus places.

It recommended that the present 3 tier structure be retained, as there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that there would be significant improvement in the level of educational attainment with alternative structures.

A long-standing problem for Northumberland has been the issue of surplus places. If support is to be secured from the Department for Education and Employment then the issue of surplus places has to be tackled. Recent attempts to address surplus places in the north of the county, at Kirknewton, Milfield and Acklington ended in the maintenance of the status quo. The special nature of the geography, settlement patterns and transport routes in Northumberland is fairly unique, and therefore careful considerations have to be made. This generally means difficult political decisions.

Cllr. Jim Wright, the authority's spokesman on children's services, has been promised that any proposed changes would only be taken on the grounds of improving the achievements of the county's pupils, and no decision would be made until a full consultation had taken place.

So if you missed the review, would like to make a contribution to the debate or simply find out more, please make sure that you attend one of the following events, which commence at 7pm. The County Council has provided communities with an opportunity for discussion. If you have something to contribute, make sure your voice is heard.

- Wansbeck** Monday 18th February
- Blyth Valley** Tuesday 19th February
- Castle Morpeth** Friday 22 February
- Tynedale** Monday 25 February
- Berwick** Wednesday 6 March
- Alnwick** Thursday 7 March

## ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

Parish Councils are being invited to nominate their chairman and spouse/partner to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party on 16 July. This is an annual opportunity, which is administered through NALC. Unfortunately, only one couple can be selected this year. The deadline for nomination is 14 March.

## FROM THESE PAGES IN

1984

### LADY OF THE ROAD

At this time last year, Community News focused attention on the particular problems the county have in getting to the surgery, chemist, dentist and hospitals. That was when we first hear about Mrs Nellie Norman of Crookham. Mrs Norman is a widow, whose husband was head keeper on the Etal Estate.

Ten years ago Load Joicey, recognising the problems of many retired people on his estate in getting to the services, they needed, decided to provide a very practical solution. He presented Mrs Norman with a car and asked her to use it to give people lifts or to run errands for them if they were unable to travel. Mrs Norman and her car now provide an indispensable service for the elderly people in Ford and Etal. She collects their pensions and does their shopping. She picks up prescriptions from the surgery and takes them to the chemist. The postman then drops the made-up prescriptions at Mrs Norman's house and she delivers them to the patients.

1987

### Source of Reference

In the parish councils movement, the 'bible' to which we turn first for an answer on a legal or technical query is Charles Arnold-Baker's book Local Council Administration. Parish clerks with a sharp sense of hearing have no doubt detected the sound of its rustling pages whenever they telephone the county office with a difficult query!

1992

### Small Schools are not just for children

It may be an old story, but it's still a good one. At a village school in Northumberland on Christmas as the teacher passed the crib scene she noticed a small boy applying red and blue felt-tip to the hindquarters of the sheep. She asked what he was doing to be told scathingly, "Well, Miss, if the yows haven't had the tup by Christmas, there'll be no lambs."

Small schools are still very much part of their local community, absorbing its culture, and reflecting its values. Television, computers and transport mean that pupils at small rural schools now have many opportunities to learn about the wider world and prepare to meet its demands. But as well as meeting the requirements of the national curriculum, most village people would still hope that children also learn about their own area - its history, economy, wildlife and music - and there is a role for local people in helping this to happen.

1997

### Interested in Parish Maps?

Parish Maps help you to express what you value as a community, and are a first step towards standing up for your place. Parish Maps can be made by anyone, at any age, in any form: textiles, painting, ceramics, photography, audio and video, newspaper, performance and song have all been tried.

# New Community Development Workers



Richard Sim, Western Tynedale

WESTERN TYNEDEALE has a new Community Development Officer. Richard Sim took up the post in mid-January when he was formally introduced to the Community Council's Executive Committee. He takes over from Kirsten Francis who recently became the Haltwhistle Partnership's Project Officer.

"I am looking forward to getting around the district," says Richard, "and meeting local people to find out more about their communities' needs. The key thing is to help communities to help themselves. There are a lot of good things going on in Western Tynedale but sometimes people need some help getting projects to run smoothly or in fund raising."

Richard's interest in Western Tynedale is lifelong. He grew up in Haltwhistle where

his father, Dr C.G. Sim was the local GP for thirty years. Richard himself has run a high street shop in Haltwhistle for three years, worked for the Haltwhistle Partnership and run a community paper, the Haltwhistle Times, in the town for the past nine years. Richard has also been active in the Town's Chamber of Trade, Town Twinning Association and the Haltwhistle and District Local History Association.

Formerly he has worked in local government both in London and in Hampshire and as Head of Research at the Institute for the Study of Conflict, London, and as Senior Research Analyst at Control Risks Ltd.

Richard can be contacted on 01434 322766.

### Berwick

A new Community Development Officer has been appointed to cover the District of Berwick. Els Nicol commenced work with the Community Council in early January and is currently based at Cheviot House, Wooler. This is a new full time post with Els giving her time to support community groups throughout the whole of the Berwick Borough Area.

Els says "I am keen to meet up with as many people as possible from within the area and I am very much looking forward to supporting community groups and voluntary organisations."



Els Nicol, Berwick

Els was born in The Netherlands. She has a lengthy experience of working in voluntary organisations. During the past 11 years she organised the running of The Dry Dock, a local charity for young people based in Eyemouth.

Els lives in the Scottish Borders, is married and has 3 young children. Next to being committed to her family and work she also takes great joy at her studies. At the moment she is in her final year at the University of Dundee studying for a degree in Community Education. Previous courses and diplomas include Counselling, Youth Work, Health & Social Welfare and Theology.

Els can be contacted in the Wooler Office on 01668-283232.

## HALL OF FAME

ROTHBURY JUBILEE HALL have plans for a major refurbishment and extension and are busy funding raising towards the project. Their recent events have been most entertaining and have included a celebrity or two.

The regional press gave extensive coverage to such acts as Lindisfarne in the Sunday for Sammy Concert on 3rd February where proceeds went to the Sammy Johnson Fund. On a smaller scale but equally important Lindisfarne appeared at the Jubilee Hall on Friday 1st February.

The concert was a sell-out, weeks before the event.

It was held to raise funds for the Jubilee Hall refurbishment fund, and the hall management committee worked with the Queen's Head Hotel on the event. The Queen's Head kindly funded and arranged for the printing of the tickets and posters. This was a very successful collaborative venture. The Queen's Head has also hosted a number of regular musical events over the past few months in aid of the Jubilee Hall refurbishment fund.

Clive Wilkinson, a member of the hall management committee, said "It was a superb concert and there was lively audience participation throughout. On at least two occasions there were standing ovations. It was truly wonderful to see the Jubilee Hall filled to capacity with local people enjoying superb music, and with the added bonus of a substantial part of the proceedings going towards making the Jubilee Hall better able to host such events in future."

And not far behind (you) in this hall of fame were the newly formed Coquetdale Amateur Dramatic Society which put on its first production, Cinderella, in February. The pantomime was originally billed for two showings, on 8th and 9th of February, but it soon became apparent that this would not meet the local demand. Both nights sold out in a matter of days. It was therefore decided to open up the final dress rehearsal on Sunday 3rd February as a 'preview'. This too sold out almost immediately.

It was a real community venture, with over 100 people involved in the production, either

as actors or backstage and front of house supporters. A number of local community groups were able to put on mini-acts in the 'cabaret' that took place at the Prince's Ball. These included the Rothbury Scouts, the Cubs, the Round Table, the Coquetdale Ladies' Circle, and the Rothbury Ranters, which comprises a local group of young musicians specialising in ceilidh music. The cabaret was a mixture of comedy acts and rather more serious musical items.

After the cabaret, the really serious business of the pantomime resumed. Cinderella lost her shoe and the Prince tracked her down and married her, but not before her sisters, Harpic and Domestos, and the wicked Dame Salmonea had done their best to thwart the happy ending.

The Community Foundation generously supported the venture, as did a large number of local businesses and individuals within Coquetdale.

You can see about 40 photographs on one of the local websites at [www.rothbury.com/pant/](http://www.rothbury.com/pant/)

### Money for Wansbeck Community Groups

Groups within the Wansbeck area are invited to apply now for grants of £50 to £5,000 for community activities at neighbourhood level.

Parent and toddlers groups, playgroups, after school clubs; Sports and leisure clubs; Social groups; Minority ethnic groups; Young people's organisations; Resident's and Community Associations; Women's groups; Art, music, drama societies and other activity based clubs are all examples of groups that may apply to the Wansbeck Community Chest for a grant to further their activity.

Wansbeck Community Chest is part of the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. It is being administered by the Community Foundation in partnership with Wansbeck CVS. Local criteria are set and made by panels of local community representatives.

For more information, an easy to complete application form and advice if you need it contact Wansbeck CVS on 01670 858688.

## HALTWHISTLE PARTNERSHIP'S ONLINE PROJECT

Haltwhistle Partnership's Online project has now been fully launched, with all three phases of the three-tiered project having been completed. The catalyst for the project was Newcastle University, which provided a computer for internet and video conferencing use at Westbourne House, the Partnership's home. That sparked the concept of the Online scheme, with computers now installed in the town's Partnership offices for use by local people.

With support from funders the Western Tynedale Community Chest, Lloyds TSB, the South Tyne Fund, the Rural Projects Fund and Tynedale Council grant aid, the Partnership has been able to expand the initial scheme to provide seven access computers and user training offering easier access to Internet work, tuition, and learning sites. † It also has an internet terminal on the ground floor for those unable to make the stairs.

On the first floor is the training room itself, which has six networked computers to provide teaching to local people on computer skills and on how to make the most of the internet.

One of the most popular courses on offer is that of web-site design and construction. This has been well supported by local enthusiasts, businesspeople and social entrepreneurs. Claire Heaviside, a volunteer for a local crafts/writing group said: "The course has been a marvellous help to us. Without it we could not have set up a web site in the foreseeable future. There simply aren't courses like this readily available in rural areas."

The main challenge for the Online project now is to provide professional guidance to help people to make decisions about their progression in learning and work. It is not that there is a particular shortage of trained advisers in the area but once again the requisite levels of professional pay are another onerous revenue requirement on a small community development trust which also has other commitments apart from IT training.

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE - THEY CERTAINLY DID



Jaz Goncu, Community Artist, with other youngsters at the BMX leisure facility

A BELLINGHAM PROJECT reached the final of a national competition to promote volunteering. The project, sponsored by Tynedale Voluntary Action and Bellingham Community Trust, was shortlisted for an award as the Most Innovative Project on "Make a Difference Day" 2001.

"Make a Difference Day" is organised each year by the Council for Voluntary Service. 49,000 volunteers across the UK took part in 2,490 diverse activities making an outstanding contribution to their communities. Organisations taking part in "Make a Difference Day" had the opportunity to submit their projects for a national award and a panel of 12 representatives from the voluntary sector had the task of sifting through these applications to create just 19 finalists across 7 award categories. Lesley Allen, of Bellingham Community Trust, and Matthew Murphy, the young man whose enthusiasm started the whole project travelled to London at the end of January to attend the Awards Dinner at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, sponsored by Barclays and The Woolwich.

The trip was a great success, a delicious dinner followed by the awards ceremony, which was compared by newsreader Martyn Lewis.

The Bellingham project was in the second category and to our delight won. Lesley and Matthew were presented with a certificate and a cheque for £200 towards further phases of the project.

The CSV Make a Difference Day organised in Tynedale by Tynedale Voluntary Action happened in Bellingham on 27th October. Working in partnership with the Bellingham Community Trust, TVA helped the young people of Bellingham improve the recently completed BMX leisure facility. Materials were donated by Azko Nobel, Matthew Charlton, Wybone Ltd, Northumberland Fire and Rescue, Bellingham Country Store and Tynedale Council. Michael Walton of Rawfoot Farm donated both his time and machinery to create a jump for BMX. Volunteers mainly aged under 16 turned up and worked until dark on the Fairfield site. They donned overalls and painted until their arms ached and all the graffiti left by visitors had disappeared. The young people picked up litter and installed litter bins to keep the area tidy. They then courageously tested the newly created BMX jump that would even have made Evel Kenevil take a sharp intake of breath.

All the volunteers then helped the community artist Jaz Goncu decorate the 'half-pipe' with many revealing untapped talent. Lesley Allen of Bellingham Community Trust said "Make a Difference Day demonstrates the enthusiasm and commitment of

young people in Bellingham. Bellingham Community Trust, with the help of the Community Council of Northumberland, raised funds for the Skateboard and BMX park, but the idea came from Matthew Murray and other young people."

Mike Colman, Manager of Tynedale Voluntary Action said "Everyone involved in the project deserves a huge amount of praise for making it happen and it is very rewarding to see Northumberland communities such as Bellingham making the national headlines for all the right reasons. Congratulations to all involved"

## Discovering, Celebrating and Preserving the Past of Morpeth

The Morpeth Antiquarian Society will be staging an Exhibition in Morpeth Town Hall on June 7-9th. The subject will be "Elizabethan England 1952-2002". It will feature the changing face and times of Morpeth over the last half century. The aspects to be considered are Childhood, Townscape, and Events.

They will be interested to hear from anybody who has any material that they might be prepared to lend. Contact name is Mrs. Janet Brown, Bilsdale, Ulgham, Morpeth, NE61 3AR. 01670 790465. e-mail: gjb@bilsdale.freeserve.co.uk

The purpose of the Exhibition is twofold. The first is the Society's contribution to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.

The second is to help find the wherewithal to have a Museum in Morpeth. It seems so strange that Morpeth, a market town for over 800 years, the administrative centre for Northumberland, with so much history to tell, has no museum. The idea of a Museum in Morpeth was first suggested by a Mayor at the turn of the last century! The society had a museum of sort for several years in the Chantry but even this has gone.

The Morpeth Antiquarian Society has its own holdings and archives. There are items scattered around the county, or the country, or even the globe, which should be in a central resource in Morpeth where they could be stored and displayed. The Friends are trying to ascertain where these might be, what form they take, and whether the present owners would be prepared to bring these to a Museum. They might be donated, or given on long-term loan. They might be handed over now, or they could be mentioned in a will as being the desired final home for them.

Anybody interested should contact: Roy Mann, 14 Southgate Wood, Morpeth, NE61 2EN. Tel: 01670 503374

The Society strongly supports Friends of Morpeth Museum in their efforts to find a building and funding for such a resource.

# NORTHUMBERLAND HOSPITAL RADIO

NORTHUMBERLAND'S only Hospital Broadcasting Service, Northumberland Hospital Radio (NHR) based at Ashington Hospital, has re-launched its public address service.

NHR has been providing a quality public address, music and commentary service to organisers of (mainly) outdoor events for many years, as a means of earning income for the Charity.

The Station's volunteers can often be seen in the summer months at local events providing announcements from a caravan which has been tailored for the purpose. Station Manager Iain Miles explained: "A local dealer generously donated a second hand caravan and several funders made grants that have enabled us to update and expand our PA equipment - including new speaker stands, cable drums and radio mics. Volunteers spent over 100 hours on the caravan, undertaking such tasks as re-wiring, installing a new bench for the equipment (which is kept in storage elsewhere) firming up a rather saggy floor and getting rid of cooking fat and doggy smells! Ann Maurice from TV's 'House Doctor' would be proud!

NHR has been broadcasting 24 hours a day for the last 18 months, thanks to a computer network and a software package which is also used by professional stations. NHR

is now able to offer a reliable, consistent service of easy listening popular music and speech-based information sequences to patients and staff at the two Ashington Hospitals.

The service is proving popular with patients awake during the night as well as staff working in departments throughout the building during the long hospital days. Readers might like to know that NHR will publicise their local events in the daily 'What's On' sequences. The Station is also looking for more ward visitors to raise the profile of the organisation at Wansbeck General Hospital, the main audience base, during weekday afternoons. NHR is also keen to hear from those with good speaking voices who would be able to read stories and present other speech items.

The contact address is: NHR Studio Centre, Ashington Hospital, West View, Ashington NE63 0SA tel 01670 521212 ext 2266.

# BEACON POWER

The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (R.A.B.I) is the national charity in England, Wales and Northern Ireland dedicated to helping members of the farming community and their families who are suffering hardship.

R.A.B.I is very proud to have been chosen as one of Her Majesty The Queen's nominated charities during her Golden Jubilee year in 2002.

On Monday 3rd June 2002 Her Majesty will light a beacon in central London, which will be one in a multitude spreading light to every part of the United Kingdom.

The Golden Jubilee provides a unique opportunity for farming and rural communities to join in the celebrations on this special occasion, by organising a summer party, to include the lighting of a beacon. R.A.B.I invites all farms and communities in Northumberland to take part and organise their own event.

An information pack, including a Golden Jubilee Summer Party Planner and Checklist and a registration form, is available to those interested in holding an event.

For a pack contact Lise Veneth, RABI, Freepost Licence OF333, Oxford, OX2 0BR; tel: 01865 724931; Fax: 01865 202025; E-mail: lveneth@rabi.org.uk

## PUBLICATION DETAILS

Northumberland Community News is produced by the Community Council of Northumberland. The first edition came out in October 1981 and it has appeared every two months since then. The newsletter should be of interest to anyone who is working to benefit their local community. We use it to circulate useful information on sources of advice and money, to alert people to changes in legislation or service provision which may affect them, and to pass on ideas and news from one community to another. There are regular columns on Parish Council affairs, community halls and the Community Health Council; but our hope is that most people read the whole paper as a means of keeping in touch with voluntary activity and the rural parts of the county.

Northumberland Community News is distributed free to Parish and District Councils, the County Council, village hall and Age Concern committees, the rural clergy and many voluntary organisations. Copies are also available in public libraries. If you belong to one of the groups mentioned and do not see the newsletter, find out why not. If you would like more copies contact the Community Council.

Contributions and ideas are welcomed. Please get in touch with the Editor, at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth NE61 1PY For information on the Community Council check our website at [www.ccn.org.uk](http://www.ccn.org.uk)

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