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DEC/JAN 23

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inside MORPETH

As Chris Mitchell, owner of Rutherford's writes in our festive edition of Inside Morpeth, Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas in Morpeth, without a trip into town to marvel at the store's windows - and how right he is!

What with the cost of living crisis, worries over winter fuel bills, and rising food prices, we all need a little cheering up this Christmas, and my goodness doesn't the Rutherford's window display do just that. Rutherford's has been bringing the magic of Christmas into the lives of generations of Morpeth children, but the store seems to have surpassed itself this year if that is possible.

The window displays are a joy to behold – not just by our children but by all of us no matter how old or young, we are. We could be cheeky and say who needs a trip into Newcastle to see the Fenwick's windows when we have out very own winter wonderland in Morpeth thanks to Chris and his team, and this time we think we are right.

The display is not only important to Rutherford's but to every trader in Morpeth, no matter how big or small their offerings, because all of them are relying on hearing their tills ringing heartily this Christmas to hopefully tide them over for when the New Year dawns and times undoubtedly get a little harder.

Morpeth can be proud of its wonderful town centre, its shops and stores, but they do need the support of local residents to spend some of Christmas in the town. A few pounds spent here and there in a Morpeth shop or store instead of on-line or the MetroCentre, can quite literally make all the difference.

So, let's all make this a Merry Morpeth Christmas and a Happy New Year and shop local!

Ian Leech

Editor of Inside Morpeth

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Front cover: Morpeth's all lit up for Christmas - photo Joss Guest

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Queen honoured Bob with sovereign's award

For a Morpeth man who has been a prime organiser of so many high-profile events across Northumberland over the past two decades very often involving Royalty, being on the receiving end of a prestigious award himself was a new but very well-deserved, honour, **writes Editor Ian Leech.**

Bob Biggs was named by Her Majesty the Queen in what would turn out to be her last New Year's Honours List, as a member of the Royal Victorian Order for his special service to the Monarch.

The Order was originally established by Queen Victoria in 1896, to be presented at her discretion, to recipients who had loyally served her during her long reign. Since then, the Order signified by a Maltese Cross surrounded by a blue ring and featuring a Tudor crown, has continued to be presented by subsequent Kings and Queen Elizabeth II.

Quite often it would be presented to recipients at an investiture at a Royal Palace, but Bob chose to receive his award at a very personal presentation at Alnwick Castle, from Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland who he has worked for and with, since she took over as Lord Lieutenant of the County.

Originally from Derbyshire, Bob moved north to work for Northumberland County Council in 1983 and held a number of senior administrative roles for the authority before in 1999 he was asked to become Deputy Clerk to the Lord Lieutenant of the county alongside his other duties. The first Lord Lieutenant he served was Lord Ridley, who was succeeded shortly afterwards by Sir John Riddell. He would hold the post until 2009 when the Duchess of Northumberland took on the role of being the Queen's representative in the county.

Bob's duties as the Lord Lieutenant's clerk included helping to organise a variety of events involving the three holders of the post he has served, including presentational ceremonies, church services, military parades and, of course, Royal visits. His first came with a visit by the Duke of Gloucester to the county shortly after he took on the clerk's role, but he was still very new to the job when one of the biggest Royal occasions he would be involved with, took place in 2001 when Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh together visited the county.



The day began in North Northumberland before the couple arrived at Morpeth County Hall then made the short road journey to Ashington, where together they walked the length of the town's pedestrianised Station Road, to be greeted by a huge, cheering crowd of well-wishers.

Co-incidentally, I was working at Wansbeck Council's Communication's Officer at the time, so was also involved with the local organisation of the Royal couple's visit to Ashington. Over the next decade I would have the pleasure of working with Bob on several further occasions, organising visits by other Royals to Ashington, Bedlington and Newbiggin including the then Prince Charles, Princess Anne and Prince Edward.

When we met to chat about his award, we both recalled breathing a sigh of relief when the Queen and Prince Phillip got into their car to end the visit to Ashington, glad that it had all gone off so well and exactly as planned. Again, co-incidentally, it was the first Royal visit to Northumberland that Sir John had taken charge of after taking on the Lord Lieutenant's role and he often remarked to me how much the Queen and Duke had appreciated the welcome they were given by the people of Ashington.

Bob would go on to be a key figure in almost 50 visits by members of the Royal

family to Northumberland, but only one other by the Queen and that came in 2010 when she visited Alnwick Castle to be greeted by some 6,000 volunteers from local charities and organisations.

Having been involved in Royal visits I understand the serious amount of planning and preparation that goes into such occasions both before and on the day, and Bob would often have to help plan several stops by a member of the Royal family on one day alone.

But, as he told me, he considers it a great honour to have been involved not just on Royal visits, but on others occasions with the three Lord Lieutenants he has worked with. "I never imagined I would go on to meet so many very important people in this country, when I first took on the role," said Bob who despite being retired from the council continues in his Lord Lieutenancy role.

"It has been an absolutely pleasure and privilege to work so closely with three people like Lord Ridley, Sir John Riddell and the Duchess who shared an absolute passion for Northumberland.

"So, when it came to being presented with my award I thought the appropriate place to do that was Alnwick Castle, the most appropriate person to present it do me was the Duchess. I feel hugely honoured to receive the award which is something I will treasure for the rest of my life."



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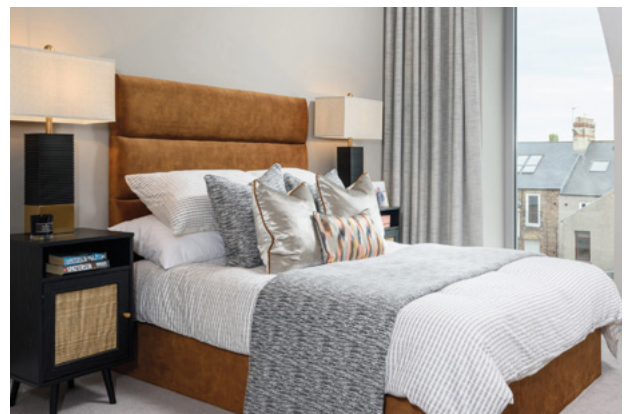


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SJPI2805b B1 (03/22)

Clubhouse make-over is a real game-changer

Report by Inside Morpeth Editor **Ian Leech**

The recently completed splendid refurbishment of the clubhouse at Morpeth Rugby Club's Mitford Road ground, has been described as a 'shining example' of local people working together to deliver a wonderful new facility a whole community can enjoy using.

The club has invested nearly £800,000 in modernising the clubhouse to provide new facilities that can not only be enjoyed by players, fans and supporters of its teams, but anyone and everyone from in and around Morpeth,

The clubhouse – first opened nearly 50 years ago – has been totally redesigned on both floors to create a stylish new function room at ground level named the Elsie Davis Suite, that can seat up to 250 people at dinners, weddings, anniversaries and parties.

On the ground floor the 1975 Conference Room is also available to hire for meetings and by businesses.

Upstairs a brand-new sports bar has been created named Laidlaws in memory of Ted Laidlaw who was the club's first captain back in 1947 when it was known as the 'Old Edwardians' representing the Morpeth Grammar School Old Boy's Association. A stylish cabinet trophy has been made by a local craftsman to fill one wall of the sports bar, while newly extended 'The Front Row Balcony' offers spectators a birds-eye view of games.

Catering will be provided for the function suite and sports bar, from a new and expanded kitchen which has been fitted out with the very latest equipment.

Both the function room and the sports bar as well as the conference room are available for hire, while the clubhouse will also be open to local people from 4pm to 10pm on Tuesdays to Fridays, 11am to 11pm on Saturdays and 9am to 1pm on Sundays. There is also ample free parking space within the Mitford Road grounds, for guests at functions.

All the redevelopment work has been completed within the original footprint of



Events Manager Kerry Stephenson in the Elsie Davis Suite ready for a wedding ceremony

the clubhouse which is licensed for civil wedding ceremonies.

As Club Chairman Simon Harries told Inside Morpeth: "The clubhouse has undergone a significant transformation thanks to our main contractors N B Clark, our generous donors, our club members and volunteers.

"It is a shining example of a community project delivered almost entirely by people and resources from the Morpeth area. The development takes the club into a new era and provides the local community with a fantastic facility club members and players as well as local people can enjoy for many years to come."

Jane Sexton, the club's Business Development Lead, said so many people from Morpeth's 'rugby family' had been involved with the project including past and present players, wives, families and friends. "The volunteer hours put in by so many to get the clubhouse ready for its re-opening, have been staggering," she said.

"Volunteers have swept up, washed out, moved furniture, re-stocked our two main bars and stepped up to do the thousand-and-one little things that needed to be done to get us open on time.

"All that means is that we have a fantastic new amenity to be proud of, the likes of which exist nowhere else in Morpeth."

As it has done since it was formed, Morpeth remains one of the premier rugby union clubs in the North East. The First XV plays in – and by mid-November was leading – the Regional 2 North League, and the club has three other men's teams, plus Under 17/18 Colts and over-35 'Ranters' Veterans.

Morpeth also has a thriving Age Grade juniors' set-up giving youngsters from the age of five years old the chance to play the game including four girls' teams from Under 12s upwards, something which is vital to the future sustainability of the club. Typically, 14 of the current first team match-day 18-man squad have progressed through the ranks from the days when they played age grade rugby.

As Jane Sexton added: "Morpeth is a classic example of a family-orientated club giving players the chance to play the game from an early age right through to the highest level of regional rugby, and that family spirit has also helped us create this remarkable new facility we now have for the whole of Morpeth to enjoy using."

All booking enquiries should be directed to Kerry Stephenson, Morpeth RFC Events Manager on 07538 411262, or by email to functions@morpethrfc.co.uk

Station back on track

All but one of the offices, created as part of an ambitious project to restore and give the historic Morpeth Railway Station a new lease of life, has now been let it has been announced, reports **Ian Leech**.

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) was the driving force behind plans to restore the station that was first opened in 1846 to its former glory, at the same time as becoming a modern transport hub, and an enterprise centre for small, entrepreneurial businesses with the creation of seven offices from within the near-ruins of the main station Grade II Listed building.

With the support of partners including the National Lottery Enterprise Fund, the Railway Heritage Trust, rail companies Network Rail and Northern Rail, Northumberland County Council and the North East Rural Growth Network, GMDT secured the £2.3m funding needed to repair and restore the fabric of the station that had originally been designed by architect Benjamin Green during the Victorian-age of pioneering passenger rail transport.

The splendid Morpeth Station was actually opened three years before Newcastle's Central Station; two years before trains were pulling into and leaving London's King's Cross; while Waverley Station in Edinburgh at the northern end of the main east coast line up into Scotland, did not open until 1868.

Guests were told at the official re-opening of the station two years ago, that Sir Peter Henry, chairman of Network Rail, had said: "A place should be proud of its railway station and Morpeth once again has a station to be proud of."

At the time several of the offices had been let, but leases were not proceeded with because of the Covid pandemic lockdown. Now, however, GMDT has just announced that four of the seven offices have tenants working there, plus another two are actively under offer.

The offices in the appropriately named Benjamin Green House, are described as being ideal for occupation by developing small or new businesses, and have all the modern office requirements as well as dedicated parking space on the Station's forecourt.

Looking back, Mike Willis, GMDT Chair, said the 2020 / 2021 Covid lockdowns could not have come at a worse time for the station project. "Construction work had just been completed, and our redevelopment partners had given a



Matthew McCreton, impressed that the Victorian charm of the station has been retained

magnificent Victorian heritage railway building a new lease of life - not only as a modern transport hub, but we also enterprisingly created much-needed office space in a unique business setting quite literally yards away from the main East Coast rail line."

"At the time we had businesses ready to move into their offices, but quite understandably they felt they could not proceed with what was for them a big step, at a time of some uncertainty.

"But like so many others we have weathered the storm. People are back travelling by train and by all accounts, everyone using the station appreciates the work we have done there.

"I am delighted to say tenants have now been found for all but one of the offices, and occupants tell us they are happy with their new workspace.

"It has been a long haul back but we have got there in the end, and the Trust along with our partners in the project, are proud of what we have done not only to preserve a piece of railway history, but to give travellers using Morpeth Station modern facilities at the same time."

One of the first businesses to have moved into Benjamin Green House is Metalis Energy, owned and run by father-and-son Paul and Matthew McCreton, who manufacture through sub-contractors, bespoke drilling and pipeline equipment for use in the offshore industry.

As Matthew told me, with both of them living locally to Morpeth, they were looking for a base in town from which to run their business. "But, we were unable to find what we were looking for until we heard about the station offices," he said.



Lisa Blaney, delighted with her station office

"The office we have taken is ideal for us. Everything is brand new with all the connectivity requirements that we need, inside a building which is part of Morpeth's history. One of the things we love is that the refurbishment work had been done so sympathetically to retain the look and character of the station building, even down to keeping the original fireplace as a feature in our office."

Another new tenant is Lisa Blaney, a family and systemic psychotherapist with more than 20 years' experience supporting families and individuals to listen and understand each other's views and to communicate respectfully and effectively when presented with life's difficulties.

She had been renting rooms in Jesmond and Newcastle but said: "I needed somewhere of my own where I can meet individuals and families I work with, in a peaceful, relaxed setting which may seem slightly odd in a room so close to a main railway line," she said. "But I never hear the trains being on the other side of the building to the track."

"The station is proving ideal for me. Morpeth is within easy reach of so many places and I have free parking on the station's forecourt. There is even a café on site which is so popular with clients coming to see me."

Management of the office space is being handled by Lambert Smith Hampton, Newcastle and any enquiries for the remaining office should be directed to Emily Wood on 0191 338 8316 or EWood@lsh.co.uk



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Festive family fun at Cragside this Christmas

Make memories this December at Cragside and enjoy a great day out with friends and family. Experience the House dressed for the season, have fun at the activity stations or stretch your legs on a winter walk. All just 30-minutes from Morpeth.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas at Cragside House

Step inside the much-loved Christmas poem, 'A Visit from St. Nicholas'. Enjoy an immersive, magical stroll through the ground floor of the House. Swags of luscious green foliage drape in the halls, and the grand Christmas tree in the Dining Room has been trimmed with traditional decorations. Look out for some special surprises as you explore, as lines from the poem have been brought to life in a playful and imaginative way.

Family fun this December

Stop by three activities stations on your Christmas visit. Create the ultimate Christmas snap at the festive photo station at the visitor centre. Grab a jolly prop, jump behind the giant photo frame and strike a pose! Christmas jumpers, are of course, highly recommended.

Help Father Christmas' elves find lost presents in the Formal Garden. His reindeer did one too many loop-de-loops when passing by Cragside and six presents fell out of his sleigh. See if you can find them. They could be tucked in the trees or among the flower beds.

You can also share your hopes and dreams for 2023. Write a New Year wish on one of the tags provided and hang it on the tree in the Stables. During December the tree will gradually fill with well wishes from visitors.

Winter walks at Cragside

Whether you're a regular visitor seeking a new corner of Cragside, or visiting for the first time, one of the best ways to explore the grounds, is on a walk. It's a great way to blow away the Christmas cobwebs too.

There are 40-miles of footpaths that criss-cross the grounds and seven way-marked walks waiting to be explored. Discover the Rocky Ramble, an adventurous trek through the heart of Cragside where you'll

duck under stone archways, and alongside giant boulders on a hike to Cragend Quarry. Delve into the mind of William Armstrong on the Inspiration Trail where you'll find his scientific quotes and thoughts for the future carved into the rocks on a circular walk with dramatic views over the Coquet valley. Or, for a gentler stroll, walk the banks of Nelly's Moss; a pair of artificial lakes, specially created to store the water needed for Armstrong's pioneering hydro-electricity creation.

If you're feeling adventurous you could create your own walk using the Explore Cragside map you receive on arrival. Follow the meandering water of the Debdon Burn, discover glistening lakes, duck under impressive rock formations and walk under the canopy of some of the tallest trees of their kind in the country. When you're next at Cragside, head to the new map room at the visitor centre to plan your next walk.

Christmas at Cragside starts on Saturday 3 December. Cragside is open 7 days a week, 11am-3pm (last entry 2pm), except for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Opening dates for the House vary. £10 adults, £5 children and £25 for family entry. Members and under 5s are free. Plan your visit at nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside. Don't forget to share your festive fun on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter at @ntcragside.



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Christmas cheer

made at Cragside

Make memories at Cragside this December on a festive day out. Experience a magical stroll through the ground floor of the House, help Father Christmas find his lost presents in the Formal Garden, strike a pose in the festive photo station, and add your hopes and dreams for 2023 to the wish tree. **From Saturday 3 December.**

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'We are here for you' pharmacy friends tell people of Stobhill

Jonathan Pringle, Asim Akhtar and Munir Nazrul are the new owners of Stobhill Pharmacy, an independent community pharmacy located in Stobhill, on the outskirts of Morpeth town centre. Having purchased the pharmacy from Boots in July, the new owners quickly discovered that changes had to be made.

The three friends met and studied at Sunderland University before going their own separate ways for the past 10 years. Jonathan worked as a pharmacy manager for a large multiple in Ashington, whilst Asim and Munir worked at a number of independent pharmacies across the region. From their university student days, they envisioned owning a pharmacy of their own where they could provide a first-class professional, friendly, prompt and efficient service for all.

"Our aim was always to go into business together once we had gained the right sort of experience in our profession," said Jonathan, who is also the pharmacy manager. "When we heard about the availability of the pharmacy at Stobhill, we decided the time was right to put our business plan into action. We believe that having a local accessible pharmacy is vital in an edge-of-town neighbourhood such as Stobhill, where people can easily park and access the services we provide. The response and feedback from local residents has been fantastic. Many patients have told us how delighted they are that we have taken over the pharmacy and that positive changes have been made. A lot of elderly people live in the neighbourhood and they tell us they were concerned they would have struggled to make it down to a pharmacy in Morpeth town centre. At Stobhill Pharmacy we don't believe in charging our patients for delivery of their prescription medicines, which is why we immediately set up our free daily delivery service to Morpeth and the surrounding areas," said Jonathan.

These days, community pharmacies such as Stobhill Pharmacy are an essential part of the NHS family, but their traditional role of healthcare professionals dispensing prescriptions written by doctors, has changed significantly in recent years. While prescription



Jonathan Pringle and Asim Akhtar - two of the new owners of Stobhill Pharmacy

dispensing is still hugely important, along with the supply of over-the-counter medication. Jonathan and his team of dispensers provide a number of services such as advice on medications and treatments; free minor ailment treatment service; deliver services such as winter flu jabs locally in the pharmacy; and liaise with fellow professionals on behalf of patients as well as signposting other healthcare services.

Stobhill Pharmacy employs an experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic team of dispensers with a passion for delivering the best possible customer service to all patients. "We believe that nobody should settle for second-best when it comes to healthcare. We pride ourselves on the efficiency of our service and our short wait times. Whilst some of our competitors appear to be struggling with the ever-growing workload, we have made a commitment that nobody will wait more than 72 hours from ordering their prescription, to having it dispensed and ready for collection or delivery," said Jonathan.

"This is a challenging time for the provision of healthcare services right across the board, and it is perhaps

more important than ever before that community pharmacies such as ours are there to provide a service that people need on their own doorsteps."

Unlike some pharmacies which may order stock from a single wholesaler, Jonathan and his team have links with at least five wholesalers who all deliver twice a day to Stobhill Pharmacy. "That means if we haven't a certain medication in stock, we can generally get it for a patient the same day," said Jonathan.

"Our message to the people of Stobhill and the surrounding neighbourhoods is that we are here for them, providing them with the best possible healthcare service and advice that we can.

"We are determined to get to know local people and for them to get to know us, so that they can have confidence and trust in the level of service we are providing for them," said Jonathan. "We want to say thank you for welcoming us into the community and for the overwhelming support we have been shown at the beginning of our journey."

Stobhill Pharmacy is open five days a week Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

Morpeth is 'home from home' to Abdul

When he moved to Morpeth almost 40 years ago to open his Indian take-away opposite the ancient Chantry building at the end of Bridge Street, little did Abdul Muhit think that he would come to consider the town as 'home.'

But, that is exactly what has happened. Not only has his Morpeth Tandoori take-away become such a popular eating establishment with a legion of followers, but Abdul himself had made so many friends in the town.

As he says, he has felt very much at home in Morpeth since first moving to the town where he has been made to feel so welcome by customers and friends he has made over so many years.

So much so, that Abdul is always very keen to give something back to Morpeth, by way of raising money for a variety of charities and local organisations such as Barnabas Safe & Sound, Henry Dancer Days which supports families with children diagnosed with a rare cancer, and most recently by buying defibrillators for junior football teams after he himself



Abdul Muhit and his nephew Salam present their charity night cheque to staff at the Thomas Bewick school recovered from a heart attack.

Very recently Abdul has – with his family – opened the DhamaKa restaurant in Cramlington to give local people the chance to enjoy his traditional Indian cuisine in a dining-out setting as well as in their own homes.

The new business venture is the latest in a long line of restaurants and take-away his family has owned and run across the region over nearly 60 years.

"Morpeth has been very good to me and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to give something back to Morpeth" said Abdul, and that is an approach that he and his

family are carrying on at Cramlington.

Already, through his DhamaKa restaurant Abdul and his family are continuing their fund-raising activities. Along with his nephew Salam who is running the DhamaKa so Abdul can continue serving his customers at Morpeth Tandoori, Abdul presented a cheque for £1,000 to the Thomas Bewick school which educates and cares for children with autism.

As this is its first festive season, the DhamaKa will be serving up traditional Indian festive feasts for customers, including on Christmas and New Year's days.

Established 1983

Morpeth Tandoori

Indian Takeaway

Abdul Muhit has been serving his Morpeth customers with the finest choice of authentic and classic Indian cuisine, freshly made to order, for nearly 40 years. In that time he has also become very much part of the Morpeth community and has donated thousands of pounds to support local good causes to give something back to the town he now calls home.

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Mark's top tippie tips for a very merry Christmas

Hello and welcome to the first of what I hope to be many columns for Inside Morpeth. My name is Mark and I'm the owner of Grape and Grain- Morpeth's longest established Wine, Beer, and Spirits Merchant.

It certainly has been very busy recently as we prepare for our first Christmas at our new home of 3 Bridge Street with lots of deliveries of top wines for the festive period. During this time, our thoughts very much go towards what can be enjoyed once we are able to put our feet up on Christmas Day.

For me, Christmas Day is always about pushing the boat out (if I can stay awake) - with a nice glass of fizz to kick off proceedings. Many go for champagne, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that if you can afford it. We have some top choices at G&G including Esprit Nature Organic Champagne (£60.00) - one famous wine critic called it "the best champagne you've never heard of".

However, for me there is a lot more value to be found elsewhere without cutting back in quality. Our Langlois Crémant de Loire (£15.50) is certainly one of those wines. Also, there is much to be said of English Fizz. As a country we are producing some of the best bottles of bubbles around! The Simpsons Estate from Kent forms the main part of our range, and the Chalkland Cuvee NV for £27.00 is excellent. Also, the Simpsons Flint Fields Blanc de Noir (£45.00) recently won Best English Sparkling Wine in the Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships 2022.

As for the main event, it is all about lighter reds, or whites with a bit of body. Pinot Noir is a definite contender (my choice would be Domaine Cordaillat



Reuilly Rouge from the Loire at £17.00), or a Beaujolais. As for the white, an oaked Chardonnay would be an ideal companion for Christmas lunch, with Felino from Argentina (£17.25) is a good alternative to some of the classic French stuff and half the price. If you are an ABC (Anything But Chardonnay), a white Rioja is a good bet, or a Chenin Blanc from South Africa. Options available from G&G ranging from £10.00 upwards.

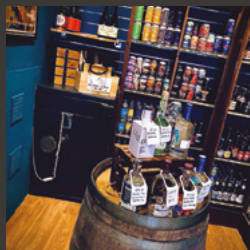
Whatever you tippie is this Christmas, we'd be delighted to help you find the right choice.

Take care and Merry Christmas from all of us all at G&G.

Cheers, Mark Stephenson

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Keeping Morpeth's young people safe and sound

By Inside Morpeth Editor **Ian Leech**

2022 has been a landmark year for a Morpeth-based charity which – in its own words – aims to make ‘a positive difference’ to the lives of local young people by supporting them on their journey to independence, and ultimately to become active and valued members of society.

For a start the year marked the 21st anniversary of the founding of Barnabas Safe & Sound, and as 2022 draws to a close, it has just unveiled another important new facility for the benefit of young people.

The aptly-named ‘Garage’ is doing exactly what it says on the tin by making use of an undeveloped garage at the charity’s Wellwood House base close to the town centre of Morpeth by converting it into a safe space where young people can be themselves, hang out with their friends, enjoy a game of pool, refreshments from its tuck-shop and take the lead on projects which are important to them.

At the moment it is open as a drop-in youth club on Thursday and Friday evenings, but it is hoped to extend the Garage opening hours in the coming months with further funding and community support. As Barnabas knows it offers the only safe space for young people to hang out as opposed to having to roam the streets. Barnabas contributed money from its own free reserves, which along with contributions from the Northumberland County Council Community Investment Hub and Community Chest, together added up to the £48,000 cost of the conversion.

Two decades ago Barnabas realised the dream and vision of a remarkable Morpeth lady called Cecilia Brown, to set up a charity offering young people sound advice and safe accommodation – hence the name Barnabas Safe & Sound.

Her dedication in creating a much-needed project led her and an equally enthusiastic steering group from the New Life Christian Centre, to conduct a number of feasibility studies and consultations with young people one of which showed a significant shortage of



Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness is pictured with Hayley Brown, manager of Barnabas, after opening the new ‘Garage’ space

accommodation for vulnerable youngsters in Morpeth. From there Barnabas was formed and since then has provided supported accommodation to more than 300 local youngsters with nowhere to call home or to live independently on their own. Currently, the charity offers 10 bed spaces for young people, in its shared supported accommodation project.

It may shock Inside Morpeth readers to learn that there are still homeless young people sleeping rough in and around the town, because, for example, of family relationship breakdowns, who are surviving in doorways and park benches!

What Barnabas Safe & Sound Homes aims to do, is to help youngsters aged 16 to 25 years old, facing a housing crisis, with solutions or supported accommodation or by sign-posting them to other agencies which might be able to assist them.

Barnabas also actively engages in other vital projects. For example, Safe & Sound Youth, reaches out to young people aged 11 to 19 years old, through detached youth work, peer mentoring and the chance to join programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

Safe & Sound Advice, also engages with 16 to 25-year-olds who need help in a variety of ways, but do not where to turn or who to ask for help.

The Barnabas team is made up of seven full and part-time staff supported by a dedicated and committed board of trustee volunteers.

As Finance and Communications Officer Gill Monaghan told me: “We like to think

we have the backs of young people in Morpeth. However, no one size fits all and every young person has different needs. We are here to try and help them in whatever way we can.

“We are on the side of the young people of Morpeth and if we can help just one of them to lead a more fulfilled life, then we are making a difference.”

Manager Hayley Brown added that it has always been the Barnabas vision to realise the potential of the building it bought in 2009, by improving the facilities it provides. “The opening of the ‘Garage’ is a big step forward and we are so grateful to all those who have helped us with its launch,” she said.

The ‘Garage’ was officially opened by Northumberland’s Police & Crime Commissioner Kim McGuinness, who told Inside Morpeth: “it is an incredible space that does vital work in creating opportunities for local young people.

“At a time when youth work services are declining, young people have missed their rights of passage, making it harder for them to develop relationships and build communication skills. Being able to come here gives young people the chance to be the best version of themselves and I am sure there will be a succession of them who will be grateful for their time spent with Barnabas.”

To learn more about Barnabas Safe & Sound and the services and amenities it provides, contact www.barnabas-northumberland.org.uk or call 01670 517721.

Challenges of levelling up learning

Educators from a Morpeth-based company specialising in providing out-of-school additional private tuition to pupils and students to help them prepare for examinations and gain academic confidence in the subjects they are studying, are taking on a new challenge to support more vulnerable youngsters within the education system.



Rachel Armitage - Maximize Education's new Education Co-ordinator

Having successfully developed the 'Maximize Education' brand offering support to students from a young age to their late teens either at its offices in Morpeth's Newgate Street or indeed anywhere in the UK via on-line learning, founder Christine Jamieson is now looking to expand the positive impact of individualised tuition to as many students as possible whatever their backgrounds and circumstances.

As she says, supporting a child's academic journey opens ever-broadening life opportunities for them, and offering that support to a wider demographic ensures more children can maximize their talents.

"Knowing that only a small proportion of the population are able to address out-of-school tuition due to socio-economic barriers, has challenged us to address the inequalities being perpetuated and to formulate a meaningful solution," said Christine.

So, one way Christine and her team, plan to do that as part of their own 'levelling up' agenda, is by setting up The Maximize Education Foundation to offer bursaries and scholarships to young people who

would otherwise not be able to take advantage of the level of supported tuition they can offer.

That ambition is being progressed through the establishment of a board governed by a minimum of three trustees supported by additional board members with levels of expertise equating to the Foundation's key aims and objectives.

At the same time the Maximize team has also begun to work with partners such as the County Council Social Services as well as some local schools, to provide individualised supportive tuition to what are described as 'looked after' children who, for one reason or another, need to move out of mainstream school and to learn through the sort of teaching they can offer.

The youngsters they will be able to support in this way, may be having some problems or issues in their lives, perhaps at home or in foster care, and are taught core subjects such as English, Maths and Science on a one-to-one basis.

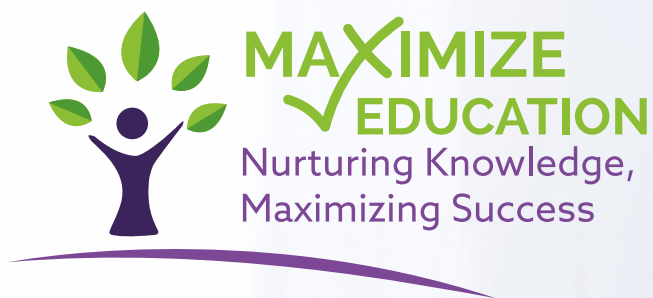
Running that aspect of Maximize Education is Rachel Armitage, who has

been recently recruited as Education Co-ordinator and Safeguarding Lead. Rachel has joined Maximize Education from Blyth Academy where she worked as the Education Welfare Officer, and before that she was teaching English at an international school in Switzerland.

Currently, seven youngsters are being taught this way either during the day at the Maximize Education centre, or online.

As Rachel said: "Our aim is to support these young people so that they can get the best education they can." All have their own individualised learning plan and as Rachel added: "It can be challenging, but also rewarding to see them progress and respond to what is a new way of learning for them."

As a footnote, Christine confirmed that a Governance Consultant has been contacted by Maximize Education to undertake the next development phase of the Foundation, who will shortly be working with her and a specialist accountant with a view to announcing the Board members in the New Year with an official launch event.



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The spirit of Christmas at Wallington

Christmas time at Wallington has always been special, from the Trevelyan family celebrating with Christmas stockings, carols and charades, to welcoming wartime refugees who tobogganed on the Barn Flatt and coasted down the path in the Courtyard.

The natural surrounds of the wider Wallington estate lent themselves to festive fun and Robin Dower, grandson of Sir Charles Philips Trevelyan and Mary, Lady Trevelyan, fondly remembers time spent with family and friends in the great outdoors:

“Successive cold winters in the late 40s and 50s allowed us regular access onto the natural ice of the woodland ponds and many of my generation became competent skaters, skilled enough at ice-hockey if not graceful at figure skating.

“One year we discovered stored in a cupboard in Scarlet Nook a set of ten or twelve large Chinese paper lanterns and suddenly had the bright idea of hanging them on the low branches of the trees round the Boathouse Pond as illumination



Trevelyan Family Archives, Newcastle University Special Collections.

for a late-night Christmas skating party... and a magical atmosphere created by the globes of light round the pond with the dark sky filled with stars overhead.”

This custom of making memories and spending time with loved ones continues today as visitors make Wallington a part of their family traditions.

On a visit this festive season, visitors can take a trip through Christmases past in the house or wrap up warm and take a stroll in the grounds, keeping an eye out for Father Christmas's reindeer who are resting in the north woods ahead of the big day.

Outside the house, you can't miss the

giant reindeer 'Magnificence', all lit up and pulling a sleigh you can sit in for a festive family selfie.

Inside the house, each room is dressed for Christmas across the eras, including the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, right up to the nostalgia of the more modern decades of the 20th century.

On weekends in December, live music will greet you in the Central Hall and Mrs Christmas is back with her sparkly shoes and piles of story books, while Father Christmas will be popping in too, so catch him for a hello and a family photo when you spot him.

This year, you can savour the sights and smells of the season in the Yuletide Yard. Festooned with lights and offering festive drinks and snacks, the small courtyard at the back of the house is the perfect spot to take a break, enjoy table games and a cosy atmosphere before heading off for more Christmas fun.

If there was ever a time of year to make lasting memories with your nearest and dearest it must be now. Let's keep the traditions of a warm, welcoming Wallington Christmas alive.



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Rutherford's of Morpeth is bursting with ways to help you capture the magic of Christmas.

Step through our doors into our Christmas wonderland and you'll find inspiration on how to deck the halls for the festive season, along with the perfect gifts to make it the most special occasion.

Christmas isn't Christmas without a trip to see our spectacular window, which brings festive cheer to the whole town.

Whether you're looking for special gifts for loved ones, secret Santa presents or stocking fillers, there is something for everyone in Rutherford's this Christmas.

Stylish handbags by Radley make the perfect gift and you'll also find some gorgeous gifts in our beauty department, including Estee Lauder, Clarins, Clinique, Benefit, Molton Brown and L'Occitane.

The party season is nearly upon us - a great excuse to dress up and look your glamorous best.

With labels like Soyaconcept, Fransa, Part Two, Masai and Sahara, we'll help you to find the perfect outfit for the office party, drinks with friends or Christmas Day itself.

We'll also help you make the season both merry and bright with beautiful decorating ideas for your tree and table.

We've beautiful baubles and unique, one-off toys that will make you want to give your tree pride of place in your home. You'll find home furnishings and interiors ideas to create a cosy home to be enjoyed, not only over Christmas, but throughout the whole winter.

From twinkling candles that create a cosy atmosphere to sumptuous throws and cushions that make any room warm and cosy even on the coldest nights of the year.

If you're inviting guests to stay this Christmas, we can help to make entertaining less stressful. Prepare your home for the festive season by giving your guest room a luxurious makeover, with crisp, white sheets, pillowcases and duvet, along with cushions and throws that add a finishing touch.

To many, Christmas dinner is the most important meal of the year, so creating the perfect table is essential. Our cookshop is full of ideas on how you can create a sophisticated, luxurious table setting on the big day. From pots, pans, serving dishes and utensils to serve up a festive treat to silver cutlery, napkins and eye-catching centre-pieces, it will be a meal to remember.



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Eating well on a budget

Carole Kirk of Home Instead, South East Northumberland

In my lifetime, we have incorporated an increasingly wide range of food and our tastes have been enriched by different cooking styles and cultures. For those who lived through the war “waste not want not” was a way of life. Out of necessity, people became used to cheaper cuts of meat and stretched their meagre food rations by using offal (liver, kidney, heart, tongue, ox tail and tripe). Vegetarians also became more creative with additional portions of eggs, cheese and nuts.

With inflation rising as well as fuel costs, many of us are looking at ways of reducing costs. At Home Instead we are fortunate to meet people of all ages and with this comes a great opportunity to learn from the knowledge and experience of those who have lived through different times. Good cooks usually enjoy passing on their top tips, so take time to chat, ask questions and learn from others.

Here are a few of the ideas which we have learned over the years – sorry no tripe!

- Planning your meals in advance will help you to be organised and also to avoid buying items you don't need.
- Keep a stock of basics, ensuring you always have things which you can cook easily or turn in to a meal – pasta, rice, flour, tomato puree, baked beans, tinned tomatoes and beans such as butter beans or cannelloni. Chickpeas are another good staple.
- If you are making one meal, consider making enough for two, or a batch of meals. You can store them easily for use the next day or in the freezer.
- Experiment with ingredients which

help to bulk out your meals. Red, green or puy lentils require little preparation beyond rinsing (follow the instructions on the packet) and can be added to many recipes (not just soup). Lentils are a great source of dietary fibre and protein, you will get more portions from your basic recipe and they are tasty.

- Porridge is a great healthy breakfast, use porridge oats which you can cook easily and cheaply in the microwave. There are also lots of recipes for “overnight oats” porridge oats left to absorb yogurt. You can use different types of yogurt -or make with natural or Greek yogurt and add a little honey. Really nice with fruit on top.
- Adding vegetables such as carrot, courgette, celery to basic recipes such as mince, lasagne, bolognese – again this makes more portions and gives added nutritional benefit. Lentils and grated carrot can be used to completely replace meat, whilst still making a tasty meal.
- Spinach is high in antioxidants, so can be eaten raw or added to food at the end of cooking - doing this provides



more nutrients. You can buy it frozen and add it to a range of dishes.

- Rice is a food which can be cooked in many ways – risotto, jambalaya, puddings. It can even be eaten cold as a salad. However on a cautionary note, rice also contains bacteria which can survive cooking and multiply if left out at room temperature for too long. Ideally rice should be eaten immediately after cooking. Great care must be taken if cooling rice or reheating it - rice should be cooled quickly, within one hour, then stored in the fridge and not be kept for longer than one day. If you do reheat rice, it should only ever be reheated once and it must be steaming hot when served.
- Slow cookers can be used to good effect, cooking cheaper cuts of meat for longer and giving tender results.
- Be aware that ovens and grills can use a lot of energy- if you are using the oven, try to cook extra portions or several things at once to get more for your energy usage. Microwave ovens use significantly less energy than a conventional oven.





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Robson & Cowan Scots' Gap Christmas winter wonderland

If you don't fancy the hurly-burly of a Christmas shopping trip to frenetically busy malls or over-crowded out-of-town retail parks, there is an alternative and that is to head the other way into the peace and quiet of the beautiful Northumberland country where you'll find the Robson & Cowan country store at Scots' Gap just a few miles west of Morpeth, might just have what you are looking for by way of presents for the big day!

It's no exaggeration to say that as panto-time approaches, the store is something of an Aladdin's Cave stocked with so many great buys right across the board.

Take its country clothing department, for example. There you'll find a wonderful array of jackets, gilets, jumpers, hats, scarves, gloves, hats, boots and wellingtons that will make fantastic



Christmas presents especially with signs that winter is fast approaching, from leading brands such as Barbour, Ariat, Hoggs of Fife, Le Chameau and more.

There are gifts and cards from Alex Clark and the store staff will even neatly wrap a present for you which means one less job to do in the final few days before Christmas!

More practically, the store has a wonderful electrical department stocked

with leading brand televisions and home appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers, cookers, fridges and freezers, all delivered and installed in homes across the region.

There are also plenty of smaller appliances such as microwaves, toasters, kettles, food processors, heaters, irons, hoovers, hairdryers, shavers and Roberts Radios, which again can make ideal and practical presents.

For the outdoor man – and woman – Robson & Cowan stock the finest Husqvarna, Honda and Stihl machinery and chainsaws, which again would make much-appreciated gifts for when it is time to get back into the garden as the finer weather arrives.

Don't forget, if you have a dog, a Christmas shopping trip to Scots' Gaps can also double-up as an invigorating walk far from the madding crowds, around nearby beauty spots such as Wallington and Bolam Lake - before the bad weather sets in!



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TOWN CRYER!

The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

Town remembers its war 'heroes - and the proud Ukrainian people



Our Remembrance Day commemorations had an extra poignancy this year, as we thought of the terrible loss of life and privation in Ukraine. We even have our own community of Ukrainian guests in Morpeth now, who meet at St George's Church with their kind host families every Friday morning.

This year our honoured guests on Remembrance Day were Lord Ridley, representing his Majesty the King as Deputy Lord Lieutenant and Colonel James Royds, High Sheriff of Northumberland.

They commented, as so many visitors do, on how good it is to see Morpeth Remembrance Day so well attended and so many young people present.

Our Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Cadets were out in force and proudly parading behind the magnificent Morpeth Pipe Band, with our veterans and other town organisations.

In the afternoon, together with Councillor colleagues and Castle Morpeth Explorer Scouts, I attended the Polish Community's commemoration at their war graves in St Mary's Cemetery. Acting Leader Edward Syndercombe told us about their lovely poppy display and flags in front of the war memorial, incorporating the names of all those war dead from or buried in Morpeth, of all nationalities. The commemoration ended with candles, flags and crosses being laid at the graves by the Scouts and children from three Polish schools.

I would also like to give special thanks to the members of Morpeth Women's

Institute, and the many other groups and individuals who assisted in decorating the Buttermarket in the Town Hall so beautifully with their poppy cascade which was enjoyed by so many in the weeks preceding Remembrance Day, both in person and through social media.

Turning to my fundraising as Mayor, having raised over £1000 for Ellington Colliery Band and over £3000 for Wansbeck Valley Foodbank, both based in Morpeth, I am now turning my attention to fundraising for the 4th Morpeth Scouts who are fundraising for the extension of their Scout Hut in Staithes Lane. This is much needed to accommodate ever increasing numbers of Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and new Squirrel troop.

I held a curry night at the Tandoor Mahal restaurant on 22nd November, and collected with the Scouts during the Christmas events and entertainment on Bridge Street over the weekend of the 19th & 20th November. There was also a Festive Makers' Market on Saturday, 26th November and Christmas Markets to come on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th December.

I am sure we are all looking forward to some festive sparkle and seeing our town illuminated by our beautiful Christmas tree and lights.

Don't forget to visit the Rotarians' Tree of Light in the Arcade, supporting local charities including Calmer Therapy in Stobhill Community Centre and Stobhill Link. Also, not to be missed is our Community Carol Service, incorporating the Clock Tower carillon in the Marketplace on Saturday, 17th December at 4.30pm.

I would like to conclude by wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Councillor Alison Byard
Mayor of Morpeth

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COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE

SEE NOTICEBOARDS AND WEBSITE

Meeting Timetable for January and February 2023. All meetings will be held in the Corn Exchange of the Town Hall, unless otherwise stated on the agenda. All Committee meetings commence at 6:30 pm, unless otherwise stated on the posters or website.

Full Council

18th January 2023

Planning and Transport Committee

25th January and 8th February 2023

Finance and General Purposes Committee

11th January and 1st February 2023

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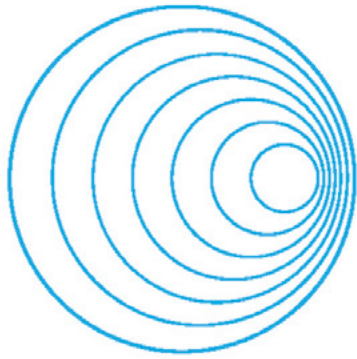
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Celebrating again 50 years on!

Former members of a King Edward VI Grammar School cricket team who earned a remarkable victory 50 years ago at one of the 'homes' of English cricket, will meet for the first time in half a century to recall the day they became national Under 15 champions.

In becoming the first national champions in their age group in 1972, they were also the inaugural winners of the Esso Colts cricket trophy sponsored by the petroleum company and The Cricketer Magazine.

The team reached the final at The Oval, with victories over Richmond School Cumbria, and Blackpool Collegiate Grammar School, before quarter and semi-final wins over Altringham Grammar School and Warwick School respectively.

The final was a two-day affair with a visit to Lords to not only tour the famous Long Room but watch Middlesex play the Australians, before taking on Brighton Hove and Sussex Grammar School in the



The victorious team (pictured back row left to right), Maurice Graham, Dave Griffiths, Peter Rowley, Ray Dunn, Paul Thornton and coach Alan Best. (Front row left to right) Trevor Logan, Colin Green, Peter Rutherford, Paul Whitfield, Brian Penfold, Keith Harrison and Peter Herbert.

final match where they ran out winners by just eight runs.

"It was both a marvellous and memorable occasion for us all, supported by bus loads of vociferous Morpeth supporters," Colin Green who batted at Number Three, told Inside Morpeth.

Joyous celebrations saw the lads presented with medals and cricket bats

by England Test legend Jim Laker. As Colin recalls, the cup run and final victory attracted both national and local publicity followed by a Town Hall civic reception hosted by the then Morpeth Mayor Geoff Brown.

"For the first time in 50 years we will meet again at Morpeth Rugby Club, to reminisce over an event never to be forgotten," added Colin.



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Inspiring the next generation...

As we are based in Morpeth, in the beautiful listed building by the side of the Waterford Arms, we are always keen to support the local community and were delighted to play a part in the KEVI Inspires event at The King Edward VI School.

The event was designed to inspire students and further fuel their ambition as the school works across the North East to shape, support and develop excellence in Careers Education. Hundreds of students and parents gathered to explore the opportunities that could lie ahead.

They were joined by TMP Wealth Management Operations Director Tony Hopper. "It was fantastic to see so many youngsters keen to get a solid grasp on a career they want to pursue and pleasing to chat to dozens of children and parents who showed a real interest in financial services," he said.

Organisers are keen to support young people to make decisions about the next stage of their education or training and their future career and brought together

representatives from a varied range of businesses, institutions and organisations across a wide range of sectors to provide parents, carers and young people with the best and most up to date information, advice and guidance.

"It follows the mantra of 'if you can see it, you can be it.' The event aims to inspire students with the possibilities of the future beyond our school, whether that be at 16 or 18," commented Leanne Johnston.

The Assistant Head helped organise the event and was thrilled with the response. "For students, they got real-time, real information about the realities of working or studying in a particular setting or context. They got ideas and encouragement. For some it opened them up to new possibilities and exposed them to things they had never thought possible; that is the power of the event. Some students will have made contacts for work experience too, this has happened at past events and has been hugely beneficial," she said.

"We have provided insight and opportunities for our students, enhancing their knowledge and understanding of opportunities beyond school. This is so

important in a world that is constantly evolving with new Post 16 qualifications like T Levels, reforms to Higher Education applications and the dynamic nature of 21st Century employment. The event strengthens our partnership network that can support work in other areas of the school, careers programme and the curriculum.

"The best people to tell students about the opportunities in our local area are the people who provide them and work in those sectors and it can make such a difference to a young person's life. Schools can be challenging to work with, we are restricted by our timetable at times, but with creative thinking we can ensure businesses can create a sustainable talent pipeline and students at King Edward's have access to a wide range of opportunities."

TMP Operations Director Tony Hopper was delighted with the outcome and is keen to continue the support. "Inspiring young people to push themselves and explore career opportunities is incredibly humbling and rewarding and we look forward to being part of the 9th event planned next year," he said.

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WITH INFLATION AND RISING INTEREST RATES – IS NOW A GOOD TIME TO INVEST?

Sometimes it may feel counter intuitive to invest in the stock market when shares are volatile, and the economic situation is uncertain. It is important to reflect on why we invest in the first place. For most, this is for longer-term financial outcomes, such as retirement or providing for children. It is likely that despite the current turbulence in the economy or the stock market that these long-term plans remain the same. Understandably for many the focus is on the shorter-term impacts of high inflation and increasing interest rates and looking to fully understand the impacts of this on their finances.

You might consider taking out some of your investment to pay for other things, or reduce the amount you pay into your pension, but it is important to understand the impact that these shorter-term decisions could have on your long-term financial plans. This could mean that you may have less in your pension fund when you reach retirement age, either impacting your quality of life in retirement or meaning you must work for longer, or that you are unable to help children with their financial situation. It is important where possible to keep these longer-term financial goals in mind when making decisions and look through market volatility.

We understand that it can be unnerving to see the impact that volatility can have on the value of your investments, you may be wondering what to do next.

Market shocks are often triggered by specific events and the uncertainty they create. Once the situation becomes more certain, confidence often returns, and markets may recover.

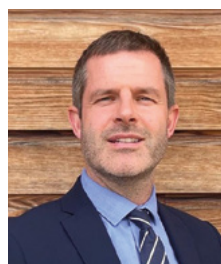
There are ways that investors can look to lessen the impact of market volatility and help keep their long-term financial plans on track. If you want to find out more you can speak with Mark Grainger, our NFU Mutual Financial Adviser.

It's important to remember, the value of investments can fall and you may get back less than invested

Mark operates out of Morpeth agency and is available to meet customers on a face to face basis in order to give advice in this area of financial planning. Alternatively, for those customers who prefer to have an initial chat over the phone, please contact the Morpeth agency on 01670 511 252.

Mark is also able to give advice on many other areas of financial planning, whether it be simple pension and ISA planning, or more complex areas such as pension transfers.

NFU Mutual Financial Advisers advise on NFU Mutual products and selected products from specialist providers. Mark will explain the advice services we offer and the charges. Financial advice is provided by NFU Mutual Select Investments Ltd.



Mark Grainger,
Financial Adviser

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Models Shown: Honda CR-V 2.0 i-MMD Hybrid EX in Modern Steel Metallic at £41,560 On The Road (OTR). OTR may be subject to change due to actual or unexpected changes in tariffs, duties taxes or other costs which may affect importation or other costs of supply. Terms and Conditions: New retail CR-V Hybrid AWD ordered with Honda and finance approved by Honda Finance Europe from 01 October 2022 to 30 November 2022 and registered by 31 March 2023. Subject to model and colour availability. Offers applicable at participating dealers (excluding Channel Islands) and are at the promoter's absolute discretion. Not to be used along with any other offers currently available. *Honda deposit contribution: £1,500 Honda deposit contribution on all new retail CR-V Hybrid AWD models purchased through Honda Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) or Honda Hire Purchase (HP). **5 years service package: It is only included when your vehicle is financed through a Honda Personal Contract Purchase (PCP) or Honda Hire Purchase (HP) agreement with Honda Finance Europe with a minimum balance to finance of £5,000. You can settle your finance agreement at any time, however you will need to make at least six regular monthly payments to ensure qualification for the 5 years service package. If you do not make six regular monthly payments, the 5 years service package will be cancelled. Visit [Honda.co.uk/cars/campaigns/five-servicing](https://www.honda.co.uk/cars/campaigns/five-servicing) for more information about the 5 years service package. 6.9% APR representative Honda Personal Contract Purchase (PCP): Maximum customer deposit 30%. At the end of the agreement, there are three options: i) Retain: Pay the optional final payment to own the vehicle, ii) Return: Return the vehicle, or iii) Renew: Part exchange your Honda for a new one. You do not have to pay the Final Payment if you return the car at the end of the agreement and you have paid all other amounts due, the vehicle is in good condition and has been serviced in accordance with the Honda service book and the maximum annual mileage has not been exceeded. Excess mileage charge includes VAT at current rate. 6.9% APR representative Honda Hire Purchase (HP): At the end of the agreement, once the option to purchase fee [if applicable] has been paid you will own the vehicle outright, you could then choose to part exchange your Honda for a new one. Indemnities may be required in certain circumstances. Finance is only available to persons aged 18 or over, subject to status. All figures are correct at time of publication but may be varied or withdrawn at any time. **Honda Franchise Dealers are credit brokers, not lenders. As the dealer offers products from a limited number of carefully selected finance providers, they are not independent financial advisors. We may or may not make a payment and / or reward to the dealer if you enter into an agreement with us.** Credit provided by Honda Finance Europe Plc. Honda Financial Services is a trading name of Honda Finance Europe Plc. Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HL a company registered at Companies House No 03289418. Honda Finance Europe plc is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, Financial Services Register number 312541.



Customer Paul Bassett with Vertu Honda Morpeth Sales Manager Mark Spring and Sales Executive Andy Davis

Paul's happy to go that extra mile!

When it comes to buying a car Paul Bassett should know a thing or two about what are the best ones to choose after driving some of the smartest new models around the region.

Before he retired Paul drove car transporters delivering new vehicles from all the top manufacturers, to leading dealerships across the North East for many years and out of all those models he delivered, he chose a Honda as his own personal transport.

Over the past ten years Paul has had two Honda Civics and two Jazz models, all bought from Vertu Honda.

At first, he bought his cars from the company's Newcastle dealership in Scotswood Road from Sales Executive Andy Davis.

But, when the company decided to open a new dealership on Coopies Lane Industrial Estate in Morpeth, just over five years ago, Paul chose to follow Andy who had been transferred to his new place of work in the town, even though he lives in South Shields.

"Andy has always looked after me so well that I decided to come to Morpeth with him," said Paul, who has no regrets about going that extra mile or two to the town. "I simply pop through the Tyne Tunnel and it's a straight run into Morpeth where everyone is fantastic, taking care of whatever I need done to my cars by way of service or maintenance."

So much so, Paul is waiting to take delivery of his next Honda early in the New Year – the all-new Civic – again from Vertu Honda Morpeth.

"I wouldn't go past a Honda now," he said "and I can't wait to take delivery of my new Civic after test-driving the car at Morpeth."

Paul clearly loves his cars, although he is equally passionate about his motor bikes – but this time his favourite two-wheel machine is a BMW. "I love getting out on my bike, especially having a run up the Northumberland coast on a nice sunny day, to Bamburgh or Seahouses," he said.

It may be an old cliché, but Paul says he loves the feeling of the freedom of the road that riding his bike gives him. But, when he needs that little bit extra comfort, then it's back to his latest Honda motor car!

Why not follow in Paul's wheel tracks, and call into Vertu Honda Morpeth to find out more about all the latest Honda models.

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Bristol Street Motors Hyundai Morpeth is a trading name of Grantham Motor Company Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (Company registration number 04722957). VAT Registration number 902737238. Registered office: Vertu House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley, Gateshead, NE11 0XA.



Tuscon is top of its class - again!

Having one of their models nominated for an award by the motoring press in their annual choices of best cars on the market in their different categories, is something that most motor manufacturers recognise as a true, independent evaluation of the vehicle.

Because – like restaurant critics – the press pundits can often be hard to please, going over the cars they test with the proverbial fine-tooth comb as they do, often in the sort of extreme conditions the cars will never encounter in their day-to-day journeys in the hands of their owners.

So, when cars win awards from the motoring press, they really do have something to shout about!

Take the Hyundai Tuscon, for example. It has a clutch of awards to its name including a ‘Car of the Year’, best family and best hybrid. It’s latest in the What Car 2022 awards, saw the Tuscon chosen as the best family SUV (Sports Utility Vehicle) for practicality and it is easy to see why.

The latest Tuscon is the fourth generation of the car, which has firmly established its itself as Hyundai’s best-selling SUV with more than seven millions cars sold around the world since its launch.

The new Tuscon is not-so-much an evolution of a predecessor, but a full-blown redesign. As one press pundit put it: “The bigger and better Tuscon is absolutely fantastic” while a fellow tester wrote that the car is ‘lovely to drive, practical and easy to live with and economical to run,’ ending the report with the conclusion that the Tuscon was

the best car he had driven all year!

The car itself has plenty of space inside for passengers and in the boot for luggage or shopping with no lip to lift heavier objects over. The stylish Tuscon is available with a choice of hybrid engines and comes with generous specifications and high-tech interior.

Tuscons have always scored heavily on dependability and the latest model has plenty of safety features on board to keep drivers and their passengers out of trouble.

What’s even better news right now, is that Hyundai is offering buyers up to £1,750 towards their deposit on the car and 6.9 per cent APR. With that in mind Hyundai is inviting potential owners to check out the Tuscon at the Bristol Street Motors dealership on Coopies Lane, Morpeth - before there’s a queue!



Committed to finding you the car of your dreams!

The cost of living crisis is unquestionably forcing many people to face up to some very tough decisions in regard to their day-to-day lives.

But, when it comes to making one of the biggest decisions in life such as deciding to buy a car, Bristol Street Motors dealerships across the country are best placed to do all they can to make it as easy as possible to get on the road with a new vehicle.

For after all that is what the company has been doing so well for the past 100 years!

Take the Bristol Street Motors Ford dealership at Morpeth, for instance. From the ever-popular Fiesta at one of the scale

to the exotic Mustang at the other, with the Focus, Puma, Ecosport, and Kuga in between, the dealership on Coopies Lane, can offer the full choice of Fords in a variety of unbeatable offers, all with a complete range of affordable, flexible finance packages.

Right now, the dealership can offer, for instance, 0% APR on two year Ford Options, along with a £500 upgrade saving.

The company has decades of experience of helping millions of people to buy a new or pre-owned car, and right now it is also leading the way in keeping pace with the technological, innovation changes that are heralding the switch from petrol and diesel motors, to electric vehicles.

Ford, itself, is committed to ensuring that all the vehicles rolling off its production lines, will be fully electric in the next decade. In the build up to that date, hybrid model are introducing motorists to the idea of electrification and the sales team at Coopies Lane is fully up to speed on the rapid advances being made particularly in regard to the development of battery technologies which are meaning that charging is now much faster and lasts longer between charges.

Everyone at Coopies Lane, is committed to ensuring customers are very welcome to discuss a new car deal in the dealership's relaxed and friendly atmosphere so they can make the right decision to drive out with the car of their dreams and one that is perfectly suited to their motoring needs.



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WHAT'S ON?

OH YES IT IS - THE PANTO SEASON IS NEARLY HERE...

....and the Morpeth Pantomime Society has what it believes is a blockbuster production up its sleeve that will have the audiences at its forthcoming shows, rocking in the aisles!

The cast and crew of 'Snow White' – written for the society, choreographed, produced and directed by the North East's 'Mr Panto himself Lee Brannigan – say the show will be a throw-back to the good old pantomime traditions of a simple story well told; plenty of slapstick and knock-about fun; good tunes to sing-along to; and lots of audience participation.

When the cast take to the stage 'Snow White' will be the Society's 43 production, but it will be the first Lee has been involved in, and he is bringing all the stagecraft he has learned as a professional entertainer on cruise ships as well as appearing in West End shows such as 42nd Street, to the panto.

Also making her debut as a panto lead will be 15-year-old Eva Dumphey playing the title role of Snow White. Alongside her as her little companions will be seven of the youngest members of the cast, while playing Prince Charming will be Jane Pedersen.

"We are confident that our performances of Snow White are going to be the nearest thing to a professional panto that an amateur company can produce," said the Society's Lucy Gammer. "Everything from the costumes, to the acting and the sets, will have a professional feel to it.

"Everyone is working so hard in stage rehearsals and behind



Some of the cast of the panto Snow White

the scenes, under the brilliant direction of Lee, to make this a panto not to be missed!"

Four shows have already been confirmed on Thursday and Friday January 26th and 27 both starting in the main hall at KEVI at 7pm, with a Saturday matinee at 1pm followed by an evening performance at 6pm. A possible additional performance on Friday January 25th, has yet to be confirmed.

Tickets costing £6 each, can be purchased via the Box Office 0333 666 3366 or through the website www.morpethpantomimesociety.com.

Any proceeds from the production will be donated to the Sandcastle Trust which supports families with children living with a rare genetic condition, in memory of young Felix Davison from Morpeth.

CHILDREN'S CLASSIC COMES TO MORPETH

A much-loved tale which has held children spellbound for more than 100 years, will be brought to life in Morpeth when the wonderful Northumberland Theatre Company presents its adaption of Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows on Thursday December 8th at the New Life Christian Centre in Dacre Street.

First published in 1908 the story tells of the friendship between Mole, Ratty, Badger and Mr Toad and the adventures they have together in the Wild Wood.

Adapted for NTC by Louis Roberts with music by Matt Besford and Lucy Desbrow, the production will introduce its young audience to the four main characters whose heartwarming friendships blossom as they embark on their adventures together.

The production presented by Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT), is said to be suitable for children of all ages with plenty of music, songs, laughs and joyous moments. The show which begins at 7pm runs over two 35-minute halves with a 15 minute interval in between.

Tickets are £5 each and are available from GMDT (01670 503866); www.ticketsource.co.uk; or The Chantry TIC, Morpeth.

NEXT SPRING'S MORPETH BOOK FESTIVAL WILL BE EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER!

Planning is well underway for the second Morpeth Book Festival next Spring which the organisers are promising will be even bigger and better than the inaugural event held earlier this year.

Greater Morpeth Development Trust (GMDT) and Northumberland County Library Service, combined forces to stage the town's first book festival last April which was hailed as an outstanding success.

So much so, it was decided almost immediately to stage a 2023 festival and already a host of national, regional and local authors have been signed up to take part in the three-day event starting on Friday March 31st.

The festival organisers were delighted to welcome to the first festival, two of the Northern and national 'queens of crime writing' Ann Cleeves (Vera) and

Maria Hannah (DCI Kate Daniels, Ryan & O'Neil and Stone & Oliver) and they are thrilled to say that Mari will return for another Morpeth appearance next Spring where she will be able to update her audience with news about the Kate Daniel series now in development for television by a production company involving Stephen Fry.

Also appearing at next year's Festival will be the third best-selling Northern crime writer L J Ross whose books which are set in the region from the Borders and Holy Island down into County Durham, have sold more than seven million copies worldwide.

Other 'big names' already signed up for the Morpeth festival, are author, poet, broadcaster, educational-guru, after-dinner speaker and raconteur Gervase Phinn; writer, historian and diarist David Willem; and Dan Jackson whose book 'The Northumbrians' is fast becoming the definitive story of the people and places that form the

region's history from the Venerable Bede, to the Prince-Bishops of Durham, the Viz comic and the television programme Geordie Shore!

They will all be supported by a host of local writers for a weekend of literary excellence.

As GMDT's Director of Culture & Art, Frank Rescigno commented: "We hope this teaser will whet the appetite for what promises to be another amazing weekend of words. Our aim is to build on the festival foundations we laid down earlier this year at our inaugural event by bringing more best-selling authors to talk to Morpeth audiences alongside some of the very best local and regional writers, so we can firmly put the town on the North East book festival map!"

Full details of who to see, where and when at the 2023 Morpeth Book Festival will be published in the next February edition of Inside Morpeth.

ST GEORGE'S CHURCH, MORPETH EVENTS

Some events at St George's United Reformed Church, Morpeth, over the coming days.

Advent series of meetings sharing the Christmas Story. All welcome. Thursdays December 8th, 15th and 22nd starting at 2pm in St George's Drysdale Room.

Coffee Morning with sale of Christmas floral decorations plus other stalls. Saturday December 10th from 10am until Noon.

Annual Community Carol Service attended by the Mayor Councillor Alison Byard. Everyone welcome to join in singing some favourite carols.

'Night of Miracles.' A Christmas Concert with the Mid Northumberland Chorus. Saturday December 17th at 7pm. Tickets costing £7 from Choir Members or by contacting 01670 515870.

Joint Services with Morpeth Methodist Church. Sunday December 18th. 10am a joint nativity service at Morpeth Methodist



Church. 6pm a joint carol service at St George's United Reformed Church.

Waterstones Morpeth

Celebrated local author historian and broadcaster John Grundy will be at the Morpeth store, signing copies of his recently published History of Northumberland book from 5pm to 7pm on December 8th. Mince pies and a glass of wine.

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Plenty of work in the garden during cold winter months

By Inside Morpeth gardening columnist **Ross Pearson**

Winter creeps into the garden in various guises. The quintessential chocolate box scene of deeply piled fluffy white snow, children wrapping a snowman in a scarf to stave off the biting cold while the fire is stoked in a cosy log cabin, is almost certainly a memory consigned to the annals of history rather than a hopeful glimpse of things to come.

The perils of climate change have brought with it long winters of mixed and changeable weather; cold, windy and almost certainly wet. Still, there is always the hope that a freak Arctic blast could paint our landscape in the style of the chocolate box of old. But only for a few weeks, please - there is, after all, much to prepare in our gardens in readiness of spring!

Preparation - the best form of defence

Sub-zero temperatures at night can wreak havoc on a garden if precautions aren't taken early. Wrap outdoor taps and exposed pipes in bubblewrap to stop the frozen water expanding. Greenhouses may not be the first priority to spend your money heating over winter but covering the inside of the glass with bubblewrap will give your frost-tender plants a fighting chance. Be sure to float a ball on the surface of ponds to leave an air hole for any creatures lurking in the deep.

Secateurs' time to shine

Now is the time to prune a plethora of flora in a bid to concentrate spring growth in the right buds. When pruning apple and pear trees, think about 'the three d's' - dead, dying and diseased, and thin out growth to form a goblet shape and allow in light to the ripening fruits. Winter wisteria pruning involves cutting back last year's new growth to two or three buds. Any gaps in the growth can be filled by training unpruned stems into its place. Prune grape vines no later than December to stop the plant bleeding sap.

Rejuvenate rhubarb

Rhubarb really benefits from dividing every five years or so to stop the crowns from overcrowding and to encourage vigorous new growth. Lift in early December and split into clumps with good rhizomes and buds attached. Stay clear of the centre of the plant as the growth will be weaker. Rhubarb doesn't like to be wet so plant in drier areas whilst digging in good amounts of organic matter to the hole.

The garden indoors

Plant up amaryllis bulbs for spectacular indoor displays and force hyacinth bulbs in the dark. Once the shoots are an inch tall, place them in the light but most crucially somewhere cool to promote straight and healthy flowers. Cut branches and sprigs of evergreens for sumptuous winter displays. Eucalyptus, viburnum, winter jasmine, holly, ivy, pine and yew all stand well and add cheer to the home.



Keeping gardening tools shipshape

Cherish your tools

A gardener is only as good as his or her tools and nothing causes more frustration or damage in a garden than a blunt tool! Sharpen secateurs, spades, hoes and trowels and liberally apply oil to all metal tools to avoid rust. Boiled linseed oil on tool handles not only nourishes the wood but makes them so much nicer to use in the hands. Let's face it, there is no better winter task than popping to the shed with a cuppa to care for your beloved garden tools - or is that just me?

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