

Your FREE independent community magazine for Morpeth

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DEC/JAN 24

# inside MORPETH



## Spotlight on Oldgate 'village'

GOLF CHAMPION  
IS AGED JUST 11

KIAN'S BID FOR  
TOP CHEF TITLE

STORE'S MAGIC  
OF CHRISTMAS

'SECRET' IN  
LOU'S BOOK





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**As a shopping destination Morpeth can pride itself on offering the rarest mix in these parts, of independent businesses trading alongside some of the biggest high street brands in the retail world. From small, often family-run business at one end of the scale to the flagship Rutherfords store in the other, Morpeth has that X-Factor when it comes to drawing people into the town centre to shop, do business or socialise.**

As an aside, hasn't Rutherfords once again excelled itself with another marvellous festive window display. As one couple told me as we wondered at the windows: "Christmas wouldn't be the same without Rutherfords' windows," adding "and who needs Fenwicks when we have Rutherfords in Morpeth." Who indeed!

But, it is those niche independents that really make the difference in Morpeth and add to the stand-out diversity and uniqueness of its shopping experience. To mark that fact, in this edition - with the help of local businessman Les Sage - we turn the spotlight on Oldgate, which is almost a self-contained 'village' as the businesses have chosen to brand it, within the town centre.

It has its own special characteristics almost hiding away behind the Clock Tower which has stood at its entrance for more than 400 years, yet these days it is 'home' to diverse range of shops and businesses, some long-standing, others recently arrived.

So, this Christmas, take a stroll past the Clock Tower to explore Oldgate - its history plus its modern offering adding so much to the Morpeth shopping experience. We guarantee you will be welcomed with open arms. From all of us at Inside Morpeth, have a very Merry Christmas, a happy, healthy and safe New Year.

*Ian Leech*

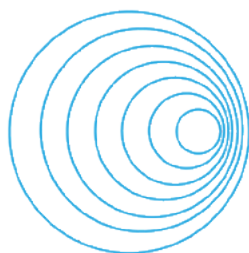
Editor of Inside Morpeth

Front cover: Oldgate Village traders

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Club captain Colleen Brown presents Amelia with the champion's trophy

## Golf champion just 11 years old!

**Amelia Temperley** from Morpeth, has won her home-town golf club's ladies' championship at the age of just 11 to become the youngest ever winner of the event in its 86-year-old history, writes **Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech**.

In only her second season playing the game, the Newminster School pupil beat the current Lady Club Captain Colleen Brown on the 20th hole of the semi-final before going on to win 3 & 2 against former champion Julie Ribeiro.

Amelia only took up the game after asking her Dad Chris if she could go with him one evening to the driving range at Longhirst Golf Club, and is now so hooked on golf that she practises at the range every evening after school as well as playing the Morpeth course at weekends.

So good has she become at the game that her handicap has fallen from 18.8 at the beginning of this year to 7.1 and she will be aiming to cut it by a further three strokes next year.

As well as becoming the youngest male or female Morpeth club champion by at least five years, Amelia now regularly plays for the ladies' first team and Northumberland



The youngest and oldest Morpeth golfers – Amelia Temperley and 95-year-old Enid Smith

County Juniors, and in addition to this amazing local success, she has also played numerous times on the Northern Junior Golf Tour, winning four times with one being the National Girls' Championship

allowing her to qualify on the Justin Rose Telegraph leader board and then compete in the Champion of Champions tournament next July at Lough Erne in Ireland.

This year she was also Northumberland's choice as the most improved young player in the county.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Amelia is setting her sights on a career as a professional golfer when she is old enough as she told me. When I asked her what she enjoys most about the game she emphatically replied without a moment's hesitation – 'Winning!'

Colleen also told me: "As a club we are delighted by Amelia's success and she is such a talented player for her age."

Mum Kylie added: "As a family we are super-proud of Amelia and all she is achieving in the game."





# Get that festive feeling at Cragside and Wallington

**Make cherished Christmas memories on a festive day out with friends and family at Cragside and Wallington. Both National Trust properties are less than 30-minutes from Morpeth and just 20 minutes from each other if you'd like to do them both in a day!**

## What's on at Wallington

On weekends, keep a look out for the man in the big red coat as you tour the House. A certain special VIP is stopping by to say a merry hello. Meanwhile, Mrs Christmas will be in the Reading Room. With her signature sparkling shoes, she'll tell the tales of your favourite story characters while you snuggle up on a bean bag. Live music will be filling the air in the Central Hall with some familiar seasonal songs and tunes to get you in the festive swing of things.

Get hands on with gift making on a creative workshop including one with artist Kay Carter, who will guide you through how to make three Terrazzo Christmas decorations. Experiment with sizes and shapes and play with different chipped colours to create unique works of art for a tree to take home.

Grown-ups can enjoy a relaxing Festive Afternoon Tea in the grand Central Hall of the House, with sparkling lights and the gentle tones of a pianist to accompany you. You could even indulge in a glass of prosecco. Once you've cleared your cake stand of treats, you can explore the ground floor of the House.

A visit at Twixmas will eek out the last of the festivities with the house open and dressed in its festive finery until the 7 January, and you can enjoy more live music as you see in the New Year.

## Christmas at Cragside

Cragside House may be closed this Christmas but there's still lots of festive fun to be had. The team have constructed a Merry Maze on the lawn right next to Tumbleton Lake. Created by the gardeners, Rangers and volunteers out of foliage from the grounds, you can follow its twists and turns to the centre. There are some quiz questions to help you find your way and avoid the wrong turns. Once you reach the centre you can enjoy taking festive photos with some jolly props – Christmas jumpers recommended!

Some of Cragside's mischievous mice helpers have gone rogue and are causing chaos around the visitor centre. We've spotted some in the Christmas tree, and another having a bath in the Stables. Can you spot them during your visit?

Families can get creative and make a simple wooden decoration to take home for the tree and add their hopes and dreams for 2024 to the wish tree too. All activities at Cragside are drop-in and free but usual admission applies.

Don't forget to head to the tea room or café wherever you decide to visit, where sweet bakes and cakes, winter-warming lunches and indulgent hot chocolates await. The teams in the shops are also on hand to help you find gifts for your loved ones – or a little treat for yourself too.

Christmas at Cragside and Wallington starts on Saturday 2 December. Discover more about what's on at [nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside) and [nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington). Normal admission charges apply. Please check the websites for details.





## Make lasting memories this Christmas

### at Cragside and Wallington

#### Christmas at Cragside

**From Saturday 2 December**

Go on an adventure through the merry maze, find the mischievous mice, make a Christmas decoration to take home and add your hopes and dreams for 2024 to the wish tree.

Visit this Christmas

[nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/cragside)  
[nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington](https://nationaltrust.org.uk/wallington)

#### Festivities at Wallington

**From Saturday 2 December**

Bump into Father Christmas in and around the House, listen to live music in the Central Hall, snuggle up for stories with Mrs Christmas and join a Christmas craft workshop (workshops advance booking only).





There are plenty of jobs for volunteers to do at the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank

# Food banks aren't just for Christmas!

Reporter Inside Morpeth Editor **Ian Leech**

**No one should go hungry at Christmas or indeed at any time of the year, is a guiding principle of more than 2,500 food banks that are providing emergency supplies to hungry people across the length and breadth of Britain – and the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank based in Morpeth, is no exception to that rule!**

Set up as a registered charity in 2012, more than 70 volunteers willingly give up their time to each week provide a life-line service for people of all ages in South East Northumberland, who have nowhere else to turn when faced with the grim reality of food poverty.

Each month they collect food and donations before packing and distributing, and on average feeding about 3,000 people a month, although these figures can substantially increase at peak times of the year including school holidays, and, of course, at Christmas.

The food bank – the largest independent one in Northumberland – covers an area from Hadston, Red Row and Broomhill, on to Widdrington, Ellington and Lynemouth then down through Morpeth, Stannington, Bedlington, Ashington and Newbiggin, and it can only continue to do the great work it does thanks to the never-ending generosity of local people and their communities, businesses and supermarkets. Right now it needs all the help it can get at a time of the year when

families – and single people – are under great financial strains.

Not just because of Christmas and the pressure the festive season puts on people's purse strings, but because winter is knocking on the door and many people will once again face the awful dilemma after paying their household bills, of eating or heating their homes.

People use food banks for a variety of reasons such as losing their job; being faced with unexpected bills; family break-ups; or just being caught up in the spiralling cost-of-living crisis. They have to be referred to the service by their GP, or one of a number of organisations such as Social Services, Children's Service or a Citizens Advice Bureau, and anyone qualifying for help including those with special dietary needs, will receive enough food to last them for at least three days.

As we said, these are challenging times for food banks and Wansbeck Valley like all the others nationwide, values and appreciates any help people can give them. So, how can you help?

By donating non-perishable food at a number of collection points around the area including the Sainsbury, Morrisons and Lidl supermarkets in Morpeth as well as Co-ops at Loansdean, Pegswood or Lynemouth; the Newcastle Building Society in the Market Place; or the Co-op Funeral Directors, and the Martino Lounge in Sanderson Arcade.

What sort of food or drink items are needed? Tea bags, coffee and longlife milk; crisps or snacks; shop-bought jam;

tinned custard or rice; tins of vegetables, meat, hotdogs, potatoes or spaghetti, fruit, baked beans, soup; chocolate or boxes of biscuits are just a few examples of the goods the food banks are always grateful for.

Monetary donations are always welcome too because food banks have to supplement the food and drink donations they are given by buying in additional supplies, while some people choose to leave bequests in their wills as a way offering financial help.

Or you could become a volunteer with the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank, working in its Morpeth warehouse packing bags, sorting donations and maintaining stocks on shelves; being a driver of one its two vans collecting donations, delivering parcels to a collection point at Ashington YMCA, or by being a driver's 'buddy.' Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer can contact the Wansbeck Valley Food Bank Co-ordinators Claire Slater or Helen Griffiths on (01670) 943014.

Chairman of the Food Bank trustees Richard Anderson, says the past year has been full of challenges coming on top of the Covid Pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, resulting in the highest-ever need for its services. But as the trustees and volunteers who keep the service running say, their doors remain open to those who have nowhere else to turn to and that will be the same tomorrow, the day after and the day after that!



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Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas in Morpeth without Rutherford's magical festive windows

# All the magic of Christmas at Morpeth's Rutherfords store

**Baubles are glittering on the tree, fairy lights are twinkling and there's a sense of excitement and anticipation in the air.**

It really is the most wonderful time of the year!

Rutherfords 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 displays, which bring 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 Rutherfords 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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Northumberland  
County Council



The River Wansbeck in full flow the after Storm Babet

# Flood resilience following recent storms

The recent storms with continued and persistent heavy rains tested flood defences along the riverbanks through Morpeth. In this exclusive article for Inside Morpeth, the **Environment Agency** explains how the systems coped with the severe weather conditions and has some sage advice for local home-owners and business as to ways they can increase resilience in the event of future storms.

**Along with much of the country, Northumberland had a testing time with Storms Babet and Ciaran, interspersed with other periods of heavy rainfall.**

In Morpeth the Environment Agency's flood defences were brought into action. The system itself consists of two parts: the in-town defences and the Mitford Dam Flood Storage Reservoir situated about 4km upstream.

The dam is programmed to control the flow of water through Morpeth up to a predetermined maximum volume.

In a flood event, once that level is reached, a series of penstock gates begin to close and impound water to ensure that level is

not exceeded. This means that the water level in the town will be close to the top of the walls for a large proportion of an event as the dam controls the flow.

Whilst we understand that seeing the Wansbeck at a high level in town can cause a level of anxiety within the community, operating the defences in this way allows us to provide the best level of protection for Morpeth by utilising the flood walls in town and ensuring the dam can use its full capacity if necessary.

Closing the penstock gates earlier would reduce the available storage capacity at the Dam and reduce the level of protection available.

The event on 20th October was a significant event and the largest we have

seen on the Wansbeck since the scheme was built in 2015.

We are currently reviewing the data to see if there any further tweaks we need to make to our operational systems but the scheme operated as expected and prevented over 1,000 properties from being flooded.

Following these recent events, the Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council are urging people to think about how they can reduce their risk of flooding.

Being flooded is absolutely devastating and any steps that can be taken towards better protecting your property, business and community can significantly lessen the impact.

## Ways that you can increase your resilience to flooding are:



Check your flood risk from rivers, sea and surface water on the flood warning information service flood maps by visiting - **[www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk)** or scan the QR code.



Sign up to the Flood Warning Service to receive free flood warning messages by visiting - **[www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)** or scan the QR code.



Create a Personal Flood Plan and pack a grab bag with essentials – visit **[www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan)** or scan the QR code for advice. Personal Flood Plans are also available to pick up in the Morpeth Library.



Look to install flood protection products – visit **[bluepages.org.uk/protecting-my-property](http://bluepages.org.uk/protecting-my-property)** or scan the QR code for further advice.



Make sure you have the right level of insurance cover needed – visit **[www.floodre.co.uk](http://www.floodre.co.uk)** or scan the QR code.



Regularly check for weather updates, by visiting - **[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)** or scan the QR code.



Fly tipping or littering in and around rivers and watercourses can cause pollution, harm wildlife and can lead to blockages which can cause flooding. Report any fly tipping to **[www.northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Environment.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Protection/Environment.aspx)** or scan the QR code.

For further information on the flood defences and related information please visit the Morpeth Town Council website and for support with any of the areas highlighted, please contact Northumberland's Flood Resilience Engagement Officer at - **[engagement\\_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk)**.

## Do you know what to do in a flood?

### FLOOD ALERT

## PREPARE

Pack medicines and insurance documents. Visit the flood warning information service.

### FLOOD WARNING

## ACT

Move family, pets and belongings to safety. Turn off gas, water and electricity.

### SEVERE FLOOD WARNING

## SURVIVE

Immediate danger? **Call 999.** Follow emergency services' advice.



# Secret Laura could never tell until now

**A remarkable book written and self-published by Morpeth Mum-of-three Laura Coel that deals with the painful subject of child abuse, is now on sale in the town, writes Ian Leech.**

Laura – perhaps best known locally as talented singer and entertainer Lou Coel (pictured) – has written the book from her own experiences of being abused when she was a young girl aged from just nine years old.

Waiving her right to anonymity at the age of 19, she eventually found the courage to speak up about what had happened to her, five years after the abuse stopped. Her abuser was subsequently sent to prison.

Now, she has written 'Laura's Secret' to share as a resource for children as well as parents, safeguarding agencies and schools, to help young people being abused to understand that is alright to talk to someone about what is happening to them and to seek help from a person they can trust.

Laura told me that when she was being abused she felt too ashamed



and embarrassed to reveal what was happening to her. "If I had been able to talk to someone and seek help, it could have made all the difference, but I just wasn't unable to do so," she said.

"If I'd had a book like mine to read as a child, I might have been able to talk to someone or give some clues as to what was going on and the 'secret' my abuser asked me to keep."

The storyline of 'Laura's Secret' is told gently and in such a readable way for young readers to easily understand, and it is also sympathetically and beautifully graphically portrayed by illustrator Lena Lion from Ukraine. Laura contacted Lena

after finding her profile on line, and remarkably despite being separated by some 2,000 miles and never meeting other than by Zoom calls, they have produced a narrative so in tune with one another.

What is also special about the book is that in the introduction Laura has written up notes so that parents and carers, can navigate their way through the reading experience with their children. At the end of the story there are also questions parents can work their way through with their children, as well as advice as to how to cope with the revelation from a child that they are being abused.

Laura hopes that her book can help start important conversations with children to help them know what is allowed and what is inappropriate. "Talking to children about how to protect themselves from any form of abuse can be over-whelming, but it does not need to be," said Laura.

"If the book can prevent one child from enduring the suffering and torment I went through, then I will have done my job."

'Laura's Secret' can be bought for £8.50 from Amazon or for £7.00 from Betty Boos shop in Oldgate, Morpeth.

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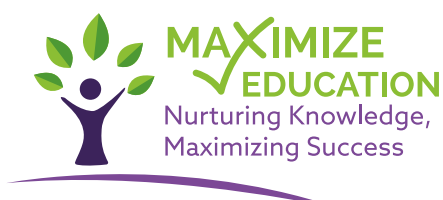
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# TOWN CRYER!



The latest News from Morpeth Town Council

**Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year**



**Jade Crawford**  
Mayor of Morpeth

**As Christmas is fast approaching, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best and thank you all for attending the much-loved Morpeth Lights Switch on!**

It was truly an honour to witness all the happiness this event brought to our town after it had sadly been absent for the past few years, but it's back and it's better than ever.

Thank you to everyone involved who made this event possible, it could not have happened without the generosity and determination of all the volunteers, may your homes be filled with laughter, your hearts with gratitude, and your bellies with delicious holiday treats. May the coming year bring you countless blessings and opportunities for growth.

Remember, no matter what challenges come our way, we are stronger when we stand together as a community. Let's continue supporting one another, celebrating our achievements, and embracing the unique spirit of Morpeth.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the incredible residents of our town for their unwavering support and participation in the various holiday events and festivities. Together, we have created cherished memories and strengthened the bonds that make Morpeth such a special place to call home. As we bid farewell to this Christmas season, let us carry the spirit of unity, love, and kindness throughout the year ahead. May it be filled with prosperity, joy, and continued community growth. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you all a wonderful holiday season and a bright and promising future.

Don't forget we still have the community carol service to look forward to on Saturday 23rd December in the market place, so do join us in singing along from 4.30pm.



Morpeth Town Council, Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth NE61 1LZ  
Call 01670 514314 email [joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wilson@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or [mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@morpeth-tc.gov.uk) or visit [www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk](http://www.morpeth-tc.gov.uk)

# Christmas in Morpeth!

**Christmas started in earnest this year following the switch on of the Christmas Lights, which I'm sure you will agree look magical.**

The switch on event was geared up to return to the community event it used to be, and we believe that is what was delivered. Fun was had by all enjoying the on-stage entertainment, free funfair rides, face painting, a chance to meet Santa and of course take away memories in picture form from the snow globe.

A special mention goes to Nigel and the team at Dobbies at Heighley Gate who sourced and provided one of the finest looking trees we have seen, simply perfect in every way, thank you!

This year sees the arrival of the Pavilion Festive Tipi, situated in the heart of Carlisle Park. The tipi bar will welcome visitors to warm themselves by the fire on a winter's day right up until New Years Eve.

There will be mulled wine, warm cider, beers available throughout the day and also woodfired pizza available from the van in the evenings, all which can be enjoyed amongst live music.

Don't forget, the Pavilion Café will remain open serving all your usual favourite treats during the day, so call in and line your stomach before enjoying the festivities in the tipi!



## Summer of fun and plans afoot for 2024!

**During the school summer holidays this year, Morpeth Town Council teamed up with Barnabas Safe & Sound to host a jam-packed programme of free activities for children.**

The activities included a climbing wall, adventures on the river, archery, street games, pizza making, crafts, acting classes to name but a few. The activities were well received by all who attended

and whilst the weather was not always kind, there was always a smile to be seen and sound of laughter to be heard!

Plans are already being discussed to extend the free activities during holidays to include the Easter holidays and of course a return to the summer holidays in 2024.

More information will be available in due course, please keep your eyes peeled on social media for links to book.

### COUNCIL MEETING TIMETABLE

#### SEE NOTICEBOARDS AND WEBSITE

Meeting Timetable for January and February 2024. 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**  
24th January 2024

**Planning and Transport Committee**  
17th January 2024 and 14th February 2024

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
10th January 2024 and 7th February 2024





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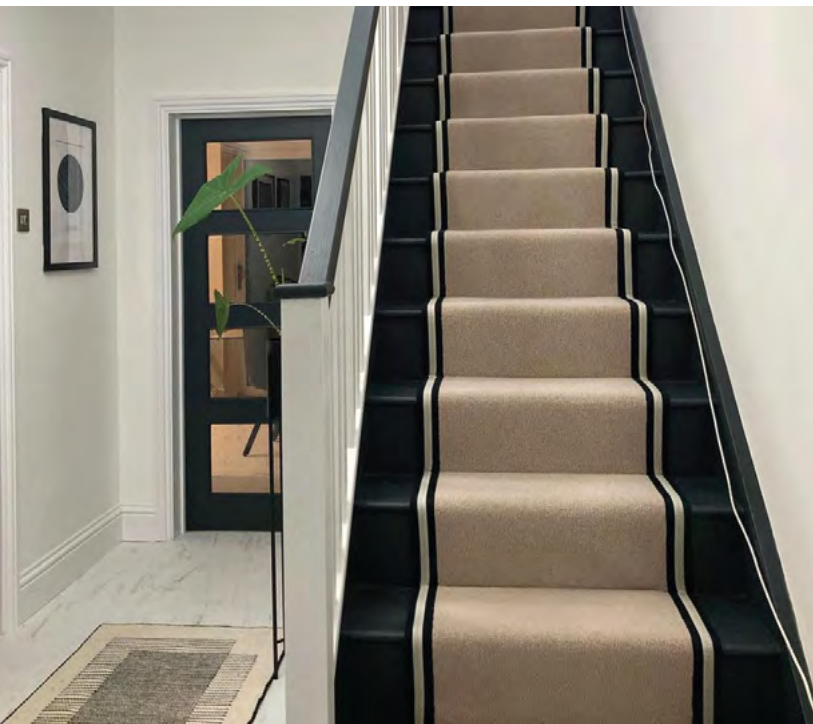
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# Future's bright for national title young chef finalist

By Ross Jackson

Although he may have just been pipped at the post for the title of Delifresh Young Chef of the Year, for St Mary's Inn and their Senior Chef de Partie Kian Marshall the future is bright.

The Stannington restaurant has an array of talented young staff across its kitchen and customer service areas, with exciting opportunities to join the team.

A great example of the restaurant offering its staff the chance to progress and evolve, is evidenced by Kian (21) a young chef who has been supported through the process of reaching the Delifresh Young Chef of the Year grand final.

Although it wasn't to be in the final at York recently, the experience and the chance to show his skills was well worth the effort for a young chef who is part of a talented team serving up seasonal food throughout the year at St Mary's Inn.

"I had worked in my family's restaurant since I was 13 years old, just pottering about but luckily I was never a pot washer," said Kian. "Then I went to college and university and just got stuck into it because I see cooking as a passion, like an escape for me."

Under the supervision of St Mary's Head Chef Ronnie Robson, Kian has blossomed and become increasingly creative in the kitchen which Ronnie believes is one of the best around.

"I am lucky with the team I have got in a really good kitchen," said Ronnie. "The owners want to continue developing St Mary's and push forward with it. We change the menu seasonally with what's available from the market that week. They are probably some of the best people to work for because they have a passion for what we do."

"For anyone wanting to get into hospitality as a career, St Mary's Inn is a great place to come and work!"

That sentiment is echoed by St Mary's Inn Manager Annette Sadler who is currently on the look-out for staff to bolster the great team already in place. "We know our staff are our most important asset, so we aim to create an environment that is upbeat, progressive and allows our team members to express themselves," she said.

"That's demonstrated in our excellent food, our brilliant customer care and everything we offer our customers day in and day out."



Head Chef Ronnie Robson congratulating his young protégé Kian Marshall

For more information on the latest vacancies at St Mary's Inn, Stannington, head to its website [www.stmarysinn.co.uk/careers](http://www.stmarysinn.co.uk/careers)





ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Give you and your family a *wealthy future*

**If you're thinking about later-life care or how to organise your inheritance, we're here for you. Let us help you make the best decisions for you, your family and your money**

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***Even if you want to stay in your home and receive care there, the cost is high***

Of course, you won't want to give away all your savings now and end up unable to live well today. Plus, there's the possible issue of long-term care to consider. Care costs can vary considerably across the country and will depend on the type and level of support you need. This is often determined through a care needs assessment. According to Laing Buisson's Care of Older People UK Market Report, December 2020, the average annual UK cost is around £34,684 for residential and £48,048 for nursing care. So we understand that the thought of having to sell your home is a genuine concern.

## **Take care of their tax**

Then there's the impact of IHT, which can make a huge dent in what you pass on to your family. It's a tax that used to be the preserve of the very wealthy, but the rise in property prices now means more and more people need to take IHT into consideration.

In 2020, the residence nil-rate band rose to £175,000, for those who qualify. Then you can factor in that the first £325,000 of your estate is exempt from IHT. This means that, subject to certain conditions, if you're married or in a civil partnership, you could have a combined tax-free allowance of up to £1 million. However, there are other financial implications to consider, particularly if you're widowed or divorced.

If you don't take the time to understand how care fees or IHT could affect you, then you and your family could suffer as a result. It's often a good idea to get professional help, as IHT policy can be confusing and everyone's circumstances are different.

Remember, too, that something as simple as making sure your Will is up to date can save your family untold hassle as well as protect your estate from unnecessary taxation. Your family's future is in your hands.

***Consider the bigger picture when planning for later life***

The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time. The value of any tax relief depends on individual circumstances.

The writing of a Will involves referral to a service that is separate and distinct to those offered by St. James's Place. Wills and Trusts are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

## **Get in touch**

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SJP Approval 16/11/2023

SJP12207a B1 (03/22)

# Welcome to Oldgate 'village'

Oldgate which runs from the edge of the Market Place to the banks of the River Wansbeck, is one of the most historic corners of Morpeth, a town that itself is steeped in more than 1,000 years of history, as **Ian Leech** reports.

Guarded at its Market Place entrance by the imposing Clock Tower that can trace its history back for more than 400 years, Oldgate has been at the very heart of community life in Morpeth almost from time immemorial.

The Clock Tower is, of course, one of three iconic landmarks in the centre of Morpeth, the others being the 16th Century Chantry, and the Town Hall designed more than 300 years ago by the legendary architect Sir John Vanbrugh of Blenheim Palace, Castle Howard and Delaval Hall fame. The Clock Tower was built between 1604 and 1634 reputedly using re-cycled Medieval stone perhaps from Newminster Abbey.

The 60-foot high structure houses a peal of six bells acquired for Morpeth in 1706 by Major General Edmund Main whilst he was the town's Member of Parliament. The bells are now the oldest civic peal of bells in the country and are still rung at 8pm every evening, a curfew tradition going back some 350 years.

Oldgate's other claim to fame is that it was the home of one of England's greatest seafarers Admiral Lord Collingwood and his family from 1791 until his death in 1810. The Admiral who was born in Newcastle and first went to sea as a 12-year-old boy, rose through the naval ranks to sail alongside Horatio Nelson and indeed took over command of the English fleet after his great friend was fatally wounded during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Collingwood House where the Admiral loved to spend time during his shore leaves, is now the Presbytery for St Robert's RC Church.

Today, Oldgate remains a corner of Morpeth where a vibrant and diverse range of shops and businesses are to be found, bringing their own unique style of trading to the town centre and is now affectionately being branded 'Oldgate Village.'







# Meet the Oldgate 'villagers'

Inside Morpeth is delighted to introduce readers to the owners of shops and businesses currently trading in Oldgate starting with:

## The Cheese Shop

The longest established business in Oldgate having been started in 1990, The Cheese Shop is now owned and run by Sheila and John Holyoak and their daughter Sarah. It is credited with being one of the largest independent cheese shops in the north of England and was also voted as one of the best in the UK by The Independent newspaper as well as being featured on the Channel 4 programme 'Come Dine with Me.' Working closely with artisan dairies, the family has a range of more than 160 different local, national and European cheeses to suit all tastes and preferences. Sheila, John and Sarah are also specialists in making bespoke wedding and celebration cheese cakes that can incorporate any of the cheeses they stock and sell and deliveries which can be made to local venues of a customer's choice. Additionally, The Cheese Shop stocks a wide variety of condiments, including chutneys and preserves, marmalades and mustards plus a vast selection of biscuits to complement its cheeses and chutneys. With Christmas just around the corner, the shop has a wonderful range of hampers on offer starting from just £18, that would make ideal gifts.

Sheila, John and Sarah Holyoak



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## Bella Boos

Is a children's accessories' shop that opened in Oldgate after 10 years trading on-line. Owner Marie Glasgow whose two daughters loved shopping for hair accessories, had seen the opportunity to start a business selling children's accessories from her garage. Now the expansion into a beautiful shop has given Marie the chance to develop her product range to cater for more accessories, gifts and toys. In addition, she has acquired an embroidery machine to offer bespoke, personalised items such as sacks, stockings and blankets in time to make unique Christmas presents. Marie is also hoping to support local businesses with embroidered and printed items in addition to the range of hand-crafted goods available in-store or on-line. Shortly after moving into Oldgate Marie and partner Chris Spraggon commissioned the street artist known as Creative Ginger to paint a colourful, eye-catching fairy-themed mural on the gable end of their shop which has proved a huge draw with families coming to Oldgate to take selfies – one even filmed Ginger's progress on a daily basis to email to family and friends in America!



## Bella BOO's KIDS ACCESSORIES

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Drop in and say hello or visit us at [www.bella-boos.co.uk](http://www.bella-boos.co.uk)

**16 OLDGATE, MORPETH, NE61 1LX**



## My Pet HQ

The award-winning pet shop was started in 2017 by partners Caroline and Diane Coppen, after two years trading at local markets. The spacious store and carefully chosen product range, offers local pet owners a stress-free and unique shopping experience – in the company of their pets which are always welcome to look around too! The store stocks such well-known brands as Cotswold's Raw and Eden Holistic Pet Foods, as well as their famous pick'n'mix selection of natural treats. The couple are particularly passionate about animal welfare and nutrition which goes hand-in-hand with My Pet HQ's core values of promoting unprocessed, fresh feeding and a chemical-free lifestyle for pets. Working with them now at their Oldgate shop, is dog groomer Emily Soulsby who runs her own salon from within the store, offering a range of grooming services for all dog breeds as well as cats and small pets. Open seven days a week, My Pet HQ runs a local delivery service meaning owners can purchase frozen foods with no weight restriction and have their delivery the same day.



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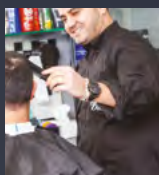


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Naz Ali and his barbers Kurva and Sya

## Star Barbers

Owner Naz Ali took over the traditional barber's shop eight years ago and is now an established part of the Oldgate scene, keeping customers from toddlers to grandads looking neat, tidy and stylish! Naz and his team of four other talented young barbers, are specialists in all the latest trends and styles among younger customers, as well as offering wet shaves, hot towels and trimmed beards. The shop is open seven days a week including Sundays when opening hours are from 10am to 4pm.





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## Avril's Hairdressing



Avril Thornton

Avril Thornton has been cutting and styling ladies' hair in Morpeth for more than 40 years, the last four of which she has worked from her salon in the Queen's Head Yard just a stone's throw from the Oldgate Clock Tower. In that time, she has built up an enviable reputation among her loyal clients and with Christmas in mind, she is advising them to book their appointments in good time for the Festive Season.

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## J W Peters Funeral Directors

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Alan Beal

worked for the original owner Mr Peters for many years. Working from their funeral parlour in one of the best-known buildings in Morpeth right on the banks of the River Wansbeck next to Oldgate Bridge, their commitment is to tailor arrangements for a funeral in just the way a family want whether that be a traditional funeral and church service, a direct cremation, the provision of a horse-drawn hearse, a woodland or eco burial, or an alternative funeral. They are available to offer their services, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.





## Watson House

Partners Robbie Heslop and Fabian Harmer have assembled a team of experienced and skilled professionals working together in a unique clinic in Morpeth devoted to the health and wellbeing of local people, delivered in a comfortable, relaxed and welcoming environment. Based in one of Oldgate's stand-out buildings dating back to the mid-19th Century, the aim of the dedicated Watson House team is to offer whole body care whether that be in the form of osteopathic and chiropractic sessions; different massages; specialist foot care treatments; counselling and talking through issues with couples, singles or children; to gentle exercise such as yoga or pilates. In others words - wellbeing, well delivered.

## Artisan Gift Studio

Husband-and-wife team April and Ray Dobson opened their independent gift store earlier this year in Oldgate. With a strong background in crafts, they set out to offer high-quality, hand-made items for customers looking for gifts with a difference! With an addiction to crochet, April herself makes many of the items on sale in shop including doggy jumpers, witches' hats, and other woolly wonders. Other gifts on sale are made by talented friends, relatives and local craftspeople. Both April and Ray say they feel privileged to be part of the Oldgate 'Village' community and are delighted to see more people venturing into a vibrant trading corner of Morpeth.



## Terriques Antique Emporium

Over the past few years interest in antiques seems to have exploded, no doubt perhaps thanks to the number of television programmes now being screened about going bargain hunting! A great place to do that in Morpeth is the antique emporium which partners Terry and Eric opened recently in Oldgate. It is a veritable treasure trove with an eclectic collection of antiques and mid-century collectables which they have built up over many years before opening their very first shop in Oldgate. They say they are delighted to be trading from Oldgate and have had visitors from far and wide browsing in their shop for that unexpected 'find.' The stock is always changing and being added to so their advice to Morpeth residents, is to pop in for a browse around!





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# Importance of staying connected during the winter

Written by **Sunny Singh**, Owner & Managing Director  
Home Instead South East Northumberland

**The cold crisp chill in the air reaffirms that winter is here, signalling the time to hunker down and ensure we can keep warm in front of the fire with a warm cup of coffee.**

Winter can be a challenging time for elderly people when it comes to feelings of loneliness or isolation. NHS reports that more than a million older people say they can go over a month without speaking to a friend, neighbour, or family members. I wanted to explore a variety of ways of maintaining contact and potentially offer companionship to those in need.

## 1 Regular Phone Calls

Phone calls are a simple but effective method to maintain contact. Scheduling specific times are important to initiate meaningful conversation, it can also allow time to structure a conversation. Sharing memories, stories and connecting on a personal level can make people feel happier by actively participating in conversations.

## 2 Video Calling

In the age of modern technology, video calling can be a critical tool to keep contact with friends and family. There are several methods such as Skype, Facetime or Zoom which will allow you to see and interact with loved ones face to face if you are unable to physically be together. If you struggle to use the platforms, we will be sharing some details for a free basic Tech Hub, please get in touch with us at: [info.blyth@homeinsteadsenorth.co.uk](mailto:info.blyth@homeinsteadsenorth.co.uk) if you are interested.

## 3 Connecting with local social groups/ activities

As we age, it is easy to get caught up in routines and lead us to isolating ourselves from the world. However, ensuring we actively participate in socialising is essential for our physical and mental wellbeing. Research the local area for activities to participate, if you are struggling to find any information reach out to your GP social prescribers for more information.

Home Instead offers a free memory café in Cramlington community hub 10am-12pm on the second Wednesday of the month, anyone is welcome to attend. The next date is for 13th December 2023. We also have some suggestions for local groups on our website.

## 4 Diary Management

Diary management is a great tool to aid against feeling lonely, plan the week in advance and put things in your diary to look forward to each day. This can be simple tasks such as a morning at the library or coffee with friends, but the clarity will help to give structure and balance to your week ahead.

## 5 Get out and keep active.

Maintaining social connections during winter can positively impact your physical health. The University of Cambridge found a reduction in the amount of time spent physically active when adults are over 60 years old is linked to lower quality of life in a study of 1500 adults. By staying connected, there is a greater likelihood to engage in physical activities and exercise, this can help to combat sedentary behaviour and boost your health & wellbeing.

## 6 Homecare Services

If necessary, consider using home care services that provide companionship and assistance for the elderly. Having a care professional visit regularly can provide social interaction, support, and peace of mind for the elderly and their families. Research the provider that meets your needs, use resources such as [Homecare.co.uk](http://Homecare.co.uk) which can give an indication of top-rated providers in the local area.

*Come along to...*

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Alistair Moffatt pictured with his young Collingwood School interviewers



# Pupils turn the tables on former top tv man!

Celebrated former journalist, television executive, book and cultural festival director turned author **Alistair Moffatt** found himself on the other end of the questions when he popped across the border to preview his appearance at next Spring's Morpeth Book Festival, writes **Ian Leech**.

His visit to the town was to record an interview with young students at Morpeth's Collingwood School and Media Arts College, and they have another lined up with local crime writer Marie Hannah who also happens to be the Patron of the Morpeth festival.

I also managed a chat with Alistair, who has enjoyed a stellar career as a writer, broadcaster, festivals' organiser and author. Born in Kelso he still lives in the Borders.

After graduating from St Andrews' University with an honour's degree in medieval history, Alistair launched on a career which would see him become the Director of Edinburgh's Fringe Festival, before joining Scottish television where he rose to become programme director and then STV chairman. After his television work he was one of the founders of the Borders Book Festival and the Lennoxlove Book Festival, and would later take on the role of Rector of the University.

Bearing in mind his vast experience of running and attending books festival, I wanted to talk with him about their importance to both authors and readers, as well as quizzing him on how the Morpeth festival can develop into a popular and well attended event.

Alistair is also a prolific author of more than 30 non-fiction books, many of which tell tales from his beloved Borders Country and indeed the history of the whole of Scotland, some of which have been adapted into television series and he will talk about his works when he comes to the 2024 Morpeth Book Festival.

As he told me: "Writing is a solitary business so festivals are a good way for authors to meet their readers and listen to them. Sessions should always include questions and answers and it is also good to meet other writers as well as journalists, agents, booksellers and people who come to the event.

"My advice to the organisers of the Morpeth event is – wherever possible – go

for the biggest and most famous names you can and build on that." When he was launching the festivals he was involved with, he did just that and managed to bring together a cast-list of such names as John Cleese, Germaine Greer, Sheila Hancock, Michael Palin and Joanne Lumley to credit a few.

"It is also important to remember that festivals are live and unrepeatable and there will be no other way to experience hearing and meeting the authors. The sessions are like parties and you need to go to them!

"Younger people will also come to a festival event if it is starry enough, so it is always good to mix in show business if you can. But whatever you do, don't call it a literary festival because that will put people off."

Wise words from an experienced writer and broadcaster, who will be one of the 'Big Names' at the Morpeth Book Festival which will run over the weekend of March 23rd and 24th next year. The Festival will once again be organised by Greater Morpeth Development Trust in conjunction with Northumberland Library Service. Tickets will go on sale early next year and the Inside Morpeth February edition will publish the full programme of events.





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**DESIGN - SUPPLY - INSTALL**

# Post early for Christmas say Morpeth scouts

**A local postal service run by youngsters from the 4th Morpeth Scout Group that has become something of a festive tradition in and around the town, is back in time for Christmas.**

The service has been running for more than 20 years with the scouts siting 'post boxes' around town so they can collect and then deliver cards to homes around Morpeth.

This year the boxes will be in Central Bean in Sanderson Arcade, the Health Hut on the Kirkhill Estate, Co-op stores at Loansdean and Pegswood, Morrisons and Sainsbury's stores.

The way the service works is that people can 'post' their Christmas cards in the scouts' boxes along with a suggested 40p donation for each card. Then, after the last day for posting on Friday December 15th, its all hands to the deck

to sort the cards into piles for each street in Morpeth plus surrounding villages such as Pegswood, Mitford and Hepscott, so that the delivery teams of around 250 Scouts, Squirrels and Beavers can collect the cards they have been allocated to deliver.

Their pledge is that all cards will be delivered in time for Christmas. The younger Squirrels and Beavers tend to deliver to their own or neighbouring streets; the Cubs have a round of their own; while the older Scouts cover the rest of Morpeth.

As Ellen Glynn, Leader of the Monday (Matobo) Troop, told Inside Morpeth: "Whilst the service is one of our biggest fundraisers, it also serves a number of other functions. It has become a Christmas tradition for our young people and leaders alike, and having a festive delivery round gives them a real sense of responsibility as well as counting towards a badge."



Keeping up a festive scouting tradition

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Abdul Muhit and his nephew Abdul Salam on the terrace at Westminster after collecting their English Curry Awards at the House of Lords



# New word that could affect us all - but just what does it mean?

A term you are going to hear more of in the coming months is 'LURB'. So, what is it all about you may ask. LURB is an acronym for the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. It will, in time, affect most, if not all of you **Planning Consultant Tony Carter explains**

On Thursday 26th October 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced that the bill had received royal assent and was now law. The new act, which was first published in May 2022, makes several significant changes to the planning system.

Whilst the Bill getting Royal Assent is a big achievement, there is still a lot of work left to do in terms of bringing the provisions in the act into effect, which will require a huge raft of further consultations, detailed technical work, and secondary legislation.

While secondary legislation has not yet been enacted, here are 15 things you need to know about on how the new laws will change the planning system.

## 1. Local planning authorities will be required to have a design code in place covering their entire areas.

The area-wide codes will act as a framework, for which subsequent detailed design codes can come forward, prepared for specific areas or sites, and led either by the local planning authority, neighbourhood planning groups or by developers as part of planning applications. This will help ensure good design is considered at all levels down to individual plots.

## 2. More weight will be given to local plans, neighbourhood plans and spatial development strategies proposed by mayors or combined authorities.

Local plans, neighbourhood plans and spatial development strategies proposed by mayors or combined authorities will be given more weight when decisions are made on applications so that there must be strong reasons to override the plan, providing communities more certainty.

## 3. A simpler alternative to preparing neighbourhood plans will be introduced.

A new neighbourhood planning tool called a 'neighbourhood priorities statement' will provide communities with a simpler and more accessible way to set out their key priorities and preferences for their local areas. Local authorities will need to take these into account, where relevant, when preparing their local plans for the areas concerned, enabling more communities to better engage in the local plan-making process.

## 4. A 'street votes' system will permit residents to propose development on their street and hold a vote on whether planning permission should be given.

This will provide a positive incentive for neighbours to consider the potential for development, especially in areas of higher demand, and support a gentle increase in densities through well-considered, well-designed, and locally supported proposals.

## 5. Decision-makers will face a new duty to act in line with the development plan and national policies.

On the planning application process the Bill will impose a new duty on decision-makers to make planning decisions in accordance with the development plan and national development management policies unless material considerations strongly indicate otherwise. This is to increase certainty in planning decisions.

## 6. Loopholes preventing planning enforcement will be closed.

The Bill amends and strengthens the powers and sanctions available to local planning authorities to deal with individuals who fail to abide by the rules and process of the planning system. This includes facilitating enforcement action by closing existing loopholes which can be exploited to prolong unauthorised development, allowing more time for the investigation of breaches, introducing enforcement warning notices, making the enforcement timescales that currently apply more consistent, and increasing fines.

## 7. Registered parks and gardens will get the same level of planning protection as listed buildings.

The Bill will make changes so that designated heritage assets, such as registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, protected wreck sites, and registered battlefields, enjoy the same statutory protection in the planning system as listed buildings and conservation areas.

## 8. Planning authorities will get the power to instigate auctions to take leases on vacant high street properties.

The Bill gives local authorities powers to instigate auctions to rent vacant commercial properties in town centres and on high streets, for leases from one to five years to attract new tenants. These new powers can be exercised at the discretion of local authorities, based on their local context, and need, but only on properties which have been vacant for over 12 months.

## 9. A council tax premium on second homes can be introduced.

The Bill introduces a discretionary council tax premium on second homes and changes the qualifying period for use of the long term-empty homes premium. Local authorities may levy a premium of up to an additional 100 per cent on council tax bills for second homes and for empty homes after one year (as opposed to two years which is the current requirement).

## 10. Planning application fees will be raised by more than one-third.

The government intends to increase planning fees for major and minor applications by 35 per cent and 25 per cent respectively (subject to consultation). However, MPs refused to accept an amendment proposed in the House of Lords which would have allowed councils to set their own application fees.

Tony Carter is a Chartered Town Planner and owner of Carter-Smith Planning Consultants, a local business based in Morpeth. The business offers professional planning advice and support on most projects requiring planning permission. Please contact [tony@cartersmithplanning.com](mailto:tony@cartersmithplanning.com)



Wise words from Tony Carter

# 11. The emphasis of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will shift to guiding plan-making.

Policies in the current NPPF that are intended to guide decision-making will be stripped out to form the basis of the promised National Development Management Policies (NDMP) that will take precedence over local plans as the primary policy guide for decision-making.

# 12. Tools to force developers to complete schemes will be made easier for authorities to use.

The Act will make it easier for planning authorities to issue completion notices to developers to require them to complete their projects. It will also introduce commencement notices which will be required when a scheme with planning permission starts on site, which will address perceptions of 'land banking' and slow build-out by larger developers.

# 13. Benefit to the public purse will become a factor in authorities' land allocation decisions.

Planning authorities will be able to partially base their land allocation decisions on the option price of sites offered to them by developers, under legislation promised by the Bill to enable the piloting of "Community Land Auctions". Landowners will be able to submit their land into an allocation process as part of an emerging local plan, offering the local planning authority an option on the land at a price set by the landowner. The local authority will allocate land based on both planning considerations and the option price. It will then auction the development rights onto a successful bidder once land is allocated in the adopted plan. The difference between the option price offered by landowners, and the price offered to develop allocated land, will be retained by local authorities for the benefit of local communities.

# 14. Powers to require developers to engage with communities at the pre-application stage will be made permanent.

For decision-making, the Act will also enable pre-application engagement with communities to be required before a planning application is submitted.

# 15. Councils will have the power to decline to determine applications from applicants who have been slow to implement previous permissions across their entire authority areas.

Authorities will therefore be able to refuse to determine an application for planning permission in certain cases where there was a previous application relating to land within the authority's area and the development was not begun or has been carried out unreasonably slowly.

So, there you have it, a 'B-LURB' on my top 15 takeaways from the Bill. Some will affect you at some point in your everyday life, and some will not, but now you will know what LURB is mostly about.

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THURSDAY 28 DECEMBER	9AM-7PM
FRIDAY 29 DECEMBER	9AM-6PM
SATURDAY 30 DECEMBER	8AM-4.45PM
SUNDAY 31 DECEMBER - TUESDAY 2 JANUARY	CLOSED
FROM WEDNESDAY 3 JANUARY	OPEN AS USUAL



# Could there be another Lioness among Morpeth's football cubs?

**Back in the day the dreams of many young girls more likely centred around being a singer in a band, a movie star, a catwalk model or on a sporting front, a gold medal-winning Olympic athlete than a footballer – but not anymore! A growing number of today's generation of young girls have added professional footballer into their dream mix, and a lot of those hopes and ambitions are undoubtedly linked to the outstanding success of the Lionesses from England women's football team.**

Over the past three or four years, England players like goalkeeper Mary Earps, defenders Lucy Bronze and Millie Bright, midfielders Jill Scott, Keira Walsh, Georgia Staniforth and forwards Beth Mead, Lauren Hemp and Chloe Kelly to name a few, have become household names and role models inspiring young girls like the members the Under 13 Morpeth Jaguars side, to want to take up the game. Northumberland's Lucy Bronze currently plays for Barcelona, while the now-retired Jill Scott has fashioned a new career as a television celebrity after last year being crowned ITV's 'I'm a Celebrity' Queen of the Jungle!

The Lionesses won the 2022 Euro tournament by beating Germany two goals to one in the final match at a packed Wembley Stadium plus millions watching on television, while more recently they finished runners-up to Spain in the World Cup final in Australia and those achievements have fuelled a massive surge of interest in the game among senior and junior players.

The Morpeth Jaguars team of young girls was formed five years ago and now plays home games in its Northumberland FA age-group league, at Morpeth's Chantry School. Once a week the 19 members of the squad also train on Morpeth Town FC's 3G pitch at Craik Park.

**Inside Morpeth Editor Ian Leech** was invited along to one such training session to learn more about the team and to see the girls presented with their new strips



Sarah Hickson, owner of Northern Skin Co, presents the girls from Morpeth Jaguars with their new strips

by their sponsor Sarah Hickson who runs her own Northern Skin Co skincare and beauty treatment business from Hadston after being based in Morpeth for 17 years. "As a business we wanted to give something back to the community of Morpeth which has supported us for so many years, and as we all love football as a family we decided together to sponsor the new strips for the girls," said Sarah.

Mark Alexander has been coaching the team almost since the Jaguars were founded by Magda Carr who still helps out with coaching as well as playing for the Alnwick Ladies' team. Mark is helped by assistant coach Fen Smith; Gillian Law – the 'unsung hero who does so much to organise pitches, referees, sorting fixtures and registering the girls; Leanne Shipley-Smith who supports training and match days as well as often running the touchline in league games; 15-year-old Tamara Brown a recent new recruit helping with team support; plus, of course, parents and families who brave the cold and wet to support the girls, wash strips, put up and take down goalposts, and drive them to training and matches sometimes as far away as Hexham and Washington.

"Ours is not an elitist club," Mark told me, "because we welcome players of all ability levels in line with our aim to get more girls playing football and enjoying the game. It takes a real team effort to put all the pieces together to create the best possible environment for the girls and we like to think we are the very essence of grassroots football."

At the time of writing Jaguars were placed mid-table in their league and looking forward to a 'derby' game with the Morpeth Tigers team.

"There's no doubt there has been a massive upsurge of interest in women's football at all age levels because of the Lionesses," Mark added. "We now have 19 girls in the squad and have to rotate playing time so that we have 13 or 14 players available to pick from on match days so that everyone gets a fair share of playing time."

And the girls clearly love playing for football at the club as I witnessed on a pouring wet night when they did not cut short their training session by one minute. Perhaps that's the dedication and commitment that one day could see one of them become a Lioness!

# Why not try an alternative Christmas shopping trip?

**With the mad Christmas rush to the city centres and out-of-town retail parks well underway, there is a less-stressful alternative shopping trip that's well worth a try along quieter roads with no traffic jams to the Northumberland village of Scots' Gap little more than a 20 minute drive west of Morpeth.**

Which is where you will find the Robson & Cowan country store like-no-other that might just have those Christmas gifts you are looking for, as well as an extensive range of goods and appliances you may need for your home and garden.

With Christmas in mind, the store has a great choice of gifts from Alex Clark Art, festive decorations; and everything to keep you warm in the winter including, sweaters, hats, gloves, scarves, socks and quality coats and jackets from Barbour and Ariat; footwear and boots to cope with all weather conditions; and everything equestrian enthusiasts might wish for in their Santa Stocking! Helpfully, staff can also offer customers a gift-wrapping service.

Thinking ahead to the warmer weather, the store has great gift ideas for gardeners with a huge selection of equipment on offer from Honda, Husqvarna and Stihl such as lawnmowers, hedgecutters and

leaf blowers right down to cordless shrub shears and pruners. Or why not treat yourself and your garden to a fantastic Husqvarna robotic mower?

There's also an unrivalled choice of everything electrical for your home. As members of Euronics – Europe's largest independent buying group – Robson & Cowan can offer customers very competitive prices on the latest large and medium kitchen appliances from manufacturers such as Bosch, Siemens, Neff, Beko, Samsung, Liebherr, Hisense, Hotpoint and Leisure, as well as the exclusive Blomberg range from Euronics.

So far as televisions go, the store offers a choice of the latest QLED, OLED, UHD and HD TVs with screen sizes ranging from 24 to 98 inch from manufacturers Samsung, LG, Sony and Hisense, with audio-visual equipment from Humax, Freesat and Sony along with a wide range of Roberts radios, with many on display in their showroom.

Robson & Cowan are approved satellite and aerial installers with all work carried out by their own staff. Their own in-house repair staff also carry out work on televisions, radios, vacuum cleaners, computers and games' consoles as well as other small domestic appliances.

In addition, the store also stocks appliances like vacuum cleaners from brands such as Shark, Dyson, Vax, Bosch, Henry and Beko, as well as a varied range of domestic kitchen appliances from Sharp, Beko and Bosch, including microwaves, kettles, toasters and much more.

As a company first established more than 100 years ago, Robson & Cowan prides itself on supplying goods and equipment offering reliability, modern design and great value for money. So, this Christmas why not head into the country rather the city, on a shopping trip with a difference.



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# Two new team members at TMP

## TMP Wealth Management continues to grow at pace and is delighted to welcome some new members of the team.

Kristian Drysdale has joined the ranks at Appleby House as a Financial Advisor switching careers from the motor industry.

"I knew from the relationships I built with my clients from the motor trade this industry would be very similar, in that building trust would be really key to a healthy and long lasting relationship," said Kristian

He'll have a keen focus on clients in Sunderland and Durham having been brought up in Washington, where he still lives with his wife Linden and three-year-old son Rhys.

The 31-year-old loves spending time with his family, is also a keen sports enthusiast and still retains a keen interest in cars. "On top of spending time with my family, I like my football and golf. As well as playing football I follow Sunderland as much as I can and also do a few track days with my car when time allows."

Kristian's career has really taken off since his arrival. "I have really loved my time

at TMP so far. I spent six months in the St James's Place Academy firstly before joining full time. We have a super team here and amazing clients too."

TMP Wealth Management Operations Director Tony Hopper is delighted that Kristian has joined. "It's really important that we continue to grow the level of support and expertise we can offer our clients and Kristian will only add to that."

Kristian is not the only new member of staff as the team continues to grow. Amy Ward is also onboard, joining from a different wealth management company and brings years of experience as a financial PA with her. She is keen to become a Paraplanner during her time at TMP and lives in North Shields with her partner Sam and enjoys spending time at King Edward's beach when she's not in the gym burning off the calories usually consumed at Riley's Fish Shack.

TMP Wealth Management is delighted to welcome them both and looking forward to bringing more fantastic staff to serve our clients over the coming weeks and months.

***On behalf of us all, have a wonderful Christmas and healthy and happy new year!***



Kristian Drysdale, Financial Advisor



Amy Ward, financial PA

## Some ghosts from Christmases past

### "What's for Christmas dinner, Mam?" That's what our mothers must have heard us say, many a time in years gone by, writes our columnist Bridget Gubbins

When I was a little girl in the 1950s, we had a chicken. That was a big enough treat in those days when everyone was hard up after the war. Later as times became easier, we upgraded to a turkey. In my husband's family in Chicago, a big juicy piece of ham was traditional Christmas dinner.

The most amazing Christmas dinner I ever had was in far-away Hungary in 1966. I had just been welcomed into the home of a kindly country family. My diary tells the story:

And then a few days later:

"I am drowsing in my cosy feather bed at 8am when I hear the unusual sound of many chattering voices in the kitchen.

Who can be there so early? I learn that the pig is now in porcine heaven. All the action took place while I was contentedly asleep.

"I was amazed at the variety of things they made from one pig - sausages and salted hams, and a year's supply of lard. The smell of blood and the smoky melting fat was not appealing to me, the vegetarian. At midday, there was a huge meal, everyone very merry, drinking and eating enormous helpings of freshly killed and cooked meat. I found it barbaric, somewhat fascinating, to see such meat-hungry people.

"In the evening, kind Mutti laid out a candlelit spread. There were ball-shaped biscuits soaked in hot water and mixed up with sugar and ground poppy seeds; a chocolate and walnut cake more cream than cake; a huge golden home-made sweet loaf. What with home-made wine, we almost burst by the time we had finished."

These were country people in the deep dark days of Communism. Yet it must have been similar in Morpeth and the surrounding areas in those years. All our grannies and grandfathers will have stories about Christmas food, often produced from the local farms where perhaps killing the pig was still an annual ritual. And as for meat-free treats, does anyone remember the heavenly-smelling Christmas pudding steaming on the coal-fired stove?



***The Hungarian story is taken from Bridget's new book, Cold War, Warm Hearts, telling of her travels on foot, alone, behind the Iron Curtain 1966 to 1967. Available at Waterstones in Morpeth £10.99 or online e-book for £5.99***

# Mistletoe and wine... and whiskey... and gin... and much more

By Inside Morpeth's wine columnist **Mark Stephenson**

**Okay, here we go...yep...it's the "Most Wonderful Time of the Year". However, when Andy Williams sang that song, I bet he didn't have to cook for a dozen family members on Xmas Day. Or think about what to get Aunt Ada who doesn't like anything, or Uncle Dave who has everything!**

In the words of Corporal Jones - "DON'T PANIC!". One of our jobs at Grape and Grain is to make it easier for you to navigate through this time of year and find the best solution for you.

One of the ways we want to help is by saving you a trip into town. Do you think you need to go to one of the big department stores in Newcastle for that special wine or whisky? Think again. We've got a superb range of wines including classic French, fine Riojas, top-quality Tuscans, and special bottles

of fizz. We've even got a selection of Magnums and Jeroboams. Honestly, if you really want to make a statement this year (in a good way), plonk one of those in the middle of the table! Our bestselling Neropasso is available in magnums for £30, and we've also got a Taittinger Nocturne Champagne at £102. Okay, it's a special treat, but the bottle and the wine are stunning, believe me!

Whisky wise, we have special releases from Raasay, Ardnamurchan, Lochlea, and Tomatin. As well as new additions to the range including Spey- a premium whisky producer from (you've guessed it) Speyside. Of course, not forgetting local distillery Ad Gefrin, and special whisky gift sets from Raasay and Kilchoman.

Not only that but we've got a great range of ports, rums, gins, sherries, madeiras, dessert wines, beers, vodkas, liqueurs, and much much more!

Can't be bothered to wrap stuff up? No worries. Gifting options are available in

the form of one, two, three, and six bottle gift boxes and bags. Also, if you spend £50 or more, we'll happily fire up the Plonkmobile and deliver your order in the Morpeth area free of charge!

And finally, if you're really struggling to work out what to get for someone, then we sell vouchers so they can decide for themselves!

It isn't an easy time of the year for many, for various reasons. We know that. But if we just make it that little bit less stressful for you, then we've done our job.

So even if you don't know about wine, or you class yourself as a fellow enthusiast like us, then pop in and we'll be more than happy to find something to make it the "Most Wonderful Time of the Year".

We can't promise that we'll be able to help you prepare Xmas lunch though... especially the sprouts. That's your job. Yuk.

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# Jon's back where he belongs!

A familiar face is back behind the service reception desk at the Vertu Honda dealership on Coopies Lane, Morpeth. After a few years away Jon Scott has returned to his old job at the dealership and he says he couldn't be more delighted.

At the age of just 17 Jon began learning his trade as a mechanic at a motor dealers on North Tyneside near his home at Whitley Bay.

"It was the dream job for me because I always loved fixing and repairing things, and I jumped at the chance of an mechanic's apprenticeship," he said.

After learning his trade Jon tried his hand at the sales' side of the business but quickly decided that working on cars rather than selling them, was for him.

Now he is back looking after servicing and maintenance at the Vertu Honda dealership and he is delighted to be back.

"It is great to see so many old customer friends because that is how we look on everyone we deal with here," he said. "It is also good to be back working as part of the dealership team."

Jon says it is also an exciting time to be back at the Honda dealership with so many new cars having either just come on stream as well as more in the offing.

"Honda has a fantastic range of cars to suit everyone, and this is such an exciting and challenging time in the trade as we move forward with the drive towards electrification."

Dealership Sales Manager Mark Spring says it has been a pleasure to welcome Jon back as part of the Vertu Honda Morpeth team.

"Jon has quickly slotted back into the team and from both the sales and service side of the dealership our aim is to give our existing and new customers the best possible experience of owning a Honda motor car," he said.

"At the same time our customers are delighted to see Jon back with us because they know he will look after them so well."



Jon Scott – back at the Vertu Honda Morpeth dealership



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# What's on?

## ST GEORGE'S CHURCH

Festive events coming up over the few weeks include:-

### Monday December 4th 6.30pm

Life Remembered Service in memory or departed loved ones.

### Saturday December 9th 10am to Noon

Christmas Coffee Morning and sale of Festive Floral arrangements and home bakes.

### Monday December 11th at 6.30pm

Community Carol Service celebration of Christmas

### Monday December 11th 4pm

Carols in the car park, part of the national 'Shine Your Light' initiative

### Sunday December 17th at 10.30am

Joint Nativity Service with Morpeth Methodist Church

### Sunday December 24th 11.30pm

Christmas Eve Service for all

### Monday December 25th 10am

Worship for Christmas

### Saturday January 20th (2024) 10am

Coffee Morning

### Wednesday February 14th 12.30pm

Lunchtime Concert featuring KEVI School musicians and choir. Tea and coffee from Noon

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Greater Morpeth Development Trust AGM Wednesday January 10th (2024) 7pm at Morpeth Town Hall.**

Before the meeting at 6pm local author and television presenter John Grundy will give a talk entitled 'A Splendid Building Morpeth and the people who built it.'

Anyone attending the AGM will have the opportunity to learn more about GMDT, the work it does in Morpeth, its progress to date and how to become a member as well as being able to become involved in a consultation process concerned with prioritising the project its will deliver.

Whether its choosing films for GMDT's Community Cinema programme, stewarding at next Spring's Morpeth Book Festival, or helping with office administration, volunteering with the Trust may be of interest to you. Or how about joining GMDT's Board of Trustees? There are a range of opportunities

available so for anyone wanting to know more and have time to offer your help, the Trust would love to hear from you. Contact Linda or Julie on (01670) 503866 or email [info@gmdt.org](mailto:info@gmdt.org)

## MORPETH MUSIC SOCIETY

**The first 2024 concert on Thursday February 15th starting at 7.30pm, will feature Iona Brown (violin) and David Murray (piano) in concert at Morpeth Methodist Church in Howard Terrace.**

Iona is well known to local audiences have played with the Royal Northern Sinfonia Orchestra since 1995. As well as her busy RNS role, she also guests with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Halle. Her frequent recital partner David, is another stalwart of the North East musical scene, having worked as Head of Keyboard Studies at Newcastle University since 2002.

Iona's programme will start with unaccompanied Bach and continue with Franck's virtuosic sonata for violin and piano, originally written for the Polish violinist Eugene Ysaye. Fittingly, the evening's programme will continue with Ysaye's own Ballade from his own solo violin sonata No 3 followed by two works by his pupil Henryk Wieniawski, before continuing with Brahms' last sonata for violin and piano.

Tickets for the concert are £18 (children free with an adult) from the [www.morpethmusoc.org.uk](http://www.morpethmusoc.org.uk) website, Morpeth Methodist Church or The Chantry TIC. For further information call (01670) 512076.

## MORPETH COMMUNITY CINEMA

**The first screening of 2024 is a not-to-be-missed film starring two of the UK's all-time-greats of stage and screen – Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson – in a true tale of 89-year-old war veteran Bernard Jordan who broke out of his care home to join the D-Day 70th anniversary commemorations in France in June 2015, in memory of his fallen comrades.**

His escapade hit the headlines at the time and although it lasted only 48 hours it captured the hearts of the British public. In the film Michael Caine plays Bernard and Glenda Jackson his wife.

Poignantly, the film marked the end of the careers of these two great actors. Glenda Jackson died last June while Michael Caine very recently announced his retirement from acting.

'The Great Escaper' will be shown at the Morpeth Community Cinema screening on Friday February 2nd at 7pm at the St James Centre, Wellway, Morpeth. Tickets at £6.50, will be available in the New Year from Ticketsource at The Chantry (Card Only).

## IT'S PANTO-TIME AT MORPETH!



It's coming around to panto-time again with Morpeth Pantomime Society members in full rehearsals for their forthcoming festive season offering which will once again be one of the classic all-time favourites – Dick Whittington.

Four performances of the classic tale of Dick and his cat Tommy, will be staged from Thursday January 25th to Saturday January 27th at King Edward VI School. Timings are 7pm for the Thursday and Friday show, then a 1pm Saturday matinee followed by a 6pm evening performance. All tickets are priced at £7.50 and are available from the Box Office – call 0333 666 4466 – or [www.morpethpantosociety.com](http://www.morpethpantosociety.com)

The show has been written and will again be directed and produced for the second year running by the North East's 'Mr Panto' himself Lee Brannigan, who has a wealth of experience of West End shows and cruise ships' entertainment. Lee will also take the role of the panto's Dame.

Dick will be played by Jane Pedersen, Alice Fitzwarren by Martha Gammer, Fenwick by George Humphries, Fairy Bowbells by Suzi Hutton, Queen Rat by Sarah Farnsworth Watson, while Sultaness will be a role shared by Gill Ayres and Laura Street. Leah Harvey will be Tommy the Cat, Alan Bullock will be Captain Cockles, and then Who, What and I Don't Know will be played by Mia Temperley, Lydia Watson and Finley Gammer.



## DIY school mural!

**Creative pupils from St Robert's School in Morpeth, have created an eye-catching playground mural that not only looks terrific but has saved their school a lot of money!**

Staff at the school looked into the idea of engaging professionals to design a mural to replace one that had seen better days, but were shocked when they found out how much it would cost.

So, they decided to set about creating a DIY version using the creative talents of their own students with a little help from the school's Art Lead Alice Butler. School Headteacher David Sutcliffe says the mural depicts its core values as well as the four

seasons and the passing of time.

Mr Sutcliffe says they are so proud of the work of their pupils adding: "We are known as a school that celebrates and displays the work of our children and to share what we have been working on with our wider community. Their work has made our playground welcoming as well as showing visitors what is important to us at St Robert's."

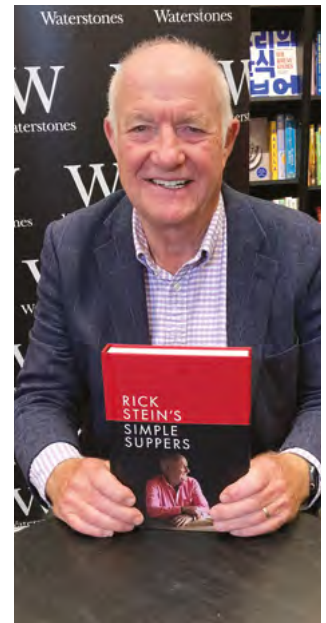
## Rick's super supper ideas!

**Celebrity chef, restaurateur and author Rick Stein called in to the Waterstones book store in Morpeth's Sanderson Arcade, for a signing-session of his latest book 'Simple Suppers.'**

Literally hundreds of his fans formed a queue the length of the Arcade to have their copy of the book signed by the man himself.

He says he has written the book to suggest 120 easy-to-follow and cook suppertime recipes for any night of the week.

Waterstones say they have copies of the book available to buy in store at £28.



## Time for tea

**More than 50 people enjoyed afternoon tea and entertainment, courtesy of a couple who were married as long as 1855!**

In 1881 Richard Hollon, Lord Mayor of York, gave the Morpeth Corporation what at the time was the princely sum of £5,000 to give 25 people from the town what he described as a 'liberal meat tea' a ton of coal and £10 a quarter, in memory of his late wife Mary who had been brought up in Morpeth by her uncle Dr William Trotter.

That tradition continues today – minus the ton of coal

– thanks to the Mary Hollon Annuity & Relief in Need Fund. Tea was provided by Newgate Street's Café des Amis, with entertainment from singer Lou Coel. The annuitants as those invited to the tea are called, have to be over the age of 75 and have lived in Morpeth for at least 10 years. Morpeth Mayor Councillor Jade Crawford was a special guest at the Hollon Tea in the Town Hall.



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# 'It's time to have a good clean up.' Jacky's traditions

By Inside Morpeth gardening columnist **Ross Pearson**

**As a boy of six or seven, I spent most weekends standing in the 'hut' belonging to my grandfather (affectionately known as 'Jacky'), peering on tiptoes at the old-fashioned tools and gardening projects spread across his well-worn work bench.**

Gardening wasn't just a pastime to Jacky, it was a way of life and things had to be done the proper way. Time spent in the presence of such a keen amateur, who gardened using traditional methods, was an education: everything in straight lines, neat rows, regimented borders of perfectly grown, gaudy annuals.

Everything had its place, everything had its purpose, everything had its particular way of being grown and nurtured. No matter what the time of year, the garden had to be tidy and his tools kept sharp and in their right place.

Today, stepping into the same hut, which now has pride of place in my own garden, I am transported back to those days. The heady smell of oil, paraffin heaters and earth remain, as do many of the lessons I learned from Jacky. With his words of wisdom echoing in my mind, it's time to have a good clean up around the garden.

## **Fruit pruning**

Winter is the perfect time to prune a plethora of fruiting trees and shrubs, including autumn-fruiting raspberries, gooseberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants, greenhouse grown grapevines and pear and apple trees.

Each one requires its own degree of pruning, but as a rule of thumb, remove any dead, crossing or crowded growth from fruit trees and shrubs and cut all canes to the ground on autumn-fruiting raspberries.

Grapevines only fruit on new growth so remove all side shoots back to two buds - don't be afraid to snip away at grapevines as they respond well to pruning.

## **Hellebore haircut**

To keep hellebores looking their best, cut back all the leaves to ground level, leaving only the flowing spikes in place.

This will not only showcase the flowers better but also encourage new, lush growth to take their place for a healthier looking plant.

## **Homemade crumbles**

January is the time to start forcing rhubarb plants into a flush of early, delicious growth.

Turn a large pot upside down over the top of the rhubarb crown, making sure to cover up any holes in the pot to cut out all the light.

Keep checking the stems and start cropping when the stems either reach the top of the pot or are around 30 cm tall.

## **Tidy up time**

Keeping the general garden tidy at this time of year is time well spent. Clear out sheds of old seeds and the inevitable pile of accumulated junk, clear pathways of slippery leaves and repair any broken pathways before expanding ice can cause more damage.

Wrap outdoor taps and isolate the water supply to prevent burst pipes and keep an eye on ponds and frozen birdbaths. The simplest and most effective maintenance task is to sharpen all tools, from spades and shears to secateurs and knives.

There are many methods to do this but a few minutes spent removing sap and rust with a scouring pad followed up by passing a whetstone over blades and finishing with a generous layer of oil will make gardening so much easier in the months ahead.

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