Santa helps Mayor light up Shildon for Christmas

Hundreds of families braved the cold weather to welcome Santa as he and his helpers, as well as the Town Mayor, Councillor Shirley Quinn, lit up the town’s Christmas tree. Timothy Hackworth School Choir entertained the crowds with carols before the Town Mayor started the countdown to light the tree, much to the crowd’s delight.

Families then followed Santa across to the Shildon Civic Hall where there was free family entertainment and a chance to visit Santa in his grotto, sponsored by the Town Council. During the day a Christmas Market, organised by the Shildon Chamber of Trade, attracted people to the Town Square to buy their Christmas gifts and they too were entertained by the school choirs from Thornhill and Timothy Hackworth primaries.

A spokesperson for Shildon Town Council said: “Thank you to everyone who came along and to all the volunteers who helped make the day happen. “It was a fantastic start to the festive season. “And there will be another chance to meet Santa too as he will be visiting the Town Square on Thursday, 21st December from 11am - 1pm. Be sure to bring your letters!”

Santa Claus was delighted to take time out of his busy Christmas schedule to make an appearance at Shildon’s Christmas Parade last Friday.

S&D Railway is Heritage Action Zone

The Stockton and Darlington Railway has been chosen by Historic England as one of eight new Heritage Action Zones announced across the country, signalling a boost in regeneration work for the project.

In another boost to the locality, Bishop Auckland town centre has also been named as one of the eight chosen projects. Heritage Action Zones is a nationwide scheme supporting local authorities to unlock untapped potential in places that are rich in history and historic fabric to help them thrive and improve quality of life for communities and businesses.

Local MP, Helen Goodman said: “I am delighted that our local vision for both Bishop Auckland and the Stockton & Darlington Railway line has received national recognition.

“The success of Locomotion and The Auckland Project demonstrates that investment in our historic sites will offer a bright future and a positive economic outlook for our community.”

For friends of the Stockton & Darlington Railway, their aim is to refurbish heritage features, like bridges and old railway buildings, along the 26-mile route in order to attract new visitors and boost the local economy ahead of the railway’s bicentenary in 2025.

Carol Pyrah, planning director for Historic England in the North-East, continued on page 4

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Clampdown on drink and drug driving this Christmas

Police will clamp down on drink and drug driving this Christmas. In the five years between 2012 and 2016, a total of 1,650 people have been injured in collisions that involved a suspected drink-driver in the North East. Thirty-eight of those were killed.

Chief Inspector Graham Milne of Cleveland and Durham Specialist Operations Unit, said: "To combat this, extra patrols and roadside checks will be conducted in the run up to and over Christmas and New Year, in a bid to tackle those who commit the unacceptable act of drink or drug driving. "It is worrying that we push this message out every year and still many reckless drivers ignore the warnings that cause devastating consequences."

Alcohol and drugs both affect your ability to judge speed and distances accurately and slow down your reaction time, warn police. Ch Insp Milne continued: "Tackling drink and drug drivers is a year round commitment for us but we know that around the festive period, many people for whatever reason, decide to get in a car while drunk. Perhaps home is 'just down the road' from the pub, but you should never get in a car under the influence."

Durham officers will be active in educational and enforcement action by carrying out random checks on drivers. "Anyone caught drink driving faces a minimum 12-18 month ban. However, deciding to drink and drive could cost you more than just your licence. Our message to drivers is simple. If you take the risk of driving whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you could kill someone, and yourself. "Even if you've had a few drinks on an evening and you think you can get up and drive the next morning, you are likely to still be over the limit. Drugs also stay in the system for a very long time" added Ch Insp Milne. Officers will breathalyse drivers and use 'Drugwipe' kits to test motorists at the roadside for anyone suspected of being impaired through cannabis or cocaine.

Motorists convicted of drink and drug driving are banned for at least a year, receive an unlimited fine and can be sent to prison. The penalty for causing death by dangerous driving under the influence of drink or drugs is up to 14 years in jail.

During last year's Christmas campaign, 116 drivers were arrested after being found to be under the influence of alcohol and a further 57 were arrested after being found to be under the influence of drugs. The public are encouraged to report any concerns relating to drink or drug driving anonymously using Crimestoppers on crimestoppers-uk.org or 0800 555 111.

Christmas Messages

Why not send Seasons Greetings to your loved ones this Christmas with a message in The Crier?

Classifieds cost 42p per word, plus £7.20 for an optional photograph (VAT inc).

The Christmas edition of The Crier will be distributed on Thursday 21st December. The deadline for submissions for this issue will be Monday 18th December at noon.

You can bring your classifieds to us upstairs in Shildon Town Council Building, Civic Hall Square, Shildon, DL4 1AH. Alternatively, submit your messages by email to crier@talk21.com and then call us on 01388 775896 to pay by card.

All messages must be submitted no later than 12 Noon on deadline day.
Shildon's the world's first railway town, claims new book

A new book detailing Shildon's early railway history goes on sale from next week.

By local author and historian Gerald Slack, only fifty limited edition signed copies of the book will initially be published, and will be available from 11th December.

Extensively illustrated, and running to over 100 pages, the book is priced at £10 and is an ideal Christmas present for those interested in the early history of the town.

Interviewed for this article Mr Slack said: “Like many people interested in early railways, in writing the book I was very conscious of the debate surrounding Shildon's place in history.

“Having researched the subject in some depth, there is no doubt in my mind that New Shildon was the world’s first railway town.

“What happened in New Shildon in the 19th century was not only significant in the development of locomotive engineering in the UK, but also had an impact on the international stage, including as far away as Russia and Canada.

“The designs and practices developed by Timothy Hackworth and William Bouch at Shildon were pinned by the railways.

“As you can imagine, population growth of that scale presented real challenges, and the last section of the book concentrates on how Shildon and its people responded. The building of the early streets, the issues of water supply and sanitation, schools and religious infrastructure.

“I think its a great story and I hope the book will go a little way towards raising the level of awareness of Shildon's contribution to early railway history, and promote the preservation of the town's railway heritage.”

The book will be available to purchase from the Shildon AFC social club on Sunday 3rd December.

Father Anthony Cornforth provided the service entitled Earth, Wind, Fire and Water, which was a moving service reflecting on the essentials to life and how we all take for granted that we have easy access to these precious commodities.

The service was conducted to a small congregation of family, friends and visiting dignitaries, giving thanks to the Mayor for the work and commitment given in her service to the town, as well as the service given by all Councillors, Mayors and MPs, and reflected on the many difficult decisions that sometimes have to be made.

Light refreshments followed and £80.60 was collected, which will be added to the Mayor’s Charities Fund.

Cllr Quinn said, “I would like to thank Father Anthony and all my guests for joining me on this special occasion and would like to thank the ladies for all their help with refreshments.”

Candlelit carol service

At 6pm on Sunday December 17th, the popular Saint John’s candlelit carol service with a tree of remembrance will take place. With popular carols, a beautiful environment and the opportunity to remember those no longer with us, the service is, for many, a chance to pause, take stock, and engage with Christmas.

There will be an opportunity to enjoy a mince pie and chat after the service.

Lottery latest

The Shildon AFC Supporters’ Club lottery’s latest draw took place at the Shildon AFC social club on Sunday 3rd December.

There was no winner of the £750 jackpot prize with the six numbers drawn from the bag being: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10. The consolation prize of £25 was won by K Watson. This week, players should select six numbers from the remaining 12 to win a jackpot of £800.

Mayor’s civic service

The Mayor of Shildon, Councillor Shirley Quinn held a Civic Service at St Thomas RC Church on Byerley Road on Sunday 3rd December.

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School Christmas fair

Care homes company show they really care

Dancers from Shildon are being invited to take to the floor for a Christmas Party Supper and Dance, when popular local organist Graeme Scarlett holds his annual Christmas Dance on the last weekend before Christmas. This year the event is being held on Saturday 23rd December. Having taken place in Shildon for several years, this year’s dance will be held at the Sycamore Suite in Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, which Graeme says is an excellent venue for dancing. A free bus will run to and from the event from Shildon.

Tickets are priced at £20, which includes a four course supper. For more information contact Graeme on 07450 880 138.

Town Council meeting

The next meeting of Shildon Town Council will take place on Monday 11th December from 6.30pm at the Town Council chambers. The meeting is open for the public to attend. Among the agenda items, the meeting’s committee will note a planning application for 40 homes on land at Redworth Road (see below, right), and is recommended to grant permission for an Armed Forces Day to take place in Hackworth Park on Saturday 23rd June next year.

Heritage Action Zones

From page 1

said: “The Stockton and Darlington Railway and Bishop Auckland both have much to be proud about - from links to the Prince Bishops to world class railway heritage. “Some of their historic sites and buildings are showing signs of neglect but with a little investment and imagination they can become assets to enjoy and benefit from again.”

Plans for 40 new homes at Redworth Road

Durham County Council has received an application for planning permission to build 40 new homes on vacant land adjacent to the Nisa store and filling station on Redworth Road. The application, by Kenworth Ltd of Catterick Garrison, is for seven two-bedroomed properties and 33 four or more bedroomed homes. The plan includes a proposal for tree and hedge planting to landscape the development around its perimeter.
Students at Greenfield Community College have been given an exciting opportunity as Tim Peake’s Spacecraft module TMA-19M arrived in Shildon.

On Wednesday 22nd November, 28 Year 9 students, along with two members of staff, were invited to a celebration morning for the arrival of the Soyuz descent module at the Locomotion Museum in Shildon, where they were able to see this amazing piece of space history.

As part of the tour a team of ‘Explainers’ from the Science Museum also delivered a science show to Year 9 at Aycliffe Campus as part of the celebration. The students were entertained by an amazing selection of experiments which had strong links to the curriculum.

Ron Milton, Deputy Headteacher, said, “It has been a great opportunity for our students, they have enjoyed exploring the themes of forces and rockets and the way it has been brought to life through links to Tim Peake’s Soyuz Capsule.

“The tour will also offer a further opportunity for Greenfield students to visit the National Railway Museum at Shildon to try a fabulous 4D virtual reality experience of the descent of the Soyuz Capsule and parachute. It has been a brilliant opportunity for the students who have enjoyed being part of the event so far.”

The Samsung-sponsored Museum Group National Tour of Time Peake’s Capsule will be in Shildon until 15th January 2018.

Co-op Funeralcare is supporting The Salvation Army in their Christmas Appeal once again this year. They are asking for donations of new toys, toiletries, towels, gloves and socks.

Any item, no matter how big or small, will be gratefully received at the Church Street funeral home on week days between 10am and 2pm. Items will be passed on to the Salvation Army who will distribute them to the homeless and others in the community who find themselves in need this Christmas. For further information call 01388 774853.

A family Christmas disco is being held at Eldon Community Centre on Saturday 16th December, between 6.30pm and 9.30pm. Santa will also be at the event. If your child would like to see Santa, contact the Community Centre before Friday 8th December with their name by calling Diane on 01388 773309.

Food and refreshments will also be available to purchase.

Meet your new beat officer

Shildon Elm Road F.C.

presents

LIVVY & THE NOIZE

Boxing Night
7pm - 11.30pm
Tickets £6

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Meet your new beat officer
**Country houses of the north east**

Middridge History Society’s next meeting will take place on Thursday 14th December, when the country houses of North East England will be the topic of discussion. “Although often overshadowed by better known southern examples, the North East has a surprising number of country houses,” said a spokesperson.

Richard Pears will talk about their evolution from Tudor times to the present, looking at their architecture, treasures and people (above and below stairs) whose wealth and work sustained the ‘big house’. The meeting will take place from 7.30pm in Middridge Village Hall. Everyone is most welcome, including non members.

**Civic carol service this Sunday**

The town’s popular Civic Carol Service will be held at Shildon’s Civic Hall this Sunday, 10th December, at 6pm. All are welcome to attend.

**Officers recover stolen goods**

Shildon Police recently seized a number of tools and a mobile phone from a known thief in Shildon. Do any of the items pictured belong to you? If so, contact Shildon Police on 101, or via their Facebook page, and they will arrange for you to officially identify the items and have them returned.

An emaciated dog was shot twice in the head before her body was dumped in a field in Old Eldon. The female Dogue de Bordeaux had recently had puppies and was extremely emaciated. X-rays show she suffered a fractured skull and veterinary opinion is that she would have suffered for some time before she died. RSPCA chief inspector Mark Gent said: “I suspect this dog has had puppies, which have drained her fat reserves as she has not been fed sufficiently and perhaps partly contributed to her extremely emaciated state. “It appears, rather than take her to a vet, her owner or someone else has decided to shoot her.

**Dog shot twice in the head and dumped in field**

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“The first attempt hasn’t been successful, so they’ve shot her again. “Vets believe she would not have died straight away and would have suffered a great deal. “It’s extremely difficult to think about what this poor dog has gone through.”

She was found in a field on the right of the lane leading to Blue House Farm, off Main Road/Moor Lane in the village on Sunday 3rd December. It is thought her body could have been there for a couple of days.

Chief inspector Gent said: “I suspect she wasn’t actually shot at the location, and that this happened somewhere else and she was dumped there. Whether this was alive or dead we don’t know.

“Vets believe she was shot with some kind of high powered air rifle. “As she wasn’t microchipped we have no way of tracing her owner at the moment, or the puppies that she has somewhere and who - given what has happened to their mum - I’m extremely worried about the welfare of. “I want to hear from anyone who saw anything suspicious, or who knows who this dog belonged to. Please call me on the RSPCA inspector appeal line 0300 123 8018 as soon as possible.”

To help the RSPCA to continue rescuing, rehabilitating and rehoming animals in desperate need of care, and to support the charity’s ‘kindness’ campaign, visit www.rspca.org.uk/winterappeal.

**Be on your guard when buying a dog**

People are being urged to be on their guard when buying a dog. Durham Constabulary, the RSPCA and Durham County Council have joined forces to warn people of the heartbreak caused by unlicensed and unscrupulous puppy traders. Behind the facade of a respectable seller is sometimes a web of organised crime, say police.

Andy Reeves, Bishop Auckland Neighbourhood Inspector, said: “We are appealing for people to come forward who have recently bought a puppy in the Bishop Auckland area that has become ill, required veterinary treatment or subsequently died. We are working with partners to identify inappropriate selling of puppies or puppy farming in the area.

“Too often people see puppy farming as a way to make money without taking the animal’s welfare into account. The proceeds from the sales of puppies are fed back into the criminal world and so a seemingly innocent purchase could actually be feeding organised crime. “As we approach Christmas, potential buyers of puppies are reminded that they should always see the puppy with the parent dog in the surroundings it has been raised. They should also ensure that the correct paperwork, KC or otherwise, is present and that the injections have been done by a recognised vet before handing over money.”

“Anyone who is concerned about the conditions they see a puppy being kept in or who is suspicious of the seller should walk away and report their concerns to us on 0300 1234 999 and their local trading standards.” For the main dos and don’ts of buying a puppy visit durham.gov.uk/buyingapuppy.
Tots ensure a lasting legacy with tree planting

A fantastic week of legacy tree planting and bulb planting took place within Hackworth Park last week. Children from Shildon Early Years, Byerley Road Pre-School, Timothy Hackworth Nursery and Thornhill Primary School, along with volunteers, Paula and Lucy from Shildon Alive, planted legacy trees supplied by the Woodland Trust, as well as bulbs ready for a show of colour in the spring.

St Mark’s Church in Eldon is extending an invitation to all children for its Messy Church group on Sunday 10th December, from 3.30pm to 5pm. The session will be themed around Christmas. “We look forward to seeing you,” said a spokesperson.

The new Monday - Saturday hourly train service from Shildon commences on Monday 11th December, when all East bound trains will run to Saltburn, with the exception of the 7.22am Shildon - Nunthorpe Service.

Holly Lodge Care Home on Maddison Street, Shildon, will be holding its Christmas Fair on Saturday 9th December, between 2pm and 4pm. A tombola, cake stalls and raffles are just some of the fun things on offer. Santa will also be in his Grotto between 3pm and 4pm with his helper Anna from Frozen. “Everyone is welcome to come along to the fair,” said a spokesperson. Tickets to visit Santa in his grotto and receive a gift are £3 each and are currently on sale at Holly Lodge.

Cancer support group pop up store

Great Aycliffe Cancer Support Group has hired premises in Newton Aycliffe town centre for two days. The shop, next door to Shoe Zone, will be manned by the team on 11th and 12th December from 10am until 2.30pm. On these days there will be members who will try and answer any questions that you may have about the group, or to lend a listening ear and offer their help. Some committee members have also had training regarding benefits, as well as helping to fill forms in for blue badges. There will be refreshments including homemade cake for a small donation, plus a tombola stall. Also on offer will be a mixture of clothing, again for a small donation.

A spokesperson for the support group said, “This time of year is hard for some people anyway, but especially hard when a family member has just been given a Cancer diagnosis. We have helped cancer patients that are homeless, we also helped families with children who through no fault of their own simply can’t even afford food. “By doing this we will show the community what we do and most of all reach out to those who are isolated and suffering from loneliness.” The group will be there both days from 10am until 2.30pm. If you would like to donate any new unwanted prizes or clothes in good condition that can help someone in need, contact Allison on 07762 258696 or Sharon on 07944 187877.

Hourly train service starts next week

The church’s Community Carol Service will take place on Wednesday 13th December at 7pm. “Come and join us to start celebrating Christmas with carols, readings and performances by the Girls Friendly Society.”

Festive Fair at Holly Lodge

Holly Lodge Care Home on Maddison Street, Shildon, will be holding its Christmas Fair on Saturday 9th December, between 2pm and 4pm. A tombola, cake stalls and raffles are just some of the fun things on offer. Santa will also be in his Grotto between 3pm and 4pm with his helper Anna from Frozen. “Everyone is welcome to come along to the fair,” said a spokesperson. Tickets to visit Santa in his grotto and receive a gift are £3 each and are currently on sale at Holly Lodge.

SHILDON AFC DECEMBER FIXTURES

ALL FIXTURES WEATHER PERMITTING

Saturday 9th December
Home v Dunston UTS

Tuesday 12th December
Away v Whitley Bay

Saturday 16th December
Away v North Shields

Saturday 23rd December
Home v Billingham Synthonia

Tuesday 26th December
Away v West Auckland Town

Saturday 30th December
Home v Newcastle Benfield

Follow @NLPostponement on Twitter for official postponement news
New Shildon AFC stand opens to the public

Shildon AFC are set to open their new stand to the public on Saturday, 9th December, when they entertain Dunston UTs in the Northern League. An official opening ceremony will take place in the new year.

The stand, built with the aid of a Football Foundation grant, is the latest phase of ground improvements to take place at the home of the recent Northern League champions. The stand will replace the iconic pagoda, which is set to be mothballed until funds become available for its refurbishment.

The club has also launched a ‘Seat for Life’ campaign to help raise further funds for the continued upgrade of the ground which offers supporters of the club the opportunity to buy a seat in the new stand for life, for just £100. Seats can be bought for loved ones, by businesses or simply as a gesture of support for the club and will carry the requested name for life.

Over 20 seats have been reserved so far and application forms are available to download from the club website at shildonafc.com. Meanwhile, Shildon’s league schedule was disrupted last week when their Division One match at home against Seaham Red Star was postponed due to heavy snowfall which covered the ground for two days ahead of the match.

The game has been re-scheduled by the league for Saturday 27th January. Indeed, the weather decimated the entire Northern League card, leaving the league table unchanged. Another fixture change sees the side’s home match against Team Northumbria, which was originally due to be played on the 3rd March, brought forward to Saturday 6th January.

Shildon remain in third position, three points behind Marske United, who have played a game less and nine points behind leaders, Morpeth Town, who have played a game more. December’s fixture list remains busy, with six league matches scheduled to take place over the coming week, including three at home and three away.

After Saturday’s match, the side will go on the road to take on Whitley Bay on Tuesday evening, followed by another tricky encounter against fourth place North Shields the following weekend.

Shildon AFC have bolstered their attack with the signing of Matthew Waters from Washington FC. The 23-year-old, who is a product of the Middlesbrough academy, graduated through the Teesside club’s ranks to Under 23 level before moving to Whitby Town.

Described as a technically gifted player with a wonderful first touch, Waters has a first prize of £300.

Shildon AFC have supported the signature of Washington and former Middlesbrough Academy player, Matthew Waters. Photo: shildonafc.com.

Shildon sign Washington striker

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