

Stockton

NEWS

Stockton Council's Community Magazine - Summer 2001



14th Riverside Festival
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5 August - 14 and 15.

Beacon Status
Government recognises excellence for
joint working between Stockton
Council and Tees Health - 18 and 19.

Making Waves in Town
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We are open for allers 10am to 4pm weekdays (9am to 4pm Mondays to Thursdays)

Stockton NEWS

Stockton News is published by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and distributed to every household in the Borough free of charge. It aims to provide news and information about the Council, its partner organisations, and local community groups and businesses. Every effort is made to ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Your views and comments are welcome.

In this issue

Page

- 2 **Going On-Line**
Stockton Library becomes one of the first UK Online Centres in the country.
- 5 **Another top award for the cabinet**
Stockton Council wins national award for reducing employee sickness and absence.
- 9 **Stockton Campus**
Sir Peter Ustinov presents degrees to more than 400 graduates.
- 12 **"Police Beat"**
Police report on further success in tackling drugs.
- 14 **Riverside Festival**
Two pages of information about "What's On" in and around the Festival. See the special two-for-the-price-of-one theatre ticket offer.
- 22 **Splash of the Day**
Councillor Terry Bean, Mayor of Stockton, and Trevor Brooking CBE open new multi-million pound leisure complex.
- 25 **Modernisation moves forward**
Up-date on "Which Way Forward?" consultation, and customer care and e-governance come to the fore.
- 36 **Ward Surgeries**
Details about your Councillor and how you can obtain help and advice.



Stockton News is produced by Stockton Council's Communications Section and designed by Bridge Design Group. Pictures courtesy of the Evening Gazette.

Foot and Mouth – Some Paths Start to Reopen

Footpaths and Rights of Way in the Borough closed as a measure against Foot and Mouth Disease are gradually reopening – but only after the risk of further infection has been carefully assessed for each path.

Initially, all 190kms of footpaths were closed in March, when the disease broke out. To date, four cases have been identified in the Stockton Borough area. However, with a number just outside the Borough



boundaries, the Council remains firmly committed to doing everything in its power to keep the disease at bay. Paths are slowly reopening, but this is a lengthy task as Council officers must carefully assess the risks involved of spreading the disease in each individual case. Priority is being given to paths across arable or urban land, where no contact with animals is likely and, as Stockton News went to press, around 45 per cent of paths and Rights of Way had already reopened. These include the Teesdale Way from Stockton to Middlesbrough via the Tees Barrage. Rights of way that are open will be signed with a green notice, informing users of the precautions to take whilst visiting the countryside.

Visitor sites are also open at:-
Billingham Beck Valley Country Park
Black Bobbies Field (Thornaby)
Bassleton/Thornaby Woods (Thornaby)
The Holmes (Thornaby)
Preston Park (Eaglescliffe)
Charlton's Pond (Billingham)
All urban parks
The Castle Eden Walkway

However, paths within 3kms of a confirmed outbreak of the disease remain closed – around 23 per cent of the total – as do countryside sites at Clarences Community Farm, Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, Stillington Forest Park and Honey Potts Wood (near Whitton).

The Council has produced a leaflet showing where paths had reopened and giving other advice to countryside users. Copies are available from many Council offices, museums and Country Parks.

For further information, please contact:

Richard Rust (Public Rights of Way) on 01642 397698

e-mail: richard.rust@stockton.gov.uk

Steve Scoffin (Countryside Sites) on 01642 358529

e-mail: steve.scoffin@stockton.gov.uk

The 'Event'

Members of Stockton Youth Forum joined other youth forum representatives from the Tees Valley to take part in 'The Event', held at the Oakwood Centre, Eaglescliffe in June.

Planned over six months and run by young people for young people. The Event offered an ideal opportunity for them to air their ideas, views and issues which affect their lives and the things that matter to them.

Youngsters presented a range of thought-provoking displays and sketches to dignitaries including Dari Taylor, MP for Stockton South, the Chief Constable, the Mayor of Stockton and local councillors as well as people from industry and commerce.

Television presenter Kirsten O'Brien, was keen to attend and give her support and, although a late train delayed her arrival, she was able to enjoy the final part of the evening.

OTC Goes UK Online

Staff at Stockton Borough Council's Open Technology Centre (OTC) in Stockton Central Library have recently celebrated a major national achievement after the facility became one of the country's first UK Online Centres.



The OTC will play a vital role in a new Government drive to get everyone in the UK online, by offering help and guidance to residents who are new to technology or who don't have their own computers at home. The Centre now offers e-mail access and, in the coming weeks, is setting up special Taster Sessions that will enable users to set up their own e-mail addresses. The UK Online initiative, which is a partnership between Government, industry, the voluntary sector, trade unions, community groups and consumer organisations, aims to ensure that everyone in the country who wants access to the Internet can get it. And staff at Stockton's Open Technology Centre are more than willing to do their bit to help the scheme succeed.

Christine Durnion, the Open Technology Centre Manager, said: "We are delighted that the Centre has been recognised by the Government as a UK Online Centre. I am sure that people will find it a friendly and helpful place to come and learn about technology and get access to the huge amount of information available on the Internet."

For more details about UK Online, visit the website at www.ukonline.gov.uk or call for further details on 01642 393997, e-mail otc@stockton.gov.uk

Walking is Better

Stockton Council's Road Safety Team joined forces with Century Radio and the four other road safety departments from the Tees Valley to highlight the benefits of walking to school during 'Walk to School Week' in May - with over 2,600 pupils from 19 primary schools actively taking part.

Up for grabs for one lucky child taking part was the chance to visit Middlesbrough Football Club's first game of next season and spend the afternoon with the Century FM commentary team. Also one child from each participating school could win a Century FM football signed by 'The Three Legends'. Walk To School Week is not anti-car because it is realised some people have a genuine need to use their cars to take children to school. In these cases they are to

park away from the school (maybe at a pub or supermarket car park) and walk the last part of the journey. Many of the cars in peak-time traffic are on the 'school run' and roads are noticeably quieter in the school holidays. By the time they've fought the school gate parking and congestion they could have easily walked there and back.

Walking gives parents a chance to teach their children valuable 'pedestrian skills' and everyone also benefits from the exercise. Many schools say that children who walk are much more alert!

Lesley Welch, Headteacher from Wolviston Primary, commented: "We had a 50% increase in people walking, which was amazing. Those who had to use a car parked well away from the school and walked the last part of the journey. It was noticeably quieter outside school for the whole week."

A Show not to be Missed!

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! The place to be is Billingham Green on September 15th and 16th as the fun of the fair is coming to town.

The show becomes more popular each year and everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy two days of real entertainment. The whole event is organised by Billingham people and everyone is encouraged to come along and join in the fun.



In the marquee you can marvel at the spectacular display of flowers and vegetables in one of the North East's leading shows. You'll have the opportunity to cheer on the two teams who put their strength to the test in the 'tug of war'. There will also be charity stalls and informative exhibitions by local businesses and organisations. On sale in the Church Hall will be a selection of handicrafts, paintings, cakes and home made jams.

A regular favourite is the free children's corner, where there's ice cream and goodies galore. And for the first time, this year there's a new senior citizen's corner with complimentary tea, coffee and biscuits.

Where Angels Tread

Angels Therapy Centre is no ordinary establishment but it could be just the place to go for a range of complementary therapies and, in particular, the Reiki system of Healing.

Wayne and Bernadette Gibson, who are both trained Masters of the System, aim to promote a deeper understanding of metaphysical sciences and to maintain the integrity of the Reiki System, which is a natural form of healing.

The programme is designed to support cancer patients, their families and

carers who may be suffering from ailments such as an impaired immune system, depression, stress or lack of sleep which are common to many people.

The business began in May 2000 and is currently based in The Business Centre in Stockton.

The couple also work in association with South Tees Holistic Cancer Care Unit, treating cancer patients and recording evidence of the effectiveness of Reiki.

If you would like to know more, please call (01642) 345633 for more information.

Just Down the Corridor...

A new 'Tees Corridor Environmental Strategy and Action Plan' will soon be helping to improve several key sites near the River Tees.

The strategy, for the section of river between the Transporter Bridge and Surtees Bridge, will address the need for reclamation and landscaping, increased leisure and educational use, and opportunities for wildlife/habitat conservation.

Consultancy firm Casella Science and

Environment Limited has been commissioned to complete the study on behalf of Stockton and Middlesbrough Councils, ONE NorthEast, English Partnerships, the Countryside Agency, British Land, British Waterways and the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust.

The improvements will cost around £30 million and work is already underway to secure this finance from a variety of sources. It should be complete as this Stockton News goes to print. The proposed improvement works will be outlined in an Action

Plan, to be implemented over the next 6 years.

To compliment this, the Council has also commissioned a separate planning and regeneration study called The Tees Navigation Strategy. Launched on July 5th, this will focus on a larger stretch of the river, between the Barrage and Low Worsall, and on exploiting the potential of nearby land for associated sustainable development. Public consultation will take place in late July - see local press and public notice boards for details.

Teesside Scheme is National Success

Youngsters in Stockton have helped Teesside Proof of Age Card Scheme to become one of the biggest in the country.



Around 16,000 Teesside teenagers have now signed up for a Validate Proof of Age Card, launched last year in a bid to prevent illegal sales of cigarettes and solvents. The scheme is part of a Teesside Health Action Zone initiative and is jointly run by the four Trading Standards Units with Tees Health.

To encourage applications, a guess the age competition was held earlier this year. All three-Stockton prize winners

were pupils at Thornaby Community Comprehensive School, and they took home a personal computer, Playstation and 35mm camera. The school also received a computer.

Sir Patrick McNair-Wilson, chairman of Photo Me - the main sponsors of the scheme - awarded the prizes at the Tees Health 'Hands on Health' day. Sainsbury's and Asda are amongst other retailers which give practical to support to the scheme. There are discounts and competitions for cardholders including:

Stockton Council guarantees leisure saver rates with discounts of between 5-30 percent on specified activities and special rates on library Internet use.

Stagecoach is offering child fare for card holders aged 12-15 years and one third discount for card holders aged 16-17 years.

Sainsbury's are offering a free draw with prizes of five Compact Disc per month between June and November 2001.

If you would like to obtain a card or are interested in offering incentives for cardholders contact the Trading Standards Unit on (01642) 391105

Details of offers are shown in a leaflet, available for schools, colleges and libraries.

Fostering - A Real Option

Daniel is 14 years old and his behaviour can be difficult to manage. As a young child, he was emotionally and physically abused, and because of this he finds it hard to form relationships with adults. Daniel needs a long-term foster placement with people who can offer him the patience he needs.

Children need looking after for a variety of reasons. Their parents may have relationship problems or difficulty in coping with caring for their children. Others, like Daniel may have suffered abuse. Being young can be difficult at times, but being unable to live with your own family can make things much worse.

Like Daniel, some children and young people need long-term foster placements until they reach independence. On the other hand, some children return to their own families after short stays in foster care and some move on to adoptive families. This is why we need foster carers from lots of difference backgrounds - because no two children are the same.

Like most other local authorities, Stockton has a shortage of foster carers, so the Child Placement Team would like to speak to anyone who is interested in finding out more. Please call them on (01642) 397212 for more information.

Free for Women

A new and exciting Adult Education project - 'Championing Women's Learning' - is running a variety of free adult education courses for women across the Borough.

There's a whole host of courses to choose from beginning in the autumn term - including Interior Design, Gardening and French Polishing. If you are looking for a change of direction then why not sign up? Nationally, 75% of those enrolling for Adult Education are women, with 46% gaining a qualification. Locally, all 'Championing Women's Learning' courses lead to a qualification. If that's not for you, then why not become a 'Learning Champion'? Are you a woman who has returned to learning? Was it a positive

experience? Did it change your life? If so, would you like to help other women who are perhaps embarking on a course for the first time?

'Learning Champions' are volunteers who encourage and offer regular support to students. Perhaps you have been a volunteer before and would like to develop your skills? If you believe you can help, then we want to hear from you.

For more information about 'Championing Women's Learning' courses or becoming a 'Learning champion' call Margot Wade, Project Co-ordinator, on (01642) 393575 or write to her at Championing Women's Learning, Kiora Hall, Ragpath Lane, Roseworth, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 9JS.



Fellowship Hall Calls for Help

One very well-used establishment is the Fellowship Hall, in West Street, Yarm.

The Fellowship Hall Committee is currently awaiting news after applying to several businesses and bodies for financial help to give their efforts a boost. They have applied to Lloyds TSB Foundation, Charities Aid Foundation, and Northern Rock Foundation and are now awaiting the results of their applications. It is hoped that the money will go towards a Hearing Loop Sound System and Mobile Stage.

Established as a trust in July 1999, it provides a central meeting place and recreational facility for the people of Yarm and surrounding rural communities. The hall is used for a wide variety of activities including the arts, education, sport health, a slimming club as well as National Blood Donor sessions. It also gives disabled and disadvantaged groups the opportunity to take part in a variety of community activities. It is also available for weddings, social events and has conference facilities.

Lots of social events and entertainment take place in the hall so if you would like to know more please call (01642) 782957 or 888786 or e mail peter.monck@ntlworld.com

Better Safe than Sorry

Off on your jollies this summer? Remember to check out whether you need any holiday travel vaccinations before you go.

You need to ensure that you are protected against any illnesses and diseases that are more common abroad. You may need to be vaccinated against hepatitis, typhoid, rabies, polio, yellow fever, meningitis and diphtheria. Some countries require that you take a certificate of yellow fever vaccination with you. Malaria may be a problem too, so find out before you go from your local doctor's surgery or call NHS Direct on: 08454647.

Reaching for the Stars

The roof of the £90,000 Planetarium at Castle Eden Walkway Country Park is almost complete, thanks to hard-working trainees from Stockton Council and volunteers from the Cleveland and Darlington Astronomical Society.

The 15 metre high Planetarium building, the only one in the area, has been designed to give visitors a bird's eye view of the sky at night.

Keith Horkan, Construction Training Officer with Stockton Council, said: "Our Environment Task Force trainees, Youth Trainees and Apprentices have been absolute stars. With help from the volunteers they have moved heaven and earth to complete the brickwork and the roof.

Work is expected to be complete by November, when the planetarium opens to budding astronomers. Made possible through the European

Regional Development Fund, the project is being jointly managed by the Cleveland & Darlington Astronomical Society and Stockton Council.

The projector for the planetarium has been donated by the Genk Planetarium in Belgium.



Planetarium under construction

Pete Johnson's Winning Formula



Previous winner of Stockton Children's Book of the Year, Pete Johnson, returned to winning ways by taking the 2001 award for his popular title 'The Creeper'.

Pupils from 24 primary and secondary schools across Stockton eagerly read five children's titles before voting for their favourite in Stockton's own version of the Booker Prize.

Presentations were made at Stockton Central Library where Sean Hynes, Customer Services Manager at Safeway Stores Plc, Ingleby Barwick, presented prizes to the children and announced that Dean Parkinson from Mandale Mill Primary School had won the Book Review of the Year Award.

Books to be nominated this year were *Elephant Ben* by Geoffrey Malone, *The Brugan* by Stephen Moore, *Killer Mushrooms Ate My Gran* by Susan Gates, *The Creeper* by Pete Johnson and *The Dream Master* by Theresa Breslin.

Grateful thanks go the sponsors of the event - Safeway Stores Plc at Ingleby Barwick, Badger for Books, Thornaby-A-Reading-Town and The Retired Members Association.

Council Wins Top Award

Stockton Council's achievement in improving staff morale and efficiency by reducing employee absence rates has been recognised nationally.

Stockton Borough Council was one of just a handful across the country to win a Risk Management Award from the ALARM - Association of Local Authority Risk Management.

Stockton's Employee Rehabilitation Programme has seen absence levels in one department fall to 3.04% per annum, compared to a national average for councils of 5%. The programme was designed to assist people suffering illness, injury or non-medical problems to regain their independence and return to work as quickly as possible.

Financial benefits include savings on management time, sick pay, overtime and temporary labour. Insurance premiums have also been reduced for two successive years as insurers recognise the value of Stockton Council's pro-active approach to rehabilitation and preventative risk management.

Confidence Boost for Parents

European Social Funding means that Parenting Plus can now expand and offer further training for parents in Stockton.

The course encourages parents to establish and maintain their confidence, improve their communication skills, learn to relax and improve their future prospects in a comfortable atmosphere where they can meet new people at the same time.



The first Parenting Plus course has been such a huge success with a zero drop-out rate that there will now be an extra 'New You' course starting in September as well as Parenting Skills Courses, Numeracy, Literacy and Basic ICT skills.

Parenting Plus offers a wide range of services for families within the Borough and welcomes referrals from agencies as well as parents who would like to just come along themselves. There's plenty of advice and support which includes home visits, accredited training courses, theme based coffee mornings and general family based activities.

If you would like to know more about the great courses on offer, call Lynne Smith, Training and Development Worker, on (01642) 391328 or one of the Parenting Plus team on (01642) 415152.

Social Fund Improves Local Job Prospects

Stockton Council's Social Services Department is delighted at being awarded a grant from the European Social Fund for an Employment Support Project - to help people with many disadvantages to improve their job prospects.

The project will initially work with 110 clients and it is envisaged that it will be opened up to support more people through the development of the Stockton-on-Tees Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan.

The Employment Support project aims to help socially excluded people into supported or open employment. Training support, advice, guidance, assessment and care plans will be provided by a multi-disciplinary team of workers who, up to the end of

December 2001, will be providing a high degree of support to the clients. Jane Humphreys, Assistant Director (Operations) Social Services, said: "We were extremely pleased to receive funding from the European Social Fund towards the costs of this initiative.

"The local authority, along with our partners and the voluntary sector, are always seeking new ways to maximise the employment prospects of all people who are disadvantaged through disability, age, gender or race - and this is a positive route we are undertaking".

Employment opportunities for both paid and voluntary placements are required for clients of the project and Stockton Borough Council and North Tees Primary Care Trust have already pledged their support.

The World Comes to Billingham

From Saturday 11th - 18th August Billingham will once again be hosting a selection of some of the best folklore groups in the world.

You can choose from three venues to experience the talents of exhilarating and colourful dance groups: the Marquee in the Park in the afternoon and the College and Forum Theatres by night.

Groups from Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Kenya, Moldova, Romania and the USA will delight you with their spirit and expertise. Don't forget the daily Children's Club held in the Marquee, plus two youth dance courses.

Tickets are selling fast and early booking is recommended. Call the Festival Office on (01642) 553220 for a leaflet packed with information or the Forum Box Office on (01642) 552663.



Young People take to the Water

Twenty young people are finding new horizons thanks to an exciting project by Stockton Youth Service.

The programme which began early in May offers watersports, DJ workshops, orienteering and a healthy eating course to name but a few activities. When the course is finished, some great celebrations are planned for next month.



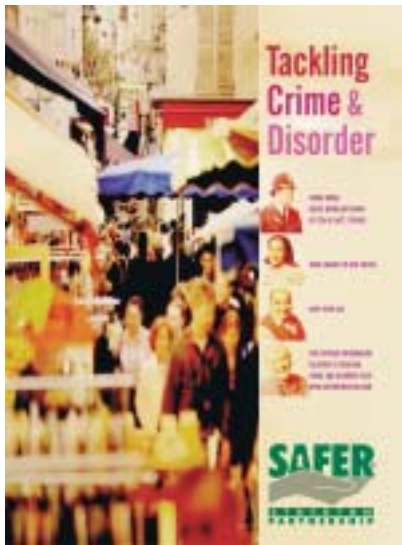
The project gives young people the opportunity to broaden their horizons and open up options for making those important career choices.

Sixteen year old Claire Higgins is enjoying the course, she said: "The programme has been very good and everyone has been working well together as a team." Wayne Whitfield, who is also 16, said: "I have really enjoyed participating in this programme. It has given me the opportunity to take part in activities that I would never have thought of doing. I look forward to every Thursday and meeting new people."

Tackling Crime and Disorder

Look out for the Crime and Disorder publication being delivered in July.

Produced by the Safer Stockton Partnership, it shows levels of crime and disorder and what we have been doing to deal with it over the last two years.



Most importantly, we included a questionnaire to find out which crime issues concern you the most. We would like to hear from anyone who lives in, or visits, the Borough. You have until 16th October to complete it and return it using the free postage. By taking part in this exercise you could win an alarm for your home. You will also be steering the way we deal with crime and disorder over the next three years. Once the public consultation is over, we will be publishing a strategy that shows which issues have been identified as priorities to be dealt with.

To make sure we get the best possible response, we are visiting community groups, schools and businesses to encourage them to send in the questionnaire. Copies are available at a number of dentist and doctors' surgeries. Alternatively, you can visit www.saferstockton.com or telephone the Community Safety Team on (01642) 393755 for a copy. If you would like a member of the team to come and speak to your group or organisation please call the same number and we can arrange for a speaker.

Nothing Wasted

A New state-of-the-art Household Waste Reception Facility will open in November at Haverton Hill.

Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough Councils have joined forces to provide the new site, which will incorporate the latest technology, plant and equipment to separate and segregate wastes. Located alongside the 'Energy from Waste' plant operated by SITA it will offer a safe, conveniently located facility for non-hazardous household waste.

The new site will replace the dated Household Waste facility at Portrack, which will close when the new one opens.

The new site will increase the amount of household waste we can recycle and reduce the amount sent to landfill - so it's much better for the environment.

The new facility will open:
8.00am to 7.00pm -
1st April to 31st October
8.00am to 6.00pm -
1st November to 31st March

Local businesses, particularly small building firms and horticulturists, will be able to dispose of some of their non-hazardous trade and commercial waste by setting up with an account with SITA.



To prevent fly tipping at the old Portrack site, Stockton Council will work with the Environment Agency to install CCTV cameras before it closes. The cameras will be used to record fly tippers' identities and their vehicle registration details. New laws mean that flytippers can be fined a maximum of £20,000 or face up to six months imprisonment.

Lee Tweddell, Stockton Council's Waste Management Officer, warns: "Fly tipping is a crime and will not be tolerated. Whilst most people dispose of their waste responsibly, there are those who continue to tip their waste around the Borough. We are closing the old site but not before the new one opens, so there is no excuse for dumping rubbish."

For further information on the new Household Waste Reception Facility contact (01642) 391162.

All Eyes on Stockton

Stockton's place on the tourist map is in the spotlight this autumn when the Borough hosts a major national tourism conference.

This is a tribute to the hard work of the Council's tourism team in putting Stockton firmly on the tourism map, nationally and internationally. 140 tourism professionals from across the UK will be attending the annual Tourism Management Institute conference at Hotel Tall Trees in Yarm, together with many high profile guest speakers. By showcasing Stockton and the Tees Valley they will help generate more visitors here in future years. Kathy Winspear, the Council's Tourism Officer, has been delegated as the Institute's Northern Representative. If you would like more information about the Institute or tourism in the Borough, please contact Kathy on (01642) 415384 or e mail

kathy.winspear@stockton.gov.uk
You can also request a wide range of local tourist information on e mail touristinformation@stockton.gov.uk
The Tourist Information Centre is open Monday to Saturday 9.00am to 5.00pm, in Theatre Yard, off Silver Street in Stockton, or tel. (01642) 393936.



Talking to George Glass about the issues that affect the day-to-day lives of blind people it is hard to imagine that once he retreated from the world because of his blindness.

Seeing Through 'Glass'

As a young man who was totally blind by the age of 20 and lacking in confidence George chose a reclusive lifestyle which meant for years he spoke to no one but his parents or their carers.

"It wasn't until my father died in 1985 that I knew about decimal coinage. I never used to bother about such things. I left that to my father and mother," he explains. That previous life is in remarkable contrast to the life George now leads as chairman of a community group which works towards easier access for



George Glass

blind people to the sort of things that sighted and even partially sighted people can take for granted. Imagine going shopping and not being able to see the colour of the clothes you are buying or being unable to read a book and having to rely on spoken word cassettes. Five years ago George, who is in his late 60s, and his friends Annie Kallagher and Geoff Garnett set up Stockton Blind People's Voice to improve access to all sorts of activities, education and entertainment.

When George tried to learn German on a college course he wasn't told the name of the textbook the class would be using until the day the course started. That left him having to wait months before a textbook in Braille could be prepared for him.

"For the first term I had no Braille at all. If I had been told at the end of the summer term which textbook was to be used I would have been able to get it in time. But that was in the late eighties and things are gradually improving," says George.

Much of that improvement in Stockton has to be credited to George and his colleagues. They have spent years trying to raise awareness in the town of blind people's needs.

Stockton Borough Council now consults Stockton Blind People's Voice over such things as the improvement in pedestrian crossings. They were consulted over the new swimming pool in the centre of the town and this magazine will be turned into a spoken word cassette for blind members of the community.

In Stockton Central Library there is a computer which blind people can use with a voice synthesiser, a Braille embosser and a scanner which enables the blind to read their post. George said: "I do find a lot of people are afraid of the blind. I was myself when I was all right. I feared it could happen to me. But people should treat you as an ordinary person and not worry too much about saying something that might offend such as 'see you later'. It's only a figure of speech.

"As a group we have had a great deal of success but there is always more to do."

That's a thought that would no doubt have daunted the younger George Glass but not the chairman of an active community group which is determined to make itself heard.

Anyone who wants to contact the Stockton Blind People's Voice should telephone either George on (01642) 611978 or Geoff Garnett on (01642) 709476.

Young Offenders Make Good

Stockton's Youth Offending Team is working with young offenders to help improve the local environment.

A partnership between the Youth Offending Team, Northumbria Water and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust has allowed young people subject of a court reparation order to work on a wildlife site at the Tees Barrage,



Tree planting at Portrack Marsh

Stockton. The wetland at Portrack Marsh is a haven for wildlife such as water voles, lapwings and skylarks. Dave Walker from Stockton Youth Offending Team said: "These young people have worked really hard with a lot of enthusiasm and they enjoy the work. For some, it is the first time they have carried out physical work and I have been amazed how they have enjoyed it."

The first people to complete their court order have asked to go back to work with a team of volunteers who regularly work on the site.

In a few short weeks, the young people involved have already planted over 200 trees and cleared nearly 100 metres of ditches.

It is important that Portrack Marsh Nature Reserve has a sense of local ownership about it, rather than being just purely for specialist birdwatchers and botanists, and the team is helping with their contribution.

Two very special guests were amongst those to receive their degrees from Chancellor, Sir Peter Ustinov, the annual graduation ceremony of the University of Durham Stockton Campus on 26 June.

Olympic Medallist Brings Golden Touch to Ceremony

400 graduates and their families took part in three separate ceremonies at Stockton Parish Church.

In recent years, the ceremony has provided a colourful spectacle on Stockton's High Street but, because of growing number this year, it was decided to bus the graduates in to Stockton's Church Road from the

Campus, has led the development of facility to fruition in recent year and is due to retire in September. Both received honorary degrees.

Following the degree ceremony, Matthew Pinsent officially named a boat 'Gold Fever' at the University of Durham's Stockton Campus Boat Club. The vessel is already a winner, having carried Great Britain's coxed four to victory in last August's World



Graduates of the future? Three youngsters take in the degree ceremony.

university campus at Teesdale where they walked in procession across the civic square. The whole operation was planned with military precision and declared an overwhelming success.

The whole operation was planned with military precision and declared an overwhelming success.

Amongst those to receive their awards were triple Olympic gold oarsman Matthew Pinsent CBE, who made sporting history in the Sydney Games, and John Hayward who, as Provost of the University of Durham Stockton

Championships in Croatia, where the winning team were trained by the University of Durham's Senior Rowing Coach.

'Gold Fever' takes its name from the tv series that followed the fortunes of Britain's now-legendary coxless four, of which Matthew was a member. The boat will now be used by members of the University's Stockton Campus Boat Club.

Matthew's honorary degree and the naming of 'Gold Fever' comes at a time when a major water-sports scheme has been given the go-ahead on the North Bank of the River Tees at Stockton (see page 10).

His rowing partner and record-breaking Olympian Sir Steve Redgrave received an honorary degree from the University of Durham five years ago in 1996.

'Stagecoach' Stands and Delivers

Youngsters from across the Tees Valley have benefitted from the expert tutors of Stagecoach Theatre Arts since 1997.

With more than 500 children currently being trained in the performing arts every weekend, the area is seeing the



fastest growth in Stagecoach schools in the whole of the British network.

Not only that, but a record was set for the 'Largest Worldwide Performance of a Musical' with over 12,000 children taking part in the largest worldwide performance anywhere was held at the Oakwood Centre, Eaglescliffe, with 420 children on stage at the same time now proudly sits in the Guinness Book of Records.

Stagecoach has a string of accolades to its name. Billingham star, Jamie Bell is a Stagecoach student and was sent to audition for 'Billy Elliott' by the company. Many children perform in professional productions in local theatres, TV adverts and children's ITV presenters.

If you would like to know more about courses for children and adults, please call (01642) 608696.

Student Safety

The NHS 24-hour health helpline is expanding its service to target students living away from home. York College of Art and Design has teamed up with NHS Direct to design postcards aimed at promoting the service to young people. The postcards can now be found in higher and further education colleges across the Tees Valley.

Public / Private Partnership for Stockton Massive Boost for Waterfront

Watersports centre sets the shape for things to come.

£140 MILLION of public and private investment is to create a new business park and almost double the size of the University of Durham Stockton Campus, dramatically improving one of Stockton's last derelict riverside areas. And, in the first development on the site, work has already begun on a £1.5m watersports centre.

Over 2,100 permanent jobs will be created on the 40-acre site of the former Malleable steel works, which closed in 1983. To the east of the Princess of Wales Bridge, it lies opposite the existing university campus, which will expand onto the river's north bank.

The scheme will include:

- High-tech business units linked to University research facilities;
- New University teaching space and student accommodation;
- A pedestrian bridge across the Tees;
- A new promenade with footpath and cycle links to the town centre and barrage;
- A new hotel/pub/restaurant;
- Landscaping and open space.



Artist impression for a major water sports development on the North Bank of the River Tees at Stockton

new, knowledge-based industry. It will be attractively laid out alongside the river and English Partnerships believe it will act as "a major engine for growth in Teesside."

Many businesses are expected to find the opportunity to set up next to the expanded university's research facilities highly attractive. Here, they would be able to tap into the

jigsaw for that area, with a major job creating boost made possible by the commitment of all the partners to work together to bring these opportunities to Stockton.

The first phase of the scheme is a new £5m road access that will form a key gateway into Stockton town centre and also improve traffic flow and road safety at Stockton's Riverside and Princess of Wales Bridge, including the Church Road, Maritime Road and Portrack Lane area.

Although work on the main scheme will not start until 2002, one development on the site is already well under way, in the shape of an innovative riverbank watersports facility.

The Tees River Users Trust recently won backing for the centre from Sport England in the shape of a lottery grant of almost £1million towards the £1.5m total cost.

Due for completion in September, it will provide a purpose built facility for several watersports clubs, as well as providing much needed boat storage, social and training space. The Centre will work closely with a number of other organisations and groups to encourage wider participation in watersports.

'The plan is to create a thriving commercial centre at the forefront of technical development'

This is the largest development announced in the region this year and will also create thousands of temporary jobs during construction. It will be carried out by a partnership of English Partnerships, Stockton Council, the University of Durham Stockton Campus and One NorthEast. English Partnerships has already announced £18m of investment, with a further £3.5m the subject of a bid for European funding.

The plan is to create a thriving commercial centre at the forefront of technical development, focusing on

technological expertise offered by the university, which will be specialising in research into health and the environment.

John Hayward, Provost of University of Durham Stockton Campus, said: "This is a milestone for investing the full potential of University expertise into the economy of the region - more jobs based on our research and improved learning facilities. It enables us to double the size of our present campus."

Stockton Council has welcomed the scheme as the missing piece of the

Local Heros

THE actions of two special residents of the Borough of Stockton have not gone unrecognised.

David Stokes and Margaret Newman (pictured here) each received a special award for environmental improvement by the Tidy Britain Group. These were presented by the Mayor of Stockton, Cllr Terry Bean, as part of the Queen Mother's Birthday Awards. David is 63 years old and has polio and, unbeknown to himself, his sister



"I like to keep the street clean and spend quite some time outside with my sweeping brush!"

Audrey nominated him for the award. She became aware that he conscientiously collected any litter he came across as he went out for his regular walk along the cycle track, near to his home in Elm Tree, Stockton.

Margaret, who lives in Billingham, has always been diligent about keeping her locality clean and tidy and has even planted flowers outside of her own land boundary.

David said: "I started off by helping youngsters from the local secondary school to collect aluminium cans for the school. It just snowballed from there and I continued to collect litter every time I was out walking."

Margaret said: "I was really surprised when the Tidy Britain Group contacted me. I like to keep the street clean and spend quite some time outside with my sweeping brush!"

Work on the South Stockton Link is forging ahead.

It's a Link Up

Work on the South Stockton Link is forging ahead, with piling in the Tees riverbed and embankment already completed and the bridge abutments currently being put in place.

Passers-by will notice that the bridge abutments have started to be cast and reinforcement is being put in place in preparation for the concrete to be poured. The bridge across the Tees is due to be lifted into place in November or December of this year. This phase of the project known as Stage 3 will complete the section of the road between Concorde Way and

"But there are other significant benefits. At the moment Ingleby Barwick traffic has to use Thornaby Road and run through residential Thornaby to access the A66 or Stockton. That is a lot of traffic and brings with it all the problems associated with congestion such as traffic emissions and road safety issues. The South Stockton Link will offer a significant benefit to Thornaby Road as it will give people much more direct access to Stockton and the A66. There will be great environmental and safety improvements too for those living along or using Thornaby Road." On the completion of the road at Stage 3 there will be a temporary link



Children from St Cuthbert's Primary School in Stockton went on a tour of the South Stockton Link road, followed by a trip to Preston Hall Museum for a closer look at a JCB.

Ingleby Barwick and is expected to be completed for Spring 2002. The project by Stockton Borough Council is running on time and within its budget. Following that, Stage 2 of the work is expected to begin in the middle of next year with advanced earthworks with the major construction work beginning a year after that. It is anticipated that the entire road will be finished towards the end of 2005 or early 2006.

The South Stockton Link will then provide a vital road link between Ingleby Barwick and Stockton town centre and the A66.

Stockton Borough Council's Assistant Director of Engineering and Transportation, Mike Robinson, said: "We have demonstrated through the findings of consultants that without the vital third access Ingleby Barwick can't support the development of housing it was intended for.

into Lowfields Avenue at Ingleby Barwick to allow people from the estate access to the main road. Mike said it is hoped the temporary link will only be for a matter of months until the link through Myton Way on the estate is built by Persimmon Homes.

Consideration is being given to a traffic calming scheme on Lowfields Avenue and a consultation involving residents will take place in the near future. This will help to reduce the impact of the temporary Lowfields Avenue link on local residents. Mike said that may include traffic crossing facilities for the school which could be permanent so traffic calming measures could be a mixture of both temporary and permanent measures. The Council will adopt its 'Community Engineer' approach, inviting residents to assist in the design process for the traffic calming.

POLICE BEAT

... DRUGS ... UPDATE ... DRUGS ... UPDATE ... DRUGS ... UPDATE ... DRUGS ... UPDATE ... DRUGS

Many people often ask what Stockton Police are doing about the drugs and dealers in Stockton. The answer is – A LOT. You will have seen in recent editions of Stockton News the tremendous success of the Dedicated Drugs Unit at Stockton in targeting known drug dealers and recovering substantial amounts of illegal drugs (to date the team has recovered over £800,000 worth of drugs in the Stockton area). The Unit has arrested over 200 people.

Clearly, success of this kind does not just 'happen', but is carefully orchestrated and planned. Many of the successful drugs 'operations' take



months to plan and execute, but in order to achieve the success we all want, i.e. a conviction at court, meticulous preparation is required. Our methods include high profile, uniform 'busts', as well as 'undercover' observations and evidence gathering, prior to arrest, often using advanced technical equipment. Information and intelligence is the key to our success, so it is vital that the excellent flow of information continues to come in to Stockton Police from the public. Please contact the Drugs Unit on 01642 302340 with ANY information you have in relation to drug activity. In addition to the proactive work of the Drugs Unit, the Drug Education Team, based at Billingham, works closely with schools to develop school drug policies and the provision of drug education within schools. The D.E.T. is a multi-agency project comprising representatives from the

Police, Education and Tees Health Authority and has provided excellent training to teachers, parents and school governors in order that the appropriate drug education can be given to the children at an early age. In addition to enforcement and education, Stockton Police representatives regularly meet with other agencies such as Health, Social Services, Education, Licensees and Voluntary Groups to develop effective action plans to reduce the levels of drug misuse, and Stockton Police District Commander plays a significant role with the Stockton Drugs Action Team.

Inspector Eric Robinson, Head of Community Safety, says "The people of Stockton can be reassured that Stockton Police have a very robust Drug Strategy, encompassing Enforcement, Education and joint working with other agencies. We aim to improve the quality of life for all of those people living and working in Stockton, by protecting them from the misuse of drugs and associated crime. We appreciate the help we get from the public and ask that it continues".

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S OPEN MEETING

If you wish to "have your say" about policing in Stockton, then the place to be is Stockton Library at 6.30 p.m. on Thursday, 13th September, 2001, where Cleveland's Chief Constable, Mr Barry Shaw, QPM, BA (Hons), will be



Chief Constable, Mr. Barry Shaw

available to answer questions at the annual Open Meeting. He will be joined by the local Police Commander and the Chair of the Police Authority. Last year's meeting produced some lively debate, but was poorly attended. It would be nice if this year's meeting attracted a 'full house'. This is your opportunity to state your

views. You may even want to come and praise your local Police to the Chief Constable. Now that would be a refreshing change! Look out for posters in your local community buildings and local press.

CYBER COPS

The new Cleveland Police Internet web-site is now on-line and is packed with information about all four Police Districts (i.e. Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Langbaurgh) as well as information on the history of the Force, crime prevention matters, advice on a host of topics and the Top 10 Enquiries we get (we even give the answers!). In addition, the site even tells you the roads where the speed cameras are situated around the Force area – there's no excuse now! The site is in its infancy and is being expanded all the time.

In the meantime, get clicking –

www.cleveland.police.uk

NEW OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT FOR STOCKTON

Stockton Police have recently appointed a new Head of Operations. Superintendent Tom Stoddart takes over from Len Ross who has moved to Headquarters.

Tom started his career with the police service 27 years ago at Stockton. His service has been a mixture of uniform and CID duties, including spells as a Constable, Sergeant and Inspector with the Serious Crime Department and as a Sergeant in the Training Department. He was involved in the 'Reach for Success' national basketball project for young people and was instrumental in getting it established in the South Bank area when working there as an Inspector. At present, he is Acting Superintendent, Crime Operations working from Headquarters.

Superintendent Stoddart said, "I am absolutely delighted to be working in the District where I started my police career. It is a tremendous challenge and I look forward to working with a committed and enthusiastic workforce and the people of Stockton, to make it a safer place to live and work".

A Voice for Volunteers

IF Voluntary work is something you have considered then Stockton Borough Voluntary Development Agency (SBVDA) supports and promotes the development of a vibrant and active voluntary sector within the Borough of Stockton, and the Agency is committed to the development of a skilled volunteers.

SBVDA act as consultants, offer training and advice on funding, provide a resource library available to the voluntary sector and cover an

and become involved in the local community. Some have been away from work for a while and need to increase self-confidence and learn new skills or simply have time on their hands and want a challenge and sense of purpose. We offer training and support to volunteers in areas such as youth work, mental health, admin support, accountancy, advocacy, listening, mentoring, child-care, disability, education and training, homelessness, conservation and many more.

SBVDA is also embarking on a Millennium Volunteers Project, aimed at 16 to 24 year olds who will give



Thinking of Volunteering?

extensive number of publications that are available on a free loan basis. It offers administrative and secretarial support to local groups and organisations with printing and photocopying facilities.

The Agency acts as a Volunteering Bureau for those wanting to volunteer, and provides a matching service with groups and organisations that need volunteers. Building on the work already achieved at the Agency, the role of the volunteer development officer is to identify and develop volunteering opportunities and in turn find suitable volunteers to fulfil these roles. Potential volunteers are matched to appropriate volunteering placements.

Carolynne Withers, volunteer development officer, said: "My job is to help identify and develop volunteering opportunities and in turn find suitable volunteers to fulfil these roles.

"Potential volunteers may want to gain experience in a particular area with a view to employment or a change in career. They may have recently retired and want to use their skills to help others, or moved into the area and want to make new friends,

their time for the benefit of others. The MV Project has already been well received by many organisations involved with young people and links are being established to get this challenging project underway.

For further information please contact SBVDA (Stockton Borough Voluntary Development Agency), 27 Yarm Road, Stockton-on-Tees. TS183NJ. Tel: 01642355292 Fax:01642 355294 or email:office@sbvda.org

Director's First

Stockton Council's Director of Finance, Bob Patterson, has been elected as the national president of the Society of Municipal Treasurers. The Society represents the Directors of Finance for the London Boroughs, the major English cities and the unitary council. Stockton is the first unitary authority to hold the presidency.

Hospice Help is Blooming

The national campaign last month to give people the chance to find out more about the hospice movement was a huge success in Teesside with more than £2,000 being raised.



The well known face of Mary Butterwick (centre) with Merchandise Manager Pauline Smith (left) and Margaret Mallon, Adult Fundraiser (right).

Events run by the Butterwick Hospice in Stockton were kicked off with a yellow ribbon cutting by the Mayor of Stockton, Cllr Terry Bean. An 'antiques roadshow' held at the Swan in Billingham raised £310 followed by a tea dance at Arc which raised £70. The giant sunflower in Stockton High Street caused quite a stir as did Father Kevin Dixon from Billingham when he allowed youngsters at St. Joseph's RC Primary School to shave off his beard! Margaret Mallon, Fundraiser for the Butterwick Hospice, said: "This week was not only about raising money, but also about raising awareness about the hospice movement, as the two go hand in hand."

Free Training Offer

Cleavearc Training (Cleveland Alzheimers) offers free training courses to the carers of people with dementia.

The courses are designed to help with the stress of caring for a loved one with dementia. They vary from educational to recreational and are run throughout the year. If you are interested and would like to be added to their mailing list for future courses, please call Cleveland Alzheimers on (01642) 357599.

THE 14TH STOCKTON INTERNATIONAL RIVERSIDE FESTIVAL

27TH JULY – 5TH AUGUST 2001

It's Festival time! The Stockton International Riverside Festival is back with ten wonderful days and nights of entertainment for everyone.

A fantastic free music weekend at the Riverside Stage over the opening weekend (27-29 July) culminates in the award-winning pop party – this year billed as “Feel the Noise – Live!” ARC's takes in music, comedy, film, theatre and dance in its most ambitious programme yet, stretching over the Festival's full ten days. The Riverside sees one of the most unusual stages ever built for a tremendous five-night outdoor theatre production by Holland's Vis a Vis (31 July – 4 August). Street theatre takes over for the final three days (3-5 August), with free family entertainment on and around the High Street, before what promises to be a fabulous Finale brings the Festival curtain down on Church Road and the High Street.

RIVERSIDE MUSIC STAGE Friday 27 – Sunday 29 July



Music opens the Festival in style with three days and nights of local, national and international talent at the Riverside Stage – and it's all for FREE! You'll find everything here from Indie music to disco diva Brutus

Gold plus, of course the fantastic free **FEEL THE NOISE – LIVE!** pop party. The weekend begins with two showcases of emerging talent from the Circulation Recordings stable. Friday evening brings a line-up of Nu Metal and Electronica artistes, followed by an afternoon of musical contrasts from rap to reggae and punk to pop. Saturday night sees the return of tank tops and loons as Brutus Gold brings his Love Train, courtesy Magic 1170mw. Highlight for 60,000-plus pop fans will be **FEEL THE NOISE – LIVE!** – the chart-topping pop party, brought to you with 96.6 tfm and NatWest. This is your chance to see stars of the calibre of A1 and Shaft, plus a

host of others live on stage - all for free! And with two giant live video screens, you won't miss a moment. Tune in to 96.6 tfm for news of the latest additions to the bill.

STREET THEATRE Friday 3 – Sunday 5 August



The Riverside is rightly famed as one of the world's leading festivals of street entertainment. No other UK event can rival the tremendous range of street theatre on show around Stockton's town centre over the Festival's final three days.

This year, we go well and truly back to the streets with a tremendous programme. The High Street is the main focus with dozens of performers from across the globe including the “On The Kerb” Showcase of the National Street Arts Festival. The fabulous Pati Free cabaret moves to the Green Dragon Yard with its high-octane blend of acts from around the globe. And who's to say just what you might find around the next corner it might be anything from an 8-foot Gorilla to a manic robot from the many walkabout performers – but it's unlikely to be what you expected! The Festival closes with its now-traditional finale event – this year on as grand a scale as ever as Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International parade their spectacular “Grand Magix” along Church Road and the High Street with the latest Riverside Festival world premiere.

OUTDOOR THEATRE Tuesday 31 July – Saturday 4 August



Vis a Vis present an action-packed thriller in “Picnic”, mixing comedy with the classic elements of “film noir”. On an amazing double stage on the Riverside, two plays are acted out. Front stage, a couple discover a body in a quiet picnic area, his case full of money, and their lives are changed forever. Behind the scenes, a whole new drama unfolds as

accidents happen, actors miss cues, lamps explode – but still the show goes on. In this theatre, you get to see both sides! Stockton is one on just four UK venues for the dynamic and visual humour of Vis a Vis, who are still remembered locally for their “Central Park” show, with its tilting skyscraper set, at Riverside Festival 95. “Picnic” is just as good. A definite must see!

COMMUNITY CARNIVAL Saturday 4 August (11am)



One of the Festival's brightest highlights, the Carnival splashes colour and sound across the town centre as it makes its way along the High Street. The local participants spend weeks preparing their elaborate costumes and

learning with dance and movement – you'll be amazed at the imagination in their creations. This year's theme is “What lurks beneath?” ... beneath the water, the bedclothes, dark corners.... A carnival glimpse of the stuff of dreams - or could it be nightmares? Later in the day comes a memorable celebration of UK carnival in all its forms through a collaboration between Festival favourites The Barracudas and The Trinidad & Tobago Carnival Club from South London in a carnival party with over 120 performers

FESTIVAL FINALE Church Road/High Street: Sun 5 Aug (10pm)



The world premiere of “Grand Magix” will provide a truly memorable Festival Finale. Neighbourhood Watch Stilts International describe themselves as “technicians of enchantment”, using

giant inflatables, music, fireworks and special effects to spectacular effect to tell the tale of the emergence of two sibling magicians at a time of cosmic misalignments. The creatures will parade

slowly from Church Road and on to the High Street before the ultimate pyrotechnic battle sees the Festival go out with its usual bang.

MUSIC & COMEDY AT ARC



ARC is now one of the North East's most impressive entertainment venues in and plays its biggest part yet in the Festival. A huge music bill includes ranges from the world's oldest soul

band, Punk legends, Top 40 breakers, Jazz and Memphis Blues.

There's comedy too plus a return by Teesside's own Paul Daniels with his new show.

FESTIVAL CLUB @ ARC

Don't forget that ARC's Café Bar becomes the Festival Club for the duration of the festival and is open until 2am on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Entrance is £3 after 11pm. The Café Bar serves stylish food and is the ideal place to relax and soak up the festival atmosphere – and

better, with a strong community-based programme in the weeks before the Festival. There's also a special mini-Shutterbugs project to record the Fringe Festival in the Georgian Theatre, and cameras will be generally available at the Green Dragon Museum from Friday 3rd to Sunday 5th August.

Either side of Shutterbugs, the Focus@gallery is exhibiting *A Few Degrees*, featuring degree show work by students from Sunderland University in July, and the Royal Photographic Society Pictorial Group's annual national exhibition from 8th to 22nd September.

For more information about any of the above, please call the Museum on (01642) 393938.

DANCE



There's a focus on dance this year, with performances by international contemporary dance company Vertigo (Arc, Sat 4 Aug). Beforehand, Vertigo give three days of youth workshops (call 01642

welcome - *under-16s must be accompanied by an adult.*

Mon 30 July: USA – Line dancing, hot dogs and cola.

Tues 1 August: Africa – Drums, jewellery-making and baboeti.

Weds 2 August: Asia – Henna painting and Bhangra dance plus Asian buffet.

Thurs 3 August: Australia – Make a cork hat and enjoy a bar-b-que.

Fri 4 August: Spain – Flamenco dancing with guacamole and sangria.

INFORMATION:

TICKETS: Many events are free. Where tickets are required, they will be on sale on the door subject to availability. You are strongly advised to book in advance at ARC, Dovecot Street, Stockton, tel 01642 666600.

To join our mailing list call 01642 666600 or e-mail river.festestival@stockton.gov.uk

STREET THEATRE, MUSIC, CARNIVAL, DANCE AND MANY OTHER EVENTS

witness the occasional impromptu performance!

THEATRE & FILM AT ARC

ARC presents a Festival season of stage and cinema productions for all ages. Four different puppet plays (Mon 30 July to Thurs 2 Aug) are ideal for the children, while at the other end of the spectrum is *Love and Other Fairytales* – a theatre production based on Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath's Tale*. There's also a daily film programme at ARC ranging from the Muppets to Clockwork Orange.

SHUTTERBUGS

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Aug, 9am-5pm
From the Green Dragon Museum,



Shutterbugs!

If it's the Riverside Festival, then it must be time for Shutterbugs! Now in its fourth year, Shutterbugs gives Festival goers the chance, for £1, to record Festival fun using single-use

cameras and then see their work on display on the Focus@gallery Wonderwall throughout August – and possibly win a top prize! Last year more than 250 Shutterbugs, aged from 3 to 70, took more than 3,000 Festival photos, and nearly 1,000 were put on display.

This year, with support from the Regional Arts Lottery Programme, the Single Regeneration Budget and Stockton Music & Arts Collective, Shutterbugs will be even

666663 for details) and there's also a chance to see local dance talent (Arc, Sun 5 Aug) from some outstanding young dancers from the Tees Valley. Spectacular street dancers *Hush Hush Hush* return from Belgium to perform in the High Street over the final weekend.

THE FESTIVAL FRINGE 2001



Two weekends of Teesside based music. The Fringe is independent of the main Festival and is hosted this year by *From Teesside with Love* – a lottery funded music development project managed jointly

by The Georgian Theatre, Stockton, and Studio 64, Middlesbrough.

All fringe events are free and, apart from two days of outdoor music in the Green Dragon Yard over the opening weekend, all take place in the Georgian Theatre, Stockton.

Visit the Fringe web-site: www.fringefestival.co.uk or pick up an official Fringe brochure.

WEA WORKSHOPS

Learn some Festival skills for yourself at one of the Festival workshops at Arc organised by the WEA (Mon 30 Jul – Fri 3 Aug, 10am – 12noon). Each free two-hour workshop follows a theme linked to a particular culture and includes appropriate and appetising food snacks. Everyone

THANKS TO OUR MAJOR SPONSORS

The Stockton International Riverside Festival is organised by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council with Event International and ARC. It is supported by:

TFM 96.6
No Messing/Care for your area
NatWest
Magic 1170mw
WEA
AskAliX
Evening Gazette
Stockton Renaissance
Thornaby Regeneration Partnership
Terra
One NorthEast
Northern Arts
Carnivalnet

Vis a Vis
"PICNIC"

2 tickets for the price of 1

Available at any show:
Tuesday 31st July -
Friday 3rd August at 9:30pm
Saturday 4th August at
10pm at Riverside, Stockton.

Available only on production of this voucher
(one pair of tickets per voucher), not valid in conjunction
with any other voucher or offer.

The thriving community spirit and strong sense of identity is what makes Thornaby special to the people who live there.

That was the positive message from the town in a survey of 1,000 residents last year. The Thornaby Health and Well Being Steering Group asked for people's problems and concerns in different areas of their lives but also asked them what was special about their town. Top of the list was the strong sense of identity in Thornaby followed by the strong community spirit.

The thriving sense of community is obvious at the Thornaby Bowls and



In and a



Tennis Club where members took over the management of the grounds and clubhouse in 1993, and then in 1997 took over the maintenance of the bowls green itself from Stockton Borough Council. The Council still provides all the materials needed for the green but it is the volunteers in the club who do all the work. Now the club is rightly proud of its commitment with the green lush and smooth and the adjacent tennis courts, which it also runs, recently resurfaced and ready for action. The sense of pride in the club was re-established in 1980 when Eddie Pattinson took over as president and was continued when Barry Garside took over the mantle in 1990. In turning the ground around the club put up high fencing and grew a high hedge in order to increase security and thwart vandals who had previously targeted the club. A garden for the disabled was created and, more recently, an underground watering system for the green was installed. More recently still the club invested in a disabled chair for the bowling green so that disabled bowlers can join the

game.

Now Don Lackenby is the man in charge and he has big ideas for the club's future including improvements to and extension of the clubhouse provided the club can find sufficient sponsorship.

There is also an active programme of regeneration in Thornaby with The Five Lamps Organisation working in partnership with Stockton Borough Council and other partners from the public and private sectors.

With the help of money from the Single Regeneration Budget there should soon be a centre of opportunity for young people where the former Walkers Bingo Hall stood in Thornaby. The centre is expected to be completed between June and September next year and will offer a variety of activities for young people aged between 11 and 23 seven days a week.

Ian Pallent, Chief Executive of The Five Lamps Organisation, said the centre will be more than just a youth centre. The idea is that it will be a place where young people can try activities they would ordinarily not have the

chance to have a go at such as fashion design and arts and crafts. This workshop area would give them the chance to make informed choices about future careers. But there would also be a non-alcoholic internet bar and a youth inquiry service providing information on employment, health, crime and training.

The centre is designed to help young people make a success of the transition from childhood to adulthood by tackling anti-social behaviour, increasing their employment opportunities and encouraging their involvement in community activities. But the renaissance of Thornaby is not just about the young people. It involves everyone in the community, and that is clear with the project to improve the Holmes and Middlefield



around



Thornaby

Park. In the middle of the Holmes and Middlefield estate the area had been neglected. Already the community centre has been refurbished in a bright and friendly way for local people and now there are plans to improve the surrounding green space for the use of

existence for more than five years. Thornaby had once been a borough council in its own right but disappeared with local government re-organisation. But the community made representations to be allowed to have a Town Council of elected but

Hall through the town to the centre where there will be a variety of entertainments on offer as well as stalls offering handicrafts, a fair and quad bikes. This year there will also be a race which the Town Council is organising in conjunction with an athletics club.

“But the renaissance of Thornaby is not just about the young people. It involves everyone in the community.”

the whole estate. Residents have already suggested areas for mountain bikes and skateboards as well as a sports pitch, an adventure playground, a teenage village and a community garden for the elderly, and possibly even allotments to grow community fruit and vegetables.

Ian Pallent is hoping that work on the landscaping around the community centre will begin in January next year with the work finished by the summer of next year.

Also thriving in Thornaby is the local Town Council which has now been in

voluntary members.

The Town Council organises the well established Thornaby Show with the help of local volunteers. Each year the show has seen an increase in the number of people in Thornaby becoming involved since its revival. The show had gradually become less and less significant in Thornaby until the late 80s or early 90s when it stopped altogether.

This year the show is to take place on Sunday September 2 at the Harold Wilson Centre. It will start with a parade of floats from Thornaby Town

Thornaby Town Council is also organising a ceremony at the Cenotaph this month (likely to be July 21) to commemorate the residents of Thornaby who died in conflicts since World War II such as the Korean War, Falklands War, Gulf War and on active service in Northern Ireland. Their names will be added to Thornabys other war dead listed at the memorial. And looking forward the Town Council is working together with Stockton Borough Council to create facilities in Thornaby for disabled people to become involved with angling on the River Tees.

Anyone wanting more information on the Thornaby Show should contact the Town Council on (01642) 678652.



Health and Social Care

A Healthier Stockton is the main goal of a multi-agency scheme to improve the outlook for local residents.

Partners

Health and social care workers are working together to improve the well being of the area by cutting inequalities between the more deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough.

The strong partnership between Social Services and the local health agencies is vital to providing the right care and services to people who need it. This has been strengthened with the development of the North Tees Primary Care Trust since April 2001.

"Doing it once" is the way forward for the partnership - joint planning means clients should no longer have to keep moving between services looking for what they need.

Since becoming a unitary authority in 1996, Stockton Borough Council has worked hard to deliver better outcomes for the most vulnerable people. That determination and hard work is now paying off.

This year staff at Stockton's Social Services and the Primary Care Trust were awarded Beacon Status for their joint working and innovative services. The health and social care partnership

has been titled "Well Connected" and co-ordinates the joint planning of these services across Stockton.

Senior managers from key organisations including the Council's Social Services, Housing and Education departments, North Tees Primary Care Trust and Cleveland Police make up the membership, working closely together to develop a strategic inter-agency agenda to improve the health of people in Stockton.

Jim Beall, Principal Manager for Development at Stockton's Social Services, believes the partnership is making a real difference on the ground and providing a far more seamless service to clients.

"We are heading in the right direction, and being awarded Beacon Status shows that. But we still need a lot of energy and hard work to keep us at the cutting edge of providing a good service to those who need it most," said Jim.

One person who recognises that significant steps have already been made is Stockton's Dee Clarke, a carer for the past 14 years.

She looks after three people. Her

husband has mental health problems, her son has learning disabilities and mental health problems, and her brother-in-law has dementia.

"There is no doubt that things have improved greatly over recent years. All the agencies involved now communicate far better with each other, which makes a huge difference," Dee said.

"Carers now have a direct route to senior Social Services and health service managers. We are being listened to when we voice our concerns about different issues." The joined-up thinking between services is highlighted in the integration with the NHS Trust for services for mental health problems and learning disabilities services. A single assessment provides all the necessary information and cuts down on the duplication that can often cause stress to clients. After this assessment, a package of care services can be offered that encompasses both Social Services and the health service - for example therapy and day services or meals on wheels.

Ann Baxter is Director of Social



The Health Improvement Programme Aims to:

- Tackle inequalities in health, quality of life and well being
- Save lives for people who have or are at risk from heart disease, stroke or cancer
- Provide better care after being in hospital
- Reduce waiting times to see a consultant
- Make life better for people with mental health problems
- Reduce the number of people smoking
- Develop more services to help people who misuse drugs to give up the addiction

Partnership

Services and she finds people are surprised to find how much involvement Stockton Council has in health provision.

"Our Health Improvement Programme sets out our aims to help improve the health of people across the borough."

"These are to sustain and improve health in line with the national average. Some people may think that it is not ambitious of us to just want to

within the most deprived 20 per cent of wards nationally and 11 of those are in the worst ten per cent. So being average would be a huge boost to these wards, where deaths from lung cancer can be almost three times the national rate, as can the rate of teenage pregnancies.

"By working in partnership with clients and carers, corporate colleagues, other statutory agencies, the community and

real difference."

"Much of the improvement of health, in its widest sense, happens indirectly through education, economic regeneration, employment, leisure and housing."

"It is just as important to give children a good start in life and an education to provide the basis for future choices and well-being.

"Through all the people involved pulling in the same direction, co-ordinating the planning and integrating the action, we are making a real difference and ensuring a holistic approach to tackling health inequalities.

"We recognise that there is still a lot to do in order to make Stockton a healthier place to live. People are now living longer and we want them to have a much better quality of life too."



"Our Health Improvement Programme sets out our aims to help improve the health of people across the Borough."

be average but we are focusing on bringing the most deprived wards up to the UK average," she explained. Figures show that wards within Stockton Borough really do have contrasting fortunes. Some areas have high levels of disadvantage, while others nearby have high levels of affluence.

A total of 14 of the 30 wards fall

voluntary and independent sectors, we want to break down these inequalities and improve the quality of life for people in the more deprived wards," added Ann Baxter.

"It is the setting up of joint planning committees and getting people signed up that makes for an improved service, and the strength of people we have on board means we can help make a



A Partnership for Health and Social Care in Stockton-on-Tees

New role for

Thornaby Town Hall

Thornaby's historic Town Hall has taken on a new role as the home of a new hi-tech partnership, e-TeesValley

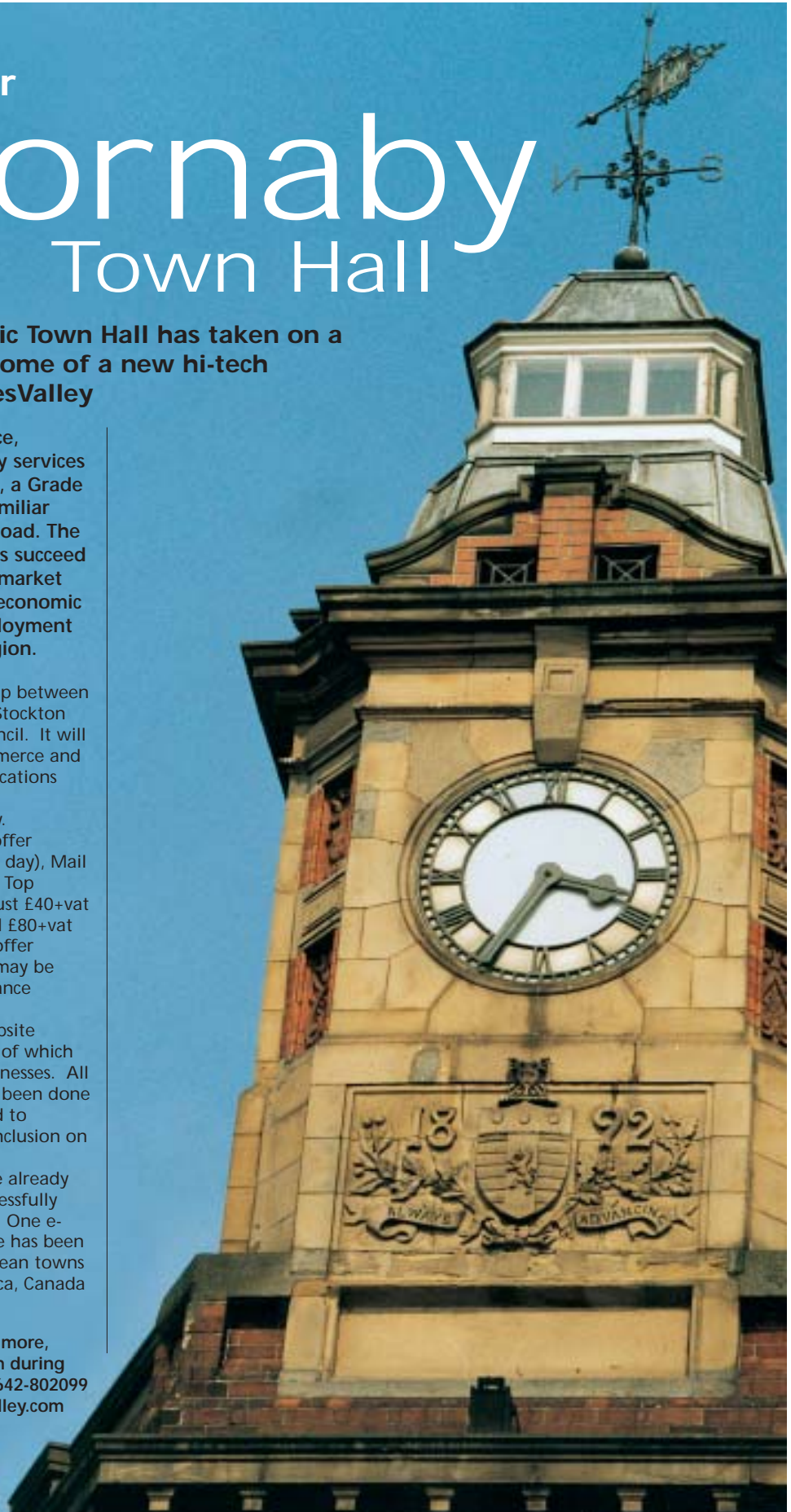
A full range of ICT advice, training and consultancy services is now at the Town Hall, a Grade II Listed Building and familiar landmark on Mandale Road. The aim is to help companies succeed in the electronic global market and, in doing so, bring economic growth and better employment opportunities to the region.

e-TeesValley is a partnership between the University of Durham Stockton Campus and Stockton Council. It will promote the use of e-commerce and ICT (Information Communications Technology) in companies throughout the Tees Valley. Short training courses on offer include Web Site Design (1 day), Mail Merge (half-day) and Desk Top Publishing (half-day). At just £40+vat for a half-a-day course and £80+vat for a full day, the courses offer excellent value – and you may be eligible for financial assistance towards these fees.

In addition, a range of website templates is available, any of which can be tailored to suit businesses. All the hard work has already been done and businesses simply need to provide a few details for inclusion on their site.

Many local businesses have already benefited with clients successfully targeted across the world. One e-TeesValley-created web site has been accessed from many European towns and cities as well as America, Canada and Japan.

If you would like to know more, please call one of the team during normal office hours on 01642-802099 e-mail enquiries@e-TeesValley.com



Dog owners in Stockton Borough are being warned to clear up after their dogs or face a fixed on-the-spot £25 fine.

Pick Up or Pay Up

The crackdown on dog fouling in the Borough is in response to over 300 complaints a year about owners leaving the mess behind.

From the beginning of July 2001 until early August 2001 teams of officers will be patrolling at varying hours, including early morning, late evening and weekends. A total of nine areas will be patrolled each week, giving a maximum of 36 different areas over the four week period. This, combined with the proposed



media campaigns, should ensure the maximum public awareness giving no reasonable excuse to those offenders caught after this period.

There will be ongoing information and targeting of people and places after the initial four-week period. The nature of the enforcement will also begin to be more covert, using plain clothed officers and a portable camera to send pictures to a remote monitor. At this point offenders will NOT be given the opportunity to pick up the mess.

The Council will begin legal proceedings against dog owners caught a second time, which could lead to a maximum fine of £1,000 from the courts.

Mark Berry, Principal Environmental Health Officer, said: "To coincide with the enforcement we are launching an extensive education campaign to bring about the required change in attitude and behaviour of irresponsible dog owners. This will include a radio campaign, articles in Stockton News and billboard posters throughout the

town to educate people to clean up after their animals.

"We want to make people aware of the fact that it's not just the mess that their dog leaves behind. Altogether there is potentially enough dog dirt produced from Stockton's dog population to fill 40 household sized wheelie bins every day - that's the scale of the problem."

Views are currently being sought from parish councils, ward members and residents' associations with regards to the proposed location of new dog fouling bins which are to be provided, along with new fouling signs. This consultation will conclude at the end of July and a rolling program of installations will commence from late August/ September.

Anyone who would like any further details or who wishes to report problem areas or individuals with regards to dog fouling can do so by calling (01642) 391163/391116.

Charity Meets its Match

Come on down to the Synthonia Ground, Belasis Avenue, Billingham and be bowled over - watching a spot of cricket - all in a good cause.

Sunday 29th July, at 2.00pm, Members and Officers from Stockton Council will battle against Unison Members to raise money for the chosen charities of Cllr Terry Bean, this year's Mayor. Cllr Bean's charities are - Leukaemia in Children and Macmillan Cancer Relief. The Mayor is focusing his theme of office on youth and achievement and hopes to establish strong business links to help the regeneration of the Borough.

Raffle tickets will be sold and drawn after the match.

Grateful thanks go to sponsors who have donated prizes: a video recorder from Labtecs; a CD player from Currys, Teesside Park; a gift from Castlegate Shopping Centre plus lots of other prizes.

Thanks also go to staff at the Zanzibar Club in Stockton who raised £1,000 for these charities.

Thornaby's Pirates, Potters and Pioneers

Pirates, Potters & Pioneers is a major new exhibition at Preston Hall Museum which tells the story of the Stafford Pottery in Thornaby, which opened in the 1820s. Arguably Teesside's first factory, the Pottery produced highly decorated tableware, as well as street signs, and ornamental goods until 1912.

The Pottery gained some notoriety for its illegal use of a 'Wedgwood' mark on its products in the 1830s and 40s,



Two workers in the factory circa 1905

much to the irritation of the real Wedgwood company which successfully sued for damages. It was also scene of the first strike locally, when the workforce walked out for several months over the use of youth labour.

Despite this, it also pioneered new techniques in glazing and production, and its wares were exported widely. The exhibition brings together many items from the Museum Service's collections and loans from private collectors.

To coincide with the exhibition, there will be two double-session summer workshops for young people aged 8 years old and over to explore pottery craft. The second session will be used to decorate and finish items made during the first week. The workshops will be held on 25 July and 1 August, and 15 and 22 August. Booking (and old clothes) essential - phone (01642) 397590.

It opened with a Splash and was soon making waves with Stockton youngsters.



SPLASH

of the day!

Splash - Stockton's new £5 million leisure complex - opened in June with a day of celebrities and street theatre.

Hosted by Sport England Chair and broadcaster Trevor Brooking CBE and the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Terry Bean, the opening has given Stockton one of the region's newest leisure facilities after two years of building work..

Mr Brooking CBE, who also dropped in on pupils at Northfield School in

entertainment and enjoyment. He continued: "We're getting requests from the police, probation service, social services and they're all saying that sport seems to be the top interest of a lot of youngsters who have got involved in crime, drugs and vandalism."

"We get asked to work with a variety

Splash includes a 25m pool with a wave machine and water features, offering leisure and training facilities for local swimmers at all levels. There is also a learner pool, whirlpool and flume slide, together with a cafeteria and creche facility. There is also a well equipped fitness suite and aerobics room.

All of this will play an important part in the Council's programme for healthy living as part of Stockton's participation in the Teesside Health Action Zone.

Local GPs will be able to refer their patients to the facility where, along with other users, they will be able to take advantage of individually prepared fitness programmes.

The complex has been designed to be environmentally friendly, featuring an energy-optimising heating system which constantly monitors temperature to save on power consumption, together with energy-efficient lighting and ozone water treatment equipment which minimises the use of chemicals.

Splash has received funding from a variety of sources, including £2.45 million from Sport England through the National Lottery. Stockton Council invested £2 million towards the overall £5 million cost of the project with further funding through the Government's Capital Challenge programme and the European Regional Development Fund.

Eager swimmers can book their sessions at Splash in advance. To find out more, or to book up, call (01642) 393900.



Mayor, Councillor Terry Bean, and Trevor Brooking CBE

Billingham as well as to the Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre which have both received Sport England Funding, was certainly impressed by what he saw.

He said: "The new swimming pool is excellent. There is a mixture of leisure facilities, including a wave machine which you can see excited the youngsters, and it can adapt to competitive swimming. It is right in the town centre so the access should be there for everyone."

As Chair of Sport England, Mr Brooking places great emphasis on the wider benefits of sport, far beyond

of groups and facilities like this are going to help the cause. It is accessible for this type of youngsters."

The name Splash was chosen after a competition in "Stockton News" and the opening itself saw swimmers from Stockton ASC and the Borough of Stockton Swimming Scheme put through their paces before youngsters from Tilery and Mill Lane Primary Schools battled it out in a special relay. Lifeguards also took their turn in the water for a lifesaving demonstration. Since opening, Splash has proved very popular with eager swimmers queuing to sample the new attraction.

Talking Rubbish

Stockton Council's new Litter Education Officer is making a concerted effort to reach the hearts and minds of youngsters across the Borough.

Sue Barker is the new Litter Education Officer who aims to make a difference to youngsters across the Borough - in their attitude towards unsightly litter. She is building on the success of the Council's ongoing programme of education for youngsters with its 'Tidy

Schools' scheme.

Education is the cornerstone of ensuring that youngsters realise that everyone is responsible for the cleanliness of the Borough and the country as a whole, and that dropping litter is clearly anti-social behaviour. Some youngsters who are proud of their village are the members of Stillington Youth Club. They joined forces with Stillington Parish Council in a litter clearing bonanza as part of the national litter campaign 'Just Bin It'. A

massive 22 sacks of litter were collected!

Meanwhile, Sue Barker has been in contact with every school in the Borough to make arrangements to find out their views on litter and to tell them of the Council's hopes of them as responsible citizens. She is also working closely with the Council's Enforcement Officer in an effort to keep the Borough clean. Sue, who was previously employed as a customer services officer within the Borough Council's housing and contract services department, said: "This is a great challenge for me - visiting schools, meeting children and making presentations to get my message across. I will be attending lots of school summer fayres and I have made it my mission to meet youngsters to talk to them about the problem of litter, not only in their immediate school grounds but also within the local environment. "I see my role as the vital link between schools and the Council to get the message across to youngsters that Stockton is a good place to live and they should be proud of its heritage", she added.

This newly created post was possible through Public Service Agreement funding.



Litter Education Officer, Sue Barker, with youngsters in the 'Tidy Schools' scheme

School for Talent

Cleveland Theatre School offers an arena for youngsters aged 8-17 years a great opportunity to exploit their talents and learn new ones.

Based at Billingham Synthonia Club, it has the full lighting facilities and sound equipment to enable youngsters to not only learn all about theatre and performing, but also to produce shows and pantomimes for the public. Nearly 45-50 youngsters currently enjoy taking part and performing to schools as well as schoolchildren coming to them.

Julian Richards, who runs the School, said 'This is a wonderful outlet for youngsters who love to perform. Our shows are of a very high standard and the youngsters have a very professional attitude to their performances.'

If you would like to know more, please contact Julian Richards on: 07887-983-462.

Dissolved

The Annual General Meeting of Stockton Twinning Association decided to dissolve the organisation as it had been unable to achieve its objective of developing links between the communities of Stockton and French twin town Asnieres-sur-Seine. The Association was formally dissolved on 31st May 2001.

We're Sorry

In the last edition of Stockton News two pieces of information were incorrect.

A delay with the printing of a new Sports Directory means that the publication will not now be ready until later this year; and the Domestic Violence website is no longer available. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused to our readers.

Soldier Search

New to Stockton Central Reference Library is a CD-rom entitled 'The Army Roll of Honour World War II'.



Egglecliffe Memorial

The information provided is the complete Roll of Honour preserved by the Public Record Office, giving name, rank, number, Army Regiment and date and place of death. Two print outs are available at 10p pence each, detailing the entry and a memorial scroll. Staff at the Reference Library will be happy to do a search for you.

A scheme to promote work opportunities for people with disabilities and their carers has been launched by Stockton Council.

Welfare to Work

The Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan will develop and promote stronger links between the Council, the Health Service and other partners to promote the independence of people with physical, learning or mental health disabilities as well as improving their employment opportunities.

Stephen Shaw, a regeneration officer at Stockton Council, believes the Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan will provide vital services for disabled people who want to get back into work – or for those who have never been employed and want to get into the workplace.

“The plan will ensure that the services delivered are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities. We want them to be properly linked to one another, to offer a seamless service with all the necessary information and

help provided to those who need it,” said Stephen.

“This will raise awareness of the fact that people with disabilities can find work and be valued employees. Through working with the health service agencies we can help them and their carers in tackling all the issues related to finding employment.

“The plan will ensure that the services delivered are responsive to the needs of people with disabilities.”

“To make the Welfare to Work Plan successful will require direction and direct involvement of people with disabilities and employers.”

To highlight the issues raised in the Welfare to Work Agenda, Stockton Borough Council is holding two events in September at the Alma Centre.

The first, on Wednesday September 26, is for employers and voluntary sector organisations.

Experts from the relevant agencies will be on hand to talk to employers about what the Council and health services can do to help them in getting people with disabilities into the workplace.

On Thursday September 27, the emphasis will be on issues for the service users and their carers.

Again, people will be there to answer any queries and offer advice and information about gaining employment. Anyone who is affected by the issues of the Welfare to Work Plan is encouraged to attend and find out more.

Anyone wanting more information about Stockton's Welfare to Work Joint Investment Plan can contact Trish Davison on 01642 391411, Melanie Smiles on 617617 ext 4729 or Stephen Shaw on 391261.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL
Local services for social progress

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Adult Education
PROSPECTUS
2001-2002

Every home should have one!
If you have not received your copy of the Adult Education Prospectus please contact Stockton Adult Education Service on 393535 or 397335

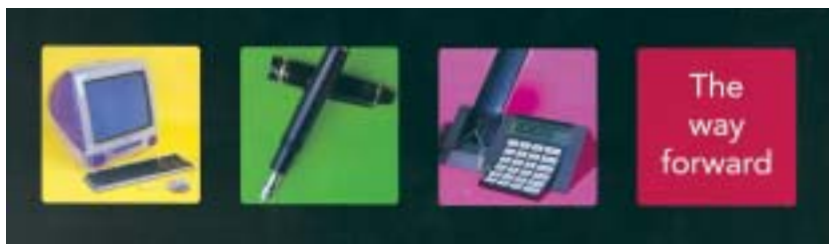
The Way Forward for Stockton Council

Do you remember the “Which Way Forward?” consultation exercise Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council undertook last year? Every household in the Borough received leaflets asking you to give us your views on how you would like your Council to be run in the future.

There were three options based on legislation from central government, and we asked you which you would prefer. Two of the options involved Stockton having an elected Mayor who would lead the Council (working either with a Cabinet or with a Council Manager) and one which was based on the model of a Leader of the Council working with a Cabinet. It was the Cabinet and Leader model which the people of Stockton preferred. Almost 60% of the people who responded to our consultation exercise preferred this option. We also spoke to businesses, community groups and residents associations, and they too preferred the Cabinet and Leader model. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had been operating a pilot scheme, based on this model, since November 1999, with a view to offering a tested system of local government. We wanted such

a system to ensure decisions would be made more quickly and efficiently, and made the decision-making process itself transparent. We wanted to ensure that members of the public would know who was taking decisions which affected their lives and why particular decisions had been made.

published to let you know when these meetings will take place, and we really do want you to become involved. We will also be producing a Guide to the new structure in Stockton-on-Tees. If you would like a copy of this or would like any more information about the new decision making system



The Council is also committed to consulting with local people on all of the issues which affect their day-to-day lives, so that decisions reflect your needs and wishes.

As a result of this public consultation, the Council is now planning to introduce a new Constitution with effect from 1 October 2001. As part of this process all meetings of the Council, the Cabinet and various Committees will continue to be open to the public. Information will be

please contact the Council's Policy and Performance Standards Unit who will be pleased to help. You can reach us by phoning Stockton 393009; by e-mailing PPSU@stockton.gov.uk; or by writing to Fran Watson, Policy and Performance Standards Unit, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD. You can also find out more about the new structure in Stockton-on-Tees by visiting our web site on www.stockton.gov.uk.

Customers asked about Customer Care

Stockton Council is committed to providing local residents with first-class customer service.

To do so we need to find out and understand the needs and wishes of our customers, and to have a good understanding of how well we are performing. Only by identifying our strong points and learning about any shortcomings can we focus on service improvement.

As part of the Council's programme of modernisation, the Council is reviewing its Customer Care policies and working to ensure that in three years time we will be able to deliver all appropriate services electronically. This will involve a massive amount of work and huge investment, so we can provide our customers with the quality of service that is as good as anything they will find elsewhere, and is fitting for the beginning of the 21st century. This will inevitably involve major changes in how the Council operates and carries out its work; it will also

mean changes in how our customers communicate and transact with us. Says, George Garlick, Stockton's Chief Executive, "We are determined that our planning for change must be based on what our customers want, expect and anticipate. To identify and

"We are determined that our planning for change must be based on what our customers want, expect and anticipate. To identify and understand this will help us with major investment and service improvement decisions".

understand this will help us with major investment and service improvement decisions".

To simply address electronic service access in isolation, and not simultaneously assess our existing approaches to customers would be a mistake since it is important that we

don't build on any existing weaknesses but solve any difficulties associated with them as part of our modernisation process.

For all these reasons we are currently consulting with the Viewpoint - Stockton's Citizens Panel which consists of more than a thousand local residents - to get a clear and accurate picture of things as they are from our customers' point of view.

We are hoping to get a high response and plenty of feedback as this will not only help us to improve existing services, and raise the quality of customer care, but also help us to lay the foundations for the next chapter in local government service.

If you have any thoughts or views, and would like to contribute to our discussions on these issues, please write to Jane Knox, Assistant Director of Communications, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD or e-mail jane.knox@stockton.gov.uk.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Ann Wynn
Superintendent Registrar

It's the happiest day of your life, so every bride and groom is told.

And this summer, at the height of the wedding season, Stockton's Superintendent Registrar Ann Wynn will see scores of couples tie the knot. But what is it really like having to deliver those famous vows up to as many as 20 times a week? *Stockton News* takes a brief glimpse into Ann's busy working life.

"Every wedding is different," says Ann.

"It's such a special occasion for every couple, we just want to make sure that it's a happy day for them to remember. Above all it should be pleasurable and fun and we always do our best to ensure that it is."

Ann has been working in Registration for nearly ten years and fortunately she has seen very few mishaps occurring on the Big Day.

"Once a bride was wearing a hat with a wispy feather on it and during the marriage the feather kept coming down in front of her face and she had to keep blowing it out of the way. This makes it difficult to keep a straight face and keep the ceremony solemn and dignified," she says.

Thankfully Ann has never had anyone object to a marriage during any of the hundreds of services she has performed, first in West Sussex, then for 18 months as Superintendent Registrar here in Stockton.

But she does agree that while the



trend for marriages is generally going down, she says that trend is now shifting from churches to civil wedding ceremonies.

The new Act means that Ann spends much of her time out at hotels performing marriages. In-between services as Superintendent Registrar, she also has overall responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Register Office. And that is no mean task.

For the Register Office has to issue certificates not only for marriages but also for births and deaths. Then there are office meetings to be held, notice of marriages to be taken, accounts to do, wedding fairs to visit, telephone enquiries to take, marriage ceremonies to discuss, the list is apparently endless.

Despite all this, Ann still finds the time to enjoy some heart rending moments as couples make the most of their special day.

"When you can see that people love each other, want to be married to each other, that's wonderful. It can really raise a tear."

"The main reason for that is the Marriage Act of 1994 which means you can now get married in a civil marriage service wherever in the country you want, not just at the Register Office where you live," she explains.

This same Act also allows people to have civil services performed in licensed premises outside the Register Office, although this does not mean that people can get married anywhere they like.

Ann says: **"This flexibility for the couples was desperately needed but you still can't get married in your own back garden - we do get requests for that."**

"The venue has to be a structure with walls and a roof. It also has to be permanent and used regularly for marriages. If somewhere is going to be licensed it has to be for everyone. We're not as liberal here as in some other countries."

She says: **"When you can see that people love each other, want to be married to each other, that's wonderful. It can really raise a tear."**



History in the Making

"My ambition, as Chairman of the Fire Authority, would be never to have another death attributed to fire in the home and to protect the firefighters who loyally take the risks to protect the communities within Cleveland".

The first woman in history to become Chairman of Cleveland Fire Authority is Mrs Brenda Forster JP.

Now in her twentieth year in Local Government and mother of five and grandmother of eleven, Brenda first decided to fulfil her ambitions to help the people in the community becoming a Councillor at Langbaourgh Borough Council in 1983 and was Mayoress of Langbaourgh in 1985. In 1991, as a Member of the Public Protection Committee, she was committed to improving the environment and was instrumental in setting up a liaison committee with local industry to reduce pollution and - being concerned with the litter on the streets - fought for the introduction of wheely bins.

In 1992, she was elected Mayor of Langbaourgh and brought to the role

her enthusiasm, vision and ideas. Brenda has a very hands-on approach to local government and particularly enjoys her social interaction with people in the community and work colleagues where her accommodating nature is one of her greatest assets. As Chairman of licensing and taxis, Brenda states that she has never taken any position for career purposes, but purely because she can improve things and bringing about change. With a firm sense of justice and fairness, Brenda is actively involved with the Co-op and is determined that

"I am thrilled to be the first woman Chairman and very proud to take on the role"

customers get the best possible value for money; and views this organisation as beings motivated by customer service satisfaction - not profit and loss accounts.

She said: "I am thrilled to be the first woman Chairman and very proud to take on the role. I look forward to a very busy and challenging year with the personnel of Cleveland Fire



Brenda Forster

Brigade. I hope my new role will be an example to other women that there is a position in the Fire Service for everyone.

"I personally believe that the most effective way to achieve this is by using my political experience and position to fight to have domestic sprinklers fitted in every home in Cleveland. Firefighters tell me that when they attend a fire in which life has been lost, they feel that they have failed. Well, we ought to make sure that they never feel like that again, which is why I fully support the installation of domestic sprinklers".

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