

DURHAM, TEES VALLEY AND NORTH YORKSHIRE:

JULY 2008

Living

JULY 2008

COMPLIMENTARY

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Living

JULY 2008



ARE you heading abroad or making the best of British this year? Either way, we've got some great ideas for everything from fashions to enjoying the great outdoors. Even better, we discover that summer improvements in your 'own back yard' can increase property values, despite the credit crunch. Staying close to home, we check out a holiday cottage with a difference, enjoy a visit to stylish Northallerton and sample some of Bishop Auckland's nightlife. We call in to see Ladette to Lady teacher and chef Rosemary Shrager – who tells her fascinating story of courage and dogged determination – and find out how *The Railway Children* shaped the life of actress Jenny Agutter. Photographer Joe Cornish shows us how he has captured the amazing beauty of the North-East coast. In fact, with so much to see in the region, it's a great place for a holiday. But more of that next month...

Sue (sue.fox@nne.co.uk)



Cover picture: Left, halterneck rope bikini, top, £16, hipsters, £12. Right, bandeau bikini top, £6, hipsters, £6, all Marks & Spencer
Swimwear for your shape: Pages 4-8

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Radio presenter John Foster's favourite places

The lucky winner of our competition for a fantastic break at the Maynard Hotel, in the heart of the Peak District, is:
Barbara Brookes of Norton, near Stockton
☐ Turn to Page 19 for a chance of winning Yorkshire Tea treats



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Unless you possess a supermodel body, the prospect of baring acres of unclothed skin can be daunting. But finding the right swimsuit doesn't have to be. LOUISE MEAKES, founder of designer beachwear boutique Sandinmytoes.com, reveals the best bikinis to suit your body shape, whatever your size

Just BEACHY



THE HOURGLASS

IF you're lucky enough to have an hourglass figure, you can carry off all styles, so don't hide away. You need to make the most of your well proportioned shape in the latest colours.

LOOK OUT FOR: Bikinis or one pieces that flaunt your curves to the max; Solid blocks of colour such as black and white, or bright reds, blues and yellows with fun edging. Jewellery and stones that will help draw attention to your wonderful shape.



Right, zig-zag print bikini, £29, Freemans

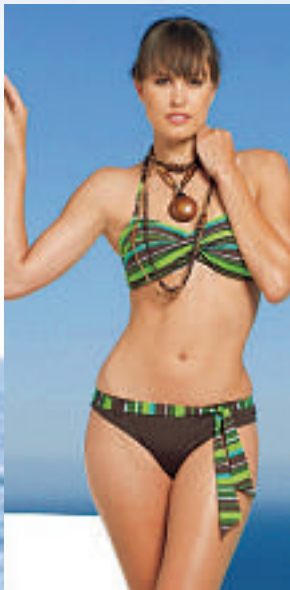
Left, white bikini top, £12, and bottom, £8, both from Next



THE PEAR

PEARS tend to be hippy with larger thighs so need to draw attention to their slim upper halves to make the most of their assets.

LOOK OUT FOR: Print or bright-coloured bikini tops, or dark one-pieces with a sexy open back to maximise your top half; high-cut bikini bottoms in one solid block of colour; simple bottoms – avoid side strings or bikini detailing that draws attention to your lower half.



Right, floral bandeau swimsuit, £34.99, TK Maxx

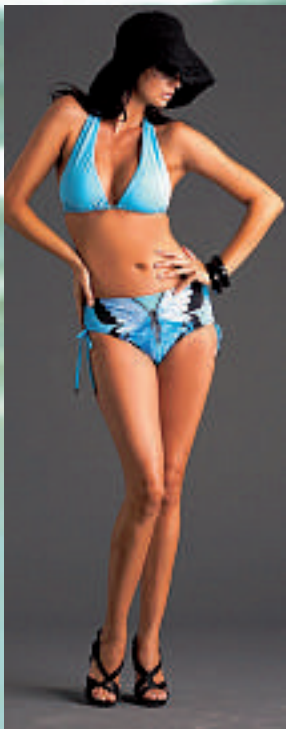
Left, stripe twist bandeau bikini, £8, Matalan





THE APPLE

APPLES have rounded upper halves with wide shoulders, and to balance this out the need to draw attention downwards to their great bottoms.



LOOK OUT FOR: Printed or detailed bikini bottoms to draw attention to your lower half. Mix-and-match separates are great for your shape; medium to high cut bottoms to elongate legs; simple, solid coloured bikini tops that aren't too revealing.

Right, polka dot bikini top, £20 and bottoms, £10, (limited range of sizes available) from the Gorgeous range at Debenhams. Left, V Del Sol butterfly bikini, £130, Sandinmytoes.com



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THE RECTANGLE

THE sporty-looking rectangle needs to create curves and shapes in all the right places.

LOOK OUT FOR: Bikinis with bold patterns, prints and details like frills, ruching, ties or belt for curve appeal; triangle bikinis, halternecks or bandeau tops to create a more interesting shape; bikinis or cutaway one-pieces which are best for you. Avoid tankinis as they will give you a solid outline with no definition.

Right, Floozie by FrostFrench gingham frill bikini top, £16, and bottom, £12, Debenhams

Below, Bond-eye Riviera bandeau bikini, £58, at sandinmytoes.com





Kaleidoscope's floaty beach caftan doubles as an evening top or dress, £40, from kaleidoscope.co.uk

Below, choose a bag that will hold loads during the day and look great at night, too. Metallic Blossom slouchy bag, £35, Accessorize



This gold toe-post sandal, £15, Dorothy Perkins, will also double up night and day



Below, white, tie-waist linen trousers are cool and comfortable, £35, Marks and Spencer



Choose tops that can be worn day or night, to extend their holiday 'life'. Above, from left, striped top, £16.99, River Island; yellow beach cami, £19.99, republic.co.uk; tiered vest, £18, Marks and Spencer



A cardigan is a great cover-up for travelling and for cooler evenings – try River Island's citrus card, £24.99



A casual jacket can be dressed up or down – this one is £45 and teamed with bikini top and bottom, £12, bag, £12, sunglasses, £16, necklace £12, and sandals £25, all from Warehouse

Travelling LIGHT

We've all done it – loaded our holiday baggage with a ton of 'just in case' items we will probably never use or wear during that two-week break. This year, pack only the basics. Life will be much simpler and your suitcases will be a lot lighter

- 1 Keep clothes crease-free by putting a layer of tissue paper between items in your suitcase
- 2 Or maximise space by rolling up clothes tightly to increase packing possibilities. Go for natural crushed effect clothes that don't need ironing
- 3 Wrap shoes and flip flops in recycled plastic bags and place these around the edges of the case to keep your holiday wear in place
- 4 Use small travel-sized bottles for decanting favourite beauty products
- 5 Wrap bottles in plastic bags to protect clothes from leaks and provide storage for your washing on the way home
- 6 Choose items that can be worn in the day or glammed up at night
- 7 THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE:
If you **KNOW** you will wear it, take it
If you **THINK** you **MAY** wear it, leave it at home



Khaki bikini top, £14, linen shorts, £12, and sunhat, £10, all from Bhs



Right, Next's skirt can also be worn as a dress, £28

Living makeover

One of the ELITE

WITH a name like that, the Elite Hair and Beauty salon, in Bishop Auckland, has a lot to live up to. After all, changing their hair cut and colour is a big step for most women.

But with intense in-house training programmes and regular refresher courses to help staff keep up with the latest trends and technological advances, Elite has a ten-year track record of excellence with a large and loyal customer base.

To show off the skills of its stylists, the salon invited an employee of Newsquest (North-East) – publisher of Living – for a pampering day and makeover.

Gillian Moore, 46, from Tudhoe, County Durham, was the name pulled out of the hat. She went to Elite for a three-hour hair session and is absolutely delighted with her new appearance.

“It made me feel really, really special,” she beams. “And I’m so happy that Elite picked my name for the makeover. I was really lucky.”

In the capable hands of colourist Cherrie, Gillian’s straight hair went from blonde highlights to a darker, more natural brown.

Cherrie says: “Gillian has quite a cool skin tone and the darker colour brought out the green of her eyes. We added darker and biscuit highlights throughout, which added volume and texture to her hair.”

And with a new hair colour, all Gillian needed was new style to match. Gemma, one of Elite’s hair stylists, created a more mature, soft and elegant look, which

Gillian Moore is delighted with her new look

Picture by
CHRIS BOOTH

Advertising feature

Makeover winner Gillian Moore enjoys a day of pampering and a sparkling new look. **JENNY LAUE** reports

softened her features and took into account her face shape.

"I think the darker hair colour makes me look much younger," says Gillian. "I feel like a cat that's got to the cream."

Elite is one of the largest Kerastase Signature DeBeaute salons in the North-East, with 22 work stations, six beauty treatment rooms and about 30 staff.

In the ten years it has been open, the salon has grown from strength to strength, winning numerous awards within the beauty industry for providing best customer service and coming top in mystery client surveys.

Investing in ongoing individual staff development and training is an important strategy for the salon to ensure quality and customer satisfaction. The salon has a professional colour specialist and all staff members are trained Kerastase ambassadors.

Elite Hair & Beauty, 67, Cockton Hill Rd, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, DL14 6HS, tel: 01388-450706



From top, Gillian sets out for her makeover treat, style director and trainer Gemma Snowball gets to work, and the interior of the Elite salon

*A little taste of
over there over here*



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Living beauty

TALON show



JENNY LAUE samples life at the sharp end with a new set of nails

I HAVE to admit that looking after my nails has never been a high priority. I'm the cut-and-go kind of girl. To my shame, sometimes I'm a bite-and-go kind of girl too. And yet, properly groomed finger nails, whether they belong to a man or a woman, are some of the first things I notice on a person.

Because I have neither the skill nor the inclination to look after them better, I went along to the Beauty Angels salon in Sedgefield to see what expert nail technician Glynis Allen could suggest.

After a look at my nails, the skin around them and a thorough medical questionnaire, she decided that I should have sculptured, acrylic nails as these would last the longest, considering the amount of typing I do.

Sculptured nails are a little different to stick-on false nails that you buy in the shops. No potentially harmful glue is involved and once they have bonded and hardened (which takes seconds), they won't come off until dissolved. They are also more natural looking.

Glynis – a “grand master” in Creative Nail Design since 2006 – says sculptured nails are extremely popular with her clients, because not only do they last for

weeks, there is a large scope to be creative with them.

After first thoroughly disinfecting her hands and mine, Glynis sets to work, first etching my nails and then priming to remove any surface moisture. Then a little stick-on platform is placed under my nails to hold the new ones in place while they set. Next, white acrylic powder and liquid is brushed into the right shape and length to form the nails.

Glynis uses flesh-coloured powder to fill in the space between the base and the tip, but if you feel a bit more adventurous this powder comes in striking block colours, as well as gold and silver.

Taking the length of my fingers, my nail bed and the shape of my hands into account, she then files the nails. The whole process takes about an hour.

Glynis then applies the cosmopolitan manicure I chose earlier, for which she first applies black polish over the whole nail and then a thin tip of white.

After about an hour and a half, I have perfectly shaped and coloured nails and, for once, I don't mind showing them off.

As Glynis says: “Treat them as jewels, not as tools.”

Beauty Angels, First Floor, 3 High Street, Sedgefield; 0845-6036687

HANDS and nails are exposed to the elements as much as your face and need as much care. Here are a few ways to keep them young-looking:

- Buy a dishwasher.
- Wear gloves – plastic for chores, garden for outdoors, wool or leather when the weather's cold.
- Carry a small tube of hand cream around with you and use it frequently.
- Buy almond oil from pharmacies and health food shops and rub it into your nails morning and night to condition them.
- Before varnishing nails, treat them with a good cuticle oil, such as Avoplex. Removing cuticles should make polish last longer.
- Always use a base coat and top coat when varnishing toenails. This also applies to fingernails and acrylic ones.
- When removing nail varnish, especially darker colours, soak a pad of cotton wool in remover and press on the nail for a few seconds before wiping to give the remover a chance to dissolve the colour. This will stop any discolouration of the skin around the nail which is so common.
- If you prefer to go all natural without varnish, a particularly good tip is to soak hands and feet in lemon juice, as this will brighten the nails and makes it easier to get out dirt from underneath.
- When removing nail polish, use a good quality, acetone-free remover, as it's kinder to natural nails. If you have acrylic nails this is particularly important, as nail varnish remover that contains acetone can dissolve them.
- Last, but not least, if you do decide to go to beauty salon or nail bar to have nail art, acrylic nails or even just a manicure done, never be too scared to ask to see their qualifications.

“Treat them as jewels, not as tools...”

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Northallerton's early days as a busy coaching stop had landlords rubbing their hands in glee. Today, the town retains a style and elegance that is as popular as ever with visitors, says **KEITH PROUD**

WITH its broad and elegant Georgian main street, massive parish church, County Hall, hospital, prison, busy twice-weekly market, cattle mart and wide variety of shops, restaurants and hotels, Northallerton today retains and deserves its long-held designation as administrative centre and county town of North Yorkshire. About 250,000 people live within 15 miles of it.

Set in the northernmost part of the fertile Vale of Mowbray, between the Dales and the North York Moors, with Thirsk to its south and Darlington and Teesside to the north, the town is within easy travelling distance of those wanting to enjoy its facilities and attractions.

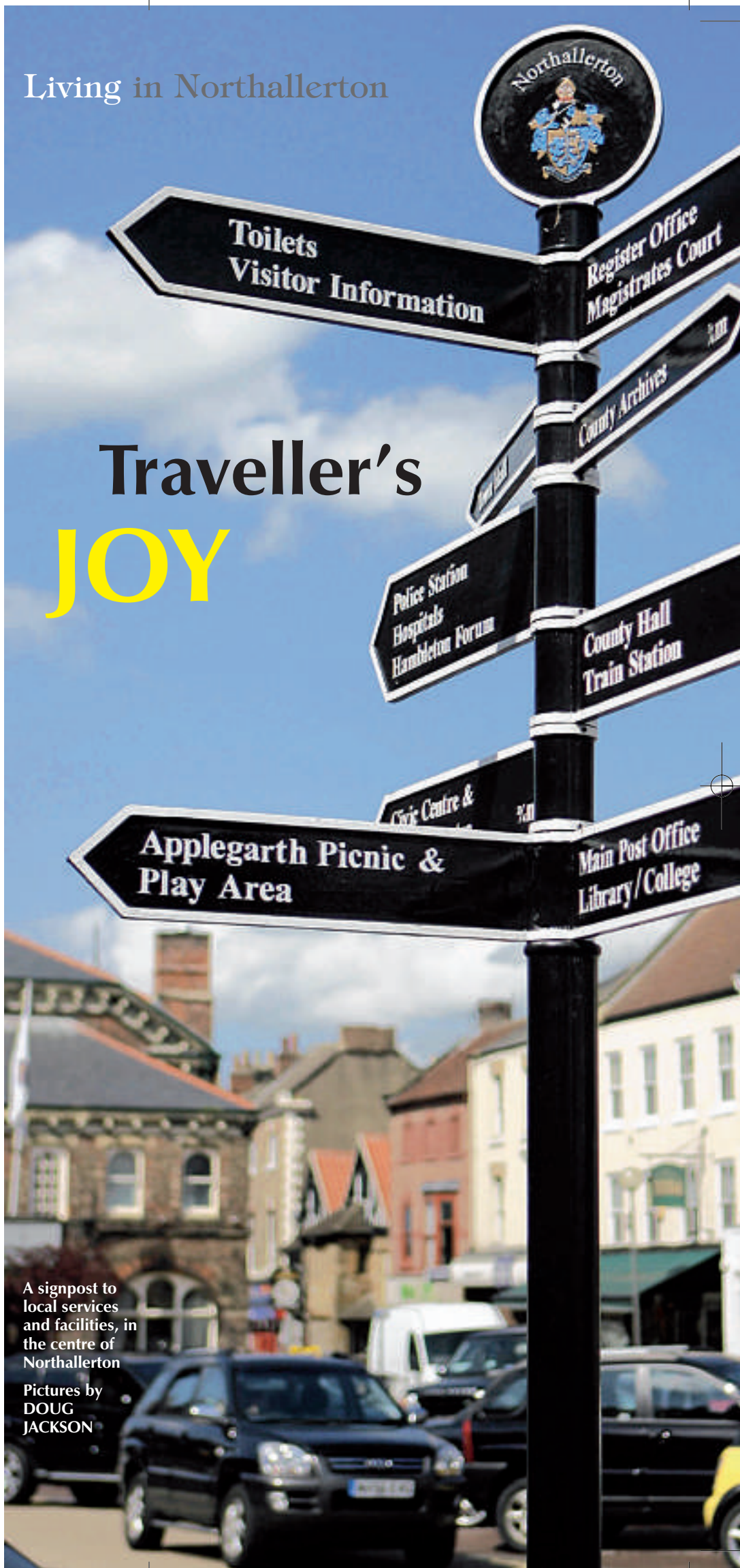
There are excellent local and longer-distance bus services. Both the A1M and A19 roads, one to the west the other to the east, pass near the town and its railway station is on the East Coast Main Line. Today, the old Great North Road has become the A168 and there is now a bypass around the High Street.

But in 1858 CF Davison Ingledeu reported the High Street as it had been, at the height of the coaching era.

"This town being situated on the great northern road, an immense number of post-horses were maintained for the accommodation of the great northern families travelling to London; those days of prosperity were palmy times for Mine Host; besides eight stage-coaches which dashed through daily, a great number of carriages and stage-waggons, with

Living in Northallerton

Traveller's JOY



A signpost to local services and facilities, in the centre of Northallerton

Pictures by
DOUG JACKSON



The rejoicing landlords might well exclaim, 'Oh what a glorious thing is a turnpike road!'

their high-piled loads, almost like moving mountains, slowly lumbering along, with their four or six horses, were continually arriving, and had either to stay all night, or bait, necessarily causing a great consumption of oats, hay, and other provisions. The rejoicing landlords might well exclaim, 'Oh what a glorious thing is a turnpike road!'

The first real occupation of this part of Yorkshire, although prehistoric man was here earlier, was by the Romans, who began to settle in Britain in 43AD, completing Hadrian's Wall, considerably further north than Northallerton, by 128AD. A Roman signal station may have stood on Castle Hills to the west of the present town. At least one major Roman road crossed the area although its exact route through or around Northallerton has yet to be firmly established.

The place name was, until about a century ago, written North Allerton, possibly meaning the farm near the alder trees or derived from the Old English Aelfereton – the farm of a Saxon called Aelfere – which gradually changed to Alverton and then to its current spelling. North was added to differentiate it from the other Allertons that exist in Britain, four of them now in or near Knaresborough, Liverpool, Leeds and Bradford.

Northallerton was one of the early centres of Christianity, with the missionary Paulinus spearheading the conversion on behalf of the Church in Rome, initiating the building in the 7th Century of a wooden church, where today's magnificent parish church, ►

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Enjoying a stroll near the imposing All Saints Church



Town and country – above a family of geese take in the views at Romanby Golf Club. Below, Barkers, in the High Street



◀ All Saints, now stands at the North End of the High Street. That wooden building was replaced by a more substantial stone one in 855AD. A further Norman rebuilding to create All Saints church has a square tower that was erected before 1150AD, but its present chancel was created by the architect Charles Hodgson Fowler in 1885.

In 1687, the church boasted four bells in its tower but by 1791, there were five “and a good clock”. In 1802, a sixth bell joined the rest, followed in 1871 by two more to provide the campanologists with a full octave. By then, however, the bells were out of tune with one another, leading in 1898 to some having to be recast and others retuned – but that was not the end of their story. In 1961, during the building’s refurbishment, they were again removed and sent to Taylor’s bell foundry, in Loughborough, where they were recast and, on their return to Northallerton, rehung in a steel frame. In 1991, two more bells were added, bringing the peal to ten.

The bishops of Durham had a castle at Northallerton and the town was granted a royal charter by King John in 1200, giving the royal assent to the Wednesday markets, which had been held there since soon after the Norman Conquest.

The town was permitted to hold two annual fairs, one in February, at Candlemas, the other at the Feast of St Bartholomew, in September. In 1555, Queen Mary also gave royal consent for the Wednesday market and for a St George’s Fair each May, while, in 1610, King James I allowed an October fair on St Matthew’s Day.

It was not until 1792, during the reign of George III that the Wednesday market was allowed to be held every week of the year. As late as the 1850s, it was remarked that the St George’s and Candlemas fairs were renowned across the whole of the North for the trading of horses and cattle ▶

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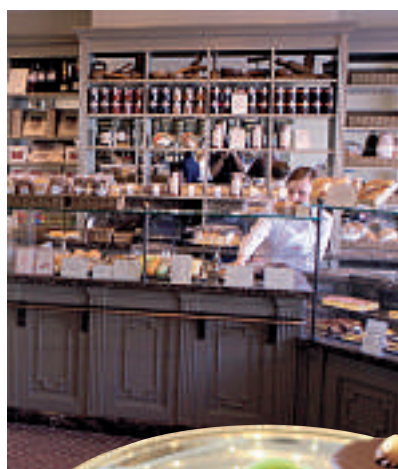
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As, for centuries, Scottish and Northumbrian drovers herded their cattle and sheep to market in the town. The original cattle market was near the church, while sheep were sold in the High Street until the early years of the 20th Century.



Above, mouthwatering cakes from Betty's, and the Northallerton shop and cafe

Northallerton is well-known for its variety of shops, the most famous probably being the old-established Barkers department store, which has an additional outlet on the outskirts of the town, Lewis and Cooper, with its extensive range of comestibles, and Betty's Cafe Tea Rooms and shop.

Betty's oozes elegance, its decor reflecting the period just after the First World War when Swiss confectioner Frederick Belmont opened his first tea rooms in Harrogate.

The Northallerton premises, with palm room, domed glass roof and walled garden, were a much later addition.

In 1962, Betty's joined forces with the famous tea and coffee company, Taylors of Harrogate.

Nobody appears to know who the original

Betty was or even if there was one, and that debate continues even today.

Living would like to tender its own theory that Monsieur Belmont would certainly have known, and probably used frequently, the French endearment "mes petits choux", literally "my little cabbages", which is often shortened to mes petits. Petits is easily corruptible to Betty's and it is not difficult to imagine staff referring to themselves in fun as Betty's, for which, incidentally, no apostrophe is needed!

Mr Lewis and Mr Cooper established their emporium in 1899 and a tea room converted from the manager's quarters was added in 1999 to mark the firm's centenary. For many years, these rooms had an internal window through which Mr Lewis was able to keep an eye on happenings in the shop.

Lewis and Cooper's claims to fame are the wide range of quality food and wines and the

WIN YORKSHIRE TEA TREATS

TAYLORS of Harrogate, Bettys sister business, is offering a year's supply of Yorkshire Tea, with a Taste of Yorkshire gift box (available from Bettys mail order service on bettysbypost.com). For a chance of winning, just tell us in what year Bettys merged with Taylors of Harrogate. Answers on a postcard or the back of an envelope by July 30, to Yorkshire Tea Competition, Living, Priestgate, Darlington DL7 1NF. Usual Newsquest rules apply.



Northallerton's impressive High Street

hampers it makes up to customers' requirements.

The Barkers have farmed in the area since the mid-17th Century but, in 1882, William Barker broke the mould when he became an apprentice at local draper Oxendales. After a time, the shop became Oxendale and Barkers, and then Barkers, selling fabrics and millinery. Barkers has diversified extensively since those early days.

Northallerton has not always been as peaceful as it is today. The Middle Ages, when England was almost constantly involved in wars against Scotland for some 300 years, were a particularly troublesome time.

On August 22, 1138, a bloody encounter lasting just two hours that became known as the Battle of the Standard was fought only two miles north of the town when Stephen was King of England while King David I ruled the Scots, 12,000 of whom he led south as he invaded England. Ten thousand were killed in the affray and buried in what became known as the Scots Pits.

This was the first known occasion when a standard, a point around which soldiers could muster, in this case a cart carrying a banner on a 12-metre high pole, was used in battle on English soil.



Above, delectable choices at Lewis and Cooper. Right, the memorial marking the Battle of the Standard

After a visit to the town, Shakespeare's near-contemporary, the great 16th Century chronicler William Camden, described the standard's purpose and effect: "The English, keeping themselves close together about the standard, received the first onset and shock of the Scottish, endured it, and at length put them to flight.

"And this Standard, as I have seene it pictured in ancient bookes, was a mighty huge chariot supported with wheeles, wherein was set a pole of a great height in maner of a mast, and upon the very top thereof stood a crosse to be seene, and under the crosse hung a banner.

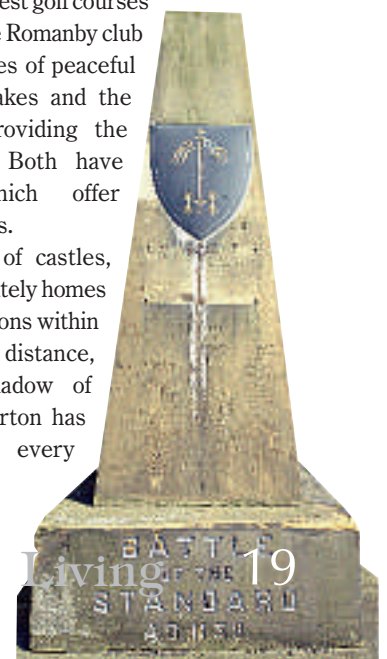
"This when it was advaunced was a token

that every one should prepare himselfe to fight, and it was reputed as an holy and sacred altar that each man was to defend with all powre possible."

A roadside stone obelisk with a recently-replaced explanatory plaque today marks the site of the western edge of the bloody meeting. The memorial was the idea of local bank manager WS Charlton in 1913.

For those wanting a more active pursuit on their visit, there are two local 18-hole golf clubs which welcome visitors. Thirsk and Northallerton Golf Club has a reputation as one of the friendliest golf courses in the region. The Romanby club is set in 200 acres of peaceful parkland with lakes and the River Wiske providing the water hazards. Both have clubhouses which offer excellent facilities.

With a host of castles, abbeys, farms, stately homes and other attractions within easy travelling distance, beyond any shadow of doubt, Northallerton has something for every visitor.



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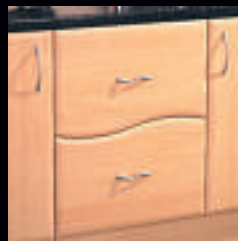
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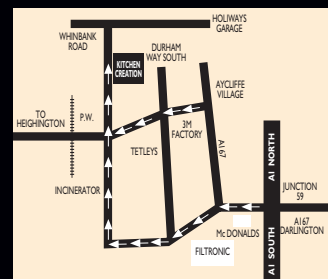


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Living interiors

It took years of planning and a sizeable chunk of investment, but with sheer determination Jane and William Weston have turned a former Teesdale cornmill into their dream home, as well as an award-winning holiday cottage. **JENNY LAUE** takes a look around



Where there's
A MILL



Jane Weston in the couple's kitchen at Brignall Mill

BRIGNALL MILL ticks all the boxes. It has everything that holidaymakers could possibly want from a four-star holiday cottage: it's cosy and comfortable inside, it's located in beautiful countryside and it isn't too far off the beaten track for a good night out.

But Brignall Mill isn't your average holiday home. It is special because it has a lot to offer those with an environmental conscience or historic interest.

As the name suggests, the building used to be working cornmill. It is situated by the River Greta, a tributary of the Tees, in Brignall, near Barnard Castle.

The mill nestles in a little valley, and when I arrive I can hear the gushing of the river but no traffic noise at all, even though the busy A66 is just minutes away. It's a chilly old day but the first green buds and daffodils have started to sprout, giving the mill a romantic, chocolate box look.

Owners Jane and William Weston, who live in the smaller, adjoining part of the mill, have spared no expense to retain the original character of the building and are keen to show me everything, including their mini-hydro electricity scheme for which they've won an environmental gold award from VisitBritain.

Not only have they installed wood-burning stoves inside, plus two solar panels on the roof, they have also invested in a Swedish



heat pump, which converts heat from the ground via 600 metres of collector pipes, and a turbine which is housed in a shed by the river and generates most of the mill's power supply.

"The reason we decided on the eco scheme was that you can't get mains gas down here in the valley, or even a tanker. So

everything was done with bottled gas and that is very expensive," says Jane.

The couple, who moved in in 2005, hope that with the mini-hydro scheme in place, the pay-back period for the initial investment will be approximately 15 years, but "it'll probably be much sooner, if the energy prices keep going up as they have recently".

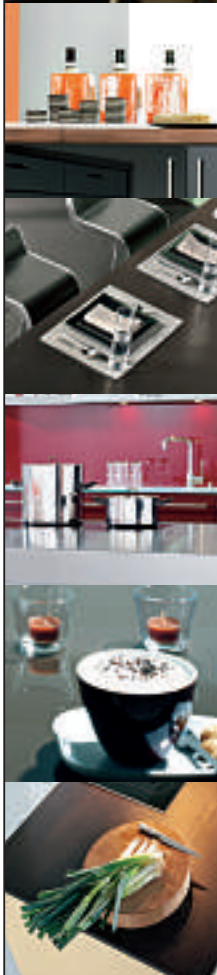
And then we're off on a tour around the house. As he opens the front door for me, William says with a proud smile: "It's an unusual building to come to and stay in for your holidays: if you want all the hotel luxuries, like a trouser press, this is not the right place for you; if you're after pure romance, this is it."

I can see why. The first thing I notice when I enter the cottage is how surprisingly light and airy the interior is, considering the mill is 250 years old and has two-foot thick walls. The entrance room is very welcoming with exposed stone walls, a beamed ceiling and warm sand-coloured floor tiles, but the big features are the three massive mill stones on the mezzanine level.

As if these stones aren't enough of a clue that you're inside a former cornmill, Jane and William next lead me off to the right past the original water wheel to the first bedroom. You can still make out the little pond and channel that were carved into the ground so the water could flow underneath the house, over the ►

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◀ wheel to turn it, and out again at the other side. “We think that when this was a working mill, this bedroom would have been a store room,” says Jane. “And later on it was probably used as a hen house.”

But, of course, none of that is visible today. The room is bright and airy, the finish is of the highest standard and one of the doors has been replaced by a big window, with only nature to gaze at.

We retrace our steps and head back out into the entrance room and up one level into the main living area of the cottage. This big lounge has been cleverly divided into separate functional parts. There is a large, modern fitted kitchen with granite worktops and all the equipment to cook a gourmet meal, a dining part with a big table for six and a spotless, high-spec, white family bathroom.

So did the layout take a lot of thought? “Having lived in this part of the mill when we were converting it, we found it was already laid out as it should be,” says Jane. “And we did have the most fantastic builders to help us,” she says of local firm Neesam & Son, from Bishop Auckland.

By far the biggest part of the lounge has been given to the living space. There are big squashy chairs, cosy floor rugs, stylish floral-print curtains and a wood-burning stove.

There is also a huge window at the end wall, which as Jane explains, was the door where the grain would have been brought into the mill. Now it’s the most attractive feature in the room and contributes



“It’s an unusual building to come and stay in for your holidays: if you want all the hotel luxuries, like a trouser press, this is not for you

hugely to the romantic feel of the cottage.

To reach the second bedroom we climb a wrought iron spiral staircase, which though not original to the mill, nevertheless looks as if it belongs. The second bedroom is much bigger, but equally cosy. It also has an en-suite shower room with a skylight flooding it with bright sunlight.

Back downstairs we go through to the family’s cosy front room and the hub of the house, the large kitchen.

“We’ve had so many visitors who are so surprised that there is so much to see and do. There is a lot of walking and wildlife, and it’s not far to Newcastle, Leeds, the coast or even the Lake District,” says William.

Jane agrees: “So many people don’t know about this part of the Dales. Teesdale is so beautiful and there is so much going on, with lovely places to visit like Barnard Castle or Bowes. It really is a well-kept secret.”

□ For more information on Brignall Mill holiday cottage, you can contact the Westons on 01833-637726 or log on to www.brignallmill.co.uk. Prices in low season start from £260 and £560 in high season for one week’s stay. The cottage sleeps up to six people.

□ There are three more mills to visit in the area. Little Salkeld in Cumbria is active and still mills flour, used to bake fresh bread which is served in its own restaurant. Other mills to visit are Acorn Bank, in Temple Sowerby, near Penrith, and Gayle Mill in Hawes.

Living interiors

A taste of SUMMER

KAREN HALL, North-East interior design consultant and founder of Stage Secrets, shares her inspirational ideas for adding a splash of summer to your home



Swedish-style Annik settle, £595, from Belle Maison, is perfect for two people. The seat lifts up to provide storage and it comes with a seat cushion in red, blue, sage or stone check. Call 0870-850-6207 or log on to bellemaison.com

I DON'T know about you but I'm convinced that no one knows how to enjoy sunshine quite like us Brits – probably because it feels like such a precious commodity.

After all, which other nationality would drag out the barbecue at the first glimmer of sunshine and spend hours dusting down the patio furniture in the hope of a freak heatwave. This urge to squeeze every ounce of joy from sunny summer days was the inspiration for my article.

If the weather does turn soggy, as no doubt it will, look on the bright side – this is a great time of the year to add a splash of

summer to our interiors. By replicating everything we lovingly associate with lazy, hazy summer days and cool lingering evenings, we can fill every room in our homes with a flavour of summer that will last for many months.

CHOOSE COLOURS THAT LOOK GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

FOR style inspiration this season, look no further than fresh summery foods such as raspberries, apricots, watermelon and vanilla. Think of the subtle pale shades of dreamy ice creams, tangy sorbets and iced cup cakes.

These rich pastel colours are surprisingly grown-up and perfect for accessories, while paler tints make a soft and uplifting alternative to plain white. Used as a backdrop to warm up neutral furniture and fabrics or for lively accents, they will revive your rooms in no time at all.

Ice-cream shades are made to be seen together. You only have to look at a bed of summer flowers to see how well they complement each other. Feel free to mix and match greens, pinks, oranges and yellows. Keep most items in the scheme to the same intensity of colour, but add depth by using one of the colours in a brighter shade for ►

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◀ accessories. For a more restrained look that still feels fun and fresh, choose only two shades; soft aqua and peach, zingy lemon and peppermint or tangy raspberry and watermelon. You can add pattern to the mix by using fabrics in charming retro florals or curvy graphic prints inspired by designs from the Fifties and Sixties. These are ideal for cushions or blinds as they make a statement without dominating the whole scheme. Always avoid an over-powering “sugar sweet” result by keeping walls and floors simple and sophisticated in neutrals such as pale caramel, biscuit or vanilla. Create a living space that lifts your spirits every time you walk into it.

TRY DECKCHAIR STRIPES

THE simple stripe is an incredible decorating dimension. Whether it's the sober pinstripe or the playful circus tent, stripes could be the basis for a whole new scheme. Mixed in with your existing look or simply added to a plain room, the stripe is extremely versatile.

For a subtle look, go for stripes in two or three similar colours. Stripes can even be created with the same colour in two different textures of finishes – this effect works particularly well in a monotone room or one with a rustic, natural theme.

Try to keep stripes to the scale of the area they cover. Wide stripes are more effective on larger expanses of wall, where narrow ones could end up looking fussy or garish. A cushion or vase, however, needs smaller stripes for maximum effect.

Stripes go wonderfully well with each other, but they also work well with other patterns, especially in the same colourway.

It is also a good idea to pick out stripes that have the same scale and degree of contrast as the other fabrics you choose. For example, a red and white floral fabric with a large, bold motif will work better with a wider red and white striped fabric. Vertical stripes will make a room look taller, while horizontal stripes increase the feeling of width to a space.

Be careful when using a striped wallpaper or paint effect on your walls – many surfaces are uneven and floors and ceilings may not be straight. Using stripes will only highlight this and unless you are careful, you could end up with wonky lines.

For an equally effective look without the commitment, paint wide stripes on a large canvas, in the colours of your scheme, and attach this to the wall – then you can update the colours as often as you like. Using striped carpets or rugs are a fantastic way to liven up a room scheme.

Leave walls in a neutral shade and add interest with a bold stripe to the floor.



SUNSHINE ALL YEAR ROUND

FROM the palest primrose to zesty lemon or rich and earthy ochre, yellow can feel lively, warm or even cool depending on the shade you choose. Whatever your preference, use it on your walls or introduce it in accessories for a sunshine feel all year round.

Go for grown-up buttery yellow in the kitchen, experts say that yellow encourages communication and conversation, just what you need in such a sociable room. Lemon yellows have an undertone of green, and so can feel quite cool.

Use warmer shades of peach, pink or raspberry to cosy them up while still keeping the look very light. For a more sophisticated look try combining lemon with slate-blue or aqua, using touches of deeper cobalt and dark wood for contrast.

Yellow and green are often seen together

in nature, especially in the summer months. They make an excellent and lively combination for a conservatory or garden room. Primrose shades are ideal with leaf greens, while deeper forest greens harmonise well with golden shades.

Raw sienna and ochre are traditional yellow paint shades made from natural clays. Both go well with earthy shades such as terracotta for a summery Mediterranean flavour. As they have been used for centuries, they also sit well in period interiors. Although the exact shades can vary, ochre is usually a deep golden yellow, while sienna is yellowish-brown or tan.

In colder north-facing rooms, yellow walls can act like a ray of sunshine. Look for warm, golden shades and add accessories in rich oranges and reds to counteract Britain's blue-ish, northerly light.

Whichever way you decide to add an instant splash of summer to your home, be sure to round it off with one last marvellous must-have. Shop for fresh-cut flowers in as many colourways as you can lay your hands on.

Flowers in abundance brighten any room

at any time of the year and are undoubtedly the most natural summer style sensation.

□ For more inspired ideas, contact Karen Hall Interior Design on 01388- 664503 or 07779-236631. Email info@khid.co.uk or visit khid.co.uk or stagesecrets.co.uk



Above, yellow metal Venetian blinds, £53, Sunway Blinds (0800-652-7799, sunwayblinds.co.uk)
 Right, from top, Scoop chair, £280, from freemans.com.
 Coral and white stripe cushions, from £22, Linum (Stockists nationwide, for details, contact textil@linum.se);
 Summer Scents bouquet, from a range by Marks and Spencer



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Living outdoors

Have you ever yearned for a relaxation zone and a special place to entertain? The answer could be right outside your back door, says **GABRIELLE FAGAN**

PATIOS this year are a stylish hotspot which should be furnished with the same care as your home.

Banish wobbly chairs and saggy parasols in favour of the latest outdoor furniture and accessories, much of which isn't just ultra comfortable but also weatherproof – so you can avoid the tedious chore of covering it up or lugging it into the shed in the winter.

With the wealth of fabulous ranges around this season, it's easy to truly transform a space into an "outdoor room" that you won't want to leave, no matter what the weather.

Armchairs, daybeds and even coffee tables and bars are the latest additions to the conventional patio dining sets and loungers.

As the housing market slumps, property expert Alison Cork, a consultant for TKMaxx, says: "A well-designed and presented outside space can add up to 15 per cent to the value of a property, and will undoubtedly be a selling factor in the summer, not to mention a "quality of life" investment.

"People increasingly regard the garden as another room in the house and are wisely furnishing it to the same



Your place in **THE SUN**

● **Patio** and garden furniture, above, from a selection at TK Maxx

● **Buddha**, left, £9.99, Sainsbury

● ● ● ● ●

high standards as their indoor rooms."

Fabien Perez, buyer for B&Q Leisure, says the trend this season is for "people to recreate a cosy, indoor feel outside.

"They're looking for pieces to make a statement – just as they would indoors – with oversized furniture pieces, such as large garden beds, which are perfect for creating a den or living room feel."

Highly-durable materials such as all-weather rattan mean the majority of new pieces can be left outdoors so people can easily take advantage of warm days at any time of year.

"Also new developments, such as solar lighting, allow people to enjoy an outdoor space long into the night."

And if the credit crunch is biting on your budget, making your garden a desirable destination instead of



Made on Earth teak steamer chair with removable footstool, £280.87, coffee table/footstool, £64.30, from gardenstyle direct.co.uk



Parasol, £30, base weight, £45, circular table and four folding director's chairs, £165, Silhouette range from John Lewis



Straight seat with scrolled supports, £265, haddonstone.co.uk (01604-770711)

splurging on a holiday could be a wise move, according to Nick Fox of furniture retailer Housing Units.

He says: "Our typical customer spends about £3,000 on an annual summer holiday and once that money is spent, it's spent. But garden furniture, which costs a fraction of that amount, lasts many summers and could be a wise investment."

More garden inspiration ►

A well-designed and presented outside space can add up to 15 per cent to the value of a property

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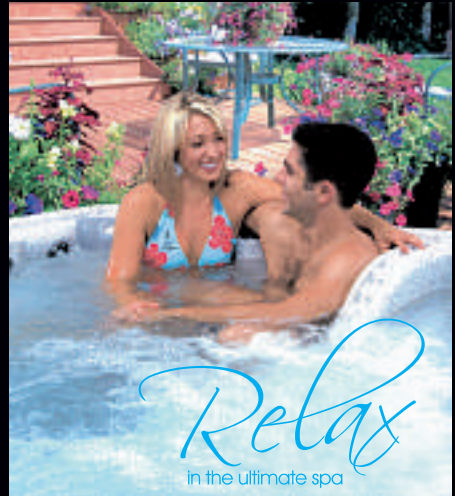
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- Shown here on a plinth, £117.
- Pump not included, £48.
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- **Watersmoon** rechargeable light, left, from
- £598, Inspired by Design, 0870-246-1672,
- inspired-by-design.co.uk. Right, Stonesdale
- textured glass pyramid, £199.99, from the Alan
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- **Holkham** bucket barbecue, £34.99, The Contemporary Home, 02392-469400 or tch.net

- **Boycat** Merlot 2006, Moscato Freisa and Pecorino 2007 wines.
- Bottom picture, beefburgers with chicken and prawn kebab, from a selection at Marks and Spencer

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- **Barbecue,** Redfyre 12, £879, provides a generous cooking area for stir-frying, grilling, and the double layered hood can be used for roasting. From Garden Style Direct, as above



- **Grilltech** Space Grill 800, right, is £299, from silvernutmeg.com, 01254-820478.

- Marks and Spencer's large kettle charcoal barbecue is £248



- **Sagaform** hamburger press, £14.95, from amaroni.com, 01205-260-384



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Bishop Auckland has a lot to offer night-time visitors, from theatre, film and concerts to top-quality pubs and fine dining, says **RACHEL WEARMOUTH**

EVENING class

A FEW years ago, Bishop Auckland was not a place where trendy folk were likely to be seen out partying. Until relatively recently, there was precious little on offer.

But changes are afoot in the town of the Prince Bishops. A quiet confidence is emerging, bolstered by a cast of quirky theatre performers, quality cuisine and ambitious soirees.

The town hall has been at the heart of the after-hours scene since its revamp in 1993. It offers a diverse menu of cultural activities that rival

Durham's Gala Theatre and Middlesbrough's mima gallery, and includes film, music and theatre.

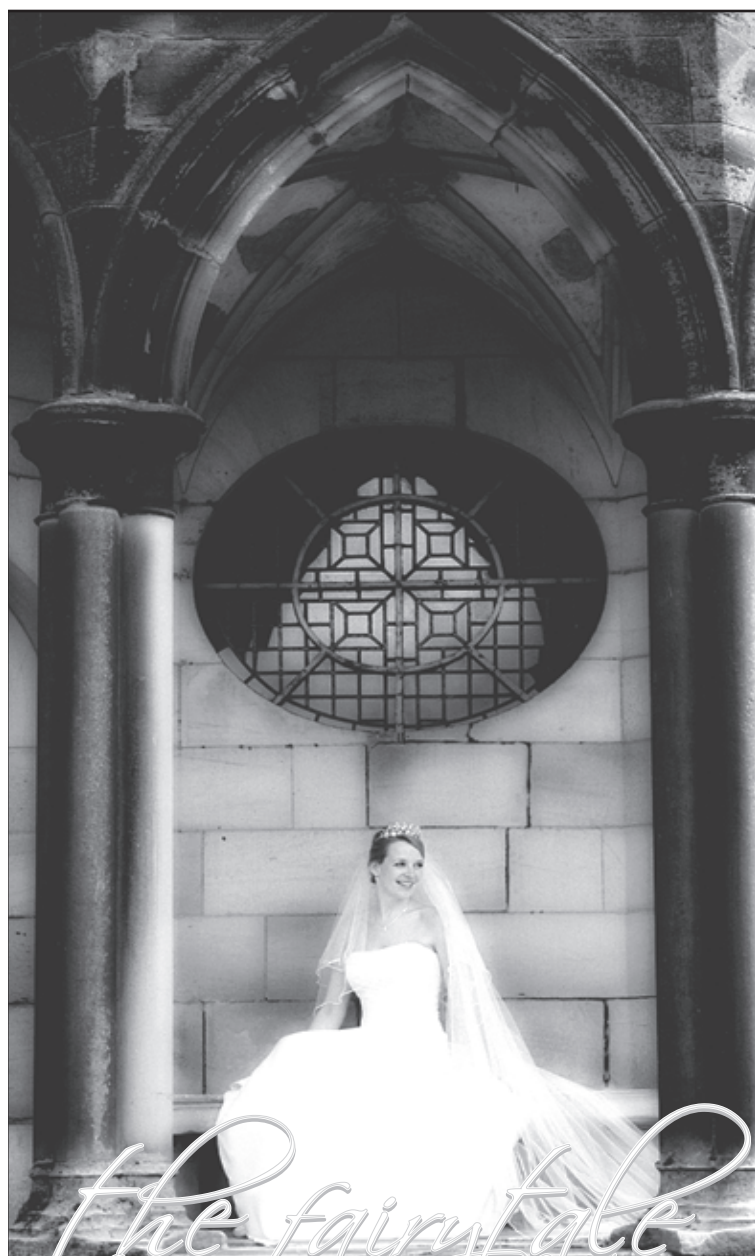
Rather than blockbuster or crowd-pleasing classics, the town hall opts for films that have received critical acclaim, but manages to do as much without isolating customers. Marc Foster's adaptation of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* is a good example – a film successful at the box office but adapted from a book that became Penguin's Reading Group Book of the Year 2006 by word of mouth.

Catherine Dawson, deputy centre manager, ►



Bishop Auckland Town Hall, viewed from the Market Place

Pictures by DAVID WOOD



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◀ said the aim was to provide a refreshing alternative to pub culture.

“In the past ten years, Bishop Auckland has started to rediscover itself, both in terms of its history and its culture,” she said. “The town seems to have gained a new-found confidence and is looking to the future. Our aim is to be one of the best cultural venues in the region.”

And why shouldn't they be aiming for the stars? Wear Valley Proms in the Park has sold out in the past two years and visitors have been upwards of 20,000.

To its credit, the town hall invests time and effort into promoting home-grown arts. Bishop Auckland Amateur Operatic Society perform their bi-annual stage production here (a rendition of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* reputedly delighted the crowds earlier this year) and Bishop Auckland's youth group, Theatre Hooligans, based at King James I Community Arts College, stage their shows in the 1862 Gothic-style building.

The organisers also reach out for big names every once in a while. September 11 will see top British funk saxophonist Snake Davis – who has played alongside Sir Paul McCartney and soul legend James Brown – entertain the crowds with his band.

If perceptions of the town's culture are changing, then so too is the landscape.

Fore Bondgate, a small side street pivotal to the town's otherworldly charm, will be cobbled and revamped later this year in an attempt to encourage

cafe culture. The summer will also see the main route through Bishop Auckland refurbished.

The £200,000 plans for Theatre Corner include a bronze statue of Bishop Auckland's most famous son, Arthur Stanley Jefferson, better known to you and I as the legendary actor Stan Laurel, one half of the early cinema duo Laurel and Hardy.

Members of the Laurel and Hardy Appreciation Society, bizarrely calling themselves The Hog Wild Tent of the Sons of The Desert, meet the first Tuesday of the month to share memorabilia and nostalgia in the town hall.

Over the road in the market place is a JD Wetherspoon pub, The Stanley Jefferson, which has cleverly made the effort to fit in with Bishop's past – celebrating the pub's first birthday earlier this year by having bar staff don Laurel and Hardy-style dress. It also boasts a Toilet of the Year award and is passionate about operating the Challenge 21 scheme to deter underage drinkers from the circuit.

Pub chains are often criticised for standardising the pub experience or for being unoriginal, but in this case it seems to have encouraged the neighbouring landlords to raise their game.

That is the opinion of ▶



Bishop nightspots,
from top, The Stanley
Jefferson, Cafe 29, and
the Infusion Bar



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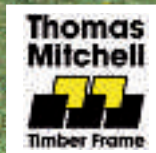
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◀ Glen Henderson, who has transformed what was The Castle Hotel into the Innfusion bar, where he has introduced a cocktail menu and weekend DJs.

“The pub was looking tired and in need of a refurbishment when you compared it to the rest of Bishop Auckland,” he said. “Since re-opening, we’ve had a lot of positive feedback. We try to offer value for money and a good atmosphere.”

However, the town described as “the gateway to Weardale” is in no danger of losing its identity to highbrow culture, as real ale and home-grown live music is thriving, particularly around his pub, on the outskirts of the town.

The Grand Hotel was built at the turn of the 20th Century, at the height of the town’s rail industry, and was popular with visiting traders and townsfolk. As rail services declined, the Grand, although loved by locals, lost much of its business and closed.

Landlord Simon Gillespie is credited with resurrecting the hotel – which is sited next to the South Church road – six years ago, after it had remained boarded-up for nearly ten years. It now has its own award-winning micro brewery and has live music on Saturday nights.

Mr Gillespie, who was busy preparing a barbeque and promoting his open mic night when I caught up with him, admits that he has become a workaholic to keep the business thriving.

“I’m always looking for new things to keep the place alive,” he said. “We have live music every week, without fail. In fact, I have been trying to get a music festival in Bishop Auckland off the ground, although that hasn’t quite happened yet.

“Variety and a good rapport with your customers are essential. If it wasn’t for the real ale and live music, mine and pubs like mine would struggle.”

He recommends Hamsterley Dark and Auckland Glory, which was named Real Ale of the Year in a 2008 poll and is the official beer of Bishop Auckland Football Club.

Another such pub evolving to meet the changing demand is the Postchaise Hotel, in the market place. Owner Peter Wright, 57, said that with the taste for heavy drinking subsiding and the smoking ban deterring some



Above, views of the Chang Thai restaurant. Below, The Grand Hotel



regulars, his business has had to adapt.

The Postchaise has been decorated twice in the past two years and Mr Wright has plans to build a children’s play area and let local broadcaster Bishop FM do a radio show upstairs at weekends. “We have to move forwards because everyone else is doing it,” he said.

Tucked away on the edge of the town centre, in Fore Bondgate – a location being primed by town planners as the centre for cafe culture – is Cafe 29, a Mediterranean-style cafe-bistro which was once a popular Victorian grocery store.

After lying derelict for a long period, the building has been transformed into a stylish, modern cafe that doubles up as a swanky night-time venue and restaurant.

The menu is packed with interesting meals and appetisers that encompass Italian, Chinese, French and British cooking, and as the produce is seasonal and locally sourced, Cafe 29 is probably the first place in the town to introduce an ethical menu.

Eating out in Bishop Auckland has in the past left much to be desired, but seafood is the dish of the day on Dao Beech’s menu, the owner of the Chang Thai restaurant, also located just opposite the town hall.

Prawns, cod and salmon are delivered fresh and on a daily basis from Hartlepool Marina, and the restaurant is lavishly decorated in authentic Thai furniture. Phat Po Tak is the most popular dish on the menu and for good reason. It is a delicious stir fry of king prawn with oyster sauce, chilli, basil and Thai herbs.

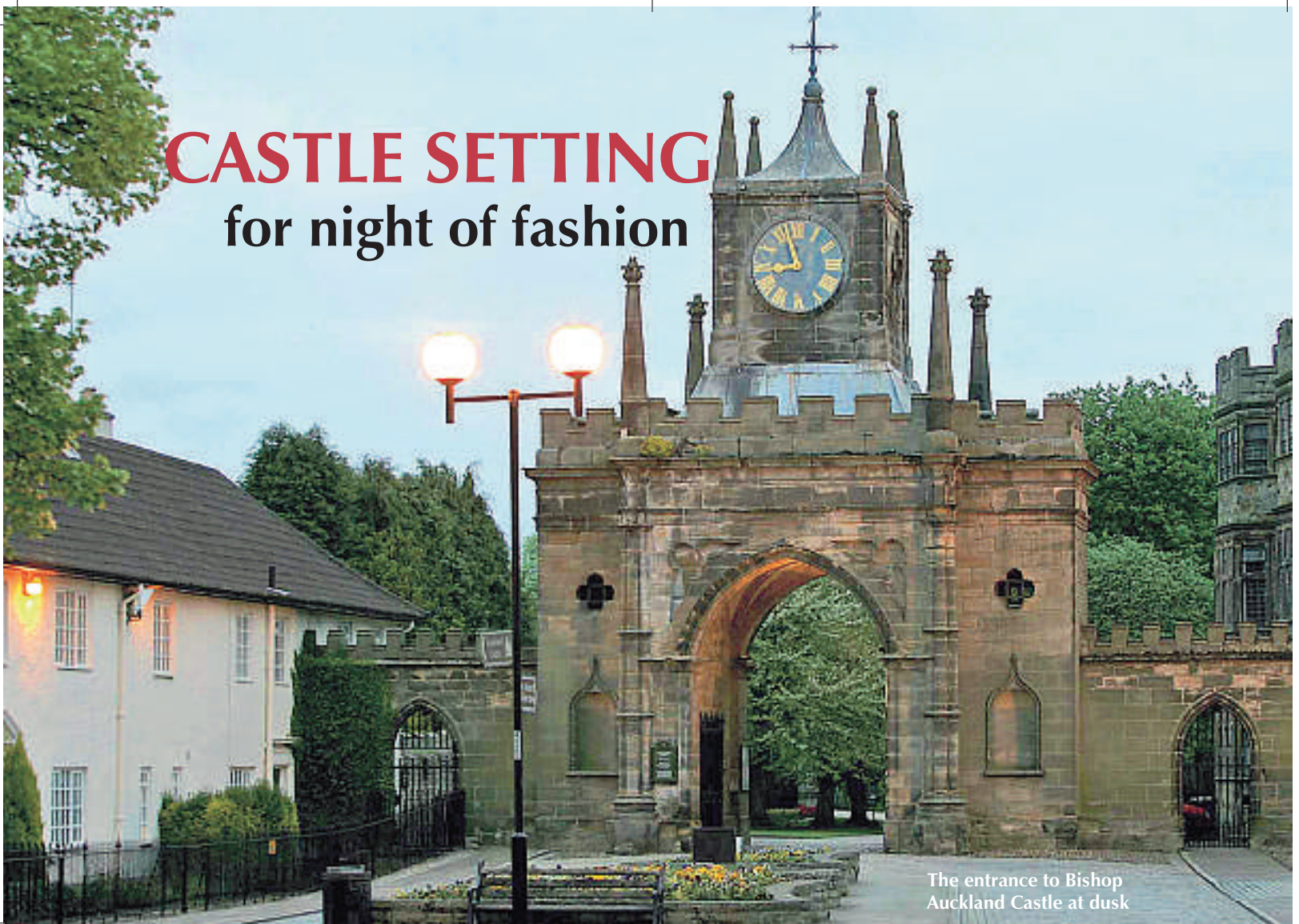
Other highlights of Bishop Auckland include The Station Hotel, Newgate Street, which is lively throughout the week and even more so at the weekend, with an atmosphere that is welcoming and genuine. The Tut ‘N’ Shive, similar to The Grand Hotel, and also in Newgate Street, is a big supporter of live music.

Those who want to take the family will find everything they need at the Tindale Crossing, on the road to Darlington, as it has a children’s complex complete with ball pool, and an adjoining hotel.

With so much on offer, Bishop Auckland promises a good night out and is well worth investigating, both for visitors and locals.

CASTLE SETTING

for night of fashion



The entrance to Bishop Auckland Castle at dusk

THERE was a fashionable throng at Auckland Castle last month for “The Show” – a chance to view the spring collections from designer boutiques in the Grange Road area of Darlington.

In the setting of the Castle’s Throne Room, guests sipped champagne as the models sashayed down the catwalk in outfits from available from Joulani, Chesnut and Geoffrey Gillow, all situated in the upmarket street.

There were smart casual outfits for both men and women and evening dresses from Italian-Indian designer, Sagai, at Joulani. Added pizzazz came in the form of salsa dancing on the catwalk.

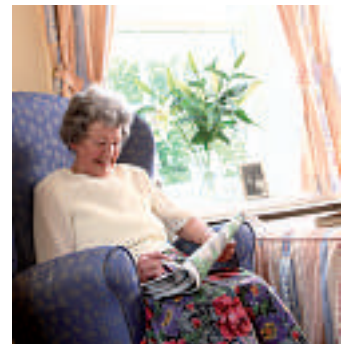
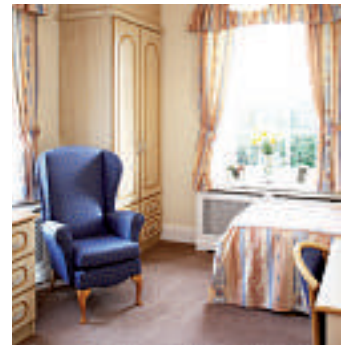
Castle manager Kim Fryer teamed up with the owner of Joulani, Mona McTaggart, for this event.

“Many people from Darlington may not know of Auckland Castle, so this is a great opportunity to bring them into this amazing building,” said Kim. “At the same time, we are delighted to help raise the profile of small-independent shops, who add character to the region’s small towns, as well as stocking fabulous clothes.”

The evening included the chance to view the castle’s 16th Century chapel and its collection of paintings by Spanish 17th Century artist Francisco de Zuburan. Meanwhile guests were able to try and to buy hats and jewellery from Catherine Hart and Kate Chaylor-Norris, and see home and babywear from House Indigo and Darling Buds.



Outfit, above, by Bleu Blanc Rouge. Top right, dress by Sagai and opposite, silk dress by Ruth Tarvydas, all from Joulani, on 01325-352355. All menswear from Geoffrey Gillow, on 01325-469369



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Search for the SUBLIME

Leading landscape photographer Joe Cornish, who has made it his mission to record the beauty of the North's coast, moors and hills, talks to **CHRIS LLOYD**

SOMEWHERE a little to the north of the Tyne Tunnel, the world widens out. The sky grows broad and blue, the beaches run long and yellow, and the air blows clean and clear.

Great hulks of castles, perched by man on rocky promontories, are dwarfed by the vastness of Northumberland.

Suddenly, from behind a clump of clouds, the sun shoots out a ray big enough to illuminate a cathedral. It plays along the line of the breakers that push relentlessly to the shore, it picks up detail in the dunes, making mountains out of sandhills, and it colours the enormous emptiness of the Northumberland coast with golds and greys.

It is sublime. I wish I had a camera: a quick snap to capture the moment.

No need. Joe Cornish captures all this and more in his beautiful new book, *The Northumberland Coast*. He is the North-East's leading landscape photographer, whose mission is to search for the sublime on coast, moor and mountain, and then record it.

Originally from Devon, he escaped London in the early Nineties to start a family out of the city.

"We looked at Cornwall, Wales, the Lake District and Scotland, but this area seemed to make sense," he says. "I knew the coast around Whitby was beautiful, and then I fell for Roseberry Topping early on."

In London, he photographed cityscapes and illustrated travel books about

the world's great wildernesses. In North Yorkshire, he struck up a working relationship with the National Trust, set up galleries in Northallerton and Stokesley, and dedicated himself to exploring the complex relationship between nature, history and industry amid the region's wonderful scenery.

"I'm a wilderness specialist, but being near Teesside I see industry in a slightly less biased view," he says. "One of the fascinating things about living on the edge of the North York Moors is that it was an industrial landscape 100 years ago. It was highly degraded, covered by buildings and railways and the detritus of industry, but nature has amazing powers of recovery."

He found similar themes in Northumberland. "The coast is highly historical and what I really love about it is the synergy between human presence and nature. The power of nature seems so benign, but you get one or two big storms and everything changes.

"I know Bamburgh beach intimately, but every time I go there it's different."

Centuries of humans have arguably enhanced Nature's desolate beauty. The time-ravaged ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle give a bleak spot a focus, the silhouette of Lindisfarne Castle rising up from the mist adds to Holy Island's spirituality, the solidity of Bamburgh Castle gives a permanence to the shifting sand dunes that surround it.

Joe's photographs tell the story of the landscape, from its geological creation to

its industrial past and on to its beautiful present, all of it illuminated by the most wonderful, colourful light.

"Photography is all about having a feeling for light, it is all about the effects of light – light is what makes the photograph live and breathe," he says. "Photography is a spiritual art form."

Capturing it is a laborious process. Although he's excited by its possibilities, he doesn't do digital. He's still on film – old-fashioned 5in by 4in single plates.

"It's a slow process that obliges the photographer to slow down," he says. "You miss a lot – but it's never been about volume, it's about form and light rather than about the precision of the moment which is what a wildlife photographer does.

"Timing is important, but in judging the passage of shadows projected by clouds across a landscape or the crashing of a wave. My exposures are over seconds rather than portions of seconds."

He goes out on "assignments" for days at a time, hiking with 20kg on his back, and then camping on top of his subject so he is ready for the first light of day and the last rays of dusk.

"Photography is still my hobby," he says. "It's a passion. If I don't get enough of it, I get cranky. I love to be outdoors. I love making pictures."

The transparencies sit on his lightbox for a month until he chooses which ones to scan in to his computer. He bristles at the suggestion that he might then manipulate the images, although we

agree that he alters them just a little, getting the balance and the colours right.

"When the world goes completely digital we won't be able to trust anything we see again," he says. "It is really important to me that you can't see my alterations.

"I am devoted to the idea that the lighting and the composition should reflect the experience of the time. If you were stood beside me on the day and then you saw the picture, you would think 'that's what it was like'."

The shapes of the mist, the textures in the sand, the rhythm of the waves and the colours in the sky are altogether quite sublime.

"Ahh," says Joe. "The secret of the sublime is that it's in the imagination and not in reality at all. The sublime is the holy grail. It is always slightly out of reach."

In his photographs, though, there is a beauty you can touch.

■ The Northumberland Coast by Joe Cornish (Frances Lincoln Ltd, £14.99)

■ Joe Cornish is one of the judges of The Northern Echo environmental photographic competition, where young photographers, aged between eight and 16, can win trees to be planted in their schools and communities. The winners will also be able to meet Joe in his Northallerton gallery. Full details of the competition, which runs until August 1, can be found at northernecho.co.uk/features/eco ►

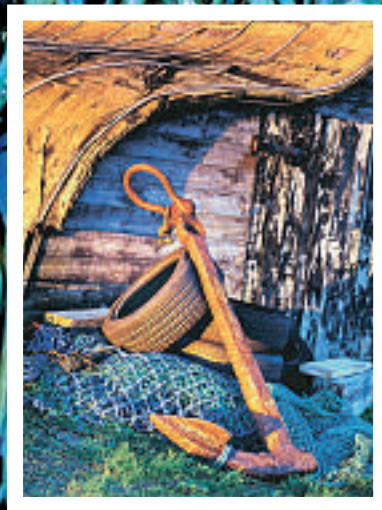
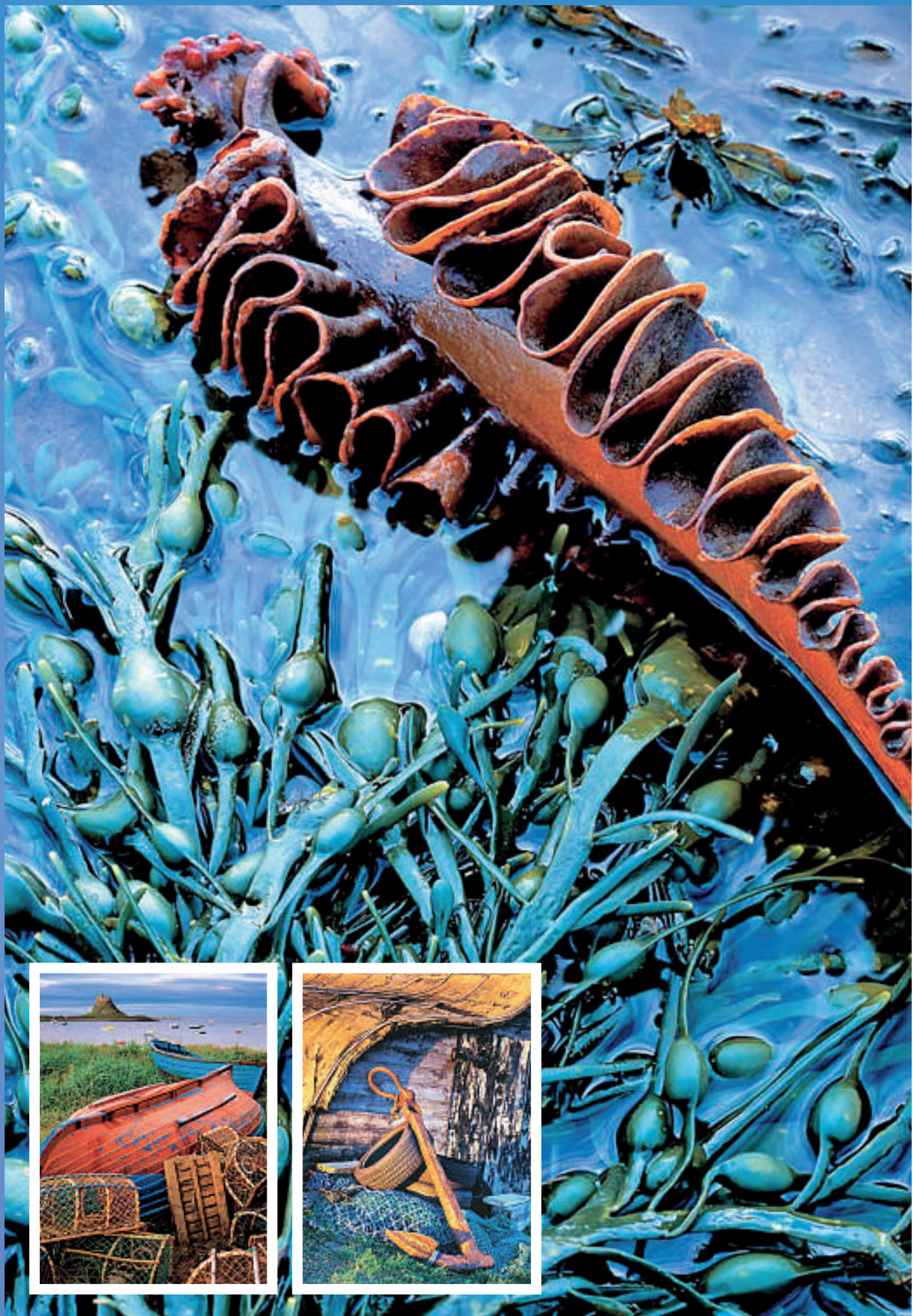
Misty morning from Budle Bay, Ross Back Sands, Northumberland



Late afternoon from Saddle Rock, Dunstanburgh. Below: summer morning, Lindisfarne Castle and the photographer reflected in his work

“ I set off from my campervan one summer morning at 3.30am, to explore the north end of Holy Island. There was no dramatic sunrise, but a gentle breeze and crystal clear light encouraged me to keep going, and I made a number of compositions on deserted beaches and bays under an ever-changing sky. I saw not another soul until late morning as I approached the village. After a round trip of about six miles I made it back to the van for ‘breakfast’ in the early afternoon, starving but happy, dehydrated and elated in equal measure





Above: lobster pots, Lindisfarne Castle, and inset right and main picture, vignettes from Holy Island Harbour

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Ford's Kuga may be late to the party, but it's still the star guest, says **NIGEL BURTON**



KUGA LEAPS to the fore

FORD KUGA 2.0 TDCi Titanium

Price: £22,500

CAN you believe this is Ford's first stab at the soft-roader since the Maverick quietly died off in 2003? Sales of small SUVs have soared by more than 200 per cent in the interim period.

Not even the most optimistic of Ford dealers could claim the Maverick was a serious SUV challenger, but the Kuga has a lot more going for it than its immediate predecessor.

The old Maverick was a re-badged Mazda. The new Kuga shares most of its basic chassis design with the Focus. Given the Focus' superb driving ability, this bodes well for the Kuga's on-the-road manners, which are far more important than a theoretical ability to wade through deep water.

The transformation from Focus to Kuga hasn't been without its difficulties. The Kuga is longer, wider and a lot higher than its hatchback cousin. Even the wheelbase has

been stretched – an unusual move when one car acts as a donor for another.

All this pulling, pushing and stretching has piled on the weight. The addition of an "intelligent" part-time four-wheel-drive system hasn't helped, either. The Kuga weighs a hefty 239kg more than an equivalent Focus.

The extra lard hasn't forced Ford to junk the much-admired Focus control blade rear suspension, though. This, more than anything, contributes to the Kuga's sure-footedness when driven hard.

At launch there's only one engine available. Luckily, the 2.0-litre TDCi is a good 'un. Designed and engineered in conjunction with the diesel experts at Peugeot, the blown four-cylinder power-plant is a gutsy little unit. Plentiful torque helps disguise the Kuga's dimensions (it weighs as much as a BMW 5-series, so every little helps) and six sensibly chosen gears help progress through traffic.

Currently, though, the performance is best described as average for the small SUV class.

Sixty from rest takes about ten seconds or so and when all's done, the top speed is somewhere in the region of 110mph. That's not exactly startling, but this is a class

noted for its somewhat laid-back approach to high performance, so the Kuga is no worse than any of its contemporaries.

If that's not enough (or if you're a glutton for punishment at the petrol pumps), a 197bhp five-cylinder petrol engine will be available before the turn of the year and Ford plans to drop in its excellent new 2.2 diesel early next year.

Climb aboard and you're greeted by the usual classy Ford instrumentation, with polished metal and chrome surfaces. Ergonomics are spot-on – you'll have no problem finding a comfortable driving position.

Surprisingly, despite the wheelbase stretch there's a paucity of legroom in the back. Taller passengers may also find their head brushes the cabin's roof lining.

The 2.0-litre TDCi is fairly green for an SUV. Its engine's CO2 emissions of 169 g/km are the best in this class, although that still means a £175 road test bill from next year. Fuel consumption is good and even drivers with the heaviest of right feet should be able to achieve an average of 30mpg.

The Kuga may have been late to this party but it has the looks and, more importantly, the ability to do well. Given the excellent suspension control and the decent handling, we have no hesitation in naming the Kuga as the SUV driver's choice.





Advertiser's
announcement

Meet the friendly bunch

Proud to be in the North East

These are exciting times for Brownhills on Durham Road, Birtley. A recent management buyout has secured the company's future and there is a feeling of optimism and excitement throughout the Group. And this optimism can be felt by its customers too.

Brownhills has been helping County Durham's clientele for over two years, and the dealership is firmly established as an integral part of the motorhoming community, including social events throughout the year and providing a one stop shop for sales, service and accessories ensuring motorhomers, caravanners and campers are catered for on one site.

A 20 strong team - headed up by Dean Lamplugh - makes sure that a visit to the dealership is pleasurable and helpful. There are no hard sales here, just an understanding ear and advice on offer, as well as over 100 new and used motorhomes to choose from.

"We're a friendly bunch," says Dean. "We've worked hard to ensure our customers feel relaxed but still receive all the information and help they need. We are as far removed from the hard-sell, car salesperson as you can get!

"We take the time to really understand our customers' requirements and offer them the best possible motorhome for their needs. And our customers come back to us again and again, and we're on first name terms with many of them. This is testimony to our customer care philosophy."

At Durham all motorhomes are open, allowing customers to browse Brownhills' entire stock; and test drives are available for those who really want to get to grips with a motorhome on the open road. But sales are not the only important element of the mix. The servicing department

ensures all technical and mechanical issues are sorted out by experienced, trained staff. Extras can be fitted on site, while you have a coffee or even stay overnight, and there is a large accessory shop stocking a range of equipment from leading manufacturers. "It's everything you need in one stop really," added Dean.

He continued: "We have a wealth of motorhoming expertise accumulating in over 100 years' experience amongst the team. This is reassuring for anyone who is new to the world of motorhoming as they are in safe hands."

The management buyout, which took place in April, was valued at £46 million and secures all 365 jobs within the Group. The focus of the new team at the helm is customer service, and a charter has been drawn up to ensure the very best for the Group's customers.

"This is indeed an exciting time for Brownhills," commented new CEO, Tom Booth. "I am delighted to be part of this chapter and intend to make sure we exceed customer expectations."

Dean concluded: "On behalf of everyone at Brownhills Durham, we look forward to making your motorhoming experience a fantastic one."

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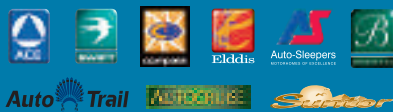
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Little GEM

Size needn't matter when it comes to safety, as a slinky little Italian proves. **NIGEL BURTON** reports

FIAT 500

TO say the Fiat 500 was eagerly awaited is an under-statement. I can't remember a car that was greeted with the same sense of anticipation as this dinky little hatch.

The Mini, maybe, or the Beetle, possibly, but the Fiat 500 is cheaper than those two and arguably better-looking.

Once you see one in the metal you can't help cooing over it like a favourite aunt would over her new nephew. It redefines the word cute.

It may be small, but the 500 has been a big success in continental Europe, where drivers have taken it to their hearts.

Maybe that's because with its five-star NCAP crash rating, smooth engines (including a diesel option) and deceptive interior space, the 500 is a world away from the utilitarian predecessor that served as its inspiration.

The original has become a design classic, with its noisy air-cooled engine and spartan interior, and good ones now command serious amounts of money. Back in its native Italy, however, the first 500 is still used as daily transport by its many fans and thousands of terminally hard-up drivers.

Still, the new 500 faces a far harder task than its predecessor. Cars like the Mini and the Beetle already command the retro car high ground and the 500 has to be good if it is to mount a serious challenge.

Despite the mini car looks, a 500 is actually larger than you would imagine. Fiat has cunningly embedded the round headlights into the curvaceous bonnet and pushed the wheels out to the extremities of the body visual tricks that help a car look smaller.

Be prepared to be amazed by the legroom. There's more space to stretch out than in a Mini and, although the boot is titchy, there's still enough space to tackle a weekly trip to the supermarket with confidence.

The Fiat 500 is the manifestation of new Fiat, a model

that is in all respects the physical demonstration of the company's new approach, the renewed strategies of the brand, a different way of interpreting the car. That is why the Fiat 500 has set new benchmarks in its segment.

For example, this is the first time that a car barely 3.55 metres long has been awarded a five-star crash safety rating by Euro NCAP, and this is the first time that a car in this segment has seven airbags fitted as standard (it is also the only super-compact to fit a knee-bag), with the advanced ESP available on all models (standard on the 1.4 16v 100 bhp).

This is the first time that a model has been launched with the entire range of power units (1.2 69 bhp, 1.3 MultiJet 75 bhp with DPF and 1.4 16v 100 bhp), built to respect emissions limits set by Euro 5, and all this more than two years in advance of the legislative deadline.

This is also the first time a small car like the Fiat 500 has been able to boast such a broad range, which is made possible by choosing from: four trim levels, three engines and 12 colours (among these are six vintage colours that evoke memories of the Fifties and Sixties, and the three-layer white, a sophisticated paint process that up to now has only been adopted on supercars).

Customers can also choose from 15 interiors, including the Cordura and Frau Leather, nine types of road wheel, and 19 sticker treatments, for a total of more than 500,000 variations.

In addition, 100 original accessories have been designed for the Fiat 500, among which the most surprising are an electric aroma diffuser and colour-coded key fobs along with the most advanced infotelematic systems: for example, a multifunctional portable navigator.

If you've fallen in love with this slinky little Italian, don't worry, you're in good company. An international panel of motoring journalists voted the 500 European Car of the Year.



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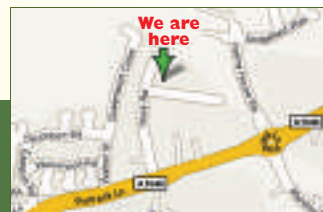
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Lunch with a LADY

Food for thought – celebrity chef and Ladettes' teacher Rosemary Shrager

Pictures by MATT CLARK



SHE has written recipe books, starred in numerous TV shows and runs a top-notch cookery school, yet Rosemary Shrager is not quite a household name.

"I've been around a hell of a long time," says the larger-than-life cook with a hearty chuckle. "But I'm still a best-kept secret."

Among Rosemary's TV credits are *School For Cooks* (ITV's take on *Masterchef*), *Ladettes To Ladies* (where she tries to tame wild women), and the *Alan Titchmarsh Show* (where she is the resident studio chef). Rosemary was also a regular on the BBC's *Food And Drink* and worked on *Soapstar Superchef* with Jean Christophe-Novelli, her former boss. "We're still great friends," she says, beaming.

But her big breakthrough on the box came when she was running her first cookery school at Amhuinnsuidhe Castle, on the Isle of Harris, in Scotland. Five signed her up for a TV series and *Rosemary – Castle Cook* was broadcast in 2001, which led to a second show the following year, *Rosemary On The Road*.

Rosemary's first appearance on TV arrived through a family connection with

MAXINE GORDON meets celebrity cook Rosemary Shrager at her North Yorkshire home

stylist Susannah Constantine (of *Trinny and Susannah* fame) – and Rosemary still recoils at the fear it instilled in her.

"Susannah and I have the same aunt and uncle and I met her while she was working for Sky, where she did her first fashion show. She told people there about me and one day I got a call and was invited to cook on live TV. I've never been so terrified in all my life."

Today, Rosemary takes performing in front of cameras in her stride – it's more likely her charges are terrified of her.

However, her no-nonsense, disciplined approach to her craft belies the warm, friendly and fun woman I encounter on my visit to her home in Masham.

She waves eagerly at me through the window as I approach her large, double-fronted town house. Inside, she bustles me around, taking me from her study, through to her front room, and finally settling in the kitchen, where she makes a large pot of ►

ROSEMARY'S WILD SALMON WITH SORREL AND COURGETTES

Serves 4

4 salmon fillets, skinned, each weighing 170-180g

60g clarified butter

1 teaspoon fine sea salt

Hollandaise sauce (see next page)

4 medium courgettes

100g sorrel leaves

4 good sprigs thyme

60g butter

juice of ½ lemon

Method

Check that there are no bones left in the fish and sprinkle each with sea salt. Wash the sorrel and remove the stalks. Cut the courgettes into thin ribbons. Over a high heat, cook the vegetables in the butter for no more than a couple of minutes, then stir in the thyme leaves and lemon juice.

Fry the salmon for a minute and a half on each side, over a medium/low heat in clarified butter (I think it is nicer to have them slightly under-done, but if you disagree, cook them for a little longer).

Make a little bed of vegetables in the middle of each plate and rest the salmon on top, surrounded by the sauce.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

Serves 4

240g unsalted butter, clarified
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
3 tablespoons water
1 bay leaf
8 peppercorns
4 egg yolks
juice of 1 lemon
good pinch salt

Method

Combine water and vinegar in small pan. Bring to the boil and

reduce to one dessertspoonful. Allow it to cool, then put the pan into a barely simmering bain-marie and whisk in the egg yolks, allowing the mixture to thicken slowly while you continue to stir. Take care not to turn it into scrambled egg. Remove pan from the heat and add the clarified butter, little by little, stirring constantly. Finally, stir in the lemon juice and salt.

◀ kitchen, where she makes a large pot of fresh coffee, talking all the time. The impression is of a busy lady with a quick mind, and someone who wants you to like her.

Her home is shabby chic; cosy and comfortable, with mix and match furniture and possessions an easy reach away.

I warm to Rosemary easily, and soon she is telling me her life story, of how she had always cooked as a child, but also liked art, so went to art college.

“I worked for an architects in the city doing technical drawing, but I was dreadful at it,” she admits in a refreshingly candid manner.

She quit, set up her own catering company, but soon realised she wanted to be a proper chef and had no alternative but to start at the bottom and work up. Her many jobs included a spell working as a patisserie chef with Novelli.

“I have spent the past 30 years learning how to cook,” says Rosemary, who is in her mid-50s and is married with two grown-up children and two grandchildren. Every job I went into I had to learn and learn fast. Because I never trained as a cook, I had to learn from books, or working on the hoof, working long hours, 18-hours a day. That’s how I got on.”

Rosemary’s drive continues today, even though she has achieved an enormous level of acclaim and success. She admits it is difficult to stop and take stock, and she’s forever looking forward to her next project.

Much of that, she confesses, stems from the fact she suffered financially during the recession of the early Nineties. “I had my own restaurant in Falmouth, but my husband lost his business and we lost everything, including the house. I only managed to salvage some pieces of furniture. Basically, I had to start again. I had to push myself to work really hard to get on in life because I had nothing left. It was sink or swim, and I swam.

“I just worked. I missed every family wedding, everything going on with our family. I have missed a social life for the last number of years. I have had to work, I have had to

A fine vintage – Rosemary Shrager, right, and below with fellow judge Gill Harbord and some of the contestants in *Ladette to Lady*, at Eggleston Hall



reinvent my life. But you can do it. You can start again.”

Rosemary moved to North Yorkshire six years ago, when she was invited to set up a cookery school at Swinton Park, the luxury castle hotel half a mile from Masham.

Although born and brought up in the South, she has Yorkshire roots. “My grandmother was Yorkshire,” she reveals. What’s more, the family home was at Kirby Misperton, near Malton, now turned over to Flamingo Land.

Rosemary recalls how her grandfather kept monkeys in the study and created a Chinese garden with a lake, where he kept flamingos.

Today, she not only runs cookery classes from Swinton Park, but also films her popular ITV1 daytime show *School For Cooks* from the historic venue. On the show, enthusiastic amateurs slog it out for the prize of winning a work placement at a Michelin-starred restaurant.

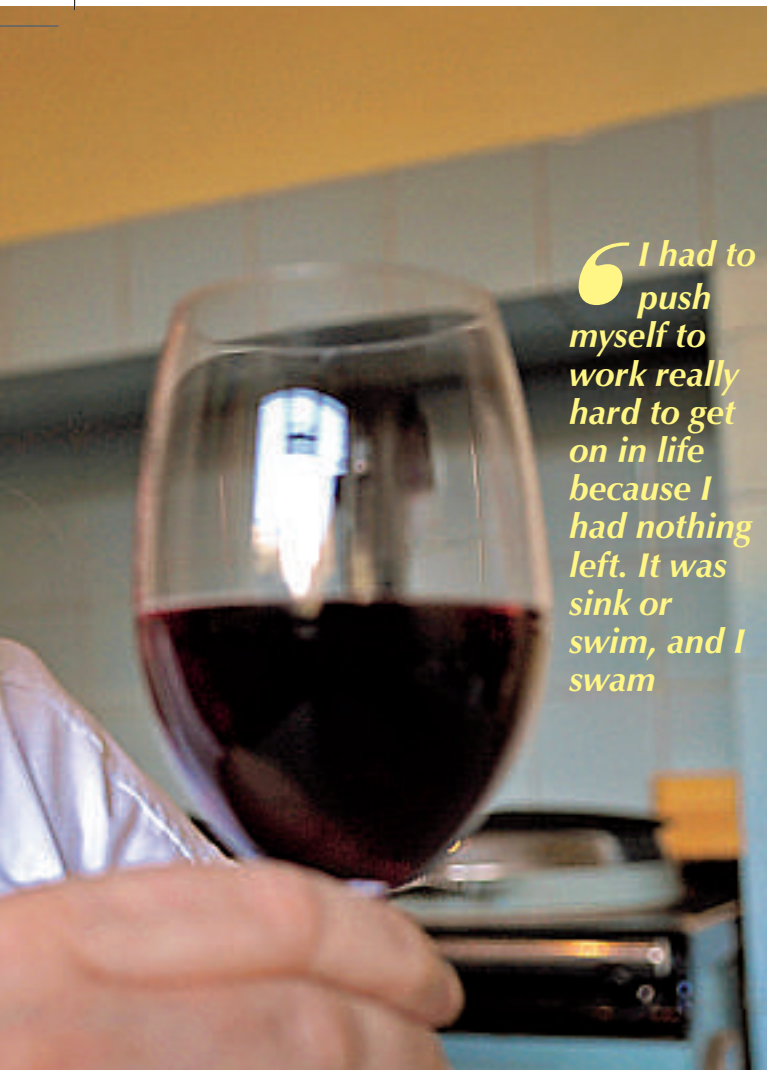
Rosemary is also putting the finishing touches to a new cook book – her first for seven years – featuring recipes from *School For Cooks*.

And she makes no apologies for the book, out in September, being full of challenging recipes, including ravioli with beetroot consomme, chicken and ham terrine with chilli jam and luxury fish pie.

“Everybody else is going so simple now, but there are real foodies now who want to know how to cook and want to know how to do things,” she says.

And Rosemary is determined to teach them.

For more of her favourite recipes, see *Rosemary, Castle Cook* (Everyman, £18.99, on Amazon), which are also on her website, rosemaryshrager.com



“ I had to push myself to work really hard to get on in life because I had nothing left. It was sink or swim, and I swam

RASPBERRY SOUFFLES

Serves 6

200g raspberries

3 tablespoons creme patissiere (see right)

8 egg whites

45g caster sugar

1 egg yolk

a few drops of good vanilla essence

caster sugar for dredging

You will also need six ramekin dishes.

Oven 180°C/340°F/Gas mark 4



Method:

Butter the ramekins very thoroughly, dredge them with sugar and put them in the fridge.

Crush a third of the raspberries with a fork.

Mix the creme patissiere with the vanilla essence, the egg yolk and the crushed raspberries.

Beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks and then add the sugar and beat again, for a few seconds. Fold one third of this into the raspberry mixture, to slacken it, and then fold in the rest, gently so as not to lose the air. Fold in the rest of the whole raspberries.

Fill the chilled ramekins to the brim. Smooth the tops and run your thumb around each, just inside the rim (this helps rising). Pop the souffles straight into the oven for 7-8 minutes and serve them immediately, sprinkled with icing sugar.

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Smooth the tops and run your thumb around each, just inside the rim (this helps rising).

Pop the souffles straight into the oven for 7-8 minutes and serve them immediately, sprinkled with icing sugar.

CREME PATISSIERE

280ml milk

25g plain flour

2 teaspoons cornflour

4 egg yolks

60g caster sugar

(Quantity may be too much for the raspberry souffles, but it is very useful and keeps well in the fridge)

Method

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together and then add the cornflour and flour. Boil the milk and whisk slowly into the egg mixture. Pour into a clean pan and bring it slowly to the boil, until it thickens. Simmer for a minute and then allow to cool. Cover it with cling-film to prevent a skin forming.

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LUCY RICHARDSON finds out about the drive to celebrate food producers on Stockton's doorstep

UPMARKET forces

STOCKTON is famous for being the birthplace of railways and boasts the widest High Street in Britain – but now it has high hopes of becoming a niche food market.

Teesside shoppers are likely to find themselves sampling some unusual local delicacies. Buffalo meat will be just one of the taste sensations on offer at the new markets in the town.

The Grade II-listed indoor market, known as the Shambles, has been restored to its former glory, thanks to a £275,000 makeover.

A monthly farmers' market was launched in May and a Christmas market is planned for the end of November.

This is in addition to the existing Queen of the North market, where traders selling a multitude of wares, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and occupy more than 160 stalls along the High Street every Wednesday and Saturday.

Angela Brayshaw, Stockton town centre management assistant, said the aim of developing the range of markets was to improve the quality of what was already provided in Stockton and to attract people to the bustling town from further away.

She said: "The town's slogan is 'Stockton – always something going on'. We want to show people that they can come and have lunch here, browse round a market and then enjoy a night out afterwards."



realise that there are fantastic local food producers on their doorstep.

"It is lovely on Queen of the North market day, as the town is packed. We are hoping the farmers' market will take off and expand – and we are hoping potential traders will think, 'I want my business to be a part of that'."

"The aim is that, with the Shambles,

“We want to show people that they can come and have lunch here, browse round a market and then enjoy a night out

Queen of the North, farmers', and Christmas market, we are offering something different for everyone. I think they will complement the retailers as they are providing a different offer of food, and we think they will increase the footfall of local businesses.

"Eventually, we will be trying to arrange coach trips here so even more people can experience Stockton."

The Shambles indoor market dates from 1825 and used to be a focal point of the town centre until traders moved into the Spencer Hall, part of the Castlegate shopping mall in the Seventies.

Originally a meat market, the revamped building can house nine high-quality, specialist and niche food retailers selling



The bustling Queen of the North market in front of the Shambles market hall

organic and fairtrade goods and local produce.

In November, a four-day continental Christmas festival will tempt shoppers with traditional dishes, craft stalls, and street theatre. The four-day event, which will run from November 27 to 30, has secured funding worth £550,000 over the next three years in Stockton, which holds the Britain in Bloom Northumbria Best City title.

The Queen of the North market received nearly a £250,000 last year, with its branded canopies giving a more European feel. It has

been a regular feature on the high street for centuries and boasts many loyal stallholders. Fox's fruit and vegetable stall has been in the family for 200 years and has held a prominent position on the market continuously for 100 years.

Many more stallholders, who have traded for 30 years or more, turn up in all weathers at the Wednesday and Saturday markets and to the smaller one held every Friday.

Councillor Bob Cook, Stockton Borough Council's cabinet member for regeneration and transport, said: "Stockton's market is at the heart of the town. You can find practically anything you want there, with its huge range of goods. It's a feature which has put Stockton on the map."



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Wander around the city with small town charm before rejoining the ship for the mini cruise back to Newcastle.

Guide prices start from £99 per person and include three nights on board and coach tour. For more information, departure dates and to book, go to dfds.co.uk/scenic

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Explore the dramatic and wild Fjords of Norway on this six night break to Voss. After your mini cruise to Bergen you join a two hour sightseeing tour of the Gateway to the Fjords before travelling up to Voss by coach. Voss is the activity centre of Fjord Norway with activities suitable for everyone. Whether you want to go walking, horse riding or fishing, or for the more adventurous abseiling and white water rafting!

Guide prices start from £341 per person including three nights onboard and three nights at Fleischer's Hotel, Voss, on half board, a two-hour sightseeing tour of Bergen, and return coach transfers.

For more information, departure dates and to book, go to dfds.co.uk/scenic



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Living on film

KEITH PROUD meets Jenny Agutter for tea on her recent visit to the region

ONE of the most moving, yet happy moments in *The Railway Children* – in fact, one of the most heart-rending in film history – takes place on the platform when Roberta sees her father, newly-released after having been falsely imprisoned, walking towards her through the engines steam and shouts: “Oh Daddy, my Daddy”.

Jenny Agutter, who played the part of Roberta and later, Mother, in the remake, says: “The film has always had a life of its own. It’s woven its way into my life too. But it’s not constantly part of it.”

I am speaking to her at the Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond, where she appeared in *Jane Austen’s World*, bringing the author’s work to life.

Returning to the subject of *The Railway Children*, she says that while it is arguably the most famous and best-loved of her films, a part of so many people’s childhoods, it was not the first she made.

“I made it just after I became 17 but made *Walkabout* when I was 16. I’d done *The Railway Children* serial on BBC television just a couple of years earlier, when I was 14, for Julia Smith, who later directed *EastEnders*. It was soon afterwards that I made the film, *I Start Counting*, with Simon Ward and then *Walkabout* came up.

“We spent five months travelling around Australia making that, and then, in March the following year, Lionel Jeffries was talking about making *The Railway Children*. I was approached to be in it but was very iffy about it, because, while *Walkabout* was about the loss of innocence and I was moving on, *The Railway Children* would take me back to being a child.

Fate was to intervene to make Jenny’s decision for her. “I just by chance happened to run into Lionel Jeffries in a restaurant in London and he was with Diana Sheridan. He was so kind of

TRACKS of my years

Jenny Agutter pictured
by KEITH PROUD

Jenny Agutter as Mother, Jemima Rooper as Roberta and Jack Blumenau as Peter in the remake of *The Railway Children*



beguiling, amusing and energetic and full of his plans that it was impossible to refuse when he explained that he was making this film and that Diana would be playing the part of my mother. That was it.

“She was enchanting and I have so many happy memories of working with her and the others. It seemed blessed, the whole thing. We shot for a very short period of time on a very limited budget and, although it may just be a childhood memory, the sun seemed to shine all the time. I’m delighted so many people remember that film with such affection.

“I moved on to *The Snow Goose*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Wild Duck*. I worked at the Hampstead Theatre Club and went on to the National and then, at 21, to America, where almost nobody knew *The Railway Children*, to see what opportunities there were over there – because no films were being made in England and that was the medium in which I wanted to progress.”

Jenny’s agents organised for her to meet Michael Anderson, who was making *Logan’s Run* and had already cast a number of English actors, including Peter Ustinov and Michael York.

Anderson was one of the few who did remember her in *The Railway Children* – and thought her too young for the role he was casting. After an audition, however, she won the part and nobody mentioned *The Railway Children* until, in her late 30s, she returned to England and found that it seemed to be on one or other of the television channels almost endlessly and videos of it were selling really well.

“I realised that it had taken on a life of its own and had a very strong place in people’s hearts,” she said. “It had been part of my growing up but was no longer part of my life. I did, however, become very interested in the book’s author, Edith Nesbit, and read what was then a newly-published biography of her, *A Woman of Passion*.

“Her childhood had been far from idyllic, but quite exciting, and she developed a wonderful imagination. All these things made me want to make a film about her, which I still do. I was also very pleased when I was approached to play the mother in the Carlton Television version of *The Railway Children*. I’d have been hugely insulted if they’d looked elsewhere and I wanted to redress the balance to show people that I really had grown up.”

Jenny has many northern connections. She was made a Doctor of Letters by Bradford University. Her mother was from Lancashire, her father from Headingley, Leeds, and she frequently visited her grandparents there, often travelling to Scarborough and the North York Moors.

Her schedule is still as busy as ever. This year, she has been in the BBC1 television series, *The Invisibles*, playing the wife of a criminal who returns from Spain to resume ►

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www.brassfestival.co.uk



Jenny as Roberta in *The Railway Children*, centre, with Sally Thomsett and Bernard Cribbens

◀ a life on the wrong side of the law. No sooner did one job finish than another began. "This one's called Monday, Monday. It's set in Leeds – but we're filming in London. It's about the goings on behind the scenes in the head office of a supermarket."

So how does the land lie with the film about Edith Nesbit? Jenny knows just how committed producers need to be and how much time such projects demand.

"It's finding time. Since I came back to England, got married and had my child within that first year, I've wanted the family to come before anything else.

"My work, which I enjoy hugely, has had to fit around the needs of my family. But now that my son's 17 I have more time to get on with my work again. I do like acting. I love the whole process of working with people, the sense of discovery. Every role that I get the chance to play gives me so much."

Her cheese scone finished, and greatly enjoyed, she glances around the room in Richmond's Georgian Theatre and out of the window into one of the town's ancient streets. "I've never been to Richmond before, never been to this theatre, but I've heard so much about it. I'm stepping into a piece of history and you can't help but be touched by what's gone on here."

And so what for the future? "More, just more. I'm greedy really. As long as I can keep on working in some way, that will be good."

A MISSION TO HELP

JENNY, who spends much of her time and energy supporting the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, tells **Living** how she first heard about the condition.

"I found out about it 29 years ago when my niece, Rachel, my brother's first child, was born," she says.

"Rachel was struggling in the first three months of her life and clearly wasn't doing well. After various tests, they found out that she had it. Then I heard about the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. When she was born, the average life expectancy of a child born with CF was just four years. Now, with the work that the trust has done, the new medications and the physiotherapy, the average life expectancy is 30 years."

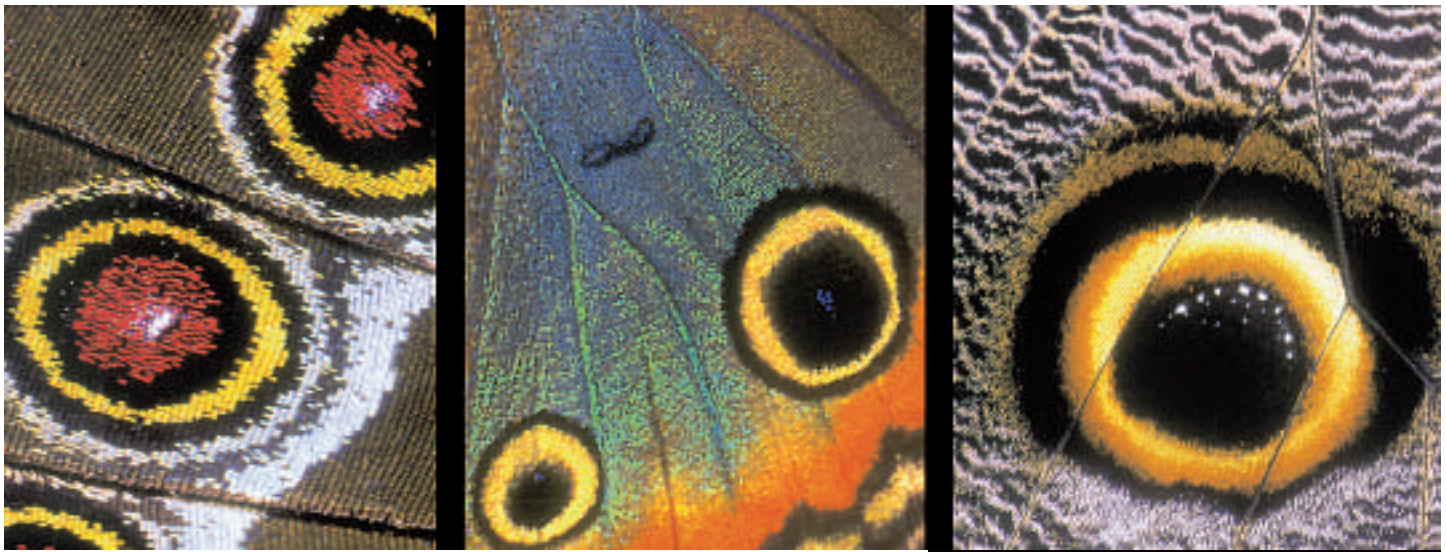
As part of her support for the trust, Jenny takes part every year in an event which raises money for it, and which always



Jenny at the Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond, when she appeared in *Jane Austen's World*

brings back memories for her.

"The Railway Children Sponsored Walk takes place annually on the May Bank Holiday at Haworth, where much of *The Railway Children*, was filmed. It follows a route where many of the scenes were shot – Three Chimneys, Oakworth and Haworth Stations, the Worth Valley Railway. It's a part of the world of which I've become very fond."



Hot tickets and hot reads for summer

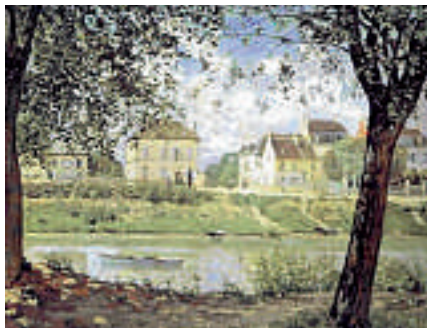
EXHIBITION

ALFRED SISLEY

Impressionist Landscapes
Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle
Until Sunday, September 21

DON'T miss your chance to see the first major exhibition devoted to this leading Impressionist to take place outside of London in half a century. It spans the years from the first Impressionist exhibition in 1874 until his death from throat cancer in 1899.

Born in Paris to English parents, Sisley's talents were appreciated by his lifelong friends, Monet and Renoir, with whom he



studied, and his art is now appreciated worldwide.

This exhibition, which includes loans from private collections and museums, explores Sisley's captivation with the landscape of the Parisian suburbs.

THEATRE

DISNEY'S HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

Newcastle Theatre Royal
July 21-August 2

THE stage version of this musical phenomenon is selling out at venues on its year-long tour, with the reaction of the young audience taking even the actors by surprise.

"From the first five minutes, it's obvious it's not groundbreaking but there's never been anything like this for a long time for kids. It's so innocent and the music is so good," says Ashley Day, who plays Troy, the popular school basketball star.

A kind of Fame meets Grease, the High



School Musical success story began two years ago with the screening of the original film on the Disney Channel. The sequel, High School Music 2, broke TV viewing records in both the US and the UK last autumn.

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BOOKS

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At present there are more than 165,000 described species of moth and butterfly, found in every region of the world, and Thomas Marent depicts every step of their amazing life cycle in breathtaking detail. The reader is given a unique opportunity to admire insects that are normally only a flutter of wings on the breeze.

BELOW: Male orange tips patrol for mates, flying up and down hedgerows in search of females



CHARITY EVENT

The Yorkshire Dales branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association is holding a car, bike and tractor show at the Tennants Auctioneer's car park at Leyburn on Sunday, August 3, from 10am-4pm.

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FLOWER club lunch



Rita Smith, Rita Whitehouse, Patricia Battye and Anne Ford

DARLINGTON Flower Club celebrated its 50th anniversary lunch at Headlam Hall Hotel, near Darlington, on May 7, on a gloriously sunny day.

There was a sumptuous lunch followed by toasts to the club by Jane Currie, chairwoman of the club, and by Valerie Best, national chairwoman of the National Association of Floral Arranging Societies, who had travelled from London for the occasion. Mrs Best gave a talk on her long association with flowers, under the title of Rags to Riches.



Ethel Solly, Anne McNally and Grace Hunter



Sheila Alderson and Greta Medcalfe



Jane Currie, club chairwoman, and Peggy Simpson



Judith Burt, Joan Johnson and Wendy Pratt



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MAYOR'S ball at Richmond

THE Mayor of Richmond's annual ball was held at the King's Head Hotel, in the town. Guests filled the hotel's ballroom for a three-course dinner, and dancing to the Richmond-based soul band, the Atlantic Soul Messengers.

The event raised money for the mayor's chosen charities – Richmond Duck Club, the Fire Service Benevolent Fund and Gargett Walker House for Alzheimer sufferers. The loyal toast was proposed by the town clerk, Geoff Coates. Guests were welcomed by the mayor, Councillor John Robinson, and Canon Richard Cooper responded on behalf of the guests.



Nicola Bryan, Sarah Seymour and Julie Winn



Karen and Barry Tiller with Nicholas Mason and Sharron Underwood



John and Christine Blenkiron, JD Bagley, Joan Metcalfe and Shirley Bagley



Angela Edwards and Maurice Bates



Gary Winn, Rob Bryan and Barry Seymour



Keith Bruce, Marian Swift, outgoing Mayor of Richmond Councillor John Robinson, Raymond Alderson, Kate Robinson and Sue Alderson



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Oliver and Valerie Blease, David Johnson, Beryl Goodfellow and Laurence and Ann Hathaway

MAYOR'S ball



Stuart Parsons, Janet Cooper, Canon Cooper, Tina and Geoff Cotes and Lyn Glover



Claire and Nick Hunter



Ian and Maree Long with Rob and Teresa Johnson

Pictures:
DEBBIE
ALLEN/
WIRESHOTS



Outgoing Mayor of Richmond Councillor John Robinson and Kate Robinson

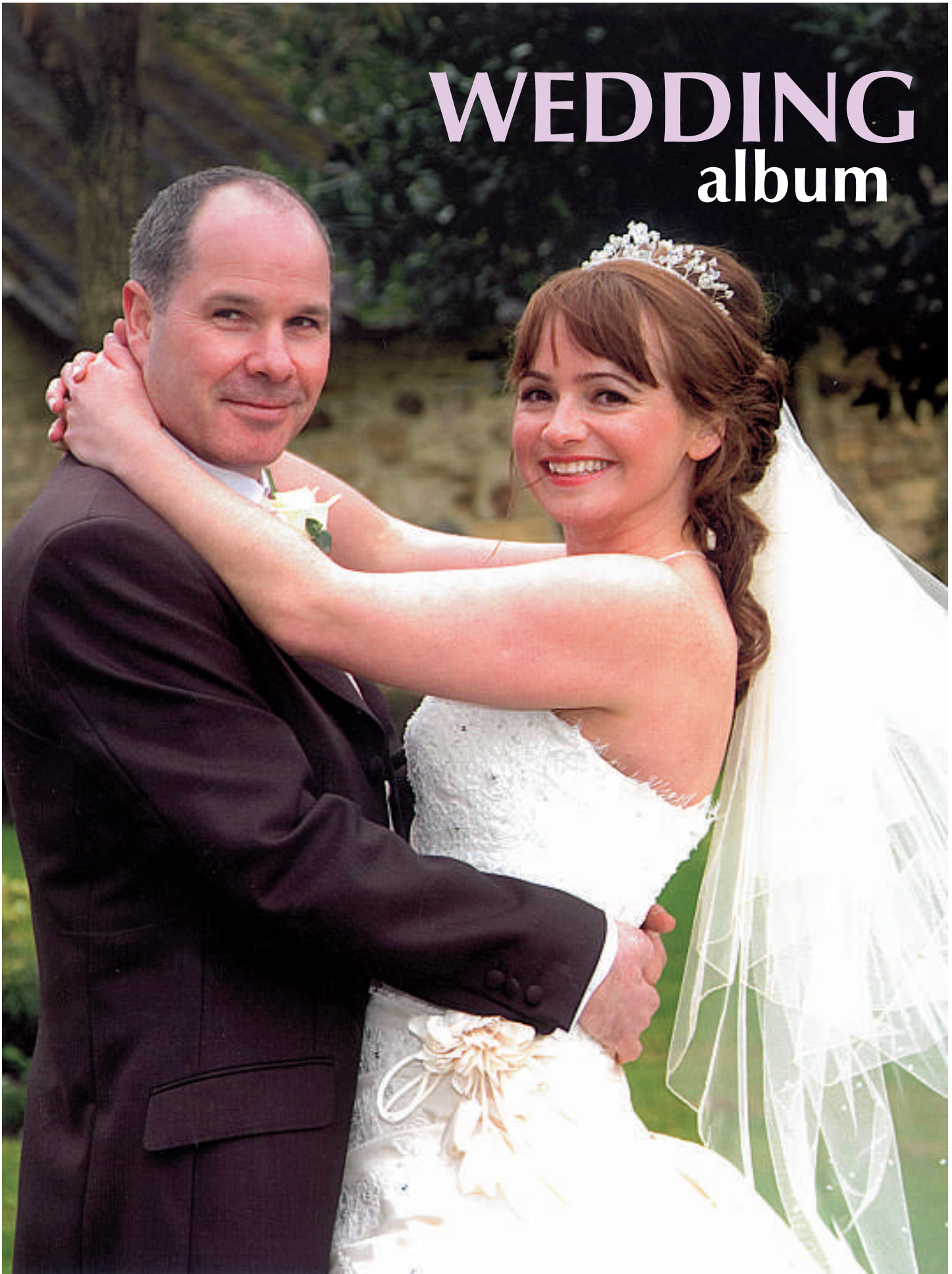


Top, Keith and Judith Morton, and Claire and Roger Swainston



£6,000 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance
A SPECIAL open weekend held by Geoffrey Benson & Son in their showrooms at Green Hammerton, near York, raised £6,000 for local charity Yorkshire Air Ambulance. The traditional furniture retailer is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and Martin and Kate Benson – son and granddaughter of founder Geoffrey – were keen to showcase their commitment to quality English-made furniture and personal service. The event was such a success another is planned.

WEDDING album



Stewart Brown and Jayne Stout, of Murton were married at Bethany Church, Houghton-le-Spring
Picture: Richardsons Photographers, Chester-le-Street



Roman Price and Sinita Lee, of Barley Mow, near Chester-le-Street were married at Stanley Register Office
Picture: Richardsons Photographers, Chester-le-Street



Claire Hugill, of Middleton-one-Row, and David John Wase, of Norton, Stockton, were married at St Laurence's Church, Middleton St George

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Alan Pritchard and Sharon Bradwell, of Chester-le-Street, were married at St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Church, Chester-le-Street

Picture: Richardsons Photographers, Chester-le-Street



Katarina Trabalikova and Mark Dodd, of Pelton, near Chester-le-Street, were married at St Mary's and St Cuthbert's Church, Chester-le-Street

Picture: Dean's Photographic Studios, Birtley



David Mortimer and Susan Longstaff, both of Hutton Bonville, North Yorkshire, were married at the Rushpool Hall Hotel, Saltburn

Picture: Eric Bourne



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When it comes to moving up a step in your career search, the online path has a lot to offer, says **JULIA BREEN**



Climbing by Ladders

TheLadders.co.uk was launched in Britain in January and already has 72,000 users.

The company has become the UK's leading search and selection website for senior executives looking for their next career move. Instead of going through a headhunter, or networking to get their next job, TheLadders.co.uk offers a different way into the top positions in top sectors.

What's different is that the jobseeker pays a subscription, which acts as a natural vetting procedure for serious candidates of a certain calibre – great news for large employers/corporations and recruiters looking for quality candidates.

TheLadders.com, its US sister site has been operating successfully since 2003, and has 1.7 million users.

Stuart Jolly, a development director from Darlington, registered on the UK site after its launch in January and used its CV critique service. He was unhappy in his job and wanted to move and had tried sites such as Monster.co.uk but found there weren't enough jobs of the calibre he needed.

He says: "TheLadders gave me a very honest appraisal of my CV. I could have dismissed it and said, they know nothing about this field, but I realised I just wasn't selling myself."

"So I paid about £400 for their CV service, which I felt was worth it, and filled out some forms and got back this CV which was amazing. I couldn't believe it. It was punchy and really sold my talents and I posted it straight on to the website."

"The next day the phone didn't stop ringing. I had so many interviews I had to start a notebook to keep track of who had called, and I was offered three jobs."

ROUTE to the top

STRAIGHTEN your tie, polish your shoes. Don't overdo the make-up. Job hunting is a delicate discipline. One false move and you're off the radar.

At least the days of printing off dozens of copies of covering letters and CVs, scouring the trade magazines and sticking stamps on letters are nearly over. These days, both the hunter and the hunted rely on the internet.

Job sites such as monster.co.uk, reed.co.uk, and fish4jobs have revolutionised the way we look for work. Searching online can be overwhelming as dozens of job sites have sprung up on the Internet. The big job boards are the best place to

Call your friends, get out your address book, and use any contacts or acquaintances to ensure your application gets in front of the hiring manager's eyes

start as they offer a wider range, but it is also worth checking out smaller niche sites.

Job hunting, of course, is dependent on your career. If you have a very specialised job in a niche area, it's probably better to search specialist sites. However, if your skills and experience are suited to a wide range of jobs, go for the larger job sites where you can search hundreds of disciplines.

Sarah Drew, general manager of TheLadders.co.uk, which specialises in jobs paying £50,000 and more, says: "The response time to hear back from a recruiter or a company varies wildly, from a few days to over a month. While there's nothing you can do to change a recruiter's personal style, there are a number of things you can do to make

sure that your CV gets to the right place at the right time, and on top of the pile."

She says a killer CV is the most important tool, and most job sites offer good advice, including tailoring it to each individual job that you apply for. TheLadders.co.uk also offers a free CV critique to its premium members.

"Second, network," says Sarah. "There's no substitute for old fashioned personal-professional networking; most of our subscribers who use the product to its best possible outcomes have approached the hiring process by attacking from multiple angles. Call your friends, get out your address book, and use any contacts or acquaintances to ensure your application gets in front of the hiring manager's eyes."

"Third, follow-up. Don't be shy about calling or emailing to follow-up one week after you first submit your CV and cover letter. Ask if the position is still open and let them know that you are still interested."

Other useful tips are to search recruitment websites to find companies that are hiring. Even if they are not offering a position that suits you, it's useful to email a CV for future reference.

Do an internet search for companies you would like to work for, and look at their latest vacancies section. It can also be worth emailing your CV speculatively to these employers.

The most crucial thing is to check spellings and grammar – it's too easy to press send without reading everything at least three times.

The internet can also have its disadvantages. Your potential employer may "Google" you or type your name into networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook – so make sure there's nothing you wouldn't want them to see.



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Living property



Hungate sales underline confidence in the York housing market

YORK'S strong appeal as a place to live is seeing the city buck the trend and achieve real growth in house prices in contrast to other towns and cities in the UK where the credit crunch is biting hard.

That's the view of Martina Collins, sales and marketing director for the new £150m Hungate urban neighbourhood, where ten new homes were reserved in the past month.

"In the past year house prices in York have risen by nine per cent and by 1.9 per cent in the past quarter, showing the strength of the housing market and underlining the fact that in spite of difficulties faced by the financial sector, both existing owners and people purchasing new homes can take comfort in the fact that owning a home in the city is a good investment," says Martina.

"Our own experience at Hungate bears this out, as we sold ten homes off-plan last month alone and our on-site sales team is handling new enquiries on a daily basis at the Hungate marketing suite.

"We are seeing a mixture of purchasers, with the majority sold to owner occupiers, and the remainder to local buy-to-let investors who recognise the demand for rental properties in York. The



development is proving popular as it has been well designed, has a fantastic specification and is located within the city walls.

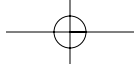
"In contrast to many other parts of the country, York is doing well because the demand for places to live in this historic and desirable city remains very high."

The first phase of riverside apartments and town houses in the Hungate development will be completed by the end of the year.

■ Sales and Marketing Suite open daily. Mon-Sat 10am-6pm; Sun 10 am-5pm. Tel: 01904-676- 797



Top team: from left – Martina Collins, Trudi Heslop, Annie Walker, Julie Scott and Priya Pannu
Above: stylish two-bedroom apartment at Hungate marketing suite



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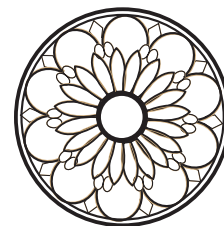
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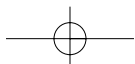


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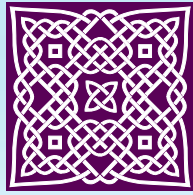
The Warehouse Low fell

A contemporary apartment development nestled in the heart of low fell with views across the Tyne valley and with easy access onto the A1 is in an ideal location for commuters both north and south. The development comprises of 5 luxury 2 bedroom apartments incorporating plasma tv's, fully fitted kitchens with granite worktops, chrome accessories and fully fitted tiled bathrooms and en-suites plus the penthouse has an additional external roof terrace.

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Have fun going up the wall in your garden, says **HANNAH STEPHENSON**

WALL flowers

GARDEN designers are getting very excited about a fresh and vibrant idea for their schemes – a living wall.

Instead of growing climbers up a wall, the idea is to create a framework which will take low-growing plants and make the most of what urban space is available. This allows gardeners to use a variety of plants which need both dry and wet soils.

Designer Mark Gregory, the brainchild behind a gold medal-winning urban garden at Chelsea this year, says living walls could catch on in residential gardens.

The plants are set into what looks like a bookcase, but with vertical as well as horizontal dividers. He used western red cedar as it is from a

sustainable source, the wood is sappy and it won't rot – but plastic, metal or clay can be used. Plants can even be mounted in CD or wine racks.

The key is getting the planting right, with dry-loving plants at the top, water-loving species at the bottom, and in-betweeners in the middle.

Mark says: "Go with a simple palette of plants which will grow vertically, without much fuss.

"You could have aspleniums (hart's tongue fern) at the bottom, which grow in walls or any hedgerow, and euonymus above it, which is a horizontal plant, but if planted in a living wall will turn upwards. Heucheras and euphorbia will grow on it and sedums are good at the top."



Designer Mark Gregory plants a living wall

Give your frame enough depth to hold a good amount of organic matter, using only small plants at first.

Professionals usually mix up free-draining material and build in irrigation, such as a drip line, then plant tiny plugs, securing them behind a galvanised mesh, starting from the bottom, and keep stapling the mesh on in layers. Plants will make a root mass, then grow through.

Don't plant your wall when it is flat on the ground, as it will be difficult to move later. Plant it up in its final standing position, from the bottom upwards.

If you want flowers, place the wall in a west or south-facing spot. If it is in the shade, you will have to use plants such as ferns, ivies and 'mind your own business' (Soleirolia soleirolii) but try not to use species that will be too invasive.

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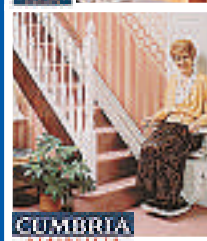
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Living My North



John Foster was born in Middlesbrough and for the past 14 years has been on North-East radio. From waking people up in the morning on commercial radio to seeing them through the afternoon on BBC Tees. 'Yer joking aren't yer?' is now part of Teesside legend thanks to John. He is also proud to live on Europe's biggest housing estate, Ingleby Barwick, in Stockton, with his partner, Anna, who works for Radio 1 Newsbeat. **CHRIS LLOYD** spoke to him

Foster favourites, from left, the Dun Cow at Sedgfield, Robin Hood's Bay and the ICI cooling tower

My favourite pub/wine bar

I used to live Sedgfield and the Dun Cow was my local. Rumour has it I had keys to the place. I still try to get back there as often as possible for a meal or a couple of pints, and it was good to see President George Bush and Tony Blair following my lead a few years back. The atmosphere in the pub is great, you never feel hurried by Geoff and his staff, the food is fantastic and the location – near the village green – is simply beautiful.

My favourite shop

Give me a good music shop and I'm happy. I like trying to unearth gems I can play on the radio. Alan Fearnley's, in Middlesbrough, was a mecca and there are some good shops in Newcastle and Sunderland too. Failing that, somewhere like the Middlesbrough Music Centre or Bandland, which sell musical instruments, I love. I have a replica Hofner bass like Paul McCartney's (which I can't actually play but, hopefully, one day I'll learn). Also, I'm partial to Kitson's butchers, in the Castlegate Centre, in Stockton.

My favourite restaurant

The Tontine, a short drive down the A19 for us. Through working at BBC Tees, I've got to interview and know Eugene McCoy and find out a bit about what goes into making the Tontine one of the best places to eat in the North-East. The food and the staff are

fantastic, and the whole ambience of the place feels great.

My favourite walk

Easy this one, Saltburn. Down the bank, a stop at The Ship Inn, and through the Italian Gardens back to the top. Whatever the weather, it's bracing and good to get rid of the cobwebs, see some gorgeous views and squeeze in an ice cream.

My favourite view

I've narrowed it down to three. When I was growing up, the Foster family always used to go to Robin Hood's Bay and the view from the top of the bank on a clear day, with that iconic house, conjures up so many memories from my childhood. The Bay is really a gem of the area with a superb fish and chip shop at the bottom of the bank, some wonderful holiday chalets and of course some good pubs.

The works at Wilton and Billingham lit up at night are an incredible sight, and people who come to the area are always impressed when you show them.

And in contrast, sitting at the Devonport pub in Middleton One Row on a summer's evening with a beer in your hand, you can't help but be impressed by that view.

My favourite landmark

This may seem strange but...the ICI cooling tower at Portrack, in Stockton. When I was

starting out in radio, I had to work and live in Leeds and Sheffield and as I used to look in the rear-view mirror driving down the A19 leaving the area, the last bit of Teesside I used to see was the tower, and it used to fill me with sadness as I left home. The view from the top of Roseberry Topping is great and High Force is amazing – but there is something special about that tower. It should be repainted, have the ICI logo put on it, and be preserved for ever.

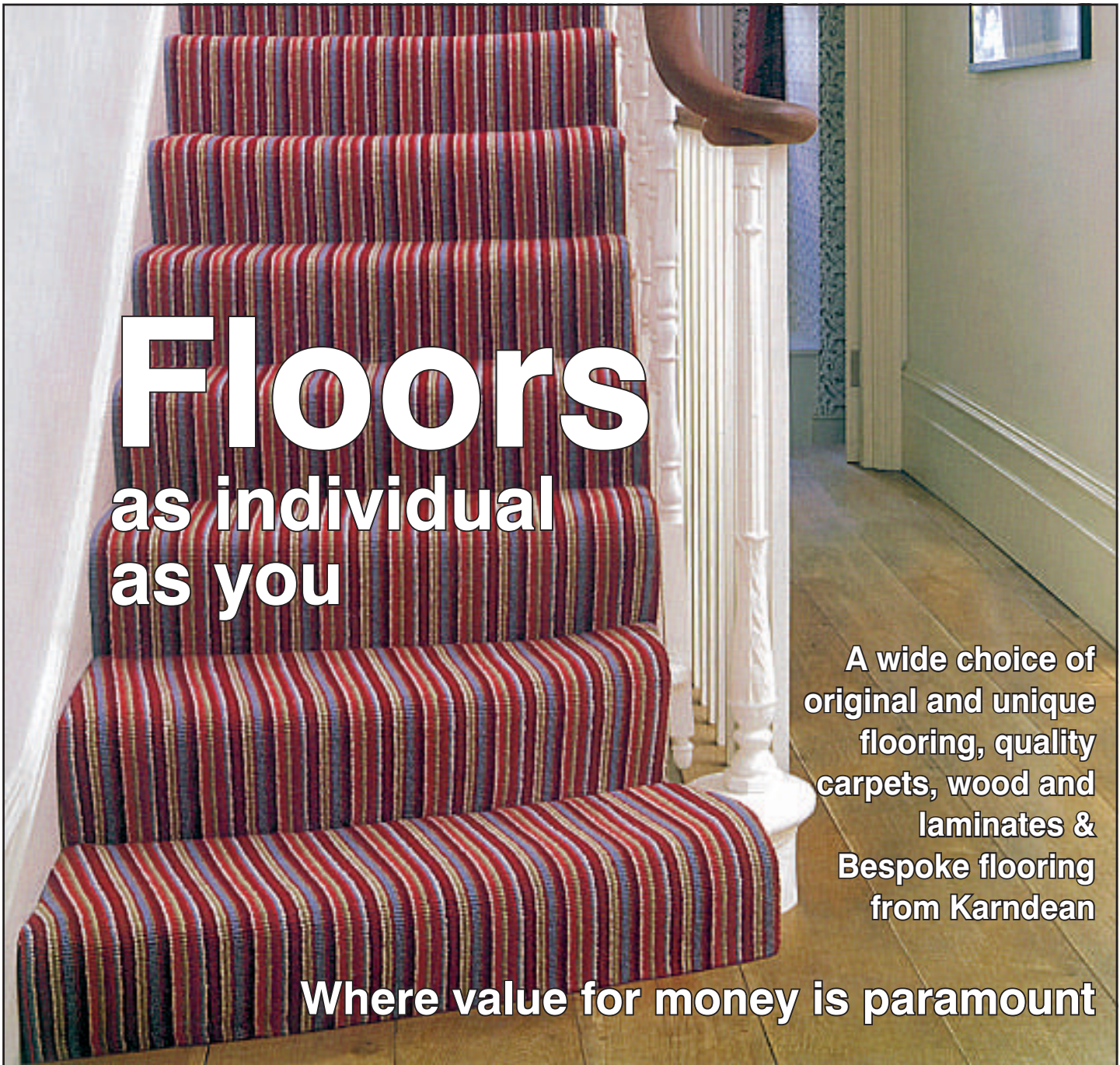
My favourite day out

Me and my other half, Anna, together doing what we want. She works away through the week so weekends are very precious to us. We sometimes hop on a train to Newcastle for a look round and something nice to eat, maybe head into Northumberland to somewhere like Alnwick. Nothing is rushed and we have a great time.

Best thing about the North?

It's home. Wherever we go around the country or on holiday, I always get a sense of excitement about coming back. Mike Neville once said that when you get to about York on the train, the air changes and becomes fresher. You get the feeling that there is something about to happen in the North-East. After years of been sneered at by the rest of the country, our time is coming and everybody will be green with envy. A lot of people I know came here to work and loved it so much they stayed.

☐ Hear John Foster on BBC Tees from 1pm to 4pm weekdays and 6pm to 9pm on Saturdays.



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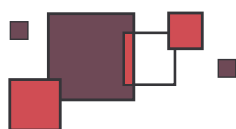
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