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Ever thought of improving on what nature has given you – maybe a little nip here, a little tuck there? You're not alone, as thousands who have undergone cosmetic surgery can testify. And in May's special feature, we explain not only what's on offer, but also how to avoid any pitfalls.

On the fashion front, there are great ideas for tailoring and a nostalgic look at the flawless style of Audrey Hepburn. A beauty therapist also shows us her favourite classic looks. We've been especially busy this month, going out and about in the region, enjoying Durham's floodlit beauty, discovering Hartlepool's attractions, and taking a peak through the keyhole at an impressive Victorian home that is the sum of two halves. On a more energetic note, we have also found that the surfing craze is sweeping the North-East coast.

So enjoy a dip into May's edition of **Living**.

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



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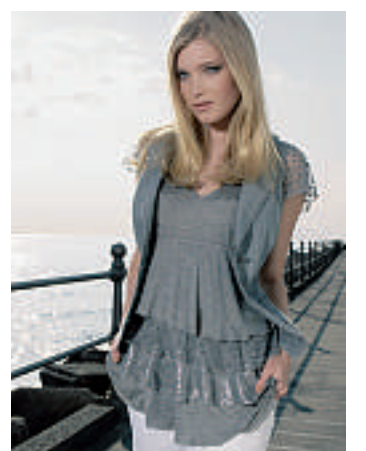
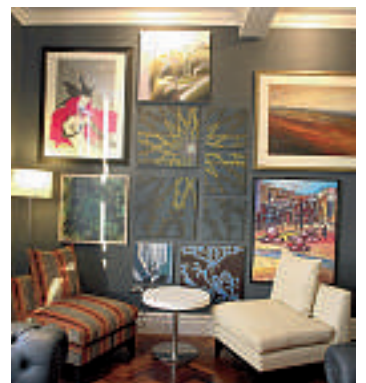
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97 HOT TICKETS, HOT READS

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98 MY NORTH

Actor Hugo Speer's favourite places



Denim waistcoat, £35, lace layer T, £35, white twin waist shorts, £29, all Marks & Spencer

Bianca ivory suit jacket, £69, and trousers, £45, both Principles

Nothing says you mean business like a suit. But give stuffy visions of Alan Sugar-style ensembles a wide berth and work this season's suiting instead, says **LISA HAYNES**

Suits you **MADAM**

TAILORING has got a stylish revamp for spring, with sharp shoulders, natty waistcoats and tapered trousers featuring on the spring and summer catwalks.

Paul Smith, Yves Saint Laurent and Todd Lynn all put tailored chic high on the fashion agenda for this season. Their shows proved that smart tailoring doesn't have to mean all-grown-up and grey. Paul Smith's Harry Potter glasses – along with slouchy cuts – gave his tailoring a youthful edge.

Don't go all investment banker in style or expenditure, but one thing you can put money on is the tailoring trend's staying power. This isn't a look that's likely to bow out once summer draws to a close. Your new Miss Prim and Proper look will be anything but a one-suit wonder.

If you're guilty of arriving to work looking like you've run for the bus, even though you've just stepped out of your car, it's time to smarten up. Investing in a tailored suit will do wonders for your work wardrobe. Either spruce up your look with a crisp shirt or pare down with a cool white tee.

Don't fancy going top-to-toe dapper? You can still tap into the tailored trend with a couple of structured basics. A tailored suit jacket, super-smart trousers or a skirt are all you need to access tailored chic.

As British designer Todd Lynn said of his tailored essentials: "This isn't about looking masculine, it's about a great fit and a fearless approach to dressing, without the appearance of the old power suit."

For versatility and staying power, choose your tailored basics in neutral shades, such as black, white, grey, ivory and stone. When trying on bottom-half staples, take your fiercest high heels with you so you can gauge whether hemlines will be too short or long once you're in full tailored glory. This is not a look that will work with timid flats.

Tailored look still turning your stomach? There is an escape route ... blazers, tuxedos and waistcoats are



tailored staples that don't scream out super-smart. Think Kate Moss in her Jaeger star shirt, teamed with fitted waistcoat and tailored trousers.

Blazers – a big trend for spring and summer – are an instant way of injecting some instant-smart into your wardrobe and a great alternative to a more structured suit jacket.

Although the Balenciaga must-have version would set you back, there are high street alternatives that are sure to fit the bill, whether you go striped or neutral. A natty tuxedo is another tailored relation that will transform even grungy rock chick to respectable girl about town.

ABOVE:

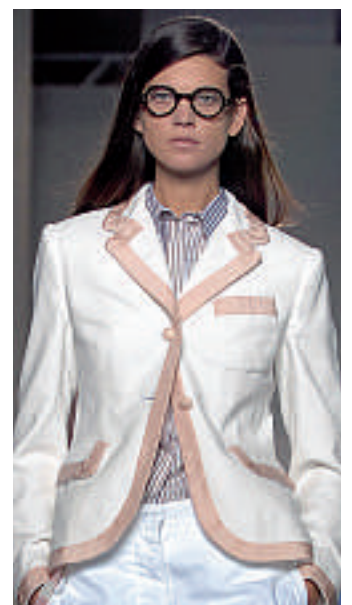
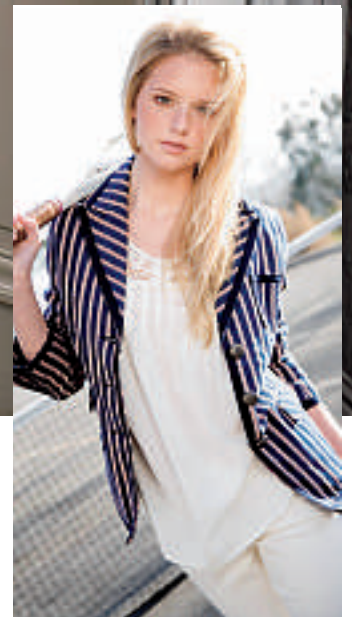
White wide-leg trousers, £35, stripy bow shirt, £29.50; Crazy circle link necklace, £15, wood havana bangle, £5, grey patent waist cincher belt, £19.50, metallic peep-toe shoes, £19.50, all Marks and Spencer

TOP RIGHT:

Primark's bargain blue-striped blazer is a snip at £15

RIGHT:

Paul Smith's tailored blazers made an impact on the catwalks





LEFT
Tuxedo jacket,
£70, Warehouse

RIGHT
Grey tulip skirt,
£30, Next



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Max Mara white
contrast collar jacket,
£275, and skirt,
£140, House of Fraser





Forever

AUDREY

Long after she left us, Audrey Hepburn's style lives on. Simplicity and quality are the key features – so buy one or two good items that you know you will wear



Jon Richard amelia tiara, £25; Julien MacDonald Limited Edition Body Con dress, £180, both Debenhams; Bella clutch, £15, Barratts



Short-sleeved blouse, £50, French Connection. Satin spot scarf, swirl clasp elastic belt, both £6, Internacionale



Novelli flats, also in black, £30, Barratts



Evening gloves, £15, from a selection at beyondretro.com; Jon Richard bracelet £25, matching earrings £10, Debenhams. Right, jersey cowl back dress, £45, black clutch, £7.50, peep-toe slingbacks, £25, all Next



Living My Style

CLASSIC beauty

Qualified beauty therapist Selena Blain owns the newly-opened Cocoon Health and Beauty in Coniscliffe Road, Darlington. The 24-year-old tells Women's Editor **JULIA BREEN** about her favourite looks



Style choices – Selena Blain

Pictures by SARAH NICHOLSON

Describe your look

I would say my style is quite classic and contemporary. I am quite predictable with items I buy – or so my friends tell me. I tend to stick to my own style, I'm rarely daring or outgoing with my look. I love dresses and heels, but then I also love my jeans and flats on a weekend.

What is your favourite item of clothing?

I have a few items in my wardrobe that I couldn't live without. My Seven jeans are a particular favourite, I love wearing them in the summer with flip flops and a T-shirt, or dressing them up with heels for a night out.

I also have various little black dresses which are always good to have. I'm a typical girl who loves shoes and handbags and have far too many of both. I think accessories make an outfit.

What's been your worst buy?

If I've ever made a bad purchase, I've returned or exchanged it. I always try an outfit on again when I get home as I think it can look completely different – and that's what makes my decision. A bad habit of mine is impulse buying. I often buy

it then regret it later. I have bought many pairs of shoes and only worn them once.

What are your favourite shops?

I love Oasis as I can always find something I like there. Ted Baker and All Saints are great too. I think high street chains have got so much better, introducing their own "boutique" ranges. I do like buying from privately-owned shops as I like to have individual pieces. I would hate to be seen in the same outfit as someone on a night out.

What is the most expensive item in your wardrobe?

A pair of Jimmy Choo's. I was so paranoid about wearing them in case they got ruined. But once I got over that, I wore them to death. I adore them and can't bring myself to part with them.

What's your favourite beauty product?

Dermalogica skin care – I would never use anything else. I have worked with the product on a professional level for more than six years and recommend it to all my clients. Their Daily Microfoliant is amazing. I also love Lush products. Their American Cream conditioner smells



Style icons,
Louise
Redknapp, top,
and Jennifer
Aniston

fantastic and leaves my hair so soft. I'm a huge fan of lip balms and glosses. I use Carmex lip balm and I couldn't live without MAC and Juicy Tubes.

Do you have any beauty tips?

Hundreds! Everyone knows that they are supposed to be drinking two litres of water a day, but very few people do. I always have a large bottle with me and I know I have to drink it by the end of the day. Cut out caffeine as much as possible too. Herbal teas are so much better for you. Fresh fruit rich in antioxidants makes a huge difference for your skins health. Body brushing is also great, anyone who has cellulite and dry skin should do it daily ... the list is endless.

Which celebrity's style do you admire?

Louise Redknapp always looks fantastic, dressed up or dressed down, and her skin is flawless. Jennifer Aniston has reformed herself and looks great for it. They both have "classic" style.

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SULTRY sirens



Left, Famous Brow Kit, £16, at Superdrug. Below, Lancome Photogenic Lumessence, £25 (lancome.co.uk)

From barely-there beauty to ultra-bright shock colour, glamorous groomed hair to laid-back gypsy locks, beauty industry experts tell **LISA HAYNES** what's new for summer



Angelina Jolie

HAIR:

IS the towering Winehouse beehive look starting to bore you? Lose the backcombing and excessive hairspray, as this season marks a more relaxed approach.

Sam McKnight, hairdresser and ambassador for Pantene Pro-V, says: "There's not one key hair trend this season. In keeping with the eclectic bunch of fashion trends, hair looks are just as disparate, from the 'gorgeously groomed' look at Versace and Matthew Williamson, where hair looks expensive, glossy and very feminine, to the 'modern gypsy' look at Etro, Giles and Chloe, where texture plays a key part of the overall look."

To go with the glossy approach, hair needs to be long and full of body and shiny, tied in a glamorous low ponytail with a slick wave, or swept up, Angelina Jolie-style. For a relaxed bohemian style, hair is teased, twisted or even crimped.

MAKE-UP:

START by giving your face an oxygen boost with Nivea Visage Oxygen Power Day Cream, £12.99.

When applying make-up, "immaculate skin" is the beauty buzz phrase, with big brows being a key focus to frame the face. "Less is more," says make-up artist Gucci Westman. "Don't wear a full face of make-up, but do conceal any imperfections."

SHOPPING LIST: Lancome Photogenic Lumessence, £25 (lancome.co.uk); Clinique Blended Face Powder in Invisible Blend, £17.50; Jemma Kidd Dewy Glow Radiance Creme, £11, at Boots; The Body Shop Cheek Blush, £9; Famous Brow Kit, £16, at Superdrug, Mac limited edition FAFI Iridescent Pressed Powder, £15.50, *right*, from maccosmetics.co.uk



LIPS:

COLOUR made a shocking comeback on the spring catwalks, from loud mouths featuring orange and blue lips at Louis Vuitton to two-tone blue/green eyeliner at Karl Lagerfeld. Either work your eyes with a wash of bright colour, or give lips a pop of colour – but never both at the same time.

Jo Bull, celebrity make-up artist, advises: "A lighter coral works better on paler skin and those with blonde, red or light brown hair and darker orange tones look great on brunettes and those with a more olive complexion."

Try Revlon Kiss Me Coral Super Lustrous Lipstick, £7.29, *left*.



NAILS:

LOSE the devilish dark colours and give your nails a colour blast. Charlotte Straughan for Ciate, says: "Keep your nails short and neat, then paint on two coats of coral colour. Finish with a super-shiny top coat to keep your colour for longer."

Lilac, yellow, orange and blue are also key brights. Not that brave? Natural pink nails were also big on the catwalks. "A soft pink works well on a number of skin tones and will brighten up dull, stained nails," says Charlotte.

Try Elegant Touch Gerbera orange, £4.95, at Superdrug; Opi Elephantastic Pink, *right*, £9.75 (lenawhite.co.uk/01923-240010); Ciate Speed Coat, £8.95 (0208-466 5200).



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The ancient settlement of Hartlepool, on the North-East coast, is a town with much to recommend it – a long and eventful history, first-rate shopping facilities and many attractions that rank among the finest in the country. **KEITH PROUD** reports

HARTLEPOOL is a town steeped in history. Old Hartlepool, originally a fishing village, is on the Headland, which may once have been a forested tidal island, much like Lindisfarne off the coast of Northumberland is today.

In the Victorian “new town” of West Hartlepool, modern shipbuilding began in 1836 and ended in 1961. For more than a century, vessels built in Hartlepool’s shipyards were prized by mariners everywhere. The two towns came together in 1967 to create Hartlepool.

In the story of Christianity in Britain, Hartlepool played a pivotal role, mainly because of an exceptional woman called Hilda, or Hild. But before she began to make her mark on history, an earlier nun called Hieu laid the foundations for her work.

Not as well chronicled as Hilda, and with confusion even about her actual name, Hieu is believed to have been an Irish princess and may even have been the same person as St Bega, St Begu or St Bee. She was a Celtic Christian who made her way to England, where, in about 640AD with the help of St Aidan, she established a monastery for men and women on the headland, now known as the Heugh.

The Venerable Bede, England’s first historian, ►

Heart and HEADLAND

Scenes at
Hartlepool
Marina

Pictures by
CHRIS BOOTH



14 Living





SHIPBUILDING HERITAGE

THE centrepieces of Hartlepool Marina, built at a cost of £60m and one of the most modern in Europe, are the Museum of Hartlepool and the Historic Quay, a reproduction British port of the late 18th and early 19th Century with the beautifully-restored HMS Trincomalee as its focal point.

Built in 1817, this wooden frigate is Britain's oldest warship afloat, work on completely rebuilding her at Hartlepool having been completed in 2001.

Also open to visitors is Wingfield Castle, built in Hartlepool in 1934 by shipbuilders William Gray and Company for the London and North Eastern Railway as a passenger and vehicle ferry over the Humber estuary.

In 2010, more than 100 very special ships will berth in Hartlepool Marina and Jackson's Dock at the end of the Tall Ships Race. They will leave Kristiansand, in Norway, on August 1 and arrive at Hartlepool, where they will stay until August 10.

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Old Hartlepool, originally a fishing village, is on the Headland, which today provides a pleasant place for leisure time, below

◀ later called the place Hart's Island.

Not remotely like the later dressed-stone and marble architectural masterpieces of the Middle Ages, these Celtic monasteries were no more than a walled enclosure, inside which was a collection of wooden or rough-stone huts with one and sometimes two churches. The link between Hieu and Hilda was this early monastery at Hartlepool. Hilda, born in 614 and a great niece of King Edwin of Northumbria, had been baptised a Christian in 627 by Paulinus, a missionary from Rome, in a small wooden church near where York Minster now stands.

In 649, Hieu left her position as abbess of the Hartlepool monastery and Hilda took her place. After she spent some time in charge of

the abbey at Tadcaster, Hieu moved to St Bee's, where she founded a new monastery.

Practically nothing is recorded of Hilda's time at Hartlepool and it seems that when her new monastery was established at Whitby, in 657, Hartlepool declined as a monastic centre and was eventually destroyed by marauding Danes in the 9th Century.

Hartlepool was an important port in the Middle Ages and many people who were sent into exile left England from there.

When the original Big Ben, cast at a foundry in Norton, was shipped down to London, it left from the Port of Hartlepool.

Soon after the outbreak of the First World War, an audacious plan was formulated by the Germans to draw Royal Navy ships out of

their harbours so that, once in open water, they would be able to be picked off by German U-boats.

In order to bait their trap, the Germans sent a battle group of heavy and light cruisers, along with torpedo boats, to shell parts of the North-East coast of England. One group, made up of the Blucher, Moltke and Seydlitz, lay off Hartlepool early on the morning of December 16, 1914.

The German ships were just a mile and a half from the Headland's Heugh lighthouse when they opened fire. Return firing came from the Heugh Gun Battery. By the time the firing stopped at just after 8.45am, the German battle cruisers had fired 1,150 shells, not all of which exploded.

The damage they inflicted was extensive. Three gasometers went up in flames. Many buildings and commodities at the port were damaged by shelling and fire, along with shipbuilders' yards and several vessels in them. Three hundred houses were damaged and railway lines blown up. The devastation caused by the Germans was terrible and is rightly still remembered today.

One of the most famous legends connected with Hartlepool, that of the monkey-hanging, concerns a supposed happening during an earlier war, that against Napoleon of France at the start of the 19th Century. A French ship is said to have been wrecked off the North-East coast and when ▶



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◀ its remains were washed ashore they included the vessel's pet monkey dressed in a uniform. The threat of an invasion of England by the French was perceived to be very great at that time and some local fishermen, unsure of how a Frenchman looked or spoke, concluded that the creature must have been an enemy spy.

They held a trial on the beach and, when the monkey failed to answer their questions in English, they sentenced it to death and hanged it from the mast of a convenient coble. There is no basis of truth in the tale, but still it lingers on and H'Angus the monkey is still the mascot of Hartlepool United Football Club.

In the history of the FA Amateur Cup, North-East football teams have an excellent record, and in 1905 the honour of winning the final fell to Hartlepool FC. When West Hartlepool Rugby Club hit financial difficulties in 1908, the Victoria Ground where it had played its home

games became available and was bought by the newly-created Hartlepoons United Football and Athletic Company, encompassing the interests of both West and Old Hartlepool. The "United" football team joined the professional North-Eastern League, but the West Hartlepool amateur side continued for a time before folding.

Although United applied several times to join the Football League, they were always turned down because Hartlepool was too near, it was felt, to Newcastle, Sunderland and Middlesbrough, all three of whom already had professional clubs.

When, eventually, a Northern Third Division was created, Hartlepool United was one of its first members. From the Twenties to the early Fifties, the club rarely reached its expected potential, until in 1955 it reached the 4th round of the FA Cup and two years later almost won the league.

By the end of the Fifties, Hartlepool was playing in the Fourth Division, but fortunes gradually improved with Brian Clough as manager. After yet more hard times, the well-supported club has again found its feet and now plays in the First Division.

In 2002, Hartlepool held its first elections for a mayor. Stuart Drummond, who was the football team's mascot H'Angus, won the post.

Compared to the town it was in the Fifties, difficult for strangers to navigate and rather oppressive, today's Hartlepool has a welcoming feeling of openness.

Middleton Grange Shopping Centre, with its all-weather facilities, is well-known for its Market Hall, has 140 outlets, is open seven days a week and has easy access for wheelchair users. There is parking for more than 1,000 vehicles and excellent restaurant and cafe facilities. Nearby, on the Marina site are two retail parks, the Anchor and the Highlight with, nearby, a 24-hour superstore.

Hartlepool has its market days on Wednesdays and Thursdays, while the farmers' market is held on the Historic Quay car park on the second Saturday of each month.

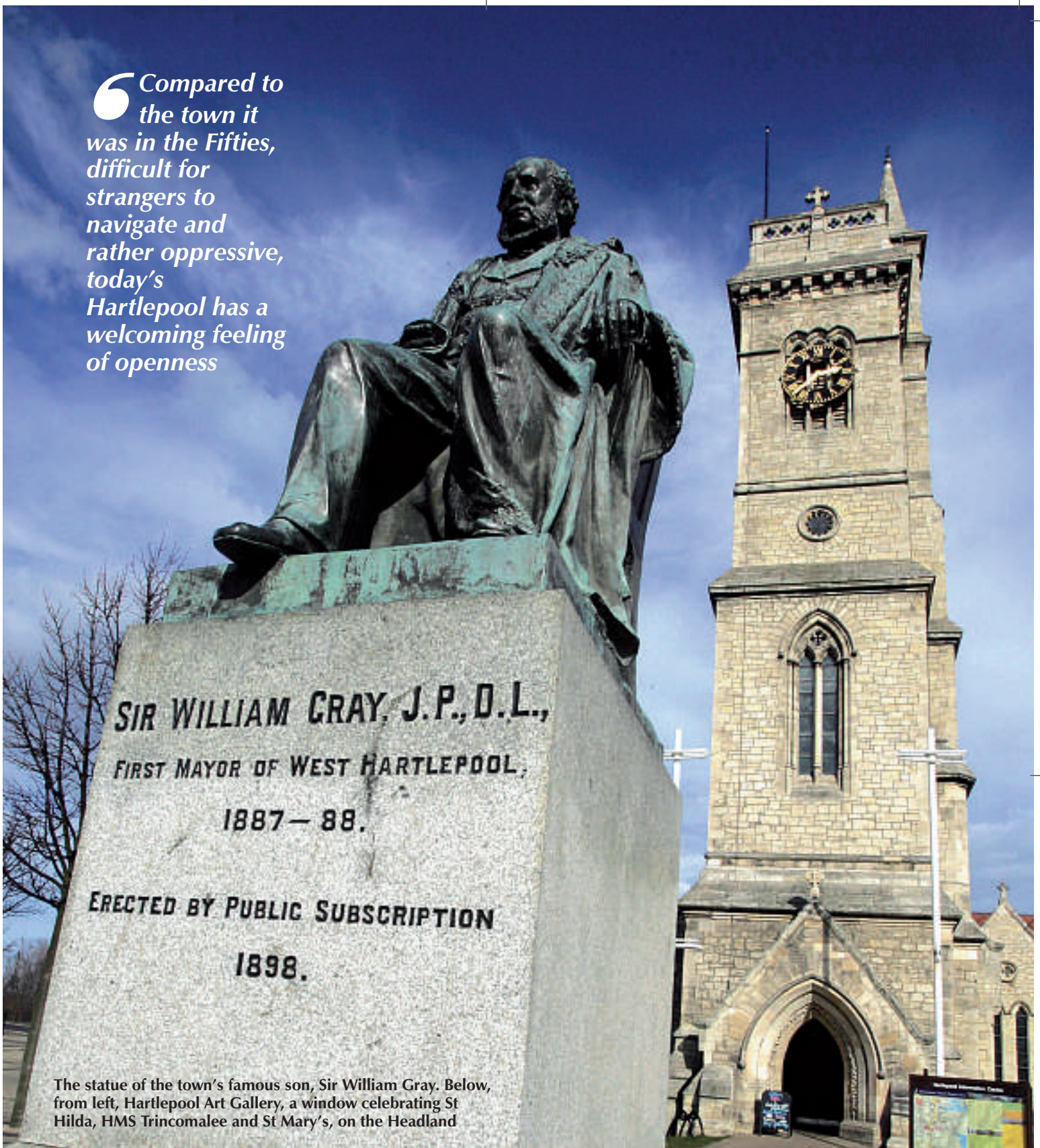
Its churches are well worth a visit, especially St Hild's, on the Headland, close to the Heugh Gun Battery and the fishmarket. Within a stone's throw of the church and the sea is Verrills, one of the best fish and chip shops in the country. Coupled with all the town's other attractions, and the adjacent seaside of Seaton Carew, what more reason could any visitor need to take a trip to Hartlepool?



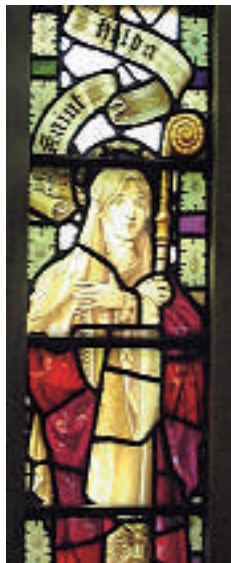
GRAND DESIGN

THE ballroom at the Grand Hotel, Hartlepool, which has been restored to its Victorian splendour, as part of the hotel's £1.5m refurbishment by Tavistock Leisure. The work has been a labour intensive job because the ornate ceiling has been renovated and the original timber floor restored.

‘ Compared to the town it was in the Fifties, difficult for strangers to navigate and rather oppressive, today’s Hartlepool has a welcoming feeling of openness



The statue of the town’s famous son, Sir William Gray. Below, from left, Hartlepool Art Gallery, a window celebrating St Hilda, HMS Trincomalee and St Mary’s, on the Headland



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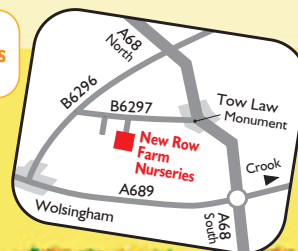
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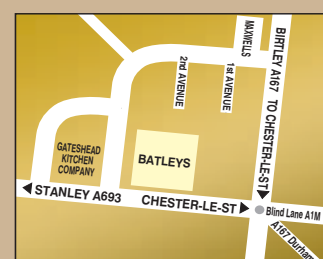
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The fall of THE WALL



The traditional exterior of Deborah Batley's property belies its bright, modern interior

As renovation projects go, Deborah Batley's huge Victorian end terrace presented a special challenge – the house came in two halves.

JENNY LAUE takes a look inside to discover what it took to turn it back into one big family home

WHEN businesswoman Deborah Batley moved into her Eaglescliffe home with her husband and two young children, her friends thought she was mad. The big four-bedroom Victorian house not only needed total modernisation and renovation, but it had also been divided into two completely separate properties.

But Deborah had had her eye on the property for years and knew what she wanted.

"We came to live here from West Yorkshire 13 years ago in a house two doors down. I used to look across from our house and think if it ever came on the market, we had to have it. There is a large aspect onto the memorial park, it's the widest house in the street, there is no one overlooking you, and to find a Victorian house with such a big garden is quite unique."

The Batleys are only the third family to live in the 110-year-old house. Before them it belonged to an elderly lady, Miss Molly Metcalfe, who had lived in it for more than 80 years. She remembered watching from her bedroom window when the war memorial was erected in the park for those lost in the First World War. There even exists an old black and white photograph of the soldiers of the Durham Light Infantry posing in the front garden of the house with its high bay window in the background.

As she grew older, Miss Metcalfe decided that a four-bedroom house was too big for her and split it into two separate units, one of which – the back part – she rented out, while she lived in the front of the house. This meant that when Deborah and her husband bought the house it had two of everything, with a solid brick wall dividing the two ►



◀ halves. But with all the determination that has helped her establish a successful catering business – Alberts – and an unerring eye for combining the old with the new, Deborah has managed to turn it from a house with an interior stuck in the Sixties back into the family home it was meant to be.

“We wanted to restore the house to its former glory,” says Deborah, lovingly stroking the panelled walls that run along both sides of the hall and under the stairs. “When the house was divided none of the wood panelling was here – there used to be a little kitchen at the end – but luckily, we had an idea of how things should look from our other house.”

Clearly very proud of the lovely home she has created, Deborah shows me around the ground floor. The hall is decorated in muted, neutral cream wallpaper – 21 rolls were needed simply to cover above the dado rail – which provides a complementary base to display striking furniture or paintings, like Deborah’s huge mirror with a clock-style face, hanging above an elegant sideboard cabinet. Reflected in the mirror is the floral pattern frosted on to the glass of the porch door, which creates a light airy feeling on even the gloomiest days.

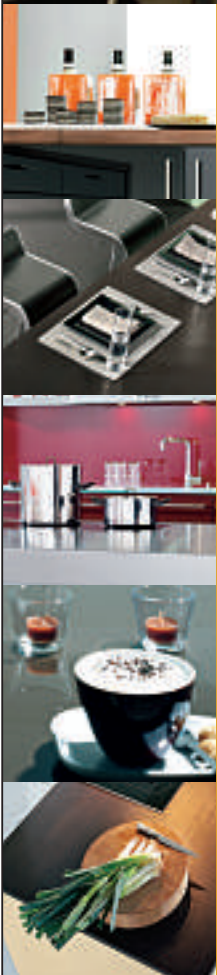
Stepping off the thick, deep-pile carpet that runs through the whole of the hallway, to the left are the living and dining rooms. “We’ve tried to decorate in a style that respects the house, its age and its history. ▶

“I used to look across from our house and think if it ever came on the market, we had to have it. To find a Victorian house with such a big garden is quite unique

– Deborah Batley

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◀ We wanted to create a mixture of old and new, in keeping with its Victorian roots but with a modern twist.”

The living room boasts the big historic bay window overlooking the park, plenty of glossy white built-in cupboards and two comfortable three-seater sofas. There are three chalk nudes and an eye-catching original oil of the New York skyline on the walls,

but by far the most impressive feature is the original black granite Victorian fire surround. It's inlaid with red marble and gold leaf and has the most intricate floral mouldings on the grate. For all their straight-laced severity, the Victorians had an eye for detail that is very often surprising in its fancifulness.

“And this is my very favourite room in the house,” Deborah smiles as she leads me past that most valuable of all mod cons – the downstairs loo – on to the family room at the end of the hallway. And it's clear why. Standing in this room, there is a feeling of being in the very centre of the house, close to the staircase to the first floor, not quite in the kitchen but not in the formal spaces either. From here it's probably easy to know what's going on everywhere in the house, I say, which Deborah confirms with a nod. It's small and cosy and furnished with a Barker and Stonehouse sofa, a little table and a wood-burning stove set into the fireplace. It is hard to believe that this was once where the dividing wall ran. No traces of it remain.

“We decided to restore the two fitted cupboards on either

side because we knew that most of the houses in the street had them. They're very useful as they hide all the video games and the TV, and the sofa is a treasured family piece because both the children have grown up on it.”

The kitchen is next and, appropriately for someone who is a professional caterer, it is spacious and well organised, with sleek lines and a very modern feel, from the double cooking range and man-sized fridge to the black granite worktops and central island. It leads through into the airy conservatory, which was custom-made to Deborah's specifications to match the rest of the house. “I wanted it to follow the lines of the coach house in the garden, so I designed it with a steep gable,” she explains.

The layout of the bedrooms upstairs is ideally suited to a family with teenagers. Towards the back of the house, Deborah's teenage daughter has her own domain – a large double bedroom with an en suite shower room.

“Every teenage girl should have her own bathroom,” laughs Deborah. “Makes life much easier.” ▶

Hand-made paper vase by Deborah's late friend Helen Hards





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The restrained decor in the downstairs rooms contrasts with the funky graffiti artwork in Deborah's son's bedroom

Pictures: SARAH NICHOLSON

◀ Her son's bedroom is a typical boy's room, painted blue and filled with all the things a 12-year-old likes to surround himself with – games station, TV, toys, drum kit... The stunning focal point in the room is a graffiti artwork by a young painter called Smart.

Heading into the master bedroom, we've almost come full circle and ended up at the front of the house again. This bedroom is Deborah's pride and joy as it was decorated around a single craft item, a hand-made paper vase by a close friend who sadly died, Helen Hards, a talented craftswoman and artist.

Here cream is the base colour, with accents of mauve, purple and grape. All this, combined with the purple floral curtains and the lovely view on to the blossoming trees across in the park, give the room a fresh, airy, yet restful and almost spiritual atmosphere. It makes it a room to be lived in, a rare thing when most of us relegate our bedrooms to mere sleeping spaces.

At the end of my tour through the house I ask Deborah if she could ever see herself moving on to another house. "Definitely not." The answer comes like a shot. "This is not just a house for us, it's a home. This our dream home."



■ Alberts caters for all occasions – business lunches, birthdays, funerals, weddings and christenings – and can be contacted on 07708-074135, 07917-824629 or albertscatering@hotmail.co.uk



Deborah with business partner Sarah Hutchcraft

BATH CLASS

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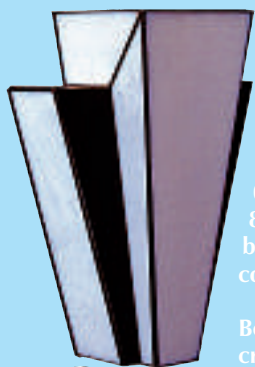
Pillar taps, £137, from MFI



Axor Massaud toilet brush holder, £154, from hansgrohe.co.uk



His and her Orient Express Towels, £98, from poshpreezies.co.uk



Left, art deco wall light, £82, from BC Designs, 01206-827100, bcdesigns.co.uk



Below, silver crackle accessories, from £5, Pier

30 Living

SPLASHING out



Handmade, hardwood freestanding bathroom range, from £20,000, at chalon.com

If your bathroom is just an area for a wash and brush up, then it's time for a change. It could be a home spa where you can escape stress and relax and pamper. **GABRIELLE FAGAN** checks out the top trends

ESCAPING the demands and stress of daily life isn't easy, but the solution could be easier to find than you think. Today's bathrooms have become the ultimate escape room, where you can literally let your cares float away.

Cheryl Gurner, a director of Bathrooms International, whose clients include a host of celebrities, says: "Our leisure time is precious in our time-poor lives, so we want somewhere where we can instantly relax, in privacy, away from the world and sometimes the rest of the family. We value our well-being these days."

In bathrooms incorporating the latest technology, there are baths with muscle-easing hydro jets, light-changing effects to aid relaxation as well as showers that can mimic rainfall and waterfalls.

As Cheryl points out: "Relaxing and de-stressing is beneficial for not just for health, but for our looks. Where better to do that than at home rather than in the impersonal surroundings of a health club or gym?"

If your bathroom is dated or a chilly, rather sterile room that doesn't invite lingering, now could be the perfect time for a revamp.

Don't be put off taking the plunge by those daunting bathroom catalogues which often feature enviably huge bathrooms with windows looking out onto glamorous views.

Cheryl highlights top looks that you can easily use to create your personal spa bathroom. Below is a guide to what's on offer.

PURE WHITE

White sanitary ware is still the top favourite. Look out for ranges with classic rounded but contemporary lines. Include a double-ended bath and a granite floor. Add easy to install underfloor heating for a touch of luxury. Use vibrantly-coloured towels and accessories for warmth and impact.

"This is a good choice because bathrooms can be expensive to install and you don't want something that's out of fashion after a couple of years. Avoid fussy detail and opt for sleek chrome or white metal for fittings such as taps," Cheryl says.

TIP: Suit your mood by using a dimmer switch or low lighting. ▶



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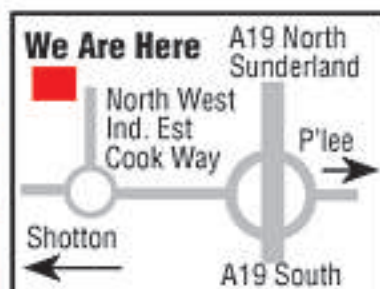
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INSIDE GROUNDS OF QC SPACE Ltd



Above, Jacuzzi Atol Suite, from www.jacuzziuk.com. Price on application. Right, Excelsior primed bath with chrome plinth, £2,390, from BC Designs at 1206-827100

RETRO

Enjoy the art deco revival and create a monochrome scheme with a black granite floor and lacquered white units. Feature a bath with mirrored panels and a matching vanity unit.

"This is a glamorous look, which harks back to the Fifties Hollywood glamour. It's particularly good for a smaller bathroom, because glossy surfaces and mirrors trick the eye into thinking there is more space and it also adds light," says Cheryl.

TIP: Consider extra storage by creating a false wall with doors housing slim shelves or fit shelves to one side of a free-standing standard bath.

VINTAGE

Echo glorious Victoriana with a free-standing roll-top bath with claw feet.

"This traditional look can give even a small bathroom instant atmosphere and charm.

"A free-standing bath is an advantage as you can use the surrounding area and perhaps include a comfy chair to relax in. Use simple white sanitaryware, and chrome accessories," Cheryl adds.

TIP: Go for bronze finishes on brassware and add a bidet – they're right back in fashion.

SPA SHOWER

A fashionable wet room – a completely tiled room which needs to be waterproofed – is

ideal for those who prefer showers, but it can be expensive and tricky to install. Cheryl suggests installing a luxurious shower cubicle instead, which could cost about £3,000.

"If it's a choice between a small bath or a spatial shower, there is no choice.

"These can be fitted with a seat and body jets to massage those aching muscles and joints, as well as a steam generator to gently cleanse, detox and soothe, she says.

TIP: Look out for beautiful detailing in exotic finishes for basins, tiling and accessories.



LETTING REPUTATION SPEAK OUT

A LUXURY bathroom specialist is letting its reputation speak for itself after being showered with compliments from scores of satisfied customers.

Premier Living is to feature six of its customers in its advertising campaign "real people, beautiful bathrooms".

Director of Premier Living Denis Shail said: "We pride ourselves on customer service, quality of service, quality of products and quality of installations.

"The real people, beautiful bathrooms campaign will let potential new customers hear from people who have had a Premier Living installation and see for themselves the outstanding transformation that we can achieve on even the smallest rooms."

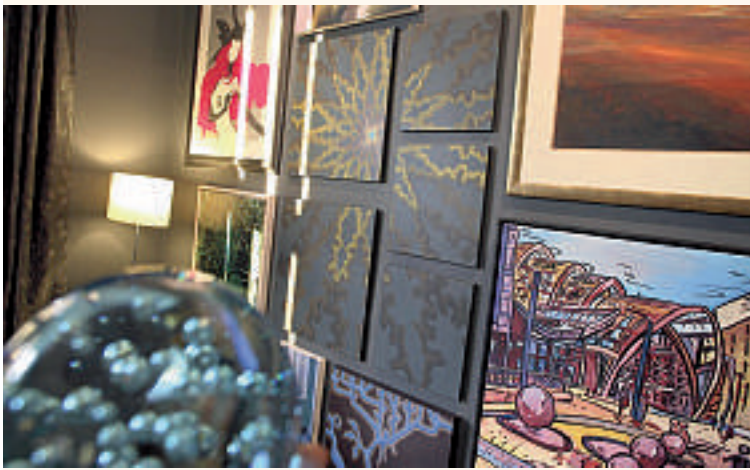
With more than two dozen suites on display in its new flagship showroom, in

Linthorpe Road, Middleborough, Premier Living offers high quality in its luxury bathroom fixtures and fittings. These include light and mood-changing showers, working wet room displays, towel rails, taps, bathroom furniture and a wide selection of accessories, including Villeroy & Boch, Hansa, and Keuco.

The company's aim to create the design 'wow' factor is backed up by its full bespoke design service.

"Some clients may only require the supply and design elements we offer and not the installation, which is fine. We can tailor any of our services to meet the individual needs of the customer," says Mr Shail.

□ Premier Living, 251-255 Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, 01642-266333, premierliving.co.uk



Win a fantastic boutique hotel break

LIVING magazine has teamed up with the newly refurbished Maynard Hotel – the first boutique hotel in the heart of the Peak District – to offer one of our readers an exciting, two-night mid-week break, worth more than £650. You will stay in one of the hotel's ten contemporary designer bedrooms overlooking the Derwent Valley and on your first night you will be treated to a three-course dinner with champagne in the sumptuous restaurant.

Paul Downing has made the new-look Maynard, in Derbyshire, a great success since taking over a couple of years ago. With the help of a creative team of chefs, The Maynard boasts an AA rosette for the quality of its food, and the bar area has been refurbished to a high modern standard.

The Maynard is the perfect base to explore the Peak National Park, including the Derbyshire villages and towns of Eyam, Ashford-in-the-Water, Bakewell and the Tissington Trail. If you are a lover of the outdoors, you will be in heaven; many excellent Peak District hikes, walks and strolls are possible from The Maynard's front door. If you fancy a bit of retail therapy, the famous Meadowhall Shopping Centre is only a few miles away by train or car. Sheffield central train station is only 13 minutes away, hard to believe when you take in the panoramic valley views from your room.

All the new rooms at The Maynard have been fitted out to the highest standard, with modern contemporary designer decor, fixtures and fittings, state-of-the-art plasma screens and all the

home comforts you'd expect from a 21st Century boutique hotel. All rooms are individually styled to make your stay feel extra special.

All you have to do for a chance to win this great prize is answer this simple question: **Which picturesque traditional market town is only a few minutes drive from The Maynard?**

- a) Bridlington
- b) Bakewell
- c) Brighton

Send your answers, by May 31, on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, to The Maynard Boutique Hotel Competition, Living Magazine, Features, The Northern Echo, Priestgate, Darlington, DL1 1NF. The closing date is the end of the month and usual Newsquest competition rules apply.

Reader offer: If you are not our lucky winner, you can still take advantage of one third off a midweek break at The Maynard, subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. Call 01433-630321 and mention Living magazine at The Northern Echo. Hurry, as the offer is only valid until the end of May 2008.



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More than SKIN DEEP

If you are thinking of having a little nip or tuck to improve what nature has given you, you're not alone. JULIA BREEN looks at why rising numbers of women – and men – are going under the knife.



ONCE the preserve of rich celebrities and Hollywood hopefuls, cosmetic surgery is becoming more and more popular. People in the UK are now believed to spend more on their quest for physical perfection than on that quintessentially British pursuit of drinking tea.

TV dramas such as *Nip/Tuck*, and radical makeover shows including *10 Years Younger* have removed the stigma of plastic surgery and cosmetic procedures.

And from having a little Botox in fine lines, to a full-on four-hour facelift procedure, we just can't seem to get enough. Last year, analysts Mintel estimated that we spent £659m on cosmetic surgery, from facelifts to boob jobs.

Procedures on the face and neck are the most popular, but breast enlargements are close behind, with tens of thousands carried

out every year. Celebrities such as Sharon Osbourne, Demi Moore and Jamie-Lee Curtis – who all admit to going under the knife – have helped fuel the boom.

X Factor judge Sharon, who had a facelift, tummy tuck and boob job – as well as having her stomach stapled – said it “hurt like a mother” but was worth it in the end.

Fearsome Weakest Link host Anne Robinson has also admitted spending about £7,000 on raising her brow, ironing out the wrinkles below her eyes and tightening her chin.

Consultant plastic surgeon Matt Erdmann, of the Spire Hospital, Washington, Wearside, says the most popular procedures he carries out are breast augmentations, followed by breast reductions, tummy tucks and facelifts.

The top procedure among men going to Spire is a breast reduction.

“It is very dependent on age,” he says.

“Younger girls in their 20s tend to want rhinoplasty (nose job), and breast augmentations.

“Then, as they get older and have children, maybe in their late 30s, they will want breast uplifts and tummy tucks. Some people may have reached their earning capacity so they are going in for more things like liposuction.

“Then, in their later 40s and 50s it is mainly facelifts.”

The Spire Hospital – formerly the Bupa hospital – is one of a small number of private hospitals in the North-East which carry out cosmetic surgery and non-surgical procedures.

People opting for plastic surgery generally fall into two categories – those who are wanting to refresh their looks for vanity reasons, and those who want what they regard as a “life-changing” operation to alter a feature which they believe is affecting



“Once they have had the treatment, they are very outgoing – because it is all about self-confidence”

their confidence and self-esteem.

Mr Erdmann has seen plenty of both, including one client who had a complex about his ears.

He says: “He had been supergluing his ears back, especially when he was going out in the evenings. It works extremely well, it has to be said, but it gives people terrible rashes and breaks down the skin. Eventually, he decided to have them pinned back so he didn’t have to keep gluing them.

“The problem is, you might look at yourself in the mirror and see your ears, and think they are not too bad. Then people make throwaway comments about them, particularly children, who can be very cruel.

“That leads people to go and have cosmetic procedures. Once they have had the treatment, they become very outgoing – because it is all about self-confidence.

“Quite often, I will look at a patient and ▶

If you’re unsure about cosmetic surgery, talk to a cosmetic surgeon.

It may seem obvious but the best advice often is. So if you’re thinking about cosmetic surgery but aren’t sure exactly what it involves, then talk to one of our cosmetic surgeons. Not only will they happily answer any questions at your consultation, but they’ll also be the same surgeon you see for your operation.

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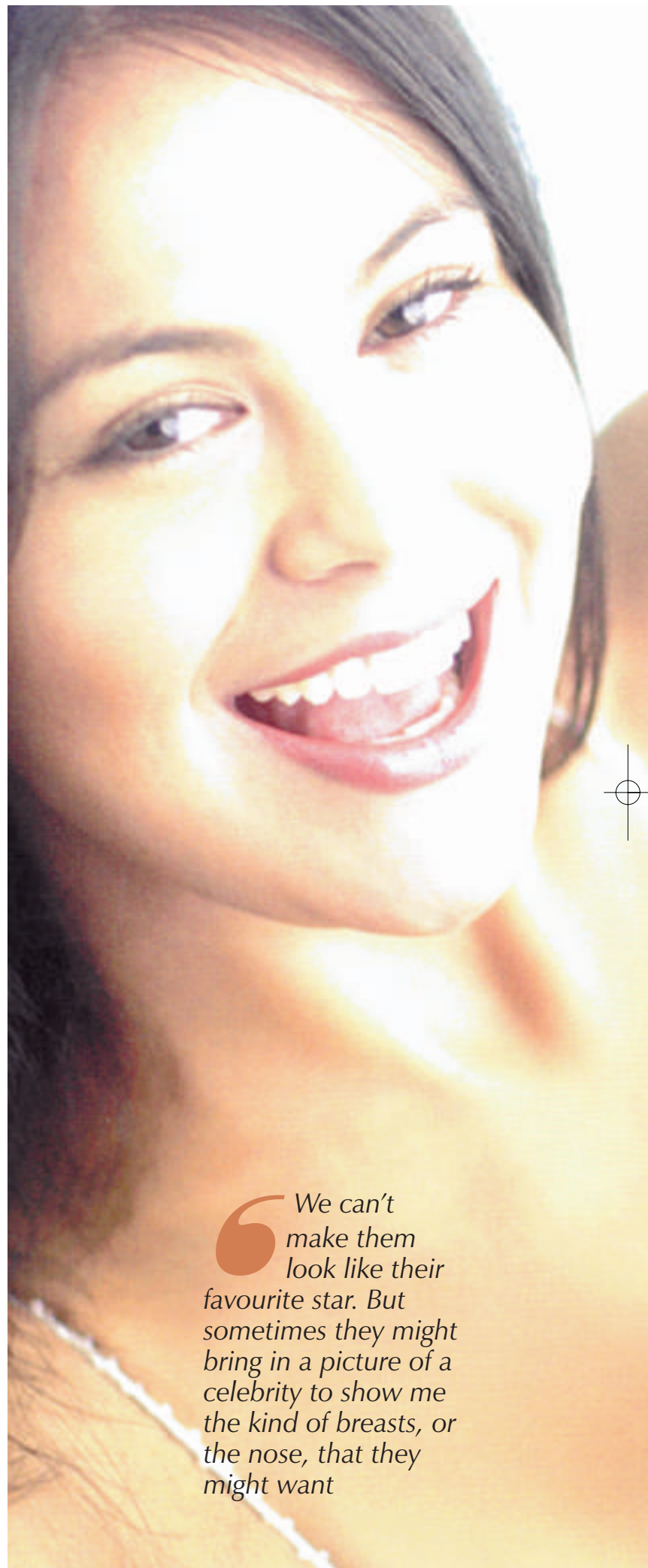
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“We can't make them look like their favourite star. But sometimes they might bring in a picture of a celebrity to show me the kind of breasts, or the nose, that they might want”

“think, they don’t look that bad at all. But it is not what I think, it is what the patient feels about themselves.”

Surgeons worth their salt are usually reluctant to operate on the third category of patient, those who are undergoing a traumatic event in their lives, such as a divorce.

“We have people who want surgery for weddings, and some want to look good in a bikini in the summer, and that is fine,” says Mr Erdmann. “With people who are emotionally distressed, who have had a divorce or a bereavement, I don’t think it is right to operate if there is any kind of distress involved. In this case I would turn someone away, if I felt they were doing it for the wrong reasons.”

Last year, there were estimated to be more than 700,000 cosmetic surgery procedures carried out in Britain, and the market is growing by about 40 per cent a year.

The boom is predicted to accelerate with the total number of cosmetic procedures, ranging from Botox injections to facelifts, expected to top one million by next year, and become a £912m industry.

A celebrity-obsessed culture, with magazines speculating on who has had plastic surgery, combined with TV shows like *Extreme Makeover*, have made radical surgery available to the masses. Some US makeover shows even offer participants surgery to make them look like their favourite star, be it Jennifer Lopez or Britney Spears.

But Mr Erdmann is keen to manage people’s expectations. “We can’t make them look like their favourite star,” he says. “But sometimes they might bring in a picture of a celebrity to show me the kind of breasts, or the nose, that they might want.”

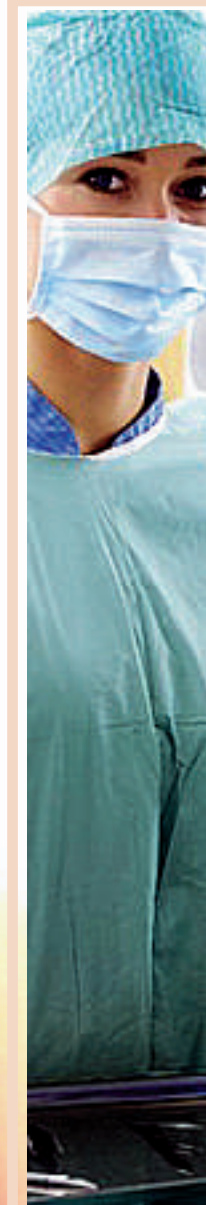
The fastest-growing sector for surgery is among young women from less well-off backgrounds – suggesting that treatment is becoming increasingly affordable.

But Mr Erdmann says surgery should not be something people enter into lightly.

“The moment we cut into someone we create a scar,” he says. “The scar might not heal very well, or it might get sunburned. You have to take more care with your skin after surgery.

“Smokers tend to have poorer healing, especially after tummy tucks. If you are a smoker, it is almost guaranteed you will have a problem with healing, so I prefer it if people quit smoking. I also don’t like to operate on someone if they have a BMI (body mass index) of over 30, because surgery on the body is more likely to be misshapen.”

Despite the risks, which Mr Erdmann and his colleagues take great care to spell out clearly to patients, he says the rewards are huge. “Certainly with the breast augment-



YOUR SURGERY CHECKLIST:

- Create a shortlist of hospitals and clinics, checking their registration details on the Healthcare Commission at healthcarecommission.org.uk or on 0207-448-8179.
- If you are in any doubt about a hospital or clinic’s capability, ask to see a copy of its latest Healthcare Commission inspection report.
- Consult your GP at the start of the process so you can get their professional advice
- Make sure your plastic surgeon appears on the General Medical Council register of specialists.
- It is recommended that your surgeon is a member of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons or the British Association of Plastic Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons. Check if they have FRCS – which all surgeons have – or FRCS (Plast), which is a further qualification in plastic surgery.
- Take a friend or relative to your consultation, and make sure you get a full explanation and written information about risks and possible side-effects, such as pain and scarring.
- Be wary of offers of “free” consultations. Talking to a sales advisor is no substitute for consulting a surgeon.
- Ask to speak to previous patients about their experiences.
- Don’t be rushed into making up your mind. If you decide to go ahead, leave at least two weeks until the operation date so you are sure.
- Ask where you will be having the procedure and what medical back-up facilities and staff are in place.
- Find out what results can be expected and how long they will last.
- Ask how long it will take to recover, how much time off work you will need, and what are the follow-up arrangements if recovery is not going well.
- Check on what corrective treatment is available and if there will be a charge, if you are unhappy with the results.
- Ask what is included in the price and what might be extra, for example if your stay in hospital is longer than expected. Anaesthetist charges, consultations, blood tests, x-rays, photos and consultations may all be extra. You should also ask about any cancellation charges in case you want to postpone or cancel your procedure. Be wary of hospitals and clinics that charge a high cancellation fee.

tions and tummy tucks, patients are over the moon,” he says.

“With the breast reductions, it is amazing because these women can wear a proper bra for the first time without the straps digging in, and their back pain is improved.

“A lot of women with big breasts say men talk to their breasts instead of their face, and once they have them reduced they feel so much more confident as a person.”

More people are also choosing to have multiple procedures in one operation as it is cheaper, such as a facelift and tummy tuck together.

“A lot of people say they have always wanted to do it, and are doing it now because the kids have left home, says Mr Erdmann. “Others have come into some money or have been successful in their job.”

Spire hospital director Silvie Adams says about 25 per cent of the hospital’s business is self-pay, with about 15 per cent cosmetic surgery – and that figure is growing.

If going in for a full-scale operation is too much for you to contemplate, non-surgical procedures are also soaring in popularity. Botox, which can help improve frown and smile lines, and collagen, which can help smooth certain types of wrinkles, are the most popular. Hyaluronic acid is becoming more popular as a filler.

Non-surgical beauty companies such as Collagenics offer these treatments as well as lip enhancement and also injections which can help melt away fat, rather than undergoing liposuction surgery.

The Spire Hospital and the Nuffield Hospital in Jesmond, Newcastle, are two private hospitals in the region which carry out cosmetic surgery.

Reform Surgical, which works with Collagenics and Saks Hair & Beauty through its clinics, has also started carrying out operations at the Woodlands Hospital, in Darlington. The nationwide company was launched last year by surgeon Dai Davies.▶

TUMMY TUCK

PARTIAL or full tummy tucks alter the shape of the abdomen by removing fat and excess skin.

In a partial tuck, the surgeon makes a large incision across the lower abdomen, then separates the skin from the abdominal wall, removes excess fat and cuts away excess skin. The remaining skin is then pulled down and stitched together at the line of the first incision.

The operation usually takes place under general anaesthetic and can take up to three hours.

You will need to stay overnight in hospital and have two weeks off work to rest.

RESULT: Your stomach should appear flatter and abdominal muscles should feel and look firmer as they may have been repaired.

RISKS: There are general risks associated with surgery. Scars usually fade after a year, but will be permanent. Puckering on the outside edge of the scar may remain.

FACELIFT

THERE are many different kinds of facelifts, but they all work to reduce flabby jowls and smooth the jawline. Generally the surgeon frees the skin by making an incision in the hairline from the temple, round and behind the ear and into the hairline.

The skin is then pulled up and backwards and excess fat removed. Those using an endoscopic technique can be performed without leaving visible external scars. It can take up to six hours and usually takes place under general anaesthetic, with an overnight stay and two weeks off work.

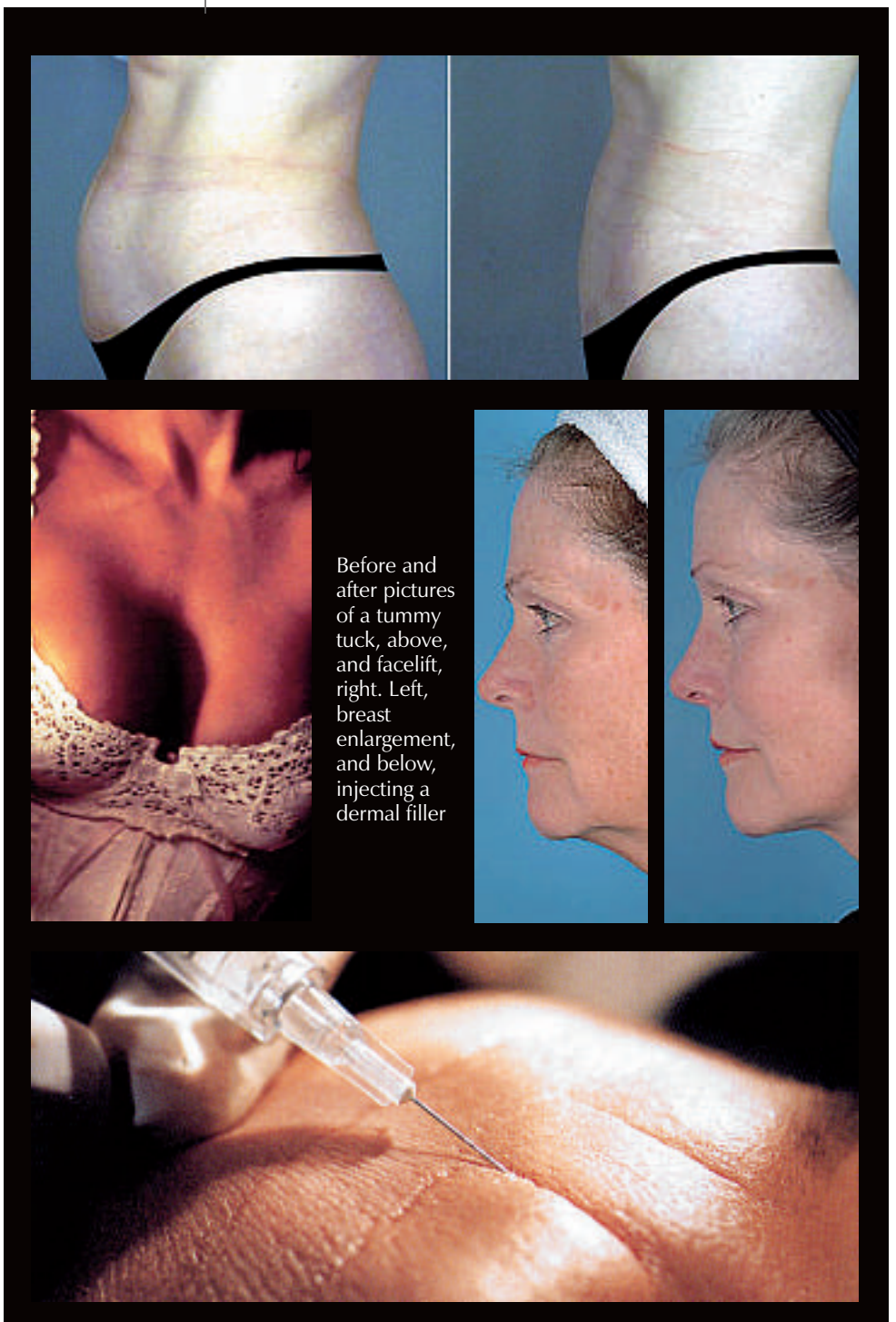
RESULT: Most people find they look about ten years younger afterwards. The scars of the operation will be permanent, although they are usually hidden by your hair.

RISKS: Some people can suffer hair loss, scarring and rough skin. Risks also include nerve damage which can cause numbness or temporary paralysis of part or all of the movement of the facial muscles.

BOTOX

THIS is a non-surgical procedure which temporarily reduces the appearance of wrinkles on the forehead, between the brows and around the eyes. It can sometimes be used on the lower part of the face and neck, often in combination with dermal fillers. Injections of botulinum toxin block the nerve signal from your brain to your muscles causing them to move into a smile or frown. The untreated facial muscles work normally and facial expressions are not affected.

RESULT: The area treated should appear smoother and less wrinkled. The effects last for about six to nine months.



Before and after pictures of a tummy tuck, above, and facelift, right. Left, breast enlargement, and below, injecting a dermal filler

RISKS: Occasionally, patients who have injections in the forehead experience drooping of the eyelids or eyebrows. Very rarely, blurred vision can occur.

BREAST ENLARGEMENTS

THESE change the shape of and/or enlarge breasts, or repair the breasts after surgery or trauma. For breast implants, the surgeon makes a small cut underneath the armpit, beneath the nipple, underneath the breast or in the abdomen before inserting the implant.

Treatment normally takes about one hour, and the procedure usually involves a general anaesthetic. You will need a week off work to rest.

RESULT: Breasts should be larger, and asymmetric breasts can be evened up. There will be some scarring.

RISKS: Infection, blood loss or rupture or leakage of the implant. Some implants need to be replaced after about 15 years.

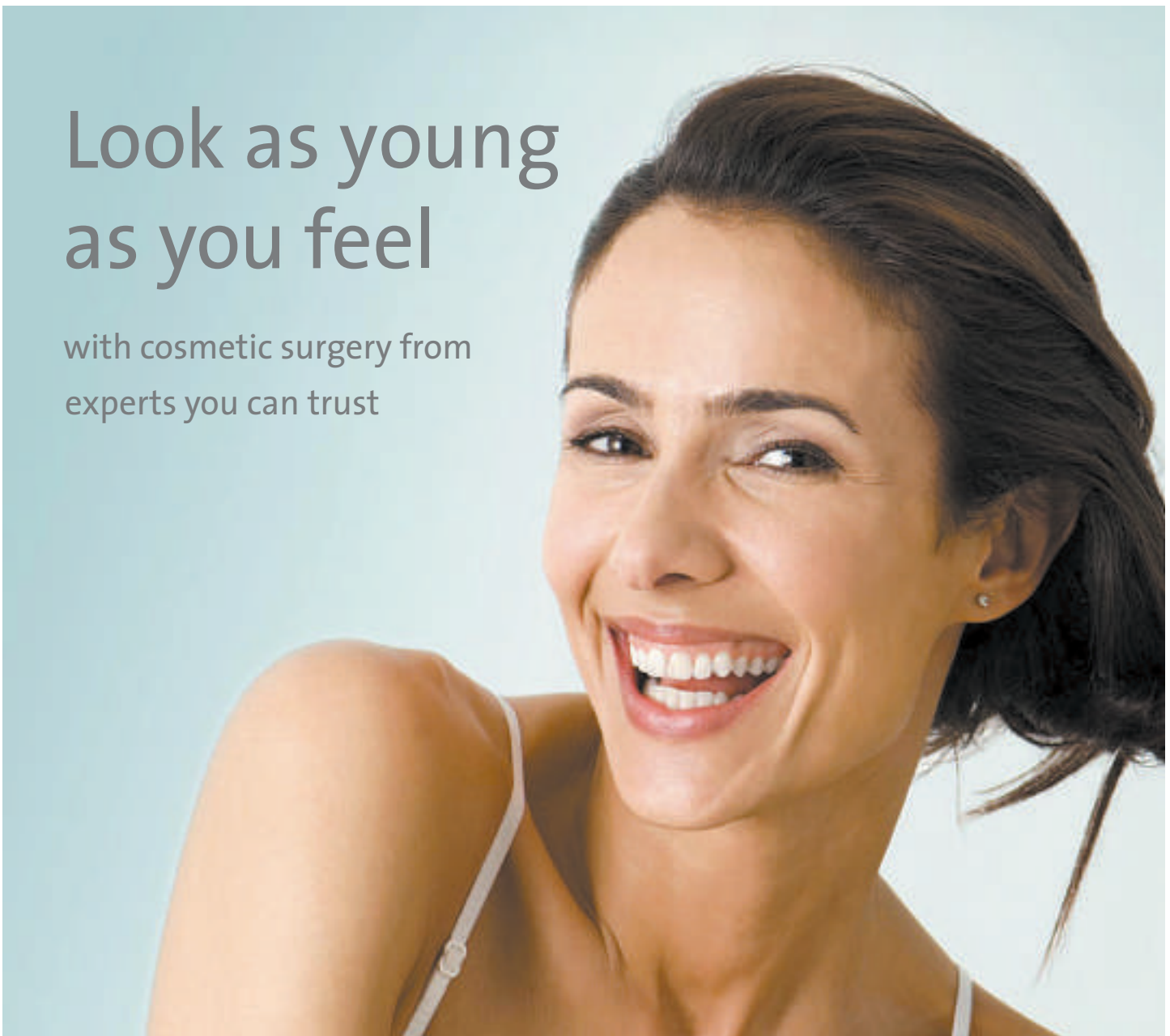
Other cosmetic procedures available in the region include: browlifts, cheek implants, chin implants, ear pinning, eyelid reduction, facelift, nose reshaping, split earlobe repair, breast enlargement, reduction or uplift, inverted nipple correction, arm reduction, labial reduction, liposuction, tummy tuck and a thigh and buttock lift.

Cosmetic skin treatments include: laser therapies for skin blemishes and birthmarks, mole removal, scar revision, tattoo removal, thread veins and varicose vein removal.

Non-surgical treatments include: anti-wrinkle treatment by injection, chemical peels, dermabrasion, laser treatment for lines and wrinkles, and liposculpture. ►

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Natural pout – Victoria Beckham

THE PERFECT POUT

ANYONE wanting a Victoria Beckham-style pout for a special occasion can try out a new treatment on offer in the region.

Collagenics North East is launching a lip-plumping treatment which lasts for two to three weeks – perfect for a wedding or special event.

The new treatment hydrates the skin around the lip area, making the lips fuller, more defined and youthful.

The product is made from natural hyaluronic acid which is injected into the skin around the lips. But unlike traditional lip enhancement procedures, the treatment lasts for about four weeks as opposed to four to six months.

Bryan McCourt, director of Collagenics North-East says: “We wanted to offer a treatment that enabled people to enhance their lips for a special occasion or to experience a fuller mouth before having the full treatment, which has longer-lasting effects.

“The treatment uses the same proven principles as our original lip enhancement procedure but it has been adapted to cater for a new market.

“Non-surgical cosmetic treatments are as popular as ever and creating the perfect pout is high on the wish list of many of our patients. Our new offering provides a short-term solution to this problem and will allow people to get a taste of having fuller lips before they try the full treatment.”

The treatment costs £100 and the effects last for up to three weeks. For more information or to book an appointment call 01325-367367 or visit collagenics.com

USEFUL CONTACTS:

General Medical Council
0856-357-3456.

British Association of
Aesthetic and Plastic
Surgeons, baaps.org.uk

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic
Surgeons 0207-831-5161.

Healthcare Commission
(North-East and Yorkshire
office) 0207-448-8179.

AND DON'T FORGET THE SMILE . . .

THE last few years have seen a massive increase in the popularity of cosmetic dentistry with more and more people going to extreme measures to achieve that “Hollywood smile”.

Until recently, braces were only commonly-used for children, but now 20 per cent of orthodontic patients are over the age of 18, with people as old as 60 receiving successful orthodontic treatments.

Falchion Orthodontists, in Darlington, offers all of the latest techniques in teeth straightening.

One of the most popular techniques is tooth-coloured braces – ceramic brackets that blend in with the natural colour of the teeth, making them far less



visible than the standard metal ones.

It also offers Lingual braces which are fitted on the tongue side of the teeth, meaning they are completely invisible so no one need know that you were wearing them.

Falchion also offers a new brace technique called Clearstep or Invisalign, which is a series of undetectable “aligners” made of thin clear plastic which fit over the teeth – these are very difficult to spot and can easily be removed. – Pippa Walker

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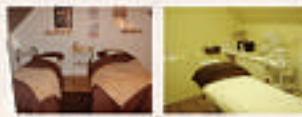
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ANDREA UBHI

Y O R K



COSMETIC DENTISTRY FROM ANDREA UBHI

AT HER CLINIC IN YORK, DR ANDREA UBHI, 'DENTIST OF THE YEAR 2005' (THE PROBE AWARDS) FOCUSES ON PROVIDING FACIAL AESTHETICS INCLUDING CALIFORNIAN PORCELAIN LAMINATE VENEERS, NO-PREPARATION VENEERS, TOOTH WHITENING, WRINKLE REDUCTION PROCEDURES AND DERMAL FILLERS, WHICH CAN ALL GIVE THE FACE A MORE YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Dr Ubhi provides Facial Aesthetic Consultations and treatments. The consultation involves an assessment of not only the teeth, but the whole facial area. Currently the most requested treatment is the No-Preparation Veneers, which can alter the shade, colour and alignment of the teeth, without removing any tooth substance.

'I am very pleased to be able to offer the No-Preparation veneers system' says Dr Ubhi. 'As more and more people are asking for veneers to be placed on their teeth, this system allows me to provide the look the patient wants without compromising the long-term health of the teeth.'

'More and more people in the public eye are having veneers and crowns to improve the look of their teeth, and patients are wanting the same look, so the cosmetic dentistry market has boomed in recent years. I am a conservative dentist, preferring to retain as much of the natural tooth substance as possible, and the No-Preparation system, and the traditional veneers prepared by me, and created for in California allow this to happen.'

Any crowns and veneers are created using Californian dental labs and techniques, giving American style aesthetics. Porcelain veneers can be best described as 'false fingernails for teeth' and can be used to change the shape, colour and alignment of the teeth.

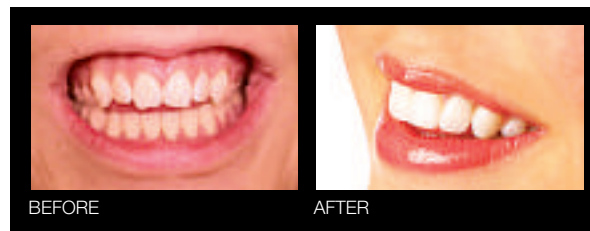
The tooth whitening procedures lighten the shade of your own teeth and can be used on their own, or combined with other treatments.

Wrinkle reduction procedures are used to minimise the appearance of lines and wrinkles, and the dermal fillers are used to plump up and reduce the lines, particularly around the mouth area. The wrinkle reduction techniques and dermal filling techniques can be undertaken in a matter of minutes, and the results usually last for 4-12 months. Treatments such as tooth whitening and smile makeovers can take 2-6 weeks to undertake.

Dr Ubhi won the Dentist of the Year award in 2005 in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Dentistry.

The practice, situated in Stonegate, also provides routine dental care and general dentistry, where dental health is assessed and maintained. New patient consultations for general dentistry are £45, and appointments are available Monday to Friday.

To arrange an appointment, please contact the practice on 01904 639667



DR ANDREA UBHI, 23 STONEGATE, YORK YO1 8AW

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LATE, LATE

breakfast show

Enjoying a late brunch has to be one of the biggest treats of the weekend. There's something luxurious about savouring a leisurely feast, rather than grabbing toast and coffee on the run

MAIN PICTURE: Smoothie created by nutritionist Dr. Carrie Ruxton. Use 50ml guava juice, 5ml ginger syrup, half a banana and five strawberries, blended, and 30ml Acai Gold 100% Pure. (Acai Gold acai berry juice costs £24.95 for a 473ml bottle and is enough for about 15 x 30ml drinks, available through superfooduk.com)



NEW YORK SMOKED SALMON HASH

(Serves two)

300g new potatoes
30g unsalted butter
1/2 small onion, finely sliced
1tbsp chopped dill
1tsp capers
75-100g smoked salmon, finely sliced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 rashers good quality, dry-cured smoked back bacon
2 free-range eggs

For the dressing:

1/2tbsp Dijon mustard
25ml white wine vinegar
Juice of 1/2 lemon
100ml extra virgin olive oil
Salt and black pepper

Boil the potatoes until tender. Drain. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion for four to five minutes, until soft. Add potatoes to the onions and fry until they begin to soften and break down. Add dill, capers and smoked salmon and season well. Stir to combine and cook until salmon is pale pink. Grill the bacon until crispy. Heat a pan of water over a medium heat. Reduce the heat to low and gently break an egg into the water. Cook for five minutes, or until the white is firm. Set aside and

cover to keep warm while poaching the remaining egg. Divide the potato mixture between two plates. Place two rashers of bacon alongside and a poached egg on top of the potato. Top with a little dressing.

The dressing: Place the mustard, vinegar, oil and lemon juice in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Whisk together to form a smooth vinaigrette. (If you don't use it all, this dressing keeps well in a screw-top jar in the fridge). Serve the salmon hash with a little black pepper on top.

BREAKFAST BURRITOS

(Serves four)

2 red peppers, quartered, seeded
 4 free-range eggs
 4tbsp milk
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 1tbsp butter
 6 pepperdew peppers, finely chopped
 Handful baby spinach
 1tbsp olive oil
 Squeeze of lemon juice
 4 soft corn or flour tortillas
 75g mature cheddar, grated
 Jamaican Hot Pepper Sauce – £1.60 for 85ml, from supermarkets or britishfooddirect.com

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas mark 6. Cook the red peppers for about 15 minutes, until they have softened. Meanwhile, place the eggs and milk in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper and whisk together until combined. Melt the butter in a non-stick frying pan. When it begins to foam, add the egg mixture. Without stirring, cook the eggs until they are just beginning to set. When they have set, push the egg gently towards the centre of the pan with a spatula. Continue to do this until the egg mixture has set, then flip the mixture over and remove from the heat.

Remove the peppers from the oven and place in a polythene bag for a few minutes to soften the skins. Place the pepperdew peppers and spinach in a bowl and mix together well with the oil, lemon juice, one to two tablespoons of Hot Pepper Sauce and a little salt and pepper.

Peel and chop the roasted peppers and add to the spinach mix. Warm the tortillas according to the packet instructions.

Place a warmed tortilla on each plate. Line the edge of each tortilla with some cheese and top with the spinach and pepper mixture. Add a couple of spoonfuls of the eggs and roll up the tortilla tightly.

Top tip: If you find the scrambled eggs are cooking too quickly, remove the pan from the heat and move the eggs into the centre of the pan, so that they cook from the outside in.



□ Recipes from Lazy Brunch by Tim Lovejoy and Simon Rimmer, published by Quadrille, £14.99



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MIKE AMOS
visits Judges
Country
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Judgement DAY



If we are to judge not lest we be judged, as St Luke's gospel supposes, what – short of eternal damnation – is the Good Book going to make of food critics, forever passing a few appropriate sentences of their own?

What, more specifically, if the venue is itself called Judges, once the country retreat – “secure and sumptuous” says the brochure – of beaks on the North-East circuit.

This month's column may thus be considered a judicial review though not, very likely, a judicious one. As they taught us at O-level English, that's something else entirely.

Judges Country House Hotel is the former Kirklevington Hall, just south of Yarm, and must on no account be confused with Kirklevington Grange, which is one of HM prisons just along the road.

Apart from anything else, the food is very much better than it is likely to be at Her Majesty's pleasure and it's by no means every commercial eating place on Teesside about which that may confidently be said.

The hall was built in 1881 for the entrepreneurial Richardsons of Hartlepool, is now a listed building and became a hotel – owned by the Downs family – in 1994.

To sum up at the beginning – a practice which could save a great deal of legal time, expense and hot air, and is thus to be recommended to Mr Jack Straw and friends – it is smart, relaxing, civilised, efficiently and

**Judges Country
House Hotel,
Kirklevington
Hall, Yarm,
01642-789000**

Don't miss
Mike Amos'
food reviews in
The Northern
Echo every
Tuesday



Manager Tim Howard in the hotel lounge
Pictures: CHRIS BOOTH

affably run and, save for lunchtime, very, very expensive.

Forever pleading poverty, we went at lunchtime. It's £14.95 for two courses, £17.95 for three – “prices are per person”, advises the menu, lest anyone suppose it to be for a family of four and with a doggy bag thrown in for grandma. We considered it good value, and a highly enjoyable experience, nonetheless.

Things got off to a bad start, however.

Though the brochure boasts 250 bins, 30 armagnacs dating to 1933, 70 malts, 50 vodkas and 30 cognacs, there was not only not so much as a single bottle of cask-conditioned beer, but a head waiter who'd no idea what it was. A pint of Tetley's Smooth was £3.60, which in the circumstances may be considered criminal. Tim Howard, the hotel manager, promised subsequently to review the situation.

Warmly greeted, we were shown to a book-lined lounge with a portrait of a robed judge above the fireplace. No one knew who it was, but probably it was Judge Jeffreys. He was a hanging judge.

Lunch was taken in the conservatory, with pleasant views of some of the hotel's 31 acres, the word out that the owner was expected to arrive at any moment.

“If you're going to shout at me, shout at me now,” said the cheery waitress whose name, it transpired, was Joy. “Name and nature,” she said.

For me it was a first visit, for The Boss a familiar haunt. It's one of the favoured locations for those who have become known as ladies who lunch – lunch, in this case, a thinly-veiled euphemism for blether.

Another dozen or so were present, two of them male. “Men like having a fuss made of them,” said Joy.

The four starters on a frequently changing lunch menu were white onion soup with deep-fried frogs' legs – honest – smoked salmon salad with citrus dressing, terrine of pressed duck leg and foie gras with celeriac remoulade and spiced pear and, fourthly, garlic ceps with white beans and garlic ciabatta.

The soup was intense, fragrant, wonderfully flavoured. Three frogs' legs – you forget how fleshy they are – came in a little cup and were fun. The garlic onion bread which preceded the starter was fresh, firm and very enjoyable, too.

The Boss had the ceps – there may have been 39 – and thought the experiment successful. Already, it seemed, there was a bright and confident talent in the kitchen.

The owner, unnoticed, had crept in without so much as a Purcell trumpet fanfare with which to acknowledge her. Happily, come to think, there was no music at all.

We'd followed with roast veal with pomme puree, root vegetables and Madeira jus – more strong, vibrant, imaginative flavours but perhaps not for the ravenous. The root

vegetables, for example, comprised four little cubes about the size of a quartet of sugar lumps. The Boss had the pan-fried bream fillet with young vegetables, clams and a foaming, tangy, mussel broth. It looked terrific, tasted (she said) just as good.

Service was by the head waiter, by the ebullient Joy and by a young lady whose principal role appeared to hold the tray while others took things off it. We were reminded of the classic Barker/Corbett/Cleese sketch. I know my place.

We finished with a “tonka bean creme brulee” – something to toy with? – with “rhubarb flavours” and a parfait of banana, coffee meringue and butterscotch sauce. They took so long to arrive that it could have been supposed that the chef had decided that the first one wasn't good enough and tried again – you know what they say about practice makes parfait. The Boss thought there should be nine months for gags like that, presumably in the penitentiary.

Coffee and inventive petits fours – an extra £4 each – were taken in the lounge, colliding by that time with a couple of ladies tackling afternoon tea. That cost £12.50 – per person – but appeared to be of classic description.

The early bird dinner menu is £30 for three courses, the carte £44. While the temptation may be to rob a bank, it's probably best just to try it out at lunchtime.

Take her down.



"A Foodie Paradise in Stockton Shambles Market Hall"

Sue Burgess, Stockton town Centre Manager describes Stockton Council's exciting plans.

You may have seen in the press that we are converting the historic, Grade 2 listed Shambles building back into a proper food market, but with the emphasis firmly on some real top quality, 'foodie' shops. These will, we think, add something really special and different to Stockton town centre and will bring in shoppers and visitors from the local area and much further afield.

Did you know....?

The name Shambles is an old word for a place where meat is butchered and sold. Some readers may remember when this was exactly what happened in our Shambles market hall, complete with sawdust on the floor!

Something special.....

Of course we already have a great range of butchers, greengrocers and other fresh food shops, plus our regular market traders who give excellent value for money on high quality fresh food on Stockton's markets. But today's discerning consumers are increasingly interested in that specialist, niche market of organic food, local produce and top-notch products with that special 'twist'. The new development will bring all these under one roof providing a food connoisseur's paradise right here in the heart of our town centre and bringing new shoppers here, which will help to support all the existing businesses too.

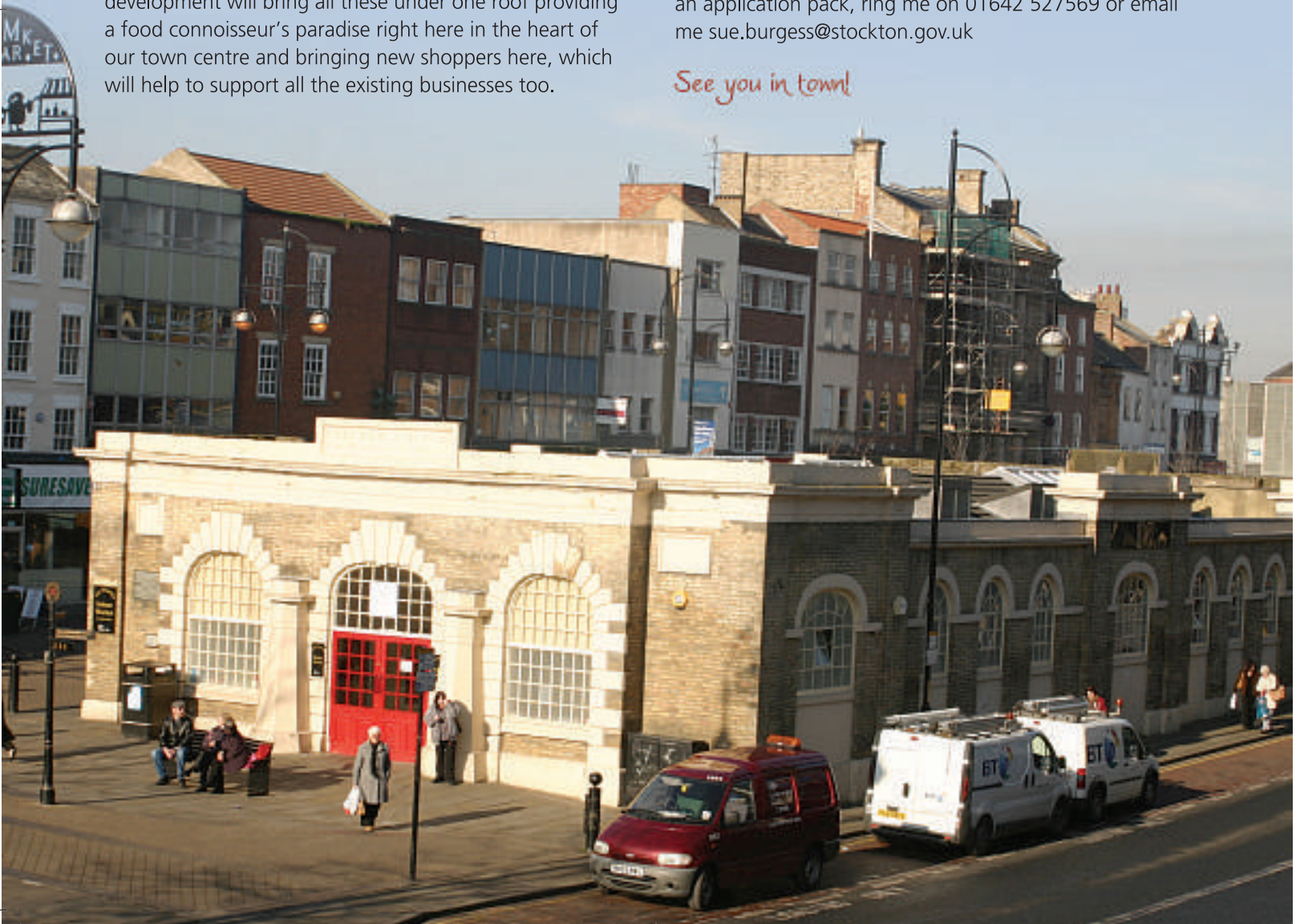


We are working with the Regional Food Group Northumbria Larder on an exciting project to include an outlet for lots more local producers and growers from the North East region who would not be able to stock a shop on their own but together with other producers, will be able to get their food on sale here in Stockton.

Be a part of it.....

If you, or someone you know, can sell or make something which you think would work well in the new Shambles development, please get in touch. You can go to our website www.stockton.gov.uk/theshambles and download an application pack, ring me on 01642 527569 or email me sue.burgess@stockton.gov.uk

See you in town!



Scarborough is fast developing a reputation as the surfing capital of the North.
RUTH CAMPBELL meets the youthful champion boardsmen on our region's own Echo Beach

The new WAVE

AS we stand on the beach, watching the waves gently lapping onto the golden sands of Scarborough's South Bay, we are forced to admit defeat. This was to have been our first surfing lesson. But today is not a day for riding the waves.

You could hardly describe dedicated surfer and instructor Steve Crawford and his friends as disappointed. More full of anticipation. For, as they explain, there is always the excitement of what the next tide will bring.

Sure enough, when I phone two days later, Steve and a few mates are heading off with their boards. There is no time to waste. Conditions are good and there are already about 15 people surfing the waves. This, on a cold, wet weekday January morning.

Scarborough is fast becoming known as the surfing capital of the North. On a good day, at weekends and in the holidays, there will often be around 100 or more surfers in the bay.

Enthusiasts say you get some of the best waves in Europe in the area and it is the impulsive, unpredictable nature of the sport that seems to make it all the more exciting.

"It's something that really grabs you. You just have to do it when the time's right. You get into all sorts of trouble with your partner," explains former gardener Steve, 38, who gave up his job to run his surf business in the town full-time 18 months ago, as demand for gear and lessons has soared.

The potential, in a business which brings in £55m a year in Cornwall alone and is one of the fastest growing sports in the country, is huge. ►





“They say we are a bit behind up here, but the waves and cliff formations are better than in Cornwall. We are definitely coming out to play now



◀ **Continued from page 49**

increasing numbers of surfers are now regularly travelling to Scarborough from cities such as Leeds, Manchester, Birmingham and even London for weekend surfing. And enthusiasts drive up from Cornwall and fly in from other parts of Europe to catch the waves when conditions are particularly good.

Keen surfers keep a close eye on the weather forecasts, watching for a tight ring of low pressure over north-west Scotland. This creates good ground swell, pushing down the coast to create huge, powerful waves off the north-east coast. These waves, known as "classics", can be predicted two to three days before they arrive.

"People used to drive six or seven hours to get to Cornwall and now they're realising what good, varied waves we get," says Steve. "The uncrowded roads make it so much easier to get here, we have such a huge number of bays and so much more space in the sea."

As well as providing surfing lessons – Steve has had about 600 bookings during the past year – his Fluid Concept company sells and hires equipment and his business partner designs and makes innovative, environmentally friendly surf boards: "I had always wanted to work in surfing, but it was never popular enough before," he says.

Twenty years ago, when Steve started surfing along this coast, there were just six or seven local surfers. Now he reckons there are about 400 regulars – including some talented up-and-coming young British stars – in Scarborough and the surrounding area alone.

The beauty of this part of the coast is that it has something for everyone. Huge, powerful, thrilling waves crash into the town's North Bay and into places like Staithes

and Cayton Bay. Scarborough's South Bay is good for beginners and places like Filey Bay are well protected. There are also lots of little hidden coves with perfect rock formations for good waves all along the coast.

One of the oldest surfers in the area is in his seventies with two artificial knees – he started surfing in his sixties. Youngsters are out on boards from the age of about five years old. One young champion, Joss Wescombe, 17, from nearby Hunmanby, started surfing when he was eight and his father let him have a go on his board: "I felt at home right from the start," he says.

He won his first under-18s competition when he was just 14 and, after winning the Rip Curl Bomb East Coast surfing championship, he was invited to train with the British junior surf squad at the National Surf Centre, in Newquay, in 2006.

The A-level student is now sponsored by Fluid Concept, which designs and shapes new boards for him. He wants to promote Yorkshire as a top spot for surfing. "It wouldn't take much for us to be clipping Cornwall's heels," he says.

"When I first started, you would hardly see anyone. Now you see surfers down here any day of the week. It has really taken off."

He says there is a really strong local surfing community. Surfer and talented amateur filmmaker Ollie Banks has even made a film of people surfing all along the North Sea coast, called 900 Miles.

"There is a good surf scene here," says Joss. "We get better and more consistent waves than Cornwall, but we could do with some investment in better facilities, such as warm showers."

For youngsters starting out, surfing gear is more affordable now. You can buy new wetsuits for £120, and second-hand boards for

less than £100, although top-of-the-range models cost as much as £1,700.

Joss, who has surfed in temperatures as low as minus ten degrees, points out that thicker, warmer wetsuits with built-in hoods make a big difference: "The equipment is so good these days you really don't feel it when you're in the water," he says.

It makes the cold North Sea so much more attractive: "We surf when it's snowing and through ice, rain, sleet and fog," adds Steve.

Another of Fluid Concept's young champions, Ryan Hammond, 17, came second in the British Long Board Union championship recently. He only started surfing four years ago when a friend let him borrow his surfboard. "I stood up straight away and loved it. I was hooked," he says.

He explains the attraction. "No two waves are the same. It is all down to how you interpret the wave, how you express yourself. No one realises how hard it is, you are alone."

Ryan hopes to enter the world circuit one day. "But I love it here, I would never move. They say we are a bit behind up here, but the waves and cliff formations are better than in Cornwall. We are definitely coming out to play now."

With inspirational young hopefuls like Joss and Ryan promoting the town, Scarborough's reputation as one of Britain's top surfing spots is, like a surging swell, sure to continue to grow.

And yes, we'll be back in town again, when the waves are right...

□ **Fluid Concept: Tel 01723-354263; www.fluidconcept.com. Scarborough Malibu Surf Club's website is www.s-m-s-c.org.uk**

□ **Pictures by Joss Wescombe and Barry Wescombe**



Living on the road



TOYOTA YARIS

THE 1.8-litre SR is the new flagship of the Yaris range and it packs a heady 131 bhp beneath the smoothly sculpted bonnet. That's more than warmed over hatchbacks from Citroen, Peugeot, Fiat and Renault.

Indeed, a few years ago, 131bhp would have been sufficient to place the Yaris in the top drawer of hot hatches — and not the second division.

The 1.8-litre engine is a new powerplant featuring the latest variable valve timing gear for better flexibility and economy. Its light weight and robust construction make the Yaris a star performer, and a refined one, too. With a top speed of 121 mph the SR has no problem keeping pace with its rivals.

The modest 0-60 mph time of 9.3 seconds is unlikely to set your pants on fire, however.

Toyota may have fitted a powerful engine but that's not to say the SR is a hooligan's hatchback. Yaris ownership has always been an eminently sensible choice. The SR has all the added refinement, build quality and safety equipment you'd expect of a Yaris... only with extra performance.

It's certainly packed with safety equipment. For starters, you get an impressive nine airbags as standard plus vehicle stability control. No wonder the

Sporty SPICE

Toyota's Yaris is small, practical, reliable, well-built and roomy for a supermini. Now you can add sporty to that list of epithets, reports **NIGEL BURTON**

“The SR's blend of subtle looks, decent performance and excellent build should make it something of a hit

Yaris notched up a full five-star European crash rating.

The cabin is roomy and very well built. If Lexus made a city car, it couldn't do much better than this. There is room for five adults at a pinch and loads of storage space for nik-naks.

The SR specification adds lots of toys: wheel arch filling 17IN alloy wheels and a pumped bodykit are among the more obvious examples, but would you also expect smart entry and smart start, full featured climate control and a premium audio system?

Stiffer roll bars, a lowered suspension (by 8mm) and sharpened dampers give the Yaris more back roads fun potential than its lesser bretheren.

Punch the starter button to fire the SR up and the engine settles down to a subdued thrum. Granted, the exhaust note could sound a bit spicier, the electric power steering doesn't have much feel and you need plenty of revs to get a move on, but there's still fun to be had ragging the Yaris around your favourite bit of tarmac.

If you fancy an SR, you'll need to find at least £13,380. That buys the three-door. An extra couple of back doors adds £500.

It's unlikely to replace the Corsa VXR in the affections of young boy racers, but the SR's blend of subtle looks, decent performance and excellent build should make it something of a hit.

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TODAY TOMORROW **TOYOTA**

Model and specification shown Verso SR 1.8 VVT-i 5 door manual manufacturer's list price £17,495 plus metallic paint £350. *Advertised finance offer available on Verso SR when ordered, registered and financed through Toyota Financial Services, on a 3 year Hire Purchase Drive Plan with minimum customer deposit of 30% between 1st April 2008 and 30th June 2008 at participating Centres. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. Terms and conditions apply. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s only. Toyota Financial Services, Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5UZ. Price correct at time of going to press and includes VAT, delivery charge, number plates, one year's road fund licence and £55 first registration fee. Subject to availability.

Verso 1.8 VVT-i Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km), Urban 28.5 (9.9), Extra Urban 43.5 (6.5), Combined 36.7 (7.7). CO2 Emissions 184 g/km.

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The BMW 116i ES 5-door

BMW Select finance example - BMW 116i ES 5-door		
46 monthly payments	£250.00	Amount of credit £14,464.67
On the road cash price*	£16,495.00	Optional final payment £6,119.59
Customer deposit	£1,030.33	Total amount payable £20,048.92
Dealer deposit contribution	£1,000.00	Contract mileage 32,000
Total deposit	£2,030.33	Excess mileage charge (per mile) 2.30p
First monthly payment	£399.00	Typical 8.9% APR

Official fuel economy figures for the BMW 116i ES: Extra Urban 53.3-58.9 mpg (4.8-5.3 l/100km), Urban 34-37.7 mpg (7.5-8.3 l/100km), Combined 44.1-48.7 mpg (5.8-6.4 l/100km). CO₂ emissions 139-152 g/km. Finance example is based on a 48 month BMW Select agreement for the model featured, a BMW 116i ES with optional metallic paint. Vehicle condition charges may apply. *On the road cash price includes 3 year BMW Dealer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. Figures are correct at time of going to print and are subject to change without notice. All finance is subject to status and available to over 18s in the UK only (excluding the Channel Islands). Guarantees and indemnities may be required. We can arrange finance and hiring facilities for you.



The BMW 320d SE Saloon

BMW Select finance example - BMW 320d SE Saloon		
46 monthly payments	£350.00	Amount of credit £21,277.89
On the road cash price*	£24,250.00	Optional final payment £9,868.03
Customer deposit	£2,022.11	Total amount payable £29,489.14
Dealer deposit contribution	£1,000.00	Contract mileage 32,000
Total deposit	£3,022.11	Excess mileage charge (per mile) 3.77p
First monthly payment	£499.00	Typical 8.6% APR

Official fuel economy figures for the BMW 320d SE Saloon: Extra Urban 64.2-68.9 mpg (4.1-4.4 l/100km), Urban 39.8-47.1 mpg (6.0-7.1 l/100km), Combined 52.3-58.9 mpg (4.8-5.4 l/100km). CO₂ emissions 128-144 g/km. Finance example is based on a 48 month BMW Select agreement for the model featured, a BMW 320d SE Saloon with optional metallic paint. Vehicle condition charges may apply. *On the road cash price includes 3 year BMW Dealer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. Figures are correct at time of going to print and are subject to change without notice. All finance is subject to status and available to over 18s in the UK only (excluding the Channel Islands). Guarantees and indemnities may be required. We can arrange finance and hiring facilities for you.



The BMW 520d SE Saloon

BMW Select finance example - BMW 520d SE Saloon		
46 monthly payments	£350.00	Amount of credit £21,996.98
On the road cash price*	£25,300.00	Optional final payment £10,922.65
Customer deposit	£2,303.02	Total amount payable £30,824.67
Dealer deposit contribution	£1,000.00	Contract mileage 32,000
Total deposit	£3,303.02	Excess mileage charge (per mile) 4.12p
First monthly payment	£499.00	Typical 8.6% APR

Official fuel economy figures for the BMW 520d SE Saloon: Extra Urban 61.4-65.7 mpg (4.3-4.6 l/100km), Urban 37.7-43.5 mpg (6.5-7.5 l/100km), Combined 50.4-55.4 mpg (5.1-5.6 l/100km). CO₂ emissions 136-149 g/km. Finance example is based on a 48 month BMW Select agreement for the model featured, a BMW 520d SE Saloon with optional metallic paint. Vehicle condition charges may apply. *On the road cash price includes 3 year BMW Dealer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. Figures are correct at time of going to print and are subject to change without notice. All finance is subject to status and available to over 18s in the UK only (excluding the Channel Islands). Guarantees and indemnities may be required. We can arrange finance and hiring facilities for you.



The BMW Z4 2.0i SE Roadster

BMW Select finance example - BMW Z4 2.0i SE Roadster		
46 monthly payments	£350.00	Amount of credit £21,008.19
On the road cash price*	£22,495.00	Optional final payment £9,566.77
Customer deposit	£486.81	Total amount payable £27,652.58
Dealer deposit contribution	£1,000.00	Contract mileage 32,000
Total deposit	£1,486.81	Excess mileage charge (per mile) 4.51p
First monthly payment	£499.00	Typical 8.7% APR

Official fuel economy figures for the BMW Z4 2.0i SE Roadster: Extra Urban 51.4 mpg (5.5 l/100km), Urban 26.6 mpg (10.6 l/100km), Combined 38.2 mpg (7.4 l/100km). CO₂ emissions 176 g/km. Finance example is based on a 48 month BMW Select agreement for the model featured, a BMW Z4 2.0i SE Roadster. Vehicle condition charges may apply. *On the road cash price includes 3 year BMW Dealer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. Figures are correct at time of going to print and are subject to change without notice. All finance is subject to status and available to over 18s in the UK only (excluding the Channel Islands). Guarantees and indemnities may be required. We can arrange finance and hiring facilities for you.

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“The man who has also put his name to Alfas and SEATs in the past, believes this to be his most beautiful creation yet



AUDI A5

LAST time Audi were in the coupe market, we were all doing the Macarena at weddings, Skinner and Baddiel had us believing England could actually win something and Bill Clinton was re-elected to the White House.

The year was 1996 and Audi were about to wave goodbye to the good old 80. In the intervening years, they washed their hands of the mid-size coupe segment, allowing their rivals from Bavaria to sweep all before them with the 3-series coupe and its high-performance brother, the M3.

Now they have returned, and how.

Styled by Walter de'Silva, Audi's head of design, the A5 contains clear elements of his Italian descent. What's more, the man who has also put his name to Alfas and SEATs in the past believes this to be his most beautiful creation yet.

The sweeping lines have a certain majesty to them, while the way the wind-screen rakes both at the front and the rear evokes images of an almost orchestral nature. Of course, there remains a strong Germanic flavour to the car. The front and rear have an authoritarian rather than romantic

FIVE comes alive

look to them. Under the skin, the A5 sports an all-new chassis and transmission layout that finally addresses Audi's nose-heavy shortcomings, a decision which has a two-fold benefit: increasing the agility of the car and also helping its stance.

At the business end of the A5 you'll find five engines to choose from: two Tdis, a 1.8T – the unit of choice – a 3.2 litre V6, and the range-topping 4.2 V8, which comes implanted in the fire-breathing S5 version.

Audi says its use of technology means that fuel consumption is low without compromising torque output, acceleration figures and concerns for the environment. The 1.8 returns about 40mpg, while the S5 Quattro is obviously more thirsty, returning a best of close to 23mpg.

Billed as a four-seater coupe, the A5 has

more than enough room up front, but those in the back might not appreciate a long journey as space afforded can most kindly be described as cramped.

The car is, as you would expect, very well laid out, with everything within easy reach. Drivers will appreciate the rear parking sensors as the view out of the rear doesn't inspire confidence.

Audi is confident it can regain market share with the A5 and, if comments from would-be purchasers on the various motoring websites are anything to go by, then it could well be a cause for concern for its competitors.

Currently, they are playing catch-up, but who would bet against them pulling alongside before too long?

Matt Westcott

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Patrick of Durham sales executive Nick Pulling

ADVERTISING FEATURE

ADMIRERS of motor dealership Patrick of Durham's personal and highly-professional service now have a double reason to celebrate.

For while this family-run car dealership continues to offer all the latest models in the Vauxhall range from its premises in Abbey Road, Pity Me, it has recently opened a new outlet on the former Volvo site in Alma Place, Gilesgate, providing Vauxhall customers from that side of the city with all their sales and servicing needs.

As approved Vauxhall dealerships, both sites also offer a large choice in used vehicles under the renowned Network Q system, giving a host of attractive guarantees to ensure customers' total peace-of-mind.

For owner Mike Patrick and his dedicated team of specialists, the aim has always been to deliver the highest levels of service, advice and value-for-money possible to every customer, every time.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data - Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litre/100km): New Agila Design 1.2i 16v: Urban 40.9 (6.9), Extra-urban 60.1 (4.7), Combined 51.4 (5.5). CO₂ Emissions 131 g/km.

Model shown features metallic paint available at an extra cost.

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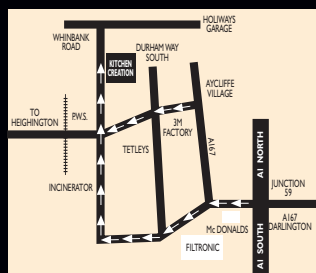
Mitsubishi Shogun Range fuel consumption in mpg (ltrs/100km): Urban 24.8 - 21.6 (11.4 - 13.1), Extra Urban 35.8 - 31.0 (7.9 - 9.1), Combined 30.7 - 26.7 (9.2 - 10.6). CO2 emissions 244 - 280g/km.

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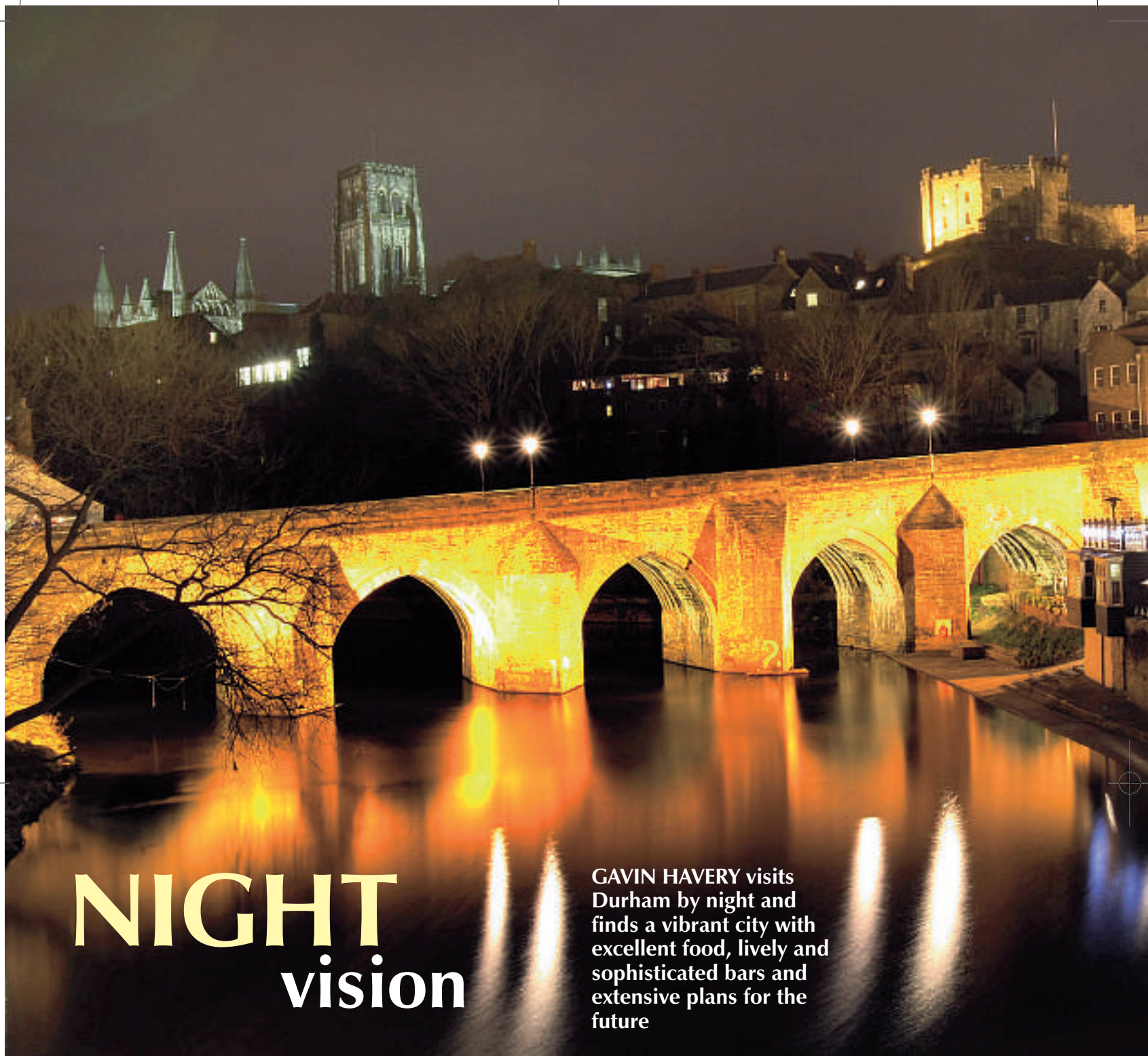
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NIGHT vision

GAVIN HAVERY visits Durham by night and finds a vibrant city with excellent food, lively and sophisticated bars and extensive plans for the future

BY day, Durham is overflowing with history and visitors. It's been that way ever since the monks carried Cuthbert's body to the high, rocky promontory 1,000 years ago.

By night, though, Durham has had a mixed reputation. For all of its highbrow heritage, after-dark it has been a place where town and gown has come into conflict, a place where the earthy ways of the surrounding pit villages have clashed with the more sophisticated manners of the city dwellers.

However, now that reputation is being consigned to history. A new vision has refocused both the location and the mood of a good night out.

Now it is more of a refined experience – a Steven Berkoff play, perhaps, and a meal of tapas or sushi complemented by Champagne cocktails.

Durham City Vision 2020 is a regeneration partnership between the county and district councils, One NorthEast, and the cathedral and the university.

During the next 20 years, it aims to

attract millions of pounds of investment to create a sophisticated, creative, modern, cosmopolitan city that still manages to maintain its architectural splendour and historical significance.

One of its objectives is to move towards more varied restaurants in the city, and the completion of Walkergate has accelerated the pace of that change. Walkergate is a £75m riverside leisure development which has shifted the focus of night-time Durham to its new up-market bars and restaurants.

Harvey Dowdy, the regeneration



manager at Durham City Vision, said: "The opening of new restaurants around Millennium Place has increased the opportunity for people to enjoy an evening in Durham.

"For example, whereas people might have enjoyed a show at the Gala Theatre and then gone home, now there is more opportunity for a bite to eat beforehand and a relaxing drink afterwards. There is evidence that more people are now happy to spend time relaxing in the city centre after work.

"The opening of the new Premier ►

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Nightspots in Durham, above, Chiquito and The Bishop's Mill. Far left, Epernay champagne and cocktail bar, and left, Bistro 21

◀ Travel Inn, in Walkergate, means there are more visitors in the heart of the city in an evening, and when the new Radisson SAS Hotel opens on the other side of the river later this year, that will add hugely to night-time opportunities in the city.

Terry Laybourne, the first chef in the North-East to be awarded a much-coveted Michelin star in 1992, owns Bistro 21 at Aykley Heads, Durham.

He says the region's palate is becoming much more sophisticated, in line with a national trend following the success of television cookery. People are no longer put off by dishes that were once perceived as ostentatious or overly expensive, and are prepared to spend their hard-earned money on excellent food, cooked well and presented beautifully.

Mr Laybourne said: "The restaurant industry has expanded enormously since we opened 12 years ago. The market is buoyant and has become much more diverse.

There used to be a handful of Italians and stand-alone ethnic restaurants, but now people have got their acts together and more places are delivering good quality food.

"A lot of the pubs are also doing decent dishes and have tapped into the fact that serving local produce always goes down well."

As well as Bistro 21, Durham boasts a range of eateries that would appeal to even the most choosy gastronome, including The Gourmet Spot, Oldfields and Chapters.

Mr Laybourne, who was awarded the MBE in the 1998 New Year's Honours List for services to the restaurant industry and tourism, said the change in Durham is driven by the students, who bring youth and different cultures to the city.

"Many of them are from the South and they always seem to be a little bit ahead in terms of fads and fashions and these things are accepted by the locals.

"Everyone is obsessed by good food these days and that is reinforced in adverts, on ▶



"The restaurant industry has expanded enormously since we opened 12 years ago. The market is buoyant and has become much more diverse"

Chef Terry Laybourne



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THIS PAGE:
Spotlight on
Durham's
Gala
Theatre, at
the heart of
the
Millennium
Place
complex

◀ these days and that is reinforced in adverts, on television programmes and in the magazines.”

But it not just the restaurants that have gone upmarket. So have the bars.

Of course, you can still get pint and a Scotch egg, if that is what you are after, but the market has diversified to cater for all tastes.

Those looking for a lively night out can still enjoy Yates's Wine Lodge or Wetherspoons, but the more discerning drinker may choose to visit Epernay Durham, the city's only champagne and cocktail bar, featuring more than 50 varieties of champagne.

It opened in February last year, in Walkergate, and general manager Alex Stewart said: "We have a lot of high-quality drinks and there is nothing in Durham like this at the moment. There are only three in the country and this was the second.

"We get a lot of people coming here from the surrounding areas who would not normally come in to Durham to drink.

"But because we offer these cocktails and rare champagne, people are willing to pay a little extra for it."

Durham City's vision is for the Claypath area to become a strong "cultural quarter", building on the success of the Gala Theatre, the Clayport Library, the completion of Walkergate and the construction of the two new hotels.

It is to be promoted as the creative quarter,

reinforcing its cultural status by clustering accommodation for the creative industries in this area.

At the heart of it is the modern Millennium Place development, opened by the Queen in 2002.

The focal point is the 500-seat Gala Theatre and cinema, offering a varied programme of music, drama and comedy,

as well as extensive conference facilities.

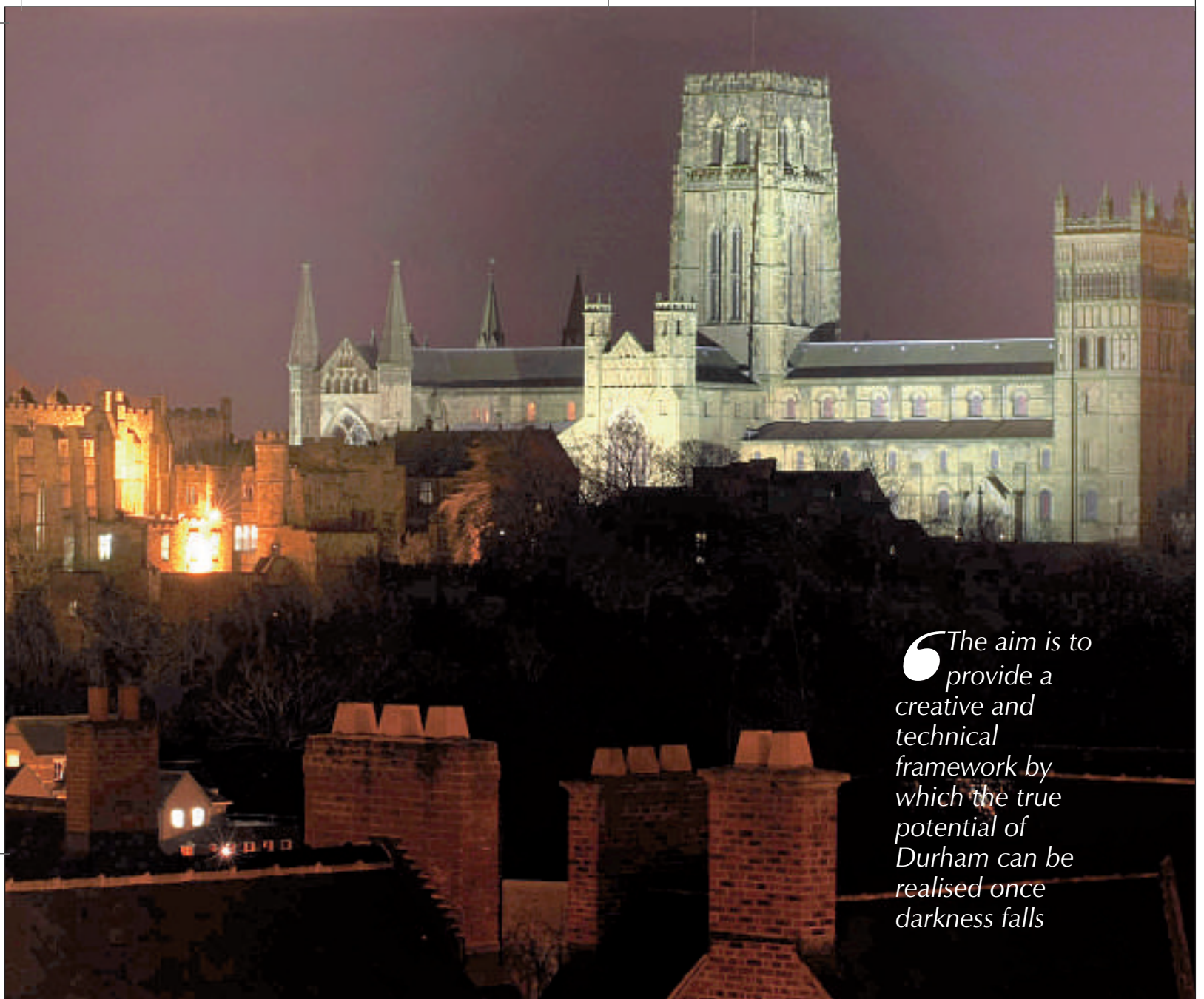
The adjacent Walkergate development provides a range of cafes, bars and restaurants, and forms a pedestrian route to further car parks and the coach park.

The historic Durham peninsula runs from the Market Place up Saddler Street and includes the castle, cathedral and university – all surrounded by the River ▶



Picture by STUART BOULTON





“The aim is to provide a creative and technical framework by which the true potential of Durham can be realised once darkness falls”

► Wear and it is the physical and spiritual heart of the city. It gives Durham a unique identity of natural beauty, combined with awesome history.

The Durham City Vision envisages no physical changes for this part of the city centre, intending instead to preserve what is a major visitor attraction for hundreds of thousands of people, who will then, it is hoped, go on to enjoy the city’s newer revitalised quarters.

An early evening stroll along the tree-lined banks of the Wear allows you to take in breathtaking views of the castle and cathedral that tower above.

You can while away the hours with a jazz or disco evening on the Prince Bishops River Cruiser, which leaves Brown’s Boathouse beneath Elvet Bridge.

Slowly meandering up the waterway, the experience offers splendid views of the

cathedral, five different bridges, the castle, a waterfall, various mills and boathouses, the racecourse, bandstand and prison.

Durham City Vision is engaged in a number of initiatives that will help make the city an even more attractive place in the evening and after dark.

The idea is to update the illumination of the city’s impressive architecture, including the cathedral, castle and medieval bridges, to maximise the effect of the striking skyline.

It is hoped the strategy will further economic regeneration in tourism and create a ripple effect across other sectors.

Mark Major, of consultants Speirs and Major Associates, which designed the £3.14m Light and Darkness Strategy, said: “The aim is to provide a creative and technical framework by which the true potential of Durham can be realised once darkness falls.”



Dusk to dark – above, a Jools Holland concert in the shadow of Durham Cathedral. Main picture, the cathedral in all its floodlit glory

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BETTER to give

Volunteers can do almost anything – from helping an elderly neighbour, to providing legal advice for a local charity, they make a vital contribution to all aspects of community life. But there are benefits on both sides, says Volunteering England

SPEAK to almost any volunteer and they will tell you that they get at least as much out of giving time as they put in. Some of this might be hard to quantify – meeting new people, the satisfaction of having made a worthwhile contribution – but other benefits are more tangible.

Volunteering can help you learn skills and get qualifications and experience. It can also help develop your knowledge in different areas of work and life.

For careers in areas such as health and social care and the environment, volunteering is an important way of getting the necessary experience. If you have a career in mind, try to find out what it is you need on your CV.

When applying to help out, don't be afraid to be upfront about the fact that you are career-minded. As long as you are prepared to commit a certain amount of time, then most organisations will not mind.

If you show willing, they should be able to help you get the skills and experience you require.

If you don't have a specific idea about what career you want to pursue, searching through the opportunities on do-it.org.uk will show you a broad range of organisations and kinds of work.

Volunteering is also a chance to try different things. Organisations will expect a certain level of commitment, but if you can find the time to try several opportunities, it will give you a great insight into what it is like to work in those sectors.

There is a tremendous range of volunteering work, for example:

- Gardening
- Being part of a team planning an event
- Campaigning
- Teaching someone to read.

Unless you are already sure what you want to do, it is worth finding out what kind of work there is near where you live.

You can contact relevant organisations

WHERE TO LOOK

See Volunteering England's website on volunteering.org.uk/Iwanttovolunteer, or call 0845-305-6979

Do-it.org.uk (YouthNet UK) is an internet database of UK local volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer bureaux or centres act as a volunteers' "job shop". They can tell you what voluntary work is available locally and put you in touch with local organisations.

Councils for Voluntary Service are sometimes known by a different name, so look in the telephone book or Yellow Pages under "Council", "Volunteers" or "Voluntary". In rural areas, the equivalents are Rural Community Councils.

Public libraries – ask if there is a noticeboard or a file of information on voluntary work.

Register with TimeBank, so your interests and skills will be matched to volunteering opportunities. Contact 0845-601-4008 or for general inquiries 0207-401-5438, or online at timebank.org.uk

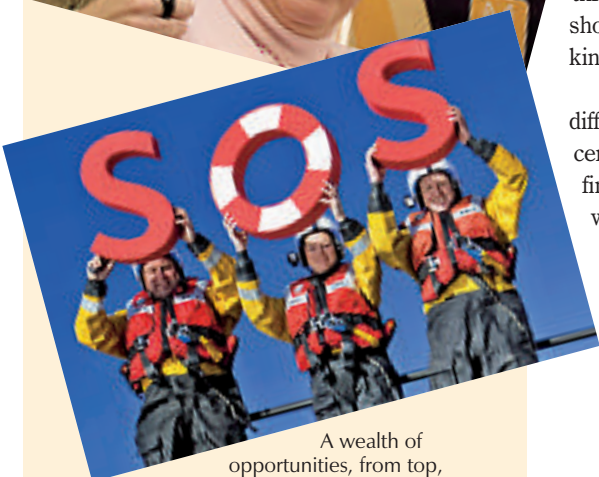
Some employers encourage and support their staff to volunteer, and may be able to provide information about opportunities and support.

Local hospitals and social services sometimes offer volunteering opportunities.

directly. For example, if you want to teach, you could contact local schools, colleges or adult education centres.

Some organisations are looking for people with specific skills. Other organisations, including volunteer centres, will try to find volunteer work for everyone, including people with extra support needs.

And don't forget, volunteering has a habit of taking people in unexpected directions. Sometimes passion can bring better results than planning.



A wealth of opportunities, from top, cleaning a Middlesbrough stream as part of the Clean Becks Campaign, Darlington Samaritans, a litter-pick and survey at Saltburn Beach, Northallerton Volunteer Centre, Tynemouth RNLI volunteers appeal for fundraising help

MENCAP

Understanding learning disability

WHO WE ARE

Mencap's mission is to improve the lives and opportunities of children with a learning disability together with their families and carers. With more than 15,000 members across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we fight to end discrimination against people with a learning disability. We challenge attitudes and help society understand how learning disability can affect people's lives.

WHAT WE DO

Mencap's housing and support services provide support and housing services to more than 4,000 people with a learning disability in England, helping them live independent and valued lives. We work closely with organisations like housing associations, local authorities and benefit agencies to provide our services. Mencap's vision is a world where everyone with a learning disability has an equal access to choice, opportunity and respect, with the support they need.

WHY WORK FOR US

Mencap is committed to ensuring its staff have opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge they need to deliver absolute quality services, and to experience ongoing development.

To do a job effectively staff will need skills and knowledge and the chance to practise applying them until they are highly effective. We will provide staff with different ways to gain the skills and knowledge they need and managers coach and support them while they learn to apply them.

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WEDDING album

Kate Alexandra Bowman and John Paul Richard Stanley, of Sunnybrow, County Durham, were married at Swainby Village Church, North Yorkshire
Picture: HighLight Photographics Ltd



Nicola Jane Fawcett and Luis Ramon Arrevillagas Nezer, of Urmston, Manchester, were married at St Mary and St John's Church, Hardraw, Hawes, North Yorkshire. The bride is the elder daughter of Jennifer and Allan Tennant Fawcett, of Pry House, Hawes

Picture: Mike Coles Photography, Bedale



Darroch Edward Bagshaw, of Sutton Coldfield, the son of Dr Ian and Victoria Bagshaw, of The Green, Hurworth, Darlington, and Lynsey Margaret Brown, of Glasgow, were married at St Quivox Church, Prestwick, Scotland

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Nicola Strickland and Mark Jai McMullan, of Darlington, were married at Blackwell Grange, Darlington Picture: Stan Seaton



Joanne Magennis and Terry Fawcett, of Hartlepool, who were married at Parkmore Hotel, Eaglescliffe, near Stockton

Picture: Neesams Professional Photography



Michelle Pearce, of Darlington, and Nigel David Sharp of Stockton, were married at St Mark and St Paul's Church, Darlington



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BLACK and bling ball



Jo Living, Jen Barker, June Thornhill, Annie Jackson, Liz Fallows, Patricia Knox, Amanda Firth and Liz Bostock (organising committee)

THE second Black and Bling Ball was held at Bedale Hall to raise funds for Yorkshire Cancer Research.

The event was organised by the charity's Vale committee, which was delighted that £7,000 was raised – considerably more than last year – through the auction, raffle and ticket sales.

The main sponsor for the event was George F White, the long-established firm of chartered surveyors in the town. Other sponsors include Richmond Foods, Playford Ros, The Yorkshire Party Company, Hill Cross Furniture and Chocca.

Other local businesses donated auction prizes from a day's go-karting to a stunt driving course. The auction was conducted by Andrew Fallows, of Carter Jonas.

Yorkshire Cancer Research funds research by awarding grants to scientists working in universities and their associated teaching hospitals throughout Yorkshire, in Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Sheffield and York.



From left, Jason and Jo Living, Andrew and Sue Frances and John Bennett and Sarah Pirie



Left, Richard and Lucy Derbyshire and Phillip and Louise Southall



Right, Patricia and Stephen Knox



Above, Mike and Annabel Spink, June and Peter Barker, Sarah and James White, and Richard Barker



Right, Martine Elliot and Mark Chapman



Above, Gill and Colin Bartrum, Annie and Chris Jackson, and Alice and John Challis

Left, Janet and Roger Greensit



Above, Paul Chapman, Angelica Bell, Liz and Nigel Phillips, Bea Eastwood and Penny O'Kelly



Blair Radford, Annie and Dan Wilkinson and Isabel Radford

Above, Andrew Fife, Rosie Thornhill, James Chapman and Emma and Miles Thornhill



Left, Elaine and Robert Macgregor



Above, Maree and Ian Long



Left, Angela and Colin Wilson



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Arthur and Inga Walker with Peggy Robinson and Ken Walton



Bill Peacock and Eileen Midgley



Barry Sudron and Sheila Ross

Cricket club DINNER

A CRICKET club raised £250 at its 61st annual dinner dance.

Great Ayton Cricket and Football Club held the event at the Mar-ton Hotel and Country Club, in Middlesbrough.

It was attended by 130 guests who enjoyed a four-course meal with traditional fare that included prawn cocktail, roast beef and York-shire pudding and raspberry meringue. Music was provided by the five-piece Terry Hetherington Band.

Arthur Walker, club president, said: "The food was excellent and the band was even better, so it was a very good night."

Mr Walker said the money raised from the evening would be ploughed back into the club, which has about 200 members.

The club has three senior teams as well as teams for all junior age groups. Last year its team came first in the North Yorkshire and South Durham League.



Peter and Audrey Ramsden with Marie and Patrick Denny



Barry and Kath Stewart with Patricia and William Jeffery



Pat and Louise Cook, and Rita, Gary and Michelle Readman



Above, Norman and Shirley Thurlow with Julie and Michael Powell



Guests including Timothy and Petula Hall, Mick and Margaret Turner, Rob and Chris Stokele, Mike and Diane Beefort, Kay and Stephen Deighton, Kevin and Valerie Lunn



Left, Phil and Lesley Readman



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From left, Nick and Charlotte Wilson, Paula Allen and Carol Cronin



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Red Cross LUNCH

THE County Durham and Teesside Branch of the British Red Cross chose Whitworth Hall Country Park Hotel as the venue for its eighth annual lunch.

More than 90 guests attended the event and were given an official welcome by Jean Slater, chairwoman of the branch's Volunteers Council. The branch holds a series of events throughout the year, including concerts over the winter at the Durham Gala Theatre.

The annual lunch is one of its most popular occasions and this year the speaker was author John Grundy, whose series Grundy's Northern Pride is being screened on Tyne Tees Television.

A vote of thanks to the speaker was proposed by the president of the County Durham and Teesside branch, Geoffrey Berriman.

A spokesman for the branch said: "The lunch was a most successful event."



Judi Evans, speaker John Grundy and Bill Gelson



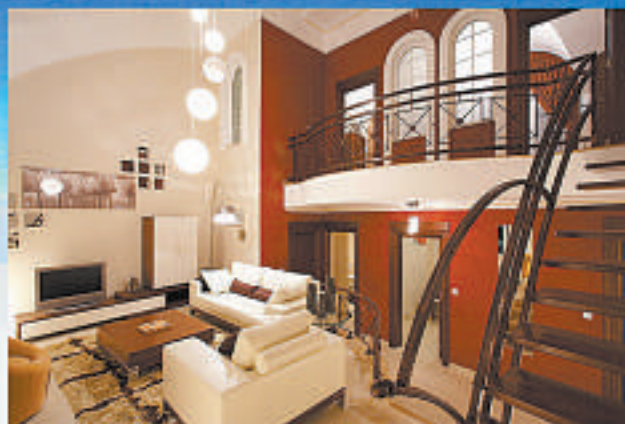
Joan McElroy, Margaret Whitfield and Mary Ripley

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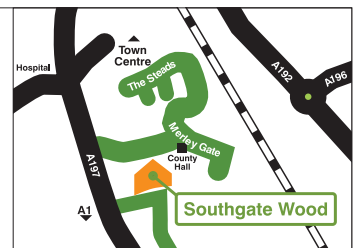
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THEATRE



ICELANDIC sporting champion Magnus Scheving (pronounced Skeving) couldn't find a TV programme to promote fitness for children, so he wrote one himself. He penned *LazyTown* and changed the world by becoming the personal trainer to millions of children as the brightly blue and white coloured superhero Sportacus, who constantly saves the day.

The BBC and Nick Jr show the series in the UK and it's beamed across 169 other countries. Now there's a stage tour based on the TV show, which will be visiting York's Grand Opera House and Newcastle's Theatre Royal this month and Sunderland Empire Theatre in August.

Scheving personally recruited a UK version of his "slightly above average superhero", who lives in an airship, to thwart villain Robbie Rotton's schemes to trick *LazyTown*'s residents into a couch potato coma. Although *LazyTown* is supposedly aimed at the nine and unders, there are teenagers who still follow the adventures of Sportacus... and parents finally have a superhero who is on their side.

■ **LazyTown is at York's Grand Opera House on May 14, box office 0870-606-3595; Newcastle Theatre Royal on May 16-18, box office 08701-283-607; and Sunderland Empire Theatre on August 13-16, box office 0844-847-2499**

Viv Hardwick

Hot tickets and hot reads for the month

EXHIBITION

NORTH EAST ART EXPO 08

The Art Work Galleries, Stepney Bank, Ouseburn, Newcastle

AFTER the hugely successful North East Art Expo 07, the Expo is to return and this time the organisers promise it will be bigger, better and bolder than before. Last year's weekend showcased work from more than 50 artists – including the region's best painters, jewellery makers, photographers, ceramicists, printers and furniture makers –, to more than 4,500 visitors and 2008 will follow a similar format. This time the event will be taking place at Ouseburn – in the heart of Newcastle's cultural quarter – at The Art Works Galleries, Stepney Bank, and will run from Friday, May 30 to Sunday, June 1.

Spokesman Dan Rose says: "There is so much talent in the region and this is the perfect opportunity for artists to demonstrate their talent and for the public to come and meet them."

■ Further information on info@northeast-artexpo.com or call 07899-731-239

BOOKS

MEMENTO MORI:

Churches and Churchyards of England. A Personal Selection
Simon Marsden (English Heritage, \$25)

AT first sight one cannot but be struck by the startlingly lifelike appearance of the effigy. Lying in quiet repose, the sculpture in the purest of white marble is perfectly placed to absorb the soft glow of the winter sun. The features of the 1st Duke of Cleveland are picked out in sharp relief. William Harry Vane, who succeeded his father as 3rd Earl of Darlington before going on to greater things, makes as lasting an impression in death as he did in life.

Photographer Simon Marsden has captured the table monument in St Mary's Church, Staindrop, near Darlington – *see below* – in all its glory in this new book. The churchyards and memorials portrayed in this stunning work are more than just a reminder of the certainty of death; they are places of historic and artistic importance at the heart of villages towns and cities across the UK. Marsden's evocative images of simple gravestones, richly carved tombs and glowing stained glass windows have captured the essence of part of our national heritage.

Other photographs from the North-East include an atmospheric depiction of a cross on the North York Moors, the Causeway of Holy Island, Lindisfarne, St Mary's churchyard in Whitby, North Yorkshire, and St Aiden's churchyard, Thockrington, Northumberland. The book is accompanied by the photographer's choice of historic fact, anecdote, prose and poetry. A publication offering page-turning pleasure at every reading.

Gavin Engelbrecht





Living My North

Actor Hugo Speer was born and raised in Harrogate, returning last year from London to live in a nearby village. He made his name as Guy, one of the stripping steelworkers in the hit film *The Full Monty*. His TV work includes roles in *Hearts And Bones*, *Sorted* and *Bleak House*. His latest stage part is playing Animal Farm and 1984 writer George Orwell in the new play, *Year Of The Rat*, at West Yorkshire Playhouse, in Leeds. He talks to **STEVE PRATT**

Left, Hugo Speer and, right, some of his Northern favourites, from top, Fountains Abbey, the North York Moors and a red kite at Harewood



My favourite view

The one from my living room window, because I can lie on my sofa next to the fire and look out over the fields and hills and trees.

My favourite walk

Around Swinsty Reservoir (to the north of Otley, in the Washburn Valley). I walk along the paths and sit and look out over the water. I've not so much rediscovered it since moving back, I just go back a bit more regularly now. When I get time I like to go walking on the North York Moors.

My favourite pub/club

The Blues Bar (Montpellier Parade, Harrogate) where I've been going for 20 years. It has a good reputation for live music five or six times a week. It's a place I've gone to since I was 19. It hasn't really changed, you walk in and there are no big surprises. They have jam nights and anyone can bring a guitar. I do play there, although I have a saxophone and guitar at home. I had to play the saxophone for the film *Swing*. I learnt as much as I could in a short space of time from Clarence Clemons, who was with Bruce Springsteen's *E Street Band* and played my cellmate in the film. I also like the Coach and Horses and The Old Bell pubs.

My favourite day out

On a day out coming up, I'm going to have falconry training at a Yorkshire centre. It was a Christmas present from my mother. I hope to learn how to have a bird land on my arm. I've always been interested in birds of prey. We have kestrels where I live and a few red kites released around Harewood. I see them as I drive into the theatre in Leeds, stop the car and get out to have a look.

My favourite landmark

Fountains Abbey, with its beautifully tended gardens. The place is steeped in history.

What I like most about the North

The countryside, which is beautiful and peaceful, and the air's so fresh. You notice coming back after 15 years in London. And the people are very friendly and generous in spirit, which I like.

Hugo Speer with Martine McCutcheon in the ITV1 series *Echo Beach*



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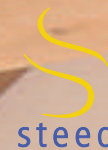
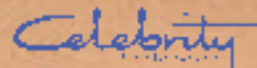
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