

The Northern Echo

**ne**

The lifestyle magazine  
for the North-East

DECEMBER 2006

*Passionate* about life

north east  
england

**GREAT  
GIFTS GUIDE**

**DUNCAN  
BANNATYNE**

**What I want for Christmas**

**BEAUTY**

**Pucker up for party time**

LIFESTYLE FASHION TRAVEL SHOPPING GARDENING

style & comfort

The Best Place to Buy Your New Fireplace

Combining Classical with Contemporary

All you need to create Warmth and Ambiance




Full Combi and Central Heating Systems are Available

Come and browse over our 100 fire displays on 2 superb showroom floors

Free Home Consultations



**FIREPLACE**  
warehouse

16 Chester Street, Bishop Auckland  
Telephone: 01388 600008

CORGI REGISTERED  
FITTING SERVICE AVAILABLE

*That Special Occasion*  
*Exclusive Ladies Fashion*

Mrs Lynne Elwin  
Proprietor

168 York Road, Hartlepool, TS26 9DT  
Tel/Fax 01429 223 748

Lynne@ThatSpecialOccasion.me.uk  
www.thatpecialoccasion.me.uk

**Award  
Winning  
Salon**

**TG'S**

4 Tower Street 19 Church Street Hartlepool  
Telephone 01429 223932

nne  
contents



15

4

12

**MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE!**

<p><b>nne</b> magazine is produced by The Northern Echo/ Newsquest Ltd., a Gannett Company, Priestgate, Darlington DL1 1NF (01325) 381313</p> <p><b>ADVERTISING</b> Gail Hunter (01325) 505 239 gail.hunter @nne.co.uk Chris Kay (0191) 374 0298 chris.kay @nne.co.uk</p> <p><b>EDITORIAL</b> Jenny Needham (01325) 505082 jenny.needham @nne.co.uk</p>	<p>3 SHARON GRIFFITHS Let's return to a simpler Christmas</p> <p>4 CHILDREN'S CHOICE Toys to bring joy</p> <p>5 WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS Pat Copeland</p> <p>6 CHEAP TREATS Gifts for under a tenner</p> <p>8 LUXURY GOODS Wrapping up the bank busters</p> <p>10 GARDENING Roots of the Christmas tree</p> <p>11 WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS Duncan Bannatyne</p> <p>12 CELEBRITY SIX The stars at Christmas</p>	<p>14 MY STYLE The Reverend Andy Nicholson</p> <p>15 BEAUTY Personalised luxuries</p> <p>18 GADGET MAN Santa's little presents!</p> <p>19 BEAUTY Pucker up for the party</p> <p>20 LEISURE To the Manor borne</p> <p>21 MOTORING The car that steers itself</p>
---	--	---





## sharon griffiths

‘If chicken actually tasted of chicken, then you wouldn’t need the sauce, would you?’

**S**O ARE you ready for Christmas then? Sitting smugly with a neat pile of exquisitely wrapped presents, cards posted, cake tins stocked, freezer full?

Or maybe you’re just like the rest of us...

If so, then don’t panic, please don’t panic.

The trouble is that once the roller-coaster of Christmas preparations starts – sometime just before August Bank Holiday – it’s very difficult to stop and actually think what you’re doing. You get swept up in the busy-ness of it all. As pipes and drums were meant to get armies all fired up and in the mood for battle, so constant TV adverts with relentless plinky plonky carols, and lots of ho, ho, ho, work their way into your blood and brain and get you wired up to go out and fling money around.

All those magazine adverts pretending to show you how to take the stress out of Christmas have the completely opposite effect. By their very existence, they end up making you even more stressed, thinking you should be doing something, anything, to get ready.

And as for those features that tell you how easy it is to make your own decorations/cards/gifts/crackers/wrapping paper, well, I don’t even bother to read them. Life’s too short.

The trouble is that it’s all got so complicated. We have too much choice.

Think Christmas cake. It used to be easy. Granny made her own on Stir Up Sunday and that was the end of it. My mother used to make her mince pies while listening to the carols from King’s College on Christmas Eve. Quite restful really. Now we are faced with traditional Christmas cakes, Italian, German, Australian, French cakes. Christmas puddings come with all sorts of added extras to make them more interesting, more exciting. And as for mince pies...

Do you want them white, wholemeal or organic? Basic, economy or luxury? With brandy, rum or sherry? Star-shaped, lidded, shallow or deep? Sugar-dusted, low fat, vegetarian, gluten-free?

Aaarrgghhh!

But this year, I have stepped off the roller-coaster. It helps that we are in that in-between stage. The grannies, bless them, have gone. The boys are grown up and though they still get stockings full of surprises, they also give me lists. So much simpler. Even my niece’s children are at the stage when they would rather have the money. And we are, not yet, anywhere near grandchildren.

So I have time to stop and think. And the solution came to me in a flash while I was eating a ham sandwich.

I had bought a piece of ham from the farmers’ market and boiled it for Sunday lunch. It was proper dry cured ham, packed full of flavour, not water, and there was just enough left for my Monday lunch sandwich.

It was so good I didn’t even think about putting mustard on it. It didn’t need it.

And that’s the trouble with all those aisles groaning with glitzy Christmas food. All the cakes the pies, the meats, the stuffings, the creams and biscuits all have to get much more complicated and exotic, because they don’t actually taste of very much. With no real flavour of their own, they need something to spice them up, to make them interesting.

Unlike my ham sandwich which needed absolutely nothing at all.

If you have nice bread, you don’t need lots of stuff to spread on it to make it taste good. If you have really good meat, you don’t need ten lots of increasingly peculiar stuffings to tickle the taste-buds. Supermarkets have row upon row of jars of sauces to give food flavour. But if chicken actually tasted of chicken, then you wouldn’t need the sauce, would you?

Oh dear, I expect there’s a whole generation that probably doesn’t even know how chicken is meant to taste.

Even party food is frequently a disappointment. True, there are some delicious nibbles, but there are also a lot that are just overpriced wedges of rather chewy pastry which cost a fortune and taste quite boring – all they do is to add to that seasonal sensation of indigestion.

So forget them. Keep it simple. See what happens. This year, I shall not be flinging my money on so many of those tempting extras that we neither need nor want nor really enjoy. Instead, I shall buy the very best I can of the basics – the turkey, ham, sausages, cake, pudding and vegetables, all will be of the finest quality, which usually means from local shops and farmers’ markets – not the supermarkets.

The cost will be eye-watering. Quality doesn’t come cheap. But it will surely work out a great deal cheaper than buying lots of expensive frills and fancies in a desperate attempt to turn cheap flavourless rubbish into a tasty meal.

It will cost me no more in the end and it will certainly be a great deal simpler. Combined with my slimmed down present list, it should also mean that this Christmas, I might even have a bit of spare time.

But enough to make my own wrapping paper? Definitely not.

### LIGHTING UP



If you want the fun of a tree this Christmas, *without* having to pick up all those needles, why not go for a plug-in version? You can brighten up the dark nights of the festive season in a less traditional way with the orange table lamp, above left, £17.95 from [www.firebox.com](http://www.firebox.com), or the fibre optic tree, left, £9.95 from [www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com). If the children want to join in the fun there’s the Gingerbread Tree Kit, above, £12 from John Lewis, though we can’t guarantee they won’t just scoff the lot...

NE window shopping

### SANTA PAWS

Front page picture and right: dog outfits and gifts from the Pets at Home winter collection. To find your nearest Pets at Home store visit [www.petsathome.com](http://www.petsathome.com) or call 0800-328-8255



**blhairdressing.co.uk**  
we are an Equal Opportunities Training Organisation



We are the largest hairdressing training organisation in the North East and currently have around 500 apprentices learning in our training centres. We are looking to recruit **16-19 year olds** who are interested in hairdressing or are already working as a hairdresser

**Complete a City and Guilds Qualification in Hairdressing whilst working in a salon**

**All learners are employed by salons and are paid at least £80 a week**

For further information, contact your local training centre

**Darlington: 01325 480 665**

or apply online at [www.blhairdressing.co.uk](http://www.blhairdressing.co.uk)

Let the **LIGHT** into your home,  
and **ENJOY SUMMER**  
all year round...

**Bespoke Sunrooms** design and build a room you can enjoy all year round. Choose a tiled or slate roof to match your house.

Quality **Velux** roof windows installed, all windows are PVCU with K-GLASS fitted, PVCU French doors with toughened glass.

All work is carried out to current regulations, professional craftsmen and builders are always used. Recognised certificate on completion. All works **Council Inspected**.



**VELUX**  
INSTALLED

FOR FREE ESTIMATES AND ADVICE CALL IAN ON:

(01325) 252740  
Or 07971 237492

**BESPOKE  
SUNROOMS**

**FOR ALL YOUR  
COMPUTER NEEDS**

- UPGRADES
- REPAIRS
- GAMING
- PC'S
- LAPTOPS
- PART EXCHANGE

24 Skinner Street  
Stockton on Tees

**Fantasy  
Computers**

T: 01642 601160 / 678525

Open Mon - Sat 9am - 6pm

**Ramside  
GOLF CLUB**

**Golf Lessons For  
Christmas**

*Why not come and fine tune your swing this winter with our team of PGA professionals*

**Great Christmas  
Presents Available**

*in our fully stocked golf shop. We have all brands and extensive range of hardware*

**Winter Golf Special**

Tea, coffee & bacon roll, 18 holes, 1 course meal  
**£27.50**  
*based on 8 or more golfers*

Why not come and enjoy our fabulous 19th Hole Restaurant this Christmas  
*Please call to book a table*

Carrville, Durham, DH1 1TD  
T. 0191 386 9514  
F. 0191 386 9519

www.ramsidehallhotel.co.uk

**Santa says...**

**homecare**  
There's nowhere quite like it for...



**appliances**



**bathrooms**



**fireplaces**



**heating**

**homecare**

**café**

Helping you improve your home

Valley Street, Darlington. Tel: 01325 352224

Opening Times: Monday-Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Saturday 9.00am to 5.00pm. Closed Bank Holidays.

Shop on-line at www.homecaresupplies.co.uk

www.homecaresupplies.co.uk www.homecaresupplies.co.uk

Huge choice. Helpful advice. Constant low prices. Free delivery



**N**O idea why, but a little green man seems to have captured the attention of colleagues. Hair-ee Magno-Man is very silly, but he's also flexible, tactile and a lot of fun. Standing less than 10cms in height, they have bendable arms and legs and their magnetic hands and feet mean they are attracted to anything metal... and each other. You can style their hair, use them as a metal detector to seek out any coins at the bottom of mum's handbag or stick them together to form a magno bling necklace. Not traditional, we know, but you can even hang him on the Christmas tree. Magno-Man comes in a range of colours, with different facial expressions and costs £1.99, or from £4.99 for a triple pack. From Ottakar's, Toymaster, Border Books and other stores nationwide.

**Toys to  
bring joy**

*They're making a list,  
they're checking it twice,  
they're gonna find out  
what's naughty and nice.*

**Y**ES, the children know exactly which toys are going on their wish list this Christmas. And to help you get your children's pressies all wrapped up this Christmas, we've found this year's best toys with some inside help from the industry experts at Hamleys.

**'IT' TOYS**

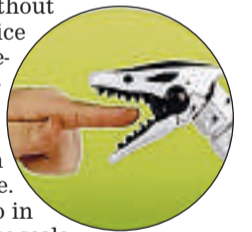
LAST year, things got creative, when the fabric and velcro play tiles called creAtiles won their place as best toy. In 2004, things got technical and stockings were full of electronic toys, with the Robosapien robot coming up trumps in most toy awards. For any parent who didn't manage to beat the competition and track down these toys - fear not, there's still a chance this year.

**FOR THE BOYS**

IF you're shopping for boys, you'll be spoilt for

choice with sophisticated, techno-savvy presents. The geniuses at Lego Technic have created an amazing kit that allows you to build and design your own unique robot from Lego bricks. At £179.99, the Lego Mindstorms NXT isn't the price of a stocking filler, but the robot is programmable via a PC or a Mac, and you can even control your robot by Bluetooth from a mobile phone.

Any self-proclaimed Dr Who fan's Christmas will be incomplete without the Cyberman Voice Changer helmet, with realistic weapon sound effects. And geeks will also be in their element with the latest toy from the Robosapien range. The Roboreptile is also in the upper end of the price scale at £89.99, but you will be amazed by its life-like rapid movements - including running on two legs. Those looking for more economical toys don't have to be left out of the cyber craze either. You can purchase the Playskool Robosapien Junior for £9.99.



**FOR THE GIRLS**

FOR girls' toys, manufacturers have avoided the techno approach and gone for what we all know girls love - dolls and teddies - with a twist.

Instead of a generic teddy bear, Spinmaster have created a bear-making factory called The Lil Luvables Fluffy Factory, £24.99. Girls will love designing and making their very own teddy bears. The factory is operated by a crank handle that stuffs bearskins and makes them into cuddly teddies that you can dress up to your own tastes.

The dolls with a passion for fashion have also undergone a





**LITTLE ONES**

YOUNGER children haven't been forgotten this year: the Turbo Tail Tigger, £29.99, does exactly what Tigger is famous for – he bounces. There's also the Superbike, £89.99, a wooden ride-on toy designed to look just like a racing motorcycle. Not just great fun, it also helps children learn basic balance and cycling skills.

**HAMLEYS TOP FIVE TOYS FOR 2006**

1. Brain Drain £16.99
2. Superbike £89.99
3. Lego Mindstorm NXT £179.99
4. Safari Hide and Seek £8
5. Cranium Family Fun Edition £24.99

**ON A BUDGET**

FOR toys on a budget, you'll want to add the Safari Hide and Seek, £8, to your shopping list. This interesting travel puzzle will keep kids and adults entertained for hours as they're challenged by different puzzles on each page. And with 3,072 possible combinations per page and only one solution, you won't be able to put this toy down.

If you're looking for a toy that will last a little longer than a few hours, look no further than the Cranium Family Fun Edition, £24.99. The game features hilarious team activities from sculpting and building to performing silly stunts. More family fun can be had with the Brain Drain, £16.99. To win the fast-paced game, you need to solve the mind-bending riddles and stop your monster from creeping forwards into the clutches of the Brain Drain.



makeover this Christmas – the Bratz Forever Diamondz dolls come complete with a real diamond pendant, keychain or bracelet for you to wear, and are only £24.99 each. We all know diamonds are a girl's best friend and now the Bratz dolls will too.

This Christmas will see the final of the X-Factor, with a new set of singing sensations. For the Will Young wannabes, Fisher-Price has launched a karaoke machine called the Star Station Entertainment System, £64.99. Kids can sing their favourite songs with a cordless microphone, and see themselves on the TV, making them the star of their own show.

**WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS**

Pat Copeland, 60, runs the designer clothing store Joseph M on Darlington's prestigious Grange Road

**Where will you be spending Christmas/who with?**  
Always at home with my family.

**What's on your gift wish list?**  
I would like a Balenciaga purse.

**What's the best Christmas present you've ever had?**  
I tend to be a giver, not a receiver, but I've had some 'wow' things in my time. As I love the universe, my husband bought me a fantastic telescope to look at the stars.

**If money were no object, what would you like?**  
Obviously a Lamborghini.

**PAT COPELAND:** prefers giving to receiving



**Visiting York?**

Then take the fast, easy way into the heart of York



**RAWCLIFFE BAR**  
Just Off A19 North of York

- ★ Frequent service every 10 mins
- ★ 7 days a week
- ★ Free car parking
- ★ Low fares



**Park & Ride Helpline**  
**(01904) 883000**  
**or 883990**

### The Exclusive Beauty Experience



Why not treat your partner, friend or that someone special to a Gift Voucher from The Beauty Room Health & Beauty Spa - the perfect gift for Christmas, Birthdays or any special occasion. Choose from:

- A SPA DAY RITUAL PACKAGE • INDIVIDUAL TREATMENTS
- A SPA DAY RITUAL PACKAGE WITH OVERNIGHT STAY
- GIFT WRAPPED PRODUCTS • A MONETARY VOUCHER (MINIMUM £10)

The voucher is stylishly presented and will be sent, along with a copy of our colour brochure, to an address of your choice. Treat yourself or your loved one to the perfect gift for Christmas with one of our pamper packages....

**Spa Taster Day... £80**  
Includes 2 treatments, light lunch, full use of facilities.

**Overnight Spa Package**  
Special Offer to include overnight stay with bed, breakfast, light lunch & evening meal, only... **£145**

**Evening Spa... £35**  
The perfect place to unwind on your own after a stressful day or meet with friends. Enjoy a treatment of your choice, full use of facilities and refreshments from 6pm-9pm. Gift Vouchers are also available to purchase and make a perfect gift for someone special.

**Winners of Darphin Best Northern Day Spa**

To experience inner relaxation telephone **The Beauty Room Spa**  
Hall Garth Hotel, Darlington: 01325 307999 • Manor House Hotel, West Auckland: 01388 833323



The Farm Shop aims to provide food at the highest quality which is natural and is locally produced as possible, Turkeys, Beef, Lamb, Pork, Game, Buffalo and Venison.

Vegetable boxes to order for Christmas (not delivered).

A range of Christmas fayre for people with specialist dietary requirements. Just give us the details of what you need and we'll do our best to help.

See us at Stokesley, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Sedgfield and Nature World Farmers' Market each month.

- Natural
- Organic Produce
- Deliciously Different

Treat yourself to the natural, home-made alternative this Christmas

*You can really taste the difference*



**LARBERRY PASTURES**  
LONG NEWTON STOCKTON-ON-TEES  
TEL: 01642 583823  
FAX: 01642 582249  
Email: larberry@farmersweekly.net

**OPEN Monday to Saturday 10-5pm; Sunday 10-4pm**



## Dickensian Festival



**AT LIGHTWATER VALLEY**

**A FESTIVAL FOR ALL THE FAMILY THIS CHRISTMAS**

**Thursday 30th November until Sunday 3rd December 2006 - 10am 'til 6pm every day**  
**FREE ENTRY, FREE PARKING**

Over 50 traditional market stalls to choose from. Plus 30,000 sq ft of undercover shopping.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 0870 458 0050

Lightwater Country Shopping Village, North Stainley, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3HT  
(Follow the signs for Lightwater Valley)  
[www.lightwatershopping.co.uk](http://www.lightwatershopping.co.uk)

SUZANNA BAIN tracks down some bargain buys so you can avoid breaking the bank this Christmas



**MAGIC:** Ladybird's White Fairy Dress Up

# Treats for under a tenner

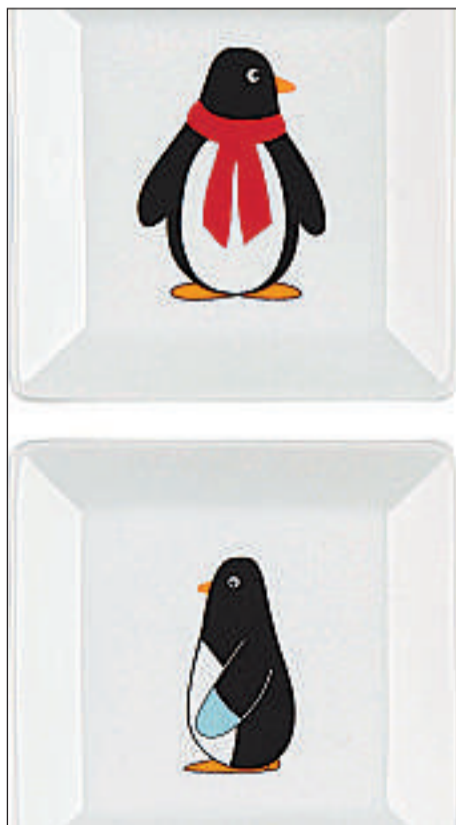
**D**EPARTMENT stores and high street shops are bursting at the seams with fabulous stocking fillers and wallet-friendly gift solutions. And best of all, whether you're short of cash or just a miserly old Scrooge, there are plenty of fabulous gift ideas at incredibly reasonable prices, meaning that friends and family will be none the wiser to your skinflint ways.

Head to House of Fraser for an Aladdin's cave of stylish delights, like the cutesie Chrome 'Bling' Pig Money Box (£6) and the Warm Mince Pie Candle Tin (£5), also available in Cranberry and Christmas Spice. Su-

doku addicts will love the Sudokube, while competitive types will score big with the Desktop Basket Ball or Bowling kit, for just £5 each. And digging for compliments is a doddle with House of Fraser's Trowel and Fork Set (£6), while Jamie Oliver's Alphabake Cook Book and Cutters (£7.99) are sure to go down a treat with younger members of the family.

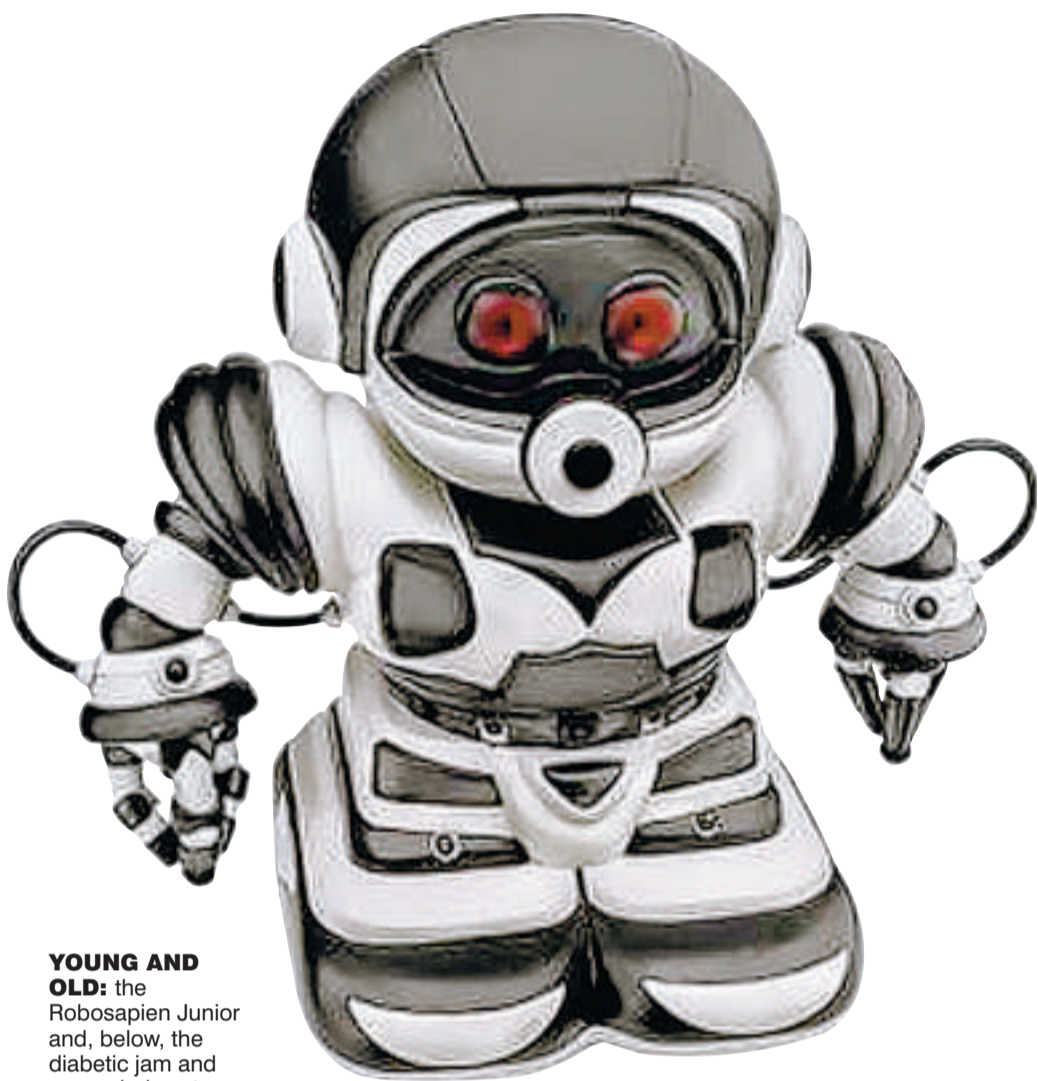
If you're popping to Morrisons for food shopping, take a look at their gift offerings. A perfect little stocking filler to be found in the bakery aisle is the Rudolph Gingerbread, just 99p for two. Staying on a foodie theme is the range of Embossed Santa Design Crockery, prices for which start at just £1.99. Choose from mugs, bowls, plates and even napkin rings. Or maybe the kids would love to snuggle down with the adorable Wallace Bear or Lenny dog? You'll lap up the price as well, at just £4.99.

It's the same at Asda; quality gifts that you can throw in the trolley when you're doing a quick dash round for other things. Take their Cava, for example. At just £3.71, it's the perfect pressie for any party host. For something a little racier, pick up the Pink Boa (white wine in a gift bag) for £5, or the Cockburns Special Reserve Port and Dominos Set, for a



**CUTE LOOT:** penguin square dishes and cookie-shaped bath bombs





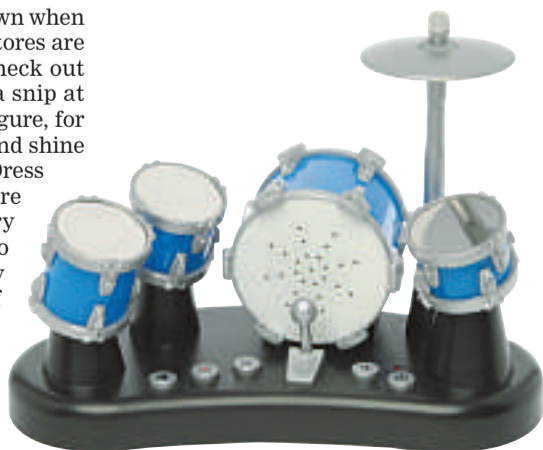
**YOUNG AND OLD:** the Robosapien Junior and, below, the diabetic jam and marmalade set



mere £3. Younger nearest and dearest will adore the Mr Potato Head Set, just £4.97, while the stylish Tuscany Bath Tin (£5), which includes a body polisher and aloe vera bath soak, is an ideal offering for anyone who needs to spend time unwinding.

Woolworths never lets shoppers down when Christmas comes around and their stores are overflowing with great gift ideas. Check out the Playskool Robosapien Junior – a snip at just £9.99 – and the Dr Who action figure, for £6.99. Little princesses will sparkle and shine in the lovely Ladybird White Fairy Dress Up (£8). For something a little more practical, seek out the Ladybird Fairy PJs (from £8), which are guaranteed to make her actually want to get ready for bed. Anyone with a quirky sense of humour is sure to appreciate the Finger Drums Kit (£9.99), while drinks aficionados will appreciate a help-

**YOU GOT RHYTHM:** have fun with finger drums



ing hand in cracking open their favourite tipple, with the Deluxe Bottle Opener (£10).

If you're lucky enough to have a John Lewis nearby, then get over there asap. Not only do they cater for all the family, they also stock interesting pressies that are a little out of the ordinary. Get a set of two monochrome, dome-shaped pomanders for just £10 – an ideal gift for men and women – or track down the gorgeous Handmade Blue Glass Wine Top, for £8.50. The colourful Penguin Square Dishes will cost you just £7.50 for a set of four and are sure to be a smashing hit with hosts and hostesses who like to add a touch of seasonal humour to proceedings.

Finally, if you're after a one-stop shop for bargain pressies, high street favourite Boots is the place to be. Not only are their shelves stacked to the hilt with all the usual sumptuous smellies and cosmetics – like the bargain-tastic Mediterranean Travel Selection (£5), the Fresh! Fortune Cookie-Shaped Bathtime Bombs (£5) and the glitzy gold No7 Compact Mirror (£6) – they're also packed to the gunnels with games, foods and drinks. Friends with special dietary requirements will appreciate the Delicious Diabetic Jam and Marmalade Set (£10), for example, while those with a sweet tooth will relish the Delicious Banana Split Set (£10). And to hit the bargain bullseye right between the eyes? It has to be the Simpsons Inflatable Dartboard Gift Set, at a spot-on £8.

## WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

**CLAIRE** Royle makes a wide range of personalised gifts for children of all ages. The 29-year-old lives with her husband and baby daughter in Whorlton, Co Durham. For Christmas she has pretty quilted Christmas stockings for £15 and quirky Danish santas for £16.50. Personalised supersoft towels cost from £26 and a hooded baby towel, velour one side, towelling the other and edged in gingham, costs £22. Claire Royle Applique is on 07917-461046, visit [www.claireroyle.co.uk](http://www.claireroyle.co.uk) or email [info@claireroyle.co.uk](mailto:info@claireroyle.co.uk)



and a new Mulberry handbag and some long black suede boots with a very cute kitten heel.

### What's the best Christmas present you've ever had?

Camilla – she was a Christmas baby. And a pair of Timberland walking boots from my husband.

### Where will you be spending Christmas?

I will be spending Christmas Day with my husband Jeremy and my daughter Camilla in North Northumberland by the coast. I really love walking off a huge Christmas Day lunch on Bamburgh beach.

### What's on your gift wish list?

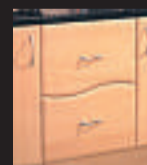
Finding our new home and lots of goodies to fill it with plus buying Camilla the most beautiful red gingham and spot single bed quilt – I have had my eye on it for a little while now. Oh,

### If money were no object, what would you like?

I would love a month long skiing holiday in France with a huge group of friends.



Leave it to us this Christmas



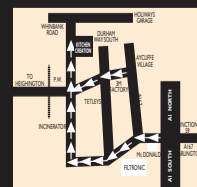
...because we pride ourselves on quality and reliability, we're still going strong after 20 years and 30,000 installations!

**Kitchen & Bedroom Creation**

Unit B1, Whinbank Park, Whinbank Road, Newton Aycliffe.  
Ring sales hotline for immediate appointment. Tel: 01325 319022

Open 7 days a week Mon - Fri 10am-5pm  
Saturday 9.30am - 4pm Sunday 11am - 3pm

[www.kitchencreation.co.uk](http://www.kitchencreation.co.uk)





**TOP-OF-THE-RANGE:** goodies from the Durham Hamper company

LISA THIEL reaches for the stars and discovers some luxury goods that will be out of reach for mere mortals – and other luxuries we might be able to afford



**SUPERCAR:** the Audi R8

**S**O there you are, escaping the British winter by taking a trip to your Caribbean villa, relaxing by your enormous swimming pool while the butler brings you another drink – but you're still worried. All your spectacularly rich friends are coming for Christmas and like you, they own the best things money can buy. Just what festive presents can you give to the person who has everything?

#### EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY

FOR greedy gourmets, head to Fortnum and Mason and get them a hamper full of high-end food and wine. The Mayfair Hamper, £250, includes sea trout, foie gras and vintage Champagne. Wine lovers might appreciate The Case of Icons, £750, which contains six bottles of classic vintages.

Treat your Champagne connoisseur friends to a Krug trunk, £29,000 from Harrods. The sumptuous red calfskin bottle-storage units include three bottles of Krug Grand Cuvee champagne, a personal monogram and a lid that turns into a handy serving table – but they're only making 30, so get your order in quickly.

Connoisseurs who lead more ordinary lives might like to order the Luxury Hamper from [www.durhamhampers.co.uk](http://www.durhamhampers.co.uk) instead. A snip at just £99.76, it contains gourmet goodies such as Tricklements Chilli Jam and Elizabeth Smedley Red Onion Marmalade.

#### GLAMOROUS GEMS

FOR this season's best bling, drop in to Boodle and Dunthorne to get your hands on their quality cocktail rings. Go for the brilliant 65-carat aquamarine Boogie-Woogie ring, a snip at £28,500, or push the boat out for the emerald and diamond-encrusted Spaghetti ring for £40,000. For something a little subtler, the elegant white gold-and-diamond Chopard Snowflakes watch is a snip at £8,685.



## Wrapping up the bank-busters



Closer to home, E De Wastney jewellers in Barkers Arcade, Northallerton, have some bling that's less expensive but no less beautiful. Their Leif collection, for example, has some stunning and highly individual pieces of fine contemporary jewellery in gold and platinum together with the finest hand-picked selection of collection quality diamonds, opals, sapphires, rubies, emeralds and other precious stones. Prices from £300. More information on [www.e-dewastney.co.uk](http://www.e-dewastney.co.uk).

#### SUMPTUOUS SCENT

CLIVE Christian's ultra-exclusive scents use only the finest ingredients to create perfumes they believe are the best in the world – with price tags to match. The No 1 Perfume was designed to be the world's most expensive scent – and at £1,130 for 30ml, it seems to have achieved its goal. The costly blend includes Mexican vanilla, cedarwood and vetiver – but don't worry, there's a women's

'spray' edition available, which is a snip at £355.

If you want something to make you irresistible at New Year's parties, Christian's X Perfume, £400 for 30ml or £165 for a 50ml spray, is the ultimate seduction fragrance, with notes of spicy orris, cardamom, pimento, ginger and cinnamon balanced out by romantic jasmine. Both scents are available at Fortnum and Mason.

#### COSTLY CARS

THERE'S always room for one more high-end model in a well-stocked garage. Audi have produced their first-ever supercar, the R8, which has an eye-watering top speed of 187mph and a hefty price tag of £76,000 to match.

The Porsche 911 Targa 4, £70,320, updates the classic version of the car by having a glass canopy instead of a cabriolet roof – so rich motorists can admire the scenery and enjoy the sun without worrying about the supermodel girlfriend's hair getting messed up.

#### HIGH-ROLLING HOLIDAYS

WHEN you've got the money to go anywhere, even a private island's passe, so splash out and send your friends on the experiences of a lifetime.

For those interested in the past, visit [www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com) and pay £28,500 to send them to the site of one of history's greatest tragedies – the wreck of the Titanic. Tourists spend 12 days on a research vessel before climbing into a hi-tech submersible to make the 2.5-mile descent to the



wreck itself. They'll even get a video of the dive, so be prepared to sit through it at their next dinner party. (And for peace of mind, make sure it's not on a boat).

If they really have been everywhere, then send them out of this world on the upcoming Virgin Galactic service. Richard Branson's firm is taking bookings for their first flights, which they hope to have operational by 2008 – but at £100,000 a seat, it's a gift strictly for your very best friends.

#### HELP THEM GET NEXT YEAR'S GIFTS

BEING a wealthy socialite can be a time-consuming business – all those parties, premieres and beauty treatments can leave you very little time to keep your life in order. If you know anybody struggling to keep up with their hectic schedule, don't stop at buying them a diary or BlackBerry – pay for a concierge service.

Companies such as UK-based Courture can help those with more money than time sort out all the niggling organisational tasks in life. After they've found out your preferences in everything from restaurants to sport and travel, they can hire domestic staff, book luxury holidays, get tickets to exclusive events, ensure you're always dressed in the latest fashions and buy gifts for all occasions. Once you've paid the £1,000 joining fee, prices start from £458 per month for eight hours' service, while a full year's unlimited help will set you back £25,000. Still, it's cheaper than hiring a full-time PA – and you can guarantee they won't sell any exclusives to the tabloids.



## CLIFTON SUITE & LEATHER CENTRE

Opening Times: Mon to Sat 9am-5.30pm  
Open Sundays 11am-4.30pm

Visit us on Boxing Day  
for some Blinding Deals

36-40 Clifton Road  
Darlington  
Tel: 01325 383 222

**BUY NOW  
PAY 2007**

**OVER 500 SUITES FOR  
IMMEDIATE DELIVERY**



was £1999  
NOW £599

Available in brown,  
black or cream

#### The Naples Suite

In luxurious soft leather  
BUY THE 3 SEATER  
AND GET THE  
**2 SEATER  
ABSOLUTELY  
FREE**

Will not be  
beaten on  
Price, Service  
or Quality

**FANTASTIC  
DEALS  
throughout  
Christmas and  
January 2007**



If you know someone who deserves a luxurious break, why not buy them a voucher for a pamper day at Seaham Spa. Voted Best Spa for Style by The Sunday Times and Best UK Spa Destination by Conde Nast Traveller, the Serenity Spa at Seaham Hall has a choice of more than 55 different treatments. Guests can swim in the ozone-cleansed pool, work out in the TechnoGym, or just relax in the thermal baths. A Serenity Indulgence day costs from £270. [www.seaham-serenityspa.com](http://www.seaham-serenityspa.com) or call 0191-516-1550

Or you can splash out and escape to Huvafen Fushi in the Maldives, with its unique underwater spa. Essential Escapes has a week from £1,715. [www.essentialescapes.com](http://www.essentialescapes.com)

**STOCKISTS**

- Fortnum and Mason:**  
[www.fortnumandmason.com](http://www.fortnumandmason.com) 020-7734-8040
- Harrods:** [www.harrods.com](http://www.harrods.com)  
020-7730-1234
- Boodle and Dunthorne:**  
[www.boodles.com](http://www.boodles.com)
- I Want One of Those:** [www.iwantoneofthose.com](http://www.iwantoneofthose.com)  
0870-241-1066 or 0870-241-1064
- Courture:**  
[www.courture.co.uk](http://www.courture.co.uk)  
0870-609-1226

**WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS**

World renowned photographer Steve McCurry is most famous for his striking picture of the Afghan girl. He has a studio in New York

**Where will you be spending Christmas/who with?**

Hopefully in some warm climate and hopefully with some interesting people.

**What's on your gift wish list?**

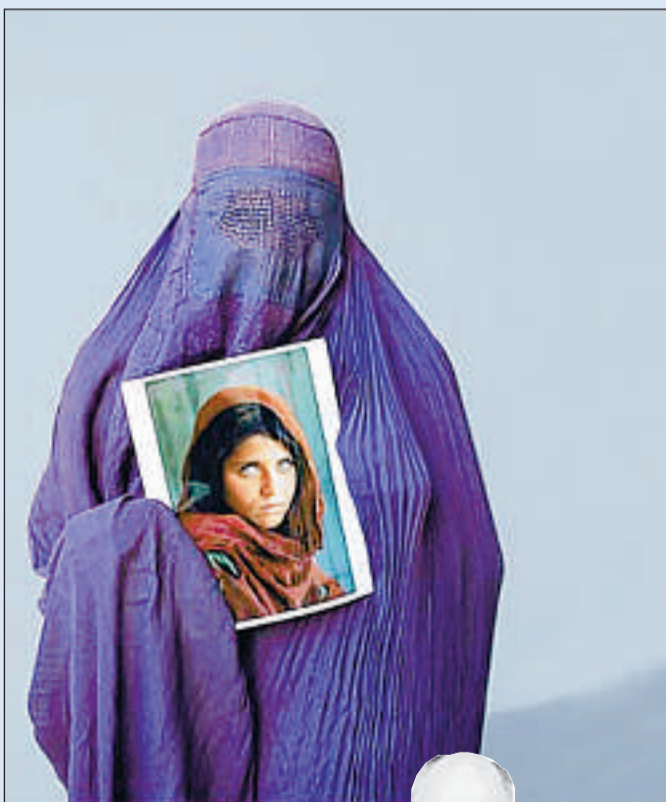
I don't need anything except love and good health.

**What's the best Christmas present you've ever had?**

Probably a new bicycle when I was maybe 11 years old.

**If money were no object, what would you like?**

Twenty million pounds tax free. That would solve a lot of problems. I could probably be a little bit of a philanthropist and I could probably have a few quid to solve my own problems.



**ABOVE:** Afghan woman Sharab Gula holding the picture Steve McCurry, right, took of her when she was a girl

**Looking East by Steve McCurry is a series of stunning photographs from South and South East Asia. It is published by Phaidon (£24.95)**



**Now Open in Sacriston**

**Canny Creations**

**dolls houses & miniatures**

We offer a full range of furniture and accessories to decorate the interior and exterior of your dolls house

Over 20 houses on display in kit-form built and wired eg. Victorian, Georgian, Tudor, Modern, Design your own pub, etc

Filled from floor to ceiling with absolutely everything - a property for everyone! Every child's dream and the perfect place for the collector.

**10% DISCOUNT OFF DOLLS HOUSE**

**EMPORIUM KITS** and a good selection of pocket money toys under £10.00



4 Front Street, Sacriston

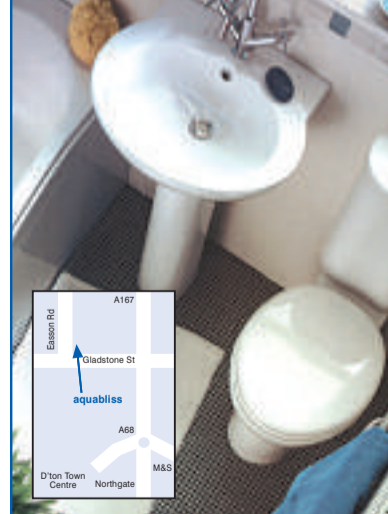
**0191 371 1766**

e: [dolls.houses@btconnect.com](mailto:dolls.houses@btconnect.com)

EASY PARKING



**Affordable Exclusivity**



Creating the ideal bathroom for your home takes a unique combination of imagination and style. That is why aquabliss have carefully approved a collection of products which compliment both period and contemporary looks, town and country styles, at prices that will guarantee to bring your imagination to life.



[www.aqua-bliss.com](http://www.aqua-bliss.com)  
122 Gladstone Street | Darlington  
Telephone 01325 485678



## This Christmas at Williams Music

...the perfect gifts  
for all musicians

**OVER 33% OFF PIANOS**  
(On selected items)

**DIGITAL DRUM KITS** from £349

**GIBSON GUITARS** from £599

**ACOUSTIC  
GUITARS** from £49

Opening Times: Mon - Fri 9am - 5.30pm  
Saturday 9.30 am - 5.30pm Sunday 11am - 4pm



**wm williams** music group  
est-1910

24-26 Blackwellgate, Darlington Tel: 01325 466224  
www.williams-music.co.uk

## NE gardening

Decorating the tree is one of the most fun things to do at Christmas, but what are the roots of the tradition?



**ROYAL BRANCH:**  
Prince Albert, Queen Victoria and family in their 1848 Christmas picture

## Tree glee

IT'S one of the centrepieces of Christmas, a beautiful tree, angel on top, bedecked with shiny baubles and twinkling lights. For children it's a festive magnet, not least because of the pile of presents strewn tantalisingly underneath.

The tradition of a festive tree has been around since ancient times and has played an important part in winter celebrations for many centuries. Most pagan religions used special trees as part of their rituals.

In Northern Europe the Vikings saw evergreen trees as a reminder that the darkness and cold of winter would end and the green of spring would return. The Druids of ancient England and France decorated oak trees with fruit and candles to honour their gods and during the mid-winter festival of Saturnalia, the Romans decorated trees with trinkets and candles.

In the Middle Ages, a popular religious play depicted the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, symbolised by an evergreen tree hung with apples. The play ended with the prophecy of a saviour, and was often performed during Advent.

Another medieval tale tells how the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was originally a fir that had flowers, leaves and fruit like any other tree, but when Eve plucked the apple from its branches its leaves and flowers shrunk and turned into spiky needles. Now it only "flowers" when it is decorated at Christmas time.

There have also been many legends surrounding the lore of the Christmas tree. In one ancient story Saint Boniface, an eighth century English monk, came upon a group of pagans who were cutting down a fir tree to use as a stake for a human sacrifice. The pagans were apparently preparing to burn a child alive.

To stop the sacrifice and save the child, the saint smashed the fir tree with one blow of his fist. Incredibly, another much smaller fir sprang up in its place, which Saint Boniface told the pagans was the Tree of Life and represented the eternal life that comes with Christianity. The pagans fled (presumably taking a pile of kindling wood with them).

According to another medieval story, evergreen trees were not always green. Before the birth of Christ they lost their leaves each winter like other trees. But while Mary, Joseph and Jesus were on their way to Egypt they were forced to hide from Herod's soldiers in a clump

of cedar trees. To hide the holy family the trees brought forth green needles and the cedar's white berries turned blue so that Mary's blue robe blended in. Since that day evergreen trees have kept their colour all year round.

Martin Luther, the Protestant reformer, is popularly believed to be responsible for illuminating the first Christmas tree. It is said that while returning home one December evening, the beauty of the stars shining through the branches of a fir compelled him to recreate the effect by fixing tiny lighted candles on the branches of the small Christmas fir tree inside his home. His followers copied the idea which quickly spread across Europe.

The idea of a Christmas tree indoors appears to have begun in medieval Germany. German Christians would bring trees into their homes and decorate them with fruit and dried flowers. The tradition of the Christmas tree eventually spread throughout Europe. The English Royal Family introduced the idea of a Christmas tree to England when Queen Charlotte (wife of George III) had the first tree in 1800.

Queen Charlotte's biographer, John Watkins, wrote: "In the middle of the room stood an immense tub with a yew tree placed in it, from the branches of which hung bunches of sweetmeats, almonds and raisins in papers, fruit and toys, most tastefully arranged, and the whole illuminated by small wax candles".

German merchants in Manchester apparently had decorated Christmas trees in the 1830s but Prince Albert and Queen Victoria were responsible for popularising the Christmas tree when they posed with their children for a Christmas press picture in 1848. The image was first published in the Illustrated News.

The photograph was subsequently published in newspapers all over the UK and caused a huge amount of public interest. The following year, leading society hostesses vied with each other to produce the most lavishly decorated tree and, in due course, the rest of the country followed suit.

Early Christmas trees were usually decorated with apples, nuts, gingerbread, ribbons and candles. The invention of electricity in the early 20th century and widespread use of electrical Christmas lights made the Christmas tree even more popular. The first mass produced electric Christmas tree lights appeared in 1890 and they've lit up our Christmases ever since.

Want a fun packed  
family Sunday?

## Catterick Sunday Market

Bring your tribe!  
We are the  
**Biggest Sunday  
Market**  
in the North East  
with mile  
upon mile of  
bargains

**Every Sunday All Year Round**

Free Parking Free Entry Indoor Cafe

Best  
**Santa's  
Grotto**  
in the  
area!



**Christmas  
Opening:**  
24th Dec.  
9am-2pm  
31st Dec.  
closed  
7th Jan.  
back to  
normal.

**Catterick  
Sunday Market**

at Catterick Racecourse Just off the A1  
Trade enquiries 07702 312456 www.cattericksundaymarket.co.uk  
Email: enquiries@cattericksundaymarket.co.uk



f

*The beauty of the stars shining through the branches of a fir tree compelled him to recreate the effect by fixing tiny lighted candles on the branches of the small Christmas fir tree inside his home*

### Getting the best from your Christmas tree

**T**RADITIONAL Christmas trees rather than the artificial variety are still proving popular with people across the North-East with demand increasing each year. Janet Summers from Cherry Hill Garden Centre, near Middlesbrough, has these top tips for choosing and looking after your Christmas tree:

1. When choosing which tree to buy, imagine what it will look like in the chosen room. Visualise the space you have and if you only have a small room then buy a tree with a flat back which will fit better into a small space.
2. If you have lots of traditional decorations, which are often heavier, then go for the Scot's pPine as it's much sturdier. And remember, if you have small children or pets, put your shatter-proof decorations at the bottom and your delicate baubles higher up.
3. Saw the end of the tree if you can when you get it home. This allows more water to be taken in which helps to retain the needles. Stand your tree in a proper tree stand so that it is easier to keep adding water and try to place the tree in as cool a room as possible, away from radiators.
4. Water regularly, almost daily if you do have the central heating or fire on a lot. Dehydration will make the tree more likely to shed its needles. Nordman and Scots pine are non-drop varieties, though the traditional Christmas tree is Norwegian spruce.
5. After Christmas don't just throw your tree in the bin – recycle it. Lots of councils and garden centres offer a recycling service these days. Trees can be recycled at Cherry Hill, for example, throughout January.

Real Christmas trees can be bought at a number of outlets in the North-East, including:

■ Raby Castle, Staindrop, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham (from Sat, Nov 25) (01833-660207)

■ Croft Christmas Trees, Grange Farm, Croft, nr Darlington (01325-720673)

■ Ormesby Hall, Middlesbrough (01642-324188)

■ Duncombe Park estate, Helmsley, North Yorks (01439-771332)

■ Boretrees Christmas Trees, Cedar House, York Road, Dunnington, York (01904-481926)

## WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS



Darlington-based entrepreneur Duncan Bannatyne, 57, is worth £168m and is becoming increasingly more well known for his television appearances on *Dragon's Den* and *Break with the Boss*.

### What's your worst Christmas present?

There is no such thing as the worst, it's just great to get presents. But what is a shame, is that some people buy champagne but if it doesn't have a date on it, I give it away.

### What's the best Christmas

### present you've ever had?

The best Christmas presents are Christmas cards made by your children with all the little trimmings and extras on them.

### Where will you be spending Christmas this year?

With Joanne (his wife) and two youngest children and my oldest because she's going away on Boxing Day and they come to me Boxing Day usually.

■ Duncan Bannatyne's autobiography *Anyone Can Do It* is published by Orion, £18.99

# Croft Christmas Trees

*The regions largest choice for variety & size of fresh cut quality Christmas trees*

**NORWAY SPRUCE, SCOTS PINE, NORDMANN FIR, BLUE SPRUCE & our Potted Trees**

**Experience our shop for a high quality range of Decorations, Lights, Stands, Gifts & Wreaths**



One mile from Croft on the Barton Road  
Open From 1st December 9.00am-7.00pm  
7 days a week Tel: 01325 720673

**Want a place in the sun?**

**Own your own property in Spain  
Frontline golf only minutes  
from the Beach**

**18 Hole Golf Courses  
Excellent Investment Opportunities  
Over 50 Developments to choose from  
Apartments to Detached Villas**

Contact our Local Agent, Steve Johnson

**Tel: 01642 758 265**

**Mobile: 07734 794 394**

**sdjcostas@yahoo.co.uk**



**MAR MENOR ENTERPRISES**

**Mega  
Epson  
Sale**

**Any 4 Epson\*  
Cartridges  
Only £10**

Any Colour, any Model, any Quantity

Offer valid throughout December



\*Epson Compatible Cartridges

**Call In Today** **Tel. 01325 465119**

Each of us has a memory from Christmas that makes us smile, whether it be a special present we received as a child, or a funny moment that happened last year. We asked some famous names about their favourite Christmas



The stars at  
**CHRISTMAS**

**ROSS KEMP, ACTOR, 42**

"I DO love Christmas trees. I've always loved them. I'd have a Christmas tree in the house all year round but it wouldn't be very special then, would it? I just love the smell of them. I always have a real one."



**LAURENCE LLEWELYN-BOWEN, TV PERSONALITY, 41**

"MY favourite Christmas memory is the bizarre day we had about four years ago. My wife Jackie cooked a monumental Christmas lunch which smelt unbelievable, and there were carols playing on the radio. We all sat down to lunch and my daughter Cecile looked out of the window and said, 'Daddy, it's snowing!' It never, ever snows in Cornwall because it's too salty, but we had a completely and utterly Disney-sponsored Christmas day. It was quite extraordinary."

**NOEL EDMONDS, PRESENTER, 55**

"CHRISTMAS has always been a special time. When we were all together at our house Broomford in Devon, it was sensational. And I used to really enjoy doing the

**RUPERT PENRY-JONES,  
ACTOR, 36**

"MY favourite memory is when I was very young and spending Christmas with my cousins. We used to spend every year with my mum's brother's family. We used to all sleep in the same room and open our presents at about five in the morning."

# MAS

television show on Christmas Day - Noel's Christmas Presents. As a family, we would have this routine where we would get up, the kids would open gifts, we'd go to church in the village, come back and have a drink and sit down and watch what dad had been doing for the last five weeks. We got the tissues out and had a cry."

**CHRIS DE  
BURGH,  
MUSICIAN,  
58**

"WHEN I was about eight years old, my parents were living in Nigeria and because there was a lack of decent education for youngsters my brother Richard (who's a year and a half older than me) and I went to a boarding school in Brae, County Wicklow. We didn't get to see our parents very often, but one Christmas he and I flew, very slowly in those days, to Africa, to Lagos. It was Christmas Eve and I remember there was the mother (and father) of a storm going on down there. I said to my dad, 'How is Santa going to make it through this?', and he said, 'Don't worry son, don't worry, he'll be here'.

"And in the morning I woke up and there wasn't just a stocking at the end of the bed, there was a pillowcase. Not just full of the usual sweeties, but exotic things. They had coins with holes down there, and carved animals. I hadn't been to Africa before, and I thought this was amazing, Santa made it! And as the rains continued to pour down in this sort of tropical storm, I thought, crikey, that's some man, that Santa. What about those reindeer!"

**JO WHILEY, RADIO 1 DJ, 41**

"IT has to be when I got my first bike. It's that moment when you wake up and walk downstairs, and your parents have wrapped it all up in shiny paper. It's so obvious what it is and you rip off the paper to find a spangly new bike. I absolutely remember that. I was about eight and I had been badgering my parents for ages and ages. I knew when I walked downstairs, in my heart of hearts, that they had already bought me the bike, but going through the whole pretence of wrapping it all up, it was so sweet of them."

**MICHAEL STARKE,  
ACTOR, 49**

"ALL my childhood Christmases were great. I remember when I was about five my Mum and Dad spent a lot of money on this Cackle robot figure, and my sister sat on it and broke it on Christmas Day, so I never got to use it again.

"My wife loves Christmas and always does it really well, so all the Christmases when my daughters were little were very special. You tend to get a little bit cynical and blase as you grow up, but when you have a family you see it through their eyes and you get the old feeling back."



## Annual Membership 2007

*Applications are  
now being accepted  
for annual  
membership*



Members will enjoy 15 days racing at Thirsk and 30 exchange visits to other racecourses plus visits to Yorkshire County Cricket Club

**PLUS**

Discounts at a number of restaurants

**Single Member £140.00**  
*(lady or gent)*

**Associate Member £225.00**  
*(member and one other family member)*

**Guest Member £250.00**  
*(a member plus one guest)*

**Junior Member £65.00**  
*(aged 17-21 - proof required)*

*Applications to:*

**Thirsk Racecourse,  
Station Road, Thirsk YO7 1QL**

*or apply on line:*

[www.thirskracecourse.net](http://www.thirskracecourse.net)

**Thirsk  
Racecourse**  
COUNTRY RACING AT ITS BEST



# NE my style

**ONE-OFF:**  
Andy in his Christmas robes, far right, and at work in more casual attire



This month's page doesn't have quite the same focus on fashion: we're broadening the meaning of 'style' as we talk to a Church of England curate during his busiest time of the year. But Andy Nicholson is a little out-of-the-ordinary and though his style initially caused quite a stir in his parish, his unique approach is a breath of fresh air to the often stuffy image of the Church. (He was recently seen doing an impromptu handstand at the local C of E school assembly...)



## THE REVEREND ANDY NICHOLSON

**How do you find yourself doing what you do today?**

**W**E have to go way back to find the root of my Christianity. My parents, both committed Christians, were killed when I was three years old in a freak camping accident in Spain when their tent was hit by lightning. My brothers and I then went to live with first my grandparents, then my aunt and uncle. The whole family were strong church-goers and God was part of my life from that early age. With God was where my parents were so He was an important figure. My uncle, who brought me up, was an actuary and later told me that a lightning strike, in life insurance terms, is considered an Act of God, which is a bit weird.

Then when I was 17, on the night before Easter Sunday I was driving on the way back from a girlfriend's house over a hill near where I lived. Something made me stop the car, get out and walk to the very top of the hill, I can't explain what it was, just an overwhelming feeling I had to do this. Once at the top, I had an epiphany – a feeling of God being close and I knew in that moment that I would eventually end up doing some kind of Christian ministry. It was quite scary because I'd been considering a career in architecture, or something like it, but now I felt I had to do this.

I went to London at 18 and spent a year out working with a missionary agency but I really hated it. I found the narrow-mindedness of some Christians stifling. After several years studying, travelling and trying to decide what to do with my life, I took the chance to go to China with the Amity Foundation, a Chinese Christian foundation, to teach English – it was an escape and an opportunity to see a very different culture through western eyes. It was here I met some American pastors and teachers and found in them what I'd been looking for – their work made so much sense to me.

I later took my wife (Debbie, who he met at college) back to China for two years to experience and understand the important way that China had affected my outlook on life and to share that. On our return to the UK, I went forward for ordination in the Church of England.

**Describe your style**

I'm not what people expect of a Church of England curate. Being a priest is just about being me. I want people to have a relationship with God whatever their background or circumstances. The stereotypical image of "church" puts a lot of people off. So I'm being absolutely honest about who I am, how I look, how I behave – I hope this will make me, and God, more approachable.

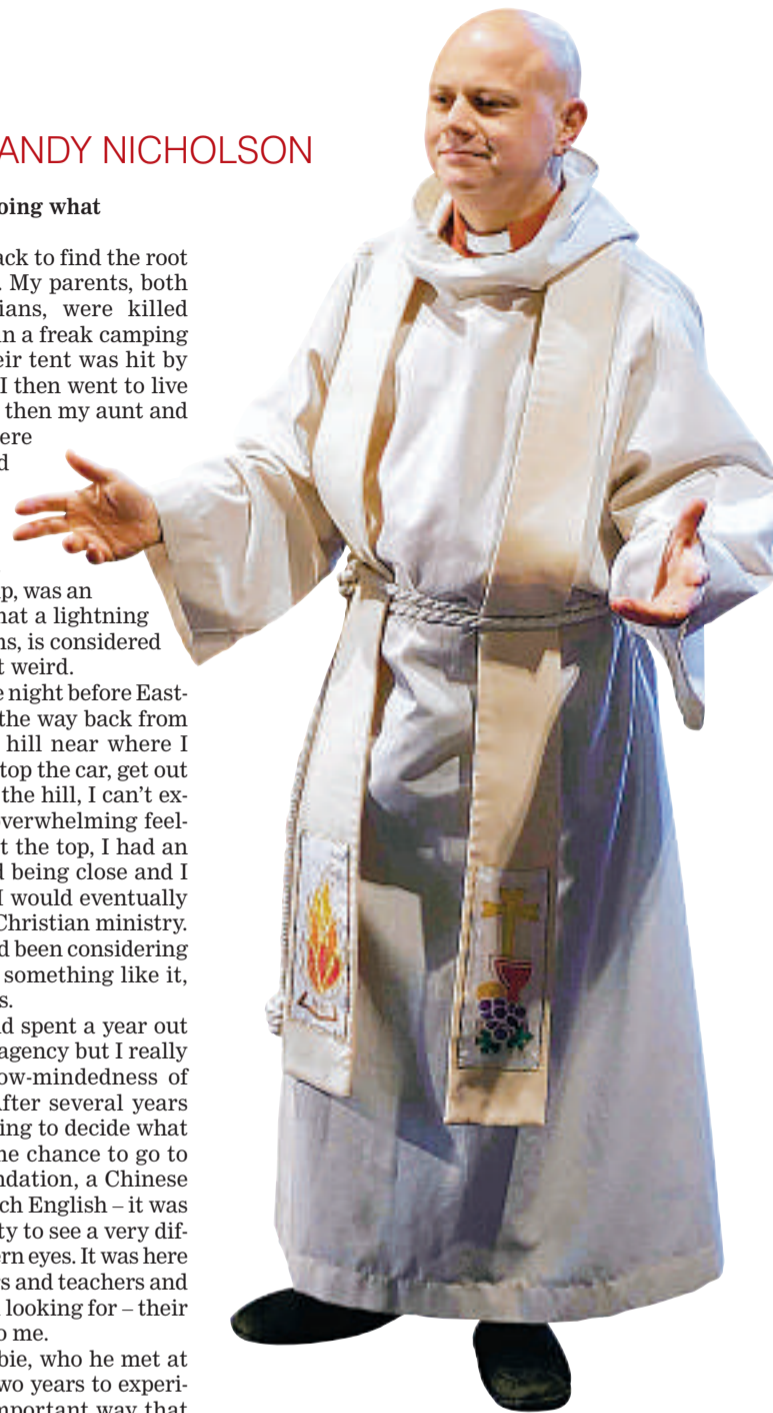
**How does your job affect your style?**

Certain services, or congregations, are more conservative and formal. For those I'll wear the cassock and stole of the season – it's what's expected. For more informal services such as Family Service, the kids don't fully understand the vicar in a dress so I'll wear a coloured shirt and dog-collar. I know some vicars who will wear a Hawaiian shirt with the dog-collar, because that's their style.

**Whose style do you admire most?**

It may sound obvious and a bit of a suck-up but it's genuine. Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He cuts the crap. He's not afraid to say what he thinks, even if he knows his words may ruffle feathers.

Also, my grandfather, who lived in York, was an inspiration. He had so much dignity and love. He was a down-to-earth woodwork teacher, very caring, who would do anything for you. He and my grandma were very gentle, loving people.



**What are the other important things in your life?**

My family, my wife Debbie and my young sons Benjamin and Jacob. I love just spending time with them.

I have always enjoyed working with children and young people, they have so much energy and are so funny. I enjoy helping them to see what and who God is.

And recently I have taken up walking. Once a month or so, and friend and I go over to the Lakes and just walk.

**Describe your Christmas**

The two or three days leading up to Christmas are ridiculously busy. Throughout the year we do so much pastoral care besides our church services so there are frequently times when we are very, very busy, but at Christmas the whole focus is on the services. There are carol services, crib services, Christingles, midnight mass, the service on Christmas day itself. This year I have six services in 48 hours to prepare for and lead. The last is on Christmas morning and after that I'll go home and be with my family, who will hardly have seen me for days! The Church of England is a good employer in that I will get a week off after Christmas (and Easter) to be with my family, enjoy the rest and recharge the batteries.

■ Andy will be leading services in North Cowton and East Cowton over Christmas. For details of the services, contact him on 01325-378689.

Fitted for Christmas

With the warm glow of the fire and the twinkling tree lights, all you need is the feel of a new carpet under your feet. We will provide everything from a free estimate to beautifully fitted carpets...

**Carpets with "in-built" underlay**  
from **£5.00** sq m

**Heavy Duty Wool Twist**  
from **£12.00** sq m

Free fitting offers on all carpets

See instore for details.

Ask about our competitive price promise!

Ask about our competitive price promise!

**BURTS**  
 CARPETS

Oakwood House, Eastmount Road, Darlington DL1 1LA  
Tel: 01325 466470

**NE** beauty

# Just for you



**DERMAGENETICS** is a bespoke anti-ageing skincare concept that is taking LA by storm – Teri Hatcher, Goldie Hawn and Meg Ryan are already fans. Using a simple DNA test, scientists can create a personalised anti-ageing formula, combining the most useful ingredients to nourish your skin and guarantee optimal results in minimal time. Order by Friday, November 24 to receive the face cream by Christmas. The DNA testing costs £135, with the face cream priced at £125 – call 01737-700-020 or see [www.dermagenetics.com](http://www.dermagenetics.com)



Make your loved ones' beauty wishes come true this Christmas with these personalised little luxuries. SHEREEN LOW reports



GO bespoke with The Body Shop and the Create Your Own Gift idea. Cram a gift bag or box, from £1, with an array of special products – food-lovers may like Vanilla Spice Bath Melt, Cranberry Candle and Golden Apple bubble bath, while Blueberry Body Butter, Coconut body scrub and Strawberry soap would suit fruity types. Gift ideas start from £2, and you can simply pop into stores to do your picking.

**BUDGET BABES £20 AND UNDER**

Treat her to a personalised Denman hairbrush, printed with a picture of her choice. This customised service is free and available for the D81 large oval grooming brush, £9.95, D14 handbag brush, £4.25, and D3 styling brush, £5.95. Just send a small photograph to Denman International Ltd, Clondeboye Road, Bangor, BT20 3JH, Northern Ireland by Friday, December 1, and they'll do the rest.



Alternatively, Vital Touch will hand-blend essential oils to make that customised special gift for the hard-to-buy person, from hand cream to bath blends. They're priced from £10 and will come beautifully wrapped and labelled. Call 0845-052-5345 or visit [www.vitaltouch.com](http://www.vitaltouch.com) by Monday December 11.

**MID-PRICE MUSTS UNDER £50**

Ensure they get a perfume they actually love with The Perfume Studio. After a consultation with the Master Perfumer, a unique signature fragrance will be created

from the 18 exquisite blends for men or women, with the final blend registered in their name within an hour. The service is priced from £50 – call 01273-477-111 or visit [www.theperfumestudio.com](http://www.theperfumestudio.com)

Origins' Ginger Mixed Messages consists of a collection of four ginger-inspired essences, so they can choose something different for each occasion. The scents – Citrus, Wood, Spice and Signature Ginger – can be worn alone or layered for something a bit different. It costs £40 for four vials, a pipette and a dish for mixing the oils.



Any present dilemma will be solved if they like Michael Kors perfume, £40. Buy a bottle then get it instantly personalised with crystal-like zodiac signs (at department stores nationwide) for no extra cost.

**BLOW THE BUDGET OVER £50**

Many women find it difficult to find the perfect shade of concealer or foundation so give them a Prescriptives Custom Blend Foundation And Concealer gift certificate box, £68 (0870-034-2566), so they can find the right shade and coverage. The box contains four empty bottles – two full-size and two travel-size – so they can visit the

counter in their own time.

Alternatively, the Prada Eau De Parfum Deluxe Coffret is a gift she'll never forget. Presented in a handcrafted saffiano leather and silk-lined box, the eau de parfum consists of amber, Indian sandalwood oil and Indonesian patchouli. For that extra-personal touch, get her name or initials engraved on the bottle's silver plaque. This can be done immediately. It costs £155 from

Selfridges (0870-837-7377).

And if you're not sure what to buy your bloke? WholeMan takes the stress away with the individually created Christmas gift boxes. You can choose from a range of brands including Molton Brown, Bvlgari, Kiehl's, Clarins and Lab Series, and you can mix and match their favourite skincare, haircare, bodycare or shaving in the same box – call 0207-629-6659 or visit [www.wholeman.co.uk](http://www.wholeman.co.uk)

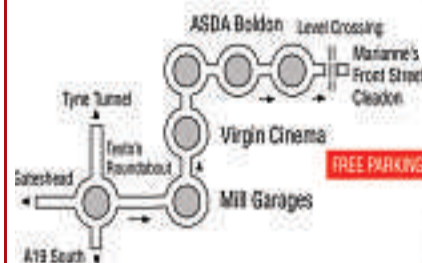


## MARIANNE of CLEADON VILLAGE

LEADING STOCKIST OF SPECIAL OCCASION WEAR

Hundreds of beautiful outfits to choose from for Mother of the Bride/Groom, wedding guests, races, cruise and holiday wear. To complete your outfit we have a fabulous selection of hats to hire or buy with matching shoes and handbags.

**SIZES 10 - 22, ALTERATION SERVICE**



**53-55 FRONT STREET  
CLEADON VILLAGE, SR6 7PG  
TEL. 0191 536 7310**

**WE ARE OPEN**

**Monday to Saturday  
9.30 a.m.-5.30p.m.  
Sunday 10a.m.-4 p.m**

[www.mariannefashions.co.uk](http://www.mariannefashions.co.uk)



**ROOM WITH A VIEW:**

The outlook from the living area of one of the new flats overlooking the chapel.

**Below:** the former hospital at Scorton, which is being converted into assisted living apartments, and the kitchen area of a flat at the former St Clare's abbey

Pictures:  
RICHARD DOUGHTY



# Getting the Abbey habit

The new care village at Scorton provides a wealth of choices for elderly people looking for a home with that little bit extra

It can't be very often that there is a chance to buy a home in a converted old abbey. But that is exactly what's on offer at Scorton village in North Yorkshire as five apartments have been created within the Grade II listed St Clare's Abbey on the fringe of the village.

The conversion is part of a seven-acre site, which Gratia Care is turning into a 'care village'. But the abbey homes will be separated from the rest of the development by way of clever design.

Simon Loveridge, managing director of Gratia Care, says: "These are very special homes, sympathetically converted."

The complex features a three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment on the top floor. The rest are two-bedroomed homes. Original features have been retained where possible, such as archway windows and exposed beams, and floor space is generous.

Mr Loveridge says each flat is individual. "They are ideal for people looking for something different," he says. "Lots of new buildings are square and boxy, these have character."

In use of materials, the company has gone all out to blend in with the original structure – which dates back to the 17th century and stone-masons have been brought in to capture the feel of the past.

Gardens are shared and there is an outside maintenance arrangement. Parking spaces have been incorporated and the homes have a separate access road. Prices range from £215,000 to £235,000.

Gratia Care bought the site from the Brothers of St John of God three years ago. A hospital/care facility was built there in 1909 as a 'home for unfortunates' charity, but to adapt it to modern standards called for a massive £15m investment.

"The first thing was to open a new care home delivering modern standards," says Mr Loveridge. That facility is already full, with 60 residents.

There is also a nursing and care home specialising in working with people with Alzheimers. This is split into units of 15 so people can form their own little communities.

"If you can have such a thing as a state-of-the-art care home then this is it," says Mr Loveridge.

Also on site is provision for people with mild dementia and 45 assisted living suites are being developed. Here, people get en-suite accommodation with lounge and kitchenette on a rental basis. Tenants tend to be people who would previously have been in a residential home. Services are provided to their door and there is a formal dining room, coffee shop and cinema on site.

"They have their independence but care is there as part of the package," says Mr Loveridge. "Prices are comparable with those of residential care homes, although people get more space and more freedom. We believe in keeping people in their own homes for as long as possible."

Elsewhere on the complex, Gratia is building 22 assisted living units. Residents can use all site facilities and have the option to buy, rent or have full-time care.

"It gives people choice and if their needs

change, they are not faced with moving away from the area," says Mr Loveridge. "We feel that in many care organisations, the physical aspects are addressed, but the social side is overlooked. We want to change that."

Ultimately, there will be provision for around 170 residents. Staff numbers already total 119 – mainly local people – making Gratia one of the biggest employers in the area.

Mr Loveridge says the care village concept has been around in the America for years but that it has 'taken us a while to catch up'.

"The backbone of our system has been smaller care homes. But as more and more regulations came in, it was harder to make that work," he says.

"Most people going into care homes have done so in reaction to a health crisis and the involvement of hospitals and social services. Assisted living rent/buy is more of a personal choice. People have more control over their own destiny and stay healthier longer if they have independence."

While the Abbey site is very much a community, it is still part of the overall Scorton village.

Some of the accommodation is for couples. "That is an important part of what we do," says Mr Loveridge. "One big problem has been couples being split up."

In assisted living, Gratia provide wardrobes, carpets and such, but leave space for people's own furniture and belongings. If needed, a furnishing package can be provided.

Outside are secure gardens and landscaped areas. There is a Victorian-style conservatory and social activities are high on the list, with residents encouraged to arrange events themselves. A bus is available for outings.

Each unit has a manager and various care workers, depending on the level of need.

Gratia have been building for two years now and completion will take another 18 months.

"So far we have had positive feedback from the Scorton community," says Mr Loveridge. "As there have been care facilities here for around 100 years, people have got used to the idea and we have a big impact on the community as an employer. We try to support local businesses."

He says Gratia have a good reputation in providing high levels of care – especially for Alzheimers sufferers.

"All too often, people don't get a choice as to what kind of care home they go to," says Mr Loveridge. "It is all done on a reaction to crisis basis. People really need to sit down with their families to make proper arrangements. They think it's not going to happen to them, but usually it does. Too many people bury the subject under the carpet but it needs to be discussed in a serious way."

To buy assisted living units costs from £195,999 for two-bedrooms and £159,000 for one-bedroomed accommodation. Mr Loveridge says these prices are competitive with local market conditions.

Rents, he says, are on a par with residential homes in general.

"The whole subject of care needs to be viewed in a common sense way," says Mr Loveridge. "Ask the question: would you put your gran here? It's an easy question to answer. It's a home from home."

## Outstanding location Outstanding care

Gratia Care Ltd is delighted to announce the opening of a brand new purposely designed care home, which provides specialist nursing and dementia care in the outstanding location of Scorton, one of the prettiest villages in north Yorkshire

This new care home forms part of the existing Abbey Care Village, and boasts a standard of accommodation and care which more than exceeds expectations.

Set in delightful landscaped gardens, the new facility also offers the benefits of existing on-site amenities such as a restaurant, coffee shop and cinema suite providing a stimulating social life for those who wish.

All accommodation is in beautifully appointed single rooms with en-suite facilities, providing every comfort and a homely and private living space. All rooms have points for

satellite television and are fitted with individual phone lines to help residents keep in touch with their loved ones.

The Abbey Care Home has been designed to be a real home from home with intimate residents' lounges and separate dining facilities throughout the building which encourage social interaction in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere.

Our experienced and qualified staff are trained to provide care and support without compromising the individuals choice and beliefs and aim to maximise their independence. Residents are treated with respect and dignity; we take into account their ability, interest and preferences, focusing on their quality of life.



... relaxed



... friendly

To find out more about the Abbey Care Home or Gratia Care Ltd and our availability, please telephone us on (01748) 811971 or write to us at:

Gratia Care Ltd, Abbey Care Village, Scorton, North Yorkshire DL10 6EB



**FAST FINISH:**  
worn, old worktops can  
be replaced in a trice



# Dream topping

SHEILA WEBER visits a firm which promises high speed, top quality transformations in the home

**S**PECIALIST firm Granite Transformations isn't so-named for nothing. The company reckons it can do just that: totally transform a kitchen with granite. And they won't take long about it, either...

Using granite from Italy, the Washington-based outlet specialises in fitting new granite worktops on to existing surfaces in a kitchen or bathroom, shower room or a fire surround.

The showroom, on the Crowther industrial estate just off the A1, oozes quality and quickly reveals what can be achieved without going through all the hassle of a total refit.

The North-East branch of the company – which originated in Australia – has only been open for 18 months, but already the order book is healthy, serving customers as far apart as North Yorkshire to the Borders. An initial workforce of three is now up to seven.

Sales manager Julie Lister says any surface can be used to take the granite, which is up to 7mm thick and comes in a range of colours and styles.

Staff make a template of the worktop and create a style to suit. A dry fit is done and when everyone is happy, the granite cover is bonded on to the existing top. It is permanent from that point on.

"Most jobs can be done in a day and it is an absolutely start to finish job," says Julie. "We take out sinks, cookers, etcetera and replace them when we have finished."

Along with the tops, Granite Transformations also supplies a range of sinks, taps and other accessories. Customers have to source their own base and wall cupboards and most white goods.

Putting new granite tops in the average kitchen costs about £1,700, including VAT. "It

might not be the cheapest way to update your kitchen, but it is certainly value for money," says Julie. "And it makes a huge difference to the look and practicality of the room. People love it when they see the finished product."

Many customers are people who have had new kitchens fitted and then they move onto granite when they can afford to," says Julie. "And once it is done you can forget it because it is extremely practical," she adds.

The granite used is non-porous as it is made from engineered stone and comes with a ten-year guarantee. It combines real granite, quartz and stone with polymer technology to create a unique material which is diamond polished for a deep shine. It will stand heat up to 300F without scorching or burning and takes everyday scrapes and scratches in its stride. The heavy duty finish protects the surface against the hardest of knocks.

The granite comes in two finishes – Rocksolid Granit and Cristallino.

The first has all the qualities of real granite and more, while Cristallino combines transparent tempered glass and semi-precious man-made stone fragments for that special touch. There are also classic mosaics, ideal for splashbacks and walls.

The firm aims to meet orders within four weeks, but this can depend on the time of year. "The business is going really well," says Julie. "It is getting more and more popular. It's lovely, practical, quick and there's minimum installation hassle – you could cook on it by the end of the day if you wanted to. It makes a huge impression in a very short time."

■ Granite Transformations is at Unit 34, Crowther Road, Crowther Industrial Estate, Washington, Tyne and Wear, tel: 0191-4171-999. During January, there is a special offer of ten per cent off installations.



*Most jobs can be done in a day and it's an absolute start to finish job. We take out sinks, cookers, etcetera, and replace them when we have finished*

...a top that fits over your existing worktop  
in just a day



**GRANITE**  
transformations

- ◆ Save money and add £££s to your home
- ◆ Rocksolid Granit™ fits over existing work surfaces
- ◆ Scratch, heat, impact and stain resistant
- ◆ Ideal over dining tables, laminate, tiles, floors and kitchen worktops
- ◆ No mess of demolition
- ◆ 10 year limited warranty

Call us today for a free quote or visit our showroom

Unit 34 Crowther Road, Crowther, Washington, Tyne & Wear, NE38 0AQ  
2 mins from A1(M) and A1231

Showroom open Mon-Sat 10am - 4pm

Tel. 0191 417 1999 Fax. 417 2345

[www.granitetransformations.co.uk](http://www.granitetransformations.co.uk)  
[granitetransformations@ntlworld.com](mailto:granitetransformations@ntlworld.com)

**EURO TILES**

LOTS OF NEW & EXCITING TILE RANGES JUST ARRIVED EXCLUSIVE TO EURO TILES

**5% DISCOUNT**  
on production of this coupon

**Wall Tiles**  
from **£9.99** sq mtr

**Floor Tiles**  
from **£11.99** sq mtr

**FREE ESTIMATES**  
Tiling Service available if required  
Also a full range of Tiling Accessories

Unit 26, Drum Ind Estate,  
Chester-le-Street (opp Batleys)  
Tel (0191) 4920073  
Open Mon-Fri 10-5 pm Sat 10-4 pm

**INDEPENDENCE RESTORED**

**DAILY LIVING AIDS FOR THE ELDERLY AND LESS MOBILE**

- Scooters
- Chairs
- Electric Recliners
- Wheelchairs
- House & Home
- Kitchen & Dining
- Bathing & Toileting

Unit 1B, Drum Ind Est  
Chester-le-Street  
(Opp. Batleys Cash & Carry)

**0191 492 2301**

**NORTHDALE HORTICULTURE**

Yafforth Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 0LQ

Phone 01609 770269 • Fax 01609 770056  
Email northdalehort@aol.com  
Registered Charity Number 519901  
VAT Registration No 8866730068

**Christmas Charity Fayre**  
Saturday 9th December  
10am - 3pm

Diabetes UK, Chopsticks, Ashtree Arts, Hare & Moon, Daies School, Tombola, Hands & Voice Choir, Hand made Jewellery, Cards, Craft Gifts, Whicker Ware, Refreshments

*And many more great gift ideas*

**50 SIGNAL SQUADRON**

The Bradford Armoury,  
Neasham Road, Darlington, Co Durham  
& TA Centre, Debdon Gardens,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Have fun and get paid for it  
Contact us anytime at the above address or telephone us on

**YOU NEED THE TA TERRITORIAL ARMY**

Darlington  
01325 356539  
or Newcastle  
0191 265 6180  
www.army.mod.uk/  
royalsignals/34sigregt

**The Scrapbook Shop**

Visit our shop for your creative Christmas Card Making Ideas

We stock **Duftex Christmas products** as seen on TV.

Join one of our many classes  
Please phone for details  
Tel. 0191 3757515

6 Beech Road, Framwellgate Moor,  
Durham. DH1 5JE

Email: [info@scrapbookshop.co.uk](mailto:info@scrapbookshop.co.uk)  
[WWW.SCRAPBOOKSHOP.CO.UK](http://WWW.SCRAPBOOKSHOP.CO.UK)

Shop opening hours:  
Mon-Sat 10am till 5pm

Bring this advert to receive your loyalty card or quote NE01 on the website

**NORTH ACOMB FARM SHOP**

"Everything a farm shop should be"

Find the finest meat and best quality produce at North Acomb's award winning farm shop.

We are now taking orders for Christmas poultry, beef, gammon and pork. Our superb range of speciality items, mince, sausages and burgers and Christmas hampers are always available.

Christmas cakes and mince pies also available.

North Acomb Farm Shop, want to tempt your taste buds this winter.

Stocksfield, Northumberland NE43 7LF  
T: 01663 843181 F: 01663 843490  
[www.northacombfarmshop.co.uk](http://www.northacombfarmshop.co.uk)



**Wensleydale's own department store**

FASHION • SOFT FURNISHINGS • CARPETS

BEDS • BLINDS • LINENS

**Milners of Leyburn**  
Tel/Fax: 01969 622208

We wish all our customers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

6 Market Place, Leyburn, North Yorkshire  
[www.cmilner.co.uk](http://www.cmilner.co.uk) email: [milnerleyburn@fsbdial.co.uk](mailto:milnerleyburn@fsbdial.co.uk)  
Freephone 0800 3582208

## gadget man



Christmas is almost here but gadget fans still have a few days to pick up some new kit for the holiday period. NIGEL BURTON reports



## Santa does his business!

■ Don't miss Burton's Bytes – game reviews in The Northern Echo every Tuesday

### BEST FOR WAKING UP ON CHRISTMAS DAY

IF you have to wake up to an alarm clock radio then make sure it's a DAB digital model. You'll get much better sound quality, digital text and more stations to choose from. New from ROBERTS is the Gemini 19, £79.99, a neat and compact digital clock radio that adds a bit of style to any bedroom.



It has a sleek and modern design with a brushed silver front panel combined with iPod white top and sides. It has five station presets and a designated Classic FM button, so you can wake up to your favourite stations.

The Gemini 19 is multi-functional as you can also playback MP3/iPods through the speakers, creating a mini music system for the bedroom.

### BEST FOR THAT XMAS EVE AMBIENCE

MICROMARK colour changing candles. These gadget-conscious candles are fitted with tiny LEDs that can change colour. Perfect for relaxing before the big day. From £8.99.

### BEST FOR THE RETURN TO WORK

Micromark desktop coffee maker. The partying has got to end sometime. When you do return to work what could be better than this desktop coffee machine that comes with its own mug. Make the perfect brew after a hard night. Cost: £10.



### BEST FOR PRESERVING THOSE PRECIOUS MOMENTS

DVD EZ Maker USB Plus. If you think that your memories are safe forever, think again! Depending on how and where tapes are stored, the number of times they're viewed and the qual-

ity of the tape itself, permanent noticeable deterioration of video tape can begin to set in within five years – even if the tape isn't used much. Loss of colour, static sound or complete tape degradation and failure can occur, leaving no reminder of those precious moments – a wedding, birthday or other momentous milestone.

The DVD EZ Maker USB Plus is a complete device that easily turns those magical moments caught in analogue format into digital and preserves them forever by burning to DVD or VCD. It's very easy to use – via a plug and play USB interface and one step installation, the capture card connects to any notebook or desktop PC as well as home video devices such as DV, V8, VHS, DVD or VCD players and transforms analogue recordings into digital and then records them onto a hard disk drive (16x burning speed). Users can even edit and restore worn and degraded analogue videos to their former glory. Cost: £49.99.



### BEST AVOIDED

WHETHER it's the hand-knitted jumpers you wouldn't be seen dead in, or another set of unbranded smellies that bring you out in a rash, or a mountain of unwanted calendars, Christmas just wouldn't be the same without a naff xmas gift. Items to dodge this yuletide include the cloth cat towel holder, a finger drumming kit, the inflatable husband, a boob lamp, pictured, and a potty putter. According to the web site [www.alternativegifts.com](http://www.alternativegifts.com) the naffest xmas present has to be the "poo, pooing santa". What could be more festive than a model Santa doing his business? Or should that be "What could be more offensive?"





**NE** beauty

# Pucker up for party time

**S**TUCK for ideas for a gift for the person who has everything? Help could be at hand in the form of skin rejuvenation treatment. According to one of the biggest practitioners in the region, facial fillers and techniques to make skin look younger and healthier are becoming more and more popular. And with the party season now upon us, what better time to go for a brighter, younger look?

Collagenics is boosting the attraction with some seasonal offers on a range of treatments provided in a network of 60 clinics throughout the North-East.

Part of a national organisation, Collagenics has its regional base in Darlington with Bryan McCourt as managing director for an area which stretches as far afield as Carlisle, Whitby and Berwick-on-Tweed.

Specialising in anti-ageing and non-surgical beauty treatments, a team of seven practitioners travels to various locations where Collagenics have clinics in hair/beauty salons such as Saks.

Botox and collagen injections can only be administered at registered premises to protect the public from rogue practitioners. The nurse practitioners include Alison Matthews, a nurse for most of her working life, and Niki Traynor. Alison covers the Darlington and Yarm areas, while Niki is based on Teesside and travels throughout the region.

In January, the company will announce a major development which is being kept under wraps for now. But in the meantime, Collagenics is seeing a rush of interest in what is already on offer.

For instance, Teosyal Kiss is taking off in a big way. This is a new, filler for lips which works by replacing the hyaluronic acid which occurs naturally in the body, but which diminishes with age. And to help you pucker up beautifully under the mistletoe, Collagenics is offering £50 off TK treatments for the festive season.

Another new product is Teosyal Meso, a skin rejuvenator. Staff use a technique involving a micro injection over an area of skin to replace the natural substance which is depleted through the ageing process.

"We put this substance back to create a rich, juicy appearance to the skin, mostly face, neck and hands," says Bryan.

Better known is Botox, often referred to as 'the line tamer'. "I can't stress enough the plus points of having Botox treatment," says Bryan. "The results we can achieve are amazing. People getting ready for the party season want to look their best and short of spending a fortune on designer clothes, Botox has to be one of the best ways to make a dramatic difference."

Treatment lasts three to six months with prices ranging from £240 to £320.

The practitioners are fully trained medically as well as Collagenics trained. "We always keep up to date with new techniques and products, and we use only natural products based on

hyaluronic acid which occurs naturally in the body, plants and animals, retaining water in skin and joints," says Bryan.

Botox has been around for many years in cosmetic treatment, and has been used medically since the 1960s, and the stigma attached to such treatment is getting less all the time.

"People are learning the truth about how safe and effective it is," says Bryan. "We have seen a massive upturn in the number of people coming to us and feedback shows high levels of customer satisfaction, with more than 90 per cent coming back for repeat treatments."

Bryan says clients are given as much information as possible before treatments, including a medical assessment. And there is no obligation to proceed.

"We are not a quick-fix business, but prefer to work with a programme of treatment, developing this to enhance the way individuals look," he says.

Earlier this year, Collagenics introduced Restylane Vital, which stimulates production of collagen and elastin to help reverse skin ageing. This can be used on the face and areas such as neck, décolletage and the back of hands, which are especially prone to sun damage. Fillers and collagen are used on lines around the lips, with Botox being used on the brow and around the eyes.

Skin resurfacing is also becoming popular and is used a lot by celebrities before major events, helping the skin with its natural exfoliation process.

Collagenics also offers treatment for acne and other skin problems, and treatment for thread veins, spidery patches on the legs. People who spend a lot of time on their feet – such as hairdressers or shop assistants – tend to suffer from this condition. A product is injected into clusters of veins and they disappear. The treatment costs about £220 per session and takes around 30 minutes.

But most people book into Collagenics for skin treatments. "Once we have a basis, we can provide products and advice to achieve a new, fresh look and help on how to maintain it," says Bryan.

"Our skin health is not as good as that of other countries because of diet, lifestyle, weather and other factors. But we are starting to value the condition of skin and this could have spurred people on to try these treatments."

Predictably, most customers are women. But Bryan says more and more men are coming forward. And they get quite a few calls from men wanting to buy a course of treatment as a gift, often using vouchers.

"Some clients have been with us so long, they even ring me on my mobile," says Bryan. "And it's good to have that kind of loyalty. It is a testament to the results we achieve and a wonderful feeling."

■ Collagenics will be doing special offers at all clinics during January. Call 03125-367367 for details.



SHEILA WEBER discovers how to get a whole new look for Christmas... and we're not talking stilettos and a little black dress

**BRYAN McCOURT:** "more than 90 per cent of our customers come back for repeat treatments"



**COLLAGENICS®**

THE COMPLETE MEDICAL BEAUTY PACKAGE

---

## Anti-Ageing Clinics

The UK's largest provider of Anti-Ageing and Aesthetic Treatments including Line Smoothing, Lip Enhancement and Skin Resurfacing




Before
After

Please call **01325 367367** for an appointment or free consultation with award winning practitioners

Tel: 01325 367367 [www.collagenics.com](http://www.collagenics.com)

**NE** leisure



**UNIQUE:** themed rooms at Crab Manor, and below, the restaurant

PETA KING and her partner embark on a whirlwind tour of some of the world's most famous hotels – without ever leaving North Yorkshire

**N**OTHING can quite prepare you for the Crab Manor Hotel. As your car crunches up the gravel drive, the perfectly symmetrical Georgian facade of the house looks as elegantly understated as it should be, the lawns as well manicured, the shrubberies as luxuriant.

Perhaps the two oversized stone dogs flanking the front steps should slightly raise an eyebrow, but then the beautifully proportioned hall with its cluttered furniture and stuffed pike in a glass case gives a first impression of sanity. But... lift your gaze to the stairs and the utterly bizarre sight of a giant Yeti – albeit a model that used to reside in York Dungeon – and an enormous, rusty clock, which looks as if it's come from a Cuban sugar warehouse, make you realise that this is no ordinary hotel.

But although undeniably eccentric, Crab Manor, at Asenby, near Thirsk, is also undeniably luxurious. Its 14 bedrooms are each designed and decorated to reflect some of the world's most famous hotels – from Raffles in Singapore, the Cipriani in Venice, the Sharrow Bay in the English Lakes, to the Hotel le Toussierok in Mauritius.

The attention to detail is mind boggling. In the Raffles room the intricately designed bed and curtains, even the china cups for your afternoon tea, transport you to the sophistication of another age. On a more up-to-date note, the room has its own sauna in case the Yorkshire climate doesn't match Singapore's sultry levels.

We stayed in the 'Waldorf-Astoria' – a haven of 1930s opulence with fringed lamps,



## To the Manor borne

art deco furniture and hat boxes on the wardrobe – you almost feel you've just arrived on a trans-Atlantic liner.

The latest additions to Crab Manor are two Scandinavian log cabins in the grounds, each with private verandahs, hot tubs and sleigh beds. There's also a communal hot tub in the courtyard if you fancy a quick dip.

Graciously aspiring to the style to which we are rapidly becoming accustomed, we are invited to the drawing room at 7pm for drinks and canapés before we embark on the gastronomic experience that is dinner at the adjoining Crab and Lobster restaurant.

Housed in a 17th century thatched building, the Crab and Lobster has enjoyed many years' success as a distinctly unusual pub and restaurant. The pub and the Crab Manor are run by North-East leisure company Vimac, which took over in 2002 and liked the wacky interiors so much it based its refurbishments on the original theme.

Combining domestic ephemera with an eclectic mix of bric-a-brac, the whole place is knee deep in suitcases, old bottles, cameras, sewing machines and a zoo of stuffed animals. Hanging from the ceiling, caught up in swathes of fishing net, are old magazines and a stable of race badges.

The restaurant carries on the theme with reckless abandon. Dressers, cupboards and

bookcases jostle for space, while elegantly dressed tables are discreetly positioned in cosy enclosures created by battered screens.

Then there are the loos: the gents a shrine to Marilyn Monroe, the ladies like a changing room in a vintage clothes shop, complete with a mannequin with a huge hat and fox fur stole.

The restaurant has long enjoyed a consistent reputation for really special food and it's not surprising to find that head chef Steve Dean has been at the Crab and Lobster for just under 15 years – spending six years as the sous chef before taking the top job in 1999.

From a menu that, not unexpectedly, majored on fish, Peter chose chunky fish soup – served with parmesan cheese, croutons and garlic mayonnaise – to start. And it was, indeed, satisfyingly fishy and chunky. Intrigued by its sidekick of beetroot ice cream, I chose the goats' cheese tart with roast shallots and aubergine caviar, which was as delightful as it was unusual. Other starters were king scallops with warm chorizo scones; mussels in

Yorkshire ale with cabbage and bacon; and Loch Fyne oysters.

For our main course we shared a fabulously presented fruits de mer platter – at £37 not the cheapest dish on the menu but with half a lobster, king prawns, crayfish, mussels and scallops cascading from a three-tiered dish, it was excellent value for two (and very sociable).

Other piscine delights included garlic roasted lobster with chunky chips and mayonnaise; halibut wrapped in prosciutto with a risotto of broad beans and peas; wild seabass with herb cheese polenta, and posh fish and chips with crushed minted peas and lobster tartare.

And for the meat eaters: pesto roasted loin of lamb or fillet steak with Yorkshire blue rarebit and mushrooms.

And we rounded it off with a lemon ricotta cheesecake for Peter and an almond choux pastry with toffee bananas for me.

It's back down to the restaurant for breakfast, too. This time in the Pavilion, where swathes of red and orange canvas create a tented effect. But you still can't get away from the central theme – the bric-a-brac spilling over onto every windowsill and an antique diver's suit suspended above the tables.

Again the choice doesn't disappoint: scrambled eggs and smoked salmon, kippers, smoked haddock with poached eggs, the full Yorkshire breakfast or even steak.

Set in seven acres of beautiful lawns and terraces with mature trees adding to the privacy of this hidden gem, Crab Manor is a hotel that is truly unique. Add a visit to your Christmas wish list.

■ Rooms at Crab Manor start at £150 per night based on two sharing and include breakfast. Our three course dinner cost around £60 without wine. Call 01845-577286; www.crabandlobster.co.uk; reservations@crabandlobster.co.uk



**NE** motoring

# The car that steers itself



**HONDA LEGEND:** performance is excellent, though economy isn't

**L**EGENDS tend to be tall tales shrouded in mystery; something to be talked about on long winter nights around a roaring fire – when the kids' computers are off and there's nothing on the telly.

So calling a top of the range saloon 'Legend' may have been just a little far-fetched of Japanese car manufacturer Honda... until now.

Legend, the car, not the myth, was always a "nice" vehicle, capable enough and difficult to fault. But it wasn't the sort of model that was going to be talked about around roaring log fires – or even the central heating boiler. It did everything well enough, looked inoffensive but certainly lit no fires, nor even struck a spark.

It lived in the shadows of other luxury marques – BMW, Mercedes, Audi and the only Japanese badge to really make it in this particular niche market, Lexus. It existed there because for the money it didn't really offer the prestige badge or anything unique. Nothing in fact that legends are made off.

But that may be about to change. You see the new Legend is rather special, possibly a first, in fact.

Cruise control has been around for ages. It sets the throttle, allowing your right foot to take a rest on tedious motorways. It's also useful in town to stop you inadvertently straying above the speed limit.

The only problem with the first incarnations was that you had to knock it off if traffic suddenly slowed in front of you. To counter this problem some of the luxury marques introduced radar controlled versions that would actually slow you down, maintain a safe gap and, in extreme circumstances, bring the car to a complete halt.

Oh, how we oohed and aahed in the motoring world at the extreme cleverness of it all and once we had got over the poltergeist effect of not really driving the car, we just reaped the safety benefits.

What next, we asked collectively? A car that actually steers itself too? Well it was only a matter of time and it looks like Honda has got there first.

Switch on the radar controlled cruise and press another little button on the Legend's steering wheel and a display comes up on the instruments panel to tell you that you are virtually redundant as a driver.

Set the speed and the system will accelerate, decelerate, brake and keep the gap quite happily without any input from the driver. More impressive still, it will also steer the car. A cam-

IAN LAMMING takes a slightly disconcerting journey in the car that can make the driver redundant

era behind the rear view mirror monitors the solid white line on the left hand side of the road and the white broken line that divides the carriageways. It then keeps you between those lines moving the steering wheel accordingly – spooky.

So now there's nothing to do as a driver at all but sit there, a bit like you were on the train, but on the road instead.

Eventually, I can see the day when the driver goes completely and you will be able to sit in the back and work, watch a film or play games of varying descriptions.

There will no longer be a scribe writing road tests about the pluses and minuses of various models, just a spreadsheet of technical information to be pored over by data analysts. But until that particular day, I will continue to assess and consider the Legend's other points.

The engine, for instance, a 3.5 litre VTEC, has considerable refinement and sophistication while hurling almost 300bhp at the road.

This power passes through a seamless automatic gearbox, which can also be used in sequential mode to each of four driven wheels, and which cleverly monitors which has the most grip and passes the oomph around accordingly.

While performance is excellent, economy isn't and no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't get the trip computer to read any more than 23mpg, which isn't great for your wallet or the environment.

Ride is super smooth and comfortable and handling effortless. New Legend has the most distinctive look yet and errs on the side of sporty. The interior is an exercise in design and opulent, too, with a nice mixture of leather and modern materials.

Specification is off the sheet and there are a host of voice activated functions, anything from the phone to the satellite navigation. Overall, there's a feel of luxury coupled with 21st century sophistication.

And with all that technology under the skin, Honda's latest executive saloon could very well be the stuff of legends yet.



*Passionate people.  
Passionate places.*

Culture, sport, business, architecture, heritage, people, places...the reasons to be proud of our region go on and on. Whether you work here, do business here or live here, there's a whole lot to feel passionate about. To find out how you can get involved in the campaign to promote the region visit [www.northeastengland.co.uk](http://www.northeastengland.co.uk)

north east  
england

## WHAT I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

Lesley Brewer is the director of dating agency The Introduction Company based in Malton, North Yorkshire (01653-669430, www.theintroductioncompany.co.uk)

### Where will you be spending Christmas and who with?

IT'S going to be a bit strange this year now both kids have left home, but at the same time it'll be a bit special too as my husband, Geoff, and I can do whatever we want for the first time in 24 years! So we have decided to take my dad, who is 82, and my mum, who is 75, out to a country pub for lunch.

### What's on your gift wish list?

Now you will want to be sick, but years ago Geoff and I decided after giving and receiving lots of exciting presents that it made no difference whatsoever to the feelings we have for each other so we buy not one single thing at all. We both think that the whole Christmas thing has been hyped far too much and we are far happier getting boots and coats on and heading off for a bit of a walk. I don't even send Christmas cards. I give a donation to charity and

this year it's to St Catherine's Hospice in Scarborough.

### What's the best Christmas present you've ever had?

What sticks in my mind is the time when I was ten years old and waiting with bated breath to see "what he's brought". At the time I felt I was verging on adulthood, so I was thinking exciting thoughts about new, cool clothes and I got a plastic toy called Play Plax - it's for building up into tower things. I cried almost all day and was really horrible to my mum because I thought she didn't understand me. I was so ungrateful and looking back now I can't believe I reacted like that.

### If money were no object, what would you like?

To take all my friends and family away to the sunshine for a fortnight and sit on Christmas Day and New Year's Day looking out over the sea and chatting over a very nice lunch with some very good red wine. We never spend enough time with those we love and I think the most special gift we all have to offer is our time.



LESLEY BREWER: would love a break in the sun with family and friends

# NE directory

## For The Home

**Aggregate Supplies**

Stockists of Sand & Gravel, Top Soil, Golden Gravel, Red Chippings, Cotswold Buff & Slates

HIAB DELIVERY SERVICE IN BULK BAGS COVERING NORTHALLERTON, RICHMOND, DARLINGTON & SEDGFIELD AREAS

T: (01325) 378111  
M: (07715)900553  
www.aggregate-supplies.com

**BONDGATE HOUSE**

Moving or improving we are the one stop shop for all your furniture, carpets and electricals. Immediate delivery on stock items, find us on the bus station at the rear of the Newgate Centre 01388 607453

Sofas from £299  
Beds from £49  
Tables & Chairs from £85  
also Carpet Remnants from £5

01388 607453  
All major credit cards taken  
email: bondgatehouse@aol.com

For every 3-piece & divan bed sold we will plant a tree for Tree Appeal

**North Yorkshire Timber**

Thinking of refurbishing your house?

North Yorkshire Timber Can Supply You With

Hardwood Flooring  
Kahrs · Junckers · NYT Solid Oak · Cattle Flooring

Oak Doors  
Oak Skirting & Architrave  
Douglas Fir & Oak Constructional Beams

Visit any of our Branches  
We offer Expert Advice & A Good Price!!

Branches At:

Northallerton	01609 780777
Ripon	01765 605963
Richmond	01748 825225
Middlesbrough	01642 460393
Darlington	Opening Soon
Sunderland	0191 5144663

(Joseph Thompson Timber)

Beauty is within the eye of the Beholder

Quality and Value from **EXPRESS BLINDS**

Vertical · Roller · Venetian Pleated · Solar Film

01740 623360  
07958 790851  
www.expressblinds.co.uk

**Magical Christmas**

Santa's Reindeers are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

**Magical Christmas**

The custom of singing Christmas carols is very old - the earliest English collection was published in 1521.

**BLINDS UK**

2 Vertical Blinds £60	3 Vertical Blinds £89
4 Vertical Blinds £111	5 Vertical Blinds £129

Any size - FREE Measure - FREE Fitting (Lovely choice of fabrics)

All blinds & samples brought to your home

Also fabulous range of Wood Venetians and Roller Blinds

(01325) 320666  
For a FREE No Obligation Estimate  
Visit our website www.blinds.uk.com

## Holidays

**Brooklyn Hotel**

Centrally located, short walk to town centre and pleasure beach. Late bar, full English breakfast & late key.

Everybody welcome.  
Bookings now being taken for New Year  
Phone now for prices!  
01253 622166

**The Kerry Hotel**  
BLACKPOOL

Licensed, friendly, family run, central for Tower and Prom. TV, tea / coffee facs in all rooms.

WEEKEND & MIDWEEK SPECIALS

01253 623105  
www.thekerry.co.uk

**Tenerife Holidays**

Tailor made holidays, for your individual needs

Apartments, Villas, Hotels  
Golfing, Bowling, Football Games

For info email natalie@tenerifeholidays.me.uk  
Tel: 01388 813783

**Denelea HOTEL** Scarborough NORTH BAY 01723 361495

Licensed 12 Bedroom Hotel  
Sea views · Non-smoking  
From £20 pp / pn En-suite £23 pp / pn  
www.deneleahotel.scarsborough.co.uk

**The Gynway Hotel**  
BLACKPOOL

Just off the seafront · EM avail · Lic · Pool table  
Late Key · PETS WELCOME  
Weekends : Mon-Fri  
Tel. 01253 314747  
email: renaissance2@blueyonder.co.uk

**Hunting Tower Lodges**

- ✓ 10 Lodges in Perth
- ✓ Beautiful surroundings
- ✓ Ideal for walking, very quiet site

01738 582444  
www.huntingtower-lodges.com

**Christmas in Bridlington**

**Dulverton Court Hotel**

OPEN CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

Now open all year round. Catering for all occasions.

Most rooms En-Suite. Tea / coffee, col TV in all rooms. Parking.

Tel (0800) 0197844 (01262) 672600

**THE COTTAGE INN**  
CRASTER NORTHUMBERLAND

OPEN ALL YEAR

5 min walk from coast. Sit in our woodland gardens  
All rooms en-suite. 3 Commended  
Fine food served in Harry Hotspur Restaurant  
Bar meals, bar area in Conservatory

AUTUMN/WINTER DEALS - 3 nights for 2  
Tel: 01665 576658

**Domestic Violence Helpline**

Physical, Emotional & Sexual Abuse.

Call us on (0191) 386 5951  
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) or the Police on 999

**three rivers HOUSING GROUP**

**Puerto de'andraitx**

3 Bedroom spacious Apartment, sleeps 6

5 mins to beach, restaurants & harbour. Superb view of bay & picturesque mountains from large balcony.

Tel. 01947 602889

**The New Chelvedon Hotel**  
BLACKPOOL

Warm, friendly, family run hotel

Bookings available for 2007/  
Pigeon Week /  
Dance Competitions /  
Christmas /  
Shopping Breaks

CALL 01253 620790

OPTIONAL 4 COURSE EVENING MEAL AVAILABLE

OPEN ALL YEAR

**Wateredge Inn on Lake Windermere**

Delightfully situated on the shores of Windermere with superb country inn-style dining. Pretty bedrooms, many with lake views.

Ideally situated for enjoying Ambleside Lake, steamers and nearby Fells.

**AUTUMN BREAKS**  
3 Nights £135 pp BB

Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 0EP  
Tel. 015394 323 32  
www.wateredgeinn.co.uk



# directory



## Entertainment & Leisure

### The Saxon Inn

Escomb, Bishop Auckland  
 From 1st December  
**Christmas Fayre** £12.50  
 served lunchtimes £9.95 & evenings £12.50  
**Christmas Day** £27.50  
 Book now for **New Year's Eve Extravaganza**  
 Live Music, Karaoke, Fantastic Atmosphere  
 To request a booking form please telephone 01388 662256

Are you struggling to find that unique gift for a friend or loved one?

### The Falcons of Thorp Perrow

Have gift vouchers available for all courses and experiences from £30  
 Choose from an hour stroll through beautiful scenery with a Harris Hawk or for a full day to be a Falconer  
**A PERFECT GIFT FOR THAT SOMEONE SPECIAL**  
 To find out more, please call: 01677 427755  
 or Email: thomas.graham1@btconnect.com  
 www.northernfalconry.co.uk



Santa's Reindeers are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

### Redworth Hall's

## Beef Stroganoff

Simple good wholesome food to warm the cockles of your heart!

#### Ingredients

- 400g/1lb Fillet Beef (tail end)
- 50g/2oz Butter
- 25g/1oz Finely chopped Shallots
- 125ml/¼pt Dry white wine
- 125ml/¼pt Cream
- Juice of ¼ Lemon
- Chopped Parsley

#### Method

Cut the meat into strips approximately 1cm x 5cm  
 Place the butter in saucepan over a fierce heat  
 Add the beef strips, season with salt and pepper and allow to cook rapidly for a few seconds. The beef should be brown but not underdone  
 Drain the beef into a colander  
 Pour the butter back into the saucepan  
 Add the shallots, cover with a lid and allow to cook gently until tender  
 Drain off the fat, add the wine & reduce down to a third  
 Add the cream and reduce down by a quarter  
 Add the lemon juice and the beef strips - do not re-boil  
 Correct the seasoning. Place in a serving dish and sprinkle with chopped parsley.  
 Serve with rice of your choice - we suggest rice pilaff

Enjoy!

supplied by Richard Chilver, Executive Head Chef at The Redworth Hall 01325 770600  
 www.paramount-redworthhall.co.uk  
 redworthhall@paramount-hotels.co.uk

### The Bridge Inn

Gordon Lane, Ramshaw, West Auckland ESTABLISHED 1995

OPEN ALL DAY



Come and try our Saturday Night & Sunday Lunch Carvery as a fine example of what to expect

#### MONDAY & FRIDAY STEAK NIGHT

FREE Starter or Dessert with any Steak (from selected menu)

Christmas Menu's Now Available



For further information please call (01388) 832509

**Underella**  
 A Rockin' Good Family Panto  
 MIKE SARNE, BILLIE DAVIS, ALISTAIR O'VALL, JANE FLANAGAN  
 Empire Theatre, Consett  
 Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> - Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December  
 Tickets from £6.50 - £10  
 Booking NOW on (01207) 218171  
 www.derwentside.gov.uk/whatson  
 Groups: £9/£7.50 (1 IN 10 FREE)

### The Scotch Corner Hotel

DARLINGTON

The Scotch Corner Hotel's Restaurants and Bar have the facilities and menu choices whatever your dining requirements, from private dinners to a light snack, in our no-smoking Lounge.

Our newly appointed chef will cater for every need

Sunday Lunch is currently available between 12noon and 3pm every week at only £9.95 per person for 2 courses with coffee.

Please call 01748 850 900

for bookings and further details



enquiries@hotels-scotch-corner.com  
 www.hotels-scotch-corner.com

**Where trains were born - more than just a museum**  
 Looking for something to see and do? Step back in time in one of the world's oldest railway stations: see, touch, feel and smell railway heritage. Enjoy family-friendly events, always something to see and do for everyone, from Grandma to the tiniest tot, whatever the weather.  
**Admission:** Adult £2.50, Child & Concessions £1.50 (special event prices)  
**Open:** 10am-5pm daily except Christmas, Boxing and New Year's days  
 Darlington Railway Centre & Museum  
 North Road Station, Darlington  
**tel: 01325 460532**  
 e-mail: museum@darlington.gov.uk  
 web: www.drcm.org.uk  
 RENAISSANCE NORTH EAST museums for changing lives

## For You

### M.V. Mobility Scooters from £450

Including Warranty & After Sales Service

Riser/Recliner Chairs from £595

Also available wheelchairs, adjustable beds, bath lifts and stairlifts  
 No obligation, free home demonstration

**DISTANCE NO OBJECT Part exchange welcome**

Call Michael on 01977 681764



### Hair Extensions

Done in the comfort of your home to salon standards by a qualified hair extension technician

Call Michelle 07790 839 085

**Competitive Rates**  
 Prices vary from £55 - £250

**Krisbek Cakes**  
 I am a home cake maker and decorator. I have been making and decorating wedding cakes for nine years. What started out as a hobby is now flourishing  
 If you prefer your cake to be baked by yourself, mother, grandmother or whoever, then that is not a problem. I will happily decorate ready baked cakes too  
 Though we specialise in wedding cakes, cakes for any occasion can be ordered.  
 Please contact me for more information:  
 Krisbek Cakes  
 1 Northgate Terrace, Darlington DL3 6PT  
 t: 01325 253785

### Are You All Alone this Christmas?

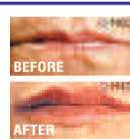
Feeling Alone? Separated or Divorced? For friends and support, join our new course beginning soon in Darlington



Offers support and guidance for divorced and separated people of all ages  
 Regular social meetings and courses to help people move on  
 For details ☎ (01325) 382860

### face first cosmetic treatments

17 VICTORIA ROAD, DARLINGTON  
 Change anything you like!



We provide a range of non-surgical cosmetic enhancements that aim to rejuvenate the skin and reverse the signs of ageing which, in turn, helps you look and feel more youthful. Treatment is as easy and quick as getting your hair done, as affordable as that special new outfit and the results are immediate and amazing! Based at our clinic in Darlington we can also offer treatments to customers throughout the North East from Newcastle to York. Whether it's frown lines or wrinkles, crows feet or Paris lip. Face First offers a free confidential consultation to assess your individual needs and suitable treatment options. All of our treatments are carried out by registered nurses, trained in Harley Street, and members of the Royal college of nursing (RCN) and the RCN aesthetics nurses forum.  
 Flexible appointments, on-site parking  
 www.facefirstcosmetics.co.uk  
 01325 268274 07996 543748

### Tees Valley Counselling Trust

For people with disabilities or chronic illness and carers  
 Registered Charity No 1064444  
**FORMERLY JOHN RICHARDSON TRUST**  
**Counselling Service for the chronically sick or disabled**

Have you been diagnosed with a chronic illness or a physical disability? Or are you the carer for such a person? Sometimes it can be helpful to talk about the effect this has upon your life and emotional well-being. The Tees Valley Counselling Trust is a free specialised and confidential counselling service available to anyone in this situation who works or lives in the Tees Valley Area.

Please ring: 01642 624788 for further details  
 North Tees Hospital, Everley House, Middlefield Road, Stockton

**AMagical Christmas**

**The Web**  
 Spyware and Viruses Removed  
 LAPTOP / PC Sales, Repairs, Upgrades & Networking  
 110 Parkgate, Darlington.  
 Tel: (01325) 465683  
**MIKOM SYSTEMS LTD**

**HANOVER RETIREMENT HOUSING FOR RENT**  
 Hanover provides rented sheltered accommodation to meet the needs of older people. A typical estate has an Estate Manager service, communal facilities, a 24 hour emergency call centre and welcomes pets.  
 Hanover also has ExtraCare estates, for independent frail older people who want the support provided by an on site care team.  
 Please call the North Regional Office on 01274 599686.  
 www.hanover.org.uk SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE



Willis & Gambier furniture available at The Northgate Bedding Centre

# 10 ways to a better night's sleep at The Northgate Bedding Centre

## 1 Bigger is best

For extra comfort, buy the biggest bed you can fit in your room. The good news is that as wider beds are becoming more common, there's ample larger-size bedding available.

## 2 Take time to choose with your partner

- Try different beds for comparison. Ask about made-to-measure options and dual-tension mattresses
- Find a pillow you like, carry it round the store and try all the beds with that pillow.
- Lie down for several minutes on each bed without your coat and shoes on.

## 3 Mattress matters

All mattresses should give support, but the actual feel depends upon what it's filled with. Although there are good deals online, there is no substitute for trying it out. Spend as much as you can afford on a mattress.

## 4 Springs have sprung!

Pocket-sprung mattresses are worth paying for. Springs move independently of each other, giving good support, a softer feel and preventing 'roll together' in a double bed. Prices have, relatively speaking, come down in price in recent years. Open-coil mattresses cost less - its springs are interlinked and move with each other.



## The Selkirk

Satin black or glossy ivory with sprung slatted base.

4'6" Double MRP £507  
**ONLY £269.95**

5'0" Kingsize MRP £537  
**ONLY £269.95**

6'0" S/King MRP £627  
**ONLY £319.95**

## 5 Memory mattress

Memory foam mattresses are provided by many top brands. For a firmer feel, choose a sprung base under the foam. It tends to be warm and the distinctive sinking-in feeling isn't to everyone's taste. How does it work? Using your body's heat, this temperature-sensitive material moulds itself around your body (like footprints in the sand). Crucially, this gives support without pressure.

## Sealy Memory Backcare

Visco elastic memory foam which combined with the ultra sprung unit contours the body for ultimate support, plus there is no need to ever turn the mattress



4'6" Double size  
**standard ONLY £399.95**  
**with drawers ONLY £499.95**

5'0" Kingsize  
**standard ONLY £469.95**  
**with drawers ONLY £569.95**

## 6 In the frame

The frame you choose really affects your comfort in bed. Solid slats give a firmer feel to a wooden or metal bedstead than sprung slats. Divans (upholstery bases) also come with options - a firmer solid top or a softer sprung edge, and many have drawers for storage. Bedsteads usually come flat-pack for easy delivery.

## 7 Finishing touches

Don't go for bright walls scheme if you want a peaceful night-time setting. By adding a few well-placed accessories, you can give your bedroom personality without disturbing your sleep. Live up plain bedding with a patterned throw or scatter a couple of dramatic, stand-out cushions on the bed.

**4 out of 5 of us flip the pillow in search of a cool spot**

## 8 Problem solving pillows

Never underestimate the importance of a good pillow for support. If you've owned yours for more than three years, it will probably have flattened. There are a variety of synthetic fillings, and feather and down combinations, on offer. Other options include:

- Anti-allergy pillows To keep bugs at bay.
- Anti-stress pillows They have carbon fibres to reduce tension.

## 9 Sleep Healthy

We spend a third of lives in bed and in addition to the normal wear and tear your mattress would receive, each person on average loses one pint of moisture per night this is why it is recommended that you change your mattress every 8 to 10 years. A good nights Sleep can make you smarter, help you look healthier and increase concentration. So sleep healthy.

## The Chester



A stylish faux leather bed in antique brown

4'6" Double  
**ONLY £199.00**  
5'0" Kingsize  
**ONLY £279.00**

## 10 Bedding Specialists

With over 250 beds and mattresses on display Northgate Bedding Centre offers the widest choice at the lowest prices, with many items available from stock for immediate delivery. The Northgate Bedding Centre prides itself on the quality advice and professionalism provided by the specialist advisors, so why not call in to 182 - 190 Northgate, Darlington or give them a call on 01325 243000.

**Tip for tonight - try this two-second test. If you can't slide your hand under the small of your back while you're lying in bed, the mattress is too soft. If it slides under too easily, your mattress is too firm**

*The*  
**Northgate**  
**BEDDING CENTRE**

Come to the shop  
with the stock

182-190 Northgate, Darlington.  
Telephone 01325 243000  
(Just along from Odeon Cinema)

Open 7 days a week  
Monday - Saturday 9am-5.30pm  
Late Thursday 7pm  
Sunday 11am-5pm

[www.beddingcentres.co.uk](http://www.beddingcentres.co.uk)

