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HUNDREDS MOURN FALLEN HERO

Hundreds of Bishop Auckland residents paid their last respects on Wednesday, February 2nd, at the funeral of a local soldier killed in Afghanistan.

Corporal Lee Brownson from Henknowle, of 3rd Battalion The Rifles, died while on patrol near Sangin in Helmand last month.

The father of two, whose wife Leeanne is expecting their third child in the summer, was caught in the blast of an improvised roadside bomb.

People lined the streets surrounding St Andrew's Church in South Church, as the funeral cortege of three vehicles and a police motorcycle passed.

The church was filled to the brim for the service.

Cpl Brownson's coffin was decorated with a union flag and ceremonial belt and cap, as well as wreaths with messages from his daughters Ginelee and Morgan, his wife and his family.

On a wreath, decorated with



Corporal Lee Brownson was killed in Afghanistan last month.

white flowers, held a message from his wife, Leeanne. It said, "You were not just my husband, you were my best friend and soul mate. I will miss you always and love you

forever.

"Until we meet again, your loving wife Leeanne and baby bump xxxx."

Lee's commanding officer, Col Ralph Arundell, paid tribute to the thirty year-old following the service. He said, "Lee Brownson was one of a kind. He was an extremely brave young man, cheerful and happy and who inspired loyalty from all who knew him.

"Despite being a young man his courage, bravery and compassion were legendary. "A lot of the younger soldiers very much looked up to him as a father figure, almost a totemic figure who could be trusted when things got really tough to keep everybody going. His loss is keenly felt by his brothers in arms."

After the tearful service, the cortege travelled through Bishop Auckland where hundreds of people lined the streets around the town, stopping to pay their respects as Cpl Brownson made his final journey.

Lee was buried at a private ceremony at Bishop Auckland Cemetery.

FUNDING SECURED FOR FOOD FESTIVAL

Bishop Auckland will be enjoying another food festival this year, after funding secured the future of what used to be known as the Wear Valley Food Festival.

The event, now called Bishop Auckland Food Festival in the Durham Dales, will once again be hosted at Auckland Castle.

The event attracted almost 20,000 people last year, and will, again, be free to attend this year.

The festival will feature some new stallholders, a speaker's corner for businesses to talk about their produce and a specially-brewed beer.

The event's future has been secured through a combination

of funding; the food festival has received a £13,000 grant from the Leader programme and £10,000 from Bishop Auckland Town Council.

Barbara Laurie, a town councillor and chairwoman of the Town Centre Forum, said, "The food festival is all about kneading together all of the amazing ingredients that makes visiting Bishop Auckland and the Durham Dales such a special experience."

The event is due to take place on Saturday, April 17th.

For further information, visit <http://www.bishopaucklandfoodfestival.co.uk/> or telephone 01388 604861.

WEIGHT NO MORE

Want to change your eating habits or live a healthier lifestyle? A new programme in West Auckland may be able to help. The 'Weight no More' programme, which is designed to encourage anyone who wants to change their eating habits, while offering advice and ideas on how to maintain

a healthier lifestyle. Sessions are being held at Oakley Cross School, West Auckland, every Thursday for 12 weeks from 9.00am to 11.00am.

The sessions will run on a morning until after half-term, when they will then be held on the afternoons from 1.00pm to 3.00pm.

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VISIT THE ICE AGE AT THE TOWN HALL

Bishop Auckland Town Hall is holding a series of fun events based around the popular Ice Age series of animated movies.

Two Ice Age craft workshops will be held. The first will take place on Tuesday, February 16th, from 10.30am to 3.30pm. This session is aimed at children aged 8 to 12 years-old.

A spokesperson for the event, which is organised by Sue Abel and Eileen Glenton, said, "Have an 'ice time' and mammoth fun, with Sue and

Eileen creating new 'Ice Age' creatures and original stories." Tickets cost £8.00 and the workshop is limited to 25 places. (See the end of the article for information on how to book a place.)

Sharon Carrick will oversee the second workshop, which is designed for children under the age of 8.



Scrat the sabre-toothed squirrel from the Ice Age movies.

The fun workshop, which invites children to come along and create Ice Age creatures and dinosaurs, will take place on Thursday, February 18th, between 1.30pm and 2.30pm. All tickets cost £2.00 and spaces are limited so advanced bookings are advisable.

A screening of the latest movie in the Ice Age series

will be shown on Thursday, February 18th at 3.00pm. Ice Age 3 sees Sid's adoption of three dinosaur eggs gets him into all sorts of trouble.

The film is a U certificate with a running time of 94 minutes. All tickets cost £2.50. For further information, or to book your workshop place, call 01388 602610.

HENKNOWLE WARD VACANCY

Bishop Auckland Town Council is considering filling the vacancy for a councillor for the Henknowle Ward by co-option.

The post became available after Councillor Reg Davison handed in his resignation, citing ill health as the reason for the decision.

Members of the council expressed their surprise and disappointment at his decision to resign, as he had given loyal service to the council and his constituents over the last two years.

Anyone interested in filling the role can obtain an application

form for candidacy from the Town Clerk and return it to the following address by Friday, February 19th.

Linda Goldie, Town Clerk, Bishop Auckland Town Council, 154A Newgate Street, Bishop Auckland, DL14 7EH.

The council will act upon the applications at its Tuesday 23rd meeting, which will take place at The Four Clocks Centre, 154A Newgate Street.

Further information on eligibility, the role of the town council and its schedule of meetings can be obtained from the Town Clerk at the above address.

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WORKING FOR OTHERS

Staff at Dale & Valley Homes have been rallying to help earthquake victims in Haiti.

The company, which manages council homes in Wear Valley, has been raising money for the disaster in the office and is also offering the public the chance to contribute also.

Website company Jadu has provided a website link to allow anyone to donate online. Employees at the Dale & Valley Homes offices in South Church organised a dress down day, staring competition and a cake sale to raise cash for the appeal and collected more than £250.

Organiser, Hannah Ferguson, said, "I saw the news reports and wanted to do something to help."

"We often have dress down days but lots of people here like baking or eating cakes so we thought that would make a bit more money." "The staring competition was just a bit of a laugh, but we hope it makes a serious difference to families suffering after the earthquake."

Anyone who would like to donate to the appeal can go to www.daleandvalleyhomes.co.uk and follow the link on the homepage.

LEARNING ON THE JOB – NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

A Bishop Auckland teenager is celebrating his apprenticeship with a leading software manufacturer. Anthony Wade, 18, from Henknowle, a former pupil of Bishop Barrington School, is a Business Administration (specialising in IT Technical Support) Apprentice with Dolphin Computer Access in Ushaw Moor, Durham.

Dolphin, a multi-national company, is a leading manufacturer of computer software for the blind and partially sighted. The company also sells comprehensive computer packages with set-up included.

Anthony said, "I am very pleased to have been given the opportunity to do my apprenticeship here, it's a great place to work and I am thoroughly enjoying working with the team. In March I will be going one day a week to Bishop Auckland College's new Skills & Employment Centre in Spennymoor to study key skills and I am looking forward to learning there."



Mary McMahon (Dolphin Managing Director) Apprentice Anthony Wade, and John Jenkins, Bishop Auckland College's Business Training Services.

Dolphin Managing Director, Mary McMahon, said, "We had been thinking about taking on an apprentice for a while. It was while discussing possible sales training for other members of our staff with John Jenkins from Bishop Auckland College's Business Training Services that we decided to go ahead and employ an Apprentice. Anthony is settling in well, he has had a bit of a baptism of fire but he is learning fast." John Jenkins from Business Training Services said, "It's

been a real pleasure working with Mary at Dolphin and finding the ideal apprentice suited to their business needs. Bishop Auckland College is delighted to be working with small businesses across the region to provide the support and advice required to cut through the jargon and make it as easy as possible to employ apprentices." For further information on Apprenticeships offered at Bishop Auckland College, contact John Jenkins on 01325 379600.

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Tuesdays: General Knowledge Quiz from 9.00pm
Fridays: Karaoke from 9.00pm - 11.30pm

XTREME DANCE FUZION

Xtreme Dance Fuzion is to present its latest show, Kaos, at Bishop Auckland Town Hall

on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th February. The show begins at 7.30pm, and doors open at 7.00pm. Tickets cost £6 each and can be obtained by calling 07701031106.

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SERVICE SET TO RE-OPEN AFTER ALMOST 60 YEARS

Weardale Railway is set to revive a daily passenger service between Stanhope and Bishop Auckland, a service that has not existed for almost 60 years.

British American Rail Services (BARS), which owns Weardale Railway, announced the plans last week. The new service would call at Stanhope, Frosterley, Wolsingham, Bishop Auckland and Shildon, utilising the newly-installed points at Bishop Auckland to link the existing Weardale Railways to the national network.

It is hoped that linking the lines will bring economic benefits, boosting the local tourism industry. Talks are believed to be underway to create a heritage rail trail, which would involve a centre like Locomotion in Shildon.

As previously reported, two

charter trains, one from King's Cross, the other from Crewe, are scheduled to make the journey to Stanhope in February. A third charter train is expected to confirm another visit to Stanhope soon.

As well as welcoming visitors to the area, the line is currently involved in negotiations that may result in the line being used to carry freight.

Alistair Gregory of Weardale Railways said, "With the addition of the rail-tour market and provision of a community train service, 2010 is going to see a considerable growth in activity on the line."

He credited the new impetus to an injection of capital from the BARS, coupled with the efforts of the line's volunteers. He added, "Together the company and the trust are hoping to show that the railway can make a positive

contribution to the economy of Weardale by increasing tourist income and by providing an environmentally-efficient means of travelling to and from the dale."

George Muirhead, manager at Locomotion, also welcomed the news. He added that the museum and Weardale Railways were looking at ways of promoting tourism on the line, he said, "We have already been having discussions with the railway about how we can work together to develop tourist traffic on the line."

Railway inspectors travelled on the line last week to check the infrastructure along the 18 mile stretch between Bishop Auckland and Stanhope, finding the line in need of only minor alterations which can be implemented before the first charter train runs on February 19th.

CONSULTATION BEGINS

A consultation on the future of local authority care homes in County Durham, including East Green Care Home in West Auckland, began this week.

Members of Durham County Council's Cabinet approved recommendations to consult on the future of council-owned residential homes at a recent meeting.

The consultation, which began on Monday, February 1st, will give residents, carers and staff the chance to comment on the proposals.

The consultation will last for three months, ending on Friday, April 30th, with residents being offered one-to-one meetings to give their feedback.

Comments can also be submitted in any of the following ways

•Email – residentialcarehomes

consultation@durham.gov.uk

•Telephone – 0191 372 5594

•Write to – Residential Care Consultation Team, Adults,

Wellbeing and Health, Durham County Council 2/96 County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UG.

The phone line will not be staffed 24 hours but an answer machine will be in operation. Callers can leave their comments or request that a council officer returns their call.

Councillor Morris Nichols, Durham County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Services, said, "It is important that the residential care services provided by the council reflect the changing needs of our older residents.

"In order to ensure this is the case, we need to know and understand how best we can help our residents.

For further details of the proposals visit www.durham.gov.uk and click on the Have your Say link.

Any comments received after the closure of the consultation will not be considered.

BODY OF BISHOP WOMAN MAY HAVE BEEN FOUND

A body found in the River Wear, near Page Bank in Spennymoor, may be that of a Bishop Auckland woman, say police.

It is thought that it is likely to be the body of a 54 year-old woman from Etherley Dene, who was reported missing

by her husband on Monday, February 1st.

Police were concerned for her welfare, and soon after discovering she was missing, launched inquiries to trace her.

The body was discovered by a dog-walker early on

Wednesday, February 3rd.

Fire and Rescue teams were then called to remove her from the river.

A post mortem is expected to be carried out shortly, followed by an inquest, which will be opened within the next week.

VARIETY SHOW

An 'open night' of variety acts is to take place at Woodhouse Close Church on Friday, February 19th, from 7.00pm. The event is part of the Woodhouse Close Arts Festival, taking place from Saturday 13th to Sunday 21st February. Anyone can take

part in the show, whether they sing, dance, act or tell jokes. Sign up at Woodhouse Close Church.

An afternoon of dancing, tea and cakes will also take place as part of the festival, on Thursday, February 18th, from 2.00pm at the church.

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MEALS-ON-WHEELS SERVICE SEEKS HELP

A local meals service has launched an urgent appeal for volunteers to help with their twice-weekly lunch and meals-on-wheels services.

The services have been running at Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre for almost 30 years. Volunteers serve meals on the premises in Proudfoot Drive, as well as delivering meals to dozens of housebound people.

Jean Clarke, centre co-ordinator, said, "This is an invaluable service, and is much-needed in this community. It is not just about delivering meals, but also about developing a rapport, and having contact with people who are housebound.

"If anyone can spare an hour

over the lunch-time period, at least once a month, we would love to hear from them."

She was joined in her appeal by Peter Hall, service co-ordinator, who said, "People are so grateful for the delivery of meals, and for some, it can be the only person they will see that day."

As well as seeking deliverers, volunteers are also being sought to wash up and serve meals at the lunch club, between the hours of 9.00am and 2.00pm, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Volunteers will be eligible to receive expenses.

Anyone interested in volunteering may call 01388 450838 or 01388 602935 to register their interest or find out more.

AN EVENING OF FOLK MUSIC

Fans of folk music are in for a treat this month when Eddie Walker visits Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

Regarded as one of Britain's best 'ragtime' guitarists, Eddie will be supported by Trish McLean and Ian Wright.

At the gig Eddie will perform a wide array of songs,

covering styles such as blues, hillbilly country, swing, traditional and contemporary folk songs.

The show will take place on Wednesday, February 17th, with an 8.00pm start.

All tickets are £6.00. For further details or to buy your tickets, call 01388 602610.

HALF-TERM FUN

A number of fun sessions for young children and their parents are planned throughout the area during the half-term holidays.

Rock and Roll, Hop and Skip sessions are starting at Coundon Children's Centre Friday, February 26th, between 9.30am and 11.00am for 6 weeks. This is a movement session where parents and children can enjoy dancing and moving to the music. All are welcome.

Also in Coundon, parents are holding a fundraising holiday day to raise funds for holiday activities for all children living in the Coundon area.

The event will be held on Thursday, February 18th, at Coundon Children's Centre between 10.00am and 1.00pm. All families are welcome.

A Teeny Tunes session will be held every Wednesday, 10.15-11.30am, by Sure Start Children's Centre staff at West Auckland Methodist Church during Term Time. The session is described as, "A fun lively session with dancing, singing and rhymes." Families with children aged 1-5 are welcome to come along. There is a cost of 50p per session.

Bumps and Beyond sessions are running at Woodhouse Close Children's Centre every

Tuesday from 9.30am to 11.30am, and at St Helen Auckland Children's Centre every Wednesday between 1.00pm and 3.00pm.

The sessions are for people who are expecting a new baby or have children under one year. A spokesperson said, "You can come along and play with your baby, chat to the midwife who will be at the session offering ante-natal and post-natal support and advice. "All our Bumps and Beyond groups are offered as drop-ins, meaning parents can pop in at any time during the session, no appointment is required."

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR HAITI (AND GET A NICE PICTURE)

A Bishop Auckland photographer is making his work available to people who donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee following the Haiti earthquake.

Paul White has teamed up with the UK's and Europe's number one online community for photo printing, sharing and personal publishing, PhotoBox (www.photobox.co.uk) to give anybody donating £5 or more through his Justgiving.com

page to receive a free print of his work as a thank you.

Visitors to his website, <http://paulmwhitephotography.shutterfly.com> can choose from an array of landscape images.

After making their donation at www.justgiving.com/paulmwhitephotographyhaiti, donors simply leave their email address and choice of picture to receive their free 10 x 8 featuring one of his landscapes.

Paul, originally from Shildon,

said, "We have all seen the devastation that has been caused in Haiti and I felt that this would be a good way of raising some money and actually thanking the people who donate by giving them something in return."

Mark Chapman, MD at PhotoBox commented, "The tragedy in Haiti is heart wrenching. When watching it on the news, you just feel compelled to help in any way you can."



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SAD NEWS FROM KINGSWAY

by John Phelan

Bishop Auckland Cricket Club held their A.G.M. last Friday in their Kingsway Social Club, however, the whole event was overshadowed by the sad death of former player, lifelong supporter and member, Gordon Nicholson, who passed away last weekend.

Gordon, who was 83, loved his cricket, and was very knowledgeable on the game in the area as well as at Bishop Auckland. He made his debut for the club at Middlesbrough in 1941 and hardly missed a summer after that at Kingsway. He was often at the ground in his last few years and would even drive on his own to North Yorkshire to watch a Third Team game.

Club Chairman, John Dobson said, "The club is deeply saddened by the death of one of our oldest members and our heartfelt condolences go out to Gordon's family." Club stalwart Keith Oldfield said, "When I joined Bishop Auckland C.C. in the 1970's

Gordon's 1st team days were over and he played mainly in the second team as an opening batsman and wicket-keeper. He will be a big miss at Bishop Auckland Cricket Club."

There had already been a minute's silence at the A.G.M. for Mr. A. Grayson and Mr. T. Storey, two other members who had also passed away during the year, when Keith Hopper informed the A.G.M. of Gordon's fragile health.

On a brighter note the cricket club now has a full committee with Mr. John Dobson Chairman, Mrs. J. Conway Secretary and Mr. M. Newton Treasurer. The committee consisted of Mr. J Dobson, Mr N. Grainger, Mr M. Thompson and Mr G. Conway.

Professional Gary Pratt was elected 1st team captain with Phil Holdsworth his vice-captain. David Garnett will skipper the 2nd team with Alistair Wild vice-captain. Keith Oldfield will toss the coin for the 3rd team but a

vice-captain has not yet been appointed.

Bar sales were up by nearly £14,000 so Andy Poole and his staff were thanked for their efforts, while Ross Cowling gave a report on the club mark, which is an ongoing process by which the cricket club gain marks or points relating to the amount of cricketing activity in the club.

The following amendments were made to the constitution: 1) Family members as defined by Rule 27 shall be eligible to stand for the general committee. 2) Family membership to be defined as two adults and their children under 18 years of age. 3) Rule 27 will now include in 5(g) corporate members to groups who are not eligible to vote at the A.G.M. 4) At present Rule 35 limits the number of functions where the club can sell alcohol to the public to 12. This line will be omitted as the club is applying for a separate licence to cover functions involving the public.

NEWCASTLE FALCONS TRAINING DAYS

Following the success of Newcastle Falcons February Coaching Camp at Bishop Auckland Rugby Club last year, they will be returning on Thursday and Friday the 18 and 19th February, 2010. The Camp starts at 10.00am

and finishes at 3.00pm each day. The cost is £40 for both days.

"This is a great opportunity for players aged 7 to 17, of all levels of ability, to experience top-level coaching and meet Falcons players," commented a

spokesperson. To book a place, or for more information, visit www.bishopaucklandrugby.co.uk. Alternatively, call Peter Gallone, the club's event organiser, on 07825 521 632 or email him at Peter.Gallone@bishopaucklandrugby.co.uk.

MORE FUNDS FOR HAITI

During the recent 'Scottish' folk music evening at Bishop Auckland Town Hall, featuring Isla StClair, a raffle raised £80 for the Haiti earthquake appeal. This has now been donated

at www.donate.bt.com/dec. "Many thanks to all those who supported this very worthy cause," commented a spokesperson for the Town Hall.

FOUR HOUNDS & FINE WALKS

The Town Hall will be hosting artwork by Joanne Brodie, an artist who is inspired by Teesdale, where she has lived for the last 6 years.

The exhibition, called Four Hounds and Fine Walks, will be on display in the McGuinness Gallery between Monday, 8th February, and Saturday, 27th.

BLOOD DONATIONS

The National Blood Service will be taking blood donations in Bishop Auckland on Tuesday, February 16th. Donations will be taken at Bishop Auckland Rugby Club

on Bridge Road, between 2.30pm to 4.00pm, and 4.30pm to 7.00pm.

For more details, or to make an appointment, call 0300 123 2323.

DIESEL THEFT

On December 29th, John Michael Stott scaled the secure compound of a building site belonging to Bellway Homes Ltd. in Spennymoor, however, a member of the public witnessed this and telephoned the police.

The 39 year-old, from St. Cuthbert's Walk in Bishop Auckland, was found hiding

near the diesel tank with two plastic drums. He made full and frank admissions to the police, telling them that he had previously been employed on the site until being made redundant some 16/17 months ago. Stott admitted the charge of stealing 45 litres of red diesel, valued at £45, and was fined a total of £185.

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BISHOP RUFC VS WESTOE RUFC



Bishop battled hard during the game against Westoe.

Bishop Auckland RUFC (under 14's) recently played Westoe RUFC. Westoe started the game well, manufacturing overlaps in the back line, and it was no surprise when two tries followed in quick succession. Bishop Auckland, stung by the early set back, took the game to Westoe. However, the team kept on battling and pulled one try back with a super individual effort by Keirl, which was converted by Thompson. Westoe responded almost immediately, with another well-worked back move leading to a try in the corner. The play then became forward-dominated with territory gained by the kicking game. One such kick

was fielded by the Bishops' fullback under his own posts and the resultant tackle led to a turnover and another Westoe try. Bishops appeared to copy the tactic and a long kick and chase led to Jarry scoring in the corner. The second half started with a period of Bishops forward domination and another try by Keirl. Gradually the Westoe pack started to gain more possession which their dangerous backs used to full effect, scoring several well worked tries. The Bishops battled gamely to the end showing good team spirit. Scrivener was awarded Man-of-the-Match for the Bishops Team. Final score, Bishop 19 - 46 Westoe.

SPORTSMAN'S EVENING SUCCESS

St. Mary's junior football club recently enjoyed a successful Sportsman's Evening.

A club spokesperson said, "The club would like to thank everyone who supported last Friday's Sportsman's Night." Over 200 people attended the event, where Lee Sharpe shared his experiences of a life in professional football.

The former Manchester United and England player talked about his former team-mates and what it was like to work under Sir Alex Ferguson. Sharpe was in superb form, staying at the event all night, from 7.00pm to 11.00pm, talking, signing autographs and having photographs taken. Comedian Jed Stone also provided entertainment, and along with a memorabilia auction, raffle and quiz the club managed to raise a magnificent amount of £2,698 towards the running cost for the nineteen teams that St. Mary's run. In the only game of the weekend, St Mary's U15B's travelled to Richmond Town for the return leg on a cold and frosty day. St Mary's were 1-0



Lee Sharpe at the Sportsman's event with organisers and comedian, Jed Stone.

inside the first three minutes with a well-taken goal from Christian Taylor, which came from some fantastic passing from the right wing. St Marys went further ahead with an 'absolute corker' from well outside the 18yard box; the goal scorer was Rhys Jones. The two blues made it 3-0 with a corner crossed in from Jones, which met Marcus Pinders head. It remained 3-0 when the whistle blew for half-time. The second half started as brightly as the first with Sam Dixon scoring two minutes into the start to make it 4-0. C Taylor took his tally to 4 when he scored 3 goals in 10 minutes to push the score up

to 7-0. Despite some pressure from Richmond, the defence of Stephen Thompson, Greg Taylor, Pinder and Haydn Lewis and 'keeper, James Cleminson, kept a clean sheet for the Saints. A solid performance from Thomas Knowles, Patrick Stephenson, Jones and Nathan Kitch in midfield ensured St. Mary's dominated the game for large spells. Lewis scored 2 minutes before the whistle blew to make the final score 8-0 to St Marys, rounding off a well-deserved win. Players are always required for most ages. Anyone interested in joining St Mary's should visit www.basmj.com.

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