

### Business that will always be required

Now that the Book Sale has gone, it seems that another 'whipping boy' has been found for local residents to protest about - namely, a funeral parlour in Galgate.

If people don't wish to be inconvenienced by having a business or shop premises near their homes, then why are they living in a town?

There are numerous other shops and firms operating in Galgate, but the one business that there will always need for is a funeral parlour - even in recessionary times. For there's one thing certain in life: just as we are born, so shall we die. Man is not immortal, although he might like to think he is.

In the certain knowledge that they too will one day undertake the services of a handy undertaking business close by, perhaps the residents in Galgate could adopt a more positive viewpoint by seeing it as a matter of convenience rather than nuisance?

MADELINE SUTCLIFFE  
George Street, Barnard Castle

### Rent increase is hard for many council tenants

Due to illness I have been unable to thank Coun Fred Blackwell for opposing the massive council house rent increasing in Teesdale. It is hard to believe no support was forthcoming from the councillors of Evenwood, Cockfield and Toft Hill who I believe have the greatest number of council properties.

Have I to believe that councillors think, like a lot more people, that all the tenants live rent free, paid by social security? If so, I would like to inform them a heck of a lot pay full rent.

Having attended the boundary commission on changes in local government at the village community centre, I asked the question: could the county promise to keep Teesdale rents the lowest in the county or would they level them off with other authorities? Now Teesdale is doing it for them. (PS: I know about the cut-backs in government grants).

Can I ask the council that in future when housing associations build new dwellings for senior citizens, part of the agreement includes the installation of water meters?

The latest ones in Evenwood have none and the residents, mainly single persons, are paying the standard rate of approximately £207 per year

## Letters

while some households in the district with four or five residents are paying much less. I honestly believe the senior citizens in Manor Grove, Evenwood, will not use as much water as a family of four or five. So please let us try to protect senior citizens in future and install water meters in new properties.

KEN WALTON  
12 Shirley Close, Evenwood

### Three cheers for this lady & RAF

My thanks to Mrs Phoebe Hutchinson for her first class letter with reference to people who constantly complain about low flying in the area.

I myself and many others to whom I have spoken on this subject are in total agreement with the comments and remarks she wrote. The type of pilot training is essential for the defence of this country, as well as many others now in the grip of dictators and tyrants.

All I can say in her defence is that the people who are forever harping on about it week after week must have a very short memory about what has happened in the past. If it was not for these kind of operations carried out by our brave lads in 1939-45 and up until just recently a lot of people would not be around today to see an aircraft, let alone hear one.

They should think themselves lucky to find that the planes flying overhead are ours and not German or Russian. Thank God for the RAF and all who fly in it. Keep up the good work, lads. You have my vote now and forever.

I end with three cheers for Mrs Phoebe Hutchinson and the RAF. But not too loud. A.B. will be listening.

JIMMY BECKLEY  
Dawson Road, Barnard Castle

### Noise of jets is small price to pay for our security

As one of the 26 participants who observed Alan Hyde in action on low-flying, I can reassure the anxious mother that the RAF has nothing to fear. His list (which had been reviewed by Wing Commander Coop) was summarily dismissed as irrelevant to the issue of the day, and his further contributions, centred around IRA terrorists on the M1 and the Queen's visits to Holwick, achieved nothing.

## Relatives and friends join in a party for Mrs Elsie Burke's 90th birthday

Mrs Elsie May Burke was up bright and early to receive lots of greetings cards and welcome a host of visitors when she celebrated her 90th birthday on Thursday.

She was kept busy all day at her home at 58 Gordon Lane, Ramshaw - and she had a hectic time again on Saturday when many of her family arrived to join her at a party.

Her son Patrick travelled from his home in Cumbria, and other relatives including grandchildren and great grandchildren moved in from all over the country to join in the festivities at the Bridge Inn in Ramshaw.

Mrs Burke is in excellent health, and she puts it down to a lot of walking along country lanes in the fresh air.

She was born in Leeds, but moved to Teesdale with her parents, Tommy and Janey Raine, when she was four.

Tommy was a brilliant cornet player who could not find



Mrs Elsie Burke

work in Leeds. He was given a job as a miner at Randolph Colliery on the strength of his musical ability, and also became the colliery bandmaster. He was in great demand to

play the cornet in other bands around the dale.

Elsie had three sisters who have all now died, but who became well known in different villages - Mrs Mabel Maddison of Toft Hill, Mrs Kitty McDonald of Cockfield and Mrs Lilian Purdie of Evenwood. They all went to Ramshaw School.

Elsie later became a lady's sewing maid for a wealthy family near Bournemouth for a number of years, and it was there that she met her husband Paul, a soldier who hailed from Tipperary. They were married at Evenwood Parish Church.

Paul left the army and became an attendant at Cambridge House, the old workhouse in Barnard Castle. Later Elsie also got a job there as a seamstress. Her task was to repair clothing and bedding for 86 hostel residents and 50 hospital patients as well as 22 men in Grove Park hostel.

Elsie, who has been a widow for about 30 years, says she loves seeing all her relatives of all ages.

Her son Patrick had a long career in the army, reaching the rank of major. Sadly her only daughter, Mrs Ellen Vart, who lived in Ramshaw Row, died some years ago.

### Rugby club needs lights to help it go on making good progress

I was disappointed, to say the least, to read in last week's Mercury that Barnard Castle Town Council was opposed to the erection of rugby club training lights on the Demesnes. The disappointment was further compounded by the fact that nobody contacted the club to discuss the proposal. I am certain that had they done so, they would have viewed the situation with a lot more care and understanding.

The rugby club goes from strength to strength, involving well over 100 people week in and week out. It is a business and it does have the serious financial commitments which must be adhered to. Financial stability is generated firstly by success on the field. This does not come with merely turning

up with your kit bag. It takes years of dedicated hard work in all weathers and conditions to achieve. In our small community we need all the help we can get.

The provision of open recreational space is much appreciated but serves little purpose when its availability is limited because it is dark six months of the year after 6pm. Only the English could invent a game involving immense skill and manual dexterity, and then insist on playing it in the most foul weather in the depths of winter.

I invite any member of the town council to the clubhouse for a constructive meeting and an insight into the intense involvement of all concerned. Our application was not borne of the frustration of weekly erecting of temporary lights. Moreover it was a statement of our intentions to take the club forward to greater things, which can only be good for all parties.

DAVID JACKSON  
Chairman, Barnard Castle R.U.F.C. Birch Road

### Come along and enjoy this walk

May 1 invite your readers to take part in our walk for wildlife (already reported on in the Mercury) on Sunday 17th April? There will be three distances ranging from two miles to 16 miles. All the walks will take circular routes starting and finishing from the Bowlees visitor centre.

We are inviting anyone who enjoys walking and who appreciates the countryside to obtain sponsorship on behalf of Durham Wildlife Trust, the organisation that takes action to protect the wildlife of County Durham. The venue has been chosen for the outstanding natural beauty of the area. With spring well underway there should be lots to see to add an extra interest.

All monies raised will go towards the valuable and important conservation work of Durham Wildlife Trust. Further details, entry forms and sponsorship forms can be obtained from me. It promises to be a most enjoyable day.

RICHARD WOOD  
Low Barnes Nature Reserve, Witton-le-Wear

### Time for a coffee

A coffee morning is being held this Saturday 10.30am-noon in the Methodist Church schoolroom at Cothesterone by the Cothesterone and Upper Teesdale Cancer Research Committee. There will be a cake stall, knitted goods, coffee and biscuits. Everyone will be welcome.

### Paintings on show

Artist Chris Mouncey has an exhibition of over 100 watercolours opening at The Bowes Museum this Friday. It will last six weeks during which time he will give some demonstrations and painting classes for children and adults. He will have some paintings and signed prints on sale. Details of the classes and fees are available at the museum.

### New map and guide

A new edition of the official map and guide of Teesdale, with street plans of Barnard Castle and Middleton, was published on Wednesday. It is a handy document for local residents as well as visitors, with a lot of information about shops and services as well as tourist attractions.

JUNIOR FRIENDS OF THE BOWES MUSEUM MEETINGS  
30th March and 6th April  
10 - 11.45 a.m.  
£2 subscription; £1.50 per session to non-members.  
Information: Tel. 690606.

ANTIQUE & COLLECTORS FAIR  
SCARTH HALL Staindrop  
Sunday, 3rd April  
10 a.m. until 4.30 p.m.  
Refreshments.  
Details 091 5842934  
Albany Fairs.

DART COACH TRIP to the PICASSO EXHIBITION London  
Saturday, 7th May  
dep. 0600, ret. 2300 hours  
Galgate, Barnard Castle.  
7 hours in London.  
Fare £15, Exhibition £6.25  
Bookings to DART Art Bus, 43 Galgate, Barnard Castle.  
DL12 8EL with name, address, Tel. No. and S.A.E.  
Cheques payable to DART (Developing Arts in Rural Teesdale)

## MERCURY COMMENT

### It's well worth putting cash into scheme to fight back against crime

It will cost some money if the latest idea put forward for Teesdale Council goes ahead, but surely most residents will agree with it.

It makes sense for a modest amount of public cash to be put into a project to fight crime at a time when just about every house and every firm in the dale is liable to suffer from the actions of criminals.

Most people would rather see extra police officers on patrol around the district as a way of cutting down on burglaries, car thefts and vandalism, but it has already been made clear that won't happen.

Others would like to have security cameras put up at strategic points to record evidence against thieves and hooligans, but it has been declared that funds can't be found for this either.

So it comes back to neighbourhood watch as the most reliable means of protection - in other words, the public have to join in and play a leading

role in looking after their own belongings.

It has already been proved, in Teesdale and elsewhere in the county, that these anti-crime schemes are effective in reducing the number of break-ins and other offences.

Possibly their main point is that they make people more aware of what they should do to make their property safe, and how to keep an eye on the homes of neighbours.

A secondary point is that some criminals - not all, but a significant proportion of them - move on and leave a street alone if they see notices pointing out that it is included in a watch scheme.

Some of the schemes are extremely well run, but others may have run out of steam, and attempts to launch new ones in several parts of Teesdale have failed so far.

It will be worthwhile to have an officer helping to set up additional schemes to get most of the district covered, and to give them all some regular professional support. It will not cost the council a great deal to pay part of the costs of the officer. It is the sort of sum that will be easily covered if just one or two burglaries - the sort reported so regularly in the Mercury - are prevented.

### PEEPS INTO THE PAST

5 years ago  
Pauline Harrison of Churchill Road, Barnard Castle, turned her hobby of knitting into a business when she opened a wool shop in a former video rental store.

Regulars at the Royal Oak in Staindrop raised £470 for the children's ward at Bishop Auckland hospital when they held a sale of decorated eggs. A creation made by Peter Gates, showing the Frank Bruno v Mike Tyson fight, was bought by butcher Joe Simpson for £20.

10 years ago  
A two year old mule lamb looked after by Mr Bill Anderson of Bell House, Staindrop, gave birth to quintuplets. The ewe produced three late one night and then two more the following morning.

Cub scout leaders Mrs Jennifer Priestley of Staindrop and Mr Jim Gibson of Barnard Castle were awarded medals of merit for 15 years of warrant service.

15 years ago  
Ken Bainbridge and his wife Mabel moved out the Langdon Beck Hotel after 36 years as popular hosts. As well as running the picturesque premises the couple maintained a 183 acre farm.

Denise Hodgson, 19, of Featherstone Bungalow, Cothesterone, was chosen to be

Barnard Castle's centenary Meet queen. Julie Nelson and Angela Dominic were selected as her attendants.

20 years ago  
The Rev Leslie Thompson, rector of Middleton and rural dean of Barnard Castle, was installed as Honorary Canon of Durham Cathedral.

Neil and Josie Davidson reopened Blagraves House in Barnard Castle after it had been closed for over seven years. The couple did a great amount of restoration work to the ancient building which was formerly owned by Colin Murray.

25 years ago  
Barnard Castle FC team who beat league leaders Grosvenor 2-1: G. Herron, T. Thornton, N. Wilson, K. Walker, K. Wilson, J. Emmerson, D. Jones, W. Lambert, R. Rideall, I. Tipton and B. Evans.

The owners of Closehouse Barytes Mine, Lunedale, applied for a council house but turned one down at Woodland as it was too far away.

VINTAGE AND AUTO JUMBLE  
Saturday, 2nd April  
HIGH STREET BROUGH  
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

HAMSTERLEY  
EASTER MONDAY WHIST DRIVE AND DOMINO DRIVE  
Starts 7.30 p.m. Supper.  
All proceeds in aid of Cancer Research.

ANTIQUE AND COLLECTORS FAIR  
RAVENSWORTH VILLAGE HALL (A66 Scotch Corner-Bowes Road A6108 Richmond-A66)  
Sunday, 3rd April  
10.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.  
Home-made refreshments.  
Tel. 0609 779611 or 748280

Grassholme Farm Tea Room & Restaurant  
• Morning Coffee • Snacks  
• Afternoon Teas  
• Evening Meals  
Booking essential for evening meal.  
Closed Wednesday and Sunday.  
Tel. Allison (0833) 40494  
Grassholme Farm, Lunedale, Middleton-in-Teesdale.

MIDDLETON & TEESDALE BAND  
TABLE TOP SALE  
Easter Monday, 4th April  
Village Hall, Eggleston at 2 p.m.  
Cake Stall, Bric-a-Brac, Tombola, Raffle Crafts etc.  
To hire Tables - Ring 0833 650575

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6a The Bank, Barnard Castle  
0833 37870  
Completely new collection of original paintings for our First Anniversary Spring Exhibition.  
FRAMING SERVICE NOW AVAILABLE.  
Open Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 12 noon-4 p.m.

TEESDALE SPORTS Development  
STEP AEROBICS  
12 weeks of exercise! for £20.40  
COCKFIELD VILLAGE HALL  
Mondays 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.  
18th April to 11th July  
EGGLESTON VILLAGE HALL  
Wednesdays 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
20th April to 13th July  
NEWBIGGIN VILLAGE HALL  
Tuesdays 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
19th April to 12th July  
OVINGTON VILLAGE HALL  
Thursdays 7.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.  
14th April to 14th July  
STAINDROP SCARTH HALL  
Mondays 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
Fridays 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.  
15th April to 18th July  
Limited places so please book early.  
Telephone Nick Goodchild on (0833) 690000  
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