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Mencap celebrated its official partnership with the 2017 Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon at the Mencap Centre. Pictured is Alderman Brian Kingston, Lord Mayor of Belfast, David Seaton, Chairman of the Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon, Mencap Young Ambassador James Martin and Dame Mary Peters CH, DBE.

Lord Mayor to run full Belfast marathon in aid of Mencap

Alderman Brian Kingston, Lord Mayor of Belfast, was among the VIPs at the Mencap Centre for the launch of the learning disability charity's official partnership with the 2017 Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon.

The Lord Mayor, a keen runner, has committed to completing the 26.2-mile race on 1st May and to fundraise for Mencap through sponsorship.

Speaking at the launch, the Lord Mayor said: "It was great to see the Mencap Centre and to cele-

brate Mencap's involvement in the 2017 Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon. The marathon is a highlight on Belfast's calendar as it brings people to the city, promotes fitness and creates a unique spectacle and community spirit on our streets. "It also promotes fundrais-

ing for many worthy causes. I am running for Mencap this year because I find the charity's work so inspiring. The new Mencap Centre serves as a new model for early intervention services across the UK and Ireland, so Belfast is lucky to have this state-of-the art facility.

I encourage everyone to join me in running and fundraising in aid of Mencap to help this charity keep changing the lives of local people with a learning disability."

Continued on Page 2

Bridge opened in honour of late East Belfast actor

A new bridge has opened in east Belfast, named in honour of local actor Jimmy Ellis.

It's the latest addition to the multi-million pound Conswater Greenway and came on the third anniversary of Mr Ellis' death.

The family of Jimmy Ellis, who was best known for his roles in the 60s series Z-Cars and the Billy Plays, attended the launch.

His wife Robina Ellis said the bridge, situated just yards from his family home and with the Harland and Wolff cranes in the background, pays a fitting tribute to a star who never forgot his local connections.

"We would like to consider the bridge naming as a double tribute, which would have made Jimmy very happy," she said.

"Jimmy remained fiercely proud of his roots for his whole life and, had he

lived to see this, he would want to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy this wonderful place."

The bridge is part of a new section of the Greenway linking CS Lewis Square and Victoria Park.

It includes 1.4km of new cycle and walkway as well as play areas and public art and flood defences for local properties.

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World Book Day at East Belfast Mission Celebrated with bicycle propelled mobile library!

World Book Day on Thursday 2nd March 2017 was celebrated with the launch of a mobile library funded by Urban Villages.

This Pop-up Art Piece was developed through a series of Workshops involving Going Green* and Avoniel Community Gardeners. Group participants commented on an improvement in their mental health and well-being after engaging with such a fun project. The mobile library travelled around East Belfast giving out books to the public and performance art was delivered by local poet Jim McLean to children at Bright Sparks Nursery at East Belfast Mission, Ravenscroft Nursery and Walkway Crèche with a theme of "feeding the imagination".

A participant said - 'All the hard work on the Project was worth it when we saw the children's smiling faces'. And there was positive response from local Community members who thought the event 'brightened up the road (Newtownards Road)



for a while'. Arlene Megaw (Life Skills Coordinator at Hosford) said- 'This innovative and creative project included projects in the Urban Village East Belfast Area with the participants learning and sharing new skills and resources'. Aidan Byrne, Manager of Hosford the homelessness service of East Belfast Mission said; 'It was great for our clients to be involved in such a positive project. I want to thank everyone in-

olved and we're all looking forward to working with Urban Villages to create more events and spaces in the community'. There's never been a better time to read with proposals to reduce opening hours at 14

of the busiest libraries in Northern Ireland having been scrapped. Libraries NI changed on initial plans, revealed in May last year in wake of budget cuts, after an extra £225,000 was reportedly "found to ward off the threat".

The proposals, under which some libraries stood to close for up to an extra day every week, attracted more than 8,000 responses opposing the plans as part of the Libraries NI consultation. Affected branches included Ballymena; Bangor; Belfast Central; Carrickfergus; Coleraine; Derry Central; Dungannon; Enniskillen; Finaghy; Glengormley; Lisburn City; Lurgan; Newry City and Omagh. Each would have had their opening hours cut to 45 hours a week, some of which had already had opening hours reduced in 2015.

Continued from Page 1

Margaret Kelly, Director of Mencap in Northern Ireland, added:

"We would like to thank Lord Mayor Brian Kingston for his commitment to running the marathon and raising money for Mencap. A 26.2-mile run is no easy feat, so we appreciate his support for not only participating on Marathon Day but for also logging the training hours. "As a charity that supports people with a learning disability and their families, we believe anyone can take part in the marathon and its associated events, whether that's

running the Fun Run or simply donating to a friend's fundraising page. Money raised from marathon support will benefit a variety of Mencap initiatives including a family support programme that will offer bespoke guidance to families with a child diagnosed with a learning disability. This innovative initiative is a first for our charity and it is a crucial step in reaching more families across Northern Ireland. In addition to the full race, the 2017 Deep RiverRock Belfast

City Marathon also includes a team relay, one of the most popular events. James Martin, a Mencap Young Ambassador and member of the learning disability team, said: "I have been involved with Mencap since I was 2 years old, when I attended Mencap's nursery school for children with a learning disability, autism or developmental delay. Mencap has been such an important part of my life since then and it still means so much to me. My team and I

have been training for months for the upcoming relay and we are excited to run. We are asking everyone across Northern Ireland to 'Step Up for Mencap' and support the charity that has done so much for us." To sign up for the team relay, full marathon or any of the other events at the 2017 Deep RiverRock Belfast City Marathon in aid of Mencap, email fundraising.ni@mencap.org.uk, call 02890 691 351 or visit mencapbigstep-forward.org.

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East Belfast mum opens up about living with Huntington's Disease

An East Belfast mum has opened up about living with Huntington's Disease.

The hereditary disorder of the central nervous system causes gradual loss of control of thoughts, feelings, behaviour, movement, communication and swallow until patients become wholly dependent on care. There is currently no cure or any means of slowing the disease which affects around 200 men and women in Northern Ireland with symptoms usually starting to show from 35-50 years.

East Belfast mum-of-three Lynsay Hands was 16 when her mum was diagnosed with Huntington's Disease. If you have the condition there is a 50% chance that each of your children will get it. The 38-year-old said: "On the 23rd August 2011 my whole life was turned upside down when my test results came back positive. When the nurse told me that I had HD I screamed and ran out of the room.

"Six years on and I suffer from severe depression and anxiety which makes it hard for me to go out. I also have really bad mood swings and I'm lucky to get a couple of hours sleep



Lynsay Hands pictured front right helping launch HD Awareness Week at Stormont

a night. I get the odd movement in my arms and legs which makes walking about very hard.

"My kids Amy-Lee, 16, Carter, 14, and Katy, 11, help around the house, my brother and sister are nearby and I've friends that do the shopping for me which is great. I do get times were I would just sit and cry and say why me? but I keep fighting for the sake of my kids.

"A year ago I started going to the HDANI Belfast support group. The first time I went I

cried for two hours but it was the best thing because they listened to me and answered my questions. I shared my story and heard other peoples.

"I worry about my children and whether they will get HD. They know that I have the disease and they've seen their granny suffer so know what lies ahead.

"I try to answer their questions honestly but it's really hard. HDANI started a youth group which was brilliant because the kids went

away and did stuff that I couldn't do with them and spent time talking about HD with a counsellor and other kids their own age.

"It really helped them and took the pressure off me. I know lots of charities are struggling for funding but I really don't know what I would do without HDANI- my Huntington's family- and would love to see more chances for patients and carers to come together and more help for our kids."

Visit www.hdani.org.uk for more info.

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Translink pick up Four Awards at Local Industry Ceremony

Translink picked up four prestigious awards at the Federation of Passenger Transport Awards Northern Ireland (FPTNI) including Translink Bus Driver of the Year, Runner Up, Hidden Hero Award and Raising Industry Standards.

The "Translink Bus Driver of the Year" recognises top performing drivers who deliver high standards of customer service alongside high quality driving skills and going beyond the call of duty. Belfast Bus Driver, Con Brown won this year's prestigious award

with Stephen Semple from Newtownabbey coming in as runner up. Translink Depot Manager, Kerry Montgomery (Belfast), received the Raising Industry Standards Award for his team's work on the Depot Improvement Programme. This in-

novative project is designed to enhance and improve the production quality, output efficiency and safety performance of its bus and rail Engineering maintenance facilities throughout Northern Ireland. Also part of this award-winning team were Graeme Copeland-Project Leader (Newtownards), Brian Madeley-Project Leader (Broughshane) and Peter Steele-Project Leader (Ballymoney)

Finally, Metro Bus Driver, Sean Armstrong who was recognised as the Hidden Hero for supporting a very distressed girl, calling an ambulance and waiting with her until it arrived. Judges commented that all nominated Translink



L-R - Mr Scott Packman, Synectics Mobile Systems, John McGrillen, Tourism NI, Translink Depot Manager, Kerry Montgomery, received the Raising Industry Standards Award for his team's work on the Depot Improvement Programme, and Ciaran De Burca, Director TNI Projects, Department for Infrastructure.

staff have a professional approach and are able to adapt quickly to

changing circumstances and additional passengers' needs. They also

mentioned that Sean's actions on that day may have saved the woman's

life. Translink Group Chief Executive, Chris Con-

way said; I want to congratulate all our worthy winners. These awards are a fantastic way to celebrate the top talent within our teams and recognise the hard work and dedication of our employees that go the extra mile to keep our customers coming back again and again."

The first images of a new transport hub for Belfast have been revealed. The Belfast Hub will serve as a main bus and train connection point for all parts of Northern Ireland and the main rail link to Dublin. Translink has revealed the latest designs and has invited the public to share their views ahead of planning permission.

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DETAILS OF 2017 TWILIGHT MARKETS REVEALED

Traders are being invited to apply for a place at this year's seasonally-themed Twilight Markets.

The 'Spring Picnic' will take place at St George's Market on 9 and 10 May, followed by the 'Summer Beach Party' on 1 and 2 August and finally the 'Twinkling Winter' market on 7 and 8 November.

Last year's two Twilight Markets between them attracted almost 46,500 visitors. The expansion of the event to three dates in 2017 looks set to increase those numbers even further. Belfast City Council is

now inviting applications for artisan food and drink producers, artists and craftspeople seeking to be a part of the spring and summer events. Go to www.belfastcity.gov.uk/twilightbelfast for details on criteria for traders, stall hire charges, and how to register your interest to trade.

The closing date for submissions is Monday 10 April.

St George's Market is one of Belfast's oldest attractions. It was



built between 1890 and 1896 and is one of the best markets in the UK and Ireland. It has been selected for numerous local and national titles and awards for its fresh, local produce and great atmosphere. It holds a weekly Friday Variety Market, the City Food and Craft Market on Saturdays and the Sunday Market. It also hosts a

range of events throughout the year.

St George's Market has joined Jamie Oliver in being named the "best in Britain". The market has recently added to its growing list of accolades when it was named 'Best Market' at the annual Observer Food Monthly Awards. The award was earned by readers' votes.

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Miss Spice and Miss Antrim crowned at the next Insanity Tan Miss World Northern Ireland Heat

A bevy of beauties descended upon Antrim as the second local heat of the Insanity Tan Miss World Northern Ireland contest came to Spice, Templepatrick recently.

Girls from across the country competed for their place at the Miss World Northern Ireland final in front of an astute judging panel which included model agent Alison Clarke, Former Miss World Northern Ireland, Leanne McDowell, Current Miss World Northern Ireland, Emma Carswell, Nazim Din, Owner of Spice and Joe McGlinchey & Gerry McBride, joint MD's of Bronze Direct and producer of Insanity Tan.

Eden McAllister from Dundonald who was crowned "Miss Spice" and Saffron Jackson from Belfast was chosen as "Miss Antrim". Both girls will now go forward to the grand final in Belfast's Europa Hotel in May and stand a chance of winning the coveted title of the, 'Insanity Tan Miss World Northern Ireland 2017.'

Competition organiser Alison Clarke, "It was great to be back at Spice again this year, and what a brilliant night had by all. Antrim never disappoints with the calibre of girls who enter, once again it was a fabulous night and a huge congratulations to



Pictured at the Spice Heat of the Insanity Tan Miss World Northern Ireland (from left to right) are: Joe McGlinchey, joint MD of Bronze Direct & producer of Insanity Tan, Miss Antrim, Saffron Jackson, Current Miss World Northern Ireland, Emma Carswell, Former Miss World Northern Ireland, Leanne McDowell, Miss Antrim, Eden McAllister and Gerry McBride, joint MD of Bronze Direct & producer of Insanity Tan.

the winning girls and a big thank you to all who came along!"

Joe McGlinchey & Gerry McBride, joint MD's of Bronze Direct and producer of Insanity Tan, and this year's Title sponsor added, "What a fantastic night at Spice. We have been told this heat has always been a strong one and it certainly didn't disappoint. The atmosphere

was brilliant and all the girls looked amazing. Congratulations to Eden McAllister and Saffron Jackson, and a big thank you for all who made the night so special."

Last year's winner, Emma Carswell added, "Congratulations to Eden and Saffron. My year as Miss World Northern Ireland 2016 has been a dream come true. It is something

that I will treasure forever and I cannot thank event organiser Alison Clarke and ACA Models enough for giving me this life changing opportunity. I would also like to thank all of my amazing sponsors for everything that they have generously provided for me this year as Miss World Northern Ireland. It certainly has been a busy year!

"I am so excited to get to know all of the girls as they embark on their Miss World Northern Ireland journey and I would like to wish them the very best of luck!"

Title sponsor Insanity Tan will be supporting the Miss World Northern Ireland 2017 contest with a number of fabulous giveaways - Every Entrant that enters is offered a complimentary Insanity Spray Tan before every heat from any Bronze Tanning & Beauty Salon and the two winners will receive an Insanity Tan gift bag on the night as well as a discount card that entitles them to 20% off all treatments at any of the Bronze Tanning & Beauty salons.

The competition is still open to entrants with heats taking place across the country, for further details of heat locations and dates please visit; www.missnorthernireland.co.uk

For more information please contact Alison Clarke, Joleen Stewart or Victoria Withers at ACA Models Office on 028 90 809 809 or email bookings@acamodels.com

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Ballina & Achill Island	5 Day	5 th - 9 th June	£330
Llandudno, Wales	5 Day	12 th - 16 th June	£399
Southport & Merseyside	5 Day	26 th - 30 th June	£390
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Connswater Community Greenway Project

With development in progress for the Connswater Community Greenway let's take a look at what the project is all about.

The Connswater Community Greenway is a £40 million investment in East Belfast. The project has been developed by the East Belfast Partnership and is being delivered by Belfast City Council.

It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, Belfast City Council and the Department for Social Development. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Rivers Agency is working in partnership with the CCG to deliver elements of the East Belfast Flood Alleviation Scheme which will help to reduce flooding in east Belfast.

The Connswater Community Greenway will create a 9km linear park through East Belfast, following the

course of the Connswater, Knock and Loop Rivers, connecting the open and green spaces. The Connswater River is currently dirty and neglected. As part of the project the rivers will be cleaned and brought back to life. The Greenway will create vibrant, attractive, safe and accessible parkland for leisure, recreation and community events and activities.

The project will improve the quality of life for the people of east Belfast. These include; the 40,000 residents, pupils and students attending the 23 schools and colleges, visitors and tourists to east Belfast and those who chose to work and invest in east Belfast. A

whole new greener environment will emerge to link local residents to parks, leisure facilities, businesses, shopping centre, schools and colleges.

The Connswater Community Greenway will:

Create 9km linear park for walking and cycling

16km of foot and cycle paths

26 new or improved bridges and crossings

Serve 23 schools and colleges

Clean up to 5 km of rivers

Create hubs for education, interpretation points and tourism and heritage trails

Create a C.S. Lewis Civic Square for celebrations and events

Provide a wildlife corridor from Belfast Lough to the Castlereagh Hills

The Connswater Community Greenway will be a living landmark for east Belfast and a fantastic legacy for our children.

SERCS YOUNG CHEF COMPETES AT WORLD'S BIGGEST CULINARY COMPETITION

20-year-old David Haggan from Dundonald recently travelled to India with his mentor Brian Magill to represent Northern Ireland at the Young Chef Olympiad in a cook-off that lasted four days.

Over 67 talented culinary students from across the globe flew to India to represent their country to be in with their chance of winning the grand title and a cash prize of \$10,000.

David finished an impressive fourteenth out of 45 competitors.

David explains: "I am passionate about food, using fresh local products, and also in developing my skills and knowledge."

David studies level 3 Patisserie and Confectionary student at the Colleges Bangor campus.

Young Chef Olympiad is organized by India's largest hotel school chain, International Institute of Hotel Management and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, and took place across the four cities of New Delhi, Mumbai,



SERC professional cookery student David Haggan from Dundonald travelled to India with his mentor Brian Magill to represent Northern Ireland at the Young Chef Olympiad where he finished fourteenth place out of 45 competitors.

"Both David and Brian have worked extremely hard preparing for the competition. Even being selected for it David has proved himself a formidable talent in the culinary arts industry."

The event attracted brands like Hyatt Hotels, ITC Hotels, Leela Hotels, Swisotel, Novotel as the Hospitality partners along with other brand sponsors.

The event was covered by World Media and judged by a senior team of Chefs from across the globe.

SERC provides a range of full and part-time courses designed to give students 'the edge'. To find out how SERC can help you 'get the edge' call 0345 600 7555, visit www.serc.ac.uk or find us on Facebook, search: SERC.

Bangalore and Kolkata.

SERC Deputy Head of School for Business, Hospitality and Tourism Paul Mercer said "Young Chef Olympiad is an excellent

platform for David to showcase his talent and also network and be introduced to different cuisines, especially Indian. It will enhance his culinary knowledge

and will bring food to the forefront along with new and inventive culinary styles and practices which will look great on his CV and enrich his studies.

Brigid O'Neill at EastSide Sessions

Come and join EastSide Arts for EastSide Sessions, a regular monthly Friday night gig at the EastSide Visitor Centre, featuring County Down Singer-Songwriter Brigid O'Neill on Friday 31st March.

Having last year travelled to Nashville Tennessee on a prestigious award scheme, where she played the iconic Bluebird Cafe, Music City Roots Show, and a series of other high profile gigs, Brigid has been developing her songs and steadily building her fan base. In addition to the most-

loved songs from her 2014 EP 'Arrivals and Departures', Brigid will be bringing you a selection of the most recent songs that she is currently recording for her new new album, to be released later this year.

"Brigid is great songwriter with a voice that breaks your heart



at 30 paces. She understands the craft of songwriting intuitively

and there's an honesty and integrity in her work that is very special." Ralph McLean BBC Radio Ulster

Two excellent, emerging young EastSide performers will warm up for Brigid, and you can say you heard them here first! BYO tipples and settle down for a great night of music.

You can contact EastSide Visitor Centre at, 278 - 280 Newtownards Road Belfast, Co Antrim BT4 1RE Northern Ireland Website: www.eastsidepartnership.com Email: chris@eastsidepartnership.com Tel: (028) 9045 1900

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Titanic Belfast Welcomes 3.5 millionth Visitor

Titanic Belfast recently welcomed its 3.5 millionth visitor, John Yard from Springfield, Illinois, USA. John, who travelled to Ireland for the fifth time with friends and family, became the latest milestone visitor when they booked with CIE Tours International.



Titanic Belfast welcomed its 3.5 millionth visitor, John Yard from Springfield, Illinois.

John was greeted with a VIP reception and joined a host of other special guests who received the red carpet treatment including Her Majesty The Queen, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, TITANIC director James Cameron, the discovery of Titanic, Dr Robert Ballard, Taoiseach Enda Kenny and, as well as celebrities including Adele and Michael Bublé, to name a few.

John, a police man, commented, said, "To be named Titanic Belfast's three and half millionth guest was a

wonderful surprise and it certainly made it a very memorable trip for my friends and I. From the moment we arrived, we had a truly titanic time!"

Tim Husbands MBE, Chief Executive of Titanic Belfast, commented, "We are absolutely delighted to welcome John as our 3.5 millionth visitor! It seems like only yesterday that Titanic Belfast opened and helped turn the city of Belfast into a major player in the global tourism market and now in just under five years, we have welcomed guests from over 145

different countries and have won the World's Leading Tourist Attraction. There is no doubt about the enduring appeal of RMS Titanic and we are delighted to be recognized as the must-see for those visiting Belfast and Northern Ireland."

Elizabeth Crabill, Chief Executive Officer of CIE Tours, comment-

ed, "Three and a half million visitors! That is outstanding and a true testament to how much Titanic Belfast contributes to the phenomenal tourist experience in Northern Ireland. It is a favorite of CIE Tours' guests and the feedback has been very positive.

We are very proud to be partners with this inspiring experience."

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"Living to Learn, Learning to Live"






- Winner of the Education Prize at the Belfast Awards
- Finalists for the Education Award in the Eastside Awards 2017

We are proud to be an inclusive school providing a high quality, creative and challenging education within a secure, caring and happy environment, where every child experiences a sense of enjoyment and achieves their full potential.

Principal: Mrs A. Gourley BMus (Hons) PGCE DASE PQH(NI)

Victoria Park Primary School - 182A Connsbrook Avenue, Belfast BT4 1JY
Tel: 02890 471274 - E-mail: agourley610@c2kni.net
www.victoriaparkprimaryschool.co.uk

GROSVENOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Grosvenor Grammar School is a multi-cultural, non-denominational and co-educational school situated in the Castlereagh area of East Belfast. The school provides a high quality education to all pupils, enabling them to participate in a wide range of curricular, extra and co-curricular activities.

The school is characterised by a pleasant atmosphere in which pupils are encouraged to develop all of their capabilities. The curriculum gives emphasis to academic, social, moral and physical development and the pupils are encouraged to grow in self-confidence throughout their years in the school. The welfare and progress of each pupil and constructive home school links are encouraged and maintained through the counselling team, Form Tutors and Heads of Year.

The school is highly involved in charity work: for example, last year it raised in excess of £16000 for various organisations through such initiatives as its first ever 'Colour Dash' event - involving over seven hundred



participating pupils as well as more than fifty

members of staff - which raised £7500 for the Northern Ireland Cancer Fund for Children, as well as a Christmas Jumper Day, held in aid of the Simon Community, and a coffee morning in support of MacMillan Cancer Support.

In July and August 2016 an incredible sixty-two pupils and eight members of staff also participated in a combined senior rugby and girls' hockey tour to South Africa, which featured four keenly-

contested matches against native opposition and also took in some of the most popular and educational sites across Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town during a two-and-a-half week period of wide-ranging experiences that will long remain in the memories of each and every party member.

Grosvenor's prime position and extensive grounds have made the school attractive to pupils from many urban, suburban and rural Primary

Schools, mainly in East & South Belfast and North & Mid-Down areas.

At Grosvenor the pupils consistently achieve outstanding examination results at GCSE and 'A' Level, as was the case once again in August 2016. However, we pride ourselves on providing a caring school with a supportive learning environment in which all are inspired to achieve high standards and to become tolerant and confident adults.

Templemore Swim & Fitness Centre - Swim, Sauna, Cycle and More!

In the shadow of Samson and Goliath sits one of East Belfast's gems of Victorian architecture. Templemore Avenue Public Baths and Swimming Pools were built as one of four public baths in the City during the late 1800s.

In the highly industrialised area of East Belfast the baths were primarily intended to meet hygiene and public sanitary needs of the community where occupants of surrounding small terraced houses did not necessarily have the benefit of personal washing and bathing facilities.

Now known as Templemore Swim & Fitness Centre the building was saved from closure in the early 1980s by a voluntary committee.

One of the 25 yard pools is still in operation. In addition the Centre also has a fully equipped gym and sauna. Recently they have also added a "Spin Cycle Room" to their Fitness Suite. This has been installed to enable everyone to get on a "bike" and Cycle in Safety. This facility will suit those who



are apprehensive about competing with cars, buses etc, for space on our busy roads. Our "Virtual Trainer" will encourage and guide users, helping them to enjoy Cycling in Safety and develop all round fitness.

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that cycling brings to all-age participants. Cost of bike per hour is £3 and includes use of sauna to relax in after your work out. Why not visit today for a swim, sauna, cycle and much more!

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Tel: 028 9070 2777



www.grosvenorgrammarschool.org.uk

Primary 6 Parent Information Evening

On the evening of Thursday 27th April the School will host its annual Primary 6 Parent Information Evening in the William Moles Hall, beginning at 5pm.

The event will address issues such as:

- The Grosvenor ethos;
- Transfer arrangements for pupils currently in P6;
- Entrance criteria for September 2016, and
- Common Entrance Examination Procedures.

All parents/ guardians of pupils currently in P6 are invited to attend - we look forward to seeing you there.



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VICTORIA PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL – “LIVING TO LEARN. LEARNING TO LIVE.”

Victoria Park PS opened in September 2008; a new school from an amalgamation of a number of schools in the Sydenham area – Mersey St. PS, Sydenham Infants and Strand Primary Schools. The schools merged into the old Strand building, clearing the Sydenham site for a new state-of-the-art site which the school moved into in December 2014.

The new building has 14 classrooms, a large, spacious library, an ICT suite, an assembly/ PE hall, a Learning Support Room, 3 shared resource areas and a number of general purpose rooms. The classrooms are equipped to the highest standards with every one featuring the latest Promethean Panels, Apple TV, sets of iPads and additional computers linked to the school network.

The school is adopted by George Best Belfast City Airport which lends support by providing human resource expertise, publicity, pupil visits and an extensive range of creative and expressive workshop opportunities. The school and airport have won a number of business awards for their partnership in Education.

Victoria Park PS also



offer a range of 17 different weekly clubs and after school activities for all children, from P1 upwards.

The school has extensive

links with business and industry and currently has 7 local companies who allow staff to visit the school each week and work with small

groups of pupils through Business in the Community and Time to Read programmes. The children visit their business partners

at work and have wonderful first-hand experiences of employment, citizenship and learning for later life.

The school was also selected as Titanic Belfast's first preferred primary school and year groups trialled the new education programmes being developed for schools at Titanic.

The school has won the Education Prize at the Belfast Awards after the submission of the outstanding "Take One Picture" project run by the National Gallery, London and in January 2017 was one of the finalists for the Education Award in the Eastside Awards.

Victoria Park Primary School | 182A Connsbrook Avenue | Belfast BT4 1JY | 02890 471274 | e-mail: agourley610@c2kni.net | visit: www.victoriaparkprimaryschool.co.uk

A Truly Personal Service at Gilmore Funeral Directors

Gilmore Funeral Directors is an independent family business run by Ken Gilmore Dip. F.D. LMBIFD who has over 35 years of experience in comforting and assisting the bereaved.

Established in 1987, Ken has remained independent for three decades in the face of corporate buy outs and is devoted to giving a personal and sympathetic service to all clients. Ken is one of the few fully qualified Funeral Directors in Northern Ireland and proudly holds his licence to practise.

Gilmore Funeral Directors advise on all aspects of arranging a funeral, such as the service, notices, floral tributes, memorials, orders of service and donations, and can accommodate all wishes. Located on The Square in Comber, Ken's facilities include a contemporary, custom-built memo-

rial hall, accommodating upwards of 100 people, which provides a beautiful, tranquil environment in which families and friends can hold services of thanksgiving.

Gilmore Funeral Directors offers Golden Charter Pre-Paid Funeral Plans, a service which allows complete peace of mind by fixing the cost of a funeral while also providing the freedom to choose the service you want; this removes the burden of planning and paying for a funeral from your family.

Ken has remained passionate about serving all members of the community, from all areas, 24/7/365. Most impor-

tantly, Ken is committed to putting the needs and wishes of his clients at the centre of his approach, as reflected in the company's motto: 'Our family looking after your family

when you need us most.'

Ken and his staff are always happy to discuss, advise or answer any enquiries that you might have. Contact them on 02891 872949 or

visit their website www.gilmore-funeraldirectors.co.uk.



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A NEW WOOD BURNER FOR 2017 – ONE OF YOUR BETTER ENERGY DECISIONS

People who've already invested in a stove don't regret it. Many will tell you that it's the best thing they've done for their home and will also probably tell you that they wished they'd installed one years ago.

They know that their stove has not only saved them money over the years but that it's also helped cushion them from the blow of relentless energy price hikes that seem to have nothing to do with reality.

Sadly on the price hike front 2017 is not going to be any different, and in fact it could be worse than ever. We've already seen the first signs of this with NPower's 9% price hike and you can bet your bottom log that all the rest will eventually fall in line soon. You just can't rely on this being the last round of rises this year either



New for 2017, the Opus Trio clean burning convection stove from The Stove Yard

friendly with your heat as it's possible to be. You'll be really spoiled for choice as well – tall, wide square, round, free-standing, inset, double-sided, virtually any colour you want – but all of them green.

The best place to see as many stoves in one go is at The Stove Yard in Newtownards. Now in their second decade, they're the stove dealers to go to for the biggest display, the widest choice and highly competitive prices and deals. But the best bit is that they know exactly what they're talking about and are happy to use their expertise and time to help you find the stove that's exactly right for you. No pressure, just great free friendly advice and always a warm welcome.

Still not sure about a stove? Just ask a stove owner what they think – and there's also a good chance that they bought theirs from The Stove Yard, after all they're Ireland's biggest stove dealer.

since a large proportion of our energy is imported and we're going to be

at the mercy of Brexit currency fluctuations. It's already happened with petrol and diesel.

So really, there's never been a better time to install a stove – a better stove too. Today's clean burn stoves are incredibly efficient with 80%-plus being the norm and importantly, with extremely low CO emissions. Which means your wood logs will go much further (3 or 4 times further than an open fire) and you'll be as environmentally

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CONQUER SLIEVE DONARD FOR LOCAL CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CANCER

A teenager who was supported by Cancer Fund for Children after his Mum was diagnosed with cancer, is encouraging others to support the charity by taking on Northern Ireland's highest peak this Spring.

On Sunday 28th May, Cancer Fund for Children hopes that hundreds of local people will lace up their walking boots and climb Slieve Donard to raise funds to support young people who are affected by cancer, and their families.

Darran Gough, 15, from Belfast, received support from the charity after his mum was diagnosed with bowel cancer when he was in P7.

Darren has been supported through Cancer Fund for Children's Young Shoulders Programme, which supports children and young people (aged 0-24) who are struggling to cope with the impact of a parental cancer diagnosis.

Sadly Darran's Mum passed away in 2016 but he still continues to receive support from the charity, through their Young Shoulders Programme.

Darran said: "Cancer is not easy. You think you are tough and can cope with things on your own. When I first went on a residential with Cancer Fund for Children it was magical. There was such an energy. I was in a room with strangers but I could talk to them about things that I hadn't talked to anyone about because we were going through the same things. We were able to open up and encourage each other. I have made great friends and also got to try so many new



15 year old Darran Gough from Belfast, supported by Gareth Beattie, Cancer Fund for Children's Young Shoulders Specialist, is encouraging local people to conquer Northern Ireland's highest peak, Slieve Donard on Sunday 28th May. The charity hopes that hundreds of local people will sign up to raise funds to support young people affected by cancer.

things and challenge myself.

"Taking part in the Young Shoulders Programme has helped build up my confidence and improve my communications skills. I might be a different person today if it hadn't been for Cancer Fund for Children."

Money raised from the Slieve Donard Climb will support a range of services including offering young people

affected by cancer the opportunity to attend residential with their peers at our unique Narnia Log Cabin, situated at the foothills of the Mourne Mountains.

Funds will also help Cancer Fund for Children to provide young people affected by cancer the opportunity of completing their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards, with Cancer Fund for Children as a Duke of Edinburgh Licensed Organisation.

Darran was recently part of a group of young people who received their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards, which seen them overcoming their own personal challenges to learn a new skill, volunteer their time to help others and demonstrate physical ability and team work on their practice and qualifying

expeditions, some of which took place in the Mourne Mountains.

Cancer Fund for Children's Young Shoulders Specialist Gareth Beattie who led the group said,

"Young people who have a parent diagnosed with cancer are under enormous stress in their young lives – from worrying about loved ones, to coping with the loss of a parent, not to mention the extra responsibilities they often take on such as caring for siblings.

"Without Cancer Fund for Children they would not have had access to the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award for various reasons including inability to afford it financially, or because of taking on extra responsibilities in the family home as a result of their parent's cancer diagnosis.

"Through the Young Shoulders Programme and the Duke of Edinburgh Programme, they pushed their personal boundaries, learning not only how to give but to receive support, and also to cope well under pressure within their peer group. It's been amazing to see how much they have grown and developed."

Encouraging people to take on a challenge for Cancer Fund for Children, Gareth added:

"By taking on a challenge like the Slieve Donard Climb on the May Bank Holiday weekend, you could help us support even more young people, as they conquer their own personal challenges, and cope with the impact that cancer has on their lives."

Registrations are now open for Cancer Fund for Children's Slieve Donard Climb on Sunday 28th May. To sign up, visit cancerfundforchildren.com, phone 028 9080 5599 or email alex@cancerfundforchildren.com



Ashfield Girls' High School

Ashfield Pupils Demonstrate Community Spirit

East Belfast Pupil Chantelle rewarded by Spirit of Pramerica



Mr Gerry Devlin, Pramerica judge, presenting Chantelle with her Award

Ashfield Girls' High School was delighted to learn that Chantelle Hutchinson deputy Head Girl, had been chosen as one of the 20 Finalists in 2017 Pramerica Spirit of Community Awards – out of hundreds of entries from schools throughout Northern Ireland and the South of Ireland.

Chantelle's community spirit award is testament to her work with The Welcome Centre; Northern Ireland Peace Players, raising funds for Belfast City Hospital and supporting others throughout school.

Krizzah wins Young Person of the Year at East Awards

Krizzah Policarpio, an A level student at Ashfield Girls' High School in East Belfast, beat off stiff competition to be crowned the "Young Person of the Year" at the Inaugural Eastside Awards ceremony at the Stormont Hotel on Thursday 26th January. The awards, presented by BBC's Tara Mills, recognised, highlighted and celebrated all that is good about East Belfast



Michelle Hatfield, George Best City Airport, BBC's Tara Mills pictured with Krizzah and her award

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Christian Fellowship Church sits on the corner of Belmont and Holywood Road. Our Sunday services are contemporary, vibrant, engaging and have seen great growth in attendance over the years.



We put this down to our sense of life and community. CFC – We Do Life, is the strapline to all we do, recognising “whilst aiming for the ideal, we pastor in the real”. Senior Pastor Owen Crane said: “Growth in numbers is great but we are always more interested in people rather than numbers. Individual lives matter to us.”

As part of our community we have a sign language congregation - currently the largest in Europe - adding richness and diversity. With Christ at the

centre we are intent on impacting Belfast, Ireland and the nations with the love of God in the power of the Holy Spirit.

At CFC we serve locally and overseas and partner with other organisations to strategically meet needs of people around the world.

An extensive staff and volunteer team mean we are able to work together to provide a packed and relevant weekly schedule with programmes and events for all ages.

CFC has a counselling service called

Anchor, open to all members of the local community.

We are home to the East Belfast CAP centre (Christians Against Poverty) offering debt management advice and also running regular money

management courses.

Central to our part in the city is Oasis, a very practical project helping those suffering economically or on the fringes of society.

To find out more about CFC visit www.thisiscfc.com

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Our two great free events for all the family, but due to demand, please visit

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To register.

Easter Sunday Services 10am & 12pm

All Welcome! Fun activities for kids throughout the morning.

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10.30am - 2pm last Thursday of each month in the Café, CFC, 10 Belmont Road, Belfast. Commences 30th March.

You're welcome!

CFC has a packed and relevant weekly schedule with programmes and events for all ages. For further information see our website, www.thisiscfc.com



CFC is a community of people who seek to have a living and relevant faith in God. We would love to meet you and help you to find a real relationship with Jesus and to explore any questions you may have.

Christian Fellowship Church, 10 Belmont Road Belfast BT4 2AN
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web: www.thisiscfc.com



Get out and about in Ards and North Down

The Borough is bursting with family friendly fun, places to discover and events galore! Explore our wonderful woodlands or take in the magnificent view of Ireland's largest sea lough from the top of Scrabo Hill, an extinct volcano.

Make a date in your diary to visit Exploris Aquarium and see the fantastic new exhibits, from

the tropical reefs to the rainforests and of course the cute otter family.

Head to the seaside and enjoy fish and chips fresh from the paper on the pier at Donaghadee or ice creams along the shorefront in Portaferry, watching little boats wrestle with the tides in the Narrows. Be sure to visit Pickie Funpark full of activities to keep the little ones amused in the fresh sea air on Bangor seafront.

Throw in cosy cafes and top class restaurants serving up tasty home-



made treats or gourmet local ingredients to keep you recharged as you discover what's on your

doorstep.

There are many events and activities to keep you entertained throughout the spring and summer season - from live music, karting and guided walks to Spring Street Carnivals at Easter in Newtownards and Bangor, the annual Sea Bangor Festival in June and the return of the Portavogie Seafood Festival in August; This is just a taste - there is something for everyone!

Download our new Spring Summer Experiences AND Events Visitor Guide out now!

To help you make the

most of your visit stop off at one of our local Visitor Information Centres in Ards or Bangor, where friendly staff are on hand to assist with advice, inspiring ideas and directions. Portaferry Visitor Information Centre opens its doors for the 2017 season on Good Friday and Cockle Row Cottages, in Groomsport also reopen on Easter Sunday with free family fun.

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The Silver Leaf – Traditional Fish and Chip Restaurant

The Silver Leaf Fish and Chips has been established for over 60 years and continues to grow in 2017. Under new management, the restaurant has undergone an extensive rebrand and redecoration, and is welcoming customers to come and enjoy some of the freshest fish and chips in East Belfast!

Proprietor John has a committed vision for the Silver Leaf, harking back to the days of the traditional fish and chip shop, "Our intention is to return the chippy to its former glory and offer our customers an alternative eating experience which is not only of the highest quality but also value for money! We always peel and chip our own potatoes daily using no chemicals whatsoever, and have fresh fish delivered daily."



Feel like eating out? The Silver Leaf also boasts a spacious sit-

in restaurant upstairs where you can relax and enjoy a meal in

beautiful surroundings. However if you want to keep your feet up you can get a delivery straight to your door by calling 028 9065 9824 or placing an order through Just Eat.

With a range of tantalising specials on offer including 2 Fish Suppers for £10 (Cod or Haddock) for takeaway customers why not call down today and experience it for yourself! And, follow our Facebook page to keep up to date - search Silver Leaf Belmont!

THE SECRET GARDEN AT DUNDONALD NURSERIES

For those of you who have not yet discovered the secret! Tucked away up a lane off the Old Dundonald Road is a massive two acre garden centre stocking an array of beautiful shrubs, climbers, perennials, hedging, trees, fruit bushes, vegetable packs and plants. Our speciality is ready planted containers, stocking the largest variety in Northern Ireland.

Complimenting our plant department, is the beautiful Secret Garden restaurant, serving delicious breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and a full dinner menu, competitively priced at £14.99 for two courses or £19.99 for three courses which is available on a Thursday or Saturday evening. Go online to view all the menus to get your taste buds going at www.dundonaldnurseries.co.uk

The food is freshly prepared and locally sourced by the team of six chefs and a wonderful baker. They also do themed events such as French, Italian, and several flower demonstrations with afternoon tea included, which really brings both elements of the business together.

Dundonald Nurseries



is always evolving and have two beautiful gift

shops stocking unusual items that you would not find elsewhere. They have a brilliant range of mens, ladies, children gifts and a huge variety of greetings cards, all at very reasonable prices to suit all budgets. An abundance of brand new stock has just arrived including a huge range of Yankee Candles.

A third gift shop has just opened, entitled 'The Summer House'. This lovely area is

packed full with gardening accessories, patio furniture and a stunning range of silk flowers and Easter gifts.

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Nursery Tel: 028 9048 3675

Restaurant Tel: 028 9048 4000

Address: 70/78 Old Dundonald Road, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 1XS

Web: www.dundonald-nurseries.co.uk

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8 PAGE PULLOUT
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- Ballybeen housing Estate • Tullycarnet



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 - Bump to Baby Cafe
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**Making a difference for you and your child
Contact : 028 9096 3399**

- Email: admin@surestart.org.uk
- Call in: Information & Services
- 134 Albertbridge Road, Belfast, BT5 4GS



Safeguard Your Child Today

A new app launched last month on Safer Internet Day by The Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland provides information on safeguarding children and is for use by parents/carers and professionals.

To get the app go into the App Store or Google Play and type Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland and download the App. This App is designed to aid you in staying up-to-date with information that could help make your child safer on the Internet.

Through this App you can develop a basic understanding of the way young people engage with technology and how it has become intertwined with their everyday lives. Including learning about social networking sites and



Apps like Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat. Other important information provided includes information on subjects such as child sexual exploitation, legal highs, bullying, gaming, other forms of abuse and the

importance of healthy relationships.

Newsfeeds and updates, signposting to key safeguarding gateways, supported by geo location features, reporting information, advice and help including video and audio content with immediate access to 'topic specific' advice where and when needed are all included on the App.

Installing this App gives you access to the information, advice and support that you need, right at your fingertips. Don't delay download today.

KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE ON THE INTERNET

Social networking is one of the revolutions of the online age and when used correctly is an excellent way of keeping in touch with friends and family. But it can also be a source of harm for your child or for you and other family members, via your child. New sites are springing up every day making it virtually impossible to keep a track off.

Do you know what sites your kids are using? Do you know how they work, what your children and the people they 'meet' on them can say or do on them? Most of us would probably answer no to these questions.

What can we do to change this, we can encourage our children to tell us which sites they're using, and ask them to show us how they work.

A number of potential dangers for our kids when using these sites include:

Chatting with people they think are new 'friends', but who



could actually intend to do them harm.

Sharing or viewing inappropriate or adult images or other content.

Being bullied or subject to other kinds of abuse.

Being dared into carrying out dangerous or irresponsible acts on camera - 'neknominating'

Revealing personal or private information about themselves, friends or family. Or arranging to meet in person someone they've met online, when that person isn't who they said they were.

And though it may seem unthinkable, your child could be bullying or saying inappropriate things about somebody else, rather than being the target.

Teach your child to be very careful to befriend and communicate with only trusted people that they know. Tell them that revealing personal details

such as their birth date, address, pet's name or teacher could give someone all the information they know to harm them. Teach them not to click on links or download from sites they have linked to.

Above all, assure them that it's OK to come to you or another trusted adult if they feel threatened by or uncomfortable about something they have seen or done on a social networking site.

Protect your kids because doing nothing is not an option as it's a sure-fire way to let your kids get into trouble.



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Leading charity urgently seeking foster carers in Belfast

Action for Children Northern Ireland has spoken again of the urgent need for foster carers in Belfast.

Despite an unprecedented response to the charity's recent campaign across Northern Ireland there are still too few foster carers coming forward in Belfast.

Avery Bowser, children's services manager at Action for Children Northern Ireland, said: "We have been overwhelmed by the response to our campaign at the start of the year but we still don't have enough people coming forward in Belfast. That's why I'm putting out this urgent call to people in Belfast to ask themselves if they could provide a safe, secure and healing home for a child."

Avery explained "It is so important to have options that are local for the child. When that isn't available it means that children can be placed many miles from home. This can mean having to change school, and losing contact with friends and family."



Avery Bowser, children's services manager at Action for Children Northern Ireland

We asked Avery if there were reasons for people not coming forward.

"It's really important to bust some of the myths around fostering because a lot of people assume they won't be considered. You need to be over 21, have a spare room and the ability to look after children who have usually had a very difficult start in life."

"We know that being a foster carer is complex

so we pay fees to reflect this, as well as allowances to cover care and leisure costs."

Avery went on to explain the importance of finding foster carers from across the community. "At Action for Children we celebrate diversity because we know our children are all different. We need carers from all walks of life so you can be married, co-habiting, in a same sex relationship or single. Gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion and community background are all important parts of who you are that can help us to make the right match between carer and child."

If you are interested in becoming a foster carer in the Belfast area or would like to find out more, please contact Action for Children's fostering team on 028 90460500 or email fostercareni@actionforchildren.org.uk

SWIM INSTRUCTOR HELPING TO TURN THE TIDE FOR WATER SAFETY

Bangor based swimming instructor Mark Angus is implementing a new and unique water safety initiative in Northern Ireland which is aimed at raising awareness of safety in water throughout local communities.

The hands-on training scheme, called The Ripple Effect, has been launched by City of Belfast Swim Club and focuses on promoting water safety and drowning prevention and will equip local children with the knowledge and essential swimming skills needed to minimise dangerous incidents.

The Ripple Effect has been launched in support of the UK drowning prevention strategy, which aims to reduce drowning fatalities in the UK by 50% by 2026, and is supported by the Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK), Speedo and Northern Ireland charity Hope for Youth. The initiative will see a roll-out of swimming education outreach and applied survival and life-saving lessons across schools in Belfast initially and subsequently throughout Northern Ireland.

Kenny MacDermid, National Drowning Prevention Coordinator, RLSS UK, the Drowning Prevention Charity said "RLSS UK is committed to a year on year reduction in drownings across the UK and Ireland and are delighted to be supporting this project. 400 people accidentally drown each year across the UK and statistics show that young males are most at risk. This excellent initiative equips the young



Mia Gribben and Miriam Young from Elmgrove Primary and Swim Instructor Mark Angus.

people of Belfast with the key skills they need to make well informed choices regarding their own personal safety in and around the water. At RLSS UK we are privileged to work with many families affected by drowning and see firsthand how devastating this can be not just to the family but the wider community and we are committed to putting a stop to these needless deaths."

Swimming instructor Mark Angus comments, "I am delighted to be playing a key role in implementing The Ripple Effect. We are rolling this out in three key stages; the initial stage involves primary school

children participating in classroom and pool lessons led by coaches with RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) which include water safety presentations, practical floating techniques and life-saving activities. Stage two involves RLSS UK's Rookie Lifeguard award within the City of Belfast Swimming Club to transform enrolled children into mini lifeguards by teaching them valuable survival, rescue and sports skills that will enable them to enjoy water safely. The final phase of the year-long programme is an end of season cross-community event that will celebrate and award each child's

achievement."

Tanya Martin, Chair, City of Belfast Swimming Club said: "Tragically too many young people are lost to the water each year due to insufficient survival skills or lack of swimming confidence. We hope The Ripple Effect will make waves about the dangers of water, both in a pool setting and in natural water outlets, and provide children with the vital skills to survive in water when adverse conditions strike."

The Ripple Effect is being piloted with Elmgrove Primary School in East Belfast and includes classroom and poolside lessons taking place at council-owned

Avoniel Leisure Centre. Designed to empower the children and remove barriers to water safety including socio-economic burdens, the initiative is supported by Hope for Youth NI which endeavours to provide funding for young people in Northern Ireland to partake in cross community activities irrespective of their backgrounds.

Commenting on the initiative, Hannah English, teacher at Elmgrove Primary School said: "Elmgrove is thrilled to be the first school in Northern Ireland to trial The Ripple Effect. After taking part in the programme's initial classroom and poolside lessons, we have had great feedback from the pupils regarding their understanding of the coach's key messages and have noticed a surge in their confidence in the swimming pool. The Ripple Effect has particular importance for our pupils because of the current regeneration work being carried out in Avoniel Park, which is making the Conns-water River more visible. A number of pupils that walk to school walk past the river on their way to school so it is great that they are being given first-hand knowledge about water safety and life-saving skills which is giving them the important tools to show responsibility around water."

Change your life for a while



Fostering a young person can be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. Talk to our Northern Ireland fostering team on **028 9046 0500**, email us at fostercareni@actionforchildren.org.uk or visit actionforchildren.org.uk/fosterwithus

We are looking for new foster carers to join the team. If you have a spare room and experience with children or young people, then we'd love to hear from you.



Change his forever

HOW ACTION FOR CHILDREN

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We supply exactly the same doors and accessories you will see in expensive high street show rooms all over the UK- and if we don't, we'll find you a similar style from our quality range of products.

Dyslexia can cause problems with reading, writing and spelling

It's a "specific learning difficulty", which means it causes problems with certain abilities used for learning, such as reading and writing. Unlike a learning disability, intelligence isn't affected.

It's estimated that up to 1 in every 10 to 20 people in the UK has some degree of dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a lifelong problem that can present challenges on a daily basis, but support is available to improve reading and writing skills and help those with the problem be successful at school and work.

What are the signs of dyslexia?

Signs of dyslexia usually become apparent when a child starts school and begins to focus more on learning how to read and write.

A person with dyslexia may:

- read and write very slowly
- confuse the order of letters in words
- put letters the wrong way round - such as writing "b" instead of

"d"

- have poor or inconsistent spelling
- understand information when told verbally, but have difficulty with information that's written down
- find it hard to carry out a sequence of directions
- struggle with planning and organisation

However, people with dyslexia often have

good skills in other areas, such as creative thinking and problem solving.

If you think your child may have dyslexia, the first step is to speak to their teacher or their school's special needs coordinator (SENCO) about your concerns. They may be able to offer additional support to help your child if necessary.

5 Spring Activities for Kids

Looking for some springtime fun for your family, if only it would stop raining?

You and your kids can celebrate spring, no matter what the weather is. We look forward to warmer days, flowers and more opportunities to get outside and play. But sometimes Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, sending blustery weather our way.

Use this list on warm days when you want to grab the kids and do something together outside, and on those grey, rainy days that are best spent indoors. Some activities have an element of both, because, well, some spring days are like that!

1: Go on a Picnic.

Nothing rings in springtime like going on a picnic as a family. When spring brings a gorgeous day, go outside and savour the sunshine with your kids. If the rain won't seem to end, you can hold a picnic indoors. Just spread a blanket on the floor and enjoy a family meal in your living room. Indoors or out, you can take along some of these other springtime activities to enjoy on your picnic.

2: Springtime breezes make it the perfect time to go outside and fly a kite with your kids! Is the day too wet to fly a kite? Put a pinwheel in a planter outside your child's window or just blow on it inside the house. It will be entertaining to watch on cooler days and the kiddos can play with it outside on warmer days.

3: Do an Art Project. If it's rainy and windy

outside, pick a project and lose yourselves in the creative process indoors. While art projects are always in season, there's something about springtime that makes art even more special. Bright and sunny? What a great time to go outside, observe the world around you and get creative. Springtime, with its extra light and ever-changing landscapes, is an extra-special time for art. Indoors or out, encourage your kids to grab a pencil and a piece of paper; an easel, paints and a canvas; or even a hunk of clay and express themselves through art.

4: Make a Cardboard Crown.

We all know "where the wild things are": they're outside! Many wonderful adventures start by donning a cardboard crown. Every kid loves costumes, and up-cycling materials from around the house to

make them deserves bonus points in our book. Take a common object—a cereal box—and turn it into something whimsical and fun with nothing but paint and scissors.

5: Turn Flowers Different Colours.

Have you tried to make your own coloured flowers? Turn flowers different colours by putting them in coloured water. What a perfect way to bring nature and colour indoors! Try doing a project using several jars in a rainbow of colours. Then, when the weather's nice, go outside and look for signs of spring. Look for tulips, daffodils and crocuses in your neighbourhood. Make it a game: Have your kids count how many different colours they can find. Or look at trees and point out the buds. Then ask your kids if they think those buds will become blossoms or leaves.



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DEAD MEN TELL NO TALES...

Johnny Depp returns to the big screen on the 26th May as the iconic, swashbuckling anti-hero Jack Sparrow in the all-new "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales."

The rip-roaring adventure finds down-on-his-luck Captain Jack feeling the winds of ill-fortune blowing strongly his way when deadly ghost sailors, led by the terrifying Captain Salazar (Javier Bardem), escape from the Devil's Triangle bent on killing every pirate at sea—notably Jack.

Jack's only hope of survival lies in the legendary Trident of Poseidon, but to find it he must forge an uneasy alliance with Carina Smyth (Kaya Scodelario), a brilliant and beautiful astronomer, and Henry (Brenton Thwaites), a headstrong young sailor in the Royal Navy.

At the helm of the Dying Gull, his pitifully small and shabby ship, Captain Jack seeks not only to reverse his recent spate of ill fortune, but



to save his very life from the most formidable and malicious foe he has

ever faced. This is one sequel I do not get bored of.

Opportunity of a lifetime - Camp America

Looking for an adventure? Want to push yourself, make friends from all over the world, learn new skills, see more of the world and get paid a great salary? Apply today to work at a summer camp in the USA!

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By applying to work



at a summer camp in America you'll be part of a huge team of staff who make a difference to lives of children at camp every summer, whilst having the opportunity to see more of the USA, make friends from all over the world and obtain a job that challenges you for the better every

day. If you're 18 by June, are free until mid-August and you're willing to really get stuck in then get that application started today! Costing as little as £395 you will typically be in America 8 to 12 weeks. Anyone can apply to go to camp as long as you are 18+

and eligible for a US work Visa.

To apply simply log onto to www.summercampsamerica.com and fill in the application. Once your application has been submitted you'll be contacted by one of the recruitment team for an informal interview with you (over the phone/Skype); so, that we get to know you better! We want to help you impress our camp directors so we'll normally set you some homework. This could be getting some more experience with kids, looking into a certification or simply to add some more detail into your application. For further information check out the website.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY APRIL FOOLS' DAY PRANKS

This April Fools' Day, don't let the kids get the best of you. It's time to play a few funny tricks on them. After all, adults can get in on the silliness, too!

Swap Sleepers If your kids are heavy sleepers, carry them into their sibling's bed and let them wake up in a different room to start April Fools on the right foot.

Frozen Breakfast Put cereal and milk in a bowl and let it freeze overnight. When your hungry kids try to dig in, they'll get quite the surprise.

Juice Joke Anyone want juice? Your family will try taking a drink of this juice and find out it's really Jelly.

Toilet Paper Message Unroll the toilet paper and leave a funny message for the unsuspecting user. My personal favourite: "You're going to wash your hands, right?" Roll the toilet paper back up and wait to see who ends up getting the message.

Mashed potato sundae also makes for quite the surprise. Act like the coolest parent ever and tell your kids you'll be serving sundaes for dinner, that way when they realize their sundae is actually mashed potatoes and gravy, it can be their dinner.

Party Popper Trick Affix a party popper to your kid's bedroom door. The best part of this prank? It will wake your sleepy kid up... and fast.

Remote Control Cov-

er the remote sensor with a piece of tape. Try not to laugh as your kid tries over and over to turn on the TV.

What better way to teach your kids that pranks should be fun and NOT dangerous and painful. That it

should not be about hurting people but having fun with pranking each other on the 1st April.



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Charity Commission Number NIC100744

CASTLEWELLAN AGRICULTURAL SHOW

15th July 2017

Set across 50 acres in the beautiful surroundings of Castlewellan Forest Park, Castlewellan Agricultural Show takes place from 9am – 6pm on 15th of July 2017.

Featuring classes for cattle, sheep, goats, horses, ponies, donkeys poultry, pigs, rabbits, dog agility and home industries. A wide range of trade stands, food and craft producers showcase their wares alongside live music, vintage tractors, carriage driving, demonstrations of countryside pursuits, Young Farmers competitions, pet show, fashion tent, vintage tea tent and children's amusements which will entertain all day long.

The Show is organised by an enthusiastic committee and we are keen to welcome visitors from towns and cities to profile all the countryside has to offer.

We have lots for children and young people to do and see with those under 16 admitted free.

For entry forms or trade applications log on to the website.

www.castlewellanshow.com

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Family Funday out on Saturday 13th May with a 4th day added to Balmoral Show

The countdown to Balmoral Show 2017 is on, with only months to go until the four-day event at Balmoral Park, which takes place Wednesday 10th to Saturday 13th of May.

RUAS and Ulster Bank got plans officially underway, and highlighted the array of activities that will take place during the extended Show.

This year's Balmoral Show will run across four days and the extra day means that the Show promises to be larger than ever in terms of footfall, sales and interest.

Ulster Bank will again be the principal sponsor of the Show, which will feature more than 700 trade stands, the NI Food Pavilion, hundreds of competitions and classes, and a wide range of family entertainment.

This year will also see the introduction of a new Health and Fitness Village, plus the significant expansion of the horticultural area.

Up and coming Co. Down artist Aidan Sloan will also be exhibiting his collection of agri-themed paintings throughout the four days and has been commissioned to create a unique print, given away on the Balmoral Show Facebook page.

Colin McDonald, RUAS Chief Executive said: "We are delighted to officially kick-off the countdown to Balmoral Show 2017 and are looking forward to mak-



Looking four-ward to a four day Balmoral Show in 2017 is (L-R) Cormac Mc Kervey, Ulster Bank Senior Agriculture Manager; Rhonda Geary, Operations Director, RUAS; Richard Donnan, Ulster Bank's Head of Northern Ireland and Colin McDonald, RUAS Chief Executive.

ing the 149th Show our best yet. We are really excited about having a four day Show this year and hope that the extra day will attract even more visitors to Balmoral Park.

"With the increase in size and scale of the Show, new attractions, and the legacy created from the Year of Food and Drink, 2017 is set to be the most important yet and we are thrilled to have Ulster Bank on board again as our principal sponsor and

for playing such an integral role in enabling us to grow the Show."

Richard Donnan, Ulster Bank's Head of Northern Ireland, said: "We at Ulster Bank are very much looking forward to once again being centrally involved in one of the biggest events in the Northern Ireland calendar.

"Balmoral Show epitomises everything that is great about our local food and agriculture industries and sponsoring the Show

symbolises our continuing strong support for this hugely important sector. We will be at the Show to demonstrate the real and meaningful help that we can provide to our customers in these sectors and beyond."

This year's Balmoral Show will run from 10th - 13th May 2017. Tickets are available to buy online now from www.balmoralshow.co.uk

For more information visit www.balmoralshow.co.uk

SURE START GIVES 2- 3 YEAR OLDS THE BEST START

Members of the Childcare Partnerships, supported and administered by the Health and Social Care Board, recently hosted an event Development of Good Practice in the Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 year olds at the Seamus Heaney home place in Bellaghy.

The event was organised to highlight the journey of the successful Sure Start Programme which is currently available to 1,700 children in Northern Ireland through 145 Sure Start Developmental Programmes which are specifically de-

signed for 2-3 year olds.

The Sure Start Programme is funded by the Department of Education which invests £25 million, through the Health and Social Care Board, for the delivery of Sure Start programmes. Provision is targeted within

the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland where educational underachievement is prevalent and currently the Sure Start projects cover 25% of the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland and play a vital role in helping to improve the outcomes of children where it is most needed.

The Department of Education's Early Years Framework - Learning to Learn the Sure Start Programme as one of its key early intervention initiatives and acknowledges the Programme's importance in creating positive pre-school experiences for the social, emotional and cognitive development of children aged under four.

This Sure Start Programme provides group-based support to children in their penultimate pre-school year and focuses on children's physical, social and emotional development, though age-appropriate play based learning and enjoyment. The Development Programme for 2-3 year olds has an emphasis on parental involvement with the crucial importance of supporting parents to maximise their children's development is recognised and incorporated within the programme. The children and parents who

attend are also supported by an extensive range of other Sure Start services for example parenting support, and Speech & Language therapy. Multi-disciplinary input is a key factor in the success of the Programme.

Fionnuala McAndrews, Director of Social Care and Children, Health & Social Care Board, says:

"This exhibition provided an excellent opportunity to showcase the journey of the Sure Start Development Programme for 2-3 year olds. We must celebrate the Early Years practice and environments developed across Northern Ireland. This early intervention approach in Sure Start addresses the holistic needs of the child and parents - to provide the best outcomes for children"

The event aimed to celebrate the journey by creating environments suitable for 2-3 year olds: places to be active, to relax, to use their imagination, to explore materials, to dine and socialise and places for family. This Sure Start Development Programme for 2-3 year olds can help identify and address emerging issues at this developmental stage and can significantly improve outcomes for children and families by providing early intervention.

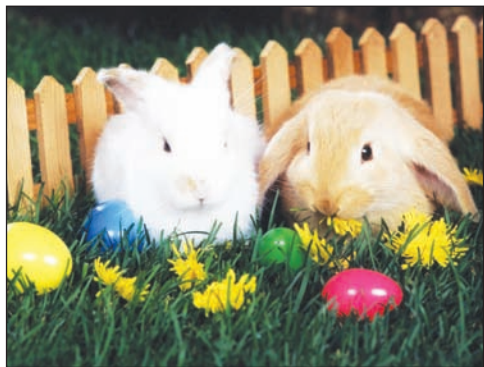
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HOPPING MAD FAMILY FUN THIS EASTER AROUND BELFAST

All aboard the Easter Eggspress steaming along to Whitehead from Belfast Central station.

There might even be an 'eggstra' special passenger on board with a special surprise for the best behaved children! All tickets cost £13. Children under three years of age not occupying a seat do not need a ticket. However, children of any age travelling on the Easter trains must have a valid ticket and will receive a chocolate egg. The Easter Eggspress Train will be running from 11.30am until 14.30pm on the 17th and 18th April. Hop aboard no pun intended.



Between 10am and 2.30pm on the 17th and 18th April.

If Chocolate, trains and furry animals are not your thing then why not Join the team at HMS Caroline for a wide range of activities this Easter. Meet Blucher, the pet bunny on HMS Caroline over 100 years ago, and follow his trail throughout the ship to discover fun and interesting facts on board. Take part in the learning room to snap

your sailor selfie!

From Saturday 15th April Meet the Captain in his cabin for puppet storytelling. Easter Sunday: Find the musician and listen to his sea shanties.

Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday: Book onto one of the Lego 'Bricks4Kidz' workshops and build your own Lego ship.

Pre-booking is required costs between £5-12 for bookings visit www.hmscaroline.co.uk

Stairlift Solutions, a local family run business, was set up in 2000

From humble beginnings, the father and son team of Ken and Michael Wallace started working from the garage of their Donaghadee home and now they are delighted to announce the opening of a brand new mobility showroom in Bangor.

Based at Unit 21, Innotec Drive (beside The Signal Centre) on Bangor's Balloo Road, the new showroom is the ideal location for them to display a new line of mobility aids that are now available.

Michael said "Stairlifts, from straight or curved, new or reconditioned, even indoor or outdoor, will remain at the core of our company. However, our team here at Stairlift Solutions have listened to what our 2,000+ customers have had to say - and we've responded by adding equipment such as scooters, rollators and wheelchairs to our ever-expanding list of mobility products."

He added: "We are aware of just how important independent living is to those with a disability or mobility problem and with an aging population, it's important for us to not just promote independent living, but also to enhance it. So along



with walking aids, we have also started selling bathroom and toilet equipment, as well as riser recliner chairs

and more." Quality and confidence in their products, as well as customer satisfaction, are essen-

tial aspects for all the team at Stairlift Solutions. They pride themselves on their after sales care and looking after their customers both new and old alike. Here is what just some of their many satisfied customers had to say:

• "I am delighted with the stairlift you supplied. It is marvelous, it enables me to get to the bathroom and bedroom and it saved me a lot of expense by not having to get a toilet downstairs. It is a great invention!" Mrs McClean - Belfast

• "It was installed so

quickly which was exactly what we needed at the time."

Mr Johnston - Bangor

• "Local and personal touch, made us feel at ease and confident in the product and service."

Mr Hayes - Newtownards

For more information or questions on their new mobility products, simply call in and meet the team, or phone 028 9188 2249 where you can also arrange a FREE, no obligation survey of your staircase. Plus you can visit their excellent website at www.stairliftsolutionsni.com

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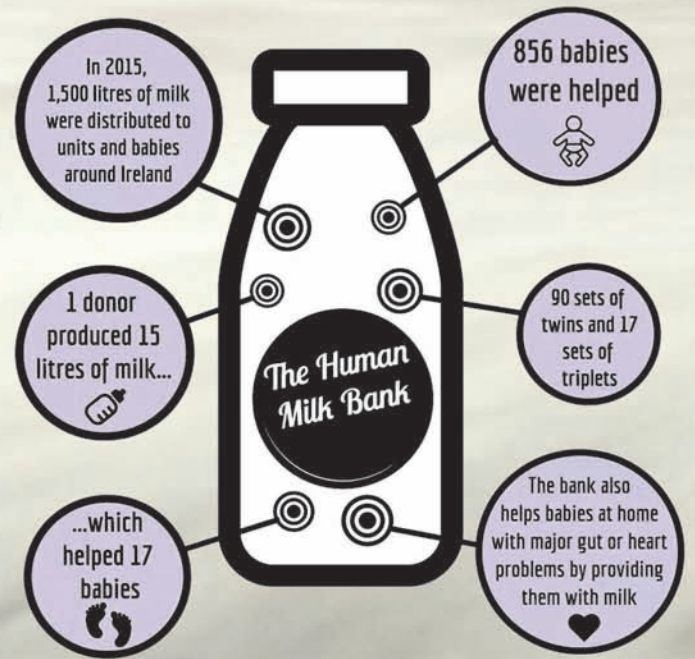




Ireland's only Life Saving Breast Milk Bank is Facing Exceptional Shortage

The Human Milk Bank receives donations from around Ireland and has been exceptionally busy for months caring for increasingly smaller babies and helping a greater number of multiple births across Ireland, North and South, which has resulted in them using up large quantities of donated breast milk. This has drastically reduced the stocks of milk that are left in the Milk Bank.

The Human Milk Bank is appealing to new mothers for help, particularly mothers of premature babies for which stocks are at their lowest. Mothers with babies under three months of age who think that they could provide at least three litres of milk, are also needed.



For more information visit www.westerntrust.hscni.net/services/2026 or to become a donor contact the Human Milk Bank on tmb.irvinestown@westerntrust.hscni.net or ring (048 from ROI) (028) 68 628333.



GOLFERS GET READY TO 'ROCK AND HOLE' FOR MARY PETERS TRUST

Brian McFadden and Keith Duffy amongst musicians teeing up for charity event.

Local golfers will be tuning up and teeing off against a mix of celebrities and well-known local musicians following the launch of a unique charity golf event, created to raise money for the budding sports stars of tomorrow.

'Golf and Guitars' promises to inject a little 'rock and hole' into the peaceful tranquillity that is normally associated with the game of golf, and already stars like Brian McFadden and Keith Duffy from Boyzlife have confirmed their participation at the event.

With proceeds going towards the Mary Peters Trust, 'Golf and Guitars', in association with online golf booking site GolfNow, will take place at Holywood Golf Club, where local superstar Rory McIlroy learned his trade, on Friday May 19, 2017.

A number of other well-known local businesses including leading motor company Charles Hurst Group, taxi firm Fonacab and public relations specialists Duffy Rafferty

Communications have also lent their support to the event.

Golf will be played during the day, followed by a live music gig in the evening, featuring 'The Band of Hackers'... a one-off collaboration that will include local session musicians and possibly a few famous guests.

A team of four costs just £140 for the 'Golf and Grub' package, with the full 'Golf, Grub and Guitars' package (which includes the evening gig) costing £180 per fourball.

For anyone wanting to play a 'solo' round, individual places are also up for grabs at a cost of £35 (or £45 including gig) - while music fans who don't play golf can attend the live gig only for just £15 per ticket.

Anyone interested in taking part need not fret as there are still spaces available - but golfers are advised to register their interest by contacting event coordinator Paul Kelly on prckelly@googlemail.com as soon



Dame Mary Peters and GolfNow's Andrew Hollywood are getting ready to rock and hole at the first ever 'Golf and Guitars' event which will take place at Holywood Golf Club on May 19.

as possible to avoid disappointment.

Gillian Hetherington of the Mary Peters Trust said: "Golf and Guitars is a great event for a great cause, bringing the worlds of music and golf together to support thousands of talented young sportsmen and women, both able bodied and disabled, from across Northern Ireland and to help them realise their sporting dreams, through the Mary Pe-

ters Trust.

"Whilst a lot of people would never link the worlds of golf and rock music, there are actually quite a few musicians who are quite handy on the golf course, from rockers like Alice Cooper, Neil Young and Pink Floyd's Roger Waters to the likes of Justin Timberlake, Niall Horan and even rapper Snoop Dogg!

"We're delighted that closer to home, stars

like Brian McFadden and Keith Duffy have already signed up to play golf at the event and we're hoping to add a few more big names to the line-up between now and May," concluded Gillian.

Olympic champion Dame Mary Peters added: "We're really looking forward to the first ever Golf and Guitars event which promises to be a fun-filled day from start to

finish, with golf in the morning and afternoon, followed by an auction and a raffle with some wonderful prizes, and finishing off with some rocking guitar music.

"We are so grateful to everyone concerned that the proceeds will go towards our 'Race to a Million' campaign which will enable us to continue helping our many talented young athletes towards sporting success for years to come.

"Finally, I'd like to say a big thank you to our sponsors GolfNow, Charles Hurst, Fonacab and Duffy Rafferty Communications whose support is invaluable in helping us to run this event," concluded Dame Mary.

Since it was founded in 1975, the Mary Peters Trust has helped over 5000 sports people in Northern Ireland, including Carl Frampton, Graeme McDowell, David Humphreys, Paddy Barnes, Michael Conlan, Kelly Gallagher, Michael McKillop, Janet Gray and Katie Kirk.

Andrew Hollywood,

Marketing Director, International for GolfNow, said: "We are proud to sponsor the first annual Golf and Guitars event in support of the Mary Peters Trust. The areas of sport and music are great unifiers and, time and time again, we have seen how our home grown stars, from Carl Frampton and Rory McIlroy to Van Morrison and Snow Patrol, have brought everyone together and made us all proud to be from Northern Ireland.

"The Mary Peters Trust plays an invaluable role in supporting our sports stars of tomorrow, both disabled and able-bodied so we are delighted to support this event and hopefully help the Trust continue their good work in the future," added Andrew.

To find out more about Golf and Guitars, book a tee-off time or purchase tickets for the live music gig, click on golfandguitars.co.uk or send an email to Paul Kelly at prckelly@googlemail.com.

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£1.4 million Water Improvement Scheme Progressing Well - Road Closure Castle Road, Ballynure

NI Water is investing approximately £1.4 million to install a new 4km pipeline along the Ballyfore Road and Castle Road to improve the security of the water supply infrastructure for customers in the Ballynure, Straid and Raloo areas of East Antrim. Work commenced on the Ballyfore Road in December 2016 and is now scheduled to continue on Castle Road. The completion point at the Castle Road/Castletown Road junction is anticipated to be completed by June 2017.

In order to carry out the work safely, it will be necessary to have a temporary road closure on Castle Road from 6 March for a duration of approximately 13 weeks.

The diversion route during this phase of the works will be via the Carrickfergus Road, turning left along the Watch Hill Road merging onto the Ballyrickard Road to the junction of Ballyrickard Road/Crosshill Road/Ballyfore Road.

Traffic management and signage will be in place as the scheme progresses to try to minimise the impact of these works on businesses, residents, road users and the public. Vehicular access will be maintained for residents where possible and pedestrian access will be maintained at all times. Normal working hours will

be 7.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday; however it may be necessary at times for work to be carried out outside of these hours.

Martin Gillen NI Water Project Manager said:

"This project is good news for our customers in the East Antrim area as the new pipelines will improve the security and reliability of the local water supply, while reducing disruption and interruptions to supply caused by burst water mains. These improvements will deliver many benefits to the local community for many years to come.

"We would also appeal for the continued support of parents to keep children and young people safe by explaining to them the dangers of playing in or around construction sites. Playing near our

works areas can have dangerous consequences and we would like to spread this safety message throughout the area while we complete this essential programme of work."

NI Water and our contractor Dawson WAM have completed letter drops to those properties close to the working area, and would like to thank the public for their patience and co-operation while this essential work is underway and would like to assure you that we will do everything we can to complete the work as quickly as possible with minimal disruption.

Customer queries should be directed to Waterline on: 03457 440088 quoting Dawson WAM, Ballyfore Road, Ballynure - Water Improvement Project.

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Easter Symbols & Traditions

Christians celebrate Easter to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some aspects of modern Easter celebrations, however, pre-date Christianity.

Ancient Spring Goddess
According to the Venerable Bede, Easter derives its name from Eostre, an Anglo-Saxon goddess of spring. A month corresponding to April had been named "Eostremonat," or Eostre's month, leading to "Easter" becoming applied to the Christian holiday that usually took place within it. Prior to that, the holiday had been called Pasch (Passover), which remains its name in most non-English languages.

(Based on the similarity of their names, some connect Eostre with Ishtar, the Babylonian and Assyrian goddess of love and fertility, but there is no solid evidence for this.)

It seems probable that around the second century A.D., Christian missionaries seeking to convert the tribes of northern Europe noticed that the Christian holiday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus roughly coincided with the Teutonic springtime celebrations, which emphasized the triumph of life over death. Christian Easter gradually absorbed the traditional symbols.

Easter Eggs
In Medieval Europe, eggs were forbidden during Lent. Eggs laid during that time were often boiled or otherwise preserved. Eggs were thus a mainstay of Easter meals, and a prized Easter gift for children and servants.

In addition, eggs have been viewed as symbols of new life and fertility through the ages. It is believed that for this reason many ancient cultures, including the Ancient Egyptians, Persians, and Romans, used eggs during their spring festivals.

Many traditions and practices have formed around Easter eggs. The colouring of eggs is a established art, and eggs are often dyed, painted, and otherwise decorated. Eggs were also used in various holiday games: parents would hide eggs for children to find, and children would roll eggs down hills. These practices live on in Easter egg hunts and egg rolls. The most famous egg roll takes place on the White House lawn every year.

Different Traditions

Orthodox Christians in the Middle East and in Greece painted eggs bright red to symbolize the blood of Christ. Hollow eggs (created by pierc-

ing the shell with a needle and blowing out the contents) were decorated with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other religious figures in Armenia.

Germans gave green eggs as gifts on Holy Thursday, and hung hollow eggs on trees. Austrians placed tiny plants around the egg and then boiled them.

When the plants were removed, white patterns were created.

The Easter Bunny

Hares and

to America -- particularly Pennsylvania -- brought the tradition with them and spread it to a wider public. They also baked cakes for Easter in the shape of hares, and may have pioneered the practice of making chocolate bunnies and eggs.

Easter Cards
Easter cards arrived in Victorian England, when a stationer added a greeting to a drawing of a rabbit. According to American Greetings, Easter is now the fourth most popular holiday for sending cards, behind Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Mother's Day.

Easter Parades
After their baptisms, early Christians wore white robes all through Easter week to indicate their new lives. Those had already been baptized wore new clothes instead to symbolize their sharing a new life with Christ.

In Medieval Europe, churchgoers would take a walk after Easter Mass, led by a crucifix or the Easter candle. Today these walks endure as Easter Parades. People show off their spring finery, including lovely bonnets decorated for spring.



ing the shell with a needle and blowing out the contents) were decorated with pictures of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other reli-

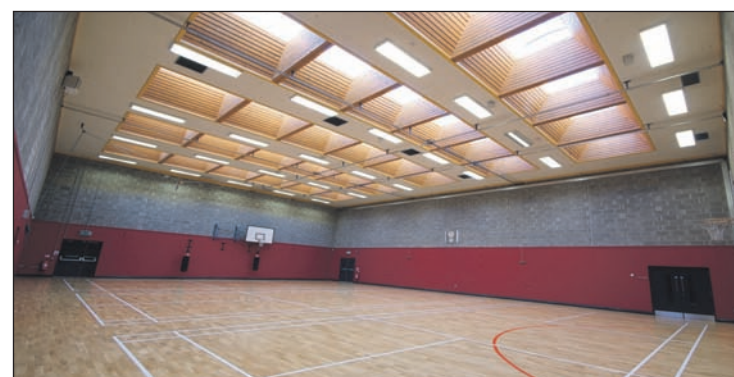
Easter customs appears to have originated in Germany, where tales were told of an "Easter hare" who laid eggs for children to find. German immigrants

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Improving fitness couldn't be easier. A full range of cardiovascular and resistance equipment can be found in the gym upstairs with a weights room for more advanced training located downstairs. Fully qualified fitness instructors are on hand to provide help, encouragement and motivation

and free workout advice and programme setting. The gym is complemented with a daily programme of fitness classes from Spinning and circuits to Pilates and Chair Aerobics. A regular Yoga course runs on Thursday evenings and you can even join a Photography course.



For children, Dino's Den, the adventure soft play area provides slides, a ball juggler, roller squeeze and biff-bash forest to entertain toddlers to 10 year olds. It's also very popular for parties and can be hired for your exclusive use, with an adjacent room for party food and games.

Gymnastics and martial arts are also available for children. Tennis is well catered for with four synthetic courts, two of which are undercover and therefore playable all year round no matter what the weather is doing outside. The centre offers all inclusive memberships

for fitness with concession and junior options available in addition to the adult rates. For more information on opening times, prices and all the facilities and activities available go to www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/leisure, call the centre on 028 9187 4350 or visit it at Castle Street in Comber.

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EASTER FUN AT BANGOR'S KILCOOLEY WOOD

The Woodland Trust invites families to discover the hidden gems of Kilcooley Wood, Bangor, in the countdown to Easter.

Saturday 1 April, from midday to 4pm, is the date for the spring diary. Woodland Trust staff will greet and point you in the right direction; then follow the clues to complete a self-guided trail through this fabulous flourishing woodland. Young nature detectives, having completed the woodland adventure, will each be rewarded with a tasty Easter treat.

Kilcooley Wood is a green oasis stretching along one side of Bangor's Rathgael Road. On the other side of the road, the magnificent towering trees within privately-owned Clondeboye Estate provide an impressive backdrop.

Much to the delight of local people, this young urban woodland was declared a Local Nature Reserve in



Follow the clues for a self-guided trail at Kilcooley Wood.

2014, in recognition of its importance to both people and wildlife.

Michelle McCaughtry is the Woodland Trust's people engagement officer and

says: "We're encouraging families to discover this young woodland at their own pace, by way of a fun and informative nature trail. "This is a beautiful time

of the year, with spring definitely in the air, to get out and about. Look out for scatterings of lesser celandine and the first sign of bluebells, mostly along

the woodland edge. You'll often see chaffinches and we've had reports of the occasional sparrowhawk, no doubt visiting from nearby Clondeboye."

Kilcooley Wood was one of four Woodland Trust woods to share a £38,000 grant in 2016 from the 5p levy on shopping bags paid to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. This much-loved beauty is now ready and waiting to show off its new look, which includes improved entrances and pathways, and quaint little stone bridges.

Booking in advance is essential. The cost is £2 per child. Find out more and book your place at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/events or call 0330 333 5302.

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Aunt Sandra may have retired, but her tradition of hand-cutting the Candy Factory's goodies continues, carried on by her nephew David Moore.

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Easter Around the Globe

Different countries have different traditions that sit alongside Easter.

In Hungary, "Sprinkling" is a popular Easter Monday tradition, in which boys playfully sprinkle perfume, cologne or water over a young woman's head, and ask for a kiss. People used to believe that water had a cleaning, healing and fertility-inducing effect.

In France, in the town of Haux, a giant omelette made with 4,500 eggs that feeds 1,000 people is served up in the town's main square. The story goes, when Napoleon and his army were travelling through the south

of France, they stopped in a small town and ate omelettes. Napoleon liked his so much that he ordered the townspeople to gather their eggs and make a giant omelette for his army the next day.

Besides being crazy football fans, in Brazil there is a tradition of creating straw dolls to represent Judas (the apostle known for betraying Christ) and hanging them in the streets and beating them up. And many times politicians involved in scandals become Judas. It is not all aggression, however, and on Easter

Saturday, called 'Sábado de Aleluia,' inspires mini versions of Carnival in many small towns to celebrate the end of Lent.

One of the biggest Easter celebrations takes place in Seville, Spain, where 52 different religious brotherhoods parade through the streets, manifesting the crucifixion, with thousands watching the daily processions of marching bands and decorated candlelit floats heaving with Baroque statues illustrating the Easter story.

The traditional "Pot Throwing" in Corfu,

Greece takes place on the morning of Holy Saturday. People throw pots, pans and other earthenware out of their windows, smashing them on the street. Some say the custom of throwing of pots welcomes spring, symbolising the new crops that will be gathered in new pots. Others say it derives from the Venetians, who on New Year's Day used to throw out all of their old items.

In Italy, a huge, decorated wagon is dragged through the streets by white oxen until it reaches the cathedral,

and when Gloria is sung inside the cathedral Archbishop sends a dove-shaped rocket into the cart, igniting a large fireworks display.

Called Scoppio del Carro (explosion of the cart), this is followed by a parade in medieval costumes.

Finally, whilst in many countries Easter eggs are hidden and children hunt for them, in Germany Easter eggs are displayed on trees and prominently in streets, with some of the trees having thousands of multi colour eggs hanging on them!

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Level 2 Diploma in Horse Care Family Morning at Enniskillen Campus

Kathryn Hazlett, Equine Lecturer - Recently, the parents and guardians of the Level 2 Diploma in Horse Care students attended Enniskillen Campus to get an update on what the students have been learning and their progression on the course.

The day started with the students giving a presentation on the units that they undertake as part of the course. The year manager for the group, Kathryn Hazlett, then spoke about the impending five week work placement which the students were preparing to go on. This then led us on to the practical session of the day. The tour started in the racing yard where two of the students demonstrated tacking up for the races and grooming, explaining each brush to the audience.

We then moved on to the Equitation yard where Lauren Gilchrist (Castleberg) and Keavy Molloy (Ballymena) had been busy painting the muscles on to one of the equitation horses - Max. They then discussed the muscles and what the horse



Keavy Molloy from Ballymena showing off her pieces she has made for her pre farrier exam.

uses them for when being ridden. The visitors then moved on to the forge and the Pre Farrier students displayed and discussed the pieces which they have been making over the course of the year.

The grand finale was held in the indoor where four students

performed a drill ride for the parents. This was a great show piece and the amount of practice put into this by the students, Zoya Robinson (Portadown), Kurtis Camlin (Portavogie), Tegan Glackin (Sion Mills) and Shannon Connor (Newcastle) was very evident.

The day ended by heading back up to the main campus building to get warmed up and the parents / guardians had the opportunity to chat to the course manager and year manager regarding the student's progress. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

BEEF PROCESSOR WELCOMES BDG GROUP

Opportunities to improve farm profitability through better beef supply chain linkages. This was the key topic for discussion at a recent Business Development group (BDG) meeting hosted by ABP food group at their beef processing plant in Newry.

During the visit the group were able to hear about current and future beef markets and the importance of a consistent supply of in spec beef cattle that can maximise the return to farmers. As a practical demonstration the group were able to grade live cattle and see how the carcass grades matched their predictions for weight, carcass conformation and fat class. Liam McCarthy, Supply Chain manager ABP, outlined that for cattle to maximise their value they have to be under 30 months of age for steers and heifers, farm quality assured, carcass weight between 270 and 400 kg and have a maximum of 4 moves. This was further reinforced as the group toured the retail packing depart-



Beef Finisher Business Development group members with Roger Sheahan, General Manager ABP Newry and Arthur Callaghan, NI Blade farming coordinator ABP following their recent group meeting.

ment and were shown beef cuts from large carcasses over 400 kg which weren't suitable for premium supermarket pre-packs.

Following the tour of the beef processing and retail production lines, Arthur Callaghan, NI Blade farming coordinator ABP, gave an outline of the Blade farming scheme and highlighted opportunities for beef finishers

to link with Blade calf rearing units.

The success and efficiencies of the farmers in the Northern Ireland Suckler Beef Programme was also discussed and it was highlighted that the linkages between farmers, ABP, CAFRE and the Irish Farmers Journal was helping to promote a system of profitable beef production.

The group visit to

ABP reinforced the importance of good communication between farmers and processors to ensure the supply of animals that meet market demands and also highlighted that there are opportunities for farmers to get involved with schemes such as the Blade farming scheme to add new enterprises or scale to their existing businesses.

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LOCAL NETWORK GETS SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

Representatives from local businesses attended the recent Lisburn Castlereagh Entrepreneurs Network at Lagan Valley Island entitled 'Online Social Networking vs Face-to-Face Networking'.

The speakers at the event included Eoin Lavery and Stuart McDonnell, Apple Solutions Experts, Dixons Carphone Warehouse and Jonathan Steen, President of the Lisburn Chamber of Commerce alongside Stephen Houston, former President.

Councillor Uel Mackin, Chairman of the Council's Development Committee, speaking about the event said: "The ease with which people can communicate online offers local businesses a valuable way to connect and engage with their marketplace at all times of the day from any location. Functions in online communication channels discussed for use by local small to medium sized businesses included Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat and YouTube.



Pictured with Councillor Uel Mackin, Chairman of the Council's Development Committee were speakers: (l-r) Jonathan Steen, President of the Lisburn Chamber of Commerce; Stuart McDonnell and Eoin Lavery, Apple Solutions Experts, Dixons Carphone Warehouse; and Stephen Houston, former President Lisburn Chamber of Commerce.

organised to support local businesses utilise online communications through a variety of platforms whilst still

maintaining the important face-to-face networking opportunities. Businesses have several online platforms

through which to promote their services and these offer quick and easy communication channels to build brand

awareness.

"However those attending the event were reminded that online communications should not replace face-to-face networking. There is a very personal quality to face-to-face conversations as they offer customers and business associates the best opportunity to ask questions, get help and work through issues. These personal connections may then develop online once the initial relationship has been established," concluded Councillor Mackin.

Networking requires certain skills and the participants were advised to be warm and treat people with respect as you learn more about them, don't be shy, follow up and deliver on any promises made; and be sure to make a long-lasting virtual connection with the individuals through the LinkedIn App.

Bring The Big Lunch to North Down neighbourhoods!

This year The Big Lunch is on Father's Day - Sunday the 18th of June. This year it forms part of The Great Get-Together weekend which is a celebration of community positivity in memory of MP Jo Cox.

The Big Lunch has just released an all-new free party planning pack to help people get started with their street's Big Lunch. It is available at their Eden Project Communities website.

Grainne McCloskey, manager for Eden project Communities' Big Lunch initiative in Northern Ireland said: "We are encouraging people in every city, town, village and even the rural areas across Northern Ireland to invite neighbours and local people to share food and friendship on Big Lunch day. It's that simple.

The Big Lottery Fund are funding the Big Lunch initiative to strengthen communities and encourage connections, sharing and positivity.

"People tell us the hardest bit is knocking the first door or inviting the first person to pitch in. But it immediately becomes easier as more and more people contribute, and planning is half the fun."

The Great Get-Together is a weekend of community celebration aiming to bring people together to enjoy a diverse mix of activities including Big Lunches on Sunday 18 June.

It is a unique collabora-

tion the Jo Cox Foundation, The Big Lunch and a range of great community organisations which in the purest sense unites initiatives that share the ambition to positively impact people's lives, and the places where they live.

Over 4000 people have already signed up to take part, and many charities, businesses and organisations are also getting behind the idea

The Big Lunch is the annual get-together for neighbours held each year one Sunday in June. In 2016 7.3 million people got together to share food, friendship and fun.

Since starting in 2009, thousands of Big Lunches have taken place in all types of communities, with millions of people taking to their streets, gardens and community spaces for lunch. A Big

Lunch event can be anything from a simple get-together with neighbours in a backyard to a full-blown party taking over the whole street.

Grainne McCloskey said "What you do and how you do it is up to you. The key ingredient is people."

The Eden project funded by Big Lottery encourage people to participate in this mass act of sharing because it helps ordinary people develop relationships on their doorsteps which in turn creates stronger, friendlier communities in which people start to share things, from conversation and ideas to skills and resources.

For more information visit www.edenproject-communities.com

or find us on social media @EdenCommunities #TheBigLunch #GreatGetTogether weekend

Budding Attenboroughs get set for career in conservation, thanks to National Lottery funding

Twenty-one budding Attenboroughs from Northern Ireland are set to get the skills and training to pursue a career in nature conservation, thanks to a new three-year programme funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The programme, delivered by Ulster Wildlife, will receive over £400,000 in National Lottery funding to provide twenty-one paid training placements, prioritizing young people under the age of 24, from ethnic minority groups or those with a disability. One-year part-time traineeships, as well as full-time will also be available starting in March 2018.

Throughout their action packed year, participants will receive a unique combination of skills and knowledge training, both marine and land-based, guaranteed on-the-job work experience, and a customised entry level Lantra accredited course. They will also have the opportunity to work in partnership with a number of other organisations including the National Trust and Butterfly Conservation.

This innovative project aims to build on the success of the

charity's existing Nature Skills Traineeship, also funded by HLF's Skills for the Future programme, which is now in its final year. During the last three years, over 700 applications were received for 18 full-time traineeships, with two thirds of trainees gaining paid employment within the environment sector upon completion.

Dawn Miskelly, Operations Director from Ulster Wildlife said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund is supporting this fantastic project. This investment will enable us to offer more people, struggling to get their foot on the conservation ladder, paid training and high quality work experience with experts, which will set them up for the best possible career in natural heritage. This level of training provision is not currently available

in Northern Ireland and will help to bridge the skills gap in the sector and reach out to a more diverse generation of people wishing to embrace a future wild career."

The project is one of 18 across the UK which will help to address critical shortages in specific heritage skills and widen the heritage talent pool.

Sir Peter Luff, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), said: "There is no quick fix to this problem. The heritage sector has been slow in widening

the profile of its work force and as a consequence is on a long-term learning curve.

"We wanted to build on the legacy of our existing targeted skills funding - £47m to date - and make a further financial commitment of just over £10m. Why? Because we know the Skills for the Future programme can drive successful and lasting change. It's simple yet highly effective: trainees paired with experts gain access to knowledge plus practical, paid, on-the-job experience."

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FORGET THE DARK NIGHTS, SPRING HAS SPRUNG

Later than last year, but spring is on the move

Though you might be hard pressed to believe it, spring is well and truly on its way – that's according to Mother Nature. Snowdrops, lesser celandine and other seasonal beauties are already on the march and have been recorded on the Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar project.



So far in 2017 the conservation charity has received sightings, across the UK, of 32 different indicators of spring; including snowdrops at 234 locations, 129 records of hazel catkins and even 48 records of song thrush singing.

Although spring is definitely in the air, the Trust has received fewer records than this

time last year, which is explained by colder temperatures in early 2017 compared to 2016.

In Northern Ireland the earliest flowering snowdrop recorded this year was on 4 January (at Newtownards in County Down). Last 'spring'

the earliest snowdrop was particularly early and was in fact recorded on 28 December 2015 (near Kircubbin, County Down).

According to the charity, while the recent spate of cold weather may slow the advance of

spring, it causes less of a problem than a late cold spell, when many more species may be flowering or awake from hibernation – as happened in 2013.

Judith Garforth, Woodland Trust Citizen Science Officer, said:

"Recording signs of the changing seasons on Nature's Calendar is hugely valuable to scientists and researchers who monitor its impact on nature. Although we're seeing signs slightly later this year, we expect to see many more as things finally begin to warm up."

Patrick Clegg is the director of the Woodland Trust in Northern Ireland and said:

"The recent wintry weather may make you think it's too early to look for signs of spring, but the clues are out there nonetheless and this is a great time to wrap up and get out and about."

"Look for lesser celandine flowering, hazel flowering, or even record your first lawn cut."

"We really need more people across Northern Ireland to play a part, and you don't have to be an expert. Your records – no matter how few – will make a valuable contribution to scientific research."

By recording natural seasonal signs, thousands of people have enabled Nature's Calendar to become a vital survey into how climate change is affecting UK plants and wildlife. Find out more at www.naturescalendar.org.uk

Local Lady Started 'Wonder Scents' Through The Go For It Programme

Councillor Uel Mackin, Chairman of the Council's Development Committee visited local lady Wendy Houston to hear about her experience as a 'Go for it' participant.

Wendy was very pleased with the assistance and support provided by one of the Council's partner organisations to develop her free business plan. Wendy wanted to start a new chapter in her life and self-employment offered her the ideal opportunity to decide on her work life balance.

She met Patricia, a business adviser at Lisburn Enterprise Organisation, and received assistance with her free business plan. It showed that her business idea would make a profit and she could receive a wage.

Wonder Scents was then set up. This local business owned and managed by Wendy makes scented candles and bath bombs as well as offering a range of tartlet candle burners and gift baskets. Wendy makes her own products in a variety of fragrances including lime, fresh cotton, jasmine, citrus burst and bubblegum.

Speaking after the visit, Councillor Mackin, said: "To have the opportunity to meet up with a participant of the Go for it programme was very beneficial. Wendy gave me an insight into this council managed programme. Not everyone wishes to work for someone else and instead prefer to set their own goals, which self-employment allows. This is exactly what the Go for It programme helped Wendy to do."



Councillor Uel Mackin with Wendy Houston

"She wanted to work but during hours suitable to her home life. Through her meetings with the business adviser she was able to put together a business plan to show she could successfully make a business producing her natural bath bomb and candle products. Should any resident of the Lisburn Castlereagh area wish to start their own business please contact the Go for It team on 0800 027 0639," concluded

Councillor Mackin. Wendy regularly attended markets to sell her products and also accepts orders through her Facebook page [facebook.com/WonderScents](https://www.facebook.com/WonderScents). Business has been so good that Wendy is now relocating from her home to a unit in Penny Lane Market, Lisburn. If you fancy setting up your own business log on to www.goforitni.com or phone 0800 027 0639. #goforitni

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Visit: www.cancerfundforchildren.com

Taking place on the second Bank Holiday weekend in May, this is the perfect opportunity for you to take on Northern Ireland's highest peak and say that you did it!

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All our Slieve Donard climbers will be helping to support children, teenagers and young people living with cancer. You will receive:

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- Pre-climb tea and coffee
- Marshals and guides along the Slieve Donard route
- A fundraising pack
- Access to fundraising materials

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Trading Standards warn consumers about fake jewellery

The Northern Ireland Trading Standards Service (TSS) is reminding consumers when purchasing jewellery to always check the hallmark.

TSS recently seized a haul of jewellery including necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings which did not bear a valid hallmark certifying the gold or sterling silver's purity. Some of the seized jewellery had

foreign markings indicating the quality of the metal, but were not hallmarked as legally required in Europe. The seized items of jewellery will be analysed by an Assay Office to discover if they really are the described precious metals.

Traders who supply or offer to supply unhallmarked articles described as gold, platinum, palladium or silver may be guilty of committing a criminal offence.

As it is not possible to detect by sight or touch the gold, silver, platinum or palladium content of an item, hallmarking is therefore a legal requirement under the Hallmarking Act 1973. Consumers can rely upon hallmarks as an assurance of the quality of precious metals.

When purchasing jewellery consumers should be aware of the following:

In a retail outlet look out for the hallmarking notice, this is the British Hallmarking Council's notice for jewellers and silversmiths. This sign, detailing UK hallmarking requirements, must be displayed by law.

If an article is described as gold, silver, platinum or palladium, always ask if the jewellery is hallmarked; this is your guarantee.

The hallmarking symbols are not always visible to the naked eye. Don't be afraid to ask for an eye glass to ensure the compulsory symbols are present.

Bear in mind that silver articles weighing less than 7.78grams, gold and palladium articles weighing less than 1 gram and platinum articles weighing less than 0.5 grams are exempt from hallmarking requirements.

If an article of precious metal is not hallmarked it may be fake. A suspiciously low price may be an indicator of fake jewellery. If it is too good to be true, it often is.

This recent seizure of jewellery is an example of how TSS acts to protect local people and the interests of legitimate business.

If you are aware of the supply of unhallmarked or fake jewellery contact ConsumerLine on 0300 600 62 62, or for further information visit www.nidirect.gov.uk/consumerline.

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THRIVING QASHQAI HITS 10-YEAR MILESTONE

The Qashqai – the car Nissan claims created the crossover segment – is celebrating its 10th birthday.

Now in its second generation, the Japanese giant's iconic model is set to surpass a decade in production, marking a hugely successful venture and feat of UK-based engineering.

Since hitting the forecourt back in February 2007, the high-riding hatchback has notched an impressive 3.3 million sales worldwide, two-thirds of which have been made in Europe.

While the Matra Simca Rancho claims to have inspired the crossover genre back in the 1970s, there's little doubt the Qashqai was the car to inspire the car-buying public to take it to their hearts.

So much so, in fact, that the model was Britain's fifth-most popular car at the end of last year. The 60,000 units sold in the UK saw it prove a bigger draw than the likes of the ever-popular Volkswagen

Polo, Vauxhall Astra and Mercedes C-Class.

Nissan believes it has as many as 21 direct competitors eyeing its position at the top of the crossover league table with rival models.

The UK received a massive economic boost last September when – in spite of the financial uncertainties sparked by the Brexit vote – Nissan announced it would build the next Qashqai and X-Trail models at its Sunderland factory,

safeguarding over 7,000 jobs.

The Qashqai being built today comes in two body styles, four trim levels and a choice of four engines, two petrol and two diesel.

Nissan says its 1.5-litre diesel engine is the most popular choice, with the majority of customers going for the mid-range N-Connecta trim and a six-speed manual gearbox.

The Japanese firm has long found considerable success on these shores,

thanks to a series of evolutionary ideas.

Late last year it announced the launch of a car-sharing ownership

scheme, whereby drivers making similar journeys will be matched to one another using social media

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NORTHERN IRELAND GOLF ON 'PAR' WITH THE BEST – TOURISM IRELAND 'TEES UP' IRISH OPEN IN FLORIDA

Tourism Ireland's golf promotional programme for 2017 kicked off in Orlando, Florida. Thirteen golf and tourism operators from NI and Ireland, as well as three American golf tour operators, have joined Tourism Ireland at the PGA Golf Merchandise Show in Orlando, to highlight our world-class golf.

The PGA Show is one of the biggest golf exhibitions in the United States, attracting more than 40,000

golf professionals and enthusiasts, as well as around 1,000 influential golf journalists, each year.

Alison Metcalfe, Tourism Ireland's Head of North America, said: "The American golf market re-

mains a priority for Tourism Ireland in 2017 and we will continue to promote the island of Ireland as a

top golf destination, capitalising on the global success of our golfers including Rory McIlroy, Darren Clarke, Graeme McDowell, Padraig Harrington and Shane Lowry.

"Golf is the world's largest sports-related travel market and Tourism Ireland is working hard to drive home the message that a golfing holiday in Northern Ireland is about much more than a round of 18 holes – the combination of our world-class golf and our unique brand of hospitality plays a key role in attracting American golfers to visit."

Tourism Ireland has an extensive programme of activity under way to promote golf on the island of Ireland in the United States this year – in particular highlighting the 2017 Irish Open at Portstewart Golf Club and the 148th Open which is set to take place at Royal Portrush in

2019. Tourism Ireland will undertake an extensive programme of promotions throughout 2017, to build on what was the best year ever for American visitors to the island of Ireland in 2016 – and to boost the number of golf holiday-makers from the US.

Our world-class golf was highlighted to some 80 influential golf journalists and golf pros earlier this week, before the PGA Show kicked off – at a special Ireland Golf Day at a golf resort in Florida. Tourism Ireland golf TV ads will air this spring on the Golf Channel, and online ads will run on GolfChannel.com, encouraging American golfers to click through to great golf vacation offers on Ireland.com; and Tourism Ireland will invite influential American golf writers to come and experience our world-class courses for themselves.

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BoE Chief Economist Visits Bryson Charitable Group

Bank of England Chief Economist Andrew Haldane, visited Bryson Charitable Group recently to hear from the Bryson FutureSkills Team how Social Enterprise can make a real difference in addressing unemployment and building a culture of enterprise.

As the Executive Director of Monetary Analysis, Research and Statistics and a member of the Monetary Policy Committee, Andrew's role within the Bank focuses on economic and financial issues.

Voted as one of the top 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine in 2014, he has a particular interest in the charitable sector, co-founding the charity Pro Bono Economics, which aims to broker economists into assisting projects in this growing segment.

Bryson Charitable Group CEO John McMullan said: "We were

delighted to welcome Andrew to our recruitment and training company at the Bryson Future Skills training facility. As one of the UK's most influential economists, Andrew's allows us to demonstrate the important role of social enterprise in addressing and reducing adult and long-term unemployment levels".

Andrew Haldane commented: "It was great to see and hear first-hand the fantastic work Bryson are doing to support those seeking to develop skills and enter the world of work, supporting the economy in Northern Ireland".

LIQUOR LICENCE HOLDERS MUST GET THEIR HOUSE IN ORDER AHEAD OF 2017 RENEWAL DEADLINE

Owners of all types of licenced premises must take action now if they don't want to run out of time to renew their liquor licences ahead of the September 2017 deadline, a leading legal expert on liquor licensing has warned.

Cathy Colton, partner at Carson McDowell, said most licence holders in Northern Ireland are aware that their licence is due for renewal in six months, but she is concerned that many have not yet started to put the necessary measures in place for a successful renewal.

Renewals occur once every five years and the deadline will impact every licenced premises in Northern Ireland, including pubs, bars, restaurants and clubs.

Ms Colton said: "Now is the time that licence holders should be getting ready for renewals by seeking advice on what the court requires at the renewal date. This is particularly important if any alterations, however minor, have been carried out on the premises since the last renewal in 2012."

"Whatever type of venue you have, if you sell alcohol you need to ensure that your house is in order. Renewals are coming and our advice is, don't rest on

your laurels, get started on it now. The process can take up to four months with only a few court dates set aside to deal with these applications. With courts closing at the end of June we are recommending

that anyone with alterations needs to seek approval prior to this date," she added.

"Carson McDowell has a team of liquor licensing experts who can provide advice on this process."

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