

CLEVER IDEA p7: Dot's treasure Extra classes keep gifted pupils on the ball : surprise p4/5

... new look for adult classes p6 ... families on road to peace p7 ... pals together p5 ...



Pupils go clockwise to get to school on time

YOUNGSTERS at a Fleetwood school are backing a new project to counter lateness and absenteeism.

Time is running out for stay-a-beds across the county.

Full story p5



Older people: fight starts for care cash

COUNTY councillors and private businesses have teamed up to fight for extra help for older people.

A growing national "funding gap" means that private providers of care homes and social care services such as home helps are not given the cash they need.

Shortage of cash threatens the future development and provision of local care services for many older people needing help, so Lancashire County Council is joining the private sector to lobby Whitehall for more funding.

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, said: "There simply is not enough money to give those care providers who meet high standards the money they need."

"Our priority is to ensure that vulnerable people receiving publicly funded care do not receive sub-standard care."

"It is in everyone's interest that care should be on a secure financial footing and be of the highest quality."

"There is no indication that the funding gap can be bridged by local actions alone, despite great willingness to seek efficiencies."

Most social care in the county is funded by Lancashire County Council, helped by central government grants. The county council spends around 10 per cent more than it receives from government.

Private providers and county councillors agree that central government must release more cash to relieve financial pressure on care providers.

The newly formed Lancashire Social Care Partnership, which includes Lancashire Care Association and the United Kingdom Homecare Association, has already won support for its lobbying from a number of the county's MPs. Representatives are seeking a meeting with Health Minister, Liam Byrne.

Councillor Cheetham added: "All sectors have to pay staff properly and pay for more and more detailed training. It all costs money. This is an issue faced by all local authorities and needs debate at a national level."



●CHRIS Cheetham: private and public sectors are on the same side in caring for people.

COUNTY'S NEW MAP

A BLUEPRINT for Lancashire has been approved that will point the county towards prosperity, health, learning, convenient travel and a quality environment.

Lancashire County Council's new Corporate Strategy has the prime aim of making Lancashire a place where everyone matters.

You spoke and we listened ... more than 2,000 people on a citizens' panel said they wanted to see attention turned to crime, health, social support, learning and development, work, prosperity, improved travel and environmental protection.

The strategy will last until 2009 and will reshape existing budgets to "bend" public spending to meet the public's priorities.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, deputy leader, said: "People have told us what they want and we are a large enough organisation to put those demands into action."

"We will also work with other organisations to steer money towards the public's priorities."

"This strategy sets out with clarity and depth where we want to be in the future. It shows our direction of travel."

The central theme is simple - Lancashire is to be a place where everyone matters.

It covers the other key themes of making

Services tailored to suit you in new plan for prosperity

Lancashire a place where people can:

- Feel safe.
- Lead healthy lives.
- Get help if they need it.
- Learn and develop.
- Work and prosper.
- Travel easily and safely.
- Enjoy a high-quality environment.

Commitments include a 15 per cent reduction in crime, working with other organisations to reduce healthcare gaps, helping vulnerable people maintain their independence and improved chances to learn and grow through education.

Efforts will also be made to improve the county's image in order to attract well-paid jobs and to tackle congestion and reduce road deaths.

Councillor Pollitt added: "All our budgets will be directed towards these aims so there are great implications."

"Providing help, for example, is just one objective but it means that people should be able to get to work when a road is flooded, that they should be supported in living independently when they get older and that they should be helped develop

their own lives successfully."

"There are only eight Corporate Strategy headlines - but we have over 800 services and almost all of them will be affected to a greater or lesser degree."

"We will be tackling these objectives with energy."

"It will not be easy but we start from a strong base of a committed local authority and first-class partners."

"It is to provide the basis of everything we do in our service provision. Together we will make Lancashire a place where everyone matters."



●DOREEN Pollitt: new direction for services after people spoke out.

Search for savings

LANCASHIRE County Council's Cabinet has recommended a Council Tax increase of below 5 per cent.

The county council's share of final Council Tax bills will not be set until 16 February - but the authority's cabinet has already recommended that savings be made to keep any Council Tax increase at about 4.9 per cent.

Rising demand for services, particularly for the young and the old, combined with general inflation had threatened to increase Council Tax by up to 8.8 per cent.

Inflation is particularly severe for transport, fuel and construction.

COMMITTED TO RECYCLING!

Making a difference, make compost this spring

WHY NOT give your garden a treat and get a compost bin, to turn rubbish from your garden and kitchen into a healthy soil improver for your plants? Biodegradable rubbish, from grass clippings to teabags and vegetable peelings to paper can be composted and used to improve the quality of your soil helping your garden bloom.

You can get your free compost bin, kitchen caddy, and instructions by ringing 0845 658 8550. As well as the standard free compost bins, there is a new bin that is ideal for the smaller garden and costs £10 (RRP £56.95) and a larger hexagonal bin for the gardener who produces lots of waste costing £20 (RRP £106.95).



Ahoy Me Hearties...

Lancashire County Council's school battery recycling scheme "Turn Batteries into Treasure" has diverted another 2 tonnes of batteries from landfill in the last 3 months thanks to the dedication of the schools taking part, making 11 tonnes this year. This is enough batteries to operate over 11,000 Roboraptor's! If your local school is not taking part in the scheme you can take your used household batteries to your Local Household Waste Recycling Centre.



Last chance to scratch and win!

MARCH IS the last chance to win prizes for recycling rubbish. Lancashire's "Win don't Bin" campaign has seen over 300,000 scratchcards given out across the County to reward people for recycling.

Each week different areas across the County are randomly selected. People using their recycling service

in these areas receive a scratchcard giving them a chance of winning prizes ranging from a Family Safari holiday to a tree.

The scheme has been funded through Defra to test if incentives work in encouraging people to recycle more of their rubbish.



TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Write to us at: Waste Management Group
Lancashire County Council, Winckley House, Cross St, Preston, PR1 8RD.
Email wasteinfo@env.lancsc.gov.uk

Do you take pet waste to the tip?

IF YOU are intending to take waste from your household pet to one of our 23 sites, tell one of our "Here to Help" staff who will give you free brightly coloured bags to take away and use. Each time you bring the bags back they will be replaced free of charge.

This is because waste from the non-recyclable skips is hand sorted to pull out material that can be recycled. To make it easier for staff to identify this waste we have introduced this scheme.

Lancashire County Council's 23 Household Waste Recycling Centres are open from 8.00am to 7.00pm 362 days a year.

recycle

Lancashire
County Council

NEWS IN BRIEF

Penalties target lazyheads

LATENESS and absenteeism in schools are to be targeted in a renewed drive to get children to school.

Educational opportunities are a great chance for success in life – and Lancashire educationalists say extra fixed penalty “fines” will encourage parents in getting children to school.

Extra staff are being authorised to issue the £50 penalties and one parent will soon face the courts to explain their child's absence.

Frances Molloy, assistant county education welfare officer, said: “So much depends on doing well at school. It would be highly irresponsible of us not to take the matter seriously.

“A truant may miss just a handful of lessons, but that can disrupt his or her learning for the entire year. We have known parents condoning their child's absence, which is entirely unacceptable.”

The parents of late arrivers at school could also be issued with fixed penalties. Parents or children need not worry about lateness caused by something like a delayed bus as only those late by 30 minutes or more will be at risk.

Wheels of freedom

THE beauties of East Lancashire are to be opened to disabled people this spring and summer.

Electric Trampler buggies, which can trundle over rough ground and climb steep hills, are to be provided for Wycoller Country Park, near Colne, while others will be provided to help people up to Rossendale's quarries.

The buggies cost about £5,000 each but are free for members of the public who ring Lancashire County Council's Countryside Service in advance.

The council will also team up with the Disabled Ramblers' Association for three days in July and provide buggies for rambles in Arnsdale, the Forest of Bowland and the Grane area between Blackburn and Rossendale.

Super, smashing

WELL-KNOWN Lancashire comedian and TV presenter Jim Bowen has given his backing to the county's safer driving scheme.

Former Bullseye presenter Jim took part in the Speed Awareness Course and described the day as “super, smashing, great”.

Popular TV entertainer Jim attended the course, to polish up his driving skills after being caught driving at 36mph in a 30mph zone.

Register offices for all your needs

Service looks ahead with baby-naming and wedding vow renewal

TRADITIONALLY people only needed the register office three times during their life – for birth, marriage and death.

But a new range of ceremonies launched this month by Lancashire Registration Service offers many more reasons to celebrate.

Bookings are currently being taken for naming and marriage vow renewal ceremonies which form a new range of celebratory and commemorative services being performed by registrars.

Gwyneth Sarkar, Registration Service manager, said: “A naming ceremony is a very special way to mark the arrival of a new child.

“It is an increasingly popular way of welcoming a new baby into the family or a circle of friends.

“The ceremony can easily be developed to suit children of any age and can involve older children or more than one child.

“Marriage vow renewal ceremonies are an equally popular way of celebrating a special anniversary or simply remembering and re-affirming the vows taken on your wedding day.”

“Although special-occasion ceremonies have no legal status each one is unique and will make your celebration one to cherish and remember.”

The ceremonies can be held at any of the 100 hotels and similar premises in Lancashire that are already approved for civil marriages, at one of the eight ceremony rooms located in our registration offices or at a public building specially approved for the occasion.



●CONGRATULATIONS: Ray, right, and Alastair found the Registration Service handy for their civil partnership. They made their relationship official after 32 years.

Happy ending for duo's long wait

IT DEFINITELY was not a wedding – but a civil partnership ceremony was the next best thing, according to Ray Robinson and Alastair Forrest.

The Ribchester duo, above, met a full 32 years ago but only became “official” partners when they tied the knot with the help of Registration Service staff last month.

A marriage it certainly is not, but the new civil partnership procedure

regularises the law to make it equal for married and gay couples.

Former engineer Ray (64) and barrister Alastair (55) took dozens of friends and family to Clitheroe Register Office for the short civil ceremony.

Alastair said: “Some people have misunderstood this – it is nothing like a wedding, gay or straight.

“We have been together for 32 years anyway. It is the chance for us to make a public declaration of our relationship and to have that rela-

tionship recognised in law.

“Apart from love and commitment, what happens if one of us has an accident? Who would be allowed to turn off the ventilator? There have been instances in the past where someone's ‘gay’ partner has been left standing in the corridor.

“It is about security for each other. We can now leave the house to each other whereas in the past a partner has had to leave the house if one has died. It regularises the law.”

Ray and Alastair, like “straight”

couples registering for a wedding, had to publicly register their intentions in advance – rather as church-going couples arrange for the banns to be read.

Ray added: “The staff and the ceremony were superb. We had a fantastic day, although we don't really feel any different now – we have been together 32 years.

“The legal implications are vitally important, but it was also great to make the commitment in front of friends and family.”

Team approach stops runaways

A PIONEERING project that has cut the number of runaways from children's care homes has received national recognition.

The issue of care agencies losing track of children received national recognition in the Victoria Climbié disaster and the subsequent Lord Laming Inquiry.

A Lancashire project is now uniting the county council, police and other agencies in producing a database of children deemed at risk of running away from care homes.

Some children run away for the same reason every time or at the same time of the week.

The database allows staff to see patterns and change the support they offer – leading, so far, to a 33 per cent drop in runaways.

County Councillor Niki Penney said: “Experience shows that runaways are at high risk of falling into all kinds of trouble.

“The work being done in Lancashire with runaways and potential runaways could prevent disaster.”

The Lancashire Children's Rights Service works in partnership with Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Constabulary to develop



●KEEPING children safe at home: from left, Bob Gower, Lancashire County Council Children's Services; Inspector Neil Middleham, County Councillor Niki Penney; Stela Stansfield, young runaways development worker, Pauline Geraghty, Lancashire Children's Rights Service.

services and systems to safeguard young people who run away from care. Their work resulted in an award by a national newspaper.

Inspector Neil Middleham added:

“The project's success shows that there are effective ways of dealing with the problem of young runaways using careful analysis, joint protocols and close partnership working.”

Action urged to save life on cockle beds

LANCASHIRE County Council is urging the government to bring in tougher laws to control harvesting of the county's cockle and mussel beds.

Members are calling for the government to introduce a national licensing scheme to replace the current ineffective permit scheme.

The government is working on new marine legislation to protect sea life around the UK but it is not scheduled to be heard until 2008.

County Councillor Keith Riley, Fleetwood West representative, said: “The situation in the cockle and mussel industry is getting out of hand with people turning up in huge numbers to harvest the cockle beds until they are stripped bare.

“A small cockle bed which opened in Fleetwood on December 6 attracted around 350 people and the beds were cleared in just two days.

“The lack of regulation provided by the present permit scheme leaves the industry wide open to illegal activity such as tax fraud, employment of illegal immigrants and dangerous working practices.

“This presents not only a risk to the economy and ecology but can cause a considerable nuisance to local residents.”

County Councillor Hazel Harding, leader of Lancashire County Council, added: “Licensing would cover the costs of properly enforcing the law and ensure that the local economy receives the maximum benefit from these fisheries.

£306,000 savings search

A RENEWED drive against money owed and added efficiency in ordering goods and services is set to save cash for Council Tax payers.

County councillors are to spend an extra £306,000 on schemes that will provide savings in the short, medium and long term.

The investment will be used to improve buying – and provide added vigour to debt recovery.



Invitation to tender for experienced parties:

60 place full-day care nursery provision

This is an exciting opportunity to deliver a 60 place full-day care nursery provision within a developing children's centre, Stoneygate Nursery in Preston city centre.

There will be an information evening on 23 February at the nursery, 6pm to 8pm.

Application packs and further information is available from Helen Armstrong, tel: 01772 331169.

Deadline for submissions: 17 March 2006.

Expected delivery date: no later than July 2006.

WIN

a relaxing Lakes weekend for two



●SCENIC beauty : a Lake Windermere cruise.

Do you love the Lake District? If so, why not enter this month's Vision competition to win a weekend away.

Clarke's Hotel, close to picturesque Morecambe Bay in Cumbria, is offering one lucky Vision reader a superb break for two people, including full English breakfast.

We'll also include 24-hour Freedom of the Lake tickets, valid on all scheduled sailings operated by Windermere Lake Cruises.

Clarke's is a three-star hotel excellently located in the village of Rampside, featuring luxurious accommodation with en-suite facilities and an all-day brasserie.

A blend of high standards and informal relaxation lets you unwind in pleasant surroundings - with a warm welcome from friendly staff and efficient service.

For more active people, many attractions are just a short drive away.

Windermere Lake Cruises is offering new "Sounds of Summer" barbecue cruises during 2006. The two-hour sailings feature live entertainment, a barbecue and a licensed bar.

Alternatively, why not take an evening jazz buffet cruise.

A full range of cruises is available all year round, starting at £4.95 per adult.

There are daily sailings between Bowness, Ambleside and Lakeside.

An Ambleside to Brockhole hourly service runs from April to October, with a half-hourly service during the school summer holidays.

Entry to the Brockhole Visitor Centre and grounds is free for boat passengers.

To be in with a chance of winning our hotel break and one of three Windermere cruise passes, simply answer the following:

In which county can you find Clarke's Hotel?

Two runners-up prizes are a pair of adult tickets for Windermere Lake Cruises and a family ticket (valid for two adults and up to three children).

Send your entries to: Clarke's Hotel Break com-

petition, Vision, Corporate Communications Group, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ.

The deadline for entries is Monday 20 February 2006.

Travel is not included in the prize - the winner will need to make their own transport arrangements.

For further information about Clarke's Hotel, or to request a brochure, contact 01229 820 303.

For further details about Windermere Lake Cruises, contact 015395 31188.

Editor's decision is final.

Caught in the web of council democracy

LANCASTRIANS are increasingly logging on to the internet to find out more about decision making in their local area, according to new figures.

The red rose county comes top of the list for websites visited, out of the 18 authorities piloting a project to give all councillors their own website.

Lancashire County Council has now occupied top spot in the councillor.info project for more than a year.

According to newly released figures for December, the county has once again taken the lead by attracting more than 8,000 visitors. In November, over 9,000 people visited the site.

Out of 84 councillors, 76 now have their own individual live sites.

Andy Wilkinson, member and executive support manager, said: "We have now occupied the top spot for more than 12 months. We're always looking for new ways for people to contact their councillors, share their views and find out what councillors are doing on their behalf.

"These new figures show that we're moving in the right direction, but we won't be standing still.

"We're also working with our councillors to improve and expand what they include on their own sites."

Councillor.info is a national project supported by the Local Government

Association, local authorities and a technical partner (London-based Poptel Technology Ltd).

By the end of December 2005, every English council had to provide their councillors with an opportunity to have their own web pages either maintained by the councillor or on their behalf.

Councillors are free to choose the content of their sites and are encouraged to make them relevant to their local area. Some sites now include parish council news, results from local sports teams and other local information.

Lancashire county councillor's web-sites can be viewed by visiting: www.councillor.info/lancashire

Building new hope for families



● DIG for victory : County Councillor Anne Brown views work on site.

A CEREMONY has been held to mark the commencement of building work on the site of the new South Ribble Children's Centre on Wade Hall, Leyland.

The building will hopefully be the start of regeneration of the area and is part of the government's agenda for "early years" and childcare. The centre will also create job opportunities. It is due to open in late 2006.



Geoff Walker, headteacher designate, Pendle Vale College

YOU will have read many articles from headteachers about their typical days, running a range of schools throughout Lancashire.

This is certainly written from a different angle, as eight headteachers have been appointed heads designate of new Buildings Schools for the Future (BSF) schools in Burnley and Pendle.

It is a real honour and privilege to be part of a project which will transform the educational scene in such a dramatic way - it is certainly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

It is also a real challenge as every existing school in the area will be closed as well - this is one of the biggest reorganisations ever undertaken in the country.

We can start a typical day with a two-hour business meeting with all heads and representatives from the BSF team. We catch up on key issues, exchange highs and lows, and crucially,

keep the communication lines flowing. It really is a steep learning curve for us all and we really appreciate the mutual support.

As BSF will eventually roll out to other parts of Lancashire, it's vital that we set up workable systems and best practice models.

Then on to a design meeting with architects' teams from potential bidders for the project. This is really stimulating and, for a geography teacher, uncharted territory!

Ultra-modern ICT, learning spaces, sustainable buildings, extended schools and community functions - I could go on.

It's difficult trying to predict what a future-proof building might look like or what the curriculum and learning experiences of our students will be in 20 or 30 years' time. Must find time to consult the DFES!

Next I have meetings with a number of staff from my previous school. All staff are having to apply for posts in the

new schools and naturally they need support and advice. It is good to touch base with colleagues and talk to ... now what are they called again?

Oh yes, I remember - students!

By late afternoon I'm flagging a little, but feel revitalised when I meet student council representatives who are contributing ideas on uniforms for the new school. I'd been wondering how to temper the radical ideas I felt sure they would come up with, but was surprised to hear them discussing blazers, logos and sensible shoes - not a hoody or baseball cap was mentioned!

Finally an evening meeting at the local college. I enjoy this involvement enormously and feel it's important to be involved with the wider community. Driving home over the border to Yorkshire gives me time to reflect on yet another diverse day.

I wonder how much I have accomplished in the planning of a brand new school - perhaps one or two more tasks ticked off, but still a long way to go!

Tracking your food 'from field to fork'

TRADING Standards officers are backing an initiative to help small food firms cope with tough new public health laws.

The Food Smart programme aims to give businesses the support they need to meet new rules which will see all food products tracked "from field to fork" throughout their production cycle.

Trading Standards will be working with other agencies including the Univer-

sity of Central Lancashire, the Health and Safety Executive and the Asian Business Federation to offer expert advice on food safety issues.

County Councillor Jean Battle said: "Food safety is of prime importance to everyone in Lancashire even though it's something we often take for granted.

"Food Smart will help businesses identify situations that could develop into food safety hazards, so that potential problems can be fixed before causing harm.

"The idea for Food Smart originated in Lancashire where Trading Standards teamed up with Environmental Health to pilot training for smaller food businesses.

"We are pleased to support this initiative with key partners including the Asian Business Federation and North West Food Alliance to promote quality within smaller food businesses and restaurants."

Khalid Saifullah, Chief Executive of the Asian Business Federation, said: "The Asian Business Federation is delighted to be working with the North West Food Alliance."

Contact Trading Standards on 01772 533 129 for more details.

Comp winners

LAST month's Bowland Forest Foods competition was won by Mrs P Rodgers in Thornton Cleveleys.

The winners of the Red Rose Awards/Rock FM competition are Mrs J Carney from Freckleton and Mrs B Rose from Accrington. They each receive a signed Lemar photo, and two CDs.

You're telling us!

Send your letters to:
The Editor, Vision, Corporate Communications Group,
County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.
neil.graham@ccs.lancscc.gov.uk

Beacon Buggies

I WAS excited to read about the all-terrain Trampler buggies at Beacon Fell Country Park, near Longridge, so I booked one.

I have a physical disability so the buggies are ideal. I was met by ranger David Bentley who explained how the things work. He took me through the safety precautions - and explained the importance of getting back to the centre at an agreed time. Otherwise, a full emergency procedure would be started.

I set off along steep muddy tracks that would have been impossible for me to tackle on foot. I felt I was experiencing Beacon Fell to the same degree as an able-bodied person.

The high point of my visit, literally, was when I reached the summit of the Fell, without having broken into a sweat.

This is a valuable new facility for which Lancashire County Council should be thanked.

I would encourage anyone with mobility problems to ring ahead and book a buggy immediately.

CAROLYN TOLSON Fleetwood

■Our Beacon Fell Trampers are free to use, but we ask that people book a place beforehand by contacting 01995 640 557.

The buggies are speed-limited to four mph and we have three trails suitable for buggy use. Some are steep and challenging so that disabled people can enjoy the countryside in the same way as everyone else.

Tony Lund, countryside officer.



● BEACON Fell: Vision reader Carolyn Tolson tests out a Trampler trail.

It's not on the cards

I WAS fascinated to read about scratch-cards (Vision, January) that offer the prospect of winning holidays and safari

breaks to people who recycle.

I wonder, however, how to get my hands on the cards.

I put my bins out every fortnight, but have only received one card so far.

Why are we not receiving them every collection if the aim is to maximise recycling?

D GORDON Bacup

■THE intention is to encourage people to use their recycling bins, so the cards are left with the bins once they've been emptied.

It is a huge, countywide operation and the idea is to distribute them at random intervals. To advertise the distribution in advance may encourage people only to recycle during those specific weeks.

The scheme will end in March, so there is still time to win - Editor.

Plastic mountain

IT'S good to see that Lancashire is now recycling more than a third of its waste (Vision, January).

I wonder if anyone can explain what we should do with the huge amounts of

plastic we accumulate.

We are being covered, as a society, in a sea of plastic wrapping.

All I can do at present is recycle plastic bottles at my local recycling centre.

What is the county council doing about telling people what to do with plastic bags, wrapping and cartons etc?

It is important that we catch up with other European countries and start to recycle 50 per cent and more.

MIKE PEARSON Hothersall

Letters containing a name and address will be given priority. Letters may be edited. We can not pro

NEWS IN BRIEF

Celebs' helpful words to young

CELEBRITY poets Lemn Sissay and Terry Caffrey, have joined young people in care to launch an anthology of their poetry work entitled, "A Sense of Place: The past does not equal the future".

Inspired by Lemn, who was himself brought up in care and, following months of hard work with him, a group of 17 young people from across the county have produced a book and audio CD of poetry based on their experiences of living in care.

Lemn presented the talented young writers with accredited AQA certificates in English language and a copy of their published work to mark their achievements at an event in County Hall.

He said: "Poetry is the voice of the imagination. The imagination and the inner voice are two elements of young people which are in constant conflict and growth."

"To bring these two together and to see people take it up has been a pleasure for me, as I hope it has been for them."

"More power to the young poets of tomorrow. You are lucky – you can read their work today."

The presentation was attended by County Councillor Clive Grunshaw, cabinet member for Children and Young People, and senior directors and staff from the county's Children's Services and residential care homes.

The project is a joint initiative between several services including the Library and Information Service, Youth and Community Service, County Arts unit and the Education of Looked After Children team.

Student reward

EXTRA help for would-be students has resulted in Investors in People status for Lancashire County Council Student Services.

National legislation has made student finance more complex over the years – and Student Services staff have responded by extra help and advice, including trips to schools, to help people.

Regal thanks

A VOLUNTEER who has worked with Lancashire County Council's Adult Volunteer Service for over 22 years has been thanked by the Queen.

Viji Ravindra, from Lancaster, was one of just seven volunteers from across the county to be nominated to travel to Buckingham Palace.

Viji's work has included visiting older people in their homes and going for walks, out for meals and shopping with people with a physical or learning disability.

Clockwise pupils have designs on time

SCHOOL pupils are "facing up" to the need to be punctual with a new county council initiative.

Youngsters from Chaucer Community Primary School have been working with the Pupil Attendance Support Team to learn about how good punctuality helps their education.

And to help get the message over in a fun way the Fleetwood children have produced their own clock faces.

A winner from each class at the school will be selected and their design made into a real working clock for the classroom.

Diane Ashton, the education welfare officer who has been giving

talks to all the pupils, said: "It is important for pupils to get into the habit of being punctual at an early age as it really does help their education."

"We have found that the best way to get the message across is by using fun activities. The pupils at Chaucer have had great fun making their clocks and the results are

really striking."

Michael Charnock, acting head-teacher at Chaucer, said: "I am sure that the work we have been doing with the Pupil Attendance Support Team will stand the pupils in good stead for the future."

"It has been a delight to work with the team and see the children make their clocks."

Memory project' to help people cope

THOUGHT-provoking images of yesteryear are helping people live in the present at a social services centre.

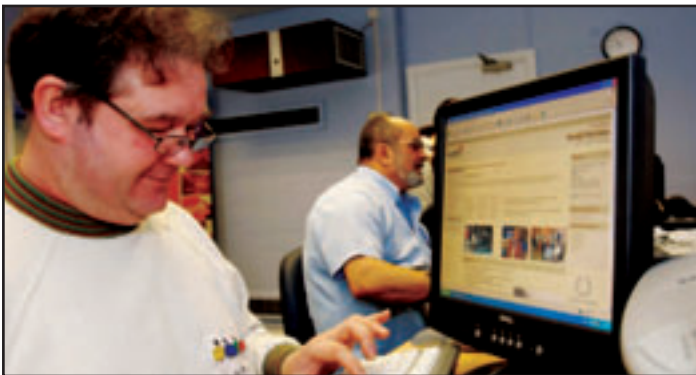
Road crashes, the blitz, the world of work ... happy and sad tales are being brought vividly back to life in a project that records living history and helps people deal with their problems.

Modern computer technology lies behind the two-minute recordings that television producers screened on BBC3 after centre users recorded their stories.

"Everyone keeps a shoebox representing the milestones in their life – things like photographs and letters. These two-minute recordings are the modern version of that", said Duncan MacLean, manager of Nelson's Marsden Resource Centre.

"Opening up and reliving parts of the past has a huge cathartic benefit as well as helping keep people in touch with modern technology."

Memories will last for ever in TV company scheme



●CALMING: Kevin uses the computer to record his life story.

The centre's first production featured Kevin Bolton who tells of the serious motorbike crash that left

him, at age 18, with just one arm and a brain disorder that affected his speech.

Kevin said: "The accident changed my life. I was young then with everything to live for and it is now one long struggle to build a new life."

"Simple things like reading, writing and speaking all have to be relearned."

"This project has helped my speech and has helped me in regaining memories of that period in my life."

Another moving tale, recorded with pictures and sound, tells of one centre user whose mother left her father, taking the young child to Liverpool – during the World War Two blitz.

Training was given by BBC staff and all the stories and films can still be seen online at: www.bbc.co.uk/lancashire/telling_lives

Duncan added: "The minimum some people got was improving their computer skills while some got the maximum – coming to terms with their life."

Call our number for consumer assistance

CONSUMERS have been given a major boost with a new Trading Standards telephone line number.

Increasing demand for help means that almost one in three telephone calls have been unanswered in busy periods.

Consumer Direct, the new helpline, will route public calls through to a team of trained advisers who will handle most pleas for help or point people in

the right direction on more urgent matters.

Lancashire's chief trading standards officer Jim Potts said: "There is growing demand for our help and our telephone lines have simply struggled to keep up."

"Our staff assist Lancashire people in recovering more than £10m each year in refunds, replacements and repairs – and we can't tackle this if calls are going missing."

"By using Consumer Direct as a

first point of contact, our staff will be freed up to tackle the more serious problems of consumer fraud, rogue traders and doorstep criminals."

The new service is open six days per week on **08454 04 05 06** or via textcom/minicom on 08451 28 13 84.

Existing Trading Standards publicly accessible numbers will be routed to Consumer Direct. They are: 01772 533573 and 0845 6001352.

I get by with a little help from my friends ...

A NEW world of experience and excitement awaits hundreds of Lancashire youngsters – thanks to hundreds of kindly volunteers.

Simple things like football, Brownies, swimming and making new friends are a daunting challenge to youngsters with additional mild to severe needs.

But Lancashire County Council-backed PIP Project is making life easier and happier by signing up volunteers for only one or two hours per week. The volunteers then support the child in taking part in "mainstream" social activities.

Inclusion officer Elaine Jones said: "These young people can be 'excluded' from the things we all take for granted, purely because some groups don't have enough people to give extra support."

"That is where PIP volunteers come in. All young people deserve the same opportunity to mix with each other – thankfully, Lancashire has hundreds of voluntary helpers who will give their time to take children along to social activities."

PIP – it stands for Play Integration Project – was founded 15 years ago in Poulton-le-Fylde by parents who found their children needed extra help in pre-school.

It now operates, with Lancashire County



●A FULL life: volunteer Kirsten Hitchins helps young James Bickerstaffe.

Council financial assistance, across Fylde, Preston and Wyre. Young people are from pre-school age up to 23.

Children often need help with such simple things as mobility.

Elaine said: "Most of us take being included for granted. We aim for our young people to be involved like everyone else in their chosen activity."

"Children can often attend activities but, without PIP support, be left on the outside. Our volunteers ensure they no longer miss out."

CAN you spare one or two hours per week to help the young?

Have you got a patient nature? Do you like helping others?

No experience is necessary as full training and support will be given. All work is voluntary although travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Contact 01253 899883 for further information.



Fairer play for childless

PEOPLE will be given fairer access to fertility services according to a report to the Health Equalities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Measures are being put in place across health services in West Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside to ensure the same criteria are used in each authority to decide whether couples should receive treatment.

Members of the public were asked what they thought was meant by a "childless" couple and whether reversal of sterilisation should be offered.

The results of the consultation formed the basis of proposals for Primary Care Trusts to adopt a consistent approach.

County Councillor Tim Ormrod, committee chairman, said: "Health services have been using different definitions of childlessness which means the treatment a couple are offered can depend on where they live."

"Having clear guidelines will be fairer and will help to reduce waiting times as the decision whether or not to offer treatment can be made more quickly."

Under the new proposals the definition of childlessness will be that neither parent has any children from a previous relationship. Reversal of sterilisation will also be withdrawn as an NHS service.

Keep the home fires burning

MORE should be done to encourage the use of renewable energy, according to county councillors on the authority's External Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A task group was set up by the committee to look into the benefits of setting up small community-based renewable energy projects.

Recommendations now include:

■Creating a web page to provide advice and information to the public on the technologies and funding available for future schemes

■Ensuring council officers consider renewable energy when starting new construction projects

■Nominating a member of the council's cabinet to drive forward the use of renewable energy

■Ensuring each district area has a pilot renewable energy project within the life of the next council.

LOOK LIVELY

Recycling - what West Lancashire people say

RISING Landfill Tax means an ever-increasing proportion of Council Tax will be spent on waste disposal unless we act now. It is as good a reason as any to reduce the waste we send to landfill sites – and that means more recycling.

What is more, landfill sites are filling fast and closing nationwide at the rate of two or three per month. It is perfectly possible that there soon will not be enough space to contain the rubbish we all produce. And Whitehall now wants local authorities to look more closely at incineration.

Vision went to Ormskirk to ask the ordinary man and woman on the bus for their thoughts on recycling...

Conscientious recycling means Ashurst's **Elsie Haslam** now only needs her "traditional" waste bin emptied once a month.

She said: "Recycling is an excellent idea. Landfill is so expensive."

"I recycle plastics, garden refuse and paper. Landfill is such a waste."

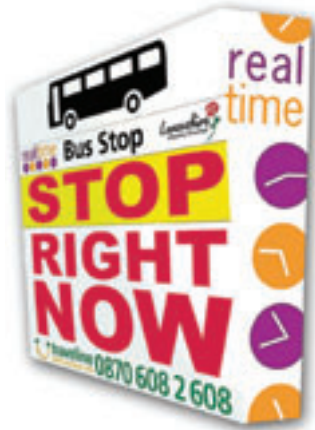
She added that on-the-spot fines should be imposed on litterbugs.

Laura McDermott, from Tanhouse, said: "Harry, my young child, generates lots of empty bottles which I hate to waste."

"I would recycle them if I could but I haven't yet got all the recycling facilities in my area. I do believe in helping the environment."

Recycling has to be made easier for everyone, said **Ormskirk's Barbara Barker**. She said: "I live in a block of flats and therefore don't have room for all the boxes and bags I would need."

"I feel I should be recycling more than I do, yet I can't be carrying it all in carrierbags to the nearest recycling centre. I take some to my



daughter's for recycling which is something I back in principle.

"Even so, I often send plastic and glass to landfill. We can only bury so much. Incidentally our binmen are very good!"

Sandra Banks moved recently to the area from Burscough where recycling facilities were first-class.

Sandra said: "I like to recycle and would do more of it if I had the correct bags and bins."

"It is such a waste to send everything to landfill. Increases in Landfill Tax make me even more keen to recycle."

Tony Jones said: "I recycle bottles and tins whenever I can. It helps the environment and nature as landfill releases so much pollution."

Space for recycling bags, boxes and bins was a problem for **Skellmersdale's Cathryn Fraser** who said: "There is not enough recycling going on."

"I don't have all the boxes so I am not in a position to recycle – but I would if I could."

Victoria McBride, from Skellmersdale, added: "It is a good idea, especially if it keeps Council Tax down."

What do you think?

Write to: Vision, Corporate Communications Group, County Hall, Preston

Treasure trove under your feet



●**SHARP discovery:** Dot and an early Iron Age/late Bronze Age (800-700BC) axe head.

THERE are many famous stories of buried treasure being discovered, from farmers striking silver as they plough their fields to builders who uncover a hoard while digging foundations for a house.

For most people, however, finding buried treasure is only the stuff of dreams.

But that is what **Dot Bruns** does every day of the week in her job as finds liaison officer at the Museum of Lancashire.

Dot is responsible for cataloguing all artefacts found in Lancashire and Cumbria and finds a pile of freshly unearthed objects on her desk every week.

It is Dot's task to research the origin of each item and tell the finder whether they've discovered something of genuine archaeological significance or just a rusty old hunk of junk.

Dot said: "I'm one of 36 finds liaison officers in England and Wales working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme."

"The scheme was set up so that all finds can be catalogued for the historical record."

"If you find something on the beach and keep it to yourself its value as an archaeological artefact is lost forever."

"But if you report it the finds liaison officer can map what kind of objects are found in a particular location and build up a picture of the history of the area."

ture of the history of the area.

"For example, we can work out whether there may have been an ancient settlement and get a better idea of what people's lives were like at the time."

Many of the finds reported to Dot are unearthed by metal detector enthusiasts but others are chance discoveries by residents digging their gardens or out walking.

Some finds are defined in law as "treasure" requiring the finder to report the item but this relates mainly to gold or silver objects and hoards of coins.

In fact, true "treasure" finds are rare. Most of the items Dot deals with are everyday objects but no less fascinating for that.

Things found in Lancashire recently are boot spurs, love rings, belt buckles, spoons, arrowheads, buttons and coins.

Most of these date from medieval times but others are of Roman origin or other historical periods.

One of Dot's most precious finds is a rare Bronze Age dagger which attracted great interest from fellow archaeologists when it was discovered

in the Ribble Valley in 2004.

Another favourite is a 16th century posy ring or love ring which was inscribed with a girl's initials and a short message in Latin. Such objects are not rare but are prized for their beauty.

Much of Dot's time is spent researching and cataloguing objects but another aspect of her work involves promoting the work of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which is chiefly financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

She said: "I visit metal detector clubs, archaeological groups and schools to tell them about local archaeology and encourage people to report their finds."

"I also hold Finds Identification Days throughout the year where people can bring along objects and I will try to tell them what it is and when it dates from."

Hundreds of archaeologically significant objects are found in Lancashire every year. They are all recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme website at www.finds.org.uk.

The objects are all returned to their owners after being examined and catalogued and the finder's details and exact location of the discovery are not disclosed.

If you find an object which you think may be of interest, contact Dot at the Museum of Lancashire on 01772 532175 or email dot.bruns@mus.lancscc.gov.uk.

Question time

1. In which Lancashire town was Olympics cycling gold medallist Jason Queally born?
 2. Which Lancashire town boasts one of the top 10 universities in the country?
 3. Which Lancashire borough has more public footpaths than any other borough in Britain?
 4. In which town was the passenger jet plane invented?
- Did you know ... the M6, originally the Preston by-pass, needed repatching within months of its 1958 opening? Cost-cutting on drainage - insisted upon by a cash-strapped Whitehall - meant the surface soon crumbled.

ANSWERS

1. Chorley 2. Lancaster 3. Rossendale 4. Preston

THE face of adult education has changed over recent years. **Kailash Parekh**, a qualified teacher and learning organiser at Lancashire College, is one of the people responsible.

Adult education classes - what we used to know as "night school" - used to be held almost exclusively in schools. Modern "night school" students are as likely to be found in community halls, churches or mosques.

Part of Kailash's job included a pilot scheme - its conclusions are now used in "mainstream" recruitment - to persuade more ethnic minority people to train as teachers.

What is a learning organiser?

I organise adult classes for Lancashire College in the Preston area. Part of my job is to increase teacher-training opportunities for people from ethnic minorities.

What is the importance of adult education?

Lancashire County Council would like all adults in Lancashire to improve their quality of life and maximise their life chances socially, educationally and career-wise.

Some people resist going back to school so we hold many classes in places that people like to go. Part of the work involves building people's confidence in their ability to learn.

Many Asian adults had difficulties as school-children and we have to be very sensitive to their

Voice of *Vision*



Kailash Parekh MBE - learning organiser

needs. The service is for everyone who wants to return to education. People deserve a fair chance whatever their background.

Is it enjoyable for you?

I really enjoy my work and find it very fulfilling.

It is rewarding to see people making progress. It can be basic skills such as reading and writing or it can even be hobbies. Not everyone does well in mainstream education.

What was the "Want to Teach" project?

There was a profound shortage of teachers from ethnic minorities and last year's project sought to address that.

We know that Asian children want positive role models - it is vital that they see adult Asians in positions of authority. We also know that Muslim women students want women teachers - so we need teachers from a range of backgrounds.

I was swamped with people and have steered interested students towards suitable courses across Lancashire. One lady, for example, wanted to teach Gujarati but struggled with English. We got her up to speed on English and now she is teaching. We hit our target of 150 recruits and our experience is now widely learned from.

What is your ambition?

We are a diverse community and I would like to see the entire community represented fairly in teaching and learning.

Lancashire County Council has many interesting jobs, all open on an equal opportunities basis. Some are advertised in Vision and others can be viewed at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

CBE honour for council leader

THE leader of Lancashire County Council was awarded the CBE in the New Year's honours list.

County Councillor **Hazel Harding**, who started her political career campaigning for children's play facilities in her village, has led the council since 2001.

Her citation is for services to local government.

She said: "I did not become a politician for fame but it is nice when your work is recognised."

Councillor Harding was born in Heysham and educated in Lancaster. She is a trained journalist and worked on newspapers in Lancashire and Devon.

She is a mother to four daughters and has two grandchildren.



LCDL update

Lancashire County Developments Ltd
The County Councils economic development department

Special office for Rossendale



Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), the County Council's economic development department, has now opened a special satellite office in Rossendale.

The Leader of Lancashire County Council and Vice-Chair of LCDL, County Councillor Hazel Harding CBE, joined the Leader of Rossendale Borough Council and local LCDL board member Duncan Ruddick to see for themselves where the company will be based in the Valley.

They met LCDL's Development Manager Andrew Barrow who will be the face of LCDL in the area. He will be based at the new office at Room 203, Kingfisher Business Centre, Futures Park in Bacup.

LCDL is working closely with the Borough Council to deliver economic regeneration across Rossendale with the aim of increasing employment, raising skills and improving the lives of everyone living and working in the area.

Racing ahead with Rosebud



Specialist hose and couplings company Premier Hose Technologies Limited from Clifton near Preston are one of Lancashire's latest Rosebud companies.

The successful business designs and develops Vortex, a world leader in vacuum hose and coupling systems selling hose technology to fire and rescue authorities across the UK, BAE Systems, Westland Helicopters and many of the Formula 1 racing teams.

The company is one of the latest firms in Lancashire to access finance from Lancashire County Developments Ltd's Rosebud scheme which allows new and existing companies in Lancashire access to loan and equity funding at competitive rates and is designed to encourage new business set up and expansion in the county.

Penwortham resident Dorret Conway has also used Rosebud to get a new business off the ground. Dorret has set up Knit Knack Ltd, to produce the UK's first interactive CD Rom tutorial for knitters.

To find out more about how Rosebud can help contact LCDL on 01772 551888 for a free information pack.

Lancashire - Where Social Enterprise Thrives



People from local social firms and charities across Lancashire came together for the launch of SELNET (a Social Enterprise Network for Lancashire) and a special NWDA Social Enterprise Action Plan aimed at increasing the ability of social firms to trade and reducing reliance on grant funding.

The special event, held at the SANAC Centre in Preston, allowed people involved in social enterprise and the 3rd sector to meet and share information about new developments and the products and services available within the network.

The work done by LCDL in this area was highlighted at the event.

Families leave the road to war

FAMILY rows during bad-tempered driving lessons could be a thing of the past, thanks to a county council scheme that helps everyone involved in learning to drive.

Refresher "lessons" from family and friends can put learners off for life – or, at least, pass on harmful driving habits.

So Lancashire County Council's Pre-Pass Support Scheme aims to train accompanying drivers such as mums and dads in how they can most help their

learners while remaining calm and clear!

The free course will be run in the coming months and consists of an evening theory class and a two-hour practical road-based session.

Anyone interested should telephone David Jones on 01772 532548.

The gift of school success

Talented children stretched as never before in climb to the top



●SUMMER school: extra classes and university tutoring now ensure that gifted children get all the help they need.

BRIGHT children are being singled out for extra help in schools in a bid to keep them on the path to lifelong success.

For many years now, extra help has been targeted towards children with learning difficulties. Lancashire schools continue to be extremely successful in this – but are now identifying the more able for extra help.

Extra classes, working with older or younger children, specialised summer schools and even university-based tutoring are being used to engage thousands of Lancashire pupils whose ability is increasingly being recognised by their teachers.

"We are challenging a widely held misconception that bright children will always do well," said Lancashire County Council's Paul Dyson-Knight.

"In reality the most able can quickly become bored, may even involve themselves in mischief and can at worst switch off school completely if they are not stretched enough.

"Many of us may remember children like that from our own schooldays – even Albert Einstein is reputed to have been expelled from school!

"There is now increasing recognition that the brightest pupils have the same rights as other children to a challenging education that allows them to make clear progress."

Faced with limited time, a few teachers may be tempted to prepare a standard lesson aimed at the middle-ability of the class, which is then adjusted to help slower learners.

If bright children then finish classroom exercises before others and are simply given extra work, it can actually discourage them from working to the best of their ability.

Increased awareness of the needs of their brightest children now means that more and more teachers are adapting lessons to meet their needs.

Such adaptations can mean pupils learn: **Faster...** where the most able are expected to learn a topic more quickly, so that they can move on to something more advanced, and may be encouraged to take exams early;

Broader... where the brightest have opportunities to follow areas of study not normally included in the school timetable;

Deeper ... where gifted youngsters are expected to learn a subject in greater depth and in more challenging ways, strengthening their understanding and skills.

In some schools, the most able may have opportunities to work with older children, broadening their friendship groups and ensuring they know they are not alone in their interests.

One good example of this takes place in summer schools, where primary and secondary age children work together in different and exciting ways and those about to move to secondary school get the chance to make new friends and meet staff before their move.

Paul, secondary adviser in the council's Gifted and Talented Team, said: "Pupils with talents in sport, music or drama traditionally receive targeted support and their talents are recognised publicly – children who are bright in maths, science, geography or languages, for example, need exactly the same recognition for their abilities.

"More and more teachers are realising that bright children actually like to learn things in more depth and that they appreciate a style of teaching that allows them more independence and choice in how they approach their learning.

"According to the Chief Inspector of Schools, two-thirds of schools in England now offer provision for brighter children that is rated good or better: this is significantly better than in recent years, but still leaves room for further improvement in a third of schools."

**Lancashire County
Developments Ltd.**

