



Jazz up your life

New look at life prompts long-term change for us all

Page 7

Eyesore land

1,000 acres of land have been converted from grotspot to beauty spot

Page 3

September fun

Lots of fun for all the family in our seasonal listings

Page 8

Dream 'wedding'

Register offices changing

Page 10



600 BUS ROUTES, 12m PASSENGERS, £13m SUPPORT

We're keeping **YOUR** buses on the road to keep Lancashire on the move

LATEST figures show that Lancashire County Council support for buses is more generous than that spent on buses by most other councils.

Research shows that Lancashire County Council provides investment of more than £4 per person – and that means more passengers on more buses in your area.

Despite rising oil, insurance and general running costs, Lancashire passengers can still use more buses than in many other areas of the country.

About 600 routes are running – thanks to support from county council offers to the tune of about £13m.

Further investments that make Lancashire one of the nation's leading supporters of public transport include new bus/rail interchanges, park-and-ride schemes, innovative marketing of routes and "live" computer-linked bus stops that tell people when the next bus is due.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for Sustainable Development, said: "County council spending keeps hundreds of routes open that would otherwise close down.

"Some bus routes will never be profitable but we want to keep them open for the sake of people who rely on them.

"That is when we give the operator help to keep the service running. It may be that it services an area full of older people, for example.

"Even so, some routes have cost us up

to £26 per person, per journey – and that is unfair for Council Tax payers. We can't be expected to continue like that.

"Some people will never be able to use buses – so we also support community transport groups and voluntary car schemes. Last year alone 240,000 were made on county council-funded dial-a-bus and community car schemes."

Few people realise that Lancashire County Council's 600 routes carry a total of 12m passengers.

Councillor Martin added: "Commercial operators will always provide most services, but we have a role to play in complementing that network.

"These subsidies help hundreds of thousands of people in their daily lives."



●NEW bus and rail stations and interchanges - this is a computer-generated picture of the proposed Nelson interchange: Lancashire County Council is keeping people on the move.

●(Inset) High-tech signs use the latest technology to tell people when their bus is due.

Technology, computers . . . and cash

AS well as buses that "kneel" to let passengers on, we also provide good-quality timetable information in a wide and imaginative range of outlets.

There are more than 8,000 bus stops in Lancashire. More than 50 per cent display timetable information. We want to help – so we are installing more and more live, electronic displays on bus stops.

We know many infrequent users can't remember which routes they

need. So we support Traveline, a seven-days-a-week transport information service. In 2005 it answered over 120,000 public calls.

And more money is being invested in www.transportforlancashire.org.uk and www.traveline.org.uk which help passengers plan longer journeys – together with connection times and total journey times.

Nearly everyone these days has a mobile phone. A few clicks are all you need to text in your bus stop code and receive timetable

information about the next three to five buses from that stop.

We also work with operators to market commercial as well as subsidised buses. Timetable improvements led to a 400 per cent rise in passenger numbers on the X40 Great Harwood to Manchester route.

Safety is key and we have a Safer Travel Unit to carry out safety checks on buses as well as working closely with schools to encourage bus use – and good behaviour.

Change ahead for older people

A MAJOR reshaping of services to improve the lives of older people is in the pipeline.

Lancashire County Council is "future-proofing" services to ensure they are right for the next generation of older people.

Better access to leisure, more flexible provision to services, a renewed look at town centre safety – all are detailed in Strategy for an Ageing Population 50-plus.

Two years of work between Lancashire County Council, district councils, the NHS, police, the private sector and voluntary organisations has led to the strategy. It has been adopted by Lancashire Partnership subject to public consultation.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, county council deputy leader, said: "People used to retire at 65, often in poor health, and typically die just eight years later.

"The help they need was aimed at their frailty.

"The next generation will be different. Early retirement for some means many have 20-30 years of life ahead of them.

"They are interested in leisure and are the first major beneficiaries of occupational pensions. They have huge spending power – and private and public sectors have to respond.

"People over 50 will form 44 per cent of the population by 2025.

"We simply cannot wait 20 years and then wonder what has hit us.

"We will still support frail people as much as ever but our wider approach must change totally."

Pensions, jobs, health, welfare, leisure, retail – see centre pages



Ask Shirley

Are you having difficulties knowing who to contact when you need help? Are you baffled when you open the phone book to ring for assistance? Shirley is here to help you.

If you are having problems getting hold of someone to help, Lancashire County Council has many staff trained and willing to assist.

Sometimes you just can't think who to ask - and this is where Vision's Shirley comes in.

Shirley answers all the letters she receives and some will feature on this page. Others may take a while as Shirley will seek responses from other council teams.

Shirley is not able to offer legal advice.

Wish you were here

Mr J from Fleetwood writes:
I am interested in working for Lancashire County Council. Can you tell me where the vacancies are advertised?

All Lancashire County Council vacancies are advertised on the website at www.lancashire.gov.uk.

Alternatively please see local papers for vacancies.

You will find that there are usually vacancies in all parts of Lancashire. Good luck!

My humps, my humps. . .

Ms T from Leyland writes:
There are cars that speed up and down the road I live on. How do I ask for speed humps to be installed?

To ask for traffic-calming measures to be put on the road please put your request in writing to the Traffic and Safety Team at Lancashire County Council, PO Box 9, Guild House, Cross Street, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 8RD.

They will look closely at traffic conditions in the area. There are usually more areas requesting such traffic-calming than there is money available, so a final decision is usually made in consultation with district councils through the new Lancashire Local structure.

Walk on by

Ms M Woods from Penwortham writes:

The numbering system on the signs on our estate is in desperate need of being revamped.

On a number of occasions, drivers of emergency vehicles have got confused and turned down the wrong



●TRUANCY posters like this, produced by Lancashire County Council and the police are used to back up truancy sweeps in all parts of the county.

street or road. Can you help?

Any queries you have regarding street name plates will be dealt with by your district council. Penwortham is in South Ribble Council's area. Contact 01772 421491.

Ticket to ride

Mrs H from Bamber Bridge writes:
What is the criteria for a free school bus pass?

Free school transport can only be provided if the pupil has to travel two miles or more to the nearest suitable school if the child is under eight; or three miles or more if the child is aged eight or over.

The distance is calculated as the safest walking route to the school. We consider the child's age and religion and the availability of places.

The pupil must live in Lancashire and may attend a school outside Lancashire. Pupils living outside Lancashire but going to a Lancashire school need to contact the Education Office in the area where they live.

I want to be free

Ms G from Ribblesdale writes:
I have received my new over-60 Nowcard and on the front it states half fare. I was under the impression that it was free.

All over-60 Nowcard holders are entitled to free travel within their district council area after 9.30am Monday to Friday, all day Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays.

Before 9.30am over-60s Nowcard holders will receive half-price travel all over Lancashire. In addition when travelling wholly outside your district council area but within Lancashire you will also receive half-price travel.

Suspicious minds

Mrs D from Preston writes:
While ago, my 15-year-old daughter and her friends were in town when they were approached by police officers conducting a "Truancy Sweep".

They asked the reason they weren't in school. My daughter said they were in the middle of exams and didn't have to be in school unless they were sitting an exam.

The police then rang the school to check they were telling the truth which I am glad to say they were.

I would like to say how impressed I am at this excellent idea.

A Truancy Sweep is an operation undertaken by police and Lancashire County Council's Education Welfare Service.

Young people considered to be of school age can be stopped and officers will make enquiries to establish whether the young person is out of school with or without authority.

If they are out of school without authority the young person can be escorted back to school.

If the young person is accompanied by an adult, enquiries will be made as to the reason for the child's absence from school. An education welfare officer will then advise the adult as to whether the given cause of absence is justifiable.

Email: enquiries@css.lancscc.gov.uk or write to: Ask Shirley, Customer Service Centre, The Red Rose Hub, Bluebell Way, Preston PR2 5PZ. Telephone 0845 0530000.

Carers told to put their health first

GETTING to health appointments is getting easier for carers and their dependants, thanks to a new Age Concern scheme backed by Lancashire County Council.

Pressures of time and the lack of someone to look after their dependant mean that carers often struggle to get to health appointments to look after themselves.

But the Carers' Access to Health Project, funded by the county council, is able to provide a limited sitting service while the carer attends appointments, can help with actual attendance and can help rearrange appointments to more convenient times.

Age Concern's Janice Taylor said: "There are 125,000 carers in Lancashire and some are so dedicated that they risk their own health so as to look after others."

"This new service is free and can offer help in a variety of ways, including arranging transport to and from the visits."

The carer or cared-for person must be 65 or older.

The service is provided by a mix of volunteers and paid staff.

To seek help, or to volunteer, contact 01257 479014 or 07890 215506.

Loving care blossoms for Rosebud



●GREAT business start for, from left, Sophie (22), pictured with Niki Penney and staff.

A NEW Leyland business is blossoming thanks to a Rosebud loan from Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL), Lancashire County Council's economic development company.

Gibson's Domiciliary Care and Support was set up in February by 22-year-old Sophie Gibson and the company already employs seven local people.

Sophie has worked in the care sector for around six years and decided to set up on her own after taking maternity leave. She applied for funding to help with her various start-up costs and has since been working hard to make Gibson's a success.

She said: "When I took time off work I realised that I wanted something to do that would allow me to look after the children and work from home."

"I've worked for quite a few care companies so I knew exactly what was needed."

"The help I have had from Lancashire County Council has been invaluable and the fact that they try to nurture us rather than simply leaving us to it makes a difference."

As well as running a growing business Sophie is also mother to five children - three of which she has fostered.

County Councillor Niki Penney, LCDL chairman, said: "Caring must be in Sophie's blood. Gibson's is exactly the sort of business we like to support through Rosebud."

Gibson's can be contacted on 01772 493685.



A full job description of all vacancies is available on our website

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies

Lancashire
County Council

NEWS IN BRIEF

Give your reps a grilling

SENIOR county councillors will offer themselves for a public grilling when Cabinet Question Time rolls into Ormskirk.

The heat will be turned up on county councillors Hazel Harding, county council leader; Anne Brown, finance chief; Chris Cheetham, adult and community services boss; Clive Grunshaw, planning and environment decision-maker; and Alan Whittaker, schools chief.

Starting at 7.15pm on Wednesday 20 September, the evening is designed to allow members of the public to ask no-holds-barred questions on any Lancashire County Council matter.

The county council aims to be as open as possible so Cabinet Question Times are held around Lancashire.

Future evenings, all starting at 7.15pm, are planned for Penwortham on 11 October and Nelson on 1 November. See Vision or www.lancashire.gov.uk/cabinetquestiontime for further details.

Web targets alcohol

A WEBSITE designed by Lancashire children and teachers to fight underage boozing is in the running for a national award.

The site is aimed at primary-aged children and contains educational facts about the effects of alcohol on health and social attainment.

It includes an information page for parents as well as downloadable lessons for teachers.

Staff at the county council's Alcohol Project will find out at the end of September if they have won the country-wide Alcohol Misuse Prevention Awards Scheme. They are on a shortlist of just two in the Young People's Involvement category.

The website can be seen at: www.lookoutalcohol.co.uk

High notes

YOUTHFUL members of Lancashire Music Service and Fulwood Music Centre Concert Band and Choir are staging a "summer spectacular" concert at 7.30pm on Thursday 7 September.

It will be staged at Preston's Guild Hall and tickets cost £9 (adults) and £7 (concessions).

Roadlife hits shops

SHOPPERS are being invited to join Lancashire County Council's Road Safety Group during September.

Group members will be visiting Asda stores to promote the latest Roadlife magazine. Corrie's crimpier Maria (actress Samia Smith) is backing the latest edition, which is packed with information, real-life stories, web reviews, competitions and much more.

Samia said: "Roadlife covers stories on education and training programmes available and is packed with exciting interviews and helpful safety advice. It's a great way to get up to speed with road safety."



●TERRY Burns: more apprenticeships needed.

Jobs plan 'will close skills gap'

AN ACTION plan has been agreed to increase skills, entrepreneurialism and prosperity among Lancashire's workforce.

Lancashire County Developments Ltd, Lancashire County Council's economic development company, has teamed up with partners in the training and business field to agree a brighter future for tomorrow's workers.

The plan, part of Lancashire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) meant to guarantee "joined-up" thinking between public and private agencies, aims to improve employment rates, increase Modern Apprenticeships in the public sector and assist people in leaving incapacity and single-parent benefits for a new start in paid work.

Councillor Terry Burns, Lancashire County Council chairman, said: "Our Local

Area Agreement covers four areas, namely safer and healthier communities, young people, older people – and economic development in which LCDL will take a lead.

"I am particularly pleased at the emphasis on training and apprenticeships. Lancashire has to develop its new industries if its people are to enjoy a more prosperous future and young people need structured apprenticeships if they are to enjoy sta-

ble careers.

"The opportunities and potential of this plan are enormous and will be matched by the scale and complexity of partnership working needed to make a success of the Local Area Agreement.

Partners in the economic development aspect of the LAA include Lancashire Learning and Skills Council, Business Link Lancashire and Jobcentre-Plus.

£2m new start for 1,000 acres

A MASSIVE near-1,000 acres of land have been spruced up – and 273,000 trees planted – in Lancashire County Council's Small Sites Reclamation Programme.

In four years alone, the programme has given £2m to local groups to tackle 200 eyesore sights across the county.

Many of the sites were formerly scarred by industrial decline. They were so ugly that economic experts feared they were driving away new jobs by deterring inward investment.

Tim Blythe, Lancashire County Council's environmental projects team leader, said: "The improvements are worth it for the environmental gain alone, but there is also major economic value in improving Lancashire's former image as an area with much industrial dereliction.

"The whole scheme has been a

tremendous bargain. We have given an initial grant and that, in turn, has been used to attract money from bodies such as the National Lottery. An initial £2m from the North West Development Agency has been turned into improvements worth an actual £8m.

"Working with local community groups has shown us how keen people are to improve their local areas.

"Projects can be as small as developing an allotment or community garden or as big as landscaping for a new village hall.

"Our job is to work alongside local people and provide the skills and time as well as grants to turn schemes into a reality."

It is estimated that 300,000 Lancashire people live near an improvement site.

About five miles of cycleway have been made from formerly derelict sites and about three miles of footpath have been created or improved.

EXAMPLE NOW: Arden Hall, Accrington



Ask us for cash help

THERE is still money left for further community grants – visit www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/grants and click on small sites or email: project-sandprogrammes@env.lancsc.gov.uk

Details are also available from Tim Blythe on 01772 534186.

BEFORE: Arden Hall, Accrington



EXAMPLE NOW: Wholaw Nook, Burnley



●(Above) TIM Blythe at one of the 200 sites improved so far.

BEFORE: Wholaw Nook, Burnley



Free Nursery Education places in Lancashire for all 3 and 4 year olds

If you have a child born on or between 1 September 2001 and 31 August 2003 your child is entitled to a free part-time pre-school nursery education place from the start of the Autumn Term 2006 commencing in September.

A free place consists of a maximum of five sessions per week and no more than seventy sessions for the Autumn term. A free session is for a period of 2.5 hours in length. There are three terms in the year, covering a total of 38 weeks per year.

Places are available from any of Lancashire County Council's eligible providers of pre-school nursery education.

These can be Local Authority (LA) maintained nursery schools and nursery classes, providers in the independent, private and voluntary sectors or accredited childminders on an approved National Childminding Association (NCMA) Children Come First Network.

Further information including a parent guide and lists of eligible providers within your area may be obtained from the Childcare Information Service on Freephone 0800 195 0137.



Join Blackpool's Party and win

SUMMER isn't over just yet...

And what better way to enjoy the remains of the holidays - before the children return to school - than an action-packed visit to Blackpool?

The UK's favourite seaside resort is bursting at the seams with things to do to keep the entire family entertained.

And thanks to an exciting new promotion, visitors can enjoy up to £100 of fantastic savings on some of the top local attractions.

Readers are urged to Join the Party and take advantage of this special offer. There are two-for-one deals at a variety of popular attractions as well as special discounts on a number



of quality hotels.

You even enjoy the thrills of the Pleasure Beach with a wristband for a mere £15.

All these discounts are available at the click of a button. All you need to do to Join the Party is visit the website: www.jointheparty2006.com and download a free party pack which contains a raft of vouchers and further details.

To help celebrate the launch of the party, Vision has got its hands on a fantastic competition prize exclusive to its readers.

A package of FREE tickets is up for grabs, giving the winning entry more than £125 worth of goodies, including family passes to:

Blackpool Pleasure Beach - with over 145 rides and spectacular shows, there's enough thrills for a full day and evening. The Sandcastle Waterworld - this indoor waterpark has undergone a £4.5m investment and now boasts the world's longest indoor rollercoaster waterslide.

The Sealife Centre - home to a myriad of underwater creatures, from the smallest seahorses to some pretty large sharks and everything in between!

Blackpool Zoo - get up close and personal with a range of creatures in their own habitat - not forgetting a wander back in time at the Dinosaur Safari.

All you need to do is answer the following question:

How many rides and shows are there at Blackpool Pleasure Beach?

There's no better time to be making a trip to Blackpool. The world-famous Illuminations will shine nightly from Friday 1 September until Sunday 5 November, giving visitors miles of free entertainment.

Send your entry to Blackpool Competition, Vision, Corporate Communications, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ.



The winners will be those answering correctly and drawn first. County council employees are not allowed to enter. Entries must be received by Monday 18 September.

For all the information and assistance you need in planning your visit to Blackpool, click on www.visitblackpool.com or call the Blackpool Visitor First Centre on 01253 478222. But don't forget to take advantage of the party pack at www.jointheparty2006.com

WIN TOP AUTHOR'S SIGNED BOOK



●TOP author Anthony Horowitz with Terry Burns, Lancashire County Council chairman.

DURING his recent visit to Lancashire, bestselling author Anthony Horowitz signed four copies of his fantastic book *Raven's Gate*.

Four lucky readers will win a copy of *Raven's Gate*, exclusively signed by the author.

Raven's Gate is a supernatural story which begins across the Pennines.

Last month, Vision brought you details of Anthony's visit to County Hall to collect the prestigious Lancashire Children's Book of the Year award.

Many readers will be familiar with Anthony's highly popular Alex Rider series, which hits the big-screen this summer with the release of the film *Stormbreaker*.

To be in with a chance to win a signed book, answer this question:

Who plays Alex Rider in the *Stormbreaker* film?

Entries must be received by Monday 18 September.

Send entries to *Raven's Gate* competition, Vision, County Hall, Preston, PR1 8XJ.

County council employees are not allowed to enter.

Lancastrians wear crown with pride

THE big-hearted people of Lancashire have won royal recognition for their work for others.

Four Lancashire groups have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service at a recent ceremony at County Hall.

Lancashire, of course, has scores of such groups and people - and the good news is that nominations are now open for the 2007 awards.

County Councillor Terry Burns, Lancashire County Council chairman, said: "Voluntary work is a vital part of any local community and the recognition of these local groups reflects that."

"The recipients have done extremely well and we are very proud of their achievement."

The winners were from Donna's Dream House in Blackpool; Hospice Care in Burnley and Pendle; Preston Panthers; and Silverdale First Responders.

Donna's Dream House members offer free holidays to children with life-threatening illnesses. Often they are too ill to go abroad - but their families enjoy the opportunity of a holiday with their children.

They transformed a derelict building into holiday apartments for children.

Hospice Care members received their award from Lord Shuttleworth, Lancashire's Lord Lieutenant and the Queen's representative in Lancashire. They care for patients in dozens of different ways, including driving, gardening and raising money.

Preston Panthers started work six years ago to help young, disabled people in the Preston area enjoy sports.

Club members provide activities such as swimming, athletics, team games, rock climbing and outdoor pursuit. Silverdale First Responders aims to help heart attack victims within six minutes - a huge step in the direction of saving life.

The awards - started to mark the recent Golden Jubilee - were presented by Lord Shuttleworth.

■Nominations for the 2007 awards can now be made. Application forms are available by calling Ian Johnston on 01772 533364 or via email on: ian.johnston@css.lancscc.gov.uk

We're proud of Lancashire



Search for a star

THE search is now on to find the most public-spirited people in Lancashire. And your help is needed in finding them.

We all know such people

but they have rarely received public recognition - before the Red Rose Awards.

Members of the public are asked to nominate people in 10 categories. There may be 10 headings but qualities remain constant - selflessness, dedication, a willingness to help others.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, leader of Lancashire County Council which backs the awards, said: "Lancashire people need to celebrate the values that make the county such a distinctive place. These awards offer that chance."

"We can all think of many people we respect and admire. We are asking people to put their

thoughts on a nomination form to make judging decisions easier."

This year's awards are the third. Categories cover almost all areas of life. Judges will include ordinary people from across Lancashire as well as county councillors and media personalities.

Nomination forms are now available in libraries, county information centres and in the county council mobile information unit.

They are also available at the reception desks of our partners at the Lancashire Evening Post, Rock FM, BBC Radio Lancashire, Magic 999 and on the Rock FM "ThunderTruck".

Nominations close on 22 September.

Tell us who you want to win



Tell us here or on a nomination form available from the places above

I nominate Category

His address Tel (if possible)

Have you told them of the nomination?

Your name/address Tel

This person deserves the award because (continue on separate sheet if necessary)

Return to: Lancashire Red Rose Awards, PO Box 78, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ

Categories

- Teacher of the Year
- Parent of the Year
- Community team - for voluntary groups
- Community champion - building community spirit
- Young Person of Year
- Amateur Sports person
- Businessperson of the year
- Lancashire Hero
- Celebrity of the Year (decided by public vote from list nominated by judges)
- Lancastrian of the Year (named by judging panel and not open to public nomination or vote)

You're telling us!

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

Once again I thank you very much and hope you have the same result in all your cases.

DELIGHTED DRIVER
Morecambe

All welcome

I RECENTLY enjoyed a fantastic weekend hosted by Lancashire County Council Countryside Service and various other agencies.

The work that is going into making the countryside more accessible is very exciting.

We could not fault the variety of facilities provided in Arnsdale and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

I am very grateful to Tony Lund and his team for all their hard work in making Lancashire more accessible.

EILEEN TOMLINSON
(by email)

Cash converter

I WOULD like to convey my thanks to Sylvia, from the Welfare Rights Service, who guided me through several hurdles.

When I retired with a reasonable pension, I didn't think I would be entitled to further help.

On enquiry they put Sylvia in touch and we have ended up with Attendance Allowance and a Council Tax rebate.

She kept appointments and telephoned when promised - a most professional performance.

SATISFIED
Preston

Letters containing a name and address will be given priority in publication. Letters may be edited. We cannot provide individual replies.

Tooty fruity

I HAVE just returned from a great outing picking bilberries. The bushes are fairly heavy with them this year.

They truly are one of the best wild fruits we enjoy in England.

Am I alone in thinking that there appear to be fewer families out picking bilberries these days? Plenty of single people and couples, but where are the children?

Let's turn this around.

A family that does things together is a good family.

A child that learns to enjoy bilberry-ing will enjoy it for life - and pass it on

to his or her own children.

In the modern parlance, you could say it is a strong social and generational bond.

Youth workers and schools could do far worse than organising such trips for their children.

There are few parts of Lancashire where you have to travel more than a mile or two to find the fruit.

There is still much time for Vision readers to see for themselves.

The bilberries will soon be gone - but there will surely be a massive crop of blackberries in September.

We'll be picking them by the bucketload. Who could ask for anything more.

B PERRY

Road to salvation

I WOULD like to start by saying a huge thank you to trading standards officers for all their hard work helping me sort out my car finance.

It's taken about seven months to finalise but I could not have done it without their help.

I would like to thank Julian Edwards from Trading Standards and anyone else who may have helped in any way.

This taught me a very harsh lesson about finance companies and you'll be pleased to know I paid cash for my new car.

Ahoy there me hearties, I spy free treasure

CHILDREN across Lancashire are joining a treasure trail – with the gift of knowledge as the prize.

Every three- and four-year-old is to be given a Bookstart Treasure Chest containing crayons, colouring books, reading books and an invitation to join their local library.

Lancashire County Council's aim is to familiarise children with books at an early age. Bookstart baby bags, for tots up to nine months, and Bookstart-plus packs, for two-year-olds, were launched a few years ago while the new Treasure Chests are being given out this month.

"Many homes have a lot of books already – but many don't", said Sheila Woodburn, Lancashire County Council's Early Years officer.

"There is evidence that children have an in-built advantage throughout their school careers and later if they acquire a love of books at an early age.

"All parents want the best for their child and these chests make it easier for parents to make reading and learning fun.

"A love of learning almost always lasts a lifetime."

The Treasure Chests are to be given out at play-groups, nurseries and pre-schools.

●ON the treasure trail: children, staff and County Councillor Penny Martin at the Treasure Chest launch at Thornton library.



PARENT ALERT FOR NEW CAR LAW

NEW seatbelt regulations for children, which could prevent up to 2,000 deaths or injuries a year, are set to be introduced on 18 September.

Anyone transporting children, especially under the age of three, will need to be aware of the changes and ensure that they have the correct child restraint or car seat.

The rules are:

- Appropriate child restraint when travelling in any car or goods vehicle (except in the rear of a taxi if a child seat is not available) for children under 3.

- No rear-facing baby seats in seats with an active frontal air-bag.

- Children aged three or more and up to 135cms (about 4ft 5ins) must use a child restraint when travelling in cars or other vehicles with seatbelts.

- Where seatbelts are provided, the number of people carried in the rear of vehicles may not exceed the number of seats available fitted with seatbelts or child restraints (to apply from May 2008.)

- European-approved standard child restraints must be used from 2008.

Bus louts on DNA spit-list

TRAVEL on public transport in Lancashire is to become an even safer experience thanks to the county council, police and bus companies.

Lancashire County Council's Safer Travel Unit has teamed up with Lancashire Constabulary to issue 4,000 DNA Swab testing kits to bus drivers, inspectors and station staff to aid detection and prevention of assaults involving spitting.

County Councillor Tony Martin, Cabinet member for sustainable development, said: "It's hard to believe that someone would choose to spit at drivers and other staff, but it happens. It's despicable.

"In the past they may have got



away with it due to lack of evidence. But now, thanks to the DNA swabs, simply by spitting they are providing the evidence.

"Our tremendous relationship

with Lancashire Constabulary ensures that initiatives such as these exist, to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour on the bus service network."

In the event of a spitting attack the victim will be able to take a sample which will then be passed to the police to add to any other evidence.

Operation Buswatch has just begun on Preston Bus and a launch is planned across Lancashire for the start of September.

The ongoing initiative will be supported by a poster campaign on buses and at stations.

It is hoped that raising awareness to the issue will also impact on the general behaviour of customers using bus services.

Safety in numbers

PUPILS in Preston have received a stamp of approval after gaining their Passports to Safer Cycling.

Schoolchildren at Queen's Drive Primary School in Fulwood have completed the scheme, organised by Lancashire County Council's Road Safety Group.

A total of 29 young cyclists from the school have successfully completed the first three modules of the scheme.

The school has trained approximately 420 children, during the last seven years they've been involved with the Passport to Safer Cycling scheme.

School Admissions in Lancashire

September 2007

From September 2006 (for September 2007 places)

Apply online: www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions

SECONDARY SCHOOLS (Applying for places)

If your child is currently in his/her final year at primary school (Year 6) then he/she will start secondary school in September 2007

YOU MUST APPLY FOR A SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACE BETWEEN 01/09/06 AND 20/10/06

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- If you have a child who is due to start at secondary school in September 2007 and have not received school admission information, contact your child's primary school or the local education office immediately.
- You must apply either on-line (www.lancashire.gov.uk/e-admissions) or using the paper application form (in the area insert of the admission booklet).
- Voluntary Aided (Church) and Foundation (Grammar) Schools also require you to complete their own supplementary form – please contact the school direct.
- You must apply even if you already have an elder child attending the school which you prefer.
- You must apply by the relevant closing date – late applications may not be included in the initial allocation process.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR SECONDARY APPLICATIONS IS 20/10/06

Advice/information is available from:	
North Lancashire	01524 581163
South Lancashire	01772 531813 / 531819
East Lancashire	01254 220708

Directorate for Children and Young People

Lancashire
County Council

Pud-ding money into jobs

TOP chef Rick Stein cooks them, former minister Edwina Currie loves them...and even the French have had to bow down to the superior nature of Lancashire's black puddings.

And thanks to a little help from Lancashire County Council Andrew Holt's famed delicacies have a bright future on the nation's plates.

The Real Lancashire Black Pudding Company concoctions, made from a secret 1879 recipe, have won 225 British and European awards in recent years alone.

Andrew turned to Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) when his premises in Stacksteads and Waterfoot became too



●GOLDEN future for black puddings: from left, black pudding maestro Andrew Holt and county councillors Hazel Harding and Sean Serridge.

small. Thanks, partly, to an LCDL Rosebud loan the firm is now based in fabulous and larger premises in Haslingden.

Andrew said: "We are

trying – and succeeding – to raise the profile of this fine Lancashire food.

"Black puddings are great on their own, but also extremely versatile

with other dishes. There are entire cookbooks dedicated to them and chefs such as Simon Rimmer and Rick Stein are big fans of such traditional fare."

The little-understood puddings are, in fact, 90 per cent fat free.

The company has now invented a vegetarian black pudding, known as V-pudding.

County Councillors Hazel Harding, county council leader, Niki Penney, LCDL chairman, and Sean Serridge joined guests from the gastronomic world at the opening of the Haslingden site.

Councillor Harding said: "It is good to work with local people and especially nice when they are helping to promote part of Lancashire's heritage."

Time to record county's colourful complexion

Record-keepers start the job of charting Lancashire's constantly changing population

THE surprisingly long history of black and Asian people in Lancashire is being told in a new exhibition.

Their history goes back about 400 years, although it has been more recent waves of immigration that have been most visible.

Staff at the Lancashire Record Office have combed their archives for historical artefacts such as baptisms, church documents and records of welfare societies.

The exhibition – entitled “Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 Years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire” – will tour county council libraries in September, October and November as part of this month's Local History Month.

Senior archivist Neil Sayer said: “From Padiham to Preston, and from Skirring to Lancaster black and Asian people have been making a contribution to Lancashire.”

“It is a gripping history of ordinary people living extraordinary lives as they adapted to a completely new way of life.”

“One of the most fascinating and visible aspects was the arrival of the

Caribbean and West African nurses in Lancaster in the 1950s.

“The Colonial Office, together with the Ministries of Labour and Health, began a programme to train ‘coloured’ men and women in British hospitals. They were warned to pack for a cold climate!”

About 30 such nurses had arrived in Lancaster by 1950. Some later returned to colonial life while others remained in Lancashire. The Ministry of Health's annual report in 1949 said: “Almost all ... from the colonies are keen and make good students”.

Neil added: “Unfortunately no first-hand accounts have yet been found from those nurses who joined at Lancaster.”

“That is one problem that historians face and we hope more organisations will take advantage of the storage facilities at Lancashire Record Office.”

“There are a number of welfare societies in the Asian community, for example, and their records will give an invaluable insight to tomorrow's historians.”

See “Summer listings” below to see the exhibition at a library near you.



●NEW start in Lancashire: two Caribbean nurses are pictured with civic VIPs and fellow nurses at Royal Lancaster Infirmary's prize-giving day in the late 1950s. (Picture courtesy of Lancaster Guardian).

Swallow swoops on county's slaving past

AN ART exhibition by artist Lubaina Himid is exploring the theme of slavery and Lancaster's involvement.

Traders in the city were responsible for 200 slaving voyages which carried 25,000 Africans across the Atlantic.

The sad tale is being told by Himid in “Swallow”, an exhibi-

tion of African cloths, optical illusions, wild flowers, ship design, river navigation and building decoration.

Himid, from Preston, has previously displayed at the Tate Gallery and in Vienna and New York.

“Swallow” will be staged until the end of October at the Judges' Lodgings Museum, Church Street, Lancaster.



Summer listings

Story-telling, cycling, comedy, theatre, countryside - Lancashire County Council has something for families and people of all ages and tastes

Sunday 2 September

2pm. Guided cycle ride, Lea to Treales. Mainly Lancashire Cycleway and minor lanes. Eight miles, suitable for families with children. Meet at Lea CE Primary School, Darlington Lane, Lea. Duration: three hours.

Monday 4 September

2pm. Under-4 storytime and activities. Brieffield library. Also 11, 18, 25 September. 2pm. Pre-school storytime. Chorley library. Also 11, 18, 25 September.

Wednesday 6 September

2pm. Pre-school storytime. Clayton Green library. Also 13, 20, 27 September.

Thursday 7 September

11am. Pre-school storytime. Adlington library. Also 14, 21, 28 September.

Friday 8 September

Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Drink. Darwen and West Pennine villages. Giant country markets, masterchef demos, world's biggest custard pie fight, brewery tours, fungi forage, meet growers, producers etc. Also Sat and Sun. Tel 01254 53277.

Saturday 9 September

Heritage open day. Family activities all weekend and free entry on Sunday. See the annual historic vehicle cavalcade. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. Tel 01282 412555 for details. Heritage open day – activities for all family, Fleetwood Museum. Tel 01253 876621. 1pm. Introduction to Fleetwood Marsh Nature Park. Discover how the site of the old power station has been trans-

formed into an attractive resource for people and wildlife. Meet at the Nature Park. Moderate walk. Tel 01995 640557. 9am. Guided bike ride, Scorton. Oakenclough, Chipping, Dunsop Bridge, Trough of Bowland, Marshaw, Scorton. Long (33 miles) but classic ride, combining open moorland, river valley and Fylde plain. Breaks to be taken at Chipping and Dunsop Bridge. Duration six hours. Meet Scorton picnic site.

10am. Children's bike ride, Walton-le-Dale to Cuerden Valley (5 miles). Off-road cycle paths. Qualified coaches. Cycle activity games en route. Parents should accompany children under eight. Older children can be accompanied or signed in by parents. Bring packed lunch and drink. Meet Walton-le-Dale Primary School, Severn Drive. Duration three hours. 9am. Farmers' market, Market Square, Lancaster. Lancaster Castle open day. Tours of Shire Hall will be free of charge from 10.30am up to and inc the 1pm tour. First come, first served. 01524 64998. Also Sun.

Sunday 10 September Heritage open day. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum,



Burnley. See entry on 9 September.

14pm. Heritage open day – lotions and potions. Learn about herbs and how they were used in Tudor times. Make a lotion or potion to cure your ills. Free entry. Turton Tower, Edgworth. Tel 01204 852203. Heritage open day – activities for all the family. Fleetwood Museum. Tel 01253 876621. Rail Ramblers and DalesRail. Swaledale and Wensleydale Day. 14-mile guided walk starts by alighting from train at Ribbleshead. Train collects at number of points in Lancashire. Details at: www.dalesrail.com

Monday 11 September

7pm. Red Rose Senior Youth Theatre (age 14-21). Penwortham Youth and Community Centre, Priory Lane. Also 18, 25 September. See website:



www.lancsycs.org/southribble

Tuesday 12 September

Cycle skills course - intermediate. Lancaster. Tel 01524 65328. 5.30pm. Red Rose Junior Youth Theatre (age 11-13). Penwortham Youth and Community Centre, Priory Lane. Also 19, 26 September. Visit: www.lancsycs.org/southribble

Wednesday 13 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Harris Library, Preston.

Friday 15 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Accrington Library. Also to be held on Saturday.

Saturday 16 September

Map and compass workshop, Beacon Fell Country Park, near Longridge. All day. Booking is essential as numbers are limited. Tel 01995 640557.

Tuesday 19 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Whalley Library.

Wednesday 20 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Padiham Library.

Thursday 21 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Colne Road Library, Burnley.

Friday 22 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Clitheroe Library.

Saturday 23 September

1pm. Trampers Trek through Lune Valley. Starts Crook O'Lune picnic site. Experience the beauty of the area and travel the Lune Millennium Park cycleway. All-terrain electric buggies for people with limited mobility of varying types. Free but must be booked in advance.

Walkers also welcome. Tel 01995 640557.

Saturday 23 – Monday 25 September

12-5pm. The Making of Lancashire – a celebration in flowers. See Turton Tower decorated with floral displays

inspired by the building and the families that lived there.

Monday 25 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Lancaster Library.

Wednesday 27 September

Cycle skills course - intermediate. Lancaster. Tel 01524 65328. Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Great Harwood Library.

Thursday 28 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire

Record Office project. Fleetwood Library.

Friday 29 September

Surgeons, Soldiers, Settlers – 400 years of Black and Asian History in Lancashire. Exhibition of Lancashire Record Office project. Chatsworth Library.

Saturday 30 September

12.30-3.30pm. When Saturday Comes: Arts and Crafts. Drop-

in activities, particularly jewellery. Museum of Lancashire, Preston. Tel 01772 534075. 10am-4pm. Horse demonstration, Beacon Fell Country Park, near Longridge. Booking not necessary. For details, tel 01995 640557.

All month

Earth: Grand Designs. Keep the children entertained with hands-on interactive exhibition. Explore rocks, minerals and fossils, millions of years old. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.

Grin Up North. Popular travelling exhibition of comedy artefacts. Discover the world's worst joke and the answer to questions such as, “Is laughter good for you?” and “Can you tickle a money?” Fleetwood Museum.

Every Thursday

3-5pm. Wise-up Sexual Health Service. Free and confidential advice for young people. 01772 621077. No appointment necessary.

Every Friday

3-5pm. Drop Support team drop-in. Leyland Youth and Community Centre, West Padock. 01772 457107. No appointment necessary.

Find out more

You can find lots of information about events on: www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk and at www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/countryside

Useful phone numbers

Bowland Visitor Centre, Beacon Fell Country Park 01995 640557
Wycoller Country Park 01282 870253
Spring Wood Picnic Site 01254 825187
Lancashire Countryside Service main office 01772 534709
Museums' main office 01772 534061

Family day launches river path

THE newly restored Lune Estuary Coastal Path received a fun test from the public following its official opening.

The path, which runs from Aldcliffe to Glasson, was officially opened with a family fun day this summer at Conder Green Picnic Site.

The celebrations, part of

National Bike Week, were led by Lancashire County Councillor Clive Grunshaw - Cabinet member for Planning and Environment - who officially opened the newly restored path.

Activities for the Family Fun Day included wildlife walks, cycle rides, a cycle simulator, free cycle safety checks, a children's scavenger hunt,

the county council's environment roadshow and other events.

Lancashire County Council's REMADE land reclamation programme funded the Aldcliffe to Glasson Greenway project to renew the coastal path as part of a wider project to extend the River Lune Millennium Park. REMADE stands for

REclamation and MAnagement of DErelict Land, and has been set up by the county council in partnership with the North West Development Agency as part of the agency's commitment to tackling the region's derelict land problem.

The formerly neglected coastal path is now a high-quality path for shared use by

walkers, cyclists and horse riders along with improved access for people with mobility problems.

It is now part of the successful River Lune Millennium Park, the Lancashire Coastal Way and the section from Conder Green to Aldcliffe is also part of the National Cycle Network's Route 6.

Works to the coastal path

included path-widening, limestone resurfacing and bridge works. Improvements to the picnic site and car park have been designed to improve access.

Landscape works include coppicing, new seating, picnic facilities and the creation of a new viewing area.

All the works have been carried out subject to ecological concerns designed to protect important wildlife habitats.

Funding partners were Lancashire Environment Fund, the Millennium Commission and the Environment Agency.

Make a trip to Beacon Fell Country Park



●TRADITIONAL pastime: this year's bilberry harvest has been the best in years. Hundreds of people visit each year to enjoy the "fruit of the field".

DEEP in deepest, lushest Lancashire, there is something for everyone in the 75 hectares of Beacon Fell Country Park.

The park boasts two picnic areas, a barbecue area, thousands of trees, three nature trails, sculptures, meadows, hills, moorland and views of the Bowland fells.

It is a haven for wildlife, especially woodland birds. The really fortunate may catch a glimpse of a deer or a lizard.

Approximately 300,000 people per year already visit the Lancashire County Council-owned park, 10 miles north of Preston.

David Bentley, information assistant at the park's purpose-built and modern visitor centre, said: "Beacon Fell can be seen from miles away. I think of it as the gateway to the 300 square-mile Forest of Bowland.

"We believe it was the nation's first country park when it opened in 1969. The idea was and still is to allow people to enjoy beautiful country near centres of population.

"Some people come for the lovely views, but others want to learn about nature or the history of the area."

Displays in the seven-days-a-week visitor centre explain how prehistoric man settled on the fell and surrounding area. The visitor centre also offers an information desk, a picnic area, a café and pond.

A picture window offers the chance to see woodland birds on the feeders - tits, chaffinches, willow warblers, goldcrests, bullfinches and crossbills are regular visitors.

The park is circled by a narrow, one-way road with plenty of car parks.

The fell summit, at 800ft, offers views to distant Morecambe Bay and

From walking to pond-dipping, from picking blackberries to spotting birds, there are plenty of things to do at Beacon Fell's numerous beauty spots - and they are all free



Everyone can do something

OUTDOOR activity buggies are available free to help people with low mobility cover rough ground. Three Trumper trails have been constructed for the electric vehicles. Most vehicles have motor-

bike-style handlebars and one has a joystick arrangement.

■Advance booking required - contact a countryside ranger or tel 01995 640557.



●VISITOR centre has café, bird-watching area, toilets and lots of information - but the pond will always attract the young.

even the Isle of Man.

Much of Beacon Fell was denuded of trees until a planting programme began in 1938. Birdwatchers now visit frequently.

David said: "The park's habitats include wildflower meadows, mixed woodland and open moorland. All the trees we plant are native broad-leaved species.

"We always aim to balance recreation and conservation and that means there is something for everyone.

"Some come for a 'brew, loo and a view' while others want walking, strolling or even cycling and horse riding.

"For many people the park is an introduction to the countryside and,

we hope, will lead to a lifetime of exploring the countryside.

"Beacon Fell is a recreation area for the whole of Lancashire."

The park is free to all.

Trained staff are available to organise activities for schools and visiting groups.

Telephone 01772 534709 or 01995 640557 for details.



How to find us

National grid ref SD 564 427. Beacon Fell is 10 miles north of Preston and is signposted from Broughton (A6 3.5 miles north of Preston), from Brock Bridge (A6 14 miles south of Lancaster) and from Longridge and Chipping.

Organised events

Birdbox-building, birds of prey, a willow workshop and art events are some of the activities on offer. Families are especially welcome.

You may be inspired to join the Green Gang - a wildlife club for children - or the

Conservation Crew that gives practical help to the ranger. Volunteer rangers work at weekends to support the

ranger, helping with activities or talking to visitors.

Tel 01772 534709, 01995 640557 for details.

Above all else, simply get out of the car. It's all free!

LOOK LIVELY



IT IS nice to be popular. Lancashire County Council's domiciliary carers – they used to be known as home-helpers – bring a ray of sunshine to people's homes across the county.

People think of their work as helping the old with work around the house. They also help disabled people and a variety of others. And their work, these days, extends far beyond the former tasks of shopping and dusting.

Elaine has seen many of these changes in her 18 years of helping people in Hyndburn...

What does your job involve?

It has changed a lot from the old home-help days. We used to do things such as vacuuming, shopping and cleaning skirting boards.

We still do that. But there is also a large element of personal care – the sort of thing that was done by medical staff, things such as bathing people, changing dressings and preparing meals for people.

Do you get to know people well?

Yes and no. Most people really like to see us and we try to keep the same clients – but we have to accept that our client list will change.

We do become attached to people.

How do people get your help?

They or their family members are typically referred to social workers who will then visit and assess someone's needs.

We call ourselves the fifth emergency service as domiciliary carers can then help the person concerned – and can see that other needs are met.

Sometimes that can be in a crisis. A husband can be looking after his wife in their own home – and then he has to go to hospital. We offer crisis support at times like that.

Can the job shock you?

It is possible you can visit someone and find they have fallen and are still on the floor. Without our visits they could stay there for days.

Some clients require more than one visit per day.

People can neglect themselves when they are on their own. We try to encourage them to keep quality of life in whatever way we can. Simply helping them take care of their appearance can make them feel much better.

What is the best part of the job?

No two days are alike. You get up in the morning not knowing what you will be doing or who you will meet. I actually look forward to getting to work.

What is the worst part of the job?

It is when someone you care for gets to the stage where they can no longer stay in their own home or, at the worst, passes away.

What sort of person does the job?

You need to be sensitive – and you have to change your personality from house to house.

One lady I used to help always used to like being told lots of jokes!

Are there any calls you dread?

It is always in the back of my mind when clients live alone that they may have had a fall in the night.

Do you feel appreciated?

Yes. I know I make a difference to people's lives.

We now help people stay in their own homes, rather than going to care homes as in the past. I know it is what people and their families prefer.

Register Office start for vow ceremony

by
Mike Warren

A QUARTER of a century after Trish and Carl Sumner walked down the aisle, they have just enjoyed the “wedding” they always dreamed of.

Trish was only 18 when she married Carl in Coppull and much of the organisation was done by parents.

But the couple are now Lancashire's first duo to take part in Lancashire Registration Service's new service to renew vows.

Other recently introduced ceremonies include baby-naming and civil partnerships.

Trish said: “We only went to Blackpool for three days when we married so, in a way, this was my actual dream wedding.”

“Renewing our vows was just like a wedding, only we walked down the aisle together. I was just as nervous and excited as the first time.”

The happy duo went on a Caribbean cruise after the Preston ceremony at

which their adult children, Gary and Kirsty, each did a reading.

Trish added: “We are more happy now than when we met. We're the best of friends.”

“It was my mum and dad who organised things when I was 18. Our renewal of vows was done our way.”

The county's Registration Service has seen a number of major changes in the last 18 months. The next change, expected to take place in spring, will be Saturday afternoon marriages.

DREAM “wedding” for Trish and Carl. They renewed their vows with Lancashire Registration Service.



TILL DEATH DO US PART

SOME people like the Registration Service for its marriage, civil partnership, renewal of vows and naming ceremonies. Others may be surprised to hear of its new venture... civil funerals.

From this autumn, staff will be able to conduct non-religious funeral services at crematoriums and gravesides for £95. Superintendent Registrar Gillian Greeson said: “We are in the process of training ceremony directors to conduct these services and write eulogies according to the families wishes.”

Some people think it is a requirement for a minister of religion to be present at a funeral. This is not, in fact, the case at all.

The move to provide civil funerals to the local community will bring the Registration Service in line with much of the rest of the country.

Library's own hit parade

THE most-borrowed books in Lancashire libraries last month were:

1. *The Righteous Men* – Sam Bourne
2. *At Risk* – Patricia Cornwell
3. *Predator* – Patricia Cornwell
4. *Live the Dream* – Josephine Cox
5. *The Journey* – Josephine Cox
6. *The Island* – Mitoria Hislop
7. *As the Night Ends* – Audrey Howard
8. *Calico Road* – Anna Jacobs

9. *Honeymoon* – James Patterson
10. *Break no Bones* – Kathy Reichs

What's more, reading in Lancashire is now more fun than ever – you can write your own reviews.

Library staff have established a website at www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries which allows readers to write a review of any of the top 10 books.

The site also details new book acquisitions for libraries.

Taiwan tour

ONE of the country's most beautiful areas has received the first of a new wave of “green” tourists.

Two visitors from Taiwan became the first official sustainable tourists to visit the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Beauty. The trip was designed to minimise car use.

Travis Tseng and friend Jimmy, took a two-day tour through Lancashire.

What I want for my future

Work to ‘future proof’ tomorrow’s world has begun. We seek the views of people in the bus queue

SOME newspapers ask “white van man” what he thinks about big issues of the day.

Lancashire County Council provides countless bus routes – so we seek the views of the man and woman at the bus stop!

A major exercise has begun to get tomorrow's public – and private-sector – services ready for future generations of older people. We visited Preston bus station and asked future older people:

What will you want out of life when you are “getting on”?

Geoffrey Bisby said: “I’ve got a part-time job in a hardware store and I plan to keep on after I’m 65 and work as long as I’m still fit.”

“I don’t want to stop at home and I also want to have some money for myself apart from having enough to pay the bills.”

“One of my elderly neighbours fell down recently and the council came and fitted out her house so she could get around, which I think is excellent but there will need to be a lot more of it in the future.”

Russell Ghulam also wants to stay independent and work as long as his health allows. He said: “My generation is different from my parents’ generation – I keep myself as fit as possible by running in the park and I want to

keep that up as long as I can.

“I’d certainly be interested in organised fitness sessions.”

Older people of the future will, more than ever, want to stay in touch with modern times according to Suresh Mistry. He said: “I would prefer to remain useful as long as I can and live with my family – I don’t want to go into a home when I’m old.”

“It would be nice to be able to come into town for a drink at night and have somewhere to go – but I don’t even do that now because it’s not safe – I’d like to see that change by the time I’m old.”

For Christine Mackie the need for people to work beyond the current retirement age is already a vital issue. She said:

“My husband can’t work due to ill health so I will need to keep on working to support the family. There’s not enough support for us now – let alone in years to come.”

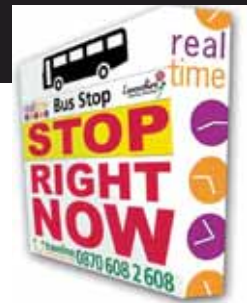
“It’s wrong that people are forced to sell their homes to pay for care when they’ve worked so hard to earn it. It’s not fair and something needs to change.”

Jenny Philbin said: “I don’t feel old enough to give up work and I don’t want to because I enjoy my job. I can see myself carrying on until I’m no longer able – it keeps you in touch socially and you feel like you are contributing.”

“You would expect people’s quality of life when they are old to improve upon previous generations but it depends on your finances – a lot more people need to keep working to afford to live.”

Lesley and George Cutler are already looking forward to George’s retirement from his job as a coach driver. They want to enjoy old age.

George said: “I go to watch the cricket all over the country and I’d like nothing more than for there to be a really decent affordable



public transport system.

“I’ve spent my working life sitting in traffic and I’d like things to improve in that respect with fewer cars on the road. It would be good for everyone.”

“Government needs to communicate with people better – at the moment it’s left to individuals to find out what help is available but you need to know services exist before you need them – it’s especially difficult if you’re old.”

Lesley added: “I’m looking forward to getting out on day-trips, relaxing and spending more time with George but he will probably be working until 70 to afford a retirement.”

The changing face of libraries - from the Victorian era to gateway to cyber-space . . .

It's you we answer to

New library centres will end public confusion on services

A FACE-to-face "gateway" to council services is to open later this year in Accrington – as a blueprint for the whole of Lancashire.

The Accrington Library Information Gateway will allow Lancashire County Council staff to answer public queries within minutes – saving members of the public the time involved in trying to find out who to speak to.

The county council runs approximately 85 per cent of local government services in the area. The eventual aim is to open such "gateways" in libraries across Lancashire.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, county council deputy leader, said: "Accrington will join Rawtenstall as pilot schemes which we hope will revolutionise relations between the council and the public.

"We have already eased telephone access to the 700 services we run, but we

know that many people want to speak to someone in person.

"Our libraries are perfect for this. They exist right across Lancashire and the staff are well trained to retrieve information and help people."

The council's recently opened Red Rose Hub includes a customer service centre that members of the public can telephone with inquiries.

Gateways, it is expected, will allow staff to answer council service inquiries as well as supporting a wide range of activities such as sale of bus tickets, tourism literature and sale of tickets for leisure venues.

Councillor Pollitt added: "The service will be available in the week and on Saturdays.

"In addition, libraries also have free internet access, with 42 computers in Accrington library, that we hope will eventually enable people to get information and services for themselves."



●HAPPY birthday: staff and civic dignitaries celebrate 100 years at one of the many libraries paid for by rail tycoon Andrew Carnegie.

100th birthday at library that showed tycoon's softer side

LIBRARIES are timeless – but they never stand still, as Rawtenstall library members know very well.

It is 100 years since American Scots rail magnate Andrew Carnegie – the Bill Gates of his day – donated £6,000 to build the library.

And this summer, civic MPs and keen readers gathered for a centenary celebration and to see the changes that 100 years have brought.

Silence is still golden, shelves still creak with books and some people, as always, go in to keep warm. But who in 1906 could have guessed of the wonders of the computer world and the high-speed links that shrink the world to the size of a living room.

County Councillor Hael Harding, Lancashire County Council leader, said: "Carnegie gave £6,000. It wasn't a lot for what we got.

"You had to show you were a fit and

proper' person to borrow a book in those days. Even so, Rawtenstall library has always been a place for ordinary people and it was one of the first in Lancashire to boast open access – before that you had to ask a librarian to go and find the book you wanted."

Libraries have always been an educational as well as social facility. They still are – knowledge is as important as ever and many students these days are as likely to be bent over a computer as over a pile of books.

Some things never change. Running libraries costs money and the opening of Rawtenstall was accompanied by a penny in the pound rate increase to cover book-buying and staff costs.

Change is still as fast as ever. CDs were introduced in 1990 and the traditional cardboard library tickets were replaced by plastic in 1991. More recent still was the installation of free-to-use People's Network computers, a passenger lift and new adjustable shelves.

We just love Wednesdays

WEDNESDAYS are wonderful at a primary school where careful timetabling allows pupils the pleasures of railway modelling, building birdboxes, extra sports and cooking.

"Creative timetabling" has won a Learning Excellence Award for Stanah Primary School in Thornton – turning Wednesday afternoons into an opportunity for practical skills while academic classes are concentrated into other parts of the week.

Headteacher Tony Ford said: "Wonderful Wednesday is crated simply by changing lessons around and scrapping the Wednesday afternoon playtime.

"All the new lessons are about practical skills that do not appear in the National Curriculum."

The school has now gained two Learning Excellence Awards in recent months.

The second award is for successfully tackling the so-called gender gap in which boys



●CAREFUL timetabling means that Stanah pupils have Wednesdays free for activities such as model-building, sports and cooking. The school also uses novel ways to tackle the so-called gender gap which leads to boys achieving less than girls in many schools.

have lagged behind girls academically.

The main methods have included breaking subjects into shorter chunks and relating them to real life so that football goals are used to teach how to draw graphs.

Red-hot road experts

LANCASHIRE County Council's emergency experts demonstrated their quick thinking during a motorway accident on the hottest day of the year.

Working with the Somerfield supermarket, in nearby Garstang, bottles of water were handed out to motorists after a coach overturned on the M6.

The crash involved a coach of schoolchildren from Cumbria who were travelling to Southport.

County Councillor Hael Harding said: "This shows how councils can respond well with other partners."

Care home opens with £1.5m new look

RESIDENTS raised a glass to celebrate the official opening of Woodlands Care Home in Clayton-le-Moors, Accrington.

Lancashire County Council Deputy Leader Doreen Pollitt cut the ribbon and declared the building open following a £1.5m makeover as part of the county's multi-million pound care homes improvement project.

Woodlands has been completely refurbished to the highest standards and contains a total of 44 beds, following an extension to

the building.

It also contains a separate facility called Oakview Day Centre, with 20 day-care places for people with dementia.

Work started in November 2004 and was completed in October 2005, with the renovation carried out in stages to ensure the home remained in operation.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt said: "It gives me great pleasure to come and meet the residents of Woodlands to hear how pleased they are with the refurbishment.

"Woodlands has contin-

ued to run smoothly during the building work and I'd like to thank the project team and the care home staff for their professionalism.

"It is an excellent home with a very caring atmosphere. The staff take immense pride in their work and the refurbishment has added to the quality care that has always been provided."

County Councillor Chris Cheetham, Cabinet member for Adult and Community Services, and County Councillor Susan Shorrocks also attended the opening.



●DOREEN Pollitt: immense pride.

Lake thrills prove a splash for young people

A group of young people in care from Morecambe and Lancaster have been working together to prepare for their futures.

Ten young people – a mixture of children in foster and residential care, care leavers, and Connexions clients – spent two days at Brathay Hall in the Lake District taking part in a range of activities aimed at helping them to develop their communication skills, teamwork, personal confidence, and self awareness.

The event, funded and organised by Connexions, with the help of the Leaving Care team and residential staff from Lancashire County Council provided the young people with the opportunity to undertake a number of new and exciting challenges. This included facing their fears on a high ropes course and working together to row large whalers on Lake Windermere.

John Gregg, residential and leaving care team manager for Morecambe Bay, said: "Outdoor activities are an important part of our work with young people who have been in care. These challenging activities enable them to develop their confidence, self esteem and trust in others."

Teams join up to save runaway kids from trouble

by
Andrew Lynn

CHILDREN and young people who go missing and run away from care across Lancashire are the focus of a new multi-agency joint protocol launched at Lancashire Constabulary headquarters.

The aim of the joint protocol is to reduce the incidence of Lancashire's Looked After Children (LAC) going missing from care.

The protocol has been developed by Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Constabulary in partnership with The Children's Society, Blackpool Borough Council and Blackburn-with-Darwen Borough Council.

It has been designed as guidance for agencies to support children and young people under the age of 18 looked after by the three local authorities in Lancashire. The looked-after children (LAC) are either placed in council-owned residential care homes or in private establishments, placed in foster care or with agency foster carers within the county.

The protocol will act as guidance for police, children's services staff including social workers, residential managers, care support staff, private foster agencies and foster carers.

The protocol covers a range of joint working procedures and systems including:

- agreed categories of absence and definition of absconding from local authority care.
- appropriate responses to children and young people who go missing from care.
- escalating system of interventions to reduce the likelihood of a child repeatedly going missing.
- agreed reporting and recording system for local authorities.
- effective reporting and information sharing across agencies.
- prompt follow-up interviews with young people who go missing.
- joint assessment information for care plans.
- monitor outcomes jointly via quarterly analysis reports.



●**PROTOCOL:** Bob Gower, county residential manager at Lancashire County Council with Assistant Chief Constable of Lancashire Constabulary Wendy Walker; and Pauline Geraghty from The Children's Society, Lancashire Children's Rights Service (back).

Estimates show that over 210,000 missing person reports are made to police each year across the UK. Over 9,000 of these are made every year in Lancashire with 6,200 cases being formally investigated by the police. Of these over 4,800 (77%) involve young people under the age of 18 years.

In Lancashire over 300 children go missing on at least three occasions a year. These children account for almost 3,200 (52%) of Lancashire's missing person investigations by the police.

Many of these cases involve children and young people in care, particularly those who live in children's care homes operated by the three local authorities or by private care providers. However, the majority of looked after children do not go missing as do most children in residential care.

Bob Gower, county residential manager and lead officer for missing children at Lancashire County Council, explained:

"Children who go missing from care, like all young people who run away from home, often place themselves and others at risk. The focus of this new protocol is about ensuring agencies work closely together in sharing information, coordinating systems and responsibilities that help provide appropriate support for vulnerable children and young people that run away from care."

"Significant achievements have been made especially in light of the Young Runaways project through inter-agency working and a joint approach and commitment in tackling this problem. Already we have been able to take proactive steps to better safeguard some of our most vulnerable young people in care who need our additional support. This joint protocol is another positive step in the right direction."

The protocol is a revised version of an initial set of guidelines introduced in November 2003. Since then, Lancashire

County Council, Lancashire Police and The Lancashire Young Runaways project have worked hard to address the problem. Using partnership working, problem solving and performance management the incidence of repeat runaway behaviour has reduced by around 20% across the county.

Acting Deputy Chief Constable Adrian McAllister of Lancashire Constabulary who has been actively involved in setting up the protocol said: "Young people who go missing from home are at their most vulnerable. We know they are more likely to be involved in crime, either as victims or offenders. The partnership in Lancashire and this protocol, in particular, aims to prevent that."

According to The Children's Society, it is estimated that there are around 2,500 incidents of children under 16 who have run away from home or care in Lancashire. The Young Runaways Project provides a vital potential link to some of those children.

In December 2005 Lancashire Constabulary and the Young Runaways Project was awarded a coveted Guardian Public Services Award.

Pauline Geraghty, project manager at Lancashire Children's Rights Service, said: "Children missing from care face many dangers and this unique partnership and project helps young people access support they need when they find themselves in difficult circumstances. Too often children who run away can slip under the radar but by working together agencies and communities can create a safe environment for children."

Councillor Ivan Taylor, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People at Blackpool Council, added: "We are all very committed to supporting our children and young people as part of the Every Child Matters initiative and this new protocol will help protect some of the most vulnerable. The aim is to ensure that the reasons for young people in care running away are recorded and addressed in a cross-agency approach to proactively support them."

Executive member for children's services at Blackburn-with-Darwen Council, Councillor Maureen Bateson said: "All young people deserve the best care and protection."

"A joint approach, like this protocol, can only be good for children across Lancashire."

HEALTH COURSE STARTS FOR CARERS

A SERIES of 12 lessons will start in September to help people who either have, or who care for people with, long-term illness.

The Blackpool-area course is for people from across Lancashire and financial help will be available for those who have to travel – the course is run in premises handy for Blackpool bus and train stations.



●**MAKE time for health:** Ann Hull, ICHER chair of trustees and Collette Taylor, LCDL's grants for growth co-ordinator. Picture courtesy of Blackpool Citizen.

Funded by Lancashire County Council and Lancashire County Council's Grants For Growth and with help from the European Union, the course will address matters such as self-confidence and self-esteem using a variety of therapies such as remedial massage, reflexology and relaxation techniques.

The course is run by the Institute of Contemporary Healthcare, Education and Research (ICHER). Contact Ann Hull on 01253 620006 for more details.

Road trainers visit school

PUPILS in Clayton-le-Moors have taken a step in the right direction thanks to an award-winning child pedestrian training programme.

Children from St Mary's RC Primary School have just completed Stage One of Lancashire County Council's Right Start Child Pedestrian Training Programme.

Since it began in 1999, the course has educated 41,000 children.

For more information about Right Start or the Road Safety Group, contact 01772 531048, or visit www.lancashireroadsafety.co.uk

Students set to shine

THE county council's economic development company, Lancashire County Council's County Developments Limited, has been creating opportunities for the county's young people who want to work in tourism.

In recognition of the importance and significance of tourism in Lancashire, Lancashire rural tourism businesses are set to receive support for a second year for a pilot scheme run by Lancashire County Council's County Developments Ltd in partnership with Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative, Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan and Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board.

Twelve promising and talented undergraduates from Lancashire universities have been recruited for a 12-month period. For the first three months they will be placed with a larger tourism organisation to gain a greater understanding of tourism marketing and the tourism industry as a whole whilst also enhancing their skills. These skills will then be used during the following nine-month placement with a smaller Lancashire rural-based tourism business.

The students are taking up these placements to enhance their future career potential. This is a double win! Not only do the young people benefit from the years practical

experience but Lancashire tourism businesses gain from their energy and talent.

In Lancashire the tourism industry generally is vibrant and growing. Tourism is a major sector in the Lancashire economy – in 2005 Lancashire and Blackpool welcomed 64m visitors contributing £2.5b to the local economy and helping to support over 52,000 jobs.

The county council's economic development company also attracted funding through the Lancashire Rural Tourism Initiative, which in turn is funded through the Lancashire Rural recovery Action Plan supported by the North West Development Agency.



●**STUDENT support for rural businesses.**