



PREMIER LEAGUE

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by Rovers' star**

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increase in school meals**

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IS THIS THE LAST POST?

Move to close post offices will see 'slow death of rural communities'

COUNTY councillors from across the political spectrum have united to fight possible post office closures in Lancashire.

If government approval is given, the current proposals would lead to the closure of one in five of Lancashire's post offices.

A move to close 56 post offices across the county has been condemned as a significant threat to community life. Councillors have vowed to continue lobbying post office officials and the government for a fairer deal.

The council's official response to the post office consultation claims how Lancashire has been unfairly targeted. More than a quarter of the county's post offices have closed since 2003 - only London has had more closures.

Councillors have written to local MPs to make the case for keeping the post offices open. Petitions against the closures were also placed in county libraries.

County Councillor Doreen Pollitt, deputy Labour leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "These plans will remove an important part of our neighbourhoods. The county council is working closely with district councils to improve our local areas and develop sustainable communities."

"These plans would go against that work and be seriously damaging to our county."

"The people who are taking these decisions need to be clear about the very serious impact of these closures."

Although the county council has responded to the proposals and is awaiting the post office's response, councillors have pledged to continue their discussions with local communities, the government and other groups, to find ways to safeguard services and protect communities.

Councillor Pollitt added: "We're currently looking at county council services and post offices to see whether we could work more closely together. There might be options for us to join up and maintain services in our communities."

Senior councillors from the other parties have also criticised the government's plan:



● **FIRST class:** determined residents in Lytham where their post office is one of 56 under threat across Lancashire. (Left to right) Thomas Jefferies, Florence Kirrelly, Mark Bamforth, sub-postmaster, Cath Powell and Clem Camotto.

County Councillor Shelagh Derwent, speaking on behalf of the Conservative group, said: "Closing post offices without proper consideration of all the consequences can result in the slow death of rural communities."

County Councillor David Whipp, leader of the Liberal Democrat group, said: "Lancashire has already had to bear the brunt of office closures and we are now being targeted again. We cannot under-

estimate the negative impact this will have on our communities, both urban and rural alike."

At the time of going to press, a public announcement from Post Offices Ltd regarding possible closures in this area was due to be made on Tuesday 1 April.

Read next month's Vision for more details.
New county lifeline for Dolphinhall library and post office - see page seven

County's shining example

LANCASHIRE County Council has been awarded the coveted Beacon Council status for its work on "improving accessibility".

The council is one of only five authorities nationally to be chosen as a shining example by inspectors. The award recognises the council's commitment to ensuring that all the county's residents are able to get access to the jobs and services that they need.

The highly competitive national Beacon scheme identifies excellence and innovation in local government.

Beacon authorities are also expected to share information and expertise with others councils to raise standards.

The government was particularly impressed with the county council's actions to improve access to healthcare and employment.

County council work with the health sector was praised, in particular work with East Lancashire Hospitals' Trust for a clinical services review and the Lancashire Mental Health Trust in choosing appropriate locations for their new in-patient units.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "This is tremendous news and proof that we among the leading councils in the country and that our residents benefit from the work we do with other organisations to maximise opportunities. "Improving accessibility is about breaking down all the barriers that prevent people from taking advantage of opportunities."

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

www.lancashire.gov.uk/vacancies



Ask Shirley

Don't know who to
contact when you
need help?

Baffled by
bureaucracy?

Ring Shirley on
0845 0530000 or email
Shirley on enquiries@css.lancsc.gov.uk

Write to:
Ask Shirley
Customer Service Centre
The Red Rose Hub
Bluebell Way
Preston
PR2 5PZ



ASK THE EXPERT

Questions
answered
by your
friend in
the know

Price of happiness

My partner and I are planning on getting married some time next year at the register office in Burnley. Please can you tell me how I go about starting the process off and how much a ceremony would cost?

Miss A Holden, Padham

Marriages and Civil Partnerships in Lancashire can be booked, at the earliest, 12 months to the day in advance of the wedding date. A register office ceremony currently costs £43.50 during the week and on Saturday mornings, and a Saturday afternoon ceremony costs £153.50. Prices are subject to change on 1 April each year. However you will be advised of the new charges by the ceremonies officer.

In order to make a provisional booking you will need to ring Lancashire County Council's Registrars' Helpline on **0845 0530021**.

Financial advice

I am starting university in September and I have no idea on how I go about getting my student loan sorted! I would greatly appreciate it if you could advise me on how I do this.

Mr G, Morecambe

Advice on new and existing student loans can be found by calling



●A GOOD start (see Price of Happiness).

Lancashire County Council Student Services' main aim is to advise and staff give guidance to young people and adults, on the financial assistance available for further higher education. To find out more, or to speak to Student Services, call **0800 0530000**.

Tidy trees

My husband and I are elderly pensioners who are both very proud of the road that we have lived on for 30 years. I am very pleased to say that over the years all the residents, including ourselves, have kept the maintenance of the street to a very high standard.

Unfortunately we have a problem with trees and bushes hanging over into our garden which looks rather untidy. We were wondering if you do any kind of pruning service?

Mrs H Denton, Earsby

Yes there is a pruning service. Lancashire County Council does keep the maintenance of trees and other plants under their responsibility. This includes pruning them and making sure that they are not causing a hazard to the public and residents. A request can be put forward to Lancashire County Council, for the trees to be pruned by calling the highways department on **0845 0530011** whereby a member of the team will be happy to help.

Parking help

I am a blue badge holder and have sent off my renewal forms, along with the photographs and other information that was requested by the blue badge department. I did this three weeks ago, but I still haven't received my new badge, or had heard anything since. I am getting worried because my current badge is due to expire in two weeks.

Mr N, Leyland

There is nothing to worry about as this is the normal procedure for renewing a blue badge.

You will be informed only if any additional evidence is needed. Your new badge is sent out 5-7 working days before the current badge is due to expire irrespective of when you posted it. If you have any further questions please contact Lancashire County Council's blue badge team on **0845 0530049**.

DON'T FORGET

Your county councillor will be keen to help. Contact details are available on **0845 0530000** or at www.lancashire.gov.uk

You can also try your area's County Information Centre where staff are trained to help the public

Ged returns to his roots

Council's new boss aims to boost residents' life chances

LANCASHIRE County Council has appointed a new chief executive.

Ged Fitzgerald has been named as the new head of the fourth largest local authority in the country. He is currently chief executive at four-star rated Sunderland City Council.

County Councillor Hazel Harding, leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "I am sure that Ged will build on the solid foundations laid by Chris Trinick, the current chief executive, and prove an excellent chief executive."

"He is an experienced chief executive with a proven track record of achievement particularly in cultural change,



●NEW boss Ged Fitzgerald.

still to be done."

After graduating from London University, Mr Fitzgerald started his local government career at Sefton Council. He then worked for several Merseyside authorities before some major appointments at Liverpool City Council.

Senior positions followed at Calderdale Council, Rotherham Council and currently as chief executive at Sunderland City Council.

Originally from the North West, Liverpool-born Ged is married and has an eight-year-old daughter.

The job is a return to the county for Ged, who has gained a postgraduate Diploma in Management Studies from the University of Central Lancashire.

Chris Trinick, Lancashire's current chief executive is to retire from the county council on 31 May 2008, after six years in charge.

Lancashire is on an exciting journey

customer focus, regeneration and partnership working - all of which are at the top of our agenda."

Mr Fitzgerald (46) said: "Lancashire has great potential and the county council is in an excellent position to improve the quality of life and the opportunities available to residents and its communities."

"Helping to lead the county on the next stages of its journey is an exciting opportunity."

"I hope to build on the achievements and improvements already made, whilst recognizing that there is much

Tudor tower leads tourism charge



●GREAT time: Brittany Rossall (8) and Lewis Gannon (9) of Hayhouse CE Primary School.

TURTON Tower held a special event last month to mark the second annual British Tourism Week to promote the importance of tourism to Lancashire and the UK economy.

Visitors including pupils from Hayhouse CE Primary School in St Annes met the Tower's historic Tudor Lord of the Manor William Orrell and his steward Alexander.

The 15th-century Tudor tower is set

in woodlands on the edge of the West Pennine Moors and hosts rooms displaying a magnificent collection of decorative woodwork, paintings and furniture, including items loaned from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Built in 1420, Turton Tower is Listed and is a popular tourist attraction for local and national visitors. For more information about Turton Tower and Lancashire Museums visit online at www.lancsmuseums.gov.uk or contact **01204 852203**.

Catch the direct bus - to court

FIRST there was the Trojan horse and now there's the Trojan bus!

A special vehicle has been touring parts of the county in the guise of a normal public transport service. But, hiding inside, is a crack team of crime prevention officers ready to swoop on anti-social individuals.

Trouble-makers in Skelmersdale were amongst the first in the county to get caught out when they fired at it with an airgun and launched an attack when it "broke down".

Officers responded immediately and a large group of teenagers was detained. One had the rifle in his possession and was arrested.

Rick Wilson from the county council's Safer Travel Unit explains: "It seems incredible that someone would attack a bus, or any vehicle for that matter, but it happens."

"Bus operators know very well that there are some hot-spots on some of their routes and they are now getting the support to sort the problems out."

Later, at a staged "breakdown", a group of youths attacked the bus and

By Martin Crabtree

were detained by the officers acting as passengers, taken home and Youth Referral Notices issued.

Rick said: "People have the choice to leave the bus to travel round its route in peace, sadly there are some that have to learn the hard way that we will take action."

The Trojan bus started off in West Lancashire but now plans are being made to launch another in Preston and more could spring up in other parts of the county if needed.

Vernon Roby, general manager at Arriva, said: "Following successful Trojan Bus operations in the Merseyside area, the result of the Skelmersdale operation was certainly a major triumph."

"Arriva's commitment to this partnership approach underlines just how much we value public and staff safety."

"I would like to express my thanks for the support given by West Lancashire Police and can assure the public that further Trojan Buses are planned."



●MAKE trouble if you dare: law enforcers are ready to make arrests on Lancashire's "Trojan bus". Troublemakers can be caught red-handed in a bid to boost public confidence.

Much more meat for no more money

SCHOOL dinners are to be better than ever with 44 per cent more meat.

The extra helpings of goodness will be added to school meals from this month (April) in a bid to boost the health of Lancashire's children.

Prices, however,

should not rise due to a mix of extra Whitehall cash and a forecast increase in pupil demand.

County school meal chief Roger Eakhurst said: "There will be more iron and zinc to guarantee healthy development – and less fat and sugar in meals."

"The extra cash means we can boost the menu in a way that youngsters will enjoy."

"We have spent six months rejigging the menu in a way that will benefit everyone."

The meals redesign also aims to encourage pupils to eat more fruit and vegetables.

Sign up for knowledge

The real St George, creative writing, composer Puccini, the Celtic kingdoms of north Britain and birdlife will all be the subject of a series of day schools at Lancaster University.

Experts from across Britain will teach members of the public the schools. Lessons start at 10am and end at 4pm on various days in April.

Further details on 01524 592623/4.

S U R E S T A R T , E A R L Y Y E A R S S C H I L D C A R E S E R V I C E

STEP INTO QUALITY

Lancashire's Creating and Sustaining Childcare Team have launched their first pilot scheme for the Step into Quality Award for Out of School Providers. The scheme is successfully operating within the Early Years Foundation Sector.

The pilot invited Out of School Providers within Chorley, South Ribble, West Lancashire and Preston to an Information evening at Wilton House, Chorley to find out more. 23 people attended, all of whom were keen to explore ways they can improve the quality of the service they offer.

Step into Quality is an opportunity for providers to focus and reflect on their current practice and improve quality within their setting through mentor support.

Settings which have received a Step into Quality Award will be highlighted on the Childcare Information Service's Database which can be accessed on

www.childcarelink.gov.uk/lancashire



0800 195 0137



SureStart



For more information on the Step into Quality Award or support from the team call

**01772
452022**

Easy-to-use 'Oyster card' bus scheme may come to county

A PILOT scheme to test out technology that could banish the fumble for bus fares forever has been underway in the county for the last few weeks.

The county council has been carrying out a month-long trial of smart-card technology - a similar scheme has been a huge hit in London - on Fishwick's and Stagecoach buses in Preston and South Ribble.

The initiative is part of the CIVITAS initiative which is bringing a wide range of innovative transport schemes to the city.

Bus projects officer Dianne Taylor explained: "Our trials involved staff from the council and the bus companies boarding buses and swiping their cards to see how the technology works and to identify potential problems.

"If the system works it could help bus journey times improve, bring to an end problems with change, and take us some way towards a 'cashless' system like ones that operate in places like London."

Depending on the outcome of the trials the next step will be to roll the scheme out to the public, potentially aiming it at the 16-23 year old age group.

Dianne said: "Ultimately we are looking towards a system which would allow people to 'charge up' their travel cards with cash and purchase things like season tickets or weekly passes electronically."

Work underway on Nelson's interchange

OUR picture shows the progress on the multi-million pound bus and rail interchange in Nelson.

Contractors are currently hard at work assembling the main structure of what will be one of Lancashire's best public transport facilities.

The £4.8m project will provide a state-of-the-art bus station linked directly to the existing railway station and, it is hoped, will welcome its first passengers in October.

Funding for the new building has come from Lancashire County Council and the Pendle Partnership.



NEWS BRIEFS

A cleaner county

THOUSANDS of Lancashire County Council staff are being encouraged to ditch their cars and cycle to work.

Council bosses estimate the Cycle to Work initiative could see 1,800 workers make the switch to cycling by giving them the chance to save on the cost of buying a bike with a special tax scheme. Combating climate change and road congestion are key aims for Lancashire County Council - everyone will benefit from less congestion.

Library friends

LIBRARIES across Lancashire may soon have their own Friends of the Library group.

It is hoped that the proposed groups will provide the public with a say in deciding what services each library will offer.

Know your rights on free nationwide travel

OVER 250,000 concessionary travelcards English National Concession Bus Passes will have been issued to residents in Lancashire and Cumbria by the time Vision reaches you.

On 1 April new rules mean that the over-60s and eligible disabled people will be entitled to free transport on buses throughout the UK, and to travel free on off-peak local bus services throughout

England.

In readiness the NoWcard team, based in Lancashire, has been busily producing and sending out cards to over quarter of a million people. It is hoped that by 1 April ALL residents currently registered for the entitlement will have their cards.

NoWcard English National Concession card holders will be able to travel for free on local bus services available after 9.30am and before 11pm Monday to

Friday and all day on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays.

Anyone who is entitled will be receiving full details direct by mail direct from the NoWcard team. Additional local concessions may be available and details will be published in the local press and the NoWcard website www.nowcard.org.

More information on the scheme is available by visiting www.nowcard.org or by telephoning 0845 0581096.

New boss for child services

HIGH-flying private-sector executive Helen Denton has been appointed as the county council's new executive director for Children and Young People.

Blackpool-born Helen will join the council from Serco, one of the leading private-sector partners in the education and children's services sector.

As operations director, Helen has been responsible for Serco's education and children's services contracts for authorities in the Midlands and West Yorkshire.

Here in Lancashire, Helen will be responsible for all of the county council's services for children and young people, including education.

Helen started her career as a secondary teacher in Manchester before a spell as head of home economics in a Hong Kong School.

On returning to the UK, Helen did a Masters degree, worked for the Department for Education and Science then built a career in local government with senior roles in several authorities, including Leeds and Sefton.



●Helen Denton.

You're telling us!

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

Keep calm in the car park

SOME people really take the biscuit when it comes to offensiveness.

They assume that all blue-badge holders must be disabled. That is not the case.

In my case, my young son is autistic and, as so, is in danger of wandering into the road - among a number of other perils he must face. It means the blue badge in my car is for his benefit. It is perfectly deserved and perfectly legitimate.

Why then must I put up with a farrago of abuse each time I take him to the shops? People see me park the car and assume I am a fraud.

The language is bad. The black looks are even more wounding.

Such poor behaviour comes not just from general members of the public, but also from other blue-badge holders who you might think would be more sympathetic.

I understand people getting angry at parking cheats - but appeal to people to be more considerate in general.

Disabled people often need drivers and they must park somewhere!

B SHARON
Chorley

Mountain challenge

I WONDER if any Vision readers can help me to help communities in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania.

This summer I will travel to Tanzania and climb Mount Kilimanjaro. It will be a huge challenge to me - and will also give me the chance to spend time at some of the Childreach International projects in the area.

Childreach projects include finding suitable means of providing clean water, improving education and vocational training and also working with, and helping street-children.

Not all children attend school.



●Sarah Pickering.

Even when they do, the classes are overcrowded and there is a lack of basic materials such as exercise books, pencils and textbooks. We in Lancashire have been well provided for in schools, but we should not forget that others are not so fortunate.

I want to raise at least £2,000 for Childreach (registered charity 1106400) and hope that readers can help with donations.

Anyone kind enough to help can send donations to: Fox Clough Barn, Birchenlee Lane, Colne LANCBS BB8 5HL.

SARAH PICKERING
Colne

Cycling vision

WHAT a great idea to use former railway tracks as cycle paths (Vision, March).

Lancashire has any number of such tracks - all specially designed to link towns.

It is a shame to see them go to waste, so let's hope that more money is made available to convert them into safe cycling "motorways" for shoppers and children going to and from schools.

G DOUGLAS

WIN a day trip to Edinburgh



and the chance to visit the royal yacht Britannia

HERE is your chance to to enjoy a great day out in Scotland by entering our latest competition. The prize is for two adults or a family with two children between the ages of five to 15 years.

Included are First Class midweek Virgin Train tickets with the chance to visit the royal yacht.

You may stay longer than a day - providing you arrange your own accommodation - recommended for the royal yacht option.

Edinburgh offers you a choice between the traditional and new. From the magnificent castle to a world-class selection of museums, walking tours and unique visitor attractions, Scotland's capital has something to interest everyone.

Shopping there is an experience like no other.

With more restaurants per head than any other UK city, dining out is fantastic whatever your budget.

Your journey with Virgin Trains starts in style and comfort from a choice of stations on the West Coast line, including Preston and Lancaster.

Meals are served at your seat by

friendly staff as you travel at speed through beautiful countryside to Waverley station, Edinburgh's main railway station. From there, the royal yacht is a few minutes away by taxi or bus.

For a chance to win, answer the following and send your completed entry to Edinburgh Comp, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ by Friday 18 April.

You could save a stamp by entering electronically at: www.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/vision

Name Edinburgh's main rail station.

The winner will be asked if he or she wants to visit the royal yacht.

For information about Virgin Trains, including online bookings, visit www.virgintrains.com or phone 085457 222333 or any staffed railway station or rail-appointed travel agent.

VisitScotland Edinburgh and Lothians can send accommodation details. Check out www.visitscotland.com or call 0845 2255121 for information.

The prize is as stated. Travel to and from mainline rail stations is not included. Lancashire County Council employees cannot enter. Usual competition terms and conditions apply.

Programmes fit for a Prince



ROYALTY paid a visit to two job creating Burnley projects that are supported by Lancashire County Council.

Prince Charles paid the visit to Burnley to see the regeneration work that is being carried out in the town.

His visit saw him take in two projects that Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL) help to support - Lancashire Digital Technology Centre and the Weaver's Triangle in Burnley.

At the technology centre he was greeted by Steve Dean, LCDL managing director, who said: "It was very interesting to meet His Royal Highness and to see at first hand his commitment and support to the work that Lancashire County Council, LCDL and Burnley Council are doing in regenerating the town."

●(Left) PRINCE Charles chats with staff at Lancashire Digital Technology Centre in Burnley.



●THE heir to the throne meets Steve Dean, managing director of LCDL.

Taking aim at replica guns

TRADING Standards officers are backing a ban on realistic replica guns on sale on the high street.

The police enforced ban now means that shops are not allowed to sell convincing looking guns, including certain BB guns that fire pellets and toy guns.

It is now an offence for anyone to sell, import or manufacture a realistic imitation firearm. The maximum penalty for breaching the restriction is six months imprisonment and/or a £5,000 fine.

Steve Brimble explained: "We have been working closely with the police to get information leaflets out

to around 1,600 businesses in the county so that shopkeepers know the rules.

"Imitation firearms can look so realistic that criminals will use them to commit crime. Even if used innocently, they can cause alarm if seen in public and the user could be confronted by armed police.

"Although Trading Standards does not enforce the new law, we support any initiative that helps to protect public safety."

Traders are now also unable to sell items that resemble firearms, even if they do not look entirely realistic, to anyone under the age of 18.

Roundabout right

MOTORISTS used to encountering one of Lancashire's regular congestion black spots got a pleasant surprise last month.

Work to remodel the infamous Whitebirk roundabout was completed towards the end of February and drivers have since reported improved journey times.

The £2m project has seen the roundabout expanded to four lanes and traffic lights controlling all the approach roads.

Since the switch-on, traffic queues have been all but eliminated and early indications show that bus journey times have been improved.

Project engineer Phill Wilson explained: "Many people used to dread using the roundabout because at peak

times there would often be queues.

"There was also a perception that the roundabout was dangerous and many drivers were hesitant about pulling out.

"The feedback we have had since we finished the project has been quite amazing. Nobody expected such a massive improvement except the county council's engineers!"

Whitebirk roundabout sees thousands of vehicle movements each day, to access the M65 and the A678.

Funding for the scheme came from the Highways Agency and the European Regional Development Fund through Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. The whole project, from initial discussions through to the design and building took just 11 months.

Get on the trail to Buck House

ORDINARY people with extraordinary achievements are being sought to receive national honours.

The honours system is widely believed to be for celebrities and the rich. In fact, however, anyone can be nominated for the Honours Lists that are announced twice each year.

Office workers, gardeners, fac-

tory workers, parents - everyone has the same chance of featuring in the New Year or Queen's birthday Lists.

The only requirement is to have made a significant contribution either to their community or in their field of work.

It can also include exemplifying selfless voluntary service, displaying moral courage or demonstrating innovation and

entrepreneurialism.

Nominations should be made by a third party at any time of the year.

Nominees should not be informed - in case the application is subsequently unsuccessful - and nominations are treated in strict confidence.

More details and nomination forms are available on 0207 2762 777 or at: www.honours.gov.uk

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

If you have a child born on or between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2005 your child is entitled to a free part-time pre-school nursery education place from the start of the Summer Term 2008 commencing in April.

A free place consists of a maximum of five sessions per week and no more than sixty five sessions for the Summer 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.

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 a list of eligible providers within your area may be obtained from the Childcare Information Service on Freephone 0800 195 0137.



Museum of Lancashire gets quality award

THE Museum of Lancashire and its new conservation studio in Preston has joined the ranks of the London Eye and Hampton Court Palace after being named a Quality Assured Visitor Attraction by Visit Britain - the official site of the British Tourist Authority.

Charlotte Steels, Assistant Keeper at the museum, said: "We are delighted by this award.

"The staff work hard to make the museum a welcoming place for visitors and it's fantastic that we have been given this acknowledgement. The assessment has given us a lot of constructive feedback which will help us to improve and develop the visitor experience further."

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Workers driven to break the law

New survey shows not all drivers get road safety training from their employers

EMPLOYERS are expecting their staff to risk huge fines and their lives while driving, according to research.

Vision readers took part in a recent road safety quiz - and 6 per cent say their bosses expect them to answer mobile phones while driving.

One in three drivers say their employer has provided them with any degree of driver training.

Using a mobile telephone while driving was made illegal because of the dangers.

Neil Cunliffe, Lancashire County Council's Road Safety Group manager, said: "Companies must recognise that they are responsible for employees' safety."

"That applies whether you drive for a living or just drive to the occasional meeting."

"They could be held liable if you are involved in a crash while on work duty."

"The good news is that by putting the right policies into place, managers can protect their organisation and reduce road risk for employees."

"From our survey we found that 60 per cent of you were not aware of any such policies being in place where you work. It's important to find out what your company is doing so that you know what is expected of you whilst out on the road."

Even using hands-free devices can still put

drivers at risk.

Over 90 per cent of people indicated that they plan rest stops on longer journeys - good news as driver fatigue can be lethal.

Neil added: "Figures indicate that driver fatigue contributes to around 20 per cent of crashes on long journeys in Lancashire and 23,300 road crashes nationally every year."

● Winner of the £20 gift voucher for the Vision quiz is Andy Pearce from Poulton.

BREAKING THE LAW?

For a free one-hour consultation about your company's occupational road risk, call James Powell on 01772 531 348.

For more information about the Road Safety Group visit: www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsafety

To find out more about road safety legislation, visit the Department for Transport's website at: www.dft.gov.uk/drivingforwork

Royal stamp



● STAMP of approval: Christine Goodier from Lancaster Castle examines one of the stamps, in front of the John O'Gaunt Gateway. (Photograph courtesy of Royal Mail Group.)

LANCASTER Castle has welcomed some "royal" visitors this month as the Royal Mail launches its latest special stamp collection: The Houses of Lancaster and York.

The collection of six stamps is the first in a series of six kings and queens sets celebrating the royal houses of the British monarchy to be issued over the forthcoming years.

The set will feature the three Lancastrian kings: Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI, and their three Yorkist successors.

Lancaster Castle was once owned by Henry IV, the first Duke of Lancaster to become king and first of the Red Rose dynasty to rule England.

It has a long and important history, dating back to the Roman period.

Much of the castle is still open to the public and by joining one of the guided tours you can view many historic artefacts and learn about the castle's fascinating past.

For more information about Lancaster Castle or Lancashire County Museum Service, visit: www.lancashire.gov.uk/museums

Creative young people

Finalists compete for writing and poetry prize at County Hall event

THE final judging of a writing and poetry competition for young people, run by Lancashire County Council's Library and Information Service, took place at County Hall.

The competition, called "Preston Youth Slam", was aimed at 11-19 year-olds from Preston, South Ribble and Longridge.

Entrants had to write a poem, rap, song lyrics or short story, which could be performed in less than three minutes.

The ten best entries were shortlisted and entrants were asked to perform their work in front of a judging panel, headed by Liverpoolian performance poet Terry Caffrey.

Terry, who uses rap music to communicate rhythm and beat in his poetry, also uses his voice to create a series of clicks, thumping and whirring noises which helps give students a feeling for poetic timing.

The panel also included Bushra Dasu from the Harris Library teenage reading group, Jean Wolstenholme and Jacob Hope from Lancashire County Council's Library and Information Service, and John Brown, manager of Waterstone's, Preston.



● PICTURED: Poet Terry Caffrey with winners (left to right): Heather Lomax, Natalie Hamer and Anna Middleton.

The judges selected three winners on the night. Anna Middleton (11), from Samlesbury, won for her poem "The truth about school", Natalie Hamer (12), from Preston, who also wrote a poem, "Forgive me bleeding battle field", and Heather Lomax (16), from Houghton, won for her short story entitled, "Peter Howard". All winners received a new iPod nano, with all shortlisted entrants receiving a book and CD of Terry Caffrey's poetry.

The idea for the competition came from the members of the teenage reading group which meets once a month at the Harris Library in Preston.

The group were also involved in shortlisting their favourite and most inspiring entries.

Hazel Becker, senior librarian for young people at Lancashire County Council, said: "The Preston Youth Slam competition was a really fantastic way of encouraging young people to

write and be creative and think about the different ways in which we can express ourselves. "The standard was very high and there were many diverse and interesting pieces of work to choose from."

"Everybody did extremely well on the night."

For more information about events and activities taking place in your local library, visit the Library and Information Service website at:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries

Staff wellbeing

AN innovative and award-winning programme led by Lancashire County Council is helping schools improve by focusing on the wellbeing of their staff.

The Wellbeing Programme offers schools a systematic approach to creating a healthy, positive working environment, which is recognised as an important factor in a school's overall success.

Since its launch in 2002, more than 200 schools and other organisations across Lancashire, including nurseries and children's centres, have been involved in the programme.

Lancashire's Wellbeing programme is part of a national scheme, in partnership with Work Life Support. Schools whose staff report higher levels of feeling valued, greater job satisfaction and lower levels of work overload are also those schools where

CASE STUDY

Walter Street Community Primary School in Brierfield has seen the full benefits of focusing on wellbeing.

Involved in the Wellbeing Programme since 2001, the school recently won a Learning Excellence Award for incorporating staff wellbeing into the school's culture and practices.

Debbie Boughen, from the school's wellbeing team, said:

"Involvement in the programme has had a positive impact on staff and led us to make changes in our communication systems, planning, training opportunities and staff consultation."

"This in turn has helped us retain staff and enable staff to provide positive role models, be more robust and resilient in their work, work as an effective team, manage change effectively and feel appreciated."

"This can only have a positive impact on the children in our care and our most recent Ofsted report recognised the progress that our children make. Taking staff welfare seriously has had very real benefits for our school and all of our children."

SATs performance is higher.

Brenda Hopper, the Wellbeing co-ordinator, said: "The programme offers very clear benefits to schools which are passed on to their pupils."

"We help schools create healthy, positive working environments

where teachers want to work and our self-assessments provide reliable and accurate data which helps head teachers manage their schools."

"We feel the programme offers major benefits to schools, staff and pupils alike."

Transport chiefs unveil new scheme

A SENIOR member of European Commission and a Government Minister visited Lancashire to mark the opening of the Adelphi Quarter Clear zone in Preston, close to the University of Central Lancashire.

As part of the CIVITAS SUCCESS project, the University of Central Lancashire area including Fylde Road and Adelphi Street has been transformed into the ideal location for walk-

ing, cycling and using public transport.

The area is now a showcase for new ideas and Rosie Winterton MP, Minister of State for Transport, Eleni Kopanezou, head of unit for clean transport and sustainable development at the European Commission, and other dignitaries toured the area to see the exciting developments first-hand.

CIVITAS SUCCESS is the only scheme of its kind in the whole of the north of England.

Generation game

Booklet project offers grandparents £100 for top tips on raising children

By Neil Graham

PARENTAL pearls of wisdom are being sought for a new booklet on bringing up children.

Almost every mum and dad knows the best way to bring up children.

And soon, a new book will be available giving Lancashire parents official advice on issues such as bedtime, discipline and food – and also the distilled wisdom of mums, dads, carers and grandparents.

£100 vouchers, to be used in supermarkets, cinemas or leisure complexes will be given to the 10 winners.

Cath Coucill, parenting project co-ordinator said: "Parents have a wealth of tips that need to be passed on from one generation to another. They often know precisely how to handle a situation - which new parents need to know."

"We want to celebrate their role."

"Being a parent involves lots of skills and can be very satisfying, but can also be tough at times."

"Some entries have already arrived – and they cover all manner of subjects including feeding,

TELL US A TIP & WIN £100

We want to know Lancashire's top 10 tips in rearing children. We'll publish the best entries in our new booklet – and give £100 to each winning contributor.

This is the sort of thing that parents have already told us:

"I play with them lots of the time so they know they are loved and wanted"

"Eat your vegetables, and eat meals with your children. Let them see you eating your veg"

(and from a child's perspective)...

"When we come home from school, our mum starts to ask us: 'how was it, what did you do?'"

Send your top tip to: Top Tips, Lancashire County Council, FREEPOST PR503, County Hall, Preston PR1 8RJ. Closing date: 30 April.

play, learning and making friends.

"They represent a fascinating insight into child-rearing."

People have until 30 April to enter.

The booklet, to be called "Lancashire Top Ten Tips for Parents" will be published later this year.

Involving parents is vital in shaping the future of public services in Lancashire.

The county has a "Supporting Parents' Framework" which involves the county council, the NHS, police and a number of other agencies.

■The county also has 10 parenting forums which need parental input.

For more information, contact Laura on 01772 531169 or email: policydevelopment@ed.lancsccc.gov.uk

Library and Post Office team up



●POST office rural lifeline: customer Linda Newby orders a library book at Dolphinhall post office (right).

A NEW library and information service has been introduced in Dolphinhall, near Lancaster, giving the local post office and residents a vital lifeline.

The Dolphinhall Rural Library Service is provided by the county council in the post office and village store.

The post office has been installed with a computer linked to the People's Network – the national electronic reference library - giving local residents and visitors free public access to local information and email via the internet.

Residents are able to search, renew and order books online from the county council's library website using their

free library card and pin number.

The village store acts a delivery and collection point for books, CDs and DVDs from libraries.

Richard Nye, postmaster at Dolphinhall, said: "This new service gives people the ability to search and order books and material online to be delivered and collected here."

"Most importantly, it encourages people to visit the shop and gives them a reason to get out and about."

The rural library project, part funded by the North West Development Agency and the Lancashire Economic Partnership, is also being piloted in Chipping community centre, Dunsop Bridge village hall, and in Caton.

S U R E S T A R T , E A R L Y Y E A R S S C H I L D C A R E S E R V I C E

Children's Centres make a big splash



Lancashire County Council has more than doubled the number of children's centres in Lancashire between April 2006 and April 2008. We have invested over £8million pounds of grant funding for new facilities, with more than £23million set to be invested in frontline children's centre services in 2008/09.

There are now 61 children's centres across the county providing a range of high quality services to over 48,000 children aged under 5 and their families. A fantastic achievement like this is

made possible by the help and continuing support of over 50 partner agencies.

The 31 new centres have been developed ahead of the deadline so that families can benefit from services such as early education, baby massage, parenting courses (and many more) at the earliest possible opportunity.

Children's centres are helping to reduce the impact of child poverty by supporting families to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing.

County Councillor Marcus Johnstone said: "I'm really pleased that thanks

to our network of children's centres, so many more families now have access to great quality services.

"I'd encourage everyone to go along to their local centre to find out what's on offer.

"With even more children's centres to be developed by 2010 all Lancashire parents and carers will soon have access to a fantastic range of services."

**Why not visit your local children's centre?
Give Childcare Information Service a call on**

**0800 195 0137
to find out more.**

SureStart

Lancashire
County Council

Two ways to spend

TAKE A WALK

Take time out in beautiful Wycoller

●SOMETHING for everyone at the famous abandoned textile village.

NESTLING on the edge of a grassy knoll close to the Haworth Road car park in Wycoller the modernistic Atom – representing a molecule – bears some resemblance to a sea-worn pebble, but with the strange inclusion of rounded apertures.

Inside, there is a large stainless steel sphere in the centre representing the last remaining atom in this particular molecule.

Look out from any of the openings – or view them in miniature on the surface of the steel ball – to appreciate the panoptical qualities of the Atom. As the word “panoptical” implies, you really do see everything!

This walk, near Colne, begins from a waymark post between the Atom and the carpark where a footpath takes off along the side of the valley towards Foster's Leap.

Where the narrow path divides, take the right-hand path down towards Foster's Leap Farm. From the second kissing-gate there is a good view of Foster's Leap Rock. This outcrop is believed to be named after Foster Cunliffe, a relative of the Cunliffes of Wycoller Hall. He made a daring jump across the gap from the cliff behind on to



The walk is 2.5 km, or just over 1.5 miles, long and should take about an hour.

A leaflet for the walk will be available through local outlets or on the Lancashire Countryside Service website

www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/countryside

Tel 01772 534709

●WYCOLLER'S Atom: well worth a closer look.

the top of the rock.

Enter the garden of Foster's Leap Barn, where there is an attractive pond boasting a pink hippopotamus, cross the lawn, following the yellow way-marking arrow to join the metalled road. Follow the road down to the next farm.

Enter the field through a gate, follow the wall to the left and cross into the next field.

Two more posts show the path downhill to a footbridge over the stream next to Parson Lee Farm. From the end of the barn there is a great view of the Panopticon. It really does look as if it is about to roll down the hill at any moment.

Attractive waterfalls are the highlight of the walk down the tree-lined farm track to “Water Meetings”. Here, two unnamed tributaries unite to form Wycoller Beck which, a short distance further downstream, is crossed by the prehistoric Clam Bridge.

Beyond the Clam Bridge is Copy House Bridge where there is the choice of walking through the live willow tunnel in the Conservation Area, or heading through the picnic area with its duck pond to the Old Coach Road behind the Aisled Barn Visitor Centre.

The willow tunnel is worth a detour as it is one of a set of willow structures, including a life-sized horse and rider.

Follow the track behind the visitor centre uphill to the Haworth Road car park.

If you are in need of refreshment before the final stretch, you may want to call in at the Wycoller Craft Centre and tea rooms (open daily except Monday, 11am-5pm).

People suitably impressed by the Atom may enjoy east Lancashire's two other Panopticons - Rossendale's Halo and Burnley's Singing, Ringing Tree.

OS explorer map OL21 South Pennines.

PANOPTICONS

Panopticon *n.* structure, space or device providing a comprehensive or panoramic view.

Pennine Lancashire's Panopticons are a unique series of twenty-first century landmarks, designed to attract visitors into the countryside to enjoy the stunning landscapes and wealth of attractions that this delightful area has to offer.

In addition to Atom, nestling on the hillside above Wycoller village, there are three more Panopticons to discover, each commanding spectacular views.

www.panopticons.uk.net

Win a Marmot waterproof jacket

Preston's newest outdoor and travel superstore is offering Vision readers the chance to win a quality Marmot waterproof jacket.

Simply answer the following question and return, by Monday 21 April, to Cotswold competition, Vision, County Hall, Preston PR1 8XJ:
East Lancashire has two other Panopticons. Name one of them.



Present this voucher for 15% discount at Cotswold Outdoor Preston
135 Fishergate, Preston (opposite Waterstones) Tel: 01772 270910
www.cotswoldoutdoor.com

*Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offers or discounts

Spring listings



5 April
1.30-3.30. Super Saturday – what the Romans did for Lancaster. Swords, sandals and standards. Lancaster City Museum.
1-3.30. Potion Power with Lei Hoyle. Turton Tower.

6 April
1pm, 2pm, 3pm. Upstairs, downstairs with the Gawthorpe butler and housekeeper. Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham.

7 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.

8 April
11-5. On the Ropes! Lancaster Maritime Museum.
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Cooler Woodlands – Willow Lanterns. Lancaster Maritime Museum.
1-2, 2.30-3.30. Woodland Wander. Turton Tower.
10-12 (until 18 April). Holiday activities for children. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley.

9 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.

1-4. Woodland Gnome Hunt. Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham.
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Games to make and play. Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster.

10 April
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Roman art and craft activities. Lancaster City Museum.
1-2, 2.30-3.30. History mystery box. Turton Tower.

11 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.

12 April
1.30-3.30. Hands-on archaeology sessions. Lancaster City Museum.

14 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.
12.30-3.30. Children's Activities. Fleetwood Museum.

15 April
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Cooler woodlands: nature college.
11-5. On the Ropes! Lancaster Maritime Museum.
1-3.30. Don't be a birdbrain, build a birdbox. Turton Tower.

16 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun.

Museum of Lancashire, Preston.
12.30-3.30. Fabulous Fleetwood Children's Activities. Fleetwood Museum.
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Games to make and play. Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster.

17 April
10.30-12.30, 1.30-3.30. Roman art and craft activities. Lancaster City Museum.
1-3.30. Going Potty! Craft activity. Turton Tower.

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

Wyollers Country Park
01282 870253
Spring Wood Picnic Site
01254 825187

Lancashire Countryside
Service main office
01772 534709

Museums' main office
01772 534061

18 April
11-1, 2-4. Easter holiday fun. Museum of Lancashire, Preston.
12.30-3.30. Fabulous Fleetwood children's activities. Fleetwood Museum.

19 April
1.30-3.30. Hands-on archaeology sessions. Lancaster City Museum.

Natural Curiosity – Uncover nature's secrets, Museum of Lancashire, Preston (until 2 July). Explore the world of the amateur naturalists who study the wildlife of Lancashire and find out how you too can become a nature detective.

20 April
2.30-3.30. Museum Ahoy! – themed museum tour. Lancaster Maritime Museum.

27 April
2-4. Herb Walk. Turton Tower.

All month
Reflective Journeys by Elizabeth Crabtree. Rossendale Museum. Series of paintings, based on memories, especially memories of childhood in India, where the artist grew up in the mid twentieth century. Includes workshops – contact museum on 01706 260785.

10 years of Progressive Threads. Gawthorpe Hall, Padiham. Aspects of textile and embroidery art.

stART: Writings; drawings; paintings an exhibition by young people. Queen Street Mill Textile Museum, Burnley. stART highlights the creative talents of young people who have offended or been excluded from school – an honest and touching artistic display.

From Cooler Woodlands, exhibition at Lancaster Maritime Museum. Look at some of the creatures that make their homes in our woodlands. Features a range of woodland crafts – from sophisticated, traditional Lancashire furniture and woodland inspired paintings to sculpture and modern creations for the future.

Viva Mexico, Rossendale Museum (until 27 April). Celebration of Mexican art and craft.

Helmshore Mills Textile Museum, Holcombe Road, Helmshore. Newly refurbished museum of the Lancashire textile industry. Suitable for the family. Mon-Fri 12-4, Sat/Sun 12-5.

your weekends

TAKE A RIDE

Life in Lancashire



THE idea of cycling from industrial Lancashire to the pretty borders of North Yorkshire had immediate appeal to me.

Part of the appeal, I confess, was doing it all on the flat.

Never having been the sort of rugged cyclist that searches for steep hills, I am never happier than when cycling along a canal. Water is always level...

But that isn't the only appeal of riding on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal from the centre of Burnley to Barnoldswick. Yes, I enjoy the flat nature of the canalside, but I also enjoy the freedom from traffic.

I enjoy looking at the gaily coloured narrowboats – and also the hidden side of mills and wharves we take for granted when not travelling at ... well, to be honest, less than 10mph.

By Neil Graham

And now spring is here, there is no better way to get the family together and to get fit than by biking along Lancashire's 160 miles of off-road cycleway.

I enthusiastically saddled up at the car-park next to Tesco in Burnley centre...and immediately had to push my bike up the steep banking to Burnley's famous straight mile.

The water here is steel grey, exposed and choppy so it was a dramatic start that also offered great views over Burnley.

Down below, the traffic was congested. I knew, as a cyclist since childhood of the perils of cycling along that main road between Burnley, Nelson, Colne, Foulridge and Barnoldswick.

And as I carried on past scenic Thompson Park, I could still hear the roar of traffic. What struck me, apart from the safety and peace, was the speed at which I travelled.

Within only five minutes I was cycling underneath the Colne Road bridge. It would have taken double that on the road with its numerous roundabouts, junctions and traffic lights.

Far from my childhood memories of a bumpy-bump towpath, the surface on this journey is almost perfectly smooth – a great help in going fast.

The main reason it has been resurfaced for cyclists is that transport planners and cycling enthusiasts want it to be seen as a safe and swift alternative to the road.

It is like a motorway for cyclists. I remember cycling from Colne to my school in Nelson – a journey that is now safer than ever.

And as I headed to Barden, I noticed several places for families to stop along the way. My favourite resting place at this spot is the Barden Mill coffee shop.

The only obstacle on this canalside "motorway" were not traffic lights but...ducks.

(Above) ↑ Lancashire has mile after mile of safe cycleway - just plan ahead and start enjoying them.

If you want information on cycle routes, visit our website at www.lancashire.gov.uk/cycling where all the cycle maps are on-line or ring our free number: 0800 328 1635

Make tracks along the safe and growing cycle network

They sit on the bank and only move out of the way at the last minute.

The sound of traffic disappears as you get out towards Reedley – and the scenery changes from industrial to verdant green.

On the right-hand side, diggers were excavating a new marina. It will be fascinating to see it progress.

Industrial architecture dominates again in Brierfield. At Lob Lane bridge you can depart on two trails – each concentrating on cotton, the canal, religion and social change.

Not until you are past Nelson are you truly into open country and the sound of traffic recedes.

The seven Barrowford locks look splendid – and represent the only bit of uphill on the entire route.

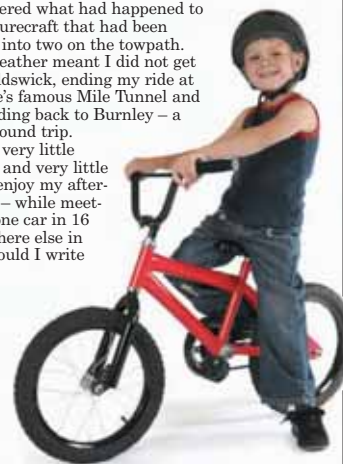
The only bit of traffic you will meet is at the locks – I met just one car leaving a nearby car-park.

From the locks to Foulridge – about three miles – is the prettiest part of the route. Dozens of narrowboats grabbed my attention as I sped through lush fields.

I wondered what had happened to the pleasurecraft that had been smashed into two on the towpath.

Poor weather meant I did not get to Barnoldswick, ending my ride at Foulridge's famous Mile Tunnel and then heading back to Burnley – a 16-mile round trip.

It took very little planning and very little effort to enjoy my afternoon out – while meeting just one car in 16 miles. Where else in Britain could I write that?



Find your way through the benefits maze

Jim Dickson, head of Lancashire County Council's Welfare Rights Service, may be able to help

If you are a carer sometimes it is worthwhile claiming Carer's Allowance even if you know that you cannot be paid because you are getting another benefit or State Pension.

If you satisfy all the other conditions, you will get a letter to say that you are entitled but you cannot be paid.

You have what is called "underlying entitlement" to Carer's Allowance, and you qualify for the carer premium.

The carer premium is not a benefit itself. It is an extra amount which is included when working out your Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.

If you already get any of these benefits the carer premium can increase the amount you get by up to £27.75 a week. Or it can help you qualify for one or more of these benefits for the first time.

A couple who both have underlying entitlement to Carer's Allowance qualify for two carer premiums.

To find out more about benefits for carers get a copy of our booklet "Carers – benefits for you" by ringing 01772 533504, or writing to: Welfare Rights Service, Freepost, Preston PR1 8RR (you don't need a stamp).

THERE are many organised cycling trips planned for this spring:

Sun 6 April

11.30am. Pedalling picnic. Enjoy a ride around Hyndburn and, when you book, a picnic will be provided. Led by John Taylor and Nicola Honey. Allow 1.5 hours. Beginners welcome. Bikes and adapted bikes available and to book the ride, tel 01254 356800 or 07746 127683.

Sat 12 April

11-3pm. Hyndburn Greenway or Ribble Valley villages. Enjoy Ribble Valley villages with lunch stop in Waddington or travel the Hyndburn Greenway with lunch at Read Garden Centre. 15-25 miles. Meet at Primetime Centre, Norden School, Stourton St, Rishton. Anne Stott on 07890 520077.

SADDLE UP AND GO

Sat 19 April

10am. Damson day out. Family-friendly day out to Damson fair in the beautiful Lyth Valley. 50 stalls inc cookery demos, archery, music, beer tent. £4 adults, children £2. Different starting points - contact organisers for options Stuart or Kirstie from Wheely Good Communities on 01524 782351 or email wheelygood@familyonabike.org.

Wed 23 April

10.30-3pm. Preston to Kirkham, using National Cycle Network Route 6 and 90. 22 miles. Meet Moor Park Avenue/St Paul's Road junction, Preston.

26 April

Burnley FC is encouraging all supporters to cycle to the last game of the season.

Wed 30 April

3.15-5.15pm. Exploring Preston by bike. Departs university, crosses the city, follows River Ribble to docklands then heads north to Preston Sports Arena. Back on Lancaster Canal on National Cycle Route 62 to the university. Approximately 7 miles, mainly flat. Meet outside the T, Foster car park, UCLAN. Contact Clair Challen on 01772 892052 or visit www.uclan.ac.uk/bug for information.

LOOK LIVELY

Voice of
Vision



*Dilys MacDonald
Safeguarding adults
co-ordinator*

LANCASHIRE county council has the lead responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable adults across the county.

Dilys MacDonald explains what abuse or neglect means – and how it can be stopped.

What does your work involve?

It involves working with other organisations such as police and the NHS to develop systems to protect vulnerable adults across Lancashire.

Many people routinely meet older people. We are now asking that they speak out if something is not right.

What types of people are considered vulnerable adults?

It can be a person unable to take care of themselves. They will often be old, but it can actually be anyone over the age of 18.

What constitutes abuse of adults?

Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts of physical, verbal or psychological abuse.

What is the county council and agencies doing to protect vulnerable adults?

The county council has been working with partners to introduce new systems and policies. Some of those processes include investigating on whether the abuse has taken place and if so, what measures to introduce.

What does the new Safeguarding Adults agenda mean for people of Lancashire?

It means better co-ordination for protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults.

Do you enjoy your job?

Yes, because it has given me the opportunity to make a difference in the protection of vulnerable adults. Safeguarding adults, of course, is everybody's business.

What should people do if they suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused?

They can contact Lancashire County Council via our Safeguarding Adults telephone number on **0845 0530028** or, for more information, visit online at **www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingadults**

You can also tell partner agencies such as the police and health professionals such as doctors, nurses, health visitors, occupational therapist, nurses or ambulance services.

If someone is in immediate danger or a criminal act is being committed, ring the police on 999.

A picture of your health

LANCASHIRE libraries, museums and Lancashire Record Office are celebrating Local and Community History Month with a focus on health.

Next month's celebrations will include displays in many libraries using extensive local and community history collections along with talks, lectures and other events.

The month will be launched on Friday 9 May at 2pm with a talk by local historian Barry Lowe at Chorley library on the history of health care in Chorley.

On Friday 16 May at 11am Dr Alan Crosby will talk at Lytham library on "Dealing with Nuisances and other Nastinesses: The Medical Officers of Health in Victorian Lancashire".

Preston's Harris Library will present a display, "A Preston Physician: Books from the Library of Dr Shepherd", which showcases the fine book collection donated to the people of Preston by the former physician and mayor of the town.

On Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15 May from 9.30am Lancaster library will have an event for children aged 4-6 years: "You wouldn't want to be



ill in the olden times".

On Wednesday 7 and Sunday 25 May at 2pm Oswaldtwistle library is running a local heritage walk: "Healthy Steps around Oswaldtwistle" in conjunction with Ossy Roots and the Stepping Out Health Walks project.

Colne library will be

running a display on health and heritage in Colne in association with the Colne Heritage Centre.

Some libraries will also have displays from Lancashire Record Office and exhibitions of some of the artefacts from Lancashire Museums and Lancaster Medical

Museum.

Contact Andrew Walmesley on **01772 534020** for more details or email: **andrew.walmesley@lcl.lancsc.gov.uk** Details will also be posted on **www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries** and available in a booklet from libraries during April.

All hands on deck

RESIDENTS, council staff, police and firefighters have united to clean up a part of Skelmersdale - and give hope to the community.

A 12-month clean-up will, it is hoped, inject pride into the Acregate area of Little Dymoor.

The project started after a public meeting last month to discuss the area.

The hope is that setting a good example will lead to long-term improvements.

Top national award for youth website

LANCASHIRE County Council's award-winning website for young people has again been singled out for praise.

The What Now? website was shortlisted along with major players such as CBeebies and Disney in the "Best Kids' Site" category of the BT Online Excellence Awards.

Though pipped to the post for the top slot, What Now? was praised for its imaginative use of technology to bring no-nonsense essential information to young people.

The What Now? range of services, now in its 19th year, was started by a group of out-of-work teenagers in Accrington who collaborated with youth and community workers on

the first What Now? handbook.

What Now? offers a range of interactive services from 10am to 10pm, 365 days a year, and is staffed by qualified information and advice workers. All the services, including WebTalk, can be reached from the What Now? web site **www.whatnow.co.uk** which also has regularly updated content.

RE answers life's big questions

School report



Helen Harrison

Consultant, religious education and collective worship

HAVING happily spent 28 years in several Lancashire schools with 11-19 year-olds it was a hard decision to turn my back on the classroom.

My passion for religious education (RE) drove me on and, in 2003, I joined the council's teacher advisers' group.

It was nerve-racking at first as who was I to tell colleagues what to do? The job entailed working with teachers individually or in groups to make RE the best it can be for children.

I also served Lancashire's Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) whose responsibility it is to create the local syllabus for county schools and then monitor and support its delivery.

After a couple of years I was appointed as the Lancashire consultant for RE and Collective Worship. I continue to work with schools and SACRE members but have more capacity for development projects such as working with local faith groups to allow visits to and from local faith communities and establishing a pilot Youth SACRE.

The sight of a young man from Hutton Grammar

School taking like a duck to water when offered the opportunity to play drums in the local Gurdwara and watching 10-year-olds whirl like dervishes at the annual youth conference all confirm for me that this is a worthwhile job.

RE is a much misunderstood subject and I welcome the opportunity to explain that in Lancashire it has at its heart, "What is it to be human?"

Exploring the big questions of life through investigating local faiths and their beliefs and practices provide models for the children to reflect on.

On my classroom wall was a Monty Python poster with the words, "My brain hurts". Good RE encourages our young people to have the skills to listen, understand, evaluate, empathise, analyse and thus think for themselves. To make them thoughtful, caring and responsible citizens.

As a young teacher in the 1970s I used to wince when I told people that I was an RE teacher - now I am proud to serve such an important part of the curriculum.

Supply and demand

Pioneering teaching scheme celebrates its fifth birthday

A PIONEERING partnership in Lancashire has raised the quality of supply teaching, ensured a fair deal for teachers and schools and played a key role in recruiting and keeping teachers in the county.

The Lancashire Teaching Agency (LTA), a partnership between Lancashire County Council and Reed Education, has just celebrated its fifth birthday. The first of its kind in the UK, the LTA now employs more than 1,000 teachers on the same pay and conditions as contracted staff.

Chris Lennox, who is responsible for school workforce development at the county council, said: "Our primary aim when setting up the partnership was to supply high-quality, trained teachers to schools in Lancashire. By paying supply teachers a fair wage and

ensuring they continue their training we think the agency has helped to improve the quality of supply teaching across the county, which has obvious benefits to our children and young people."

By offering flexible working options the LTA has helped teachers, including women returning from maternity leave and older teachers, stay in the profession. Working with Newly Qualified Teachers, particularly those from the big teacher training colleges in the County, has helped to ensure that talented young teachers also stay in Lancashire.

County Councillor Vali Patel, Cabinet member for schools, said: "We feel we have done an excellent job over the last five years but are not complacent. We are continually reviewing current arrangements to improve services available to our schools."

CASE STUDY SAMANTHA CULKIN - TEACHER

I qualified in 2007 and joined LTA in the September. This was due to the fact that there were so many teachers and not enough jobs in my area!

LTA made it clear to me that at the start work would be quiet, but soon, jobs started to appear.

I was sent to local schools for day to day work and soon enough I had visited at least six schools in a short time.

This then led to more and more work as the schools requested me to go back. I then built up strong contacts with four local schools where I started to cover for a week and I had set days during the week.

I was then given the chance to be put

forward for long term supply at two of the schools I had been working in.

I accepted one of the posts and am now working on completing two terms of my NQT year.

Working for LTA has meant that I am able to develop my teaching and observe how a variety of schools worked.

I have picked up numerous tips and am now using them in my classroom!

LTA has also offered me the same opportunities that would be available to me if I was on a fixed contract in a school.

They offer training courses which enables me to build on and develop my knowledge and it also keeps me up to date.

CASE STUDY LINDA MYERS - HEADTEACHER

TALKING about the Lancashire Teaching Agency, Linda Myers, headteacher of Ryelands Primary School, Lancaster, said: "As a headteacher of 11 years one of the biggest stresses for me was finding supply teachers, sometimes at very short notice."

"Some evenings I would spend two or three hours making phone calls and would work my way down or up the supply list supplied by the local authority."

"In a school of this size supply is needed every week for absences and courses."

"Five years ago when the LTA formed it was a blessing for us headteachers."

"Now when we get the 7.30am call we make one call to the agency, tell them our requirements and the job is done."

"I have found the staff who work at the agency have all been polite, helpful and efficient. Most of the senior staff have taken the time and trouble to visit school, meet with me, see round school to get a flavour and



●Lynda Myers - Headteacher of Ryelands Primary School, Lancaster.

insight into where they are sending their supply teachers. They have asked lots of questions to ensure they get a full picture of our requirements so that they can do 'best match' and so indeed give 'best value'."

"There have also been occasions when a member of staff has been sent home ill during the course of the day and again the agency can usually find someone very quickly who lives close to school so promptly the class is covered."

"I have used the agency on many occa-

sions for long term supply for teachers and teaching assistants. This saves the hassle of adverts, interviews, paperwork etc. because we know the agency has ensured that they have up to date references, police clearance etc."

and work of the agency and the quality of the teachers they supply. I do not use any other agencies and will continue to use this one as long as the quality

"All in all I have been very happy with the support of work continues."

County access award

Continued from p1

Other examples of good practice in its bid were:

●Burnley BEST - a bus service specifically introduced to serve employment opportunities.

●Preston Orbit - a bus service linking deprived residential areas with employment sites.

●Network Chorley - a partnership with Stagecoach NW.

●WyldeFyre - a bus service to help people from the smaller towns and villages on the Fylde peninsula to get access to health facilities.

Councillor Harding explained: "Improving accessibility is about breaking down all the barriers that prevent people from taking advantage of opportunities."

Lancashire has previously achieved Beacon status for many of its areas of work including Supporting the Rural Economy, Transforming the School Workforce, Positive Youth Engagement and Healthy Schools.

BEACON STATUS

For more information about Beacon status visit their website at:

<http://www.beacons.idea.gov.uk>

Premier League star backs reading scheme

TEN children and their families in Longridge have been selected to become Premier League Reading Stars, in a partnership between the local library and Blackburn Rovers FC.

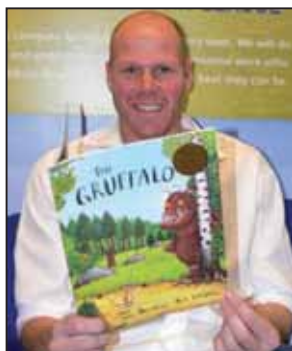
Rovers' goalkeeping ace Brad Friedel, along with Everton's Leon Osman and Manchester United's Edwin Van der Sar are among the 20 Premier League players who have revealed their favourite books as part of Premier League Reading Stars - the national reading initiative.

Each club has nominated a Reading Champion who selected his favourite book, for either children or adults, to create a list that will be used to inspire families across the county to read.

Brad's choice of book this year is The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson. He said: "The Gruffalo is a great book that shows how brains can defeat brawn. It tells the story of how a small mouse, while walking through a dark wood, outwits several larger dangerous animals who want to eat him. The poetry is appealing to all ages, especially the very young, and the book has some fantastic illustrations too".

All participants will meet the football author Tom Palmer and take part in a series of football-based reading games throughout the initiative, as well as attending Blackburn Rovers ground for a behind-the-scenes tour.

Hazel Becker, senior librarian at



●GOAL: Brad Friedel shows his book choice.

Lancashire County Council, said: "Using the footballers' favourite book choices are a way of inspiring families to read together. By tapping into people's passion for football and providing positive role models, the initiative inspires families to enjoy reading and sharing books together."

The scheme is run in 60 libraries around the county in partnership with the Football Foundation and the National Literacy Trust.

The county council has previously run the scheme in libraries in Chorley, Read and Church.

Budding business award success

THE pride of Pendle's business community were celebrated at a recent awards ceremony.

Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL) sponsored the Pendle Business Awards, held at Fence Gate Inn, which saw businesses recognised for their achievements in ten categories.

LCDL also saw success with Rosebud recipient Giddy Kippers Ltd, which won New Business of the Year. The Nelson-based play centre received funding in 2006.

Giddy Kippers company director Nicola Nuttall said: "We only started this business 20 months ago and we are thrilled to have received an award! The Rosebud loan helped us get established, provide facilities and buy the equipment that we needed to succeed."

LCDL also sponsored the Pendle Business Woman of the Year award which was won by Annette Getty of PDS

Engineering Ltd.

The event was attended by over 250 business people and almost 80 companies entered the awards. The award categories included New Business of the Year, Most Outstanding Small, Medium and Large Businesses of the Year, Business Person of the Year and the Mayor's Lifetime Business Achievement Award.

County Councillor Niki Penney, chair of LCDL - Lancashire County Council's economic development company, said: "We strive at LCDL to play our part in helping businesses to excel and sponsorship of the awards is one way of achieving this in Pendle. I congratulate all the winners and am particularly thrilled to see a Rosebud recipient amongst them."

The Rosebud Finance Scheme, a Lancashire Dealmakers' triple award winner, has been hugely successful in providing funds for established or start up businesses across the county. In the last three



●AWARD: Mark Nuttall and Nicola Nuttall, the directors of Giddy Kippers.

years Rosebud has helped over 128 businesses by investing £4m in Lancashire-based companies.

Rosebud finance is only available for companies either already based in Lancashire or those relocating to the county.

For more information on Rosebud call on 01772 536 600.

Inclusive sporting activities encouraged

FITNESS activities for disabled people are the focus for events later this month.

Inclusive Fitness Week, 24-30 April 2008, aims to encourage inclusive physical activity.

Sports centres across the county are arranging physical activity

sessions as part of the week.

The facilities are accessible, have trained fitness professionals and accessible fitness equipment.

For details visit the IFI website at www.inclusivefitness.org or contact individual venues:

All Seasons Leisure Centre, Chorley, 01257 515 000

Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Lancaster, 01524 847 540;

Sporting Edge, Ormskirk, 01695 584 745

West Craven Leisure Centre, Barnoldswick, 01282 666 710

WestView Leisure Centre, Ribblesdale, 01772 796 788

Lancashire Schools Serving great lunches everyday



What does the new menu provide for your child?

Here are ten good reasons to choose a school lunch.

- ✓ Daily choice of tasty meat or non meat main meal.
- ✓ Portions of meat increased to provide extra iron and zinc.
- ✓ Daily main meal suitable for vegetarians.
- ✓ Standards exceeded for energy, protein, carbohydrate and saturated fat.
- ✓ Standards exceeded for vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ Unlimited salad from the salad bar or servery.
- ✓ Up to 3 of your child's five a day portions of fruit and vegetables.
- ✓ Extra bread without spread.
- ✓ Daily choice of fresh milk or fruit juice plus chilled water.
- ✓ No confectionery or added salt.

Welcome to exciting new menus for schools in Lancashire.

September sees the introduction of tough new standards for the nutritional content of school lunches. We are delighted to announce that nutritional analysis shows that in Lancashire these have been met ahead of schedule with the introduction of our new summer menu. The new menu is being phased in over the two weeks following the Easter Holidays.

Diane, our menu planner, and Alison, our nutritionist, have been working with our catering staff and consulting children's panels on 'taster days' to produce recipes and menus that not only meet the new standards but which will also be enjoyable to eat.

Special Diets

We are able to cater for most special diets. These are normally arranged through a child's dietician to ensure that the meals we provide are appropriate to the individual child. If you require a special diet, please contact your school and ask them to make contact with us.

Free Meals

Free school meals are offered to children of families who are in receipt of:

- Income Support or
- Job Seekers Allowance (Income based) or
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 or
- The Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit or
- Child Tax Credits (if you are entitled to Working Tax Credit or your total yearly income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, is in excess of £14,495 you are not entitled to free school meals).

The Government does not allow us to recognise any other benefit other than those mentioned above. To apply, you need to complete an application form. These are available from your child's school or your local Area Education Office, or as a downloadable form from www.lancashire.gov.uk/eadmissions.

Sample menus

Roast Pork Loin with
Roast Potatoes, Gravy
(v) Toasted Panini with your School's Choice of
Filling and Jacket Wedges
Fresh Seasonal Vegetables
• Crunchy Italian Salad *Salad bar
Meringue Nests Filled with
Tropical Fruit
Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt
Chilled Water, Fruit Juice or Fresh Milk

Traditional Top Crust Pie with Baby Mid
Potatoes & Gravy
Breaded White Fish Fillet with Chunky Chips
Fresh Seasonal Vegetables
• Garden Peas • *Salad bar
Currant Bun or Fingers with a Drizzle of
Water Icing
Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt
Chilled Water, Fruit Juice or Fresh Milk

Grilled Gammon & Pineapple
with Jacket Wedges
(v) Freshly Made Tomato & Lentil Soup
with Hot Filled Baguettes
Roasted Vegetables • *Salad bar
Fresh Fruit Platter and Shortbread Biscuit
Fresh Fruit or Yoghurt
Chilled Water, Fruit Juice or
Fresh Milk

*Fruit is available either as part of or with each main desert.
Vegetarian choice available daily.

Marks of quality



Commercial services

Lancashire
County Council