

FULL STEAM AHEAD AT WEST PARK • ART IN THE PUBLIC EYE • DARLINGTON PARTNERSHIP NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR WEST PARK • BRINGING BUSINESS AND ARTS TOGETHER

A real gem in our hands

NOW that the landscaping works at West Park are almost complete, the biodiversity theme is falling nicely into place. Creating a good template of habitats that will encourage the maximum numbers of plants and animals in the future is a luxury that is rarely come across in this day and age.

Combine this with the artistic and recreational features that are being built into the Park and we find we have a real gem on our hands. Darlington, for one reason or another, missed out on the spread of country parks that took place in the 60's and 70's. Consequently, most of Darlington's residents have to travel out of the Borough if they want to experience quality countryside – with many choosing to travel to Hamsterley Forest or down to the North York Moors.

West Park is showing the way for a whole generation of new sites to come on-stream that are adjacent to where people live. Accessible to all even if you don't have a car as well as being attractive to a younger audience, these new sites are springing up around Darlington, and so, increasing the quality of life for all members of the public.

West Park will be a delight to explore. The wildlife is already starting to recollonise with butterflies and birds in abundance, flying over the new wild flower meadows and between the newly planted trees. Water Voles and all kinds of fish are moving back into the many new pools of west beck which flows down a series of specially constructed small weirs and riffles making the beck a delight along which to wander beside along the newly created footways.

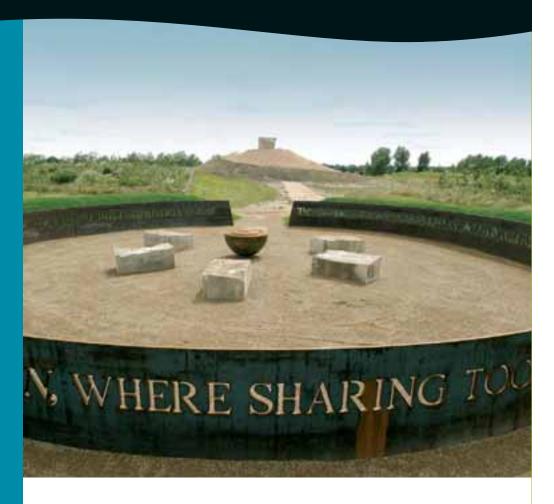
Plans are afoot for adding to West Parks interest with ideas being discussed for a new mountain bike facility that will keep the young and not so young happy. And to cap it all the Council in partnership with the community and the developer are looking at the possibilities of creating a park rangers building as well as visitor centre although these are at an early stage.

None the less, we will be encouraging people to get involved in the management of the park shortly after its opening next year so don't hesitate to get in touch and we will keep you informed on how to get involved.

Rob George, Countryside Section, Darlington Borough Council. Tel: 01325 388 648

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Full steam ahead at West Park







WORK ON the West Park development is now steaming ahead. The new Alderman Leach Primary School is under way next to the Community Village site and is due to open early in 2005. The new roads for the community village are in progress and designs are being finalised for the first phase which will include convenience store and pub, followed by retails units, a nursery and a doctors surgery. New homes are springing up daily and the first buyers have recently moved in. The access road to the hospital and homes including footpaths, landscaping and street lighting has been completed over the summer.

The parkland continues to take shape and will become even greener over the next few months when the ponds around the park are planted and the final sculptures are put in place. The parkland is due to open in June 2005 however will be used this summer for events linked to the West Park Arts & Strategy which included an education programme involving several Darlington Primary and Secondary Schools.

Green links for pedestrians and cyclists are being finalised through the development and will link with existing bridleways and the adjoining rail corridor to adjoining routes providing safe and quiet access to West Park.

West Park is starting to be recognised as a tremendous example of good practice in public art as proven by the recent success in the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Renaissance Awards for the North East when it won the Gold Award for sensitivity in regeneration.

Further information will be available on our website at: busseyarmstrong.co.uk/projects

TONY COOPER

Director, Bussey & Armstrong Projects

Poetic inspiration for West Park

Armstrong's assistance we developed 'Writing West Park'









New mental health facility takes shape

A STATE-OF-THE-ART mental health hospital for the people of South Durham and Darlington is nearing completion on the West Park site.

The £20 million West Park Hospital will be up and running by the end of the year and will replace outdated facilities for adults and older people, such as the Pierremont Unit,

> next to Darlington Memorial Hospital.

> > One in four people will suffer from some form of mental illness at some time in their life, making it a more common problem than coronary heart

> > > disease and cancer. The new hospital will provide people experiencing mental health problems with the best possible care in an environment designed to feel more like a hotel than a hospital.

All of the 116 single, en-suite rooms will be on the ground floor. The site will be beautifully landscaped, the

entrance will have the feel of a hotel lobby. Access to all parts of the hospital will be from a circular corridor around a central courtyard and each ward will have its own therapy garden.

Some of the doctors and nurses who will be working at the new hospital, as well as service users who have been involved in its design, have visited the site and have been impressed with what they have seen.

Angela Pickering, who is the ward manager on one of the elderly wards that is moving to the new hospital felt it certainly had that 'wow' factor. She said: "I can already imagine what it will look like and the architects have certainly done us proud. There is plenty of space and our patients will have three garden areas to enjoy.

The range of mental health facilities at the new hospital will also include a dedicated hospital pharmacy

run by Boots the

Chemist. The partnership between County Durham and Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust and Boots is believed to be the first of its kind in the country.

Boots will provide a tailor-made pharmacy service for the hospital, supplying and dispensing medication for inpatients, day patients and outpatients.

Wendy Broderick, chief pharmacist at the Trust, said: "We hope that having a well-known community pharmacy like Boots in our hospital will add to its friendly environment and help service users prepare for leaving hospital and returning home."

You can find out more about West Park Hospital by visiting the Trust's website www.cddps.nhs.uk or by calling the hospital's project team on 01325 743848.



Angela Pickering, ward manager

Darlington Partnership - making a difference

DARLINGTON PARTNERSHIP is the Local Strategic Partnership for the town. This probably doesn't mean a lot to many people which is unfortunate as its function is to improve the quality of life for everyone who lives or works in Darlington.



The Partnership involves the council, police, health, education providers, local businesses, community partnerships and the voluntary sector to identify gaps in services and then work together to fill them.

When the West Park developers, Bussey & Armstrong, approached Darlington Partnership to assist in the development of community facilities it was an opportunity accepted with relish. To help co-ordinate the establishment of something new for residents and the surrounding community is a rare chance to make a tangible difference by engaging the ideas and commitment of partners.

In order to decide what will be built for the community in and around West Park there is to be a consultation and planning process which will be conducted from September 2004 and will last about a year. This will include extensive community consultation with the new residents of West Park and those living in the surrounding areas. The criteria for these consultations is to come up with facilities that will meet the needs of those living in the area as well as showing financial viability and fulfilling other formal planning

requirements. There are already some organisations that have expressed an interest in being located within the new premises; they will be invited to make presentations to a steering group during the course of 2005 as to their possible inclusion in the final plans.

The expertise and experience of Darlington Partnership will be used to come up with an innovative and well-designed community facility of which the whole town can be proud. Partnership Chairman, Alasdair MacConachie OBE has commented that, "It is wonderful to be a part of something that will make a positive difference to the people in West

> Park and beyond. Darlington Partnership will ensure that the best decisions are taken to reflect the wishes of the community and to come up a plan to ensure its financial viability."

We look forward to the opening of the community facilities sometime in 2006.

Steve Rose, Chief Executive, Darlington Partnership. Tel: 01325 488 260



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Supporting initiatives

AN INNOVATIVE scheme to create a long-term community fund has been developed between Bussey & Armstrong, Bellway Projects, Darlington Borough Council and County Durham Foundation at

County Durham Foundation will collect a £50 levy each year, paid by each of the homeowners, details of which have been included in the companies and individuals to make a local and lasting impact by helping them choose and support the best causes in the easiest and most effective way possible. They will deal with all administration of the West Park Fund, including collection and distribution of money and monitoring the effectiveness of the programme.

Initial plans for the fund include providing Park Rangers for the parkland and decisions on appropriate projects to support each year

County Durham Foundation chief executive, Gillian Stacey explains: "Many larger scale developments have struggled to create a community identity and engage residents. This approach will help to foster a real community spirit. We are delighted to be involved."

For further information contact Gillian Stacey, County Durham Foundation on 0191 383 0055 or e-mail gillian@countydurhamfoundation.co.uk



Art in the public eye



IT'S AN EXCITING time in Darlington with some interesting, quality public art projects developing. Taking inspiration from the WestPark model, Darlington Borough Council's Arts Team and New Writing North have just appointed poet and writer Maureen Almond to work with local people over an eighteenmonth residency. The writing produced will be incorporated into artworks within North Lodge Park as part of a larger redevelopment of the park funded through New Opportunities Fund. To get people involved, Maureen had a "man of words" (see picture) wonder round the park during a recent summer fayre!

The Pedestrian Heart project is changing the centre of Darlington to provide an enhanced and accessible experience for local people and visitors. Emphasis has been placed on high quality urban design, reinforcing the character of Darlington through a contemporary and sensitive use of materials. The scheme will feature space for events, markets and street activities, avenues of trees and bold planting, a water feature, plenty of seating areas, highlighting of key landmarks and quality granite surfacing.

Sculptor, Paul Wager has just started working with the workforce at Cleveland Bridge to inspire a commemorative sculpture to mark the company's 125th year. This project is being funded by The Arts & Business Sponsorship Club that encourages the business sector to work with artists.

Visual artist, Mark Haywood and poet, Andy Croft are working with SureStart to produce a series of wall based ceramic pieces with words, drawings and photographs from the users of the facility.

If you are interested in public art and would like to find out more please contact Wendy Scott, Visual & Public Art Officer, tel: 01325 348845 or e-mail: wendy.scott@darlington.gov.uk

Law firm's excellence recognised at the double

REGIONAL multi-disciplinary law firm Blackett Hart & Pratt has joined a small elite group of legal practices in the UK to achieve double recognition for its excellence.

The firm, which has offices in Newcastle, Durham, Darlington and Newton Aycliffe, has gained both Investor in People and Lexel, the Law Society's quality assurance mark, following a recent audit.

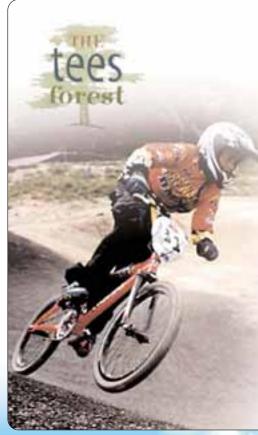
Out of more than 8,000 law firms in England and Wales, it is now among a minority group of about 200 to hold the joint accreditation. Anne Lane, Blackett Hart & Pratt's practice manager, said: "Investor in People is all about commitment to developing our staff, while Lexel focuses on good practice within our legal work and related procedures.

"Achieving them both has meant a lot of hard work for everyone but the benefits are very real both for the firm and its clients. Not least the recognition that our procedures and service levels meet the highest standards, but also all our staff are committed to driving forwards the firm's plans for growth and improvement whilst developing as individuals."









People in the Park

THE TEES FOREST is proud to be involved with the development at Darlington West Park. The planting of over 40,000 trees was completed by March 2003, creating a native broadleaved community woodland stretching over eight hectares of former industrial land on the outskirts of Darlington. The woodland contains a variety of trees including; oak, ash, birch, willow and hazel, and is an exciting addition to The Tees Forest, offering new opportunities for local people.

The site is due to be open to the public next year, and we are already working with Bussey and Armstrong and the Darlington Borough Council's Countryside Staff to develop recreational activities on the site. One exciting possibility is the development of a BMX style cycle track. A world class course

developer has been asked to design a competitive course, to rival any in the North East. The aim is to involve young people in its development, use and management with the hope that the site can be host to competitive races in the future.

Our long-term vision is to have a Centre at the site, which will provide a base for Ranger Staff who will manage and maintain the park, and develop a range of activities and experiences, including; healthy walking, running, bouldering and environmental education.

The woodland is already starting to flourish and wildlife is beginning to move in. As the site evolves and matures it will offer a steppingstone to the wider countryside and a beautiful green landscape to be viewed on the approach to the town.

Contact Simon Blenkinsop, Recreation Officer, The Tees Forest, Tel: 01642 300 716



New primary school for West Park

WORK STARTED in February this year on the construction of the new £3million Alderman Leach Primary School in Darlington. The new stateof-the art school is being built at West Park and will replace the existing primary school.

The designers for the new school, DEWJOC Architects, have worked closely with all the stakeholders to develop the design into a school, which will provide a first class facility which not only demonstrates the authorities commitment to providing environments where continuous improvements in education standards can be delivered but also provides a valuable addition for the community.

The new 315 place school will include a 26 place nursery unit which will also provide wrap round care for three and four year olds.

Located in the heart of the new West Park community, the new accommodation will provide a more suitable site both geographically and for the delivery of the national curriculum, seeking to raise educational standards, deliver the Authority's 'Early Years Strategy', promote lifelong and family learning and deliver diversity and inclusion within the education system.

Special features include, state of the art facilities, the latest IT technology,

interactive whiteboards, a multi-use games area, football pitch and a hall with a sprung floor making it suitable for recreational activities such as badminton.

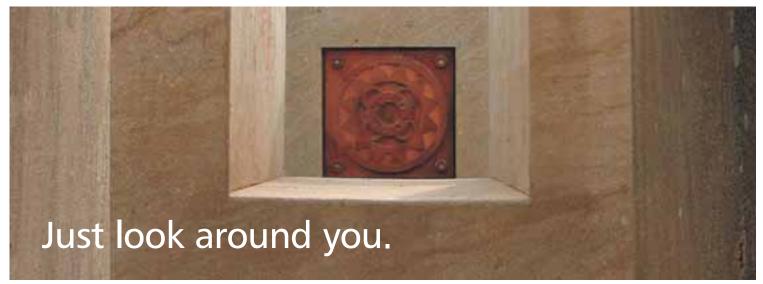
The building contractor is DORIN Construction who are making good progress and are on programme to complete the new school for its opening early in 2005.

Kevin Duffy, Education Premises Development Manager Tel: 01325 388 818









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Darlington Mowden Park RFC

- a club for everyone!



ALL OF US at Darlington Mowden Park RFC have recently been casting envious eyes at the transformation of the West Park site over recent months. The hospital is nearing completion, the first houses are underway, the park area is looking more inviting by the day and the steel frame of the school, which is located on our original site within the development, has started to

In order to accommodate the school, we had to find an alternative site within the development. This necessitated lengthy and complex discussions with our professional advisors, the purchaser of our current ground and Bussey & Armstrong Projects Limited to find an area large enough to accommodate our needs and still remain financially viable. Thanks to the best efforts of everyone concerned, especially Bussey & Armstrong, we now have a new larger superior site, full planning permission and detailed designs and costings for our new clubhouse.

We are finally looking forward to becoming full members of the West Park community and hope that the clubhouse can become a focal point for all new residents, regardless of their sporting (or otherwise) interests, to enjoy social intercourse in convivial surroundings!

For the Rugby Union enthusiasts we shall continue to offer rugby for all ages and abilities. Our Mini and Junior sections continue to go from strength to strength and always welcome new players, coaches and helpers. We have a tremendously strong womens rugby section, with two players gaining representative honours for England last season. The First

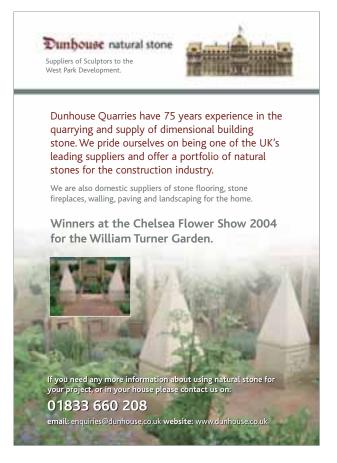


XV continue to play in the National Leagues, having just missed an automatic promotion spot in season 2003/2004, and we have high hopes of achieving this goal in the current season. We also run a Second and Third XV who play competitive rugby with an old-fashioned rugby ethos.

We intend to become an established part of the West Park "family" and can guarantee a very warm welcome to anybody reading this article who would like to be one of the first to use our magnificent new facilities.

Contact Geoff Chandler, Darlington Mowden Park RFC. Tel: 01325 465 932





Bringing business and arts together

THE SPONSORS CLUB for Arts & Business has been working with businesses and arts organisations in the North East for the past thirteen years. Our aim is to help businesses benefit from commercial and creative relationships with the arts, museums and artists of the North East, and to help the cultural sector benefit from the financial and professional support that the business community can give. We believe that

mutually rewarding partnerships are possible that will enhance both enhance both

sectors, and we provide advice, case studies, training and some financial investment to help develop these collaborations. Westpark, which has involved poets and street names, schools film-making and public art, is an excellent example of how artists and developers can together create an innovative and distinctive development that profits everybody.

We run two match funding schemes, a first time sponsorship incentive scheme, which is unique to the region and the Arts & Business New Partners scheme. We're delighted that Bussey & Armstrong successfully applied to New Partners for an investment so that schools around West Park could produce

films, write poems and produce radio shows highlighting the areas past and present and creating positive images for the future. Other programs include; Creative Training and Development;

Sponsorship Seminars; Board Bank; Skills Bank and the Arts Development Forum. We are funded and supported by our members who represent a range of businesses in the region, together with Universities, the Community Foundation, Arts Council of England, North East and the North East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

If you would like any additional information or advice on the services that the Sponsors Club can provide, please have a look at our website at www.sponsorsclub.org.uk or contact us on 0191 222 0945 or via e-mail as below:

Director: Adam Lopardo al@communityfoundation.org.uk

Manager: Jane Tarr jt@communityfoundation.org.uk

Administrator: Stuart Garratt sg@communityfoundation.org.uk

The Sponsors Club for Arts and Business Community Foundation, 9th Floor, Cale Cross, 156 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SU

Mayflower Engineering wish to congratulate Bussey & Armstrong and David Paton, the artist with whom we worked, in the development and manufacture of the Circular Word Panels at West Park.

We are pleased to have been associated with this excellent project.



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