

Pagan Picnic

As usual, this Beltane saw the neo-pagans and Wiccans of Newcastle taking to the countryside to light fires and take part in dark masses under the moon. This ancient Celtic ritual dates back to before the introduction of civilisation into the British Isles when the barbaric populations would make sacrifices to the gods in the hope of a good summer for their crops and livestock. Of course whilst most of leave these things to scientists and farmers these days, a few anachronistic folks still take it upon themselves to reenact these ancient traditions.

Still for all the hocus pokus this night in particular has a

tradition of being plagued by minor mishaps and streaks of bad luck. Whilst the more superstitious blame fairies playing whilst the boundaries between their world and ours are at their thinnest, most simply chose not to take big risks and double check that they locked the door. This year was no different, as people have been reporting minor freak occurrences and odd events.

Whether you throw in your lot with the fire burning pagans, sit firmly with the superstitious or simply shake your head with the rest of us, you have to admit that this is one crazy time of year.

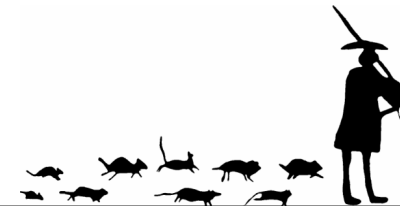


Police Hound Local Business

In what is being branded as a methodical victimisation of local businessman Vincent Black the local constabulary have spent a considerable amount of taxpayer's money. The justification for this has been the lengths the police had to go to track him down and yet when he was cornered in his own home he went willingly to assist the officers in their enquiries. Given the cooperation of Mr. Black, at least the police did not actually bring charges against him reducing the chance of a lawsuit being brought against them.

Apparently the local businessman was suspected of being involved in several

illegal activities including drug trafficking, kidnapping and in particular the disappearance of five local women. However, the police were forced to look elsewhere as cast iron alibis were produced proving beyond doubt that Mr. Black could not have been involved in these events. After several hours of questioning Mr. Black was released without charge and the police have issued a formal apology for their over zealous pursuit of this individual. So far Mr. Black has made no formal statement on the events, but the senior officers committee has warned the police against this kind of harassment of innocent citizens.



The House That Does Not Always Win

It seems that after a promising start the newly renovated Grosvenor Casino has run into a few problems. The official opening was a great success attended by many local celebrities who all raved about the facilities available. Along side these endorsements it was reported that the takings for the first night were almost three times the expected amount. The first week of trading also went well with a high attendance rate and continually growing profits. Everything looked rosy for this new enterprise and the owners of Aspers must have been getting a little concerned.

Unfortunately a few details

concerning the paperwork that was filed to obtain the premises gambling license game to light as being in error and forced the temporary revocation of the casinos operating permission. Whilst the complications are in no way criminal it will result in at least a two-month closure of the premises whilst several checks are remade and the administration is sorted. This does not bode well for the fledgling casino and this kind of press will greatly damage the good reputation it was rapidly building. Only time will tell if Grosvenor casino can rise from the ashes or whether it burned too bright too quickly.



Farm Cat Given The Sack

It seems that even our feline friends have to face the music when dealing with the harsh world of work. Floss, the farm cat at Fell Moor farm located just outside of Newcastle, was given his P45 this month for failure to do his job. That's right, for failing to catch mice this poor moggy has been consigned to the local animal shelter. It seems that whilst the cat was meant to be on duty a contingent of vermin broke into the grain stores on the farm and emptied them. Quite how they managed to make of with over three metric tons of grain is still unknown, but after the event Floss was found cowering under the farm tractor. Having lost his nerve and failed in the line of duty the cat was fired to be replaced by a younger model. I know that we can all associate with this feline to some extent and the animal shelter are sure they will find a new home for the traumatised ex-mouse catcher.

Police Stripper Charged For Impersonation

A male stripper in Newcastle has been charged with impersonating a policeman after real officers mistook him for one of their own. His outfit and props were confiscated and he was later charged with impersonating an officer and carrying an offensive weapon. He has yet to discover whether the case will come to court -- and said he faces problems with show bookings, as his uniform has still not been returned. "I immediately told the officers I was a stripper but they didn't seem to believe me. They watched the show then they asked me back to the station. Now I have to wait to find out if this is going any further," he said.

