



 azure  
charitable enterprises

*A Very  
Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year  
  
from everyone at  
Azure*



## **Julie wins National Training Award**

Congratulations to Julie Embleton, Supported Housing Manager at Cramlington, who recently won a National Training Award. The award, which recognises and celebrates people and organisations who create success through training and personal development, was presented by Colin Jackson on October 2nd at the Gateshead Hilton Hotel.



Fourteen years ago whilst on an NVQ level 2 training course with SHAW, Julie visited Supported Housing and was so interested in the work she became a volunteer. She later applied for a permanent post and in April 1994 started part time working.

Julie has achieved various work related qualifications - most recently completing her Registered Manager course.

Julie is delighted and stated, "The self-doubt I used to have has changed into confidence and self-belief through the knowledge and qualifications I have achieved".

## **Visit of Chairman and Vice Chairman**

Azure's recently appointed Chairman Joe Oliphant and Vice Chairman Neville Furness visited Azure operations in September to meet with staff and gain a deeper understanding of their work.

They were both delighted with what they found. Afterwards Joe stated, "I found the visit both enjoyable and enlightening". He and Neville gained a great deal of satisfaction from their reception and said how pleased they were with staff's openness and to see so many smiling and friendly faces.

## New Café for Azure Garden Centre

Over the winter a completely new and attractive Café is to be constructed in the area occupied by the present children's play area. The design, construction and operation have taken due account of all environmental considerations. It is to be a timber structure - from sustainable forest sources in Finland. It will minimise the use of pvc base materials – the floor coverings will be natural product based and the guttering will be recycled stainless steel.

Plans include provision for: solar panels, ground source heat pumps, extraction of heat from kitchen exhausts, appropriate glazing choices and rainwater harvesting. We are also constructing new toilets with additional and improved facilities.

There is to be a completely new kitchen and servery. Azure will be making every effort to source good quality produce locally – to reduce the food miles travelled. This will be finalised as the new menus are developed.

The eco credentials of this exciting facility will be a major marketing tool and we hope that the building as well as the food will give people good reasons to come - and to return.

## What happened to the trees?



Given Azure's eco commitment (refer p3) let us explain why the established Leylandii along the front of the Garden Centre have been felled. Unfortunately these long established trees had originally been planted too close to the building and the roots were causing damage to the floor. In addition they had seriously penetrated nearby drains – a fact confirmed by a recent video camera survey.

We have been able to retain the smaller more attractive cedar trees which are not posing any threat.

## Azure Garden Centre – give them your support this Christmas

Please support Azure Garden Centre. The back cover has Christmas offers and opening times etc. Also see the offer from GCS (inside back cover).

## Azure's environmental attitude

In keeping with all responsible organisations, Azure is looking to see what it might do (or stop doing) to minimise any negative environmental activities or practices. Each month the senior management team have discussions on eco matters to seek ways of improving our position.

The new restaurant (refer p2) demonstrates clearly the sort of thinking and investment that is now being applied. Space does not permit a fuller list of the issues being addressed at Azure, but the following give a flavour of the sort of simple things that all add up in a positive way – not printing e/mails, double sided photocopying (as a norm), moving to eco friendly paper sources for our printed documents and copiers, switching off lights and not leaving equipment needlessly in standby mode.

Waste and its avoidance are, for us, a major issue - given the nature of Azure's trading activities. Interestingly, independent analysis of sample skips recently taken from Azure revealed that 97% of the material was fit to be recycled – with only 3% having to go to landfill.

Any of the management team will welcome suggestions of ways for Azure to continually improve – and such suggestions will be discussed and, as appropriate, acted upon.

Everyone can help. Please think carefully about everything you do.



## IT ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) Awards – 7th August



These awards were presented by Azure's Chief Executive, Peter Elliott OBE to Newcastle IT Centre trainees who had recently achieved ECDL qualifications.

Peter is seen here with some of the successful students and Azure's IT Tutor Peter Stokel.

Azure's 25th party - Newcastle Civic Centre - 26th October





All photographs  
courtesy of  
Peter Ellis



### **Elaine Dobson – NVQ Level 4**

Employment Services Deputy Manager & Welfare Benefits Adviser, Elaine Dobson, has recently achieved her NVQ Level 4 in Management.

### **John and Lorraine Charlton – 25th Wedding Anniversary**

John Charlton, Homes Manager at Tynedale, and his wife Lorraine celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary on 2nd October.

John and Lorraine have two sons, Paul, 24 and Ben, 21.



### **Mark Leyland – NVQ Level 1**

Mark Leyland has achieved an NVQ Level 1 in Horticulture and CIEH (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health) Manual Handling qualification.

Mark (pictured centre) joined us in 2005 as a trainee on the Horticultural Basic Skills programme. After funding finished in July 2006, he stayed on as a Volunteer in the Horticultural Training Unit and Nurseries. During this time, Mark also achieved his CIEH Health and Safety Qualification.

### **Azure Printing – 10,000th Customer**

Azure Printing recently completed work for its 10,000th customer since receiving ISO9001 Standard re-accreditation in December last year. By coincidence the customer was Azure Employment Services - the job was their newsletter designed by Audrey Hanlon.



## **Darren Turner – Proud Father**

Darren Turner, Senior Graphic Designer at Azure Print, has become a father for the second time. He, wife Joanne, and little Ellen Louise welcomed new arrival, Liam John, on the 23rd of September - weighing in at 9lb 2oz.



## **e2e Bidding Success**

Azure has been successful in a bid to The Learning and Skills Council for a contract to run Entry to Employment (e2e) in Northumberland.

e2e training will include practical, hands-on horticultural and retail experience as well as IT training and computer work. Learners, aged 16 to 19, will come from the Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth, Cramlington and Morpeth areas.

## **Tony Kelly - NVQ Level 3**

Tony Kelly, Recruitment Adviser, has achieved his NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance.



## **A step in the right direction**

In July, Sandra Allaway and partner Aidan Malone walked around Holy Island in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care - raising £358, and they send a big “thank you” to everyone in Azure who supported them.

Sandra had two operations on her spine in 2001 and has suffered with chronic pain and fatigue since. Sandra is determined to beat this disabling condition and rose to this challenge - gradually increasing her walking distance from 1 mile to over 3 miles. She was helped along by walking in memory of a dear friend, Margaret Rose Graham, who was taken by cancer some 6 years ago.



### Alan Cowen - Azure Printing

Alan began work for Azure in February 2001 – initially as a guillotine operator and van driver. Prior to that Alan had worked for 30 years as a time served carton boxmaker. After a couple of years Alan was promoted to his current position of Finishing and Despatch Supervisor.

Alan has been married to Irene for 32 years. They have two daughters; Tracy, who married husband Ray in August of this year and

Andrea who will be marrying Robin in December. Alan and Irene have a lovely 19 month old granddaughter called Katie.

Alan's hobbies are photography, fishing and working on his pride and joy (as seen in the photo).



### Paul Scott – Azure Garden Centre

Paul joined the Garden Centre team over 16 years ago as a Sales Assistant. He very much enjoys contact with customers and can be found answering their paving and fencing queries or working in the shrub area. He is also a standby delivery driver.



Paul likes to be kept busy and over the years has completed Disability Awareness Training as well as Spraying & Pesticides and Emergency Life Support courses.

Paul recently celebrated his 40th birthday. He is interested in clay pigeon shooting and is a keen cyclist, sometimes cycling to work from his home in Choppington.

GCS supplies quality garden buildings and provides a full delivery and installation service.

10% off all TGB Playhouses delivered by Christmas 2007.



**Candy  
Cabin**

Azure colleagues also qualify for a further 5% discount, giving an overall saving of 15%.

Why not treat that special small person in your family to a very magical Christmas.

You can find us at Azure Garden Centre. Call in for a brochure and price list, or telephone 01670 733499 and we will mail you a copy.

[www.gcs-online.co.uk](http://www.gcs-online.co.uk)

**GCS wishes you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

# Visit Azure Garden Centre

A wide range of Christmas goods as well as our usual high quality plants and many other products. Something for everyone.

**Fantastic Offer**

**For every £20 spent  
a free box of Lindt Lindor  
Milk Chocolate Truffles (rrp £3.49)  
A great stocking filler!**



**Fresh Christmas Trees  
from 1<sup>st</sup> December**



**Meet Santa  
at weekends (10 - 4pm)  
from 1<sup>st</sup> December**



**Coffee Shop  
Christmas Menu  
commences 1<sup>st</sup> December**



**Late night opening (until 7pm)  
December 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>**

- Giftware
- Aquatics & pet products
- Gardening tools & sundries
- Furniture
- Seasonal plants
- Children's books
- Landscaping supplies
- Rolawn stockist



Azure Garden Centre, Station Road, Cramlington NE23 8BS  
Tel: 01670 733762

Check website for offers

[www.azure-gardencentre.co.uk](http://www.azure-gardencentre.co.uk)