

Vendor honoured as he marks 18th year selling the *Chron* today

# Our man Brian's Facebook following

A GROUP formed on the popular social networking website, Facebook, has attracted more than 300 fans over the weekend to celebrate the work of *Chron* 'legend', Brian Howard.

The unmistakable sound of "Chron-i-cle" bellowing over Abington Street is something thousands of people have become used to as they walk along Northampton's main shopping thoroughfare.

And today, the man behind the voice, 52-year-old Brian, has really come of age having notched up 18 years selling newspapers the traditional way at his town centre pitch.

In 1992, Brian was made redundant from Harlestone Firs saw mill in Northampton. Since then he has become a part of the furniture in Abington Street, where he selling the *Chron* six days a week.

Brian, who lives in Long Buckby, said: "I worked as a wood sawyer for 15 years until I was made redundant, I have been doing this job 18 years today. I saw it advertised in the *Chron* and I got the job straight away."

Brian was shocked after he heard a group had been set up in his name, but he added: "Some-

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body told me I was on Facebook, so I went around to my neighbours house to have a look. I was very surprised and I wasn't happy at the time, but I can see the funny side now. But I am not a legend, I am just doing my job. People have set up the group because of what I am doing and who I am. I am a big character.

"When I shout 'Chron-i-cle', I do it because my mum was partially deaf so I had to shout a lot, but to me it is not shouting."

He said he believed he had helped customers and passers-by in Northampton over the years, adding: "I have helped five people not to take drugs and helped alcoholics to get them on the right path. Blind people also know where I am when they walk past me., I am always speaking to them and helping people in need, I advise people what to do, I don't tell people what to do.

"I would say I am a happy-go-lucky bloke and very approachable but I can be serious.

"I have relief from my friends who will help me and take over if, for example, I need to go to the toilet. I keep warm on the cold



Brian Howard has notched up 18 years selling the *Chron* in Abington Street

CE Picture by LOUISE O'CALLAGHAN

days by putting my hands in between the stack of papers and I have even been known to wear cardboard, I love to work in the fresh air as I suffer from claustrophobia. The colder the better for me."

Creator of the popular Facebook page, student, Karl Senghore, aged 18, of Goldings, Northampton, said: "I remember the sound Chron-i-cle from my childhood. The bloke is a legend. He has been there every day for years and never changes."

## 'Brian's a real one-off'

CUSTOMERS', friends and Facebook fans have congratulated Brian Howard for 18 years of dedication to the *Chronicle & Echo*.

Comments like 'Hero' and 'Legend' have appeared on the social networking site on the Facebook page set up in his name.

Work colleague, Robert Howes, aged 49, of Weston Favell, often takes over from Brian on his half-hour lunch break.

He said: "I have known Brian for 10 years, I think it is fantastic there is a Facebook site for him. He is out there in all weathers, even in the snow.

"He is great. He is quite quiet really. I think the job is his life, that is why he is so dedicated.

"Brian is also like an informa-

tion centre; you often hear him telling other people where things are, the way to the train station and even where the *Chronicle & Echo* building is. If all the members on Facebook buy a paper from him, that would be great."

One customer, John Howsam, aged 68, of Wootton, said: "Brian is the human side to the street furniture. Actually he is part of the street furniture, he's a nice bloke.

"He is also very observant about what is going on in the town, and takes an interest in his job and keeps track on how many papers he has sold. He is a dedicated employee of the *Chron*.

"He is a one-off and a real character because of the job he does. People recognise him as the face

of Abington Street."

Another reader, Richard Powell, aged 50 of Eastfield, said: "He gives the town a bit of character and he is unique."

*Chronicle & Echo* editor, David Summers, said it was great to see Brian finally getting the recognition he deserved.

"Brian already has legendary status in the *Chron* building and now it seems he is reaching out through the internet.

"Brian's never shy in telling me what he thinks of that day's front page or what stories we should or shouldn't be covering, and one thing I am always certain of is that he cares passionately about the sales of the *Chron*. He is dedicated to the cause."

### NEWS BRIEFS

#### A breakfast date with Claire Young

THE Circle Breakfast Club's next business networking event is on Tuesday, February 2, from 7.15am to 9am. *Chron* columnist and runner-up in *The Apprentice*, Claire Young, will be the guest speaker at the event which will be held at the Circle Cafe in the Jesus Centre, Abington Square. Tickets cost £7 or £5 for students. For details, call Miriam Beresford on Northampton 601575 or email [miriam@masonb.co.uk](mailto:miriam@masonb.co.uk).

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE author Judith Allnatt will launch her book, *The Poet's Wife*, which is about the life of John Clare's wife Patty, at the Abington Street branch of Waterstone's on February 18 from 7pm. *The Poet's Wife* will be published as a Doubleday hardback. It is already available to order on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).

PEOPLE looking to get fit in Northampton will be able to attend a boot camp in Abington Park. The sessions will be run by GI Fitness, who ran a similar scheme in Brixworth. Sessions are designed for all levels of fitness. For more information on the camp, call 07536 057849 or go to [www.gi-fitness.co.uk](http://www.gi-fitness.co.uk).

A RETRO flea market and antiques fair will take place at Brixworth village hall on Sunday, February 7 and will include furniture, clothes, jewellery and memorabilia. All money raised will go towards a renovation of the village hall, and the event will run from 9pm until 3pm, with entry 50p for adults but free to children and OAPs. For details, call 07873 285461 or 07887 886505.

connexions

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

### Is your teenager in Year 9?

Between now and March all Year 9 students (some Year 8s) will be making choices about what subjects they will study over the next two years.

The changes made to the 14-19 curriculum in schools mean that there are more option choices for young people to choose from. Connexions have produced a variety of resources for young people and their parents and carers to help support them when making these decisions.

#### How Connexions helps?

- All Year 9s receive a Connexions Fact File.
- Parents and carers will receive information about all the options.
- 'The Bigger Picture' - Theatre Tour, will be visiting schools across the county in January and February.

For more information or to download our publications visit: [www.connexions-northamptonshire.org.uk](http://www.connexions-northamptonshire.org.uk) or [www.4you2.org.uk](http://www.4you2.org.uk)

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To join Brian's Facebook site, log on to the following address:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?v=wall&ref=fb&gid=259661009681> or search for 'The Chronicle & Echo man' on Facebook