

# Duo dazzle judges at Billy Elliot auditions

PICTURE: MIKE URWIN www.chroniclive.co.uk/buyphoto ref: 00610045

TWO young lads dazzled judges to show they've got what it takes to clinch a coveted acting role.

Hundreds of young hopefuls headed to Newcastle to audition for the starring role in a London production of Billy Elliot.

Producers Working Title and Old Vic Productions were looking for boys aged nine to 13 to audition for the roles of Billy and Michael in the West End production of the hit show.

And two delighted lads have made it through to the final stage of the auditions.

Curtis Appleby, 13, from Houghton-le-Spring, County Durham, and Jack Mulholland, 12, from Low Fell, Gateshead, who both attend Acting Up Children's Theatre School in Gateshead, have both had success at the auditions.

It is the second time Curtis has managed the feat – last year he got down to the final audition stages

**RICHARD FLETCHER**

0191 201 6122  
richard.fletcher@ncjmedia.co.uk

in London, where he and another seven boys were put through their paces.

He said: "The audition process is really hard work. The first few stages are the easiest, but then you have to put in hours and hours of training. I went from having no tap experience to becoming a pretty good tapper over the last year. It has been a life-changing experience."

This year Jack Mulholland attended the auditions for the very first time.

He said: "It was a long day – we had to do street dance and freestyle, lots of role play, script reading and sing on our own. I've been attending Acting Up for a long time but have only just started tap dancing. I can't believe I made it through. I now have to work really hard and take ballet and tap lessons for when I will be seen again in July."

Paula Wright, principal of Acting Up, said: "Working Title are not simply look-

ing for boys who have done lots and lots of dance. They are keen to meet fresh, raw talented boys who have lots of potential. So I knew a lot of our boys could be suitable for the role.

"I'm not surprised Curtis and Jack have been so successful – they are both extremely hardworking boys who take direction very well. They also happen to be very passionate about performing. I'm a strong believer when children are having fun it is then they become truly open to learning and are able to develop their skills to their full potential.

"We are all extremely proud of both our boys and have high hopes for both of them."

For more information on Acting Up, contact 0191 452 0304 or go to [www.acting-up.co.uk](http://www.acting-up.co.uk)

**ON THE ROAD TO FAME** Jack Mulholland, left, and Curtis Appleby



## Driver robbed by trio

A GOOD Samaritan had his car stolen after giving a lift to three men.

The robbery happened on Onslow Road, in the Pallion area of Sunderland, at around 1.40am in the early hours of Saturday.

A 40-year-old man, the owner of a black VW Passat, had given a lift to three men from Tay Road, in Grindon, Sunderland.

They directed him to Onslow Road where he was forced out of the vehicle and held down while the three took money and a mobile phone from him.

They then made off in the car. The men were all white men, aged 20 to 25 years, and all had strong local accents: One was 5ft 6ins to 5ft 7ins, slim build, wearing a dark woolly hat and a black zip-up top.

Another was 5ft 10ins, slim build, wearing a dark baseball cap with a Chinese emblem on the front, a zip up padded jacket and possibly gloves. The third was 5ft 6ins to 5ft 7ins wearing a multi-coloured woollen hat.

## Flood plans

VITAL £21m flood defences for Morpeth have come a step closer.

Defences at the Northumberland town, which was badly hit by floods in 2008, now look certain to start going up in early 2013 after the Environment Agency's regional committee confirmed it is moving towards finalisation.

The plans are now on course to be formally rubber-stamped at the agency's next meeting on February 9.

## Car crushed in cover mistake

A DRIVER had his car crushed after his insurance company told police he wasn't covered.

James Taylor was fuming when Admiral Insurance told police he was not insured to drive the vehicle when it was involved in a crash.

They have since admitted they were wrong and he was allowed to get behind the wheel after all – but it came too late for his Rover 45.

A last-minute attempt to save the car had ended in failure when Northumbria Police refused to accept a letter proving James was allowed to drive. Meter reader James, of Newbiggin Hall Estate, Newcastle, demanded compensation from Admiral.

The 46-year-old said: "A mistake by Admiral has left me extremely out of pocket. I was involved in an accident at Belsay and the police rang Admiral to confirm my insurance. The police were told I was not insured."

Admiral offered £500 for the car and are considering further payment for possessions.

A spokesman for Northumbria Police said inquiries were ongoing.

Beautiful windows & doors at affordable prices...

**AMRON**  
Windows and Doors Ltd  
0191 414 1005  
[www.amronwindows.co.uk](http://www.amronwindows.co.uk)

Unit 6 | Shibdon Business Park | Cowen Road | Blaydon-on-Tyne | NE21 5TX

**Modern Tandoori**  
RESTAURANT & TAKEAWAY

174 High Street West  
Wallsend  
NE28 8HZ  
0191 2342749  
[www.moderntandoori.co.uk](http://www.moderntandoori.co.uk)  
[facebook.com/moderntandoori](https://www.facebook.com/moderntandoori)

Intimate Indian Dining

Bring your own alcohol

**Enjoy 2 for 1**  
on main courses  
0191 234 2749

Present voucher,  
Booking is essential  
Not valid on Saturday  
Open 6pm-11.45pm

C  
M  
Y  
K