

Award joy for country duo

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ACOUNTRY music duo has hit all the right notes to bag a prestigious award.

Luke Thomas and Melanie Greggain, of Lees, won the Duo of the Year gong at the British Country Music Awards.

The 26-year-olds - who perform as Luke and Mel - were also nominated for the UK song of the year for their track Don't Cry (Because It's Over).

The duo performed alongside four-time Grammy award-winning country star, Steve Wariner at the ceremony, which took place at the Concorde Suite at Heathrow Airport.

The pair write and sing all their own songs full time, with Luke on lead guitar and Melanie playing acoustic rhythm guitar. Melanie, who is originally from Cumbria, said: "To win the best duo award is a big step up for us and it's going to help with our upcoming tour."

The pair met while per-

forming in the Solid Gold Country Legions tribute tour three years ago.

After gigging in local pubs around Oldham, they are now performing all over the UK.

They both admit country music is not as popular on British shores as it is in America, but they are slowly getting new audiences.

Melanie added: "Country music is on its way in the UK and getting more modern these days, with the O2 having ran the sell-out Country 2 Country

music festivals for a few years."

Luke and Melanie are due to perform at the festival in March before touring the UK with country music star James House.

They are then set to jet off across the Atlantic to play in Nashville next June.

The talented pair are also looking forward to the release of their self-titled four-track EP, which launches on Monday at Gullivers in Manchester city centre ahead of their album release next spring.



● Luke Thomas and Melanie Greggain with their award

Victims of doodlebug bomb to be honoured

ONE of Oldham's darkest days is to be remembered with a commemorative plaque.

The 1944 Christmas Eve doodlebug bomb attack claimed 27 lives and injured 49 others in Abbey Hills.

This year marks 70 years since the German flying bomb slammed into a row of houses on Abbey Hills Road.

It is believed the original target was Manchester but the German V-1, known as a doodlebug, fell short after running out of fuel.

Oldham council will be marking the anniversary by placing a plaque at the site at noon on Saturday, December 20.

It will be unveiled by Doreen Highland whose house was destroyed in the attack when she was a little girl.

Coun Jean Stretton, said: "Although this tragic event was 70 years ago I'm sure the memories of what happened that day are still with a lot of older residents even to this day.

"That is why it is very important we preserve the memory of what happened for future generations.

"If you would like to remember those who died or want to learn more, you

can do that by attending the various events that have been organised."

The ceremony, at 145 Abbey Hills Road, will be followed with refreshments at Hope Congregational Church, on Skipton Street.

People can learn more about the tragic events at a talk by historian John Fidler from 7pm on Wednesday, December 17, at the Oldham Local Studies and Archives Centre, on Union Street.

Using local and national archives, John will explore the background of the attack and the experiences of those involved.

● TO mark 100 years since the start of the First World War, Oldham council is asking people to get in touch with their photographs and stories of the First World War for the Oldham Remembers website.

The site also offers a guide to what's on across the borough and a resources page for people to explore their own family histories.

To contribute email oldhamremembers@oldham.gov.uk or call 0161 770 3297.

Go to oldhamremembers.org.uk to visit the site.

in brief

DONATION

GENEROUS rotary club members have been ensuring the season of goodwill is spread across Oldham.

John Walkden, president of the Oldham Metro Rotary, handed the Mahdlo Youth Zone a donation of almost £400 towards their Christmas fair.

The money will be put towards Santa's grotto and is the third festive fair supported by Rotary members.

Mr Walkden said: "We are always keen to support local charitable organisations and have a long-standing relationship with Mahdlo.

"Our donation towards the Christmas grotto builds on those foundations and enables us to support all the young people that attend the youth zone."

Organiser Marya Afsar added: "It means so much to have this support from Oldham Metro Rotary.

"We can make the event even more magical for all our young people and their families.

The Mahdlo Christmas fair will take place on Saturday December 21.

TOWN HALL INVITE

RESIDENTS are invited to take part in next week's full council meeting - from the comfort of their own homes.

The meeting, on Wednesday, will be streamed live on the council's website from 6pm and Oldhamers can get involved through social media.

The 20-minute 'open council' session allows members of the public to ask questions directly to cabinet members via Facebook, Twitter or email.

Questions must be submitted before 6pm on Wednesday, December 17.

They will be answered in a first-come first-served basis.

To submit questions before the deadline send an email to localdemocracy@oldham.gov.uk, visit www.facebook.com/loveoldham or Tweet your question directly to @OldhamQT.



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