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Books

**TINSELTOON or
ONE NIGHT IN NEWCASTLE**
Christopher Goulding
(Newcastle Libraries, £4.99)

LOCAL histories, memoirs and guide books form the staple output of many civic publishers. How refreshing to see Newcastle Libraries breaking the mould with a book aimed at children.

Chris Goulding is a man of many parts – actor, historian, critic, author and mature student. Writing for children surely constitutes another string to his bow.



He first read *Tinseltoon* to a bunch of young admirers in 1994, then read it on BBC Radio Newcastle the following year. Now, greatly enhanced by Chris Mabbott's excellent illustrations, it finds its way into print.

The narrator is an appealing ginger cat called Grainger who, as Christmas Eve becomes Christmas Day, sees all the statues in Newcastle city centre come alive for five minutes of fun.

It starts with the golden lady on top of the Northern Goldsmiths clock on Pilgrim Street. Scattering magic tinsel dust, she soon has all the other statues cavorting about and even playing soccer in Northumberland Street.

It's charming, funny and educational. Children will enjoy finding the statues in the book, many of which featured in the author's earlier non-fiction work about hidden Newcastle.

Supported by Northern Arts and Fenwick Ltd, whose window nearly gets smashed in the midnight mayhem, it is a welcome addition to bookshops pre-Christmas and should boost the 230,000 volumes sold by Newcastle Libraries over the last 14 years.