



GREETED: Cheering Dalton villagers welcomed Charlie Steele (left) and Cameron Burnett as they cycled through on Wednesday as part of their Lands End to John O'Groats challenge in eight days.

Firm fears fuel hikes

THE OWNER of a distribution company fears a hike in the cost of fuel could "cripple" the local economy.

James Dunlop, who runs Carrutherstown-based J Dunlop Distribution, has already been forced to cut back on staff as a result of spiralling petrol costs.

Fuel is expected to rise by four pence per litre this month, going up by as much as 10p by the start of next year. All Dumfries and Galloway drivers will be picking up the tab as the Westminster Government's increased VAT payments and fuel duty has its effect at the pumps.

The figures come from the Retail Motor Industry Independent

By Julie Watt

prices continue to increase the impact of this percentage VAT hike on consumers' wallets will be even greater.

"I know high fuel prices make life tough in rural areas like ours. That's why Labour took action to reduce fuel duty in real terms during our time in power. The Tories' petrol price hike will make everyday life for people in Dumfries and Galloway more expensive. It will also increase the costs of goods on the shelves as shops pass on the increased transport costs."

Driver jailed

Worth the effort

ANNANDALE cycling duo Charlie Steele and Cameron Burnett will tomorrow reach John O'Groats after more than 9,000 miles in the saddle during the past eight days.

The 17-year-olds were greeted to cheers from Dalton villagers when they passed through on Wednesday.

Charlie from Kirkwood, Dalton, and Cameron Burnett of Carrutherstown hope to raise over £2,000 from their marathon.

It is raising awareness of suicides among young people.

Charlie's 21-year-old cousin James Wentworth-Stanley took his own life in 2006.

The cash will go to the James Wentworth-Stanley Memorial Fund set up in James' honour.

Charlie's dad Anthony said: "The boys were de-

lighted to see so many people turn out to support them in Dalton and should reach John O'Groats tomorrow.

"They have been doing 115 miles a day since leaving Lands End.

"We are all very proud of them.

"Our family was devastated when we learnt of James' totally unexpected death. It was a shock to everyone.

"A nicer, more cheerful and together person, you could not meet. Charlie really looked up to him. In the short time he knew him he felt like an older brother.

"He wanted to do something in his honour and to raise awareness."

According to latest figures suicide is the second greatest cause of death among young men, aged 15 to 44.