

THE STONE & ECCLESHALL Gazette

MAY/ JUNE 2024

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GETTING IN TOUCH

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Once you've finished enjoying your Gazette, please recycle it, by giving it to a friend!

Phew... that's a lot of congratulating

Welcome to the May/June edition of the Gazette, hopefully you've not been washed away with all the rainfall. The headline on my Sunday paper this week read "England drenched after the wettest 18 months since records began in 1836", you're not kidding, after my early years working on farms, and out in the fields, I know all about April showers, but Jeeeeeeez! There's been no let up has there?

I've been constantly monitoring my weather app, to see what percentage chance of precipitation awaits the next few days, in the vain hope of a window of opportunity to get the washing done and out to dry on the line. (I am that dull man)

They say it's 'good for the garden' but I'll tell you one thing, it's not good for gardening, and the cynic in me is already suspecting there will still be hosepipe bans in force within the coming weeks.

Hopefully, by the time you're reading this, we're having a heatwave, or even a bit of a dry spell would be nice, I hope so, as there's a plethora of events and activities coming up locally over the next few weeks and months inside this issue.

After sadly reporting in the last Gazette that both Stone and Eccleshall Festivals were both postponed for 2024, I'm happy to announce that both are now taking place, in some shape or form, full details from both inside...

For music lovers, a brand new affordable family festival www.risingfestival.co.uk is coming to Kibblestone, with headline acts like Dub Pistols (nod to Barry and Seanie) and Banco de Gaia to name but a few, you can count this aging raver firmly in, I'm digging out my tent as I type this.

I saw the Dub Pistols about 3 years ago when taking my son to his first festival, they were his favorite act, and the last time I saw Banco de Gaia was in 1991! so it will be nice

to catch up with him again, on home turf. Trencham Live is coming with new artists announced, there's also classical concerts at Sandon Hall, and from the Stone Choral Society, and a Rock n' BBQ Night and Film Night are coming to Oulton.

Family events include Feast Stone, which returns to Stone Cricket Club for a sizzling summer series, Great Bridgeford have their annual Village Fete, and The Puppet Tree Jamboree, see ad below, which promises to be a summer highlight for both young and old (Yes I'm going along to meet Muffin the Mule in person too!)

There's an update inside from the Crown Wharf Theatre, who despite having countless issues along the way, are finally nearing opening fully, good luck guys, we all can't wait!

If you're the green fingered type, Eccleshall Open Gardens returns, Sandon are hosting a stunning Bluebell Walk, and the Stafford County Show promises to be bigger and better than ever this year.

There's lots of congratulations this edition, are you ready? They go to Mark and Kristan Green for celebrating 15 years as Stone Lions, P&M Edwards who celebrate 70 years in business, 8 year old ballerina Edie Burgess who was chosen to be part of English Youth Ballet, Aaron Pope for winning Gold in the National Track Championships, Kai, for getting his forever home X, John Hartley and Kath Adams of Stone Bridge Club, who won the Staffordshire and Shropshire County Championship Pairs, Andy and Helen at Eagle House for winning the Best B&B and Guest House of the Year, 16-year-old Ruby Twigg for been accepted in to Jill Clewes Academy, Oulton WI celebrating 100 Years, and Skier Sophy, for taking Silver in GB Special Olympics National Winter Games. Phew... that's a lot of congratulating.

Dan Mitchell 23/4/24

★ Saturday 29th June ★
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Lots of fun for everyone! Starts 10.15am. Last show approx 3.30pm



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Station volunteers Barbara and Rachel with Stone Town Mayor, Jim Davies

Celebrating at Stone Train Station

Over 100 people joined North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership (CRP) and volunteers at Stone Station on Wednesday 13th March for their Community Open Day celebrating the work of the station volunteers and the recent station improvement projects.

Clients from Futures2gether provided a pop-up café offering refreshments, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust offered seed bomb making activities, AEDdonate provided demonstrations on using a defibrillator, North Staffs CRP gave a guided Rails to Trails walk from Stone Station into Stone Town and pupils from St Dominic's Priory School entertained with their spring themed poems. The event was also attended by West Midlands Trains, Network Rail, Stone Town Council and North Staffs Rail Promotion Group.

Photo boards displayed the station improvement projects, funded by London Northwestern Railway, including new planters, rainwater harvesting, school projects, defibrillator and volunteering days. Attendees also got to vote for their favourite pollinator friendly planting arrangement and the winning arrangement will be used to plant up the two new planters on platform 2.

Station volunteers Barbara and Rachel provided information about their work and station projects and attendees shared their thoughts via a feedback wall at the event. Comments included:

"Well done and thank you to everyone who is involved in such a wonderful community event. The station looks fantastic with all the floral displays."

"We have enjoyed this morning very much, so interesting. Well done!"

"What a beautiful station we have in Stone. Thank you so much for making the most of it and for your time and effort."

Those attending the open day were amongst the first to view the new history

panel recently installed on platform 2 which features information about the history of the station, and the town, as well as the Stone Rails to Trails walk which passes many of Stone's historic attractions.

The history panel was funded by London Northwestern Railway, with information and images supplied by Stone Town Council and Philip Leason.

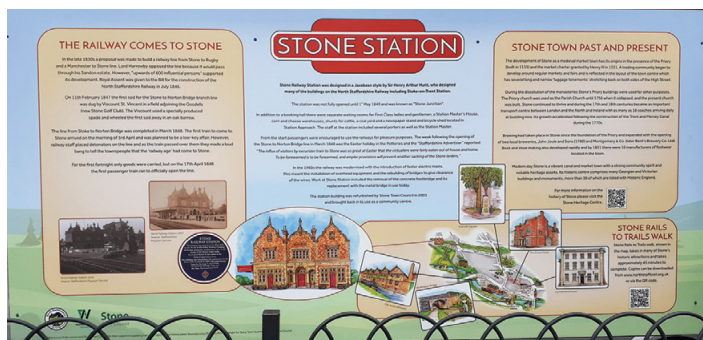


St Dominic's Priory School pupils share their spring themed poems

Emma McIntosh, Community Rail Partnership Officer at North Staffs CRP, said *"The open day was a great success and it was wonderful to share the station improvements with the local community and hear their views. It was also a great opportunity to give thanks to the station volunteers for their considerable time and effort spent creating a welcoming environment at the station with their fantastic planting arrangements."*

If you are interested in volunteering at the station please contact Emma McIntosh at North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership on northstaffscrp@stoke.gov.uk for more information.

Copies of the Stone Rails to Trails walk can be downloaded from the Days Out page at www.northstaffsrail.org.uk



The Stone Station History Panel



Mark and Kristan celebrate 15 years as Lions

When Stone Lions Club met on 10th April, Lion President Paul was delighted to present Lions Mark and Kristan Green with Certificates and Service Chevrons marking 15 years as members of Lions Clubs International.

Although Mark and Kristan have filled several roles within the club in the past, including that of President (*once for Kristan and twice for Mark*), during the last couple of years the couple have been unable to play as active a part as before due to health issues. However, they continued their membership, maintaining as much contact with the club as possible and members are all hoping that they will both be able to continue taking part in future events whenever they are able.



Eccleshall Open Gardens

Eccleshall Open Gardens will be taking place on **Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd June, from 10 am to 4 pm** on both days.

Please put the dates in your diary, come along and enjoy visiting some wonderful Eccleshall gardens. We will have a variety of gardens to explore and inspire. Entry is £5.00 per adult and Programmes are available on the day from outside the Library on the High Street (*look for the clock!*). Sorry but only assistance dogs are permitted in the gardens. 'Ashcroft' one of our beautiful gardens will be serving refreshments including home-made cakes.

If you would like to open your garden to the public, why not give Luke and Anne Sargeant a ring for details on 01785 850764.

The weekend draws in lots of people to the town to enjoy the displays. The weekend is part of the activities of the Ecclian Society.

You can email the organisers at email: eccleshallopengardens@gmail.com or ring 01785 859439. The scheme also needs helpers on the weekend to man the sales stall and help with the refreshments.

Newcomers to Eccleshall receive a welcome pack from the Ecclian Society containing details of the community, its groups and activities, if you would like one delivered to your home get in touch with Phil and Wendy Baskerville at email: philandwendybaskerville@btinternet.com.

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Bluebell Walk

There is a Bluebell Walk taking place on **Sunday 12th May at 2pm**. The walk starts from All Saints Church in Sandon ST18 0DB.

We will meet on the church car park, and the walk is approximately 2 miles, the cost for adults is £5 and there is no charge for accompanied children.

The price includes tea and cake afterwards, with all proceeds going to the church. There's no need to book, just turn up on the day wearing suitable footwear for a walk.

Sandon Hall Concert

A Concert for a Summer Evening with The Heath Choral Society and Uttoxeter Town Band takes place at Sandon Hall on **Tuesday June 25th** at 7.30pm.

Tickets are priced at just £15, including canapés, and there will also be a bar available. All profits will go to All Saints Church, Sandon. For tickets call rose on 079765 540491 or steve on 079632 52869.

Community Hall available for bookings

St Michael's Community Hall on Lichfield Street in Stone is available for bookings – private parties or regular meetings. They offer competitive rates. Contact Dennis Abbott on 01785 814134 for more details.

Adbaston Community Concert Society
ACCS are excited to be approaching the 2024 season of 4 concerts! Dates for your diary are; **Sunday May 5th** Manchester Camerata. **Sunday July 7th** Francaix Wind Trio.

All concerts are held at the Church of St Michael and all Angels, Adbaston. ST200QE at 5.30pm. Tickets are £10 in advance or on the door. There is nearby free parking. During the concert interval, light refreshments are served, for which we ask for a donation. Visit www.adbastonccs.org.uk for Society details and contacts. We look forward to welcoming you to the concerts!

Eccleshall Poetry Group

Eccleshall Poetry Group will be pausing their poetry readings occasionally during their meeting on **Thursday 2nd May** as they gaze heavenwards. Why? The theme for their meeting then is "The Moon".

However, due to the use of the Methodist Church Hall as a polling station on that date, this will be a members-only meeting and will convene elsewhere.

It's back to All Welcome on **Thursday 16th May** for "Poems from our Youth" at Eccleshall Methodist Hall between 2.00pm – 4.00pm. Whichever decade(s) you count as your youth, you'll find a warm welcome awaits you.

Then you may have to be brave as the Group's next meeting at the Methodist Hall, same time, on **Thursday 6th June** takes a step "Into the Wildwood", followed on **Thursday 20th June** by the tame-sounding theme of "Pets". Come along and see if you think Eccleshall Poetry Group are tame as well!

For more details: Eccleshall Poetry Group – please phone Thelma Whitfield on: 01785 760017



Any information on this team?

Hi Dan,

my husband Graham Birt was born in Stone. He has a photograph of his father Albert Frank Birt playing in the Stone Charity Cup 1935-36 along with other members of the team. They all received a rose gold pendant, with an inscription on the back.

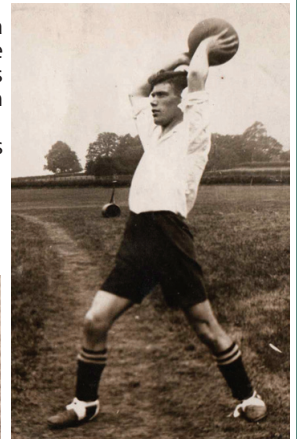
My husband would like to know if any Gazette readers are able to give more information about the team? I have attached some photographs.

I sincerely hope someone is able to help.

Kind regards

Gill Birt
gillbirt1948@gmail.com

ED: I notice the ball says D.U.F.C 1934-5 on it, who were DUFC?



Your paper Sir, a peak into retailing history!

Dear Dan,

To the uninformed onlooker the sale of a newspaper across a shop counter has no magic, requires little or no skill or technique - you select the newspaper of your choice, you pay for it and you leave - end of story!

There is a simple magic in the act of handing the newspaper to the customer; do you simple let the customer pick their own or push forward a copy of the required journal to facilitate easy lifting?

Do you lift the paper to meet the oncoming customers hand or do you lift the paper, fold in neatly in half and then place it carefully in the customer's outstretched hand. Which hand do you place it in if no hand is proffered, is he or she left or right handed or even ambidextrous, does the customer have something on one or other hand, money for example?

Taking the trouble to have the correct newspaper ready for a customer as they reach the counter says one of two things to the customer. "I am in a rut and even my friendly neighbourhood newsagent knows exactly what paper I want without asking" or "How warm and friendly and helpful is my neighbourhood

newsagent knowing instinctively my preference and having it ready for me" (making a note to call at this shop more often).

Not forcing the customer to reach across the whole width of the counter to reach his choice and perhaps even dislodging several other copies on the way and disturbing the artistic layout of the counter.

Treating each newspaper purchaser as someone special which of course they are – oh yes there is a magic in newspaper salesmanship.

There is a short sentence which will bring tears to old newsagent's eyes. When a customer walks boldly up to the counter and says in a loud cultured voice at the same time opening wallet or purse they utter those golden words – "Can I pay my paper bill please?"

What joy, what bliss?

Guaranteed to dismay any shopkeeper is watching a potential customer walk around your shop only to slip away quietly unnoticed just as your back was turned – Arkwright would turn in his grave.

Oh the joys of shop keeping!

From an old newsagent
Peter Jones
Eccleshall

The Gazette reserves the right not to publish any correspondence that arrives without a name and address or email address.

It is our policy not to publish any addresses unless specifically asked.

We also will not publish any letters that we consider to be offensive or divisive - this is a freely distributed publication with a responsibility to our readership, beyond that of a paid for publication. It is for this very same reason that we do not carry a personal column or any advertisements for personal services that could be deemed potentially offensive.

Send your letters to dan@stonegazette.com

Experience Seven Decades Of Growth with us as we Celebrate our 70th Anniversary at our Plant Centres

For seventy years now, our Plant centre has flourished from its humble beginnings, when Philemon Edwards took the gamble of a complete life change, for not only himself, but for his young family too.



The Walled Nursery in 1954

Our journey began with a Market Garden at Johnson Hall Nursery, where a passion for plants laid the groundwork for what would become two plant centres. Bury Bank was established in 1985, then opened to the public in 1998, it was ran by son, Micheal Edwards.



Bury Bank in 1997

What began as a single nursery has grown into two vibrant centres...

The Walled Nursery at Johnson Hall (now managed by grandson Greg Roberts) with its Victorian greenhouses exudes a timeless charm.

In summer the walls offer a sanctuary of serenity. Contained within you will find a wonderful selection

of annuals, perennials, trees etc. The air hums with the buzz of bees and the song of birds.



The Walled Nursery today

Nestled amidst the greenery is the coffee shop offering delicious cakes and drinks. Venture into the Greenhouse Emporium where you will find a treasure trove of inspiration for the home and garden.

And at Bury Bank (now managed by grandson Ben) it has always been our aim to grow quality plants, at affordable prices.

Growing on site enables us to grow an extensive range of plants not readily available at many other Garden centres.

The garden centre offers a rich array of products, an abundance of plants from seeds to trees. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned gardener you will find all the tools of the trade to tend your green spaces.

Whichever centre you come to visit, friendly, knowledgeable staff, will be on hand to offer you some advice or assistance.



Bury Bank

To commemorate this milestone we are offering readers a **Free Pot Of Sweet Peas**, which was Philemon's favourite flower, on production of the coupon below at either of our centres, **while stocks last**.

Voucher for a Free Pot of Sweet Peas

Philemon's Favourite Flower

on production of this coupon, while stocks last

Valid until 30/06/24



In addition, we invite you to enter the raffle to win £100 of vouchers, redeemable at either centre, when making any purchase.

Raffle to be drawn at the end of June, and the winner will be published on our website & on our Facebook.



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Bury Bank Plant Centre

on the A51 at Darlaston, ST15 0QA
01782 796353 burybank@pandmedwards.co.uk



Stone Festival 2024 - *Events taking place*

Despite the announcement in the last Gazette, regarding Stone Festival having to postpone this years Carnival and Parade, due to the lack of new volunteers, the committee have still managed to organise several events for you to get involved in.

With about six weeks to go, and with the team still having some final last minute details to sort out, here is the list of events that will make up Stone Festival 2024, please visit www.stonefestival.co.uk for up to date listings and information and support these events where you can.



Walking Treasure Hunt

Question sheets, compiled as always by Stone Lions Club, will be available from **Saturday 8th June**. Answers must be returned by the end of **Sunday 16th June**. The cost per entry will be £10. Prize for the answer sheet with the most correct answers. See the Stone Festival website (www.stonefestival.co.uk) to get your question sheet.

Photographic Exhibition

The Stafford Photographic Society will be displaying the best photographs from their members – at the NEW Stone Heritage Centre. A chance to meet members of the Photographic Society, and look around the new Heritage Centre. Open **10am to 4pm, Tuesday 11th June to Saturday 15th June**. Hopefully also open one weekday evening. Free admission.



Car Boot Sale

Sunday 9th June, on Westbridge Park.
Sellers – arrive from 9am (earliest).
£10 per vehicle. Pre-booking not required.
Buyers – arrive from 10am (earliest).
Refreshments will be available on-site.
Please note: Buyers will NOT be able to bring their vehicles onto Westbridge Park.

Family Fishing Day

On a Sunday – date to be confirmed, see website for up to date details
Organised by the Bibbys Stone & District Angling Club. At Willows Pools, Longton Road, Rough Close ST3 7NH
Once again we are hosting the popular family fishing day offering a taster and introduction to fishing for all the family. If you want to have a go members will be on hand to ensure an enjoyable day with

hopefully plenty of fish to be caught. Fishing tackle will be available on the day but participants are welcome to bring their own. We will be running 2 sessions, one in the morning from 10.00am to 12.00am and one in the afternoon from 12.45pm until 2.45pm. Because of its popularity all participants must book in as early as possible, *all children under 16 need to be accompanied by an adult.*

No charge for participants

Pre-booking essential – contact Mark Wilton on 07927 643 402



Steeplechase & Dog Derby Races

Sunday 9th June, on Westbridge Park.

Supported by Stone Master Marathoners.

Registration from 2pm.

- Steeplechase starts at 2:30pm – just for humans – six classes.
- Dog Derby starts at 3pm – for humans with their canine friends – four classes.

A course of approximately 1.5 miles, including (weather permitting) the “Water Splash!”.

Adult entries £4 per runner, 15 and under entries £2.

Certificates for all participants, medals for class winners.
Note: Runners and spectators will NOT be able to bring their vehicles onto Westbridge Park.

Historical Talk

Wednesday 12th June, Crown Wharf Board Room.

Lift available from the ground floor.

An illustrated talk: Stone Historical and Civic Society members Philip Leason and Steve Booth will tell us about the discovery and subsequent research of the Stone Matrix Seal.

Doors open 7pm for a prompt start at 7:30pm.

Entry: £3 (adults). Under 16s no charge. Pre-booking not required.



Freemason's Open Evening

Wednesday 12th June.

A chance to be shown around the local Freemason's lodge (entrance just behind Stone Library). Open from 7pm until 9pm. No charge.

Mediumship Evening

Thursday 13th June, Crown Wharf Board Room.

Lift available from the ground floor.

Another chance to meet Medium Ruth James for an uplifting evening of evidential communication from loved ones.

Doors open 6:30pm for a prompt 7pm start.

Cost: £10 each (adults only). Pre-booking advised, see the Festival website (www.stonefestival.co.uk) for booking arrangements.

The Stone Festival team would really like to put on more events, and perhaps different, new, events, in 2025 – but this can only happen if more volunteers come forward to help plan, organise and run those events.

If you have a few hours each month to help the team, please contact acting-Chair Tim Joyce by email, at concessions@stonefestival.co.uk.

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Eccleshall Festival & Street Market - *Saturday 29th June*

Held every two years, the Eccleshall Festival has been running since 1979, after the disappointing news of the cancellation of the festival this year, local residents contacted seasoned event organiser, Lorraine Conkey to help orchestrate saving the hugely popular bi-annual festival.

Now taking place on **Saturday 29th of June**, will not just occupy the High Street but will encompass the Cricket Club, Church and the whole of the town centre.



A vibrant, multi-colored poster for the Eccleshall Festival & Street Market. At the top left is a Union Jack with the text 'ARMED FORCES DAY SHOW YOUR SUPPORT'. To the right is a 'vibe1' logo with 'RADIO FOR THE STUFFERS' below it. The main text reads: 'EGCLESHELL FESTIVAL & STREET MARKET SATURDAY 29TH JUNE 2024 | 12 - 6PM'. Below this, it says 'ARMED FORCES DAY - FANCY DRESS WELCOME HIGH STREET ECCLESHELL FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY'. Further down, it lists 'LIVE MUSIC | FUNFAIR | DANCE TROOPS FOOD VENDORS | RETAIL STALLS'. At the bottom, it says 'BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR A STALL CONTACT NIKKI@LRPARTNERSHIP.CO.UK'.

providing free pitch opportunities for organisations to showcase their causes.

Lorraine Conkey the organiser of this year's festival told the Gazette; "I've been bowled over by the response to the festival and really wish to extend my respect to those in Eccleshall for their brilliant community spirit. It's going to be an amazing day and we are excited to announce our partnership with local radio 107.3 VIBE1 Roadshow, ensuring top-notch entertainment and coverage of the event. Paw Patrol will also be making an appearance, offering attendees the chance to capture a selfie. Reverend Phillip Johnson of Holy Trinity Parish Church will kick off "Eccleshall's Got Talent" in collaboration with local dance instructor Lucie Talbot. Further details on participation will be communicated via social media channels. There will also be a weeklong schedule of activities before the main event on Saturday and more detail will be available nearer the time."

Children of all ages will be able to ride on the mini funfair, featuring rides, a bouncy castle, and entertaining games.

For those eager to showcase their hobbies, limited indoor stalls within the church will be available. Interested individuals are encouraged to reach out to Nikki via email for inquiries.

Local establishments such as The Eccilian, The Little George, The Royal Oak, The Bell and The Kings Arms Hotel will be hosting various activities, fully embracing the festival spirit. Additionally, businesses like Perry's of Eccleshall, Studio 12, The Flour & Co Bakehouse, Eccleshall Tennis Club, Eccleshall Young Farmers, and Three Pillars Wine will play integral roles in ensuring the event's success.

Sports enthusiasts can anticipate a cricket match between Eccleshall Cricket Club's 2nd XI and Sandon, with cream tea available for spectators. EURO 2024 matches will also be broadcasted on the big screen ensuring sports enthusiasts don't miss out on the action.

For those interested in showcasing products or services, stall inquiries can be directed to Nikki at nikki@lrpartnership.co.uk, while sponsorship opportunities can be discussed with Lorraine at lorraine@lrpartnership.co.uk.

Don't miss out on this fantastic event! Mark your calendars and join us for a day of fun, food, and community spirit at the Eccleshall Festival & Street Market.

Attendees can anticipate a diverse range of activities and attractions, ensuring a memorable experience for all. Live music performances featuring talented local artists and bands will grace the stage throughout the day, alongside dance routines presented by local troupes.

As part of our commemoration of Armed Forces Day attendees are encouraged to don forces uniforms spanning the ages or showcase their patriotic spirit in red, white and blue attire. A prize awaits the best-dressed individual in this salute to our armed forces.

Food enthusiasts will delight in the offerings from our array of food vendors, serving up everything from delectable street food to irresistible sweet treats. Meanwhile, retail stalls will beckon shoppers with a diverse selection of products from local artisans and businesses.

The festival proudly supports community and charity initiatives,

Stone Choral Society

Stone Choral Society's Spring concert took place on Saturday 16th March 2024 in St Dominic's Priory Hall. The evening was one of the most beautiful choral singing; the programme comprised many sacred choral greats and Fauré's beautiful and evocative Requiem.

The concert opened with Fauré's "Cantique de Jean Racine"; a beautiful piece written by the 19-year-old composer and hints at the dignity of the Requiem written later. Many sacred choral favourites were also performed in the first half of the concert. This delighted both the choir and the audience. This music is so moving in the springtime. As always, we sang under the direction of Harriet Johnson, our Choral Director and accompanied by Jennifer Hames.

The first half included Bruckner's "Locus Iste"; a haunting motet sung a cappella by the choir and other favourites such as Bach's equally haunting motet "O Jesu Christ, meus Lebens Licht" with all its rich Baroque tones and Mozart's Ave Verum that never fails to hit a chord and is so universally known and loved.

Two teenage soloists joined us on the stage; this was their first concert with us. They both sang solos in the first half before taking on the soprano and baritone solo parts in the Requiem. Isaac Bentley sang first and enchanted the audience with his renditions of Benjamin Britten's arrangement of the traditional "The Salley Gardens" closely followed by the operatic aria "Salut! Demeure chaste et pure" from Gounod's "Faust". Isaac is a dual winner of Stoke on Trent's Young Musician of the Year in the vocal category in both 2022 and 2023. He is currently studying in Manchester and is definitely a rising star.

Sophie Oakley followed and sang the Qui Sedes from Vivaldi's Gloria and then the choir joined her for Mozart's Laudate Dominum. Sophie is another rising star; she has been a chorister at Lichfield Cathedral for several years and recently featured as the soloist on their recording of Britten's a



Ceremony of Carols. We hope that this was the first of many appearances with us for both Sophie and Isaac.

The Requiem took the second part of the concert; this relatively short piece by Faure is as he described it "gentle in character, like myself". The choir loves the piece and enjoyed singing this to an appreciative audience. The soloists were superb too and added supremely to the gentleness of the piece. There are some intense moments notably in the Sanctus and Libera Me but mainly the work is one of peace and simple tranquillity; it is so easy to hear why it is a firm favourite of choral societies including Stone.

Please look out for our summer concert too; this will be on **Saturday 29th June 2024**. This is always a lighter choral programme and always accompanied by seasonal strawberries and cream. Alternatively, if you would just like to join us, please email info@stonechoral.org.uk; we meet on **Thursday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm in Walton First School, Walton, Stone.**

With thanks to Martin Robinson for his photographs and commitment to our Choral Society.



Aaron Pope, center, with his medal

Stone's Aaron takes the gold!

Aaron Pope, a 24 year old track cyclist from Stone, won gold in the men's 1km time-trial at the National Track Championships in March. He set a time of 1:02.172

Aaron has spent the last four years in Exeter completing a master's degree in Sport Science at the University of Exeter. Despite being diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in 2018 and initially being told that he wouldn't be able to exercise at a high level, he took up track cycling a year and a half ago.

He has since achieved notable successes, including winning the 2024 British Kilo Championship, the 2023 BUCS Kilo Championship, and securing 1st place in Round 2 and 2nd place in Round 5 of the 2023 National Sprinters League.

He will now officially compete in DerbyWheel, bringing the often thrilling environs of Keirin racing to a global audience, having previously been a closed domestic enterprise in Japan and Korea where it continues to be a hugely successful spectator sport.



Two years in the making, DerbyWheel will bring the often thrilling environs of Keirin racing to a global audience, having previously been a closed domestic enterprise in Japan and Korea where it continues to be a hugely successful spectator sport.

DerbyWheel is a Professional Keirin League with equal accessibility for the entire cycling family, looking to grow the economic model of track cycling to support riders, venues and federations across the globe, all with the ambition of bringing Pro Keirin racing to the masses.

Keirin racing has a rich history, beginning in 1948 in Japan. In its homeland, the Keirin is raced primarily on outdoor 400m tracks and is all about sports betting, being one of only five sports that it's legal to bet on. DerbyWheel will establish events across multiple territories utilising indoor 250m velodromes to bring more intensity to the traditional format. It will also be the first time many Japanese and Korean Keirin specialists will go head to head against international riders bringing a new dynamic to the racing as east meets west on the velodrome boards.

Speaking about the launch of DerbyWheel, Ross Edgar said: "I was immediately excited about the vision of DerbyWheel. As a former track sprinter and Keirin medalist the benefits were clear for the sport, particularly for riders."

In professional track cycling, only a small percentage of riders reach the pinnacle of the sport and compete for Olympic medals. DerbyWheel will provide a steady platform for current and developing riders to perform and continue their careers for longer and continue doing what they love."

It was an honour to be invited to ride the Japanese Keirin, through my career I would have spent almost a year racing there and had many memorable experiences - it was something all western riders hoped they would get invited to. I wish DerbyWheel had been around when I was a rider, so I'm excited to be part of the team bringing this to life for the current and future generations of track sprinters. In my opinion, Keirin really is the best race on the track."

Details of the DerbyWheel 2024 season will be announced later this year. More information can be found at www.derbywheel.com Riders can register their interest at www.derbywheelplayer.com

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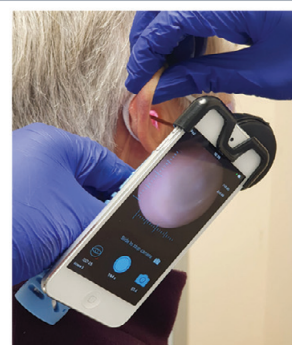
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An example of a Bee Stop bus shelter

Would you like to help support local biodiversity?

A participant from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's youth group, 'Wilder Youth', has created a petition to try and get a series of living roof bus shelters across Staffordshire.

22-year-old Laura Gerrard is working to demonstrate the local support for this project, in the hope that Staffordshire County Council will look into installing a series of living roof bus shelters (also known as 'Bee Stops') across the county.

Living roof bus shelters can support our native bees and butterflies by providing vital links between our parks and gardens. They can also reduce the strain on drains by absorbing rainwater, which in turn helps with flood-risk and management. These bus shelters can also actively capture pollution and particulates from the air.

Laura told My Village Voice "Living roof bus shelters have already been extremely successful in other counties, and it would be fantastic to also see them across Staffordshire. These shelters are a really cool way to incorporate more native plants into our cities and roadsides, and also provide extra space for bees and other wildlife to find respite in our developing county."

If you'd like to read more about the project, or show your support, you can either scan the QR code, on right, or head over to this website where you'll be able to sign the petition.

<https://chnng.it/L4ChCVMzmn>



Every signature is valuable and will help to show Staffordshire County Council that the people in our community want to see positive steps forward in fighting the climate crisis, and would like to see living roof bus shelters across Staffordshire in the near future.



A Living Roof Bus Shelter Can:



- Provide VITAL links between parks & gardens - helping our native bees and butterflies!
- Reduce flood risk by retaining rainwater
- Brighten up our roadsides
- Actively capture pollution and particulates from the atmosphere - cleaner air for all of us!



The photos show members having some Easter fun.

Hop to it...

Stone Alzheimer's Club celebrated Easter this year with a special event supported by the Stafford Borough Council Community Foundation. Easter is the club's second special celebration event of the year and a great time was had by all.

On arrival the members had tea, coffee and biscuits followed by member Malcolm and carer Anne celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary with a special cake. Entertainer Neil Mason had been given a list by Malcom and he performed songs from the swing era that were special to the couple. Some of the song choices led to laughter and much merriment - 'Delilah' being one such and then to complete the couple's celebration, cake and Shloer was served to all...it was very special.

That got everyone in the mood for dancing so most were on the floor enjoying the songs that Neil performed, dancing and joining in the vocals. Neil performed two sessions and at the end of the morning Easter eggs and a copy of the March newsletter were distributed to all who came along.

The Easter bunny made a special appearance and Lead Volunteer Sandie McQueen who was hiding inside the costume did a great job entertaining the members and handing out chocolate eggs.



Neil Mason provided the entertainment

Sandie told the Gazette: "Easter is always a special time for us here at the club and with the very welcome support of the Stafford Borough Council Community Foundation this year we were able to make the event really memorable."

She continued... "The club is so important to our members and increasingly so in the present climate, so being able to create these special events means a lot. As a carer said to me today... "I managed for ten years on my own but would have gone under without the club."

If you would like to know more about the Club you can email: stone_alzheimersclub@btinternet.com

Visit www.stonealzheimersclub.mywebcommunity.org

give us a call on 07375 748733 or simply come and see us...you will be really welcome.



Malcolm and Anne celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary

The club was also pleased to welcome Lesley, the local Community Organiser from the Co-op as a guest and the club will welcome her back at the end of April when the Co-op will be helping organise a games morning at the 25th April meeting.



The Easter eggs



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Paul Niblett (left) receiving a cheque from President Barry Tunnicliffe

Stone Probus luncheons

The speaker at the Stone Probus luncheon in March was Paul Niblett a long-term volunteer at the Gladstone Pottery Museum, Longton, Stoke on Trent.

Paul spoke in some detail and showed slides of the landmark 'Last Firing of a Bottle Oven in the Potteries in 1978'. This took place at Sutherland China situated across the road from the Gladstone Pottery.

Special dispensation had to be obtained from the City Council before this firing could take place because of the 1956 clean air act which prohibited the burning of polluting coal in industry in the City. The firing took 12 tons of Florece Nuts (premium local coal) to complete, hence in the past when many such ovens were in full use the City was rather unkindly referred to as 'Smoke-on-Trent'.

Much of the fascinating detail and unique pottery terminology can be found in a short You Tube video – titled 'Alfred Clough talks about the last Bottle Oven Firing in 1978'. This short film brings home just how much human skill and effort went into making the ware which put Stoke on the world map all those years ago.



Paul Niblett from Gladstone

The April 'Partners Luncheon' was an event of high drama - The Venue was Trentham Park Golf Club, The weather that Tuesday was unbelievable with high wind and torrential rain.

Some early attendees arrived safely; others a bit later found the one approach road to the Club completely blocked by a huge fallen tree. People were informed that it would be several hours before the tree would be cleared and that the only other way in was via a footpath from further up the estate! Some members eventually found this alternative way in and arrived muddy footed for a delayed lunch.



Following the storm, the brook in full spate at Trentham Park Golf Club

The speaker Jess Boyden-Dukes from RAF Cosford gave an after lunch presentation of 'Women in the RAF' citing specific women in different roles with some very touching personal anecdotes. A WW2 aircraft flight plotter, an aircraft transportation pilot, the first official RAF woman pilot and a trauma nurse from the more recent war in Afghanistan.

At the conclusion some people returned by foot to their cars parked on the nearby estate. The 'early birds' being still captive with their cars at the wrong side of the fallen tree resigned themselves to an extended session at the club bar 'pending their eventual escape'.

Never a dull moment with this Club, for more information about Stone and District Probus Club please visit our website www.stoneprobus.org.uk or phone Club Secretary Jon Goodson on 01785 613966.

Photos from Martin Robinson



Members and Partners listening to Jess

From Yarnfield to the stage!

A superb achievement has been made by talented young dancer - Edie Burgess.

In January, Edie, aged 8 from Yarnfield, was chosen to be part of the 90-strong cast of English Youth Ballet's (EYB) production of *Sleeping Beauty*.

The Springfield's First School pupil was selected in a hugely competitive audition.

The young cast of the ballet got to experience the life of a professional dancer in rehearsals. They were all super excited, as they got to perform alongside international professional dancers, in English Youth Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty*, which took place in April at the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent.

Edie told the Gazette: "I started dancing with Helena Cox when I was three because I wanted to be a ballet dancer and I liked dressing up. My teacher always told me I have lovely pointy toes."

Dancing makes me happy, I especially like to leap and turn when I dance - it gives me enjoyment and makes me feel free. I love to listen to music and make up my own dances, because I don't have to think about what I'm doing - I just dance.

I'm excited to be a part of a professional show with EYB, I'll be so proud to be performing in front of a big audience. I always want to improve my ballet dancing and look forward to learning new techniques with Miss Lewis.

I would love to be a dancer when I grow up and I dream of dancing on pointe. I also like to dance contemporary and I'm experimenting with musical theatre. But when I'm not dancing, I enjoy painting, reading and playing football with Stone Old Almeynians."

EYB Principal - Lindsey Fraser starred as Aurora in the production. Before joining EYB she danced with the Vienna Festival Ballet.

She said "I wish I had danced with EYB when I was young. The dancers learn so much about performance skills and the artistry of ballet. I love working as a principal dancer with EYB because I get to dance fantastic roles and teach and watch the young dancers progress."

The sets and costumes in the production are superb and the whole experience is one the young dancers (and the audiences) will never forget!"



Edie Burgess (photo by Ben Garner)



Lindsey as Aurora

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Feast Stone: Returns for a Sizzling Summer Series

Feast Stone, Stone's biggest and original street food event, is set to make a triumphant return for a series of unforgettable evenings from May through to September.

This family favourite returns again on the first Friday of each month, the event promises to transform Stone Cricket Club into a hub of gastronomic delights, family-friendly entertainment, and community camaraderie.

Feast Stone has evolved into a culinary haven, showcasing the very best street food from across the Midlands. Having moved from the high street to Stone Cricket Club, the event continues to grow in popularity, attracting food enthusiasts and families alike.

With diverse Culinary Delights: Award-winning street food vendors will offer a diverse range of mouthwatering dishes, catering to all tastes and preferences.



- **Inclusive Food Options:** Feast Stone proudly accommodates dietary preferences, providing options for vegans, coeliacs, and those with gluten intolerance.
- **Family-Friendly Atmosphere:** With a focus on family fun, Feast Stone creates an inclusive environment for all ages to enjoy. From delectable treats to engaging entertainment, there's something for everyone.
- **Dog-Friendly Venue:** Furry friends are more than welcome, making it a perfect outing for the entire family, including your four-legged companions.
- **Picnic-Friendly:** Attendees are encouraged to bring picnic blankets and chairs, making the most of the expansive and inviting space at Stone Cricket Club.



you to savour the flavours, create memories, and embrace the vibrant community spirit. Come one, come all, and let the Feast beg!"

Feast Stone is a free event, offering an enjoyable way for the community to unwind from the week and usher in the weekend.

The events will take place on the **First Friday of the month, from May through to September**, from 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM.

It all takes place at Stone Cricket Club, 80 Lichfield Rd, Stone ST15 8JW]



Organiser, Daren Bach, expresses enthusiasm for the upcoming series of events: he told The Gazette *"Feast Stone is not just about the incredible food; it's a celebration of community, diversity, and shared experiences. We invite everyone to join us for an evening of culinary delights, entertainment, and good company.*

Don't miss out on the culinary adventure of the summer! Feast Stone invites

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The Puppet Tree Jamboree - That's the way to do it!

Have you ever seen a hungry crocodile chasing a character with a big red nose and a large pointy hat, or a 78-year-old Mule dancing on a piano? Or a band of dastardly Pirates sailing down the canal? Have you ever seen a wolf dressed up as grandma?

No? - Well, you will! - Right here in the Stone on **Saturday 29th June**. However, there are strings attached, because all these characters and many more, are all part of the Puppet Tree Jamboree that will include lots of puppets and fun for everyone.

The programme kicks off with the inevitable Punch & Judy Show by Nikki-Jo followed by "Sing with Puppets & Joy" - a singalong performance arranged by Stone Library and you can learn a little sign language too. On Saturday 22nd June there will be a puppet-making workshop in the library and children will be invited to bring their puppet along to the Jamboree and join in the performance the following week.



• Come and meet Muffin the Mule

The St Dominic's Primary School Puppet Club in Stone are currently rehearsing and creating a show that's nothing short of magical.

Using a cast of Pelham Puppets, they tell a riveting tale about a band of dastardly Pirates, who sail into "Stoneville" along the canal to kidnap the Princess and her Poodle, Pom-Pom. Will the handsome Prince, who has been turned into a Frog by a wicked witch, succeed in his mission to rescue her from the Pirates?

You'll have to come along to find out.

Muffin the Mule and Friends are having a Puppet Party and lots of fun and laughter is guaranteed and there'll be a performance by the

BuzzKing Marionettes and members of the audience will be invited to handle the puppets and join in the performance too.

These are only a few highlights of the day's programme that will conclude with a spectacular Finale by The Sanctuary Studio Dancers.



• St Dominics Puppet Club

Regular updates and further details can be found by following The Staffordshire Puppet Tree Face Book page

So, mark your calendars and just for one day, enter the magical world of fun with puppets! You can even bring the children!

As Mr Punch would say, "That's the way to do it!"

The Puppet Tree Jamboree is brought to you by the Staffordshire Puppet Tree - a local Community Group and we gratefully convey our thanks to Stone Town Council for their support in staging this event.

For further information, you can email David Leech, Chairman SPT: tradpup@btinternet.com or visit the website: thepuppettree.org



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Walton Community Centre is looking forward to bringing you some NEW events!

Weekly Timetable of Events

Mon	MiSfiT Fitness - STRONG Gentle Exercise U3A Talking Books U3A Craft U3A (monthly 2nd Mon) Slimming World Clubbercise Dance Fitness	9.30-10.15am 10-11am 10.30-12.30pm 2-4pm 6-7.30pm 6.30-7.20pm
Tues	Pilates: All Abilities Family History U3A (fortnightly) Gentle Seated Exercise & Social Sequence Dancing Papercraft U3A (fortnightly 2nd & 4th Tues) Weight Watchers Boogie Bounce Fitness Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly) Pilates: All Abilities Rock Choir	9.30-10.30am 10.30-12.30pm 1.30-2.45pm 2-4pm 2-4pm 6-7pm 6.20-7.10pm 6.30-8.30pm 7.30-8.30pm 8-9.30pm
Weds	Guitar U3A Knit, Crochet & Chat Absolute Beginners Line Dancing Changes (mental health support group) Beginners & Improvers Line Dancing & Social Conexus Tuition Stafford & Stone Rockbox Fitness Yoga: All Abilities	10.30-12.30pm 10.30-12.30pm 12.15-1.15pm 1-3pm 1.30-3pm 4-6pm 6.30-7.20pm 6.30-7.30pm
Thurs	Happy Feet Beginners Italian U3A (Sept 24) Indoor Bowls Meditation U3A Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly) GPC Meeting (3rd Thurs monthly) Flower Club (last Thurs monthly)	10-11am 10-11.30am 10.15-11.45am 2.30-3.30pm 6.30-8.30pm 7.30-8.30pm 7.30-9.30pm
Fri	MiSfiT Fitness STRONG Savvy Stitchers U3A (fortnightly) Taekwondo BINGO - Community & Social Group	9.30-10.15am 2-4pm 7-8.30pm 7.30-9.30pm
Sat	Slimming World Child of Mine Playgroup (last Sat monthly)	8.30-10am 2-4pm
Sun	Table Top Sale/Car Boot (fortnightly Sep/Apr) St Johns Church - Weekly Service St Johns Church - Monthly Service (last Sun)	8.30-11.30am 10.30-11.30am 6.30-7.30pm

If you didn't manage to get to their recent 'Beetle Drive' maybe pay them a visit for the FUN & family friendly 'PIG RACE' - you will definitely have some laughs & maybe win some prizes!.

The centre is always looking for new volunteers to help out & maybe even get involved on their committee.

For upcoming events see their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/WaltonCommunityCentreStone

*Walton Community Centre prides itself on being a place where people get a **friendly welcome** & get to make new friends in the local area.*

*If you're looking for a **room to hire** for your group or event get in touch with them for availability!*

PIG RACE

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Kai gets his forever home

1st Oulton Scout Group would like to say a big thank you to all of our children, their parents, Oulton Villagers and everyone who responded to the post on Yarnfield and Swynnerton news asking for donations for animal lifeline.

We would also like to thank animal lifeline for visiting our group with one of their dogs Kai in April, giving a talk to all the sections about the work they do.

Kai has now been rehomed. As you can see from the photo, we were able to deliver a huge amount of donations which were gratefully received by Animal Lifeline on Tuesday 5th March. Two of our leaders spent the day helping out, walking the dogs, cleaning the kennels and helping in the doggy kitchen, no mean feat as they currently have over 70 dogs who need forever homes!

If you are considering adopting a dog please bare them in mind. www.animallifeline.org.uk



If your child would like to join one of our sections **they all meet on a Friday evening at Oulton Village Hall** and Scout Hut Squirrels aged 4-6 meet @ 5.30pm Beavers aged 6-8 meet @ 6.30pm Cubs aged 8-10 1/2 meet @ 6.40pm Scouts aged 10 1/2 - 14 meet @ 6.45pm

If you are able to offer help volunteering in one of our sections or would like to register your child please email carondudley@outlook.com Or call 01785 760585.



Elliot sculpting an owl in clay

Sculpture Exhibition by Elliot Channer

Throughout April and May, No 42 Interiors will be hosting an exhibition of works by Staffordshire based wildlife sculptor Elliot Channer. The Uttoxeter interior design showroom will be displaying around ten of Elliot's works as they return from being exhibited at the World Garden Expo in Dubai.

Having studied at the City & Guilds of London Art School, Elliot has been a professional wildlife sculptor since 2013, the main focus of his art being birds, sculpted in clay and cast in bronze. Focussing on capturing the elegance and movement of the subject with instinctive mark making,

Elliot's work has been exhibited at numerous prestigious venues, including The Chelsea Flower Show, Affordable Art Fairs and Berkshire Polo Club. As well as galleries across the UK. www.elliotchanner.co.uk



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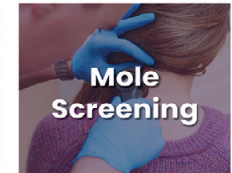
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'What's on' at Great Bridgeford Village Hall



For Tennis Club – Contact Hazel Waters, Membership Secretary on 01785 255 260.

Monday • The Monday Club – alternate weeks, over 60s; 1.30 – 3.30 pm. Contact Maureen on 01785 282 785
• Garden Guild 2nd Monday in the month at 7.30pm.; contact Denise on 01785 281 691

Tuesday • Parent and Toddlers 10.00 – 12.00am. Every Tuesday in term time; Contact Joan 01785 282 722
• Moorland Voices 8.00-9.30pm First Tuesday of the month; Contact Sue 07710 234 223
• Village Hall Committee meeting – 2nd Tuesday of the month – contact Chairman Phil Casuer

Wednesday • Coffee Morning 10.30-12.00, every fortnight - May 1st, 15th, 29th; June 12th, 26th; July 10th, 24th; Aug 7th, 21st; Sep 4th, 18th;
Oct 2nd – Macmillan Big Coffee Morning – all donations to Macmillan Cancer Support – Homemade cakes including Gluten-free and sugar reduced; Leslie/Peter 01785 282 582
• Martial Arts/Kick Boxing 6.30-7.30pm. Contact Laura on 07880 938 027
• Argentine Tango – 8.00 pm, contact Hannah on 07749 368 581

Thursday • Canine Partners – training dogs to assist owners with disabilities; last Thursday in the month; contact Ronnie on 07584 995 247
• Gentle Yoga – weekly during term time; 7.00-8.00 contact Kerrie 07887 687 288

Friday • Life painting & drawing 9.30-12.45, Contact Laura on 07588 074 229
• Argentine Tango dancing – Beginners -7.00pm contact Hannah on 07749 368 581

For more information please visit our website at www.greatbridgefordvillagehall.org.uk or you can email gbvh.bookings@gmail.com

For bookings contact Leslie Longstaff; The Pintles, 18 Newport Road, Great Bridgeford 01785 282 582

The Clothing Bank on Great Bridgeford Village Hall car park is for quality unwanted clothes and shoes. Proceeds will be shared between the Salvation Army and St Chad's Church.



Stone Lions Spectacle collection

Most Gazette readers will be aware that for many years Stone Lions Club (CIO) have been collecting used spectacles for recycling, and use in the developing world. All High Street Opticians have been very supportive of this service project, and continue to be happy to receive any unwanted spectacles (*without cases please*) which are collected by members of the Club.

This has enabled in excess of 30,000 pairs to be processed over the years. **ED: An amazing total so far!**

Stone Lions are pleased to announce that an additional collection point is now available in Stone Town Library.



Co-op's Help Walton Community Scheme

The Warm Spaces soup sessions run by St John's church at Walton Community Centre received a welcome boost last month with a very generous donation from the Co-op's Help in the Community Scheme of £150 worth of goods.

This included 86 tins of soup, 42 packets of partially baked baguettes and an assortment of boxes of cakes.

Lesley Perkins, a Member Pioneer of the Co-op had seen the advert for the soup sessions and came along one Thursday to see how the soup sessions were run.

She was so impressed that she suggested that the Church apply for a grant from the Co-op's Help in the Community Scheme.

Lesley Perkins and Julie Hall, the latter from Walton Co-op store, seen here above on the photo with David and Celia Stewart from St John's Church.

The sessions run every Thursday until May, from 12.15-1.45p.m. Where soup, a bread roll, tea and coffee and a cake are served, free of charge.



Crown Meadow Litter Picking

Stone Town Councillors Robert Townsend, Jason Meters, Tom Kelt, Ian Fordham and Philip Leason donned their wellies and gardening gloves on Sunday 3rd March 2024 to do a litter pick on Crown Meadow.

Despite the ground being extremely soggy underfoot, the sun made an appearance and the group had a very productive morning. The litter picking team squelched their way through the meadow to pick up litter as well as removing a range of flotsam and jetsam from the river, filling about 15 bags with a huge number of bottles and cans, a pile

of carpet tiles and a ball cock!

Councillor Robert Townsend, Chairman of the Council's Environment Committee, said "Crown Meadow is a special natural environment owned and managed by Stone Town Council, which provides a beautiful green space for residents of Stone and visitors. It is an important area of flood plain to the River Trent and it is home to a range of wildlife, trees and flora.

The litter picking is part of the Town Council's overall plan for continual maintenance and improvements to the meadow, with other projects planned for the Spring and Summer."

Collage Café Fun

Collage Café is a Bible-themed art activity held at Stone Library on the **second Thursday of each month** from 10.00am till 12.00pm.

It is part of a community engagement programme by St Michael and St Wulfad's Church, Stone.

Sessions are free, and all materials are provided. Hot drinks are available courtesy of Stone Library, together with cake and biscuits. No painting or drawing skills are needed – anyone who can wield a glue stick can enjoy collage!

We use lots of recycled materials such as card, paper, packaging, plastics and



textiles. Anything that will stick!

Stone Library provides a relaxed welcoming workspace. If you can spare some time out from your day to have fun and get creative then we would love you to join us.

Future sessions are on **Thursday 9th May, 13th June and 11th July**. As places are limited, please contact Jill on 07491 311832.

Bridge pair take title

On Sunday 17th March John Hartley and Kath Adams, both members of Stone Bridge Club, won the annual Staffordshire and Shropshire County championship pairs.

They played a gruelling 52 boards over 7 hours which demanded intense concentration.

The field included one international player. The follow up Inter-county competition takes place in Yarnfield in June but sadly at a time John and Kath can't make.



Then on Sunday 21st April Stone Bridge Club had another wonderful success in the Staffordshire and Shropshire Championship Teams. The event was held at Newcastle Bridge Club who provided a splendid afternoon tea. 24 boards played before tea and 24 more boards after. The competition was very friendly but keen and the winners had a reasonable margin lead.

Stone Bridge Club offers lessons to anyone wishing to start playing bridge on Friday afternoons starting at 1.30 and ending around 4.30. You do not need a partner as one can be found without prior notice. Any player wishing to resume their past hobby can come along and play with guidance on Wednesday afternoons until the end of April again at 1.30. There will be a break for the summer for this Wednesday afternoon session but simply keep a check on the bridge club website for news of when it is restarting in the autumn. The website is www.bridgewebs.com/stone/

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“Pupils at Christ Church thrive” OFSTED ‘Good’ 2022

“The curriculum and extra-curricular offer is exceptionally rich” SIAMS 2020

Minnie

Our school dog

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A strong Christian ethos with values such as trust and friendship underpinning an atmosphere of challenge, support and acceptance.

SIAMS ‘Excellent’ 2020

Visits to the Academy are warmly welcomed

Please call the school office to arrange your visit: 01785 334900



Fully equipped science laboratories, specialist technology workshops, computer rooms offering programming and coding from the outset, well-resourced library, strong links with the parish church, specialist dance and drama studio, extensive sports, music and extra-curricular opportunities.









"Walk of the Month" From The Stone Ramblers



Oh, my goodness, when will it stop raining?

We have certainly been testing our waterproof gear!

A huge thank you to the brave souls that came to visit us in the pouring rain at the recent Farmers' Market and a reminder that we will have a stall at the opening of Westbridge Park on **Saturday 27th April**. We will be giving out pens and badges and also, a list of some future short walks, that we hope you will join us on, to sample the Stone Ramblers. You will also have to opportunity to purchase our walking books, 'Stone Circles' and 'Walks Around Stone'.



I've been doing a lot of reading during this wet spell and have recently finished 'Little Dribbling' by Bill Bryson. It's so good, I can highly recommend it. Bill is American and loves the UK and says, 'What a joy it is to walk in England and Wales, that has 130,000 miles of public footpaths, that's about 2.2 miles for every square mile of area. People in Britain don't realise how extraordinary that is. If there is one thing that I enjoy and admire in Britain, it is the pleasure of being on foot and at large in the open air'. Well said Bill, you should join the Stone Ramblers!



In February we had a wonderful weekend away in Shropshire, walking around Bishop's Castle and a group of us are off to Coniston later this month for a week of walking and exploring. We can't wait and hope that the weather improves, well it can't really get any worse.

Walk of the Month: Moddershall

Moddershall is a peaceful village noteworthy for the large Millpool in its centre. The mill house, now demolished, stood opposite the Boar Inn and also carried the name of Boar Mill. Built in 1798 and in operation until 1958 crushing lime and flint for the pottery industry. This was the highest of 11 mills in the Moddershall Valley (now a Conservation Area) on Scotch Brook as it flows the two miles down to Stone

Distance: 4 miles **Time:** 2 hours

Refreshments: the Boar Inn, Moddershall, the Rook House Tea Room, Moddershall and the Spot Gate Inn, Spot Gate.

Please check for opening times.

Terrain: The going is mainly level, apart from an uphill section close to Idlerocks and a downhill section on the return to Moddershall.

Please expect some mud along the way as this has been one of the wettest seasons on record! There are 11 stiles to cross.

1) We start at the Boar Inn in the delightful village of Moddershall. Parking is available opposite the pub.

We proceed by walking into the rear car park and leave by the way-marked path on the left. After 75 yards we come to a surfaced lane and turn left up the hill.

We continue along the lane as it becomes unsurfaced and pass through a gate and alongside a high fence. Look out for the deer enclosure, on the right. On one particular day we saw hundreds of deer but be warned

this section can be particularly muddy.

Now start to steadily climb up the valley, known as Idle Rocks, for about 1 mile, taking care of the ditch.

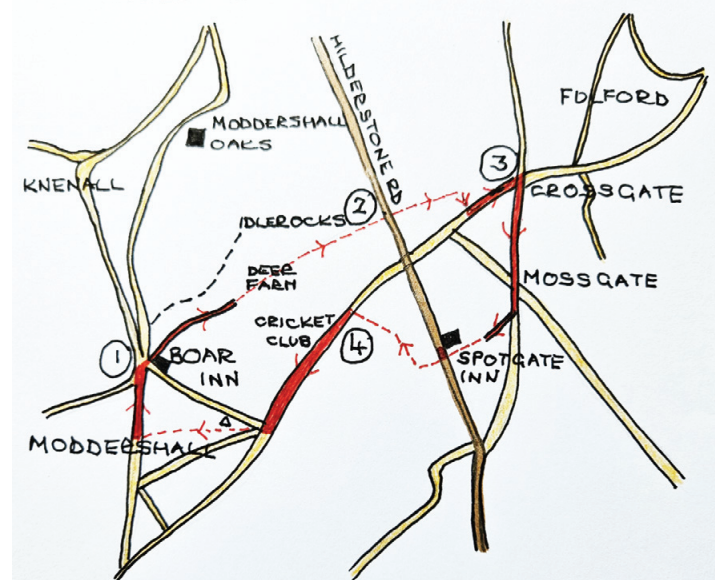
Approach the top of the valley, cross a stile into a steep field aiming for the top right hand corner. Cross a stile and walk behind a post and rail fence leading on to a track. From the track, cross a further stile directly in front and follow the path between hedges up to the main Hilderstone Road.

2) Crossing the road we enter a wood, Stallington Heath and following the path through the wood you will soon join the line of the boundary fence which we follow. On the other side of the fence is an SSI, Site of Special Interest, which often has a good display of orchids.

After a further 200 yards we come to a surfaced track and turn right and in a further 75 yards turn left and on to Fulford Lane passing the Kattery. At Sandy Lane we turn right.

3) We proceed along Sandy Lane for about ½ mile to the crossroads, go straight across into Balaams Lane and then proceed until we take a track on the right in 100 yards. As we pass Flatts Farm the track becomes a path which we follow until we come to a stile under a holly arch. We

MODDERSHALL MAP REF: ST 926 368



should now follow the edge of a broom coppice as we start to descend to the rear of the Spot Gate Inn. (You will often see wild rabbits in this area)

Crossing the road in front of the pub, enter a wood which has way marked route to the left of an overgrown lake. We pass through an area of rhododendron woods with a deep ditch on the left. We should now leave the wood by a stile in the left corner and walk up the track to the lane

4) Turn left along the lane, walk facing on-coming traffic, proceeding past the cricket ground until we come to a junction on the right. On the left is a stile hidden under the hedge. Crossing the stile we are in an open field which we cross diagonally right pausing at the trig point to observe the distant views of the Shropshire and Welsh Hills with the nearer Wrekin, usually very distinct.

Continuing on the diagonal route, first crossing a stile in the hedge and then across the next field to the bottom left-hand corner where we will find and cross a hidden double stile. We now proceed up the incline to cross the stile alongside a field gate and follow the track down the field to a stile alongside a cottage.

Turning right we proceed back to the Boar Inn and the Rook House Tea Room at the other end of the village passing the Old School House and Village Hall on the way.

This walk is taken from our 'Stone Circles' book and we should make you aware that over the years, changes can occur to footpaths, so please let us know, if you spot any.

Once again, thank you to all of our volunteers. Perhaps have a look at our website www.stoneramblers.org.uk or visit our Facebook page 'Stone Ramblers' to check out our forthcoming walks. Hoping to see you for a chat on 27th April at Westbridge Park and in the meantime, Happy Walking!

From Penny Meakin, Chair, Stone Ramblers

The secret to a happy retirement



The positive difference that moving to a retirement living community can make to your quality of life, might just be one of life's best kept secrets.

Homeowners seeking a supported yet independent lifestyle can experience the best of suburban retirement living in Newcastle's latest retirement community, Brookfields House, on Clayton Road.

Time for a new chapter?

Each year, with the first blooms of spring our spirits lift, and we start to look forward to brighter days, warmer weather, and new beginnings.

When you move to Brookfields House you can enjoy a fresh start, with more fun and less to worry about.

Ann and her husband Harry have been loving life since they moved to an Adlington community in Lytham last year: "You don't have any worries here. When you own a house, you become a servant to it. You have to do all these jobs to keep it sellable and up to scratch, but the days come when you don't want to have to do that sort of thing anymore. It worries you. Here it's like being on holiday every day. I can't get over it. We're having such a wonderful time."

Why wait until tomorrow, when you can enjoy life today

More homeowners are choosing to move when they're fit and well, to future-proof their retirement.

Margaret, who moved to an Adlington community in Heaton Mersey with her husband John, said: "I was the one who wanted to move. I have some health issues which are not causing me a problem at the moment, but I feel that they may do, at some point in the future and I just don't want to wait until a crisis happens. That's the reason that we moved at 74 and 71, whilst we're relatively young.

"I was thinking of the future when we bought here, but actually we're really enjoying the present. The people here are such good company. We have a great community and we all get on very well."



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Coffee Break Story



By Stone Scribblers Creative Writing Group

The Home Show Not a favourite gadget!

The ultimate "Big Top" of gadget shows, where the constant hum of piped elevator music lends an air reminiscent of casinos in Las Vegas.

We always find some strange gadget. There is no way around it, with hundreds of exhibitors peddling their wares. So many items that make you pause, chuckle and shake your head.

The Gadget - It slices, it dices, it juliennes, it turns every vegetable into a work of art. Smooth lines, easy to clean, wide range of colours. The premiere performance of this wonder machine is a huge success, and is growing a very large crowd. Eyes widen in amazement at the ease of use, ease of cleaning and ease of assembly.

It, of course, can be purchased at a hugely discounted price, for today ONLY, and ONLY at the Home Show!

The reality - Gadget bought and brunch now being prepared with the new and amazing gismo.

It sure does slice and dice like a charm but fingers and knuckles should be kept well clear.

A & E - Tea towel wrapped fingers, blood everywhere, embarrassment, stitches, pills for pain. That stupid bargain wonder gadget.

Bin - Gadget destroyed and gone. Lesson learned. Good thing Grannie's kitchen knife is still in the drawer.

SHOP - See How Others Purchase

The walk home seems longer each day now. The years have taken their toll.

Sitting by the fire, a hot brew in hand, the old woman lets her mind wander. Images of years gone by are larger than life as she drifts back in time.

A young child, hand grasping a shiny sixpence, her first pocket money, is walking to the corner shop. Sweets of all shapes and colours dwell there and she can't wait to buy some of those pink and white striped ones with her own money.

A Saturday morning at the record shop with her teenage chums. The sound booths are busy, but the time spent in wait gives a chance to browse the racks of every 45 and 78 imaginable, and is just what she needs to decide which of the latest releases will go home with her.

A young couple hold hands as they gaze with longing at the display in the Estate Agent's office. Who knew that buying a house would be so complicated? The glossy photographs in the shop window are so very enticing, but there is much to think about. Can we afford the mortgage? What if we want to start a family? Will we find a home in the area we want with a school close by?

Now two small children, each holding a hand of Grannie, excitement building as the three make their way to the corner shop, for a special treat of pink and white striped sweets, a favourite of all.

Smythe and Sons, in business for many years, have a good reputation.

Discrete, professional and caring are all attributes required at a time like this.

Relief, and a sense of accomplishment flows to the fore, having now made her final purchase, and a hint of a smile appears as the road home beckons.

Both stories by Irene Lukkarinen

Stone Scribblers meet at Stone Library on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month between 11 am and 12.30pm, and you can find them at www.facebook.com/StoneScribblers/

REVIEWS MOVIE

by Joe Jenkinson



Monkey Man

Director: Dev Patel
Starring Dev Patel



Slumdog Millionaire's Dev Patel makes his directorial debut in bombastic fashion.

This is a full-throttle action thriller in the vein of John Wick; not for the faint-of-heart action sequences are constant, but this may be up your alley.

The plot is entry-level and leaves logic on the shelf, but Patel's surprise finesse as a director (and as an actor) is worthwhile for those who love some OTT, blood-splattered spectacle.

JJ Rating 4/5

Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire

Director: Gil Kenan
Starring: Paul Rudd, Finn Wolfhard, Bill Murray



If there's something strange in the neighbourhood, you might need to call someone else because this follow-up is a sign of the franchise losing its energy. As someone who isn't a Ghostbusters purist, I am worried that this franchise is now another variant of the Hollywood sequel system.

I enjoyed 2021's Ghostbusters: Afterlife for its sense of depth and enjoyment, but Frozen Empire is a movie that only has nostalgia and an oversized ensemble of popular actors as its priority. Knowing what to do with this cast of old and new members was shelved long ago. It ultimately feels like one of the ghosts circling aimlessly until containment.

JJ Rating 2/5



Kung Fu Panda 4

Director: Mike Mitchell
Cast: Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, Viola Davis

The always-loveable, heroic panda is back for a new adventure that packs a sturdy punch, though one not as hard as its predecessors.

For what it lacks in emotional depth, it makes up for in slick pacing, attractive animation and Jack Black always guaranteeing the chuckles.

Families will enjoy this breezy return to DreamWorks Animation's beloved action-comedy franchise.

JJ Rating 3/5

New Family Festival Rises In Stone

A new affordable family festival combining live music and entertainment with outdoor activities takes place in Staffordshire in July. The Rising will take over Kibblestone Scout Camp, near Stone, from July 4-6, with tickets for the 2,000-capacity event already selling well.

The first acts to be announced are *Death of Guitar Pop, Dub Pistols, Loonaloop, Banco De Gaia, Subgiant, Brian Stone & the Masters of None, 3 Daft Monkeys, Jemma Johnson, True Deceivers, Spacehopper, Glowbones, Ed Tangent, Clumsy, Templehead, Magic Lantern, Prognosis, and Indigo Herder.*

At the heart of the festival will be the Magical Sounds stage, with an additional outdoor stage, the Cub Lair, and a small acoustic marquee stage named the Last Outpost.

Children's activities will focus on The Rising Academy, where Sergeant Bob and Captain

Cod will lead activities including circus skills, storytelling, arts and crafts.

For a small extra charge there'll be challenges including rock climbing, archery and high ropes, all professionally tutored and run by the Scout Association.

The organisers of The Rising bring together years of experience working on similar events. Food vendors will be selected to keep prices down, and the bar will offer the best local ales, ciders, quality wine and an excellent selection on non-alcoholic drinks.

Two-day tickets for The Rising including camping are £50 for adults, £25 for 12-16 year olds and free for under 12s. There are additional charges for Thursday early arrival camping and for vehicles. For full details go to www.risingfestival.co.uk





Oulton Film Night

Oulton Village Hall present a Film Night on **Saturday 18th May 7.00 pm. for 7.30pm**

The Great Escaper - Inspired by a true love story
The Great Escaper is a movie that sees Sir Michael Caine and the late Glenda Jackson in a heartwarming true story of a veteran war hero and his wife.

There will be Bar and Nibbles available. Tickets are just £5.00 (*advance sales only*) and available from Sue Petrusis 01785 286879



Sandon and Burston Parish

Sandon and Burston are two villages that are south of Stone on the A51 where the River Trent, the Trent and Mersey Canal, the main London to Manchester railway route and the A51 all run within 100m of one another.

The A51 was in fact one of the foremost coaching routes in the country, providing access from London to Holyhead from where shipping and modern ferries crossed to Dublin and dominates the two villages.

The two villages also lie on the Two Saints Way a pilgrimage route from Lichfield to Chester, with the 'stretch' from Stone to Burston being very popular with local walkers. Although the route is currently closed at Burston because the footbridge over the River Trent is waiting for repairs following last year's storms.

Sandon, the bigger of the two villages, is dominated by the Estate, the ancestral home of the Harrowby family and goes back many centuries to a time when the Lord of the Manor was Lord Erdswyck in the 1300s.

Burston is equally historical and goes back many centuries to the Dark Ages. With the majority of its houses being developed in the 1700 and 1800s by the Stubbs family, albeit with several much older properties.

Today, Sandon and Burston are joined together and represented by Sandon and Burston Parish Council, which meets every two months at the parish rooms. For more details see sandonburston.staffslc.gov.uk.

The parish council meetings are of course open to the public and meetings are open to public discussion about local matters. One of the main local concerns is the traffic speed and safety on the A51, and the roads leading from it, and it is the intention of the Parish Council to consider how to lobby the County Council and Highways Authority to explore how to improve the situation.

Another Parish Council initiative has been to provide some planters (see pic above) to brighten up the two grass triangles in Burston, which are maintained by The Oak Tree Rural Farm Project in Hilderstone (oaktreefarm.uk.net) and it is hoped that a similar project will happen in Sandon.



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Gazette

Eccleshall

NEWS IN BRIEF

Community Showcase

On **Monday 17th June 2024** the Eccleshall Parish Council stages a gathering of Eccleshall community organisations and clubs at the community centre, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall between 6.30pm and 8pm. Parish residents are warmly invited to drop in. The aim is to provide the Eccleshall community with the opportunity to meet and talk to clubs and to find out more about any that they are interested in.

Eccleshall has over 50 such clubs and this forum will provide residents with a chance to explore what is available to them. Members of the parish council and Borough Councillors will be available. Light refreshments will be available to everyone in attendance.

For further details contact the Clerk to the council at clerk@eccleshall.staffs.gov.uk or telephone her at 01785 282296.

Eccleshall Festival

Despite a false start in its reformation the Eccleshall Festival will in fact take place in the town on **Saturday 29th June** this year. Full details can be gained by visiting nikkie@lrpartnership.co.uk or Lorraine@lrpartnership.co.uk

Planting Sponsorship

Each year the Ecclian Society organises and funds the floral displays of planting baskets, mangers and troughs which enhance the appearance of the two throughout the summer. The flowers are sponsored by businesses and individuals and you could help in that regard. For further details contact Myf Freeman on 01785 851590 or mail her at myanwyffreeman@aol.com. You can sponsor a basket for yourself or support the whole scheme with a donation.

Membership: To become a member of the Ecclian Society costs £5 per year and you will be helping to improve the character of our town and bring your ideas to the society. The membership covers all members of the household. Contact Barbara Dodds on email: b_dodds@btinternet.com

Diary Dates: Erection of baskets and mangers will take place on **2nd June**, the open gardens weekend takes place on **22nd and 23rd June**, Eccleshall Show takes place on **Saturday August 31** and the Ecclian Society AGM takes place on **19th November**.

June Gardens

Two delightful Eccleshall gardens will be open to the public on **Sunday 9th June** for members of the public to enjoy, Ashcroft in Stafford Road and 26 Claremont Road.

They will be both open from 2pm to 5pm on that day. The combined admission fee is £5, children go free, Home made teas will be available at Ashcroft in aid of Katharine House hospice.

On **Sunday 2nd June** The Pintles at 18 Newport Road, Great Bridgeford ST18 9PR will be open to the public between 1pm and 5pm. Admission is £3.50 children go free. Home made teas available. **Visits by arrangement can be made between 2nd June and 30th June for groups of 15 to 30.** For details contact Peter and Leslie on 01785 282582 or email peter.longstaff@ngs.org.uk.

For national details visit www.ngs.org.uk.

Eccleshall Open Gardens

Eccleshall Open Gardens will be taking place on **Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd June**, from 10 am to 4 pm on both days.

Please put the dates in your diary, come along and enjoy visiting some wonderful Eccleshall gardens.

We will have a variety of gardens to explore and inspire. Entry is £5.00 per adult and Programmes are available on the day from outside the Library on the High Street (look for the clock!). Sorry but only assistance dogs are permitted in the gardens.

'Ashcroft' one of our beautiful gardens will be serving refreshments including home-made cakes. Contact Luke or Anne Serjeant on 07817 930857 email: eccleshallopengardens@gmail.com



Oulton WI - celebrate 100 Years!

On March 11th 2024, Oulton WI commemorated their 100th anniversary with a celebratory meal in Oulton Village Hall.

Thirty-five members, former members, and guests, enjoyed a delicious hot lunch served by Ridgway Caterers.

The ladies reminisced about WI activities

over the years - particularly from 1970s to the present day, noting how the group has evolved over that time.

There was a display of old photographs and other memorabilia and the afternoon finished with the ladies sharing a beautiful cake decorated with the WI colours.

Photo from Martin Robinson

Skier Sophy chuckles her way to a Silver Medal in GB Special Olympics National Winter Games

Sophy Soryal, a 22-year-old from Staffordshire took to the slopes in Folgaria, Italy to take part in the GB Special Olympics National Winter Games. This is the first time Special Olympics GB has hosted the National winter games event, so it was hugely prestigious that Sophy was selected to take part in this event. Special Olympics is a global organization that looks to change the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, whilst supporting inclusion and acceptance within this sector.

The event took place from the 27th of January to the 3rd of February 2024, with around 80 athletes taking part, with Sophy being one of 20 other competitors from the West Midlands Ski Group.

Sophy did amazingly throughout the giant slalom skiing races that involved her skiing a zig-zag course between upright obstacles and she made herself and her team immensely proud when she earned a silver medal. Not only did she do brilliantly in the races, but Sophy also had to be hugely dependent, as she had to oversee her ski kit and shared a room with fellow competitors. When asked about the experience, Sophy



told the Gazette "I feel proud and accomplished, it was awesome doing the slopes!"

Sophy has been attending Chuckle Productions, a non-profit organisation, based in Stone, for the last three years and is currently enrolled in the ArtShed Arts Training project for young people with additional needs.

Chuckle Productions are so proud of Sophy's medal accomplishment and wish her success for future events.

To find out more about what Chuckle Productions does, visit their website, at <https://chuckleproductions.org>

Concert - The Flutes and Frets Duo

Newport Music Club are delighted to introduce the exciting 'Flutes and Frets Duo', on **Saturday 11th May 7.00pm** at Cosy Hall, Water Lane, Newport TF10 7LD.

Beth Stone and Danny Murphy founded the Duo in March 2021 after first collaborating at the Royal College of Music. They are passionate about showing the versatility of the flute and plucked instruments combination.

They have performed numerous recitals in various locations across the UK. Notable concerts include the London International Early Music Festival, the Lichfield Young Artist's Concert Series and performing at the National Gallery. They were thrilled to be awarded the first prize for the 2021 La Follia Nuova International Chamber Music Competition.

To discover more visit our website www.newportmusicclub.org. Ticket prices: Adults: £15; Children/students £5 Contact the Music Club via email at



chairman@newportmusicclub.org or phone 07726 959233 to confirm the number of tickets you would like to reserve.

The next concert will be on **Saturday 13th July 7.00pm** at Cosy Hall by the noted pianist Colin Stone www.colinstone.co.uk



The photo shows Sandie and the volunteers at the Christchurch Centre in Stone.

Rewarding times

Stone Alzheimer's Club was delighted to recently receive a grant of nearly £1,000 from Stafford Borough Council Community Foundation.

The award will allow the club to put on special events for a whole year and these "celebrations" are a really important aspect of the Club's activities and the Club has special events for Christmas, Valentine's day, Easter, a Birthday celebration and a club birthday celebration. There are always special guests, entertainment, gifts and, at Christmas, a special buffet meal is provided.

These special events are very important because they provide additional stimulation for those with Alzheimer's and creates an opportunity for carers to be more relaxed and have some fun. If all the meetings were the same, those with Alzheimer's would stop being as stimulated as they could be so taking the opportunity to introduce more variety, fun and laughter is, therefore, vital.

Volunteers and carers often dress up – Christmas elves and Easter bunnies, for example, so stimulation is also on a different level.

The club volunteers know that this approach to stimulation works because

members and carers will talk for weeks about what a great time that they had so the benefits are real, long lasting and are felt throughout the club. These events also encourage members to come back each week and for new more members to join.

Sandie McQueen, Lead Volunteer said: "We are over the moon to receive this award from the Stafford Borough Council Community Foundation and are so pleased that the work of our volunteers has been recognised this way."

We know how important that these special celebration events are to our members and carers but with our limited funding, it has sometimes been a struggle to fund them. This grant will allow us to plan ahead for the whole year and create really memorable celebrations...for the club it's more than fantastic news."

She went on to say: "I am so pleased for the work of our amazing volunteers do, to be recognised by grants and awards and, in this respect, we were delighted to hear recently that the club has been shortlisted for a prestigious Support Staffordshire Award 2024 and we will be attending the celebration evening at Alton Towers on April 25th."



Mordearg pops in to promote the show

Shire Horse - Mordearg Pendragon, an 11-year-old grey gelding born and bred in Staffordshire, was at Stone Farmers' Market on 2nd March.

He was promoting the Shire Horse Society Annual Show at Bingley Hall the

following weekend.

This is the world's largest gathering of 'rare breed' Shire Hoses taking place in March each year to celebrate the breed's unique history and heritage.

Photo from Martin Robinson

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Crown Wharf Theatre Update

We're very conscious that it has been some time since our last update, we had been holding for a new opening date but unfortunately things are taking longer than hoped. Whilst frustrating, we have been using the extra time to our advantage, adding a raft of additional features, acoustic improvements and extra technical infrastructure and equipment, all of which we were planning on adding further down the line.

In the auditorium we have been familiarising ourselves with the newly installed lighting and sound equipment, as well as the impressive cinema system. Our back of house areas are shaping up nicely as well, the flooring is down, decorating largely finished and we've now installed all the dressing room tables, chairs and mirrors.



We had a fantastic turnout to our recent volunteer "help out" event which saw 25 of our wonderful volunteers joining us for a day of odd jobs. It was a great team effort involving painting, furniture building, tidying, cleaning and generally giving the whole place a good spruce. We'd like to say a huge thank you to all those that donated their time. It gave the project team a wonderful boost to feel the support of the community and to catch up with some familiar faces.



We still have some finishing to do, such as installing new doors and carpeting the corridors but everything is really starting to come together... the end is in sight, or should we say, the beginning!

This unexpected additional time has also afforded more opportunity to prepare for our eventual grand opening. We are in the process of running a series of operational test events, learning about our technology, box office system, front of house procedures and the various safety systems. This process is also helping to design the training our volunteers will need to make sure we're ready to open our doors and ensure our audiences have a smooth and enjoyable visit.

A big thank you to all those that have participated in one of our test events, your patience and feedback has been invaluable. This glimpse into the future has only increased our appetite for being able to finally open our doors for the real thing.

Until then, the hard work continues...



Stone Scooter Club's Sunday Soul

Stone Scooter Club attended the Sanctuary Bar and dance Studio on Sunday 14th April, for an afternoon and early evening of Northern Soul.

Quite a few scooters from the club attended, and the scooters parked outside generated a focal attraction, and

many a conversation.

The Sanctuary was busy with many Northern Soul fanatics dancing away to sonic sounds of Soul from the 60's. There are several other Sundays planned this year to repeat this type of music event.

Stone Lions pay a visit to Sandon Church

Members and friends of Stone Lions Club enjoyed an extremely interesting afternoon just before Easter when they had a guided tour of the beautiful 12th Century Grade 1 Listed Parish Church of All Saints, Sandon.



The many interesting artifacts within the building include an integrated display of post-reformation genealogical paintings on the walls, heraldic glass above the altar and the Erdeswicke family monuments and tombs spanning five generations from the time of Elizabeth I onwards.

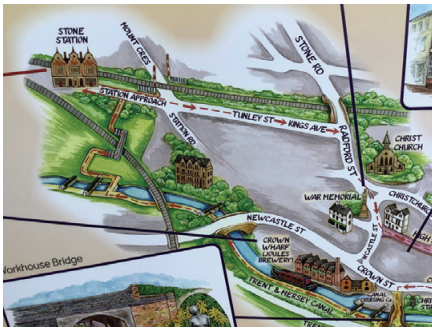


There is also a large Royal Coat of Arms thought to be of Charles I (1625 - 1649) and two 19th Century stained-glass windows by William Wailes, in the style of Augustus Pugin, who designed the Houses of Parliament.



The tour included a visit up to the Belfry, giving members and friends the opportunity to try their hands at bell-ringing, which was a great experience of teamwork involving high levels of concentration from all participants!

The afternoon concluded with a plentiful supply of tea and cakes, which was greatly enjoyed by everyone.



Updates on Stone Station

North Staffs Rail Promotion Group continue to campaign to get a better train service for Stone Station.

NSRPG chair, Jon Heal, says that it really is a struggle in 2024. "The London Northwestern Railway service was cut in two in December, so Stone has lost its direct service to the West Midlands," says Jon. "Several people have contacted us to say this has had a drastic impact on their daily journeys to work. We are putting together a summary of the impact that passengers pass on to us."

NSRPG welcome comments on the December changes, and are in regular contact with train planners. Sadly, the train companies are forced to cut costs whatever the outcome for passengers.

Two local people started petitions and collected names of nearly 2000 people who objected to the changes. Sadly this has had little response from West Midlands Trains, who operate the LNWR service. "They tell us that the service is running well," says Jon, "but this is not really true. Trains seem to be turning up on time, but that's not a great help for people who have lost the direct service to their place of work. There are just fewer trains to Birmingham, so the Cross Country ones that do still run are overcrowded, and they don't stop here!"

The recent NSRG meeting in Stone Station attracted several new members who are keen to join the campaign for a return to a good service. NSRPG thank The Stone Gazette for advertising the meetings.

An event that also attracted a good crowd was an Open Day organised by North Staffs Community Rail Partnership. The station was open with several local groups and school children taking part. "We hope the representatives from Network Rail and train companies went home aware of the enthusiasm for the station and its importance in the life of the town," says Jon Heal. "The small group of volunteers have done wonders in recent years."

One surprise was a large information and tourist board that had suddenly appeared on the platform. If you want to know about Stone, here is a start! Thanks to Stone Town Council for providing the information.

NSRPG's next meeting is on Thursday May 30th at the Quaker Meeting House, Miller Street, Newcastle. Contact : jhnorthstaffsrail@hotmail.co.uk for details, all are welcome.

Two petitions are online on the change.org website.

A local medical worker Ceri Williams started one, asking the train company to : **Reinstate the Direct Train Service from Stone to Birmingham**

A second one is: **Prevent the Cancellation of the Direct Stone to Birmingham Train Service**

It helps if anyone really concerned about this takes action, and also sends a comment to Customer Services explaining the problems caused. The link is:

<https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk/contact-us/customer-relations>

NSRPG are still awaiting feedback from the train company about the impact on passenger numbers.

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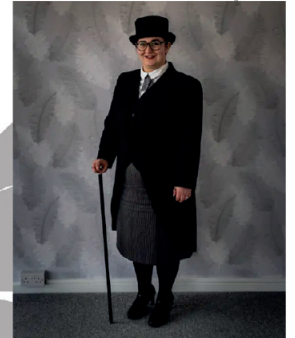
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Probus President handover

President Graham Finlay hands over to Bryan Fletcher our new President for 2023/24

Longton Probus meets the **second Monday of each month** at the Upper House Barlaston.



Nathan Dawe announced at Trentham Live

Trentham Live are thrilled to announce Nathan Dawe as special guest for Jess Glynne on Friday 16th August for this year's music spectacular.

The 4-day music event is bigger and better than ever before having announced Deacon Blue, Jess Glynne, Manic Street Preachers and Busted as the headline acts. The event takes place from **Thursday 15th August through to Sunday 18th August 2024**. Four amazing shows in one unique setting!

BRIT-nominated DJ/producer Nathan Dawe is one of the UK's biggest breakout dance acts of the last five years. Buoyed by a huge fan base in Birmingham and the Midlands, Nathan's regional transmits nationwide – as evidenced by a series of standout UK Top 10 singles.

Trentham Live has established itself as a Summer event on the UK festival calendar, drawing music enthusiasts from far and wide, promising an unforgettable weekend for music lovers of all ages. "We are excited to announce **Nathan Dawe as special guest to Jess Glynne for our Friday night for 2024's Trentham Live!**" said Head of Events Kerrie Pope. "We've worked hard to bring a line-up of great music to cater for all tastes whilst making sure the event is affordable for all."

The event is now hailed as a firm family favourite in the event calendar, with a growing number of families choosing it as their first live music experience with young children along with a great selection of food vendors.

Other special guests over the Trentham Live weekend include Lightning Seeds with Deacon Blue on Thursday 15th August. As well as Nathan Dawe, Jess Glynne's special guest also includes Sam Tompkins on Friday 16th August and Busted's guests on Sunday 18th August are Dadi Freyr and SOAP. Manic Street Preachers special guests will be announced soon, watch this space!

Tickets for Trentham Live 2024 are available from - www.trentham.co.uk/trentham-live



Helen and Andy with their awards

Eccleshall couple win 2024 Tourism and Good Food Awards!

Andy and Helen, the owners of Eagle House in Eccleshall, were thrilled on Thursday evening to receive The Enjoy Staffordshire Gold award for Best B&B and Guest House of the Year! It was the 10th anniversary of the award ceremony and the National Memorial Arboretum in Lichfield provided the beautiful backdrop for these prestigious awards.

The husband and wife team were absolutely delighted to win, having worked really hard over the last 3 years, setting up and running their business. They won Silver in last year's competition, and are delighted to now receive the top award, acknowledging their progression and success.

They also received bronze awards in the Self Catering Accommodation of the Year and Ethical, Responsible & Sustainable Tourism categories.

Andy said "It is a great honour to win these awards and we'd like to thank all the staff at Enjoy Staffordshire for running such a wonderful and inspiring event."

welcoming community, there is always something going on and so many nice places to eat and drink. But we also have the tranquil Staffordshire countryside right on our door step and our guests also love to explore all the pretty woods and footpaths."



One of the BnB rooms

But Helen and Andy aren't going to rest on their laurels after winning. They have plans to improve Eagle House even further and hope to make the building even more eco-friendly and also add to its charming and beautiful décor.

They are already looking forward to entering next year's Enjoy Staffordshire competitions and would encourage other local businesses to enter too! They say they find the competition process and feedback from the judges really motivating and helpful in improving their business and giving the best guest experience possible.



The impressive entrance hall

Eagle House is a stunning Grade 2 listed residence, with over 200 years of history. It offers three spacious and elegant Bed and Breakfast rooms as well as the Eagle's Nest, a cosy one bedroom self-catering Apartment. It's luxurious, with lots of little extras and also impressed the judges with its commitment to sustainability. It is the only accommodation provider in the area with an Electric Car Charger for guests!

Located in Eccleshall, Eagle House is just a few minutes stroll from its thriving and elegant High Street, containing an array of independent shops, restaurants, pubs and cafes.

Helen told the Gazette "We feel so lucky to live in Eccleshall! It is such a warm and



Unwind and relax in the garden



Looking Back, Looking Forward

Janus, the god after whom January is named, reputedly had two faces, one looking back to the old year and the other looking forward to the coming year.

An Annual Meeting does the same job, without being two-faced, and March 12th was the date of Aston-by-Stone W.I.'s Annual Meeting. Members were reminded of the variety of interesting and entertaining meetings held in the last year, reports given and the year ahead anticipated.

President Pam Lowe will continue in her role which she carries out so well, and the Committee is pleased to welcome a new member, Moira Johnson. Pam was also awarded the Competition cup, having made some splendid entries in the monthly competition.

After the Annual Meeting, which we keep to sensible proportions, we enjoyed the tea and home-made cakes which always feature at refreshment time.

Members then tried their hand at making cards, with beautiful and useful reports. William Morris would have approved!

"My Time Inside"

Then at our April meeting we began with celebrations: we sang "Happy Birthday" to those members born in April, and later in the meeting we sang it again to celebrate the 99th birthday of our W.I. itself. President Pam Lowe cut the beautiful cake made by Anita Murphy, and we look forward to a Members' afternoon tea later in the month. We are already planning celebrations for our Centenary in 2025, so Ladies, if you'd like to attend a 100th birthday party, do join us!



Member Shirley Finney was presented with a certificate for 40 years' membership of Aston-by-Stone W. I., and Julie Hughes was thanked for her work on the Committee over the past years.

There has been a prison at Stafford since 1185, but it was only in the 20th century that education for prisoners began at this and all other British prisons. Joy Stephens-Blank, Speaker at our April meeting, taught Life Skills at Stafford prison, and spoke to us about the highs and lows of her job. You need a sense of humour to teach in a prison, it seems, and she certainly has this! She spoke movingly of the problems and joys of helping the 60% of prisoners who have low literary skills. Such a gifted teacher has helped many prisoners to better themselves and gain employment after release. We enjoyed the talk very much and the minutes ticked by quickly.

Over the 99 years of our W.I. we have taken part in a great many activities and outings, and this is still true today. So, Ladies, if you enjoy painting, poetry, walks and theatre outings, to name but a few, the W.I. has plenty to offer you. We meet on the **second Wednesday of the month** at Aston-by-Stone Village Hall at 7.30 p.m., and everyone is welcome. Why not visit us and see for yourself?

At our **next meeting on May 8th** the Speaker will be Jenna Goodwin, "The Red-haired Stokie" who will be exploring some of the secrets of Stone.

On April 26th, members will celebrate the 99th birthday of Aston-by-Stone W.I. with an afternoon tea. We are also planning celebrations for our 100th birthday next year.

If you are interested in visiting us, why not do so? You will be welcome, we meet in Aston-by-Stone Village Hall at 7.30; all are welcome.

If you would like to know more, please contact us at astonbystonewi.secretary@gmail.com, or phone 01785 615662. We look forward to meeting you!

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TUES 13:30-14:45 Seated Exercise & Social Stone
TUES 18:20-19.10 Boogie Bounce Stone
TUES 19:30-20:30 Pilates Stone

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WEDS 13:30-15:00 Line Dancing & Social Stone
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Stones' Ruby Twigg lands a place at prestigious performing arts school

Having seen a record number of students win places at performing arts schools across the country last year, Stone's Rooftop Studios is once again celebrating student success.

16-year-old Ruby Twigg, who has attended the studio for the past seven years has been at the and takes classes in ballet, jazz, modern and tap has successfully auditioned for a place at the Jill Clewes Academy of Theatre Arts in Newcastle-under-Lyme. She will go on to study at the renowned academy's full time BTEC course, which has a large number of alumni crafting careers for themselves in the entertainment industry.



Principal at Rooftop Studios, Laura Keeling, told the Gazette: "We couldn't be happier for Ruby – not only is she very talented but she is a hard worker, listens well to corrections, always strives to do her very best she also a wonderful role model to younger students – always impeccably turned out and a lovely, encouraging student teacher."



We're going to miss seeing her in regular classes but can't wait to see what the future hold for her and wish her the very best of luck for this exciting new chapter."

For more information on Rooftop Studios' broad range of dance and performing arts classes head to their website at www.rooftopstudios.co.uk To sign up for a free trial of any of the classes at the studio, email info@rooftopstudios.co.uk



Chanteuse Chamber Choir Triumphs at Festival for Music, Speech, and Drama

Chanteuse Chamber Choir has emerged victorious, claiming first place in the fiercely contested Adult Choir category at the prestigious Newcastle Festival for Music, Speech, and Drama, an annual event organised by dedicated volunteers, that stands as a beacon of opportunity for performers in speech, drama, and music.

The competition, featuring performers from various disciplines, took place 15th-16th March 2024 and witnessed an impressive showcase of talent and artistry.

Under the expert guidance of conductor Sue Brereton-Banks, Chanteuse Chamber Choir captivated audiences with a captivating performance, presenting three contrasting pieces that showcased their versatility and musical finesse. They started with a rousing unaccompanied piece followed by two accompanied pieces with their wonderful accompanist Mr Steve Williams.

Adjudicated by Marilynne Davies, whose credentials as a distinguished member of the British and International Federation of Festivals are well-established. Chanteuse Chamber Choir's attention to detail, intent, and energy from the very first note set them apart from their competitors. The choir's dedication to excellence was evident throughout their performance, earning them the top honours and accolades.

The victory has not only elated the members of Chanteuse Chamber Choir

but has also provided them with a renewed sense of determination to continue sharing their voices with the world. With this triumph, the choir recognises the standard they have achieved and the responsibility to uphold it in their future endeavours.

In a remarkable display of talent and cohesion, Chanteuse Enchantée, the sister choir to Chanteuse Chamber Choir, secured an impressive second place with distinction in the Small Adult Chamber Choir category. Comprising a select ensemble of ladies drawn from the main choir, Chanteuse Enchantée is a new group who are working on musical styles from around the world.

This double success is a testament to the outstanding level of choral singing within the groups and underscores the commitment to excellence upheld by both choirs, as the musical director of both choirs, Sue Brereton-Banks illustrates: "I am so proud of my wonderful ladies with what they have achieved, and the friendship and support that they give to each other as a group."

As the Chanteuse Chamber Choir basks in the glory of their triumph, audiences can anticipate future performances by visiting the choir's website and following their social media channels for upcoming dates and initiatives.

For further information, please visit www.chanteusechamberchoir.co.uk

Memorial Service for Alderman Bill

The Civic Funeral Service for Alderman William 'Bill' Simpson took place at St Mary's Church, Stafford on Monday 8th April, former Mayors of Stafford Borough are honoured with a Civic Service attended by the current Mayor, councillors, and officers of the Council.

The service was led by the Reverend Prebendary Richard Grigson, the Rector of Stafford, and Reverend John Davis, the Town Centre Chaplain, along with members of the family.

A private committal service took place after at Stafford Crematorium. Donations in memory of Alderman Simpson were given in aid of St Mary's Church.

The photo shows Mayor 2015 – 2016 Cllr. Peter Jones presenting Bill Simpson with his Alderman certificate.





The outdoor indoor pool!

What a splashing time at Green Lea First School

Over the last two weeks of the Spring Term, we have been very fortunate to have our own heated swimming pool right on our playground for the children to continue or maybe even begin their swimming journey in.

Our beautiful school is based in the lovely rural spot of Milwich near Stone, so the logistics of being able to give all children swimming lessons off site isn't always possible therefore we thought let's bring the pool to them.



Expert instructors from Time4Sport have been on hand to provide the children with bespoke lessons catering to the needs of all groups. All children including Nursery have been provided with this fantastic opportunity to develop this key life skill. By providing these lessons on site, we have been able to keep the group sizes small so that all children had a lesson that was individual to their needs.

Headteacher, Lindsay Harris, told the Gazette 'The children have absolutely loved it and we are very grateful to the fantastic instructors from Time4Sport who made each lesson enjoyable and developed the children's confidence in the water.'

It has been a fantastic resource, having the heated pool on site as it has meant all children have been able to have several lessons each. At Green Lea First School we 'Learn, Explore and Achieve' and we feel it is really important to be able to teach our children of Green Lea such a valuable life skill'



Donkey joins the congregation!

Reverend Phillip Johnson led members of the congregation, along with a donkey and pony, on a parade along the High Street in Eccleshall on Sunday 24th March, prior to a service held at Holy Trinity Church.



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Bowls Club Annual Lunch

Barlaston Bowls & T.C., on Meaford Road, held their annual Club Lunch on February 18th. Over 30 members enjoyed a wonderful feast, Stone Golf Club was once again the venue, and they looked after everybody very well.

The lunch is an excellent opportunity for members to meet up off-season and renew old friendships. Members were kind enough to donate an excellent selection of raffle prizes, which helped to raise further funds to assist with running the Club.

The occasion is combined with a trophy-giving ceremony where members are rewarded for their achievements in the previous year. Particular mention should go to Steve Kettle who picked up no less than four trophies after an impressively consistent season, and to Keith Simcock who was declared Club Person of the Year.



The Club is always looking for new members so if anyone is looking for some gentle social exercise, in lovely surroundings please come and **give us a try on any Friday afternoon from April onwards**

Eccleshall Civic Amenity Visits

The Eccleshall Parish Council sponsor the bimonthly visits of the special household waste collection trucks to Eccleshall.

The next visit is due on **Saturday 25th May 2024 between 9am and 11am** opposite the Methodist Church in Stone Road.

The next visit after that one, is due on **Saturday 20th July 2024.**



Local estate agent partners with Midlands Air Ambulance Charity to help save lives

Staffordshire-based independent estate agency, James Du Pavey, has pledged its support for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity throughout 2024.

The new partnership will see James Du Pavey help raise vital funds for the pre-hospital emergency service by offering house sellers to opt in for a charity 'for sale' board for a £50 donation on the sale completion. The estate agents will further generate funds for the charity by matching each donation pound for pound.

Every donation will go directly towards the funding of Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's daily lifesaving missions, which rapidly reaches and treats people in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

James Du Pavey, managing director at James Du Pavey, told the Gazette: "We're really excited to be supporting Midlands Air Ambulance Charity this year. We chose this essential emergency service after one of our colleagues was airlifted to Royal Stoke Hospital after suffering from a traumatic injury last year, where because of the charity's medical interventions, he is making a strong recovery."

Our last charity for sale board campaign was hugely successful, in which we look forward to championing Midlands Air Ambulance Charity by helping to fund even more lifesaving missions in 2024."

Jon Cottrell, senior partnerships executive at Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, said: "Our advanced clinical team attend twelve missions each day, responding to some of the region's most critically ill and injured. Partnerships like James Du Pavey are crucial in ensuring our charity can continue to reach and treat those who need it most. Thank you to everyone at James Du Pavey for pledging your support and helping to save lives."

James Du Pavey has also announced its support for the charity as headline sponsors for the **Eccleshall Show which is taking place on Saturday 31st August 2024.** To find out more about Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's vital, lifesaving work in your local area visit midlandsairambulance.com and join the conversation by following the organisation on social media.

Eccleshall Guide Cover Competition

For 26 years now, the editor and publisher of the Eccleshall Guide, Peter Jones, has been able to find a photograph of Eccleshall, suitable for the cover of the Guide.

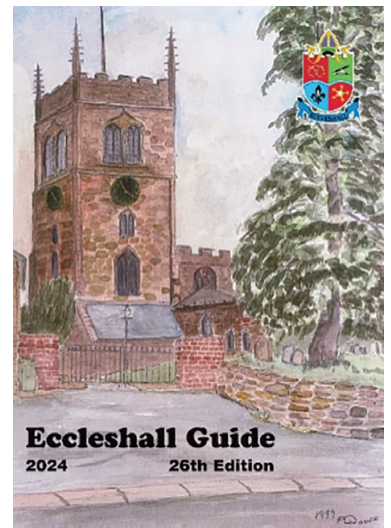
All of the town centre public houses have been on the cover, along with an assortment of other Eccleshall pics, and of course many various photographs of Holy Trinity Church from assorted angles.

The current edition has a painting of Holy Trinity Church, by local man Fred Douce.

Our task for the 27th edition is to find a suitable cover.

If readers have any ideas please do get in touch with Peter Jones at peterwjones@btinternet.com or you can phone him on 01785 851381.

The winning image will appear on the front vcover of the 27th edition.





Great Bridgeford Village Fete

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Saturday 6th July

12:00 – 16:00

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Eccleshall W.I. members getting ready for another meeting

Eccleshall WI - A Success Story

Life with Eccleshall WI

Eccleshall WI is continuing to thrive and over the last few months has enjoyed evenings which have been both informative, challenging and amusing.

With one of our speakers we found out how little we knew about the poppies we wear and see displayed at Remembrance time.

They are so much associated with the British Legion that it came as quite a surprise to learn that they first appeared in New York, hand made by a young woman, who wanted to find a way of remembering those lost in the First World War.



The first poppies she made were given to friends but soon the idea spread across America and Canada, when the Veterans Associations of both countries took over. It was some time before the UK caught on to the idea which has become an enduring tradition.

The same speaker asked us whether we had given any thought to how the Unknown Soldier came to be in Westminster Abbey? Most of us had not, but we were fascinated to hear about the care, detailed work, compassion, and practical help from the then King, which finally brought an unknown soldier from a First World War battlefield to Westminster Abbey.

Another speaker asked us whether we knew how much trees had done for us. Quite a lot as it turned out. He explained how they communicated with each other and supported each other. He went on to explain the many ways they improved the quality of the environment, cleaned the air and helped to stabilise temperatures in our towns and cities, quite apart from their much appreciated beauty he pointed out that life on earth depended on them, and asked us to be more proactive in saving mature trees and woodlands, as it takes 40 years before a tree reaches its optimum influence on our planet.

Members enjoyed a Christmas Lunch at a local hostelry in the December and welcomed our County Chairman in January for a lively question and answer session. The WI can be a bit of a mystery to new members, but all was much clearer once the County Chairman had finished her session.

Our latest speaker told us how she came to be a glass artist. It was a long journey through Art College to America and back to Stone, which many of us had not realised once had a thriving glass making hub.

It was fascinating to follow her career and to see the glass work she was currently producing, some of which can be seen locally. This was followed up with a workshop when we produced our own glass pieces. Not as polished as hers but good enough to satisfy us!

We are about to embark on another WI year, with a programme planned to appeal to all interests, including some new experiences and unusual talks.

If this item has piqued your interest do give Joan a ring on 01785 851412.





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Frank Harrison, posing with Lesley

News from Stone u3a

In March we were privileged to see another great performance by Lesley Smith on her last appearance at Tutbury Castle. This time, she brought the mighty warrior queen Boudicca to life; recounting how she rose to lead the Ancient Iceni tribe in a failed war against the Romans. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and amusing talk, followed by a scrummy cream tea...

Papercraft is a popular group, meeting at Walton Community Centre on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month. The leader, Jennifer Mason, told me a little more about this friendly group.

They usually have nine or ten members attending, but have space for a few more, including men and beginners who are interested to learn. They also chat on a WhatsApp group. Until a few years ago they had a group leader but now it's run by members who research or get an idea from a magazine, and demonstrate it for the group to try. But nobody is expected to lead, and some weeks everyone just does their own thing.



Thanks to Janice for these pics of members and their work



u3a members can also join in many free national Zoom events online. Current ones include laughter yoga, cryptic crosswords, a talk on Turner and others on mindfulness and artificial intelligence.

On Wednesday April 10th the new Croquet season began at Stone Cricket Club (*Lichfield Road*) from 10.30am until 12.30pm The Pétanque group restarted on 3rd April, and meets every first Wednesday of the month at The Stone House from 2.00-4.00 pm. Both are happy to welcome new members who are beginners or already players. So would the Canasta group, meeting on Wednesday afternoons, and the evening Reading group, which meets each third Wednesday in one another's homes and would like two new members.

The Art group at Stone Fire Station on Thursdays from 12.45-2.45 would also like a few more members to join them.

We now have a shiny new website with lots of up to date information and photographs from our groups. Do have a look on stone.u3asite.uk

We can also be found on Facebook, with a Publicity group for non-members, and messages to either will make their way to group leaders.

From Liz Mills



Auntie Joan's shop

The job was to signwrite a shop fascia in a small precinct with the title '*Auntie Joan's craft and cross stitch shoppe*'

The sign was to be hand painted in old english gold letters on a green background and shaded in black, and my client was an ageing lady who had opened recently to cater for ladies who indulged in the art of cross stitch and other gentle pursuits.

The precinct included various trades, one of which was a motor accessories shop which employed a jovial guy named '*Big Malc*', a nice guy who used to take himself off to Blackpool on occasions where he would trawl the many joke shops in the town and come back with bizarre items which he would subject to the residents of our town. Many people, me included, fell foul of his absurd pranks all of which were harmless and designed to create a laugh in our dull old world.

This particular prank created a somewhat unusual result, Big Malc wandered across Auntie Joan's one morning and began to aimlessly fiddle among the items on the counter, while idly chatting about his recent trip to Blackpool, then casually wandered back to the motorist accessory shop having planted (*unknown to auntie Joan*) a device of which she was rudely soon to become acutely aware!

Soon, a haughty looking lady came into the shop and began to browse among the cross stitch kits. There was a sudden '*Barp*' which appeared to come from just below the counter where auntie Joan stood, causing her to jump, and the haughty lady to bury her head among the cross stitch kits. Outside in the precinct, big Malc suppressed a cackle, and fiddled with a hand held remote. There then came a '*fritte-te*' a '*phraaap*' then almost immediately came the device's piece de resistance - an eight second, four octave, entity which gradually increased in volume, accompanied by a horrendous smell, that was caused by a hidden glass phial bursting, prompting the haughty looking lady to emit a snort of disgust and stride rapidly for the door.

That did it!

Auntie Joan caught sight of big Malc lurking in the precinct and she suddenly lost it. She seized a hammer from under the counter and swept her arm around clearing a large space among the items on the counter which exposed the errant device.

'*You horrible disgusting vile despicable person....*' she flared,

She grabbed the device along with its glass ampule of stink bomb mixture, strode outside and smashed the whole caboodle onto the tarmac, which exploded with a stifled scream, then she laid into it with the hammer, then she threw the hammer at Malc's head, missing him by less than an inch!

'*Wooah!!*' bellowed Malc '*You've smashed it to bits....That cost me thirty quid....*'

'*Now it's your turn!*' snarled auntie Joan and stalked menacingly towards Malc, who backed rapidly into his own shop. Auntie Joan followed him in and chased him through the rear door. If she had caught him, she would have done him some serious damage, but Malc stayed well out of her way for the rest of that week.

It was a long time before big Malc went to Blackpool again and when he eventually did venture forth, he didn't bring anything back to test on Auntie Joan.

By Alan Povey

Summer 'Rock n' BBQ Night'

Oulton Village Hall present a Summer 'Rock n' BBQ Night' featuring the popular band 'The Vanz'.

It's on **Saturday 8th June**, at Oulton Village Hall, with the BBQ from 7.00-8.00 pm, and Music from 8.30pm There will be a Bar available for all drinks.

Tickets (inc. food) are just £15.00 pp. and available from Elaine Robinson on 01785 812438 (advance sales only).





Stone Scribblers visit a local hidden gem

In late February, braving the torrential rain, Stone Scribblers visited The Brampton Museum in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Such a hidden gem on our doorstep.

Once a family house, 'The Firs' was the home of the Mosley family, who made their money in Newcastle. It is now a family friendly venue for children and adults alike. The museum inside houses 2000 years of Newcastle history.

The Mosley family were drapers. You may ask what was a draper? They sold button hooks and darning mushrooms, alongside steel enforced corsets. And made bespoke clothing for affluent gentry of the town.

Apart from modern art created by David Hockney and Damien Hirst and others being on display, it has a recreation of a Victorian shopping street which takes you back in time.



Mr Dale's chemists shop or apothecary sold laudanum and wind pills. He ground ingredients by pestle and mortar, creating panaceas for all ailments. The ironmonger Mr Mellard sold candles, hand drills and oil lamps. From pocket watches to longcase clocks which Percy Tildesley made and mended, and it was evident by his mug on the table that he made time for tea during his busy day. The Doctors surgery houses an array of antiquated instruments. A pottery inhaler, stethoscope and forceps, to assist delivery. But why did he have leeches, we wondered.

Sad to see the pawnbrokers shop, where items on display had been taken in from those who had fallen on hard times. The sweet shop brought back memories of Coltsfoot Rock and stick striped humbugs, weighed out from large jars.

Toys of yesteryear brought childhood back into sharp focus and some said I've got one of those in my loft. Cheerfully the teddy bears were enjoying a picnic, which brought us back to the 21st century.

A worthy and enjoyable visit made even more palatable by coffee in the lovely surroundings.

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Stone's sporting teams from the past

By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

It's that time of year when the cricket season is just starting but the football and rugby union seasons are coming to an end, so this month we take a look at some of Stone's sporting teams.

If you can identify any of the people in these photographs, or have images you would like to lend us to add to the Staffordshire Past Track website please contact us at past.track@staffordshire.gov.uk

Over 49,000 other images are available on the Staffordshire Past Track website (www.staffspastrack.org.uk). To find out what's new on the site just click onto the 'Latest Additions' tab. We've recently improved the 'Zoom' facility so that you have more control over zooming in and out of the images. It's very useful if you're looking at detail and particularly so when looking at maps.

If you have any images to lend, or any extra information, please contact the Past Track team: Staffordshire Past Track, Staffordshire Archives & Heritage, Unit G, Beacon Business Park, Weston Road, Stafford ST18 0WL. Telephone 01785 278379. email: past.track@staffordshire.gov.uk You can also keep up to date with what's new on Past Track by 'liking' or following our facebook page.



• Little Stoke Cricket Club, Stone Charity Cup winners 1984.

Back row (left to right): Charlie Goodchild, Dave Jones, Dave Brock, Tim Fielding, Adrian Butters, Doug Hornby.

Front row: Les West, Ian Grisewood, Ken Finney, Peter Tomlinson, Dave Illidge.

Little Stoke Cricket Club were formed in 1946 after the amalgamation of two Stone-based cricket clubs: Aston-by-Stone C.C. and Christ Church C.C. (Staffordshire County Museum)



• Badminton Team, Stone, mid 1970s.

Stone Badminton Club Ladies team pictured at Alleyne's Sports Centre, Stone.

(Mr John Morris)



• Annual dinner, Stone Branch, Cyclists' Touring Club, Stone, 1962-65.

Annual dinner and awards presentation of the Stone Section of the North Staffordshire District Association of the Cyclists' Touring Club, formed in 1962 by Gordon and Irene Smith and Dave Steele. The venue is probably the Darlston Inn, near Stone. Standing far left are Irene and Gordon Smith.

Photographer: Staffs Photo Services, 44 High Street, Stone. (Staffordshire County Museum)



• Stone Hockey Club, 1957.

Stone Hockey Club 1st XI are pictured before their match with Wednesbury at their home ground at Aston-by-Stone on Saturday 26 October 1957.

Front row left to right: G Richardson, T Pearse, L Buckley (Captain), J Lloyd, G Finnemore. Back row: G Boote, J Chetwin, W Swanwick, M Mawditt, P Batchelor, A Williams. This photograph was published in the Stone Guardian on Saturday 2 November 1957. (Mr Ian Hazlehurst)



• Stone Catholics Youth Football Club, 1950-51.

Stone Catholics Youth League Eleven pictured after a game, probably on Crown Meadow where the football pitch was frequently waterlogged.

Back row, from left to right: Ray Selwood (referee), Henry Evans (captain), K. Woodward, G. Brandrick, H. Key, G. Jervis. Front row, left to right: J. Shardlow, D. Warham, B. Potts, R. Lugg, B. Plant, K. Shardlow. (Mrs Sheila Evans)



The Darlaston Inn circa 1910-1920

A potted history of the public house The Darlaston Inn

Literally millions of people have either passed the Darlaston Inn, or in much smaller numbers have called in.

To begin with, looking at the date of 1685, the year that Charles II died, it would appear that very few would have known the Inn was that old.

The pub has gone through a few changes over its lifetime (*and is about to be demolished anytime soon*).

I was the landlord of The Darlo as it was known as from 1977-1984, the road layout being changed to provide a more substantial bridge able to cope with huge loads that came from Alstrom (*formerly The English Electric Co*) in Stafford.

In my early years I lived up the road from the Darlo, so I remember when it was a single carriageway, the road south passing the front of the building and heading for the George and Dragon pub, now on the old A34 road on the other side.

In its much earlier days the building had three uses, a public house, a village bakery, and last but not least, the local lock-up! *All the essentials for a village in them days.*

Everyone will be familiar with the pub and bakery but not quite so with the lock-up, it was what it said, anyone breaking the law, being arrested would be put in the local lockup overnight then carted to Stone to face the beak - local magistrate, the next day.

When I first saw the layout of the pub it struck me that a lot of it didn't make sense, why did the wine and spirits store have bars on the windows, no glass, but

bars and a door that was about 5'8" high, the height of a man at the time of building, it did present a good reason for one to duck or grouse, I'm 6'4".

The door itself could have stopped a rhinoceros!

Little evidence suggested a bakery on first glance, but looking at the roof one could see a stack of chimneys that had no use downstairs, there was however a place where the ovens would have been.

We had a wall removed in the part of the building that would have been for customers of the bakery and found a plaque with a date of 1685 on it.

On the very large car park there had been a space that catered for coach parties, this would have been in the sixties, one of its features was a football ground style turnstile, I've no idea what was about? The building however came to a sticky end when a lorry carrying a large load of cheese came down Bury bank (*opposite the Darlo*) failed to negotiate the bend and finished up with just the rear of the lorry in view right in the middle of the cafe - end of!

All the locals never bought any cheese for ages!

During the 1980's the pub underwent a major renovation, before I left the pub I was asked what I would do with it if it was mine - ackrow prop it up, and punch it out was my reply - nothing is where it should be.

That is exactly what they did - I forgot to mention that I hadn't got the 650k to do it myself.

From Martin Donovan



AGE Concern

Stone & District

Journalist Martin Lewis is a saviour to many of us; probably due to him and the escalating cost of living we are busier now than we've ever been, seeing clients who desperately need our help with many online only services.

We ensure we find time for everyone who makes an appointment, and sometimes even for drop ins, if we can slot you in. Digital exclusion applies to all ages; for those who do not know how to use the internet or have the facility to do so. Pressure is applied to access services digitally, without the offer of alternative methods, this is positive discrimination, and means many will miss out on their entitlement to help or financial support, as well as being unable to participate in ways that are needed in modern day life.

Age Concern Stone and District offer a friendly smile and a chat as we guide our clients through the many questions asked when filling in forms online. Our volunteers use their digital expertise to assist clients to access help and fill in the online forms which can baffle so many people.

We help with Housing Benefit, Pension Credits, Council Tax, Attendance Allowance, and other benefits applications. In applying for a Blue Badge (*this gives you the right to parking concessions if you have a disability or a health condition*) the form asks for a photograph of an exact size, and it needs to be scanned in, we will take your photograph to the specifications needed. A birth certificate, driving licence or passport as proof of who you are, proof of address (*such as a utility bill*) and a few other things are required, they too need to be scanned in. **You do not need to be a driver to apply for a Blue Badge.**

We are often asked for help with tax queries and contacting electricity and gas companies, applying via the telephone means you can be on hold for very long periods of time, which can be very costly if you use a pay as you go mobile. We will make those calls for you and hold on for as long as it takes to get an answer, we will then speak on your behalf once permission is given.

As well as the mundane, we still have time for fun!

Our **coffee mornings are every Friday from 10 am**, Persey the dog sometimes makes a guest appearance in the hope someone might give him a biscuit while his owner isn't looking!

We hold a **lunch club the last Tuesday of the month** (*free transport, pay for your own food and drink*). We also offer transport to hospital appointments, with the return charge to Stoke or Stafford Hospital approximately £13. Our driver will wait for you while you attend your appointment or if required will attend the appointment with you. We are a local charity with no wage bill, all our volunteers are local and give their time and smiles for free (*though a donation is always appreciated*).

We offer a private consultation room with all matters treated in total confidence. You can find us at 15 Station Road Stone, opposite the side of Wetherspoons. **Our opening times are 9.30 - 12.30 Monday Wednesday and Friday** if you call out of hours, please leave a message on 01785 817906 and we will get back to you.

If you like people, we need a few more volunteer drivers, suitable qualifications are, being able to listen, able to smile and a willing attitude.

Finally, our super star volunteer Janice Curtis is raising money to bring help and hope to those affected by dementia. She is taking part in the Alzheimer's Society Trek26. A walk of 26 miles over tough terrain through the Peak District.

She is hoping to raise a modest £300. We believe we can help her to smash that target so if you would like to donate, please pop into our office.

From Jill Hood

50 years of changes to the roads in Stone

By Philip Leason MBE

One of the major changes to the town of the last fifty years are those effecting the road layout of the town. This month I thought we would look at some of them.

Walking down High Street today it is hard to imagine that this was once a two way road with pavements either side. There was a bus stop outside Elkes Cake Shop, later Joules Off Licence (now part of B & M) for the Service number 10 to Hanley. (The stop for the Stafford bus was located by the public conveniences in Station Road and the bus then drove down High Street.)

The only entrance to Mill Street was via High Street and so lorries going to the Cattle Market (now Morrison's Garage) and to the factories located down there had to make the sharp turn opposite the Crown Hotel. On one occasion a vehicle making the turn hit the portico of the Crown and dislodged one of the pillars, also causing it to collapse.

To ease the flow of traffic in the High Street "a one way system" was introduced with traffic going up Crown Street as it is now, but then being able to turn to go down the High Street. There is a lovely story on the first day this was introduced, the police stopped an elderly man driving up the High Street and when he was asked if he knew it was now a one-way street he replied "Yes but I didn't think that applied to residents."

On the subject of Crown Street many readers may remember that until the 1960s the road was not a thoroughfare but was blocked off at the rear of the Crown Hotel.

CHRISTCHURCH WAY

From before the Second World War there were plans to build a by-pass and pedestrianize the High Street. Over the years various schemes were proposed but never came into fruition. The route varied and one of the previous schemes suggested that traffic left the Longton Road and followed the Scotch Brook through the Coppice. As we know the eventual scheme joined the by-pass in Radford Street, with working starting in 1993.



• Construction of Christchurch Way

To make way for the new road thirty-five bodies in the churchyard at Christchurch had to be exhumed by a specialist contractor and were later reinterred.

Many readers may remember the house that once stood on the site where you enter the by-pass, number 11 Radford Street. It was originally the house of the Schoolmasters of Christchurch School in Northesk Street, but was later used as a dental surgery by Mr. Gerry O'Donnell.

Behind the house stood Christchurch Parish

Room, which was used by various organisations for meetings, social events etc. This together with the house previously mentioned was purchased by the former Stone Urban District Council for "highway purposes" and demolished. It was later used for informal car-parking before the land was incorporated into the by-pass.

Near to this land was the Christchurch Youth Building which was used by scouts, cubs, Brownies and Guides.

Before moving on it is perhaps appropriate to mention how the road was named Christchurch Way. Stafford Borough Council is the responsible Authority for the naming of all roads and streets within the Borough area. They decided that as there was a tremendous interest in the name for the new road, they invited members of the public to submit suggestions for consideration either directly or via the Stafford and Stone Newsletter.

Christchurch Middle School also looked at the name as a project, and various pupils put forward names including Falcon Inn Road, Stone Age Road and Water Way Avenue.

However the most popular name among the pupils was Christchurch Way, as suggested by 12 year old Philip Clark.

The Headteacher, Mrs Betty Leslie wrote to Stone Town Council and the Borough Council and pupils wrote to Borough Councillors asking them for their support to name the road Christchurch Way.

All the names that had been submitted were considered by the Development Services Committee on 26th January, 1995 and they felt that as the name Christchurch Way had been nominated by school children, the future generation, they would support the suggestion.

Going back to the route and much of the land was owned by the Bass Brewery who had acquired it following the Joules takeover. Joules had originally purchased the land with a view to possible expansion and while it was not needed rented it to their employees as allotment gardens.

Next to the allotments was the Cattle Market which had been established in 1834. I am sure that many readers will have memories of the market. Until 1957 the Cattle Market was held on a Tuesday but this was changed to a Thursday which caused problems for those attending the market for Thursday was early closing day in Stone. It was largely as a result of this change that early closing day was changed to a Wednesday.

In the days when the licencing laws were more restrictive, public houses closed at 3.00 p.m. but to allow people attending the cattle



• The old Walton Bridge the two ribbed arches of the original bridge on the right

market to buy alcohol, the licencing hours for the Unicorn, the Red Lion and the Crown Hotel were extended to 5.00 p.m. on market days.

In addition to selling livestock the market also sold dressed poultry at a special sale just before Christmas. The Cattle Market closed in May 1994



• Strengthening the walls of the building which is now the Post Office

A little further down the route was a three storey building that had been used by Broadcrown Ltd. The building had originally been a Fustian Mill in the 19th century and was partially destroyed by fire on 26th December, 1993 prior to it being demolished for the construction of the road. Fustian was a type of velvet being a mixture of linen and cotton. Bails of plain fabric were brought to Stone from Congleton and the threads cut by hand to produce the pile. The workers who cut the threads were paid according to the lengths of cloth they had cut and reductions were made if the warp had accidentally been cut as well. Once completed the bails were returned for dyeing. Other buildings which had to be demolished in this area were the old stables and outbuildings of the Falcon Inn (now the Thai Larna). In the 1920's the owners, Bents Brewery, modernised the pub and incorporated a wine bar featuring artificial vines etc. which they named "Wine Land." The name can still be seen on the inn sign on the side wall of the building.

The Falcon remained a pub until the early 1980's when it was sold by Bass (who had taken over Bents). It then became a disco known as "The Doll's House" and later a night club and restaurant known as "Changes."

Later it became a French restaurant and while building work on Ken Rodgers Insurance Office (which was opposite) was being undertaken as part of constructing the road, the office was moved to the old Falcon for a short period.

As part of the preliminary work for the new road archaeological excavations were undertaken at various sites.

In August 1993 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Staffordshire County Council and Seven Trent Water undertook a dig in the old Falcon Yard.

Once the construction of the road had been completed it was formally opened by the then County Councillor for Stone, Councillor John Wakefield on Monday 13th February, 1995.

THE GATES VERUS BOLLARDS SAGA

No article on the construction of Christchurch Way would be complete without mention of the Gates or Bollards Saga.

In 1997 as a result of building Christchurch Way, the County Council allocated 1% of the capital sum of the building of the road for an artistic project to improve the access to the town. Recommendations for the project had been channelled through the Town Council who were in favour of a pair of ornamental gates at the top of the High Street and they had consulted three artists for designs. However they were not satisfied with what they had submitted and so a fourth artist was consulted.

A large number of residents, and particularly the traders in Granville Square and Radford Street were totally opposed to the idea of gates which they felt would shut them off from the rest of the High Street. It was also felt that gates would spoil the vista looking up the High Street and would obscure part of the War Memorial. So on 24th March, 1997 a packed public meeting was held in the Crown Hotel at which it was obvious that the majority of people present objected to the idea of the gates.

So it was decided to hold a survey to canvass the views of residents. As a result of this the Town Council received 24 letters and 150 phone calls in favour of bollards and seven letters and 39 phone calls in favour of the gates. Despite this at the meeting of the Town Council in June where the matter was discussed 10 councillors voted for the gates and 5 for the bollards. The main argument against the bollards was safety as it was feared that children would run into the road. In addition if the bollards were light-weight they could easily be damaged by ram-raiders and if they were too heavy they would be difficult to move. The Councils recommendation for the gates was then passed to the County Highways Committee.

Not to be deterred on 14th July six electors visited the Town Council Offices and completed a form calling for a town meeting to be held over the council's decision to install gates. At the packed meeting held on 23rd July 10 electors voted for the Town Council to hold a poll on whether to install gates or bollards. Leaflets were produced for and against the bollards. One of the leaflets produced opposing the gates read "Bollards to the Council!"

The referendum was held in September and 1,332 voted for the bollards and 1,144 voted for the gates. The poll cost the Town Council over £3,000.

So on Monday 8th September the Area Highways Committee made up of Stafford Borough councillors and Staffordshire County Councillors voted 5-4 in favour of the bollards.

So today we have the very attractive railings depicting the legend of the founding of Stone and bollards to stop the traffic instead of the proposed gates.

WALTON BRIDGE

It is hard to imagine that the bridge which is now pedestrian was the original bridge that crossed the Trent at Walton. Drivers will remember having to give way to lorries and buses to allow them to cross. There was a separate pedestrian bridge alongside it

There is no documentary evidence as to how long there has been a bridge at this location, but there had always been a ford immediately downstream of it. The first reference to a bridge is in the will of Roger Mareschall, Canon of Lichfield who left £5 for the repair of it in his will dated 1317. The bridge was built in a style known as "Early English" which prevailed from 1189 to 1307, and it is therefore probably of this period, notable features of which are the ribbed arches, which can still be seen today.

It is not known how wide the original bridge was or when some rebuilding took place and the semi-circular arches which are there today were added. It is thought that they date from 1660 when the County gave £20 for the repair of the bridge, which had suffered damage during the floods of the previous year.

Out of interest in the 19th century, offenders were placed in the stocks sited "on" Walton Bridge. The last stocks were made by Isac Dutton, a wheelwright. Hopefully he made a good job of them as by fate he was the first man to be placed in them.

Prior to World War II, a contract was drawn up to build a Stone By-Pass, which included the demolition of the old bridge and building a new one. When war broke out the contract was cancelled.

The new bridge was designed by Mr R Green and the main contractors were Galliford & Sons Ltd.

In conjunction with the new bridge, the existing road had to be re-aligned and widened between Walton Roundabout and Star lock. This meant moving the Walton War Memorial from beside the old bridge to Walton Community Centre.

At the same time as this work was being undertaken the Stone Town Council erected a footbridge over the Scotch Brook to give pedestrian access on to Crown Meadow. The wooden side rails were made by Stone carpenter, George Shufflebottom, and paid for by people subscribing to have an inscription carved on them.

The new bridge was official opened by the County Councillor for Stone, Councillor Michael Shenton on 28th June 1984. The first vehicle to cross the bridge after the opening was a horse drawn dray owned by Galliford's.

Over the years there have been some road schemes which have been proposed and then shelved, one of these was proposed by Fradley's when they were constricting the Aston Lodge housing development. The company propose building a 3 lane road up Pingle Lane and widening the railway bridge for another access onto the estate.

Then Fradley's decided to build a block of retirement homes between Pingle Lane and Jordan Way and the road was shelved. Later the idea of retirement homes was also scrapped and the lane remains as it is today. I hope that the above will be back memories to some readers and will be of interest to others.

Please help us to keep the heritage of Stone alive for generations to come. If you have any photographs relating to the anything mentioned here please contact Staffordshire Past Track. All photographs will be treated with the utmost care and returned safely to their owner after they have made digital copies.

Philip Leason



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Gazette Motoring

Honda Jazz 1.5i MMD Crosstar Advance

Syd Taylor takes the Crosstar, and Vince for a spin

Seldom do manufacturers get it right when naming their motor cars. When they do, the clouds part and the sun shines. A new dawn, a new hope.

My elevated mood is the result of getting to know the cool SUV inspired Jazz Crosstar, with its two tone colour scheme, roof rails, distinctive front grille and elevated ride height. Years back when weekend Dixieland used to fill the smokey air in crowded pubs, a phrase 'HAPPY JAZZ' used to be deployed by the cognoscenti. It denoted music that was sung and played with a smile and received with nods of approval, grins of delight and plenty of feet tapping.

That was then. In today's world pubs have shut, music is the stuff you knew in lifts and neon lit aisles and merriment is prohibited as a public order offence. Oh gloom!

But what is this? Why does one smile again? It's simple. You takes the phrase 'happy jazz', you spins the wheel and before you can say Basin Street Blues backwards, you have the self charging Honda Jazz Crosstar. Here is a hybrid not ashamed to blow its own trumpet right in the face of market rivals. Huff and puff as they might, they simply turn purple in muted consternation. When it comes to hitting the high notes and gracing the highways and byways with polyrhythmic pleasure, the Jazz Crosstar, with extra ground clearance is the only cool cat in town.



Rather than use his bus pass he climbed in and boogied all the way to Brum

"Gimme the lowdown" He said.

I reminded him that the increased ride height had made it easier for him to enter and that the upbeat styling lightens the spirits, pointing out the smart interior that harmonises comfort and practicality - even having water repellent seat fabric.

I showed him the 'lift and fold' capabilities of the 'Magic' seats. He noticed the hidden storage compartments but as a passenger he was denied access to the pleasure the driver gets from the peppy petrol - electric hybrid system comprising a 107 PS, 1.5 petrol engine that combines beautifully with a 122PS electric motor and smooth CVT transmission. It's probably the best hybrid system yet - as evidenced by the outstanding economy. Honda claims a combined 58.9 mpg overall but that's the understatement of the year. Driving gently in eco mode I got over 75mpg. I could hardly believe it.



It's so lively and agile to drive, roomy, modern yet comfortingly familiar that behind the wheel you can't help but be happy. None of this detracts from a practical versatility that transforms utilitarian concepts into jolly positives. Lift and fold seating configurations are many and you can fold everything flat to get van-like capacity. So if stuffed giraffes with detachable necks are your bag, you can pack them in here on your way to the Smethwick Natural History Museum.

With this in mind I called in on an old school jazz musician. Vince Pepper plays saxophone with a combo comprising ancient enthusiasts. They call themselves The Swindling Syncopators. They certainly don't swindle their audiences with a playlist of happy jazz anthems.

"Wot you doin' 'ere?" He demanded.

"I'm here to show you the new Honda Jazz Crosstar self charging hybrid"

"The 'what' jazz?"

"It's a car. Fancy a spin?"



Most of the time around town on light load it drives on electric with the engine only coming into play when the batteries need charging - so it drives like an all electric car. On the open road and up to speed the engine comes into play unobtrusively. All this combines to take you to near 110mph - while at the same time you enjoy precise and nimble handling and a smooth and quiet ride.

It's packed with the sort of eco-conscious technology that hits the right note today; yet if you enjoy a little up tempo vivacity there is poke enough in sport mode to please those who like it hot.

My reward for introducing Vince to the £28,550 Jazz Crosstar 1.5i-mmd hybrid Advance was an invitation to the next gig by The Swindling Syncopators. This was to take place in a former bank building now converted into a craft gin palace. It all sounded a bit uncertain to me - unlike the Jazz Crosstar with its metronomic pulse of pleasure. Certainly this is the right car with which to banish the day's blues.





London Concours 2024 set for spectacular McLaren showcase

The London Concours, the capital's leading automotive summer garden party, runs from the **4th to the 6th of June** has announced an exciting addition to the festivities for 2024. For the first time in its illustrious history, June's event – which brings the very finest cars to the heart of the City – will welcome a stunning fleet of 50 McLarens, honouring the iconic marque's rich heritage.

As a partner to the London Concours event, McLaren London will showcase the latest models from the British marque, providing a captivating exploration of the brand. From the pioneering McLaren F1 to the cutting-edge 750S, attendees will have the opportunity to witness the evolution of McLaren's design and engineering prowess.

Founded by Bruce McLaren in 1963, the eponymous brand swiftly made its mark in motorsports, introducing the McLaren M1A in the first year. Years of racing success followed both under the stewardship of the founder and of Teddy Mayer, with the brand clinching its first World Constructor's championship in 1974.

A fundamental moment for the company came when McLaren merged with Project 4 Racing Team in 1984, before introducing groundbreaking carbon fibre composite technology to racing for the first time with the MP4/1. Between 1984 and 1991, McLaren dominated Formula 1, winning seven world driver's championships.

In 1992, McLaren launched the legendary McLaren F1. At the time it was the only road-legal vehicle capable of achieving over 200 miles per hour.

A shift in focus to road cars began in 2010 with the establishment of McLaren Automotive. A year later, the McLaren MP4-12C was uncovered. Boasting a 592-horsepower twin-turbo V8 that would propel it from 0 to 60 mph in 2.8 seconds, the MP4-12C was the start of an outstanding period for the brand.

Subsequent models, including the hybrid-powered McLaren P1, showcased McLaren's commitment to innovation. Pushing the boundaries with the track-focused McLaren Senna, open-top McLaren Elva, and the zenith of drag-reduction; the McLaren Speedtail.

McLaren's Sport Series debuted a line-up of more accessible sports cars, with the 540C, 570S, and 570GT developed with more creature comforts in mind. Over time, new models joined the ranks starting with the McLaren 600LT in 2018, followed by the 620R in 2019. However, by 2021 the McLaren Artura had become the standard bearer for the Sports Series segment.

The McLaren 720S, introduced in 2017, exemplified the pinnacle of their Super Series until it was replaced in December by the 750S.

This is a mere glimpse into the upcoming event, where a stunning array of machinery will take centre stage. Stay tuned for further class announcements in the weeks and months ahead as we approach the anticipated 8th edition of London Concours.

More information and tickets at londonconcours.co.uk/



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