

# Celebrating 40 Years in Style

Celebrations on the weekend of the 31st October

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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!

#### Can It Get Anymore Christmassy!

edition of the Gazette.

Unfortunately, we start the magazine with the sad news of Stella Winsor's passing. Stella was not only a kind and caring woman, she was a determined and strong one too. She was part of the group of volunteers who founded the Stone and District Stroke Club, who celebrate their 40th birthday this year, and then, in 2006, she opened Stone Alzheimer's Drop-in Centre.

Stella gave her life to caring for others,

and will be very much missed by all those who were lucky enough to have met her, myself included.

We never publish obituaries in the Gazette, there wasn't even one for Paul or Carol, the founders of the magazine, however, Stella tirelessly did so much for the people of Stone, and beyond, that it felt only right to remember and honour her life, thank you to her good friend Chris Handley, for writing and sending in a tribute to her on page 6.

Inside this time you'll find some great photos from Martin Robinson, who visited Eccleshall Show, the date was just to late to make it into the last mag, also he was on Stone High Street, camera in hand for the Celebrating Emergency Services Day and Stone Classic Car Show.

Gazette reader, Euan Manning, has sent in some photos he took at the Eccleshall District Annual Ploughing & Hedge-Laying Match, including some with a birds eye view, taken from a drone, it's the first time I've ever seen a ploughing match from above!

Birthday celebrations for Stone and District Stroke Club who celebrated their

Welcome to your November/December 40th, and to The Crown Wharf Theatre for their 1st, and The Marquetry Group celebrating 30 Years too.

Congratulations go to Rooftop Studios' Maria, who has Secured a place at a prestigious performing arts school, and to Stone u3a who were awarded at the National 'Discovery Award'

Well done to everyone who helped with the annual Phil James Charity Cricket Match, which raised an incredible £9835.

Stone Town Council's Remembrance Sunday takes place on Sunday 9th November at Walton and Stone High Street, with Armistice Day been marked on Tuesday 11th November in Granville

And then Christmas Officially Starts!! with the biggest night of the year in Stone, the Christmas Lights Big Switch-On, from 5pm Thursday 20th November, get there early to secure your spot!

Keeping it festive, there are Christmas Fairs at St Saviour's and Great Bridgeford Village Hall, and the Advent Windows return to the high street from December 1st, with a daily window unveiling and Christmas Carol.

There's Concerts coming up, at Sandon Hall, Newport Music Club and Oulton to name just a few. The Stone Church Services for Christmas are inside, also details of The Holy Trinity Christmas Tree Festival, and Stone Christmas Markets.

In the villages, Hilderstone's 'It's Christmas!' returns, and Chebsey have a Christmas Afternoon Tea, with Santa! Can it get anymore Christmassy!

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy new year.

Dan Mitchell 27/10/25

# OF STONE





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#### Welcome To Peter Bowers Opticians

The history of Peter Bowers Opticians dates back to the 1930s, with Peter's grandfather opening his own watch making, optical and jewellery shop in Silverdale near Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Both Peter's parents qualified as ophthalmic opticians and had, at different times, independent optical practices in both Stone and Newcastle-under-Lyme, paving the way for Peter to establish his own practice.

Situated on Stone High Street, Peter Bowers Optometrist is celebrating 40 years this year, cementing a strong family foundation of providing optical services in Staffordshire.

After a career establishing a reputation for clinical excellence in Stone, Peter Bowers retired in 2019. Now Alison, Kelly and Georgina, along with their team, look after your eyes and ears.

Alison has been at Peter Bowers for nearly 30 years and both Kelly and Georgina leading into the future of eyecare for the community of Stone and surrounds. Our qualified team are passionate about delivering exceptional service to everyone who comes to see us.



MOSCOT TIFFANY&CO. (

GUCCI

TOM FORD

We are delighted to announce that we are **Celebrating** Our 40th Anniversary at Peter Bowers Optometrists! On Friday October 31st 9am - 7pm and Saturday

November 1st, 9am - 5.30pm we would love for you to visit the practice and celebrate with us.

This special milestone would not be possible without you. We'll have brand exhibitions from Tom Ford, Gucci, Moscot and Tiffany alongside the exceptional lens quality of our Essilor lenses.

Our qualified dispensing opticians will be on hand to offer their expertise with complimentary styling consultations.

Exclusively on the day, there will be 15% off complete prescription eyewear and non-prescription sunglasses. We'll also be offering 50% off the second pair of lenses from Essilor.

Prosecco, coffee and nibbles will be served throughout the day for you to enjoy whilst you browse!

To book an eye examination or styling consultation in advance, please call us on 01785 813902.

We hope to see you there!

#### **Opening Hours**

Mon - Fri: 9.00am - 5.30pm Sat: 9.00am - 4.00pm Sun: CLOSED

63A High Street, Stone, ST15 8AD T:01785 813902 www.peterbowersopticians.co.uk



## **Charity Cheques Presented Following** Successful Stone Carnival Week

A special charity presentation evening was held at St. Dominic's Social Centre, Stone, on Friday 24 October, marking the culmination of this year's outstanding fundraising efforts by the Stone Carnival Committee

Three cheques, each worth £1,200, were presented to local charitable organisations: Stone First Responders, Stone Minds Matter, and Stone Alzheimer's Club.

Additional funds raised will be dispersed to other community groups, further extending the carnival's positive impact. The funds were generated during Stone Carnival Week, held over eight days from Sunday 31 May to Sunday 8 June, and organised entirely by a team of dedicated local volunteers. Led by committee chair Alex Heaton, the group worked tirelessly to deliver a programme packed with activities for all ages, celebrating the spirit of community involvement.

Their efforts drew tremendous support from residents and visitors alike, reinforcing the carnival's reputation as one of the town's most cherished annual

traditions.

Among those attending the cheque presentation were Stone Town Mayor, Councillor Jason Metters, who praised the volunteers for their exceptional dedication to civic pride and charitable giving. High Sheriff Timothy Gillow also commended the town for once again uniting to support vital organisations that provide essential services to local people.

Representatives from each of the beneficiary charities expressed heartfelt thanks and shared how the donations will directly aid their ongoing work - from emergency response and mental health support for young people to creating a safe, welcoming space for those living with Alzheimer's and their carers.

As the celebrations concluded, attention turned to the future. Alex Heaton confirmed that planning is already underway for Stone Carnival 2026, which promises another exciting showcase of community engagement, entertainment, and fundraising in support of three new worthy causes: Katherine House Hospice, The Green Bus, and Chuckles Production.

The success of this year's fundraising once again highlights the generosity and community spirit of the people of Stone and their generous Sponsors. Through their collective effort, the town continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who rely on its muchvalued charitable organisations.







Stone Alzheimer's Club



Stone Minds Matter



Stone Community First Responders

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#### We Remember Stella Winsor 1931 - 2025

Members of the Stone community were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Stella Winsor, who passed away peacefully at Autumn House on September 8th at the age of ninety-four. Born in Wallasey, Birkenhead in 1931 and growing up through the Second World War, Stella displayed many of the attributes of her generation – fortitude, determination, and a no-nonsense attitude to life.

She joined the British Red Cross as a volunteer in 1958, when her three children were small, after responding to an advert in a local paper, and this was to be the start of over 60 years of volunteering. She was always kept busy with her Red Cross duties, including several sessions at the Royal Festival Hall. In the early 1980's Stella moved to Stone with her husband Dennis and continued her Red Cross service, soon becoming their voluntary coordinator for the Stone area. She organised fund-raising events and collections and provided first aid training for a number of local groups including youth organisations like the Scout and Guide movements and ran courses for the Service section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme in local schools. She was immensely popular with the young people, delivering the training with humour which enthused many of them to become trainers themselves.

In 1985, Stella was one of a group of volunteers who founded the Stone and District Stroke Club and, in 1998, she took over as the club's Main Organiser, a role she continued to fill for 20 years until poor health made it impossible for her to carry on. Nevertheless, she continued to attend meetings as an honorary member as often as possible and was always at hand to offer suggestions, encouragement and advice to members and volunteers alike.

When her beloved husband Denis was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, Stella very quickly realised that there was a lack of local support both for sufferers and their carers, the only provision being a drop-in centre which met monthly at a location several miles away. Never one to sit back, Stella decided that something needed to be done, grabbed the bull by the horns, and set about improving the situation.

She identified a perfect venue in the centre of town, managed to source funding from a local businessman to cover the cost of the rent, arranged for advertising to attract members, recruited volunteers to help make teas and coffees and opened the doors of the Stone Alzheimer's Drop-in Centre for the first time in October 2006. She only 'retired' when forced to do so for health reasons.

Both Stone and District Stroke Club and Stone Alzheimer's Group continue to thrive, offering a valuable service where it is most needed, and this is Stella's legacy to the community she loved.

There is no doubt that Stella's strong Christian Faith played a huge part in the way in which she lived her life and interacted with others. She was a much-loved member of Church at the Crossing (formerly Stone Baptist Church) for 30 years and is fondly remembered for the way she always found time to listen to others, often ending up laughing with them.

Stella's selfless attitude put the needs of before her own and her others

dedication to improving their lives won her the admiration of all who knew her.

Her efforts were recognised by the presentation of several prestigious awards, namely....

- The British Red Cross Badge of Honour which is presented in recognition of exceptional service
  - The Stone and Eccleshall Gazette Citizen of the Year Award for 2005
  - The Lions Clubs International Centennial Award for Outstanding Service to the Community in 2017 and, most importantly,
  - The Queens Award for Voluntary Service in 2017

Stella always made time for people, putting their needs before her own. Her enthusiasm and drive motivated and inspired others to become volunteers, thus ensuring that her legacy will continue to flourish well into the future. She will be sorely missed.

#### From Chris Handlev

Stella's funeral took place on Thursday 2nd October at 1.00pm at Christchurch.







**Certificates for young first aiders** 

Mrs. S. Winsor, Barnsley Centre organiser of the British Red Cross Society, presents first aid certificates to members of the Dodworth Youth Group of the society at the Mechanics Institute, Dodworth.





Pictured are Sylvia Loughhead whose nomination swung the verdict, Stone Town Mayor, Mike Leese, Margaret Goodall who made the presentation which included a small bursary and the Stone Citizen of he Year for 2005, Stella Winsor.

#### The Stone Citizen of the Year Award for 2005



Twenty up for the Stroke Club in Stone ..

Above - The Stroke Club, launched by Stella celebrates their 20 year birthday in 2005 **Top left** - Stella (on the left) in her early British Red Cross days as a volunteer **Top right** - Stella receiving her Stone and Eccleshall Gazette Citizen of the year award Middle - "Mrs. S Winsor, Barnsley Centre organiser of the British Red Cross Society, presents first aid certificates to members of the Dodworth Youth Group.

Bottom left - The opening of the Autumn Fair, organised by the Barnsley branch of the British Red Cross



# From Rock Bottom To 70k Followers: The Healing **Power Of Creativity**

Jenny Hardacre, a local artist and business owner based in Stone, has gone from living her worst life, to living her best, all thanks to a paintbrush.

Jenny explains "Just a few years ago, I was in a controlling rela-tionship that left me feeling worthless and broken. One night during lockdown, I found myself on the floor kitchen being told I was "useless."



That was the moment I decided to leave and it became the turning point that changed my entire life.

Back at my mum's house, I picked up a paintbrush for the first time in years. Painting reduced my overwhelmed mind, and gave me peace, purpose, and confidence again. What started as therapy became transformation.

Fast forward to today, I've built a thriving art for self-care business. I now help adults across the UK, and worldwide, reconnect with creativity and rebuild confidence through

My community has grown to over 70k members, and I've launched a successful online course, featured on the front page of unstoppable magazine, and most recently I had the privilege to share the stage at Business Mastery Live in . Leeds with Levi Roots and Grace Andrews (Steven Bartlett's former brand & editorial director at Flight Story)

My story is one of resilience, self-belief, and the healing power of creativity. I'd love to share my journey with Gazette readers, hopefully showing them how creativity can help people overcome hardship, rebuild their lives, and even create a business they love."

You can find out more at www.jennyhardacre.art/ membership







# **Eccleshall Show - Saturday 30th August**

Despite the gloomy weather forecast for the day the show was as enjoyable as ever, with big crowds enjoying the vast programme of events and displays.

This must be one of the most friendly and enjoyable summer events in the area,

everything being so well organised and marshalled. We look forward to attending next year's event in this lovely rural setting.

























# **STONE PREPARES FOR THE BIG SWITCH-ON 2025! HURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER**

Thursday 20th November will see Stone Town Council staging the annual switch-on of the town's Christmas lights.

The event opens at 5pm, with Kath Stanway as compere for the evening and entertainment leading up to the switch-on including the pupils from Alleynes Drama Society performing scenes from their Christmas pantomime, Cinderella, and of course the combined schools' choir, this year led by Mr Harrison from Christchurch Academy.

At 7:00pm we will get to the main event - the turning on of the lights. This year the lights will be switched on by the Town Mayor, Councillor Jason Metters, and of course, Father Christmas! They will be joined by the winners of the Mayor's Christmas Card competition.

The ever-popular Warwick's Funfair will be set up in the Market Square and down the High Street, and there will be food stalls, trade stalls, and charity stalls with all manner of things to buy and win.



 The lights being switched on here last year by the Town Mayor, Councillor Philip Leason, joined by Father Christmas and the winners of the Mayor's Christmas Card competition.



• Always a packed High Street - get there early to get the best spot!

We are excited to welcome Alleynes students to perform scenes from their pantomime this year. We will again be putting on a fantastic show, with a full programme of entertainment and even Santa himself putting in an appearance. This is always a hugely popular event for all age groups, and I hope you will join us on the evening to welcome the Christmas season to Stone.

Chairman

Council's

and Town Promotion

The Council would like to thank Stafford Borough Council's High Street Boost campaign and the UK Government who have provided funding to contribute to this year's Christmas Lights Switch On event.





# Gazette

## NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Stone Christmas Markets

The markets will take place on Sunday 23rd November and 14th December 2025 at 10.00am -3.00pm in Stone High Street.

If you have any queries, please email: traders@ stonefooddrink.org.uk

#### Sandon Hall Concert

The Chanteuse Ladies Choir will perform an 'Evening of Christmas music and much more' at Sandon Hall on Wednesday December 3rd at 7.30pm.

Light refreshments and a Bar will be available on the evening. Tickets are available from 07976 540491 or 07972 838140. In support of All Saints Church.

#### Hilderstone's 'It's Christmas!'

Hilderstone's "It's Christmas!" annual event will take place on Saturday 20 December.

The event will feature a Christmas Ensemble Choir, sketches, musical numbers and helpers but we need a company to make it work.

Absolutely no experience is necessary - the event is a fun, enjoyable way to meet people.

If you're interested in helping in any way at all please contact Andy at andyreiss@beyondthebarricade.com

#### Worston Halloween Fireworks

There is a Halloween Fireworks & Family Night at The Mill at Worston, ST18 9QA on Friday 31st October, 8:00 pm.

Join us for a spectacular, safe and family-friendly Halloween alternative to trick or treating! This event includes: Children's party & kids' disco, Stilt walker, Fire show, Spectacular fireworks display

We encourage all attendees to wear fancy dress - let's make it magical for all the family. Entry includes all entertainment.

Tickets can be purchased at the bar on the night or in advance at www.ticketsource.co.uk/themillatworston

#### Christmas Fair at St Saviours

St Saviours Church, Aston by Stone are holding their Christmas Fair on Saturday 22nd November at Aston Village Hall. Doors open at 2 pm

There will be interesting stalls including Crafts, White Elephant, Raffles, tombola also Woodworking Willow & Corn Craft and more.

Refreshments will be available throughout the afternoon.Come and enjoy!

#### CU@4 at St. Michael's

Looking for a fun and engaging way to worship together as a family? Join us for our all-age worship service at St. Michael's Church, Stone.

CU@4 takes place on the third Sunday of each month. Each session has a different theme with children's games and craft activities for all ages. Refreshments are provided.

The next CU@4 is 4.00pm till 5.00pm on Sunday 16th November and 21st December

Come along and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming environment where you can connect, learn, and grow in faith together. We can't wait to see you there!

#### Jelly Tots Toddler Group

Looking for a welcoming space where your little ones can play? Why not come along to Jelly Tots, a vibrant toddler group that meets every Tuesday at St Michael's Church from 9.30am till around 10.30am.

With fun games, engaging activities, and a friendly atmosphere, Jelly Tots offers a wonderful opportunity for toddlers and their parents/carers to explore, play, and make new friends. No child is too young - come along and have a coffee and a chat.

Whether you're a parent, grandparent, or carer, all are welcome at Jelly Tots. Why not come and experience a community that's as warm and joyful as its name?







## The Holy Trinity Christmas Tree Festival

The 7th Annual Holy Trinity Christmas Tree Festival takes place between **27th** and 30th November, at Holy Trinity Church, Eccleshall.

It's FREE ENTRY and there will be Hot & Cold Drinks, Home Made Cakes, Mince Pies, & Snacks on sale.

> The opening times are Thursday 27 Nov 5 - 7pm, Friday 28 Nov 10 - 5pm, Saturday 29 Nov 10 - 5pm And Sunday | 30 Nov | 11 - 5pm

Come & experience a truly Christmasy event & experience a wonderful display of individually decorated Christmas trees. For more information see our Facebook page @holytrinityeccleshall

The photos above are just a few taken from last years Festival.

If you would like a tree in the display at the Festival they cost £39 per tree (Yours to keep at the end of the festival).

For that you get a 5ft fresh cut, Nordman fir tree, plus the loan of a tree stand. (£18) tree stand purchase - optional)

Then come along and decorate your tree on Wed 26th and Thurs 27th November between 10-3pm.

You can have any theme or showcase business/organisation. Then collection will be Mon 1st December between 10am and 3PM

You can apply for a tree online at https://eccleshall.church/christmastree-festival

# **Unearthed** - New Paintings by Ed Jeavons At Stone Heritage Centre

This November, Staffordshire artist Ed Jeavons presents Unearthed, a solo exhibition of new paintings at the Stone Heritage Centre.

Through layered abstraction, Jeavons explores painting as a process of excavation - building, eroding and unearthing surfaces in search of something previously unseen or felt. The works suggest landscapes without depicting specific places, offering instead a space for reflection on memory, material and belonging.

The exhibition opens with a Private View on Thursday 6 November, 6-8pm and runs until Saturday 29 November (open Thursday-Saturday, 11am-4pm).

Following the exhibition, students from local schools and colleges will present Creative Responses to Unearthed (8-20 December), showcasing work made in workshops led by the artist.

Venue: Stone Heritage Centre (Joules Fire Station), 13 Newcastle Street, Stone,

Dates: 6-29 November 2025 (Thurs-Sat, 11am-4pm) Private View: Thursday 6 November, 6–8pm.



# Reading Fun At Stone Library

1st Walton Rainbows recently enjoyed a visit to Stone Library as part of their Book Lovers Badge.

They discovered what the difference was between fiction and non-fiction books.

Joy, from Stone Library, read them a story and also sang with them. The girls particularly enjoyed looking at some of the new children's books that had recently arrived at the library. Jane West, leader, commented, "the Rainbows really enjoyed their visit and a big thank you to Joy for making their visit such an enjoyable and informative one".



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FOOD HYGIENE RATING







# Freedom of the Parish awards at Parish Council Civic Service

The annual Civic Service took place on Sunday 12th October 2025, as part of a well-attended Holy Trinity Church service Eccleshall, led by the Reverend Phillip Johnson

Chairman of the Eccleshall Parish Council read the first lesson in the form of a poem and the second lesson was ready by Parish Councillor Peter Jones.

Three 'Freedom of the Parish' awards were presented by the Chairman Ros Taylor and each received a special plaque.

The plagues marked their individual achievements and contribution to the community over many years

John Ariklitis or John the Chippy as he was more commonly known, for serving the people of Eccleshall and beyond, offering work experience to many young people in the parish over more than 45 years, and encouraging them to grow.

Gill Bertram awarded for her role as a

founding member of the Ecclian Society, and contribution to Eccleshall Open Gardens, for not only opening her garden but fundraising by selling plants and proving and serving refreshments, in support of the Ecclian Society and charities. Gill also entered her garden in the National Garden Scheme.

John Baldry was granted Freedom of the Parish and presented with it at a separate ceremony some weeks before by the Chairman and the award was acknowledged at the church service at the same time as the other three.

John was awarded recognition for his contribution to keeping the local library open and dedication to supporting day to day operation in conjunction with the Eccleshall Mercia Rotary Club.

He also recruited a volunteer team to run the library and kept it going during covid.



Freedom of the Parish awardees





John Ariklitis (Left) and John Baldry (Right) with Ros Taylor Eccleshall Parish Council Chairman



John Ariklitis, with sons George left and Nick right, and their children.



## Stone Old Alleynians FC Girls Section Team Photo 2025

It was the annual photoshoot day for the girls section at Stone Old Alleynians FC. The girls section is the largest female club in Staffordshire, with 200 active female players, ranging from u6 to open-age, where this season has seen the long-awaited introduction of two ladies teams, spanning a membership closing in on 500 people.

As can be seen, 191 active members were present for this incredible photoshoot, which grows in size every year, with the cameraman moving ever-further backwards!

Additionally, the two ladies teams have started their seasons very well, with 100% records several weeks in. The first team compete in the Staffordshire Premier Division, with the developmental, second team, who draw upon many of the older present junior players, competing in Division One.

Managing the first team is the very experienced Dave Wright, moving to the Club via spells at both Port Vale and Newcastle Town Ladies, whilst Adam Johnson heads up the second team, utilising many of his current u18 team.

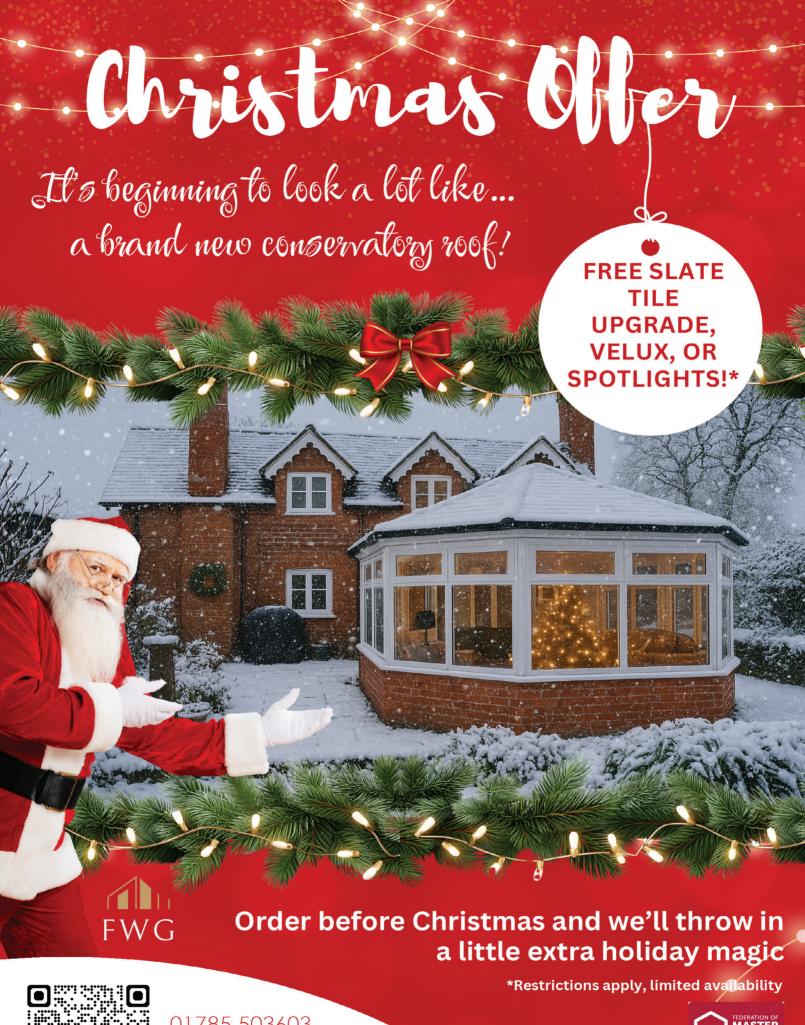
Chairperson, Richard Jones told the Gazette: "The size of the girls section is phenomenal, with sixteen teams playing all over the county and

further a field, on Saturday mornings. What is nice, is that we now have a full pathway from junior girls into open-age football. A number of the two ladies teams are comprised of current junior players or ex-junior players who are now over 18.

We have worked hard on this for several years to get the right structure in place and didn't just jump straight into it. This was the final piece in the jigsaw for the whole club, including boys, veterans, adult, disability sections, whereby to uphold our 3-Star FA Accreditation, we needed an open-age female team. Not only did we do that, but we've got more than enough players for two ladies teams! Across the whole Club we have 1600 registered members, making it the biggest in the Midlands area.

More recently, the ladies first team experienced their first taste of FA Cup football, narrowly losing away to Halesowen Town Ladies in the opening round, again a great achievement to be competing in the biggest and most prestigious football competition in the country.

In order to achieve what we have achieved, we are exceptionally grateful to all of the volunteers that give up their time to make the club the success that it is today. We hope to continue what we are doing and are very welcoming to both new players and volunteers alike".





01785 503603 WWW.FEELWARM.CO.UK CONTACT@FEELWARM.CO.UK







# We're All In Bloom Together

Have you strolled through Stone recently and thought, "We have a lovely town, but it could use a bit of a spruce up," then you're not alone and we have the answer.

Stone in Bloom, the town's valued gardening group that's been quietly brightening borders and breathing life into messy areas, is getting a fresh new look and will be joining forces with Wendy Lewis and her band of volunteers. If you've spotted a cheerful duo armed with green bags and litter pickers strolling through Stone, chances are you've seen Wendy Lewis and her husband in action litter picking. Stone in Bloom is relaunching, and reuniting with another group of unsung heroes, green thumbs are joining forces with those who bravely battle rogue rubbish to form a new, united front in the fight against brambles and burger boxes.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener, a bin-bag-wielding ninja, or just someone who thinks Stone deserves to shine a little brighter, you're invited to a special gathering at Bod in the Market Square Stone on November 17th at 7pm. It's a chance to meet the team, share ideas, and enjoy a warm space and a chat. Bods' manager Darren has kindly promised the venue, and it would be a lovely gesture to support the venue by treating yourself to a drink or two while you're there.

Why now? Because with Stone in Blooms' volunteer numbers dwindling, we would have been daft to turn down a helping hand in a town that thrives on teamwork. The town needs a little extra TLC, let's be honest, that litter isn't going to pick itself up. Streetscene do an amazing job, but volunteers can reach the parts off the beaten track which they can't.

Who's invited? Everyone, representatives are welcome from Community groups, schools, local businesses, and anyone who's ever muttered "someone should do something about that". This is an opportunity to volunteer, you don't need to join a committee, there's no membership fee just the will to come out now and then to help, the time you put in is entirely up to you.

So come along on November 17th, bring your ideas, your enthusiasm, and maybe a friend or two. Let's give Stone the glow-up it deserves and tackle one flowerbed and footpath at a time.

Because when it comes to community pride, we're all in bloom together.

If you would like further details call Jill Hood (Chairman) 077364 13097 or Secretary Tracey 07545 780935



## Chebsey Christmas Afternoon Tea with Santa

Come and join us for our **Special Christmas Afternoon Tea with Santa, on Saturday 13th December, between12.00pm to 4.30pm** at Chebsey Parish Hall
(Sittings at 12.00, 1.30pm and 3.00pm)

Only £12 per person. Includes tea/coffee, sandwiches, scone, mince pie and home-made cakes etc.

Everyone is welcome, *Pre-booking required.* To book ring Marg 07514 237465/Sandra 07736 324132

\* Please inform us of any special dietary requirements



From left, Jane Mitchell, Ed Conway and Carole Field

#### An Afternoon of Art, Music and Style in Salt

Salt Village Hall was transformed into a haven of creativity and charm on Saturday, 14th September, when Sue Chatterton's talented watercolour group unveiled their latest exhibition.

The afternoon was not only a celebration of artistic skill but also a delightful social occasion that will surely be remembered as one of the highlights of the village calendar.

At the heart of the exhibition was a special feature: a collection inspired by Ed Conway - singer, entertainer, and master of many instruments. The artists captured both his presence and the spirit of his music with sensitivity and flair, and visitors were impressed with the standard of the artwork. The atmosphere was one of admiration both for the artists and Ed who brought so much joy through performance.

The event was crowned with the announcement of Ed's personal choice of painting to take home. The honour went to Carole Field, whose work stood out for its warmth and originality and attention to detail. Her painting will now grace Ed's home, a fitting tribute to the bond between artist and subject.

Of course, no village gathering would be complete without refreshments - but what awaited guests went far beyond the expected. Afternoon tea was served with such finesse that one could easily have mistaken it for the spread of a five-star hotel. Delicate sandwiches, exquisite cakes, and endless cups of tea created an indulgent pause between viewing artworks, sparking conversations among friends old and new.

Those who were lucky enough to attend left with their senses filled, eyes dazzled by watercolours, ears reminded of Ed's music, and tastebuds thoroughly spoiled. And for those who missed it? Let's just say you missed more than an exhibition you missed an experience.

The event was held to raise funds for a professional hanging system for the gallery that is a feature of the Village Hall.

This is a permanent exhibition space open to the public on a Thursday from 10am to 3pm or by arrangement.

£230 was raised towards the hanging system. The hanging system means the exhibitions will look even better and we will no longer have to knock nails into the wall.

Salt Village Hall has once again proved itself to be more than a venue: it was a stage for talent, a home for community, and, on this September afternoon, the very centre of culture and delight.

#### Staffordshire's Biggest Fireworks Night is Back!

The Fireworks Extravaganza is returning to the Staffordshire County Showground **this Sunday 2nd November,** promising a night packed with dazzling displays, family fun, and a whole lot of sparkle - all in support of local charities.

Gates open at 4pm and the fun starts right away. Sizzling street food, tasty treats, a buzzing fun fair, and plenty to keep the whole family entertained - all building up to a jaw-dropping fireworks finale.

#### More Than Just Fireworks -It's Community Magic

The Rotary Club of Stafford Castle is committed to supporting others and giving back to the community, with every ticket sold helping to raise money for local charities - making this event more than just an incredible night out.

Event Organiser Richard Mitcherson said "We believe in the power of coming together for a good cause, and what better way to do that than under a sky filled with fireworks?"

Safe, Spectacular, and Seriously Fun The show will once again be lit up by Pyro 2000, the experts behind some of

Pyro 2000, the experts behind some of the UK's most breathtaking firework displays. We also have floodlit parking areas, dedicated disabled parking, and co-ordinated road management - so you can have all the fun without the stress.

For everyone's safety (and to make getting home a breeze), the A518 Weston Road will close for 30 minutes after the fireworks. This gives families plenty of time to walk safely through the tunnel and across the road, so everyone can head out smoothly and without stress.

Tickets Flying Fast – Don't Miss Out! 6,000 people are expected this year and tickets are online only in advance - no gate sales. So grab yours early, round up the family and get set for Staffordshire's brightest night of the year!

Date: Sunday 2nd November 2025
Time: Gates open 4pm | Fireworks 7pm
prompt. Location: Staffordshire County

Showground. Tickets: Available online at http://bit.ly/430ZR5K



#### Remembrance Sunday 9th November **Armistice Day Tuesday** 11th November

Stone Town Council warmly invites members of the public to join Town Councillors and members of ex-Service Organisations in remembering those who gave their lives for us at its Remembrance and Armistice commemorations.

#### Remembrance Sunday

The Annual Parade, together with Services of Remembrance at the War Memorial in Granville Square and later at the Parish Church of St. Michael and St. Wulfad, will take place on Sunday 9 November.

#### The arrangements are as follows: -

10.15 a.m. Parade Personnel to assemble at the bottom of the High Street.

10.35 a.m. Parade, led by Stone Scout & Guide Band, will proceed along the High Street to the War Memorial, where Florence Brass Band will play.

10.45 a.m. Presentation of Wreaths in accordance with an Order of Presentation (to follow). Persons laying wreaths (including any not on the Order of Presentation) should kindly report to Mr I. Prescott, the Parade Marshal, during the assembly in the High Street, to be briefed on the wreath laying ceremony.

11.00 a.m. Two Minutes Silence and Service of Remembrance



All those laying wreaths will be asked to walk together in the parade or asked to assemble together prior to the parade reaching the top of the High Street and asked to stand near to the War Memorial in order to streamline the laying of the wreaths.

At the conclusion of the Service at the War Memorial, the Parade will proceed to the Parish Church of St. Michael and St. Wulfad via High Street and Church Street led by Stone Scout & Guide Band, where the Colour and Standard Bearers are requested to line up at the entrance to the Church, and when instructed enter the Church, present their Colours, and then take the seats reserved for them.

After the Church Service the parade will disband.

Earlier during the morning, the customary Service of Remembrance will be held at the Walton War Memorial, Whitemill Lane, Walton, commencing at 9.30 a.m. Persons attending should kindly assemble at the War Memorial by 9.20 a.m. Please note the slightly earlier start time for this service.

#### Armistice Day

A short ceremony will be held at the War Memorial in Granville Square at 11.00am on Tuesday 11th November.



2.5 lb Boneless Turkey Crown 2 lb Beef Joint 6 Large Handmade Sausages 12 Pigs In Blankets **Medium Pork Pie** 

4 lb Boneless Turkey Crown 3 lb Beef Joint 3 lb Gammon Joint 6 Large Handmade Sausages 12 Rashers Streaky Bacon 12 Pigs In Blankets 1 lb Pork Pie

Early Bird Offer - Last Years Prices On All Hamper Orders Placed Before December

# Hamper 3



# Hamper 4



10 lb Turkey 3 lb Beef Joint 3 lb Gammon Joint 6 Large Handmade Sausages 12 Rashers Streaky Bacon 12 Pigs In Blankets 1 lb Pork Pie

4 lb Boneless Turkey Crown 6 Large Handmade Sausages 12 Rashers Streaky Bacon 12 Pigs In Blankets 1lb Pork Pie

Telephone Orders Welcome





## Stone Classic Car Show Pulls In The Crowds

Stone Town Council worked along with the Stone Carnival Committee to organise a collection of classic cars in Stone High Street on Saturday 27th September.

Most of the cars were local to Stone and represent some of the fine classic cars in the area. This year's event included over 60 cars spanning 90 years of motor car development.

In the Market Square there was a display of American Cars, complemented with cars from the 20th century filling the High Street.

The proud owners of these carefully restored cars were only too happy to talk at length about their machines. The event was a huge success for all involved and also benefited the local economy with the increased visitors to the town.



A road closure was in place for the High Street from 7:00am - 5:00pm on the day so no vehicles, other than the classic cars which were part of the event, could access the High Street during those times.

Big crowds were drawn to the High Street on the day to enjoy the large display of well-prepared cars, from the motoring past.

Parents and Grandparents proudly sharing nostalgic motoring memories with their kids and grandchildren.

Councillor Jill Hood, Chairman of the Council's Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee said "The Town Council was pleased to be able to bring a Classic Car event to Stone High Street once again. With such a wide range of vehicles there was something for everyone!

It has been a pleasure to work alongside the Stone Carnival Committee, and we are very grateful to their support in co-ordinating this event, which was free to attend and is always a family favourite."

Photo's by Martin Robinson















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# Gazette **Eccleshall NEWS IN BRIEF**

#### **Historical Talks**

The next meeting of the Eccleshall Historical Talks Society takes place on Monday 10th November, at the Holy Trinity parish room, where the topic of the talk will be 'Oliver Cromwell - Good Guy or Bad Guy'? The talk

On **Monday 8th December** the talk will be a members only session with the topic of 'Show and tell' also at the parish room starting at 7.30pm.

#### Eccleshall Women's Institute

The next meeting of the Eccleshall Women's Institute will be at the Holy trinity parish room on Thursday **13th November** when a talk given by Debbie Hill from Perry's Field & Fork.

The competition for the evening will be 'a recipe book'. The evening starts at 7.30pm

Civic Amenity Visit

The next visit by the special bin lorry will be on Saturday 22nd November opposite the Methodist Church in Stone Road, Eccleshall between 9am and 11am.

The special refuse collection vehicle will accept domestic refuse from residents. The collection is arranged and provided by the Eccleshall Parish Council.

#### **Eccleshall Poetry Group**

The Eccleshall Poetry Group meets at the Methodist Hall, Stone Road, for people who enjoy reading and or listening to poetry.

On Thursday 6th November the theme will be Poems by UK Laureates.

The second November meeting of the group will take place on Thursday 20th November at the same venue when the them will be 'Success and failure'.

Trinity Coffee & Cake
We are invited to share coffee and cake in Eccleshall's Holy Trinity parish room twice a month on a Wednesday between 10am and 12 noon when we have an opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. The November dates are Wednesday 12th and 26th when we are all welcome.

#### **Eccleshall Community Cinema**

The Eccleshall Community Cinema showing in November really is a complete unknown - the title of the film is 'A Complete Unknown' on **Thursday 21st November** in the function room at the Royal Oak starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets at (still only) £5 each available from High Street library, James du Pavey. Why not learn more about your community cinema by following the monthly podcast (free) at https://shows.acast.com/eccp.

Eccleshall Community Cinema – bringing the community together – one film at a time.

The December film is Bridget Jones - 'Mad about the Boy' on Thursday 11th December.

#### **Eccleshall Parish Council**

On Wednesday 15th October 2025, members of the parish council planning committee met to discuss applications for planning permission in the parish and on this occasion the first of what may be may was from the Muller property Group for 55 dwellings on land south of Shaws lane, Eccleshall.

Application number 25/41015/OUT. The meeting was chaired by Councillor Bryan Delanchy and after much discussion the committee agreed to register their objection to the application with the Borough Council.



Division Two Champions Barlaston Bowls & Tennis Tuesday afternoon 'A' Team

## Barlaston Bowling and Tennis Club

As this years bowling season draws to an end it has turned into a successful season for the veteran's teams with the "A' team being champions of Division Two and 'B' team being runners up in Division Five with both teams hopefully being promoted



Barlaston Bowling and Tennis Club, Tuesday's afternoon 'B' Team

#### Singles Bowls Championship

September saw the semi final and final of the in house bowls championship for Barlaston Bowls and Tennis Club. The semi finalists were Diane Blakeman, Neil Rowley, Stephen Kettle and Andrew Maddams.

The afternoon saw the semi finalists battle it out in very competitive games, with the final being keenly contested between Neil Rowley and Andrew Maddams. The optimal winner being Andrew receiving a bottle of champagne from the Club's retiring chairman Brian Astbury.

The club wishes the community a Merry Christmas and hope to see more of you when the new season starts in April 2026.



The day's winner Andrew Maddams receives the champion's bottle of champagne from Club's retiring chairman Brian Astbury



Andrew Maddams and Stephen Kettle



Diane Blakeman and Neil Rowley in the semi final



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#### A Christmas Memorial Service

As the festive season draws near - a time so often filled with family, laughter, and celebration - it can also be a tender reminder of those we have loved and lost.

Recognising this, Isobel Whittaker Funeral Services warmly invites the Stone community to come together for their second annual Christmas Memorial Service, a thoughtful evening dedicated to remembrance and

The service will take place on Thursday 4th December at 7pm in the President's Hall at Walton Community Centre on Whitemill Lane, and is open to everyone, not just those who have been cared for by Isobel Whittaker Funeral Services.

Building on the heartfelt success of last year's event, the evening will offer a peaceful and supportive atmosphere where individuals and families can gather to honour their loved ones. The service will include music, readings, and a time of reflection- creating space for quiet remembrance during what can be a difficult time

Á highlight of the evening will be a photo tribute, allowing attendees to share an image of their loved one as part of the service. This simple yet powerful gesture offers a visual reminder of the connections that endure, even in absence.

Reflecting on last year's event, many families spoke of how comforting and uplifting the evening was- a chance to pause, remember, and find solace among others who understand. After the service, light refreshments will be served, providing an opportunity for gentle conversation

and community connection.

In the midst of the festive rush, this memorial service offers a moment to slow down, to remember, and to find comfort in shared experience.

If you would like to share a photo for the tribute, please contact Isobel on 01785 336722 or you can email isobel@iwfuneral.co.uk



## Aston & Little Stoke Scout Group Camp

Almost twelve months ago Aston & Little Stoke Scout Group, along with other groups from Stone Scout District were washed out at Sherratts Wood camp site during a severe storm which also destroyed part of the road near the camp site near Milwich.

On the last weekend of August, Aston Scout Group took 10 Beaver Scouts and 15 Cub Scouts on a weekend camp again. This time to Barnswood Camp, near Leek.

The weather was much better and the youngsters enjoyed a weekend of learning about nature, building shelters in the woods, and fire lighting skills as well as having fun with a parachute.

They also experienced Scouts Own, a Christian based short act of worship held in the open air chapel at the camp site. They also wrote their own prayers which were hung in a tree outside the building which was their home for the weekend.

Friendships were made and bonded on what all agreed was a great weekend.



# A Northern Ireland Girlguiding Adventure

In August, 4 guides and a from Stone leader Division Girlguiding were selected to go on a Staffordshire Girlguiding international trip Northern Ireland.

They flew out from Birmingham to the Girlguiding Lorne Estate for 6 days. The girls went on a bus tour of the coast stopping at a castle, saw some of the sites where Game of Thrones was filmed and ending at The Giant's Causeway which was fabulous.

They spent a day on a hop-on-hop-off bus tour of Belfast, seeing the city

and even spending some time at a jail.

A morning was spent at the Titantic Museum and an afternoon shopping. The final day was spent on-site where they did lots of exciting activities including zip lines, archery and a vertical obstacle course.

A fantastic week was had by all, including the leaders and the girls made lots of new friends in the process.









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# Stone and District Stroke Club 40 Years On (And Still Going Strong)

Way back in 1985, a small team of volunteers, including the much loved Stella Winsor, motivated by the late Ruth Dickson and led by Jo Heath, felt that there was a need for local residents who were recovering from the after effects of a Stroke to be able to get together and socialise, encourage and support each other.

Soon afterwards, Stone and District Stroke Club was born and, unbelievably, they have just celebrated their 40th Anniversary.

Stroke Club members are a very sociable group who all really enjoy a good party and all agreed that this was the best way to celebrate such a special occasion, with Wednesday 17th September chosen as the big day.

Volunteers and members alike were delighted to welcome to the party Joyce Farnham, who has filled the role of President of the Club for 40 years, and a surprise guest was Jo Heath, the club's first Chairman, who had been instrumental in setting up the club in 1985 and remained in the Chair for over 20 years.

Entertainment was provided by U3A Singing for Fun, a small group of extremely enthusiastic singers, who performed many well-known pieces popular in the 1950's and 1960's and encouraged as much audience participation as possible.

A buffet lunch was supplied by Frances at the Secret Kitchen and this was enjoyed by everyone, with plenty left over for second helpings (and thirds, in some cases).

A popular guest and supporter of the club, Wendy Kerr, was also there to read several poems with the theme of 'Celebration'. Wendy is a frequent visitor to the club and, as ever, members were all spellbound as they listened to her - as one of the volunteers was heard to say, "It's the quietest they have been for weeks!"

There was a bittersweet moment during the afternoon when everyone took time to remember Stella Winsor who sadly passed away on September 8th.

Stella had been a volunteer at the club since its beginning and was its main organiser for over 20 years. Members all raised a glass in her memory and agreed that her efforts over the years had been a massive contribution to the success of the club and that she had been an inspiration to both volunteers and members alike.

Wendy had written a poem to celebrate the occasion and this was greatly appreciated by everyone.

The Stroke Club is a special place where people meet together To chat, to eat, to have some fun, make ties no-one can sever.

Both volunteers and members look forward every week To sending time each Wednesday, it's just what many seek. Encouragement, support, advice, shared challenges and success. A time to stop and just relax, and so much happiness.

A fortieth birthday's special, so many years have gone Since Stella had her great idea, a Stroke

Club, set in Stone! A place where folks can be themselves and learn new ways to cope. To find new skills, to be their best and know that they have hope.



Over the years, the club has become a lifeline for many, offering a warm and welcoming space where members can share their stories, build friendships, and discover new interests.

feature guest Regular meetings speakers and engaging activities and the dedicated volunteers, some of whom have been with the club for many years, continue to provide steadfast support, ensuring that no one feels alone. As the club moves forward into its fifth decade, its spirit of compassion, resilience, and community remains as vibrant as ever.

Stroke Club meets every Wednesday from 10.00 - 12.15 at Little Stoke **Cricket Club.** They currently have a couple of vacancies for members (and volunteers) and would welcome the opportunity to meet anyone who would like to know more about what is on offer.

There is plenty to look forward to in the months ahead, in particular Christmas is always a busy time with lots of activities planned

If you would like to know more, please call Jan on 07790 078627 or Chris on 01785 812027.











## Sending Out A Message In A Bottle

Stone Lions Club (CIO) have been promoting 'Message in a Bottle', a Lions Project, for around 15 years now, but recently became aware that a number of new residents in Stone may not be aware of the existence of this scheme and how one small green and white plastic container can provide essential information in the case of an emergency. This service is provided completely free of charge and is funded through Stone Lions Club's fundraising activities.



Picture this. An elderly resident, living alone, suffers

a fall and manages to attract the attention of a neighbour, who responds by calling the emergency services. The emergency services are called and arrive at the scene, ready to help.

The patient is elderly and confused, possibly suffering from concussion, and unable to respond to the questions being asked. Questions like "Who can we contact?" "What medication are you taking?" "Are you Diabetic?" "Do you have any allergies?" etc. Questions we can all answer quite easily in normal circumstances but would find much more difficult if suffering from shock and in pain.

Imagine how much easier it would be if all the required information was on hand, readily accessible and available for the emergency services; this is where Message in a Bottle can help.

Each bottle measures approx. 4 inches tall by 2 inches in diameter and contains a form with a number of questions for completion, plus 2 small green and white sticky labels.

When the form is complete, it is placed in the bottle and stored in the door compartment of the kitchen refrigerator. One of the sticky labels should be placed on the outside of the fridge – to make it easy for the emergency services to spot - with the other being stuck in a prominent position on the inside of the front door.

This scheme is being actively promoted by Stone Community First Responders and Stone Lions would like to thank them for their support. It is also supported by Ambulance, Police, Fire and Rescue Services.

If you would like to take advantage of this scheme, either for yourself, a relative or neighbour, bottles are available at Stone Library in the Market Place or Age Concern Stone, whose office is in the Council Building. Remember, when time is saved, lives are saved.

Lions are always on the lookout for more outlets, so if you feel that you are able to help, please get in touch by calling 0345 8338478.

# **Brownies Make Homes** For Hedgehogs









#### **I Swear**

**Director: Kirk Jones** Starring: Robert Aramayo; Maxine Peake; Shirley Henderson; Peter Mullan Producers: Kirk Jones, Georgia Bayliff, Piers **Tempest** Running time: 2 hours

A blistering, darkly funny portrait of truth, lies, and the spaces between, I Swear cements its director as a voice unafraid of discomfort.

The film's jagged rhythm, sharp dialogue, and aching performances turn moral ambiguity into poetry. Beneath the chaos lies a strangely tender heart, beating for redemption.

JJ Rating 4/5

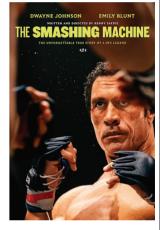
## The Smashing Machine

Director: Kirk Jones

Starring: Robert Aramayo; Maxine Peake; Shirley Henderson; Peter Mullan Producers: Kirk Jones, Georgia Bayliff, Piers Tempest

Running time: 2 hours

The Smashing Machine feels less like a film about Mark Kerr than a showcase for Dwayne Johnson's rebranding as a "serious" actor. There's admirable craft here, from Safdie's direction to the sweat-drenched fight scenes, but little emotional coherence. It's a film about a man breaking apart that never quite lets us feel his pain.



JJ Rating 3/5

#### **Tron: Ares**

Director: Joachim Rønning Music composed by: Nine Inch Nails Producers: Jared Leto, Emma Ludbrook, Steven Lisberger, Sean Bailey, Justin Springer, Jeffrey Silver Running time: 1h 59m

Visually dazzling yet dramatically inert, Tron: Ares mistakes digital gloss for soul. Jared Leto's performance flickers between intensity and emptiness, while the story short-circuits under the weight of recycled ideas.

The neon spectacle occasionally thrills, but its pulse is artificial - a gorgeous simulation of emotion without the spark of life.

JJ Rating 2/5

Sarah Williams, a leader with 1st Walton Brownies. commented.

"The girls had a great evening making homes for hedgehogs out of old cardboard boxes.

This is part of a badge, 'Have Adventures' that they are working towards.

They had lots of fun constructing and decorating the homes. They also learnt some vital first aid skills too."





# AMG Nursing & Care Services



Team AMG at the summit of Snowdon, making a difference for those we support.

"Wow, what a team at AMG!! My husband was diagnosed with MND in August 2024. We have been receiving AMG since January 2025. What a positive difference this has made on our lives. Their knowledge, thoroughness, and kindness is second to none and we thank you. A huge shout-out to one carer who has gone above and beyond whilst my husband has been in hospital. His empathy and genuine kindness has made this stay bearable for both of us, our friends, and family. All carers are a credit to AMG."

— Service user's family, Stone branch

AMG Stone
homecare.co.uk, 2025

# **Caring Above and Beyond**

Families across Stone have trusted AMG Nursing & Care Services for more than 25 years to provide care that helps loved ones live comfortably and independently at home. Recently, our team climbed Snowdon to support one of our service users living with motor neurone disease by helping to provide a specialist recliner chair. Despite the difficult weather, we reached the summit together, united by care and determination to make a real difference.

We believe care is about going further whenever we can. Every step, every visit, and every act of kindness reflects our ongoing commitment to those we support. Our connection to the local community continues to grow stronger as we deliver care with compassion, respect, and a genuine desire to help others live well.

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The Stone Community First Responders with Mayor & Mayoress 2024-25

#### Mayor's Charity (2024-25) **Donations**

The Town Mayor has many important roles to fulfil during their term of office, one of which is fundraising for local charities.

At the beginning of their term of office the new Mayor selects charities and community groups to support. They must be operating in Stone and surrounding areas, serving the local community and helping to improve the lives of residents in the town.

The Town Mayor fundraises through the year, and the fundraising efforts are distributed to their chosen charities at the end of their Mayoral term.

Councillor Philip Leason held the office of Stone Town Mayor during 2024/25 and during this time he raised f 3766 57

Councillor Leason's chosen charities were Stone Community First Responders, The Alzheimer's Club and Stone Stroke Club.



The Alzheimer's Club

Councillor Leason has presented the Mayor's Charity donations to his chosen charities with Stone Community First Responders receiving £2,500, the Alzheimer's Club £500 and the Stone Stroke Club £766.57.



Stone Stroke Club

Councillor Leason said "It is a great honour to act as Mayor of Stone and I am particularly pleased to have been able to raise funds for such deserving causes, which will be used to better the lives of the town's residents.

## **Stone Town Council Upcoming Events**

Stone Town Council has had a busy couple of months with a variety of free-to-attend events having taken place and with lots more still to come before the year ends!

Saturday 1st November - Guest speaker Shaun Farrelly will return to the Heritage Centre to deliver a follow up talk about the Americans in Yarnfield during the second world war.



Thursday 6th November – Stone-based artist Ed Jeavons will hold an exhibition of his work at the Heritage Centre. The exhibition will run until Saturday 29th November.

**Sunday 9th November** – The town remembers and pays its respects to those who fought in times of conflict at our Remembrance Sunday parade and services (Walton and Stone High Street).

Tuesday 11th November – A short Armistice Day service will be held at the war memorial (Granville Square).

Thursday 20th November – Join us to switch on the town's Christmas lights and enjoy a fun-filled evening! The entertainment starts at 5pm and culminates with the lights being switched on at 7pm (Stone High Street).

Saturday 29th December – Texas Flag Raising ceremony in the High Street accompanied by the Florence Brass Band (Stone High Street)

Councillor Jill Hood, Chairman of the Tourism and Town Promotion Committee said "Throughout the year, our town hosts a variety of free events, with something for everyone to enjoy and take part in.

Among these is Remembrance Day, a poignant occasion when we pause to honour those who served and sacrificed in times of conflict. We very much hope that you will join us at these events."

Further information about upcoming events can be found on the Council's website www.stonetown council.gov.uk and on the Council's Facebook Page www.facebook.com/STCnewsandevents/



# Working Towards A Better Rail Service

Train timetables change in December but we don't expect any obvious changes to the London Northwestern service that calls at Stone.

However at a recent Stakeholder meeting in Birmingham, the Managing Director Ian McConnell suggested there could be significant changes this time next year. The proposal is to extend the rather short "Potteries Shuttle" service that currently only runs between Crewe and Stafford. At one end trains may carry on to Manchester Airport. At Stafford the plan is to continue to Birmingham New Street, although doing the consuming loop through Tame Bridge.

"It is a better offer than we have now, explains Jon Heal of the North Staffs Rail Promotion Group, "as it improves connectivity, and does give us a chance to board a train at Stone and continue to the West Midlands:

Ironically, the Stakeholder meeting was held in a week in late September when reliability plummeted. One of the LNWR trains was needed elsewhere so we were reduced to a train once every 2 hours. "At least I had the satisfaction of bending management ears on this before we started the conference, but it did give the the impression that our "Potteries shuttle" is not top of the train company's priorities," adds Jon Heal. NSRPG welcome comments about the dreadful service at the end of September.

Anybody who travels on the East Midlands Railway, which runs between Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent, Derby Nottingham, should check carefully their train times from December 14th. There is



An autumnal view up the Stone Station approach road

a complete overhaul and trains will continue to Lincoln. EMR are also tightening up on fare evasion so the Penalty Fare system applies on the route. Tickets need to be bought before boarding.

We are hopeful that the Station building will get a coat of paint soon. Geoff Grant, the helpful Stakeholder Manager at LNWR, has contacted the right person at Network Rail to get the go ahead for the painting work.

North Staffs Rail Promotion Group meet every two months to discuss what can be done to get a better train service. The next meeting is at Stone Station on Thursday 27th November at **7pm.** All are welcome. We hope that Geoff Grant of London Northwestern will join us again for updates on our local

You can contact the group via email at jhnorthstaffsrail@hotmail.co.uk for further information!



#### Crown Wharf Theatre Celebrates First Birthday!

It's been a whole year since Crown Wharf Theatre opened its doors — and what a year it's been!

Since the sell-out success of our debut in-house production of Shakespeare in Love on 8th November 2024, the theatre has gone from strength to strength. In just twelve months, over 10,500 seats have been filled, proving that the people of Stone and beyond truly love live performance.

From plays to pantomimes, concerts to cinema, National Theatre Live screenings to children's shows and stand-up comedy, Crown Wharf Theatre has quickly become a vibrant hub of creativity and community.

We've welcomed a wide range of local and visiting production companies through our doors this year - including Stone Revellers, Theatre1, Musical Youth Theatre Stafford, Musical Theatre Stafford, Stone Choral, Spitfire Group, Walton Priory, Rooftops, Studio B, Michelle Moss Performing Arts and othersn - all helping to build a diverse and dynamic programme.

Of course, none of this would be

possible without the 100 incredible volunteers who have together donated over 2,600 hours of their time. Their hard work and enthusiasm make every performance possible, and we'd like to offer them a huge and heartfelt thank you.

As we look ahead to our second year, there's plenty more to look forward to. Upcoming highlights include Theatre 1's Songs For A New Decade, Classic and Christmas Cinema screenings, Stone Revellers' Pantomime Cinderella, and the MYTS Christmas Concert.

And 2026 is already shaping up to be another fantastic year, with shows such as It's My Life (a one-woman comedy hoping to raise a smile), We Will Rock You (Young @ Part), Bonnie and Clyde, and Beauty and the Beast.

To mark our first birthday, we're running a special anniversary giveaway!

Anyone who signs up to receive Crown Wharf Theatre emails between 14th October and 30th November 2025 will be entered into a draw to win four tickets to any Cinema production (subject to aváilability).

Sign up here: https://zcmp.eu/jGlf

## Marquetry Group Celebrates 30 Years

Eccleshall-based Staffordshire Marquetry Group recently celebrated 30 years since its founding in1995. In that time numerous members have passed through its ranks, many achieving top awards at the Marquetry Society's annual exhibitions. Current members were joined by former members and guests to enjoy a gallery of work, a light buffet and, of course, cake!

Highlight of the day was member Mike Roberts, who is also Secretary of the Sutton Coldfield Marquetry Group, bringing along his large picture "Arrival" which was awarded the Marquetry Society's Rose Bowl for best exhibit in show at this year's exhibition.

The celebratory cakes were cut by Shirley Archer and Val Faulkner, whose husbands John and Bill were the Group's first Treasurer and Chairman.

The Group meets at the Methodist Church Hall, as it has done throughout its history. Visitors interested in learning the skills of marguetry are welcome to come along from 2-4pm on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

More details about the Group are available on its website at staffordshire marquetry.org.uk or from the Secretary, Quentin Smith, on 01785 850614.



Shirley Archer (L) and Val Faulkner cut the cakes



Mike Roberts's picture was the star amongst the gallery of work





# CICE CUE COLONIA DE LA COLONIA

#### Tittensor C.E. (VC) First School

Learning and growing together as we follow Christ

Tittensor First School is a small, friendly first school with a caring, Christian ethos.

Our staff deliver a creative and challenging curriculum in a nurturing and fun environment.

We believe in educating the whole child and prepare our children for the everchanging world we live in.

Nursery places available for September!







office@tittensor.staffs.sch.uk

www.tittensor.staffs.sch.uk

Ofsted 2023- Good with Outstanding features:

"Pupils are well cared for at Tittensor CE First School. They are met with smiles and warm greetings by staff and leaders every day. "Pupils are taught how to show acts of kindness. Staff and pupils are kind to each other as a result".

Tittensor First School Beechcliff Lane, Tittensor Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9HP

#### Join us for our Open Day

# Experience Pirehill First School in Action

Experience our vibrant, recently refurbished learning environment, meet our dedicated, friendly staff and see our wonderful pupils shine.

At Pirehill First School, our motto is **Achieving more, together.** Come and explore why our school could be the perfect start to your child's learning journey - we can't wait to meet you!









#### PIREHILL FIRST SCHOOL

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November

1.15-1.45pm 2.00-2.30pm 2.45-3.15pm 6.00pm-6.30pm

Scan the QR code below to book your visit today!





# Tittensor CE (VC) First School

Come and have a look around our small and friendly school, where nurture and kindness are at the heart of everything that we do!

Our staff have high expectations of every child, they are taught a love for learning that we hope will last a lifetime. Immersed in a positive environment, we promote confidence, self- esteem, resilience and independence.

We welcome all children inclusively and provide an enriched and challenging curriculum which encourages everyone to care for others and the environment, be aware of their own emotional health and wellbeing and also that of others.

Our aim as a Church school is to support children in our three core values: Faith, Love, Hope. We teach our children to make the right, positive choices and to always have a positive impact on others.

We are a happy and positive school; children love to come and learn and in turn learning is fun, engaging and exciting. We enjoy enrichment activities and educational trips to bring our learning to life. Exciting visitors come and offer us their knowledge and life-skills so that we are aware that we can be anything we want to be in the future.

Everyone will succeed and have the opportunities to establish good relationships, have fantastic home/school links and be a part of the Tittensor Community. We believe that it is important to educate the 'whole' child so that all children are prepared for the ever-changing world that we live in.

At Tittensor we offer every child outdoor learning opportunities through Forest School sessions and feel it is important that children foster a love of the outdoors and the natural world we live in, using our extensive grounds, woodland area, pond and outdoor classroom. We are proud of our 'family' feel and welcome everyone to come and visit our school and see for themselves!



## Pirehill First School

Pirehill First School is very much a Community School situated in the residential area of Walton, Stone.

We are very fortunate in having beautiful, well-maintained grounds which are used throughout the year to enhance our children's learning, this includes our extremely popular Forest School which is accessed by all of our pupils. This year we have invested in our Early Years environment which has been recently refurbished.

We pride ourselves in our excellent standards of teaching, pupil progress, attainment and behaviour. We strongly believe that every child has a right to reach their full potential and succeed in their own unique way, whether that is via sport or music, the arts, or by their own academic excellence.

Local visits from our community partners enhances our curriculum offer and prepares our children for life outside of 'Pirehill'.

If you would like to know more about please visit our website and follow us on Facebook/Instagram'. If you would like to see us in action, please contact the school office on 01785 334970, we can assure you that you will be made to feel welcome by our friendly staff and our fantastic children.



# St. Dominics Priory School

#### Where every child is known and thrives

Nestled in the heart of Stone, St Dominic's Priory School

is a flourishing independent day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 16. We offer a unique blend of academic excellence, personal care, and a vibrant, inclusive community — all supported by a rich heritage and a progressive outlook.

**Excellence in Every Classroom** 

Academic achievement is a cornerstone of life at St Dominic's Priory. Our students consistently strive to exceed expectations, supported by expert teaching that is tailored to individual strengths and needs. Whether they are high achievers or require additional support, every child is encouraged to reach their full potential.

A School That Feel's Like Family

At the heart of our school is a nurturing environment where every child is seen and valued. Our close-knit, family-focused community is built on respect, kindness, and compassion — and it shows. From the youngest pre-school student to our confident Year 11s, emotional wellbeing and strong pastoral care are central to our ethos.

**Inclusive and Individualised Learning** 

Our dedicated SEN provision ensures personalised support, while gifted and talented students are extended through a rich programme of challenge and enrichment. We combine traditional values with forward-thinking education, offering a future-ready curriculum and subject-specialist teaching.

What else?

Our school is equipped to nurture every aspect of learning - from modern science labs and ICT suites to inspiring performance spaces and dedicated SEN facilities. Outdoor learning, sport, and the creative arts play a central role in our broad and balanced curriculum, helping every child grow in confidence and character.

We also offer Year 7 Scholarships, wrap-around care to support busy families before and after the school day, and a convenient school

transport service covering a wide area across Staffordshire

Whether you're thinking about your child's first step into education or looking for the all-important Year 7 move - Why not take a fresh look at St Dominic's Priory School.

To discover more, visit our website www.stdominicspriory.co.uk or call 01785 814181.

See the wonderful adventures of our students on Facebook and Instagram: @stdominicspriorystone

#### New Staffordshire Young Poet Laureate selected

Young new Poet 1 Laureate for Staffordshire has been appointed.

Pearl Knight-Dutton from East Staffordshire was inaugurated on National Poetry Day on 2 October at a special poetry evening held at Stafford Library. The event was hosted by Staffordshire Poet Laureate Scarlett Ward and outgoing Young Laureate Harry



Fletcher, featuring performances from young poets alongside more established writers.

Pearl will now be mentored and supported by Scarlett Ward. Her role will involve creating, promoting and performing poetry, while developing new ideas to raise the profile of poetry among children and young people across Staffordshire.

Talking about her appointment, the high school student said: "I'm very proud to have been selected as Staffordshire's Young Poet Laureate, as poetry has always been a big part of my life.

To be given the opportunity to share such an amazing and diverse medium and to open people's eyes to the limitless possibilities of what poetry can be and do is an honour and a privilege.

I hope to show young people that poetry isn't outdated or irrelevant to their lives. It is incredibly accessible and a fantastic tool to express oneself and bring joy. It really does have something for everyone."

During the event, Harry Fletcher also reflected on his achievements during his year as laureate and shared his experience of the role, offering useful tips and advice to Pearl and other budding young poets in the audience. He described the role as "highly rewarding and a huge privilege.'

Find out more about the Poets Laureate at https://www.stafford shire.gov.uk/Libraries/Arts/Staffordshire-Poet-Laureate.aspx





Independent education for children aged 3-16

www.stdominicspriory.co.uk



#### **Conexus Tuition** Stafford and Stone

#### **Building Confidence and Empowering Progress**

As the end of the Autumn Term approaches, many local families are in the thick of the all-important mock exams for Year 11s and SATs preparation for Year 6s. For parents looking to give their child a confidence boost and some expert support, Conexus Tuition Stafford and Stone has become a trusted name in our community.

Every Conexus session is led by highly skilled, qualified teachers who understand the curriculum, the exam process and most importantly, how to build confidence. Our tutors work in small groups of no more than six learners, giving each student the personal attention they need to thrive. They're passionate about helping young people achieve their potential and believe in themselves along the way.

As specialists in SATs and GCSE tuition, we support local pupils through engaging sessions that target the exact areas they need to strengthen. We also offer dedicated KS3 tuition (Years 7-9) to help learners consolidate their understanding, bridge any gaps and build strong foundations ready for the GCSE years ahead.

With a firm commitment to safeguarding and a warm, welcoming approach, our sessions help learners rediscover a love of learning and believe in what they can achieve. Parents can feel confident knowing their child is in safe, professional hands.

We're proud to have supported **over 900 local pupils** to build skills, grow in confidence, and achieve fantastic results in SATs and GCSEs. The best thing I ever did was to send him to Conexus!" - Parent Google Review

Our local venues - including Walton Community Centre in Stone offer a convenient and friendly setting for face-to-face tuition that really works. Whether your child needs a confidence boost before mocks, targeted SATs support or structured help through KS3, Conexus can help.

Why not see for yourself? Book a FREE trial session and discover what makes Conexus Tuition Stafford and Stone the local leader in confidence-building, empowering support.

Confidence starts here - at Conexus Tuition Stafford and Stone. 07826 968703 or by email: fiona@ Contact Fiona on conexustuition.co.uk

Visit our website for more info: https://conexustuition.co.uk/ find-a-class/Stafford/

# Green Lea First School 'Learn, Explore, Achieve'

At Green Lea First School, we are dedicated to providing pupils with the very best learning experiences. Our motto 'Learn, Explore, Achieve' is the driving force behind this.

Green Lea is a very happy, busy school where children are supported and encouraged to grow and learn. We are a small, rural school at the heart of the community, situated in the beautiful countryside village of Milwich, between Uttoxeter and Stone. We provide a safe and supportive environment with small class sizes.

Our lovely outdoor areas enable all of the children to take part in meaningful outdoor learning weekly in their Forest School sessions.

We are proud of our amazing personal development offer, the opportunities and enrichment experiences we provide. This year our Reading Council have launched our very own community library to help us share our love of reading. The library is open 8.30am – 4.30pm term time only. Please do come down and have a look.

"We welcome children from two years old in our Nursery and offer wraparound care from 7.30am to 5.45pm for children 3 years old and older.

Our highly experienced team believe that learning should be fun. purposeful, engaging and challenging. We pride ourselves on our family feel, our open-door ethos and ensuring our children's well-being is paramount.

If you would like to find out more and see if Green Lea First School is the right fit for your family, please contact the school office at office@greenlea.staffs.sch.uk or ring 01889 505309 for further details and to arrange a visit. I would be delighted to show you around and answer any questions you may have. Every day is an Open Day"

> Mrs L Harris **Executive Headteacher**

To find out more visit our website https://www.greenlea.staffs.sch.uk/ or check out our Facebook and Instagram page!







## The Inn Ringers - Looking for a new home! .....and some new recruits!

Since The Inn Ringers were formed in 1977 the team have gained a reputation for being one of the largest handbell teams in the country still entertaining audiences across Staffordshire as well as further afield. They are fast approaching their 50th anniversary (Feb, 2027) from their beginnings in a room above the Red Lion in Stone's High Street, The Inn Ringers have made many TV appearances, recorded three albums and played at venues across the country including the Barbican in London!

The team currently practise in St Luke's Church Hall in Tittensor but due to unavoidable circumstances the team are looking for a new permeant home for their practises and storage of their bells

and equipment.

Musical Director for the team, Paul Mellor, says 'we are looking to relocate to Stone or the local vicinity. We have got to look to the future and ensure the team is sustainable for years to come. We are very proud to have represented our home town of Stone not just across our home county but in many other parts of the country. We need space to store the bells and equipment, a trailer and space to ring the bells on our Monday night practise sessions. Ideally, a village hall, school hall or similar'.

'At the moment the bells and all the equipment are stored at a private address and transported to and from the church hall to practise. This is becoming a less viable option for the ringers and they are appealing to the local Stone community for help in providing a new home for the team.

In the meantime the team are looking forward to taking part in the Heart of England Handbell Society annual rally at Kingsbury and their annual Christmas concert on December 13th at Meir Heath Village Hall.

A few years ago the team put together a presentation called 'Bells & Banter'. The main purpose of these sessions is to introduce people to handbell ringing, promote the art of handbell ringing and generally generate interest in the tradition of ringing bells. Bells & Banter sessions have been delivered to many organisations and have been particularly successful with W.I. groups, so much so their diary has over twenty bookings for these sessions taking them up to December 2026!!

MD Paul says – 'Handbell ringing is a great hobby; we have a lot of fun.

Staging our annual charity concerts in the spring and our annual Christmas concerts are always a great success all due to a tremendous team effort.

We nominate a different charity each year and charity concert this year raised £700 for 'Symmetrical', an organisation based in Hanley who support young people who have been living care into independent living.

The Inn Ringers are also on the look out for more new recruits to join the band.

MD Paul explains 'we are coming up to celebrating our 50th anniversary and I would like to think we can carry on well beyond that milestone and keep the tradition of handbell ringing going for many more years.

You don't have to be able to read music, we have a notation we use that enables people who can't read music to play music. Our concerts always go down well with audiences and it would be such a shame if we ever got to the stage where we have insufficient ringers to continue'.

I was at the very practise night when the



Presentation of cheque to Lillian Dodd of the charity Symmetrical.

Inn Ringers got together in February 1977. I was immediately hooked on the sound the bells made, I néver imagined that a tune like the theme to 'Match of the Day' could sound so brilliant played on handbells!

Apart from being away from the team for a few years due to work commitments, I have enjoyed every minute of my 40 plus years with the team. There were a lot of teams based across the Midlands but sadly so many have fallen by the wayside. There are just not as many handbell teams around these days. Teams disband for a whole host of reasons and it is difficult to keep a team like The Inn Ringers going. People have busy lives and find they can't give the commitment.

The team practise once a week on Monday evenings (7.30pm - 9.00pm) and do three or four full team concerts each year. The Bells & Banter presentations just require 6 ringers and 15 bells – the full team has twelve ringers and 116 bells!'

If you able to help the Inn Ringers to find a new home or if you are interested in joining the team or just coming along to have a look at what we do - please contact Paul via email paulmellor@aol.com



#### MEET THE TEAM AT SALON 36 UNISEX SALON

Michele, Salon Owner with 44 vrs experience Jayne, Senior Stylist with 34 yrs experience Ella and Molly Our 2nd Year College Trainees

(Weekly Offers With Ella & Molly in our salon window)

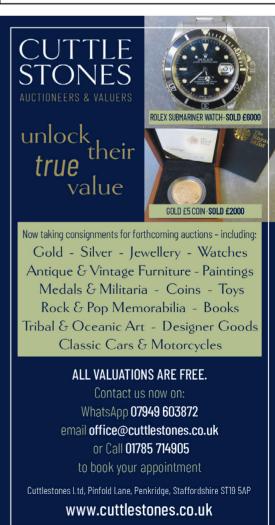
#### Introducing Mani's by Dani @ Salon 36 Beauty Room

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#### Christmas Shopping

Another Thursday and she made it to 'her' bench, situated at the end of the road. She always rested there, catching her breath before turning the corner into the High Street. This week was a special one – the Christmas shopping trip. Martha sat, handbag beside her, before a young girl skipped over, plonking herself heavily onto the seat beside her.

"Hi Martha – I've got yukky maths homework, but I had chocolate pudding at lunchtime!"

Martha grinned. It had been about nine months since little Aggie had come into her life. Like today, the youngster had arrived on the bench, chatting incessantly about her day, wildly hand-gesturing while shuffling around on the seat. They met most Thursdays since then. Aggie's mother, Jane, appreciated a few peaceful minutes to buy groceries and post her online trading parcels, while her daughter remained in Martha's care.

Martha loved watching Aggie's animated face, expressive hands and energetic gestures as she recounted tales about pals, recited teachers' comments and repeated her chats with Mum, oblivious of her innocent exuberance. The pigtails whipping around her head as she turned, were held in place by a myriad of different coloured bows - Aggie said she always wore mismatched ribbons because she liked to be different from everyone else and when she grew-up she would always wear odd socks and get a multicoloured butterfly tattoo.

Aggie and Jane were the only people Martha had spoken to since last Thursday. Well, Martha had spoken to her son, James, too, but it was a single weekly call now. She had asked him about Christmas gifts for his boys, hoping she might buy them books or games. She planned to wrap them in bright paper and ribbon, in hopeful anticipation they might be personally collected.

"They'd appreciate money, thanks Mum," said James "it's easier for you to send and they can spend it while we're away for Christmas

Clearly embarrassed, he spoke as if Christmas plans had already been discussed. This was the first Martha had heard about their festive holiday. The behaviour, however, was nothing new to Martha; her daughter-in-law disliked her and resented family time spent with her. Martha was saddened by James's promise to find a 'window' to visit her soon, disappointed at his lack of backbone when it came to his wife. During a rare break in conversation, Martha rose, clutching Aggie's hand and headed towards Jane as the young mum appeared from the Post Office.

"Thanks for watching her Martha, said Jane. She loves her Thursday chats with you, though I'm guessing they are one-sided? Aggie told me you're her best friend and she wants you to come to our house for Christmas. I don't suppose...we'd love if you could?" Martha promised to consider the heartwarming

invitation.

The child hugged her elderly friend, whispering "please come,"as they parted.
In the Bank, Martha arranged the impersonal transfer of

funds to her grandsons, concluding her family Christmas shopping for another year – with no wrapping paper needed. Just one last thing.

"£300 cash please.

She had one more item of Christmas shopping to do.

The bicycle shop owner was delighted when Martha handed over a delivery address and wad of notes.

"I thought I'd have trouble selling this one," he admitted, "the odd colours and bold butterfly design aren't everyone's cup of tea. Most girls want Frozen or Barbie bikes these days!"

"It'll suit my little friend," said Martha, "but please attach these to the bicycle before delivery." She pulled a bundle of ribbons from her handbag.

The shopkeeper scratched his head as Martha left. Not his usual customer type but the lady seemed confident in her choice, despite the questionable multitude of coloured bows in his hand, which clashed terribly with each other - and the bicycle. In fact, nothing matched at all!

# by Carrie Vettorn (2023)

Stone Scribblers meet at the Borehole Pub on Mount Road, Stone on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month between 11am and 1pm, you can also find them at www.facebook.com/StoneScribblers



# Stone and District Probus Club Welcome Caring Gary

The speaker at the October Meeting was Gary Fear an Estate Agent from Gnosall.

Gary, spoke in detail about his project of providing food aid to some of the unfortunate communities in war torn Ukraine. Altogether Gary has made twelve trips to Ukraine at his own expense.

Funds and donations raised in the UK are used to purchase food and other essentials out there. Food parcels are then made up and distributed with the of Ukrainian volunteers to particularly needy communities.

Gary gave a captivating account of his many experiences out there, some of

them guite hairy and some very sad. Even with all the hardship and disruption Garv found the Ukrainians hospitable, friendly and most appreciative of his efforts.

To listen to such an inspired and driven man was a real privilege, he is so modest about his achievements, a visit to his Just Giving' page bears testimony to the massive local support he continues to receive.

To find out more about Stone and District Probus Club, please contact our secretary Simon Cornes on 07960 811637 or visit www.stoneprobus.org.uk

From Martin Robinson







# Stone Flower Club Is Growing Stronger And Stronger

What a great year we are having at Stone Flower club. We continue to go from Strength to Strength and have had some amazing demonstrations. In July we welcomed back Mark Entwistle from Sandbach with his Title I'm sorry I haven't a clue! This was far from the title such amazing designs and the biggest amount of people since pre Covid days with attendance of 78. Some very lucky people got to take home the designs in the raffle.

Then in September we were spoilt by having 2 Demonstrators a welcome return from Sue Davies of Cannock Wood along with the Club Chair Sue Dix of Stone again such a wonderful night with a total of 18 prizes for the raffle in the designs that were created. A great attendance with many visitors.

So we are excited that **October 30th** we see the return of Becca Morris of Oswestry with her title Inspired by Nature.

Then on **November 27th** we welcome back Leanne Williams from Welshpool with our Christmas Evening, her title is Sparkle and Shine very apt for Christmas. This lady was incredible last year when she visited the club, so we are excited to see her return.



Fees discussed at the **Annual AGM** which will be on **30th January 2026** at which there will also be a mini Demonstration all are welcome to attend this evening, only members will be allowed to vote though.



Stone Flower Club is warm welcoming club you don't need to be a flower arranger. It is a club for anyone who loves the beauty in flowers. Do you feel alone and no friends this is a perfect place to come along and meet others for a totally relaxing evening. All evenings are at Walton Community Centre, Whitemill Lane, Walton, Stone ST15 0EG. The doors open at 6.45 pm and demonstrations start at 7.30pm the cost is £8 for visitors. Which includes hot drinks and biscuits.

#### **2026 Dates For Your Diary**

January 29th AGM and mini Demonstration

February 26th, March 26th, April 30th, May 28th, June 25th, July 30th, September 24th, October 29th, November 26th

All evenings there will be a demonstration of flower arranging, and in November this is a Christmas Demonstration Evening .









# Trader Applications Now Open For Food Festival

We are excited to invite applications for the 2026 Stone Food & Drink Festival, taking place from **8th to 10th May 2026** at our home, Westbridge Park, Stone, Staffs.

We have introduced a bidding system for all on site consumption food and drink pitches. We ask you to bid the amount you are willing to pay to trade at the 2026 Stone Food & Drink Festival. We will then assess all application and you will be notified if you have been successful from 1st November onwards.

Food & Drink and Home & Garden retail traders (not Street Food or Bar for on site consumption) will be offered an early bird discount if the booking is made and paid in full prior to 31st December 2025.

To apply, please use the online electronic booking form or if you would prefer a paper application form, simply email us at traders@stonefooddrink.org.uk.

For further information about the festival please check out our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/thestonefoodanddrinkfestival



# Lets Get Quizzing With Stone Lions

Stone Lions Club (CIO) are throwing down the gauntlet again on Saturday 24th January, 2026 by challenging Stone's Eggheads to enter their Annual Fun Quiz which takes place at St Dominic's Social Centre, Station Road, Stone. Doors open at 7.00pm, with the quiz starting at 7.30pm.

In the past, Stone Lions Quiz Nights have been very popular with those attending, all of whom enjoy an assortment of rounds - some of which can be a little more unusual than other run of the mill quizzes!

This year's event promises to continue the well-established tradition of some questions that are easier than others and some that need a little more deliberation but with the emphasis always being on enjoying an evening of fun and laughter together -although naturally competitiveness is encouraged!

At just £5 per ticket, with a bar available on the night (to comply with licencing regulations all drinks consumed on the premises must be purchased from the bar) and attendees invited to bring along a picnic to eat during the interval, the event is very good value for money and all proceeds will be used in support of Stone Lions local charities.

So why not get a team together – up to six members per team please - and plan an evening where you can have a lot of fun exercising those little grey cells! Tickets will be on sale from mid-December at Arcadia Café or Artisan Boutique or by calling 01785 814852 or 01785 812027.



Some of our volunteers on hand to help, at the recent Heritage Open Day

# Heritage Open Day And Volunteering At All Saints' Sandon Church

All Saints' Church Sandon has lots of exciting events and activities planned for our National Lottery Heritage Fund project over the next year when we will continue to celebrate the amazing history of the church.

This is to build on our recent success for Heritage Open Day on Sunday 21st September when over 140 people visited taking part in tours of the church and graveyard, bell ringing, craft activities and trails for families and engaging with the

church, provide a warm welcome and share the

unique history of the church to drop in visitors.

History Group volunteer

 Help support our research into the history of the church and our burial records.

School resource research and development group

· Help research and develop our school



**Bellringing Volunteers** 

history group to learn about the history of the church. This would not have been possible without the amazing contributions of all the volunteers.

We already have a fantastic group of volunteers but are keen to recruit more volunteers to come and help out at events, opening the church for visitors, activities with schools and groups and with researching our fascinating history. If you have a couple of hours a

month to spare and you would like to share your time and skills, you are assured of a very warm welcome and a rewarding experience.

# Volunteers giving a Church Tour

and family resources inspired by the amazing history and natural environment of the church.

#### Volunteer roles include:

Learning Assistant Volunteer

 Help lead tours, indoor and outdoor learning and wellbeing activities for a range of people

including school groups, youth groups, local families, community groups, young and older people.

**Church Opening Volunteer** 

· Work with other volunteers to open the

#### All roles will have full training.

For more information and an application form please contact Elizabeth Jarrett by email elizabethjjarrett@gmail.com or on 07534 915068.

For more information about events please visit our website and Facebook page.

www.sandonallsaints.com www.facebook.com/allsaintssandon



# **Celebrating Emergency Services Day**

Sunday 14th September saw Stone High Street taken over by blue light vehicles of all shapes and sizes, as the town came together to celebrate our brilliant Emergency Services.

Alongside browsing the vehicles on display – which included ambulances, fire engines, police cars and fire boats there was also the chance to meet and greet representatives from Stone First Responders, Midlands Air Ambulance and Staffordshire Police.

The free event was part of the popular

'Sunday Series', run by Stone Traders' Group in partnership with the team behind the Stone Food & Drink Festival with the aim of bringing visitors into town to help bolster high street businesses.

The event was well supported, particularly by families with children. Many youngsters had a great hands-on experience checking out the various appliances and exhibits.

From Martin Robinson













# COOPERS CROFT

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#### Coriarna Makes Finalist At Make A Difference Awards

Stone resident Coriarna Morris was nominated as a BBC Radio Stoke "Make A Difference Active Award" Finalist in recognition of her outstanding work with Blaze Trails Parent & Baby Walking Group, a community initiative inspiring families to get outdoors, stay active, and support mental wellbeing.

Blaze Trails, co-founded and passionately run by volunteers including Coriarna, is dedicated to helping families enjoy outdoor adventures across Staffordshire

and the Peak District.

From baby-carrying, pushchair, and toddler-friendly walks, to more challenging treks across hills, woods, National Trust sites, cafés, and parks, Blaze Trails has something for everyone.



Coriarna and her team believe in the power of connection, activity, and nature. "Our aim is to give little ones their first outdoor experiences, support parents and carers in getting active, and help everyone enjoy the mental health benefits of being outside," says Coriarna.

Blaze Trails has grown into a network of volunteers and organisers running walks across the county, from the seven summits in Staffordshire to hills in the Peak District to scenic routes in Staffordshire Moorlands. Their events are welcoming, family-focused, and often completely free, ensuring everyone can join in regardless of experience or equipment.

"Getting outdoors together makes such a difference—not just physically, but for mental wellbeing too," Coriarna adds. "We love seeing more families, more active moms and dads, and more carers joining our walks, exploring new places, and sharing experiences with their little ones.

Coriarna's one-year-old son, Nico, is already a seasoned little walker, and Blaze Trails encourages families to come along, meet other like-minded parents, and enjoy the outdoors together.

The award ceremony took place at Bet365 Stadium in September, and although Coriarna didn't win on the night, she can be very proud of bringing Blaze Trials to

Join Blaze Trails, be inspired, and make a difference! Visit https://www.blazetrails.org.uk/







# Stone u3a - Getting Ready for Winter

As it starts to get colder, we all think hard about going outside and the winter months can become very lonely. Here at Stone u3a you can find a simple and friendly solution.

We have an amazing 57 different groups to help bust that boredom. With everything from an Allotments group to a

Walking group.

A lot of our groups are starting to get ready for the festive season by planning their social events, local pubs and restaurants are always a favourite, or just drinks and nibbles after class.

Although some of the seasonal groups, such as Bowling will pause over the winter, many others, such as Photography, Gentle Exercise and Walking keep going. Indoor activities such as Chess, Scrabble and crafts keep going all year round, and at this time of year they may well be preparing for

Christmas by making gifts decorations.

With so many different groups to choose from you're bound to find something that interests you and popping out to class once a week or fortnight can really help to break the monotony of winter life.

So, if you are over 18 and not working full-time now's the time to make the most of life. u3a gives you the chance to develop your interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself. Most of the activities are held during the day and are in easily accessible to all. Why not take a look at our website to browse through the available groups. www.stoneu3asite.uk

Join us - Membership is £50 for a full year and allows you to attend as many groups as you like for free. That is just 97 pence per week!







Flo - Bassoon



David Palmer - Piano

## Newport Music Club 50th Anniversary Season

The finale of Newport Music Club 50th anniversary season sees the visit of a trio of talented young musicians to Cosy Hall on **Saturday November 15th** at 7.00 p.m. at Cosy Hall, Newport TF10 7LD.

We are delighted to introduce Rennie Sutherland, clarinet; Florence Plane, bassoon and David Palmer, piano.

Lumas Wind Trio are members of Lumas Winds, an ensemble based in London committed to promoting the rich variety of wind chamber music repertoire and have been described as 'one to watch' (BBC Radio 3, Record Review). Winners of the prestigious 71st Royal Over-Seas League Mixed Ensemble Prize, the group are currently Munster Recital Scheme Artists and Kirckman Concerts Society Young Artists.

Alongside performing the classics of the repertoire, Lumas explore works that deserve recognition. This is highlighted in the six hidden gems on their debut album, The Naming of Birds, released in May 2024, it features works from every decade from 1960 to 2010 and includes three world premiere recordings. They will be playing works by Mozart, Glinka and Hurlestone.

The ensemble has performed in venues throughout the UK including Wigmore and Conway Hall, Snape Maltings, St George's Bristol, and recently toured Scotland with the generous support of the Tunnell Music Trust.

Tickets are £15 adult/£5 child & student (cash or cheque) at the door on the day.

Contact the Music Club chairman@newportmusicclub.org phone 07726 959233 to confirm the number of adults and children tickets you would like to reserve.

To discover more visit our website www.newportmusicclub.org.

Newport Music Club returns with a programme of six concerts in 2026. The first will be on Sunday January 25th at 3.00 p.m. featuring the Jarualda String Quartet.



### Rooftop Studios' Maria Secures Place At Prestigious Performing Arts School

Stone's Rooftop Studios is thrilled to announce that long-standing student Maria Kelly (12) has been offered a full-time place to study Musical Theatre at The Hammond – one of the UK's leading performing arts schools, based in Chester.

Maria has been part of the Rooftop family since she was just three years old, and over the years has thrown herself into every opportunity available. She currently trains in Jazz, Ballet, Tap, Modern, Singing, Stage Academy, Pointe, Performance Group, RTK and Heels, and is known for her incredible work ethic, versatility, and love of performing.

Her place at The Hammond is a testament to her talent, passion and dedication – and the Rooftop Studios' team couldn't be prouder Maria says: "I am so excited to be starting the next step in my performing arts journey at The Hammond. Since starting I have been thoroughly welcomed and am enjoying every part of the curriculum they offer. It's so much fun!! I also want to thank all the teachers at Rooftop Studios who have helped me and continue to support me.

Studio director, Laura Keeling, told the Gazette: "We're excited to follow Maria's journey as she takes this next exciting step toward a professional career in the performing arts. We're delighted that despite her busy schedule at The Hammond Maria is still keen to carry on with a number of her classes here, so will remain very much part of the Rooftop family!"

Maria is the latest in a long line of students from Rooftop Studios, which has branches in both Stone and Leek, to gain places at the country's leading performing arts schools.

For more information about classes and how to book a free trial, visit www.rooftopstudios.co.uk or you can email info@rooftopstudios.co.uk.

### All Aboard For A First-Class Talk



### Staffordshire Railways On The Level with Carl Dudley

Thursday 13th November 2025 At 7.30 pm in the Parish Room, Sandon, Lichfield Rd A51, Corner of Milwich Lane, Sandon, ST18 ODN

Track down Rose for tickets on 07876 540491 priced at £8 to include light refreshments.





### Appeal to Rediscover Arthur Berry's 'Lost' Works

As part of the Arthur Berry 100 centenary celebrations, Barewall Art Gallery in Burslem has launched a major public appeal to help trace and rediscover a number of Berry's 'lost' artworks.

The appeal forms part of a year-long programme of exhibitions, performances, workshops and archival delivered in partnership with the New Vic Theatre, Arthur Wood Estate, Victoria Theatre Archive, Claybody Theatre, Keele University, Three Counties Open Art Exhibition, Staffordshire Film Archive and Appetite Stoke.

Barewall Art Gallery is calling on the public to come forward with any original Arthur Berry paintings, particularly works created before 1985 or sold or gifted before 2012, to help complete the picture of one of Britain's most distinctive working-class artists.

#### Tracing the 'Lost' Works

When the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery staged a retrospective of Berry's work in 1984, the exhibition featured 113 pieces and produced an illustrated booklet in support. Today, the whereabouts of only a small proportion of these is known. Slides discovered in Berry's studio after his death in 1994 also suggest further

artworks are yet to be located. Artworks photographed within the booklet, but currently 'missing' from the catalogue raisonné include Asbestos Garage, the still life Apples and Mugs and The Lovers. Additionally, slides discovered in Berry's studio document works that have not been seen in their original form for many years, contributing further missing artworks.

This vital work of rediscovery will enable works to be catalogued and potentially inputted into the digital archive, adding to our understanding of Berry's output and legacy.

#### **Next Steps for Owners**

Anyone with a Berry painting is invited to bring it to Barewall Gallery in October, where the work will be sensitively unframed, photographed, and reframed. Each piece will be recorded as part of the official Arthur Berry catalogue raisonné, and owners will receive a certificate of authentication.

Anyone who can provide more information about Berry's artworks are asked to contact Amanda Bromley at Barewall Art Gallery at shop@barewall .co.uk or call 07932 717718 to arrange an appointment.



Andrea receiving her Bronze Award Certificate from National D/A Committee Chairman Ian Littlehales.

### Stone u3a at the National 'Discovery Award' Convention

What is the Discovery Award? That is always the

It's not a well-known organization, but think of the long-established Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for teenagers, designed to promote new interests, new horizons, good health, and a sense of community service in the young. Now translate that idea into a similar set of challenges for the over 50's. That is the Discovery Award.

The UK Discovery Award Annual Gathering took place this year at the Staffordshire Wild Life Trust Visitor Centre, Wolseley Bridge, on Saturday September 20th.

30 Discoverers from different parts of the country came together to share their progress in the 4 designated categories of:

1,Hobbies/Interests 2,Physical Recreations 3,Community Service 4,A Journey of some kind (real or virtual).

As with the youngsters, these older Discoverers may raise their levels of achievement through Bronze, Silver, and Gold standards within defined parameters. They can then work through their chosen subjects in their own good time towards assessment.

Seven members of the Stone u3a D/A group attended the event. We were treated also to a guided nature walk, some craft activities and a delicious lunch. Two of our Stone u3a group, Marion and Andrea, were presented with their achievement certificates on this occasion.

Further information at info:discoveryaward.co.uk

From Bel Crawford



PSCO Gareth with volunteer librarians Pat Davies and Diane Knappe during one of Gareths sessions at the High Street library.

### PCSO At The Library

PCSO Gareth Higgins held a surgery at Eccleshall High Street library on Saturday 4th October 2025, meeting with members of the community and dispensing leaflets and crime prevention items.

He shared the event with Borough Councillor Peter Jones, who was their for this monthly drop-in session. Gareth holds regular sessions with the public to tie in with his shift rotation.



### **Oulton Choir Concert**

The Daleian Male Voice Choir return by popular demand to sing at Oulton Village Hall on Saturday 8th November, 7pm for 7.30pm start.

There will be a Bar available on the evening for all drinks (you can pay by Card or Cash)

Early ticket booking is recommended for this ever-popular event. Tickets are just £12.00 (advance sales only) and are available from Sue Petrulis on 01785

### Nelson & Jervis - Lessons in Leadership



This was the title for the unique lecture given by Admiral Sir Trevor Soar KCB OBE DL to a full house at the Crown Wharf Theatre in Stone on 9th October.

The fund-raising event was organised by Tim Gillow-High Sheriff of Staffordshiré. This was the start of a fund-raising campaign to restore the historic mausoleum at St Michael's Church, Stone to its former glory.

The building which is the final resting place of Admiral John Jervis has slipped into disrepair in recent years. The leaking roof has caused structural damage and the costly specialist work has been approved. The mausoleum restoration project requires urgent and substantial fund-raising efforts for it to proceed.

From Martin Robinson







### Stone Christmas Markets 2025

The teams from Stone Food & Drink Festival and Stone Traders Group are delighted to once again bring the Christmas Markets to Stone High Street.

The Christmas markets will take place on Sunday 23rd November and 14th December 2025 at 10.00am - 3.00pm in Stone High Street.

They are still accepting stall applications from shops, organisations and charities, but are now fully booked for Street Food, Bars or Hot Drinks stalls.

Pitches are £45 for a 3m x 1.5m back to back stall with a gazebo provided. Tables are available to hire if required at £6. A minimum 50% deposit is payable at booking.

When your booking has been accepted you will be issued with an invoice and the 50% deposit will be due within 14 days. If the deposit is not received your pitch may be offered to another trader.

If you'd like to apply for a stall please email: traders@stonefooddrink.org.uk





Winters Day on the Caldon Canal, Endon by Diane Leopard

### Dougie Mac To Benefit From Sale Of Local Calendar

A photo taken by breast cancer survivor, Diane Leopard, will appear on the front of a calendar being sold to raise money for Dougie Mac.

Diane, a keen amateur photographer, says "I was 49 when I had treatment for breast cancer and I took up photography to help describe the impact of a cancer diagnosis. "I am convinced that if people can have insight into our emotions, cancer patients will have an improved quality of treatment and recovery.

Diane's photo is one of 12 chosen by a panel of judges from almost 100 submitted as part of a photographic competition launched by three local Rotary clubs.

The quality of the entries was such that the panel also chose 12 highly commended pictures to feature in the calendar.

Everyone with a photo in the calendar is being presented with an award at the Rotary District conference taking place at the Double Tree by Hilton hotel in Stoke-on-Trent on Saturday 6th September. This includes three young people, two of whom are under 12 years of age.

Calendars will be on sale for £10 in the Dougle Mac Christmas Gift Guide, their online shop and in their shops in Bradwell, Chesterton, Hanley, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Silverdale, Stoke, Westlands and Longton. Longton was chosen because a member of

their team has two winning photos appearing in the calendar. Along with the three Rotary clubs, local organisations have sponsored the costs associated with producing the calendar, meaning every penny raise will be going to fund vital local hospice service.

Sponsor, Newcastle Golf Club, will also be selling the calendars. New stockists are

coming on stream all the time, with the latest being the New Vic Theatre.

The theme of the photo competition was 'Round & About in Staffordshire' and the calendar features images taken in Endon, Wood Lane, Cannock Chase, Eccleshall, Longton, Staffordshire Moorlands, Trentham Gardens, Biddulph, Wolseley, Westport Lake, Heath Hayes, Stoke-on-Trent, Baldwins Gate, Hanley, Barlaston, Alton Towers, Madeley, Brampton Museum and Blackbrook.







### Left Behind In A Digital World

At Age Concern Stone & District we help and support many clients who need services that can only be accessed online, we sit with them and guide them through the mine field of this digital age and try to help make every day digital tasks less intimidating.

Online banking, virtual GP appointments, digital-only discounts and reward cards in restaurants, supermarkets etc, makes it that being tech-savvy isn't optional it's essential. Around 2.4 million older people in the UK are digitally excluded. It could be due to lack of access to the internet in rural areas, confidence, or lack of training, the digital divide can leave older people cut off from vital services and social connection and often make them feel foolish.

Stone Library plays a quiet but vital role in digital inclusion. Bus pass applications are dealt with by the staff who help older residents apply for and renew bus passes online, guiding them through the process using library computers, if someone needs help then the staff will do it for them. The library offers free use of their computers and often the Librarians and volunteers assist with tasks like email setup, online forms, and navigating government websites.

The staff at the new banking hub are fantastic at supporting those who aren't confident with digital services. They're incredibly kind and patient, especially when helping older residents, making sure everyone feels welcome and well looked after.

The Crown Wharf Theatre recognises that not everyone is comfortable or able to access tickets online. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the variety of entertainment the theatre performances and cinema screenings give, they're trialling a weekend box office

The entrance to the theatre is next to the Crown Wharf Pub and the box office will be open Saturdays and Sundays between 11.00 to 1.30. Friendly volunteers will be on hand to assist with ticket purchases, answer questions, and help you find the best seats for your chosen and future shows. Whether you're booking for the theatre or the cinema, they're there to make the process easy and welcoming.

Stone has become a large town, but its efforts reflect a growing recognition that digital inclusion isn't just about technology - it's about dignity, independence, and connection. The most powerful change starts with listening and understanding the worries of older adults. At Age Concern we value experience and support independence. In Stone, we don't just talk about community, we live it. Whether you're popping into the banking hub, picking up a parcel at the post office, booking a show at the Crown Wharf Theatre, using our shops and businesses or enjoying a meal at one of our lovely restaurants and pubs, you'll find one thing in common, if you're not tech-savvy, they'll bend over backwards to help you.

I overheard an elderly gentleman reply to a café staff member who had just asked "Do you have any allergies" "I'm only allergic to QR codes, card machines, and anything with a microchip, he said, So if it's alright, I'll pay with good old-fashioned cash."

We're seeking donations of unused or surplus wool to support a local client who finds it very therapeutic to knit as it helps their mental health. Any contributions no matter how small would make a big difference to them. Please drop off the wool at the Age Concern Stone and District Office at 15 Station Road. ŠT15 8JP.

We are open Monday Wednesday and Friday Mornings 10-12.30. Call 01785 817906.



### Trentham Dragon Boat Event

Members from Trentham Canoe Club. Trentham Dragoneers Dragon Boat team successfully completed the Great River Race in September, raising £2030.00 for the local Dougie Mac Hospice.

The Great River Race is London's River Marathon. It's a spectacular boat race covering 21.6 miles from Millwall in the East to Richmond in the West, travelling under 28 of London's famous bridges.

The race was dedicated to founder member and Dragon Boat stalwart Lynda Whiston who sadly passed away in January 2025. The team wanted to compléte this gruelling race as a tribute to her and raise money through their efforts.

'Lynda's drive and passion helped her through her cancer journey and powered the teams forward, if she wasn't going to quit, we couldn't!' said Deb Wilde, one of the paddlers.

Dave, Lynda's husband was a driving force behind the effort too, ensuring we didn't fail.

Two teams, 'Powered by Oatcakes' which of course is named in honour of our local delicacy! And 'Powered by Biscuits' (treats used as encouragement to complete training sessions...especially in the dark winter evenings!) took on the challenge.

Oatcakes came 140th with a time of 4hrs 11 mins and Biscuits came 130th with a time of 3hrs 47mins...Over 270 started the race with the fastest completed time just over 2 hours. Many of the boats were sea faring gigs and coastal race teams, which made the attempt seem even more of a challenge!

Team member lan said 'We were so proud to finish given that we normal manage about 45 mins /4 miles round Trentham Lake once a week'

It was exhausting but a great sense of achievement especially for a crew where the age range was from mid fifties to mid seventies, and 'while young in spirit the bodies certainly knew it had been hard work'said crew member Steve Seabridge-Chadwick

Hopefully the teams will be entering a few more shorter, but still challenging charity races next year and anyone looking for a new hobby is more than welcome to join us. It is good fun, helps with fitness, mental health and there is a good deal of good natured banter thrown in. Any age from 16 years can participate and with coffee and biscuits as well, what's not to love!!

More info available on www.trentham canoeclub.co.uk/



Testing out the fit



Ready on the slipway at Millwall



Oatcakes, finding it a bit choppy!



The James family - Celia, Chris, Lee and Grandson George

### Phil James Charity Cricket Match 2025

This years annual charity cricket match and funday, dedicated in memory of Phil James, took place on Sunday 24th August at Stone SP cricket club. The sun was shining and the skies were blue, just perfect for the day.

The event which gets bigger and bigger each year included a tombola, cake stall, BBQ, the famous grand raffle and of course plenty of cricket.

The chosen charity this year was The Midlands Air Ambulance and we raised an incredible £9835.

More than £50000 has now been raised over the 11 years since we did our first event going to various charities through the sport which Phil loved so much.

As a family we would like to thank everyone who participated in so many ways, yet again showing the real meaning of community spirit in Stone.

There are far too many businesses to list from Stone and the surrounding areas who have continued to help us each year with raffle prizes etc but you will know who you are and we can't begin to tell you how grateful we are. Your generosity really does help to make it such a fabulous day and to help raise such an incredible amount of money.

A big thank you to Stone SP Cricket Club for all the help and support again this year.



The James family presenting the cheque to The Midlands Air Ambulance at the recent Emergency Services Day

And finally, a massive thank you to all of our family and friends that support us year in, year out to make the day possible, either by playing cricket on the day, selling raffle tickets, baking cakes, helping with the BBQ and everything else which helps to make the day such a huge success.

This event wouldn't be able to take place without the support, kindness and generosity from so many people and we honestly can't thank you all enough.

Phil would be so proud and he will never be forgotten. See you all next year

Love from the James family xxx



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### National Trust Staffordshire Centre Talks

The Staffordshire Centre's programme of talks at Walton Village Hall in Stafford continues on **November 11th.** There is no need to book in advance, just turn up at the door and pay as you go in. However, it would help the organisers if you book your place(s) on our website **https://www.ntstafford.org.uk/** go to Events-Talks - Book a Talk.

All talks start at 2.30 pm and you do not have to be a member of the Centre to attend. Admission is £4.50 for non-members of the Centre and talks are followed by tea and biscuits.



### Famous Folk of Staffordshire November 11th A Talk by Kath Reynolds

This is a talk by the always entertaining Kath Reynolds. The talks Kath presents are a reflection of her interest in people and in social history – usually within living memory. She is a collector and sharer of stories. This will be about some famous sons and daughters of Staffordshire.

John Brindley as the subject of a previous talk a few years ago. Some, such as Robert Peel, the former Prime Minister and founder of the British police force, you may have heard of but won't be sure of the Staffordshire connection. Others, John Currie perhaps? You might think you've heard of – but he wasn't a skater.

Still more – Mary Blagg, Fanny Deakin, for example, may be a complete mystery to you. Come along and listen to Kath reveal all.

Life that idiom!
Two heade are better than one.

Life that idiom!
Cat got your tongue.

Life that idiom!
I'm all ears.

Life that idiom!
On doud nine.

Life that idiom!
Cold feet

### Idioms And Expressions December 9th A Talk by Steve Williams

I didn't know how to describe this talk but, in the end, I decided to bite the bullet, get my act together and get something down in black and white. Don't want to steal Steve's thunder by letting the cat out of the bag but I only get to do this once in a blue moon and it's not going to cost me an arm and a leg.

Who thought of all these expressions, and where do they come from?

Perhaps I'm barking up the wrong tree and you should take everything I say with a pinch of salt. The best thing you could do is turn up at Walton Village Hall on December 9th, let Steve Williams tell you himself and get it straight from the horse's mouth.

To keep up with our future events, watch out for us in these pages or check out our Events page at https://www.ntstafford.org.uk/





### Success At The Eccleshall Show For Crochet In Eccleshall

Crochet In Eccleshall entered ten items in the Crochet Class, in the Horticulture & Craft Section, at this years Eccleshall Show, and they were delighted to have been awarded three awards:

- First Prize to Jill for one of her dolls
- Highly Commended to Janet for her granny square blanket
- Highly Commended to Elaine for her bag

The groups tutor, Julie, also entered in a new class for a handicraft of any kind, from a professional person, and we were very pleased that she was awarded:

- · First Prize for her blanket
- Highly Commended for her three gnomes

There was such a lot of talent in the marquee. Well done to everyone who entered.

We have small monthly Beginners classes at Eagle House from 12.30pm to 3.30pm, usually on a Monday or Tuesday.

We also meet monthly on a **Friday** at Eccleshall Library **from 12.30pm to 3.30pm.** Usually these are Improver classes but occasionally Crochet & Chat. On the **first and third Wednesday of** 



**each month,** some of us join the Staffordshire Marquetry Group for "Crochet & Chat".

Please contact Christine Smith on 07946 535035 or christines1386@gmail.com for more information and to book a place in a class.

Also see our Crochet in Eccleshall Facebook page.

\*\*See us next at the Holy Trinity Christmas Tree Festival \*\*

### Buddy's Elf Back In December To Create Smiles!

Sylvia Keris, from Eccleshall, will once again for the 6th year, be morphing into a full-time Elf throughout December - from 1st Dec up to Christmas Day - to get up to mischief as Buddy's Elf and raise laughter and smiles while promoting and raising funds for the charity The Buddy Bag Foundation.

The Buddy Bag Foundation (BBF) helps children in the UK with a bag of essential and comfort items, related to the child's age and gender, after they have escaped from domestic abuse to the safety of a refuge. Many children have to flee at a minutes notice, with just the clothing they are standing up in - so the buddy bags contain essential clothing, toiletries and comforting items including a knitted teddy bear.

The charity also now provides some help to children with their mothers, when able to leave a refuge to start life in a new safe dwelling, so they can obtain essential items like a cot & bedding, etc.

Sylvia's challenge is to become Buddy's Elf 24hrs a day (she even has Elf pyjamas...) so she has to be an Elf whether going food shopping, being on transport, going to the GP's, at a Rotary meeting, going for a canal walk or helping other local organizations she volunteers with, such as at Walton Hall Academy, at a Bagpacking session for Buddy Bags or at the Eccleshall library lounge speakers meeting or community



Breakfast club, for example.

Buddy's Elf is happy to visit any place locally that she can get to, if available, to promote other charities or attend festive events, to bring a few smiles, and if you would like the Elf to appear somewhere, especially if this would lend itself to a humorous photo, you can contact Sylvia by email at: sylviakeris@yahoo.co.uk or leave a message with contact details on 01785 851005.

Photos will be posted regularly on the Facebook page: Buddy's Elf and if the Elf's full-time December challenge makes you smile, you can make donations via the Buddy Bag charity festive webpage set up especially for her challenge at www.justgiving.com/campaign/elf2025 and you can leave a little festive message for family, friends or the Elf at the same time while kindly leaving a little donation, if you wish.



### Stone Lady To Take On Indoor Skydive For Charity Close To Her Heart

A local lady is planning an indoor skydive this month in order to raise money for a national charity that supports people with Multiple Sclerosis

Lisa McAdams, who is 51 and lives in Stone in with her husband and cockapoo, has been diagnosed with MS for the last 28 years.

"I was diagnosed when I was 23. I had no idea what the doctors were looking for so it came as quite a shock. Nowadays I use a wheelchair to get around and often I struggle with fatigue and weakness.

I find that keeping active massively helps me. I love getting outside in the open air when I can, and there are lots of lovely places that are accessible for my mobility scooter.'

During the first lockdown in 2020, MS-UK began offering opportunities to take part in specialised exercise classes, workshops and peer support groups - all on zoom. Lisa got very involved joining all of the sessions on offer and now volunteers to run one of the charity's varied weekly 'peer pods' - support groups for people with MS to talk to others in similar situations.

"For many years the MS didn't really affect my day to day life and I didn't tell anybody about it. Finding MS-UK and a group of people I can talk with openly was like a breath of fresh air.

MS is a neurological condition affecting the central nervous system for which there is currently no cure. It affects over 150,000 people in the UK and at least 135 new cases are diagnosed each week. Symptoms can vary greatly from person to person. Such symptoms may include numbness, weakness, fatigue, pain, issues with vision, memory, bladder and bowel.



When Lisa saw the opportunity to sign up for an indoor skydive taking place on 13th November, she took the chance to set up a Just Giving page to raise much needed funds for the charity to help continue its valuable work.

If anyone would like to sponsor Lisa's skydive, please go to the Just Giving webpage www.justgiving.com/ page/lisa-mcadams-2





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Stone Ramblers Soaked to the skin

# "Walk of the Month" From The Stone Ramblers

Well, the change in weather came very quickly, didn't it! As ever we don't let it stop us, but you have to question our wisdom, when we set out on an extremely wet walk around Kniveton recently.

It was raining when we began and seven miles later, when we finished, it was still raining! Message to self .... keep a spare set of clothes in the car.

Enough of that. We're ready for our AGM on Thursday 20th November, 7.30pm at Christ Church in Stone, with a guest speaker. We're also planning our New Year Lunch in January and several trips for next year. We're always so busy, Thanks to our volunteers, isn't it wonderful!



### Stone - Little Stoke

This walk is the second in the three free walks that we give away when we have our market stall at the Farmers' Market. It is also one of the walks that we feature regularly on our Tuesday morning 'Health Walks'. Look at our website for more information.

It is about 3 miles long and ideal for this time of year. Remember to wear some study shoes and canal tow paths can be very muddy. Take some waterproofs too as the 'heatwave' is well and truly over!

- 1. Start at the canal side at the Star Inn. Walk down the cobbled towpath and pass under Bridge 93, the road bridge.
- 2. Continue along the towpath passing the Moorings apartments. The central section was part of the warehouses of the old wharf. Walk along



the canal passing under Bridge 92 until you reach Bridge 91.

- 3. Walk under Bridge 91, past Brassworks Farm Cottages and shortly the 18th century three story Georgian farm house. At the next bridge take the steps up to the A51, turn left and after approximately 30 metres on your left you will come to a footpath with a metal barrier. Turn into this path, follow straight ahead through the estate into Lichfield Road.
- 4. Turn left, cross the road and walk up past the pub then turn right towards the level crossing. About 20 metres after the crossing, look on the opposite side of the road for a metal barrier marking the beginning of a footpath. Take this path and shortly it enters the top of a cul-de-sac. Go past some houses and look for the continuation at the side of a house opposite. A green service box and bollard mark the top of the path.
- 5. It continues at the bottom of Lyndhurst Grove. Turn left and continue up an estate road for a third of a mile. After passing Cranmore Grove, look for a footpath on your left, marked by a safety barrier. Take the path and ahead you will see the railway boundary fence. Here you turn right and follow the fence to a wide dirt track. (Pingle Lane)
- 6. Left into this track to Lichfield Road. Turn right and follow the road back to the bottom of the High Street. Go left to return to the Star Inn.

As always, we should make you aware that changes can occur to footpaths, so please let us know if you see any that we have missed.

Walking is so good for you, as is socialising. Have a look at our website www.stoneramblers.org.uk , pick a walk, contact the walk leader and have a go!

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Penny Meakin Chair, Stone Ramblers

### Macmillan Coffee Morning at Great Bridgeford

A very big thank you to everybody who came to our annual Macmillan Coffee Morning on Wednesday October 1st, 2025, and donated so generously.

Old friends, new friends, excolleagues, and Bridgeford Coffee Morning regulars all contributed to the magnificent total of £363.80!



There was another £47.25 raised through Gift Aid, and some who weren't able to donate on the day also donated online.

Thank you also to those who made cakes, including Amanda who has recently joined our team, and Peter, and thank you to those who helped on the day, collecting empties, putting away the furniture, sweeping the floor – it all helped to make the morning a great success. *Thank you everybody* 



### Carer Advice Day

Dougie Mac are hosting a 2nd Carer Advice Day and all carers and health professionals are welcome to attend.

It takes place on **Thursday 27th November, from 10am - 4pm** at Burslem Cricket Club, Greyhound Way, Festival Heights, ST6 3LQ.

The day will provide the chance for patients and carers within our local community to learn about local carer support available to them. We hope the event provides you with information, guidance and advice in relation to your current situation. Refreshments will be available.

For further information, contact Dougie Mac Dementia Services on 01782 214999.



### A Gruesome Glimpse into Staffordshire's Past -Sold at Auction

A printed list charting over a century of executions in Stafford provided a chilling highlight at a recent Cuttlestones auction, where it and other execution related ephemera in the lot sold for £170 to a local bidder from Uttoxeter.

Spanning from 1793 through to 1907, the document offered a fascinating – if macabre – insight into the town's criminal history and changing attitudes to justice.

The first entry dated from 1793, recording the executions of Betley and Ellis of Biddulph for the murder of Mr Ward of Yarlet. At the other end of the spectrum, the list closed in 1907 with two executions – J.A. Shufflebottom and J. Jones – for crimes that were not detailed.

#### **Crimes and punishments**

The register served as a stark reminder of how broad the definition of a capital crime once was. Alongside the many murder convictions, it recorded hangings for rape, forgery, highway robbery, house breaking, and even horse and sheep stealing. For modern eyes, the sheer range of offences carrying the ultimate penalty was a sobering thought.

#### **Gruesome tales**

The document did more than list names – it also preserved snippets of grim folklore. In 1812 William Booth, convicted of forgery, slipped and fell as he was hung. In 1816, the scaffold itself collapsed during the execution of murderer Ann Statham – one of the few women listed – making hers the last hanging to take place on top of The Lodge. Two years later, burglars Joseph Dace and Samuel Hames sang a hymn on the drop before meeting their fate. And in 1866 the rope slipped during William Collier's execution for murder, marking the last time a hanging took place outside Stafford Gaol.

#### The most infamous entry

Perhaps the most notorious figure in the list was Dr William Palmer of Rugeley – better known as "The Prince of Poisoners." Convicted in 1856 for the strychnine murder of his friend John Cook, Palmer was suspected of having killed several others, including members of his own family, for financial gain. His trial caused a sensation, with Charles Dickens branding him "the greatest villain that ever stood in the Old Bailey." Palmer's execution at Stafford was one of the most infamous of the Victorian age.

#### A macabre look back

Believed to be a tourism piece dating back to the mid-20th century, the list was part of a lot that included other ephemera related to executions; providing an interesting glimpse into our judicial past.

It unsurprisingly created quite a storm on local social media groups ahead of the auction; ultimately being secured by a bidder from Uttoxeter for £170, ensuring that this interesting piece of Staffordshire history has remained close to home.

Cuttlestones is now inviting consignments for future specialist sales. To find out what your antiques or collectables could be worth, send images via WhatsApp to 07949 603872, email valuations@cuttlestones.co.uk, or call 01785 714905 to arrange a free, no-obligation valuation.







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### Win Big and Help Save Lives with Charity's 2025 Christmas Raffle

Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is inviting people to make a life-saving difference in their local community by participating in its 2025 Christmas Raffle, which has officially launched.

The festive fundraiser offers a chance to win big, including a grand prize of £3,000. Every ticket sold directly supports future lifesaving missions, enabling the charity's advanced clinical team to respond to the most critically ill and injured patients across Staffordshire.

In addition to the £3,000 jackpot, there are 16 other cash prizes to be won.

Participating in the charity's Christmas Raffle will help save lives this festive season, making a real difference for people like Thomas and Becky Kay who suffered traumatic injuries while getting ready to head out for a family walk in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, with their 18-month-old daughter Rosie. They were parked up and strapping Rosie into her backpack carrier when, without warning, a car veered off the road. It collided with their parked vehicle, which was then shunted directly into

"It all happened so fast, and a normal family outing ended with us suffering life changing injuries and needing urgent treatment."Thomas recalls.

"Thanks to the incredible care from Midlands Air Ambulance Charity and the emergency services, we were able to begin the long road to recovery, something we're forever grateful for. Becky still lives with ongoing pain and some limitations but, through it all, we've discovered just how much resilience and love we have as a family. In March 2023, we were overjoyed to welcome our second child, Sam, and now enjoy every moment together."

Emma Wood, head of fundraising and engagement at Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, said: "Last year, the generous support of those who purchased tickets for our Christmas Raffle made 33 air ambulance missions and 37 critical care car missions possible.

Our charity does not receive any government funding and relies entirely on support from the local communities we serve. So, by participating in this year's raffle, you'll be making a vital difference to our essential emergency service, helping keep families together this Christmas while also having a chance to win an incredible cash prize.

Each year, the charity is tasked with raising £16 million to stay operational and deliver lifesaving pre-hospital emergency care, meaning each raffle ticket purchased will directly support the critical-care team and fund their

The Christmas Raffle is open to anyone aged 18 and over. Each ticket costs £1 and entrants' unique raffle ticket numbers will be automatically entered into the prize draw.

The closing date for postal entries is Monday 15th December; the closing date for online entries is Thursday 18th December, and the draw will take place on Monday 22nd December.

Terms and conditions apply. To buy a raffle ticket and help make missions possible this Christmas, please visit: midlandsairambulance.com/christmasraffle

To find out more about Midlands Air Ambulance Charity's vital, lifesaving work, visit www.midlandsair ambulance.com and follow the organisation on social



### Stone Alzheimer's Club Remembering Stella Winsor

The Club recently celebrated the life of Stella Winsor who passed away in September. Way back in 2006 when Stella's husband Dennis was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, she could not find a suitable club in the area for him. So, with great determination, grit and a lot of hard work she started the Stone Alzheimer's Drop-in Club in Stone which has now become the Stone Alzheimer's Club.

Starting the club was no easy task but Stella who was not only caring for her husband at the time, had the strength and foresight to push forward and do it. Stella was in her seventies so it was certainly an incredible achievement.

From small beginnings, the Stone Alzheimer's Club has grown considerably so that it now uses three rooms at the Christchurch Centre for meetings and a fourth for specialist member support. Štella's inspirational work in the community both with the Alzheimer's Club and the Stone Stroke Club, which she had also founded in 1985, continues to have a major impact both locally and beyond. Stella's legacy continues to flourish, offering valuable service where it is most needed.

Sandie McQueen said: "This amazing lady has left our town with not one but two great legacies...Stone Alzheimer's Club and Stone Stroke Club and she will be remembered by members every week. Without her determination and foresight, these clubs may never

have existed.



Raising a glass of Shloer to Stella

The Stone Alzheimer's Club continues to play a pivotal role in the community supporting those with Alzheimer's and dementia along with their carers. Passionate and focused, the Club is having a lasting impact because there is a great deal of experience within the club which our volunteers use to improve the lives of its members. Some of our volunteers have been with the club since 2006 so that level of continuity is part of what makes the Club special.

By listening and learning, the Club has, over the years, adapted what it does so that it is now more than just the drop-in club it originally was and now provides, in addition to a place to meet and share, monthly physiotherapy, hair care and regular access to Alzheimer's Society visiting specialists as well as to other local services and essential support. In the last year, the Club's Better Lives project has made a big difference by bringing many much needed services to members when they are at the Club. In this way, by combining our strengths, we have achieved more together which is making the Club an even more joyous place to visit.

Here for the long term, the Club has just celebrated its nineteenth birthday and Stella's passing with a great party. Celebrations are a really important part of the Club's activities so the room was packed for a very lively morning at the Club.

Stone Town Council Mayor, Jason Metters, called in to say hello and, as well as cutting two cakes – one for the birthday and one for Stella, he chatted with the volunteers and members and even joined in the dancing. (see right)

The Mayor's special dance performance with singer Debbie Miles and two local policemen

who also called in was very memorable and greatly enjoyed by all! The members then enjoyed cake and Shloer and there was much dancing and laughter to complete the party...all in all, a wonderful celebration of 19 years of the Club being an integral part of the community.

If you would like to support the Club or just come along and say hello, please get in touch. The club meets at Christ Church Centre, Christ Church Way, Stone ST15 8ZB every Thursday for fifty weeks a year and is open between 10 and 12. You can contact the club by telephone on: 07375 748733 or by email on: stone\_alzheimersclub@btinternet.com



### What's on at Great **Bridgeford Village Hall**

Monday		Time	Contact
Monday Club	alternate weeks, over 60s;	1,30 - 3,30 pm	Maureen 01785 282 785
Zumba	Weekly	6.00-7.00	Michelle - 07449 048 726
Garden Guild	2nd Monday in the month	7.30 - 9.00pm	Angie - 01785 282 634
Tuesday			
Parent and Toddlers	Weekly during term time	10.00-12.00	Joan 01785 282 722
Moorland Voices Choir	First Tuesday of the month	8.00-9.30	Sue 07710 234 223
V Hall Committee mtg	Every 2 months	7.30-9.00	Chairman Phil Causer
Wednesday			
Coffee Morning	Alternate weeks - 2025 15th & 29th Oct, 12th & 26th Nov: 10th Dec. 2026 - 7th & 21st Jan, 4th & 18th Feb	10.30-12.00	Leslie & Peter 282 582 Homemade cakes including gluten-free and sugar reduced
Tai Chi movements for Wellbeing	weekly	2.00-3.00	Sam 07948 717 534
Argentine Tango	Weekly	8.00-11.00	Hannah 07749 368 581
Thursday			
Canine partners - assistance dogs	Last Thursday in the month;	10.00 - 12.00	Ronnie 07584 995 247
Baby Massage	Weekly	10.00-11.00	Stacey 07872 647 296
Gentle Yoga	Weekly	6.00-6.45	Emma 07376 050 512
Yoga Flow	Weekly	7.00-8.00	Emma 07376 050 512
Friday			
Life drawing	Weekly during term time	9.30-12.30	Laura 07588 074 229
Argentine Tango	Weekly Beginners Course	7.00-9.00	Hannah 07749 368 581

Tennis Club - contact Sarah Twigg - 07971 443 396

To book the hall go to www.greatbridgefordvillagehall.org.uk and choose Online Booking to take you to the calendar. Booking Secretary - Amanda Milner 07963 548 691

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

#### New Headteacher at Pirehill

absolutely delighted to introduce myself as the new Headteacher of Pirehill First School. It is a true privilege to join such a vibrant and dedicated school community and I am excited to work with the students, staff, and families to continue



building on the school's excellent reputation. I come to Pirehill with a passion for creating a nurturing, inclusive, and stimulating environment where every child can flourish, feel valued, and reach their full potential.

Having worked in education for 16 years with nearly 11 of those as a Deputy Headteacher, I have always been committed to fostering a culture of collaboration, kindness, and mutual respect. My approach is rooted in the belief that every child should feel supported, inspired, and empowered to become the best version of themselves, both academically and personally. I believe in the importance of developing a strong partnership between home and school to ensure that our children receive the guidance and encouragement they need to succeed.

I look forward to working closely with the talented and dedicated team of staff, as well as with parents and carers, to build upon the great work already happening here and to introduce new opportunities for our students to thrive. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or ideas, as I believe in open and honest communication and look forward to building strong, lasting relationships within our community.

Here's to a bright and exciting future for Pirehill First School!

> Warm regards, **Mrs Kerri Fenton Headteacher, Pirehill First School**

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### Weekly Timetable of Events

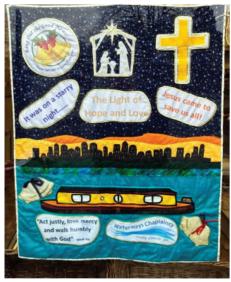
Mon	STRONG (fitness class - beginners welcome) Gentle Exercise U3A Talking Books U3A Craft U3A (monthly 2nd Mon) U3A Meeting (monthly 1st Mon) Slimming World Clubbercise Dance Fitness	9.30-10.15am 10-11am 10.30-12.30pm 2-4pm 1.30-4pm 6-7.30pm 6.30-7.20pm	Presidents Chairmans Classroom Classroom Classroom Chairmans Presidents
Tues	Pilates: All Abilities Family History U3A (fortnightly) Improvers Line Dancing Gentle Seated Exercise to Music & Social Sequence Dancing Cryptic Crosswords U3A (Ist & 3rd Tues) Papercraft U3A (fortnightly 2nd & 4th Tues) Weight Watchers STRONG fitness class - beginners welcome Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly) Gentle Pilates Stretch & Relax: All Abilities Rock Choir	9.30-10.30am 10.30-12.30pm 11-12 noon 1.30-2.45pm 2-4pm 2-4pm 6-7pm 6.15-7pm 6.30-8.30pm 7.30-8.30pm 8-9.30pm	Presidents Classroom Presidents Chairmans Presidents Classroom Classroom Chairmans Presidents Classroom Presidents Classroom
Weds	Guitar U3A Knit, Crochet & Chat Beginners Line Dancing Tutorial Hour Beginners & Improvers Line Dancing & Social Conexus Tuition Stafford & Stone Combat Assassin Yoga: All Abilities	10.30-12.30pm 10.30-12.30pm 12.15-1.15pm 1.30-3pm 4-6pm 6.30-7.20pm 6.30-7.30pm	Chairmans Classroom Presidents Presidents Chairmans Presidents Classroom
Thurs	Happy Feet Italian (Continuation - Sept 2025) U3A Private Booking Indoor Bowls U3A Relaxation / 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 1-3pm 2.30-3.30pm 6.30-8.30pm 7.30-8.30pm 7.30-9.30pm	Presidents Classroom Chairmans Chairmans Classroom Classroom Classroom Presidents
Fri	STRONG fitness class - beginners welcome Singing for Fun U3A (fortnightly) Dressmaking & Needlecraft U3A (fortnightly) Taekwondo BINGO - Community & Social Group	9.30-10.15am 1.30-3pm 2-4pm 7-8.30pm 7.30-9.30pm	Presidents Classroom Classroom Presidents Chairmans
Sat	Slimming World Child of Mine Playgroup (last Sat monthly) Line Dancing Tutorials & Socials	8.30-10am 2-4pm Coming Soon	Presidents Chairmans Presidents
Sun	Table Top Sale/Car Boot (fortnightly Sept/April) St Johns Church - Weekly Service St Johns Church - Monthly Service (last Sun)	8.30-11.30am 10.30-11.30am 6.30-7.30pm	Chairmans Presidents Presidents

There's been a lot going on at Walton Community Centre in the last couple of months! The SOS charity fashion show was a hit, the MacMillan coffee morning raised a FABULOUS £458 & the Pig Race was a lovely community event. Looking to the weeks ahead the community centre's TABLE TOP & Car boot sale will continue fortnightly up until the end of November. The CRAFT FAIR in November is set to be a great SHOPPING event, PLUS why not put Sunday 21st December 10.30am in your diary & join in with the Community Centre & St Johns Church for the Christmas Carol Service - its always a lovely social morning....!









### Advent Windows 2025 - The Advent Alphabet

For the 16th consecutive year Christ Church Stone are pleased to invite you to our annual Advent Trail around the town.

This years Theme is *The Advent Alphabet* and 21 locations have kindly agreed to host 24 Advent displays to illustrate our Community Advent Calendar for 2025.

Although the windows will be on display throughout December, please join us each day as we reveal our window for the day, sing a Christmas carol and tell the story of Christmas.

We would like to thank all the shops, businesses, organisations, schools and nurseries for taking part and making this a really joyous event for

The photos above show some of the Advent window displays from 2024

All window reveals take place at at 11.00am, followed by a Christmas story based on each windows theme, and then join in with singing the chosen Christmas Carol.

The first opening is at Vantage Point Creative on Monday December 1st, below is the list of the other dates and locations, we'll see you there!

#### Carol **Date & Day Location** Theme St Dominics Priory School **ANGFLS** Angels from the Realms of Glory 1 MON Vantage Point Creative Woolliscrofts What child is this? 2 TUFS Oaktree Farm Rural project **BABY** 3 WEDS Co-op Funeral Care 1 Walton Priory School **CHOSEN** The Virgin Mary had a baby boy Pirehill School **DILIGENTLY** As with Gladness men of Old 4 THURS John Burton 5 FRI Cats Protection League Christ Church 1st School **EQUALITY** O little town of Bethlehem 6 SAT Stone Library **Hub Craft Group FRANKINCENSE** We Three Kings of Orient are Christ Church (1) Sunday School **GIFTS** On Christmas night all Christians sing 7 SUN 8 MON AED Donate (1) Clothes shop The Crossing Community Centre HOLLY The Holly and the Ivy 9 TUES **British Heart Foundation** Smarty's Day Nursery **INNS** See him lying on a bed of Straw Joy to the World 10 WEDS **Mud Pottery** St Dominics Primary JOY 11 THURS Co-op Funeral Care 2 St Michaels School **KINGDOM** Christians Awake, salute the happy morn 12 FRI Millies Pie Shop **Oulton Church** LOVE AND LIGHT Silent night **MESSENGER** Waterways Chaplaincy/Canal Cruising Hark the Herald Angels sing 13 SAT Xtraweld Stone Pharmacy 14 SUN Springfield OSC **NOBLEST** God rest you merry Gentlemen Oulton 1st School **Baystone Interiors** ONCE Once in Royal David's city 15 MON Ding Dong merrily on High 16 TUES AED Donate (2) Furniture Shop Manor Hill School **PRAISING Shear Genius** Christ Church Academy **OUESTION** The First Noel 17 WFDS 18 THURS Childrens Society Elmhurst Day Nursery tbc **REJOICE** Good Christians All, rejoice **SHEPHERDS** While Shepherds Watched 19 FRI Secret Tea Room **Mumbles Day Nursery THRONE** It came upon a Midnight Clear 20 SAT Lively Artisan Lifestyle St Mary's Nursing Home **21 SUN Bod Bar & Coffee Shop** The Early Years Academy Nursery UNSEEN See amid the Winters snow 22 MON Little Dots Meaford Fields Day Nursery **VIRGIN** Away in a manager 23 TUES Auto Car shop Kids Planet Day Nursery WHAT? In the bleak midwinter 24 WEDS Christ Church (2) Christ Church **XMAS** O Come all ye Faithful

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### **Eccleshall District Annual Ploughing** & Hedge-Laying Match

Gazette reader, Euan Manning, visited the Eccleshall District Annual Ploughing & Hedge-Laying Match on Saturday 27th September, where he spent the

day photographing the event.

It proved to be a fantastic day celebrating traditional rural skills and agricultural heritage.

Euan also had his drone up for some aerial shots of the work softing underway which I think

getting underway, which, I think

you'll agree, are pretty impressive.

ED: I'm not sure I've seen a ploughing match from above before!

This years event was held at Moss

Farm in Gnosall.

Thank you to the Tomkinson family for a great site and to all the competitors, judges, committee & Jez & team for the food.

The hedge laying photos, and prize giving photos are courtesy of Eccleshall District Agricultural society, visit them at www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1 00085694627401

Find out more about Euan Manning (Photography) at www.euanmanning photography.co.uk







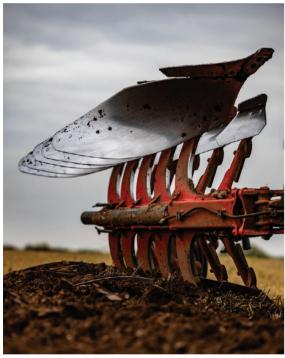














# THE STONE & ECCLESHALL

The Stone & Eccleshall Gazette is hand delivered bi-monthly to 13,400 homes in Stone, Eccleshall and the surrounding areas.

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### MY VILLAGE

My Village Voice is our sister publication, it has the same ethos as The Gazette, in terms of strong local editorial content, but is delivered to homes and businesses within villages to the south of Stafford.

5,400 copies are hand delivered bi-monthly to Acton Trussell, Bednall, Bradley, Brocton, Church Eaton, Colwich, Coppenhall, Dunston,  $Derrington, Haughton, Marston, Milford, Seighford, Great\ Haywood,$ Little Haywood and Walton on the Hill.

### THE ST 15 DIRECTORY

The ST15 Directory is an annual directory, produced by The Stone & Eccleshall Gazette.

10,000 copies are delivered each year in late January, to homes and businesses within the ST15 postcode area. B5 in size it has a strong laminated cover, making it perfect to keep all year round.

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Sir Gavin on the left, talks to Treasurer, Dennis Abbott

## MP Gavin works to help secure funding for St Michael's Hall

Sir Gavin Williamson, Member of Parliament for Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge, is working alongside the trustees of St Michael's Hall to secure funding that will help maintain the building for many years to come.

help maintain the building for many years to come.
Situated at the bottom of Stone High Street, the spacious hall hosts many community events including craft fairs, bingo evenings, and various theatrical productions.

St Michael's Hall was built on Lichfield Street in 1911, and was originally a Working Men's Club prior to being transformed into a community asset.

transformed into a community asset.

Work in the region of tens of thousands of pounds is needed to address roof repairs as well as fit insulation. Sir Gavin is helping the Trustees of the Hall to identify suitable grants that can help with renovations.

Dennis Abbott, Treasurer at St Michael's Hall said: "The Hall has been a centre for the community for the past 115 years – offering a pleasant and affordable venue for the townsfolk of Stone and the surrounding area.

It has progressed from its origins as a Working Man's Club through to being a social club to a community hall; hosting many community groups. We would like it to remain viable for the next 115 years at least, but it is need of some tlc and financial investment,"

Sir Gavin said: "I was delighted to meet with Dennis at St Michael's Hall and learn more about the fantastic work that volunteers undertake to maintain such an important community asset.

These venues are the lifeblood of communities – providing a spacious, safe place for people of all ages and backgrounds to socialise and participate in various classes. I am committed to supporting the Hall obtain the grants that are necessary to modernise the venue and ensure that it can be used for generations to come."

### Forthcoming Events at St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone and St Saviour, Aston

### At St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone

- Sunday 2nd November at 4pm we will be hosting an All Souls Service
- Remembrance Sunday is on 9th November. There will be a service of Holy Communion at 8am as usual, but there will be no 10.45am service. There will be the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, followed by the Town Service at St Michael's at 11.30am. All are welcome.
- Collage Café will take place in the library on 13th November and CU@4 on 16th November at St Michael's.
- Our Annual **Christmas Tree Festival** will take place from **5th 7th December.** This year we have a 1940's theme in honour of the 80th Anniversary of VE and VJ Day.

#### And St Saviour's, Aston

- Sunday 9th November Remembrance Sunday Service at 9.15am
- Saturday 22nd November at 2pm Christmas Fair
   Tuesday 9th December at 7pm Aston Scouts Carol
- Service
   Wednesday 17th December at 2pm Women's Institute Carol Service
- Christmas Eve Wednesday 24th December at 6.30pm Parish Carol Service
- Christmas Day Thursday 25th December at 9.30am Service of Holy Communion. Please note the slightly later time than usual.



### Christmas 2025: Church Services In Stone

### Christ Church, Stone And Oulton With Moddershall [Anglican]: Saturday 20th December

4.00 p.m. Christingle crafts and short service at Christ Church, Stone
Sunday 21st December

9.15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service at Christ Church, Stone 3.00 p.m. Carol Service at St John the Evangelist, Oulton 5.00 p.m. Carol Service at Christ Church, Stone

#### **Wednesday 24th December**

9.30 a.m. Advent Windows trail
11.00 a.m. Final Advent Window opening at Christ Church, Stone
5.00 p.m. Carol Service at All Saints, Moddershall
11.00 p.m. Late night Carols and Communion at Christ Church, Stone
Thursday 25th December

9.15 a.m. Christmas Day Communion at Christ Church, Stone 11.00 a.m. Christmas Day Communion at St John the Evangelist, Oulton

Sunday 28th December

11.00 a.m. Joint service of Carol Praise at St John the Evangelist, Oulton
Sunday 4th January 2026

11.00 a.m. Joint service of Holy Communion at Christ Church, Stone with bring and share lunch to follow

#### The Church At The Crossing [Baptist, Station Road]

Sun 30th November & Sun 7th Dec - 10.30am Advent Services
Sun 7th December 6-8pm 'Beer & Carols' (in partnership with The Butchers Block)
Sun 14th December 10.30am - Family Christingle with
crafts & activities (festive snacks afterwards).

**Sat 20th/Sun 21st December** - Rising Brook Carol Services (*at our Stafford location*) **Sun 25th December** 10am - Christmas Day Celebration

### St Dominic's [Roman Catholic, St Margaret St & Sacred Heart, Eccleshall:

**Wednesday 24th December:** 4pm and 7pm Christmas Eve Mass at St. Dominic`s. **Thursday 25th December:** 9am Mass at Sacred Heart, Eccleshall; 10.30am Mass at St. Dominic's

### St John's Methodist/Urc [Walton Community Centre]

**December 21st.** 10.30am. Carol Service. Rev. Samuel Silungwe **December 25th.** 9.30am. Christmas Day Service. Rev. Patrick Taylor

#### St Michael & St Wulfad With St Saviour Aston [Anglican]:

#### St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone:

7th December - Civic/Parish carol service 3pm
14th December - A Christmas Reflection 4pm
24th December - Crib service 3pm
24th December - Midnight Mass 11.30pm
25th December - no services

#### St Saviour, Aston

**24th December** - Parish Carol service 6.30pm **25th December** - Christmas Day Eucharist 09.30

### Ho! Ho! Ho! We're having a Christmas Fayre at Great Bridgeford Village Hall

On Saturday, 29th November 11am – 3pm; set-up from 8.30am

£15.00 per stall – a few stalls still available Max 12 stalls in Main Hall Bring your own Table/Chair or we can provide Light Refreshments & Homemade Cakes available to purchase

Free Entry and Free Parking For more info contact Denise – 07786 393360

## Gazette **Eccleshall NEWS IN BRIEF**

### The Ecclian Society

The annual general meeting of the society will take place on Tuesday 18th November when the society will invite interested folk to attend and take part.

### Community Lounge

"My mum flew Spitfires" is the theme for the 20th November speaker Caroline Speirs, at the Eccleshall Community lounge in the High Street library between 2pm and 4pm, who will speak about her Mum who lived in Eccleshall until her death in 2007. The lounge has a December function with a Christmas party on Thursday 18th December.

### Drop-In's At The Library

Borough Councillor for Eccleshall Ward, Peter Jones, holds his regular monthly drop in sessions at the High Street library on Saturday 8th November and Saturday 6th December between 10am and 12 noon.

Top of the list of things that gets mentioned is the proposed housing plans but members of the community are welcome to mention anything that they wish to talk to Peter about.

Voluntary Car Scheme
Thanks to the voluntary drivers the Eccleshall car scheme continues to provide transport to those local people in the Eccleshall area who need transport to medical appointments.

The scheme which was founded in 2018 has a team of around eight volunteer drivers who can usually be relied on to answer the call of local people when asked. The scheme has a 99% success rate in responding to requests for transport at reasonable costs.

If any readers would like more details of how the scheme works, how it could help you or members of your family with transport needs or if you may be able to become a volunteer driver contact the coordinators Peter & Joy Jones on 01785 51381 01 07815 419166 or email at péterwjones@btinternet.com.

### **Eccleshall Salon Wins** Salon of the Year

Following their win as "Salon of the Year" at the 2024 Francesco Hair Salon Business Awards last year, the salon have achieved this prestigious accolade once again in 2025!

Under the leadership of Salon Director Lola Skelton, and with the recent addition of their relaxing Head Spa, the Eccleshall salon continues to go from strength to strength.

In addition to the salon's success, one of their talented stylists, Ayleshe Smith, has been awarded one of six coveted spots on the Francesco Hair Salon Spotlight Team. This entails a year-long creative mentorship program designed to celebrate and elevate the talent within their company.

### Adbaston November Concert

Adbaston Community Concert Society proudly present for their November Concert, The London Handel Players, performing 25 years: a London Handel Players retrospective. With works by Handel, Vivaldi, Telémann, Leclair and Geminiani.

On Sunday November 2nd at 5.30 pm. St Michael & All Angels Church, Adbaston, ST20 0QE

Tickets: £15 at the door or reserve in advance (recommended) via Pam Trafford 01785 280373 or trafford.pam@gmail.com

For more information visit www.adbastonccs.org.uk

### 'Dance Scottish' with the Stafford Caledonians

Have you ever wanted to Scottish Country Dancing but never got round to giving it a go. Now is your chance to find out more through the Stafford and District Caledonian Society.

Don't worry you don't need to be Scottish or wear tartan all the time and you don't need a partner. Our friendly and inclusive group welcomes new members of all abilities with beginners especially encouraged.

Not only can you learn and develop Scottish Country Dancing steps and dances, but it's also a

way of keeping fit and active, having fun and meeting new people.

The group meets weekly Wednesday evenings at the North End Community Centre, Holmcroft Road, Stafford ST16 1 JG starting with the Beginners and Improvers session at

Just wear something you are comfortable in and bring some pumps or lightweight trainers.

The session continues for social dancing at 7.45pm with a break for tea and chat at 8.30pm, with the evening finishing at 9.30pm. The social dancing includes learning new dances with 'walk throughs' of all dances so people are familiar with

them before we dance each one.

The evening session costs £3 and the annual subscription is £10. Those attending the Beginners session only pay



The group runs from September to May and during that time there are some special occasions like Burns Night, President's Evening and Annual Ball not forgetting the Fish and Chip Supper plus

Start date of the new session was on 3rd September 2025, carrying on every Wednesday.

There is a website at www.stafford scottishdancing.danceorg.uk so you can check out what's on and see any variations to timings. Alternatively you can phone Gerald on 07904 380760 for information about membership or to ask any questions and there is a contact form on the website, where you will usually get a response within 24 hours.

So put on your Scottish dancing shoes, come along to the Stafford and District Caledonian Society and 'Dance Scottish'.

### A hug in a mug at the F2G Macmillan Coffee Morning

We were very taken aback by the wonderful response that we had for our MacMillan coffee morning. It was held at The Community Crossing Centre during our usual Wednesday morning cafe, and then it continued into the afternoon during our CAMEO (come and Meet each other) group.

Our very talented Clients took part in a Bake Off competition where cafe goers paid £2 to judge the cake selection and were very impressed by what was on offer. A big well done to all the Clients, they all worked so hard to bake and decorate their beautiful cakes.

We also had a number of other activities; guess the weight of the cake and a 50/50 cash prize raffle but we must say none of it could have been achieved without our Clients, their families, Staff and of course you! Our wonderful cafe and CAMEO attendees

We raised £413.60 for MacMillan Cancer support which is an incredible achievement and was the absolute cherry on the cake of such a wonderful day.

Donations aside, the one thing that really stood out to us is how warm and caring our local community is. The support that we had was incredible.

Our cafes run every Wednesday 10am-12pm at the Crossing community Centre, Station Approach, Stone, feel free to pop along next time you're free. Many thanks, Futures2gether





# Gazette Motoring

### Syd Taylor gets out and about in the impressive Hyundai i20 N Line S

For those wanting a top quality and interesting supermini with a touch of individualism about its styling - plus engineering as dependable as it is versatile, the i20 N Line S is a candidate for top billing. It's a package that ticks all the boxes, with a spicy piquancy that's a product of the high class Hyundai menu. This is quality fare, fairly presented and nicely turned out. You can pay more for a supermini but you won't get much more than you get here. It's a fairly hot version of the i20 and an inspirational 'drivers car' for the keen

At £24,750, with the 100 PS, 1.0T-GDi petrol engine and a 7 speed DCT (Automatic) transmission, it will take you to near 120mph. An exciting performer with a delightful 'brmm brmm' exhaust sound lets you know that it has a soul rather than a whispering ghost of an electric motor. Hyundai seems to have struck the ideal balance between sportiness and refinement: 'inspirational sophistication' springs to mind. It is one of the best small cars - with lots of pluses: particularly as everyone is beginning to learn, cars don't come much more reliable than Hyundais.





I was excited to discover just how good this little car is, combining as it does, five doors, an accommodating interior with multi-colour ambient lighting, room for four adults in reasonable comfort, a decent sized boot, comfy seats, a Bose sound system, cruise control, reversing camera, air conditioning and a host of other worthwhile features to aid convenience and safety.

The i20 N Line S is a well integrated model that can do so many things. As a small family car it brooks no nay sayers - but open its lively potential and it will gallop off down the home straight. In short it's a safe bet - an important consideration today.

With a top speed of around 120 mph, a fuel consumption of over 55mpg (even when I was using it enthusiastically) and low emissions, it's up there with the best.



A taut little performer on all kinds of roads, there's a zesty perkiness to the reassuringly predictable road manners; well controlled by uprated brakes and sport suspension that gives a good ride quality too. Despite the sportiness the cabin is well insulated from the bumps and shocks resulting from decaying road surfaces. In fact - driven gently in eco mode - it's quiet and relaxing. Sport mode adds zest and zip. It's the

sort of car that, one might say, puts the 'super' in supermini to give us an appealing car representing a passport to freedom: and very quickly establishing itself as a driver's friend.

Here is the ideal servant or companion that will help you to negotiate today's stressful world in a stress-free manner.



The many jolly user-friendly little touches that Hyundai have incorporated into the i20 N Line S have a built-in endearment factor. None less so than the mechanical handbrake. (No electric switches here thank goodness). Not only that, for peace of mind there's that doubly enticing five year warranty - which means that ownership of this fun car is underpinned by cast iron dependability.





### ABB Brings Al-Designed Street Art To Life

ABB has combined advanced robotics and artificial intelligence to create a one-of-a-kind artwork for the City=Gallery Street Art Festival in Mladá Boleslav, Czech Republic, home to Škoda's main plant. Working in collaboration with the Škoda Auto Endowment Fund, Škoda Auto, PPG and the festival organizers, ABB's IRB 5500 painted a large-scale mural designed entirely by AI, based on ideas submitted by the public.

"We are thrilled to take robotics out of the factory and into the heart of the community," said Joerg Reger, Managing Director of ABB Robotics Automotive Business Line. "We're not only demonstrating precision engineering – we're showcasing how technology can respond to people's creative ideas and bring them to life in a way that's interactive and

inspiring."

Through an online vote, the public helped define the mural's style, mood and themes, which Škoda Design translated into the inputs guiding the AI tools to generate the final artwork. An ABB robot equipped with the award-winning PixelPaint technology – which uses 1,000 individually-controlled nozzles similar to an inkjet printer – then brought that design to life with complete precision on the wall of the Pastelka Art School.



"As an international company, Škoda Auto knows that innovation and sustainability are only possible with strong local roots. Through the Škoda Auto Endowment Fund, we have long supported public space, education and innovation in the Mladá Boleslav region.

The robotic artist project is a perfect example of this – bringing together art, new technologies and community participation in a way that makes those values visible on the walls of our city. It shows how strengthening local communities also strengthens the company. That's why we act locally to remain strong internationally, and why we are proud to co-organize the City=Gallery festival for the fourth time," said Endowment Fund director Ladislav Kučera.

Originally developed for the automotive industry, PixelPaint's ability to apply intricate patterns in a single pass without masking make it uniquely suited to transforming the Al-generated image into a large-scale mural.

PPG provided an advanced waterborne basecoat specially formulated for ABB's PixelPaint to ensure reliable performance and precision. For the mural, PPG's coating system was adapted to the unique demands of street art, featuring a fast-drying primer and a topcoat that provides UV protection and weather resistance.

The live robot painting, held on September 4 and 5, was one of the festival's headline attractions. The ground-breaking collaboration between ABB, Škoda Auto Endowment Fund, Škoda Auto, City=Gallery festival and PPG marked the first time a robot artist had been showcased at the event.

The City=Gallery festival follows a long tradition of transforming public spaces into open-air galleries, a practice that resonates across cities worldwide. This year's edition in Mladá Boleslav added a new dimension, uniting art, technology and community in a live collaboration that showed how people and machines can create together, while also connecting local voices to a broader cultural movement.



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## Towcar of the Year 2026 - Victory for Volkswagen's Perfect Passat

The Volkswagen Passat R-Line 2.0 TSI 204PS DSG has won this year's overall trophy and been crowned Caravan and Motorhome Club Towcar of the Year 2026.

The Passat also claimed victory in the Family Towcars and Caravan weight 1300kg-1500kg categories. It was a hugely successful year for Volkswagen as it also topped the podium in the Large Family Towcar category with its Multivan Style 2.0 TSI 204PS.

The Passat has been a common sight on Britain's roads for 50 years – in many ways it's the definitive, practical family car, and the latest

ninth-generation version is the best of the lot. It's so good that the judging panel for the Caravan and Motorhome Club Towcar of the Year Awards 2026 overwhelmingly voted it as the overall winner.

The Passat impressed the judges with its superb towing capabilities, power, quality interior, refined driving experience and huge storage space in the boot.

Caravan and Motorhome Club Towcar of the Year, the leisure vehicle industry's original and longest-standing towcar testing awards, saw 37 high-quality entrants put through their paces at the world-class UTAC Millbrook Proving Ground testing facility in Bedfordshire.

Rather than being listed by price, the vehicles were split into categories by



caravan weight – this makes it easier for potential buyers to work out which cars can tow their own caravans. There were also special award categories for Pick-Up Towcars, Family Towcars, Large Family Towcars, Electric Towcars, Hybrid Towcars and Luxury Towcars.

As the industry evolves, the range of vehicles in the competition has expanded, with entries spanning a broad spectrum from affordable options to premium, high-end towcars. Fifteen of the entrants were pure-electric and there was also a host of hybrids.

Every one of the cars featured in this year's competition has been extensively evaluated – for more information about each model, including technical data, visit camc.com/towcar.

### COME TO STONE

By Philip Leason MBE

In the last Gazette I wrote about the railway in Stone to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the railways nationally. This month I thought I would write about how the railway encouraged people to visit Stone and a little on the development of tourism

As a result in the article on the railway I received a number of emails either asking for further details or passing on their memories and so I will deal with these first..

One reader asked about the railway crossing leading from Mont Road to the Station. Her grandfather who worked on the railway had always referred as "Pearce's crossing"

But who was this Pearce? After a little research it turns out that it was probably installed for Richard Eustace Pearce (1846-1923) who lived in Field House and in 1894 was appointed the Company Secretary of the North Staffordshire Railway, a post he remained in until he died. He had a bell installed into his home which was rung by the signalman at Stone Junction in order to give him sufficient warning to enable him to walk over the crossing with "the dignity as befitted the secretary of the line.

In researching Pearce I discovered that another North Staffordshire Railway official lived in Stone for a short period. Last month I mentioned that in January 1847 the North Staffordshire Railway Company had taken over the Trent & Mersey Canal Company. The Headquarters of the canal company had been Westbridge House in Stone (where Westbridge Park is today). It was an ideal location as it in the nearest town to the half way point of the canal at Aston lock. After the takeover the building became the house and for a short period the home of Samuel Parker Bidder (1811-1872) who was appointed the resident engineer for the North Staffordshire Railway on 23rd September, 1846 having previously been engineer of the Preston & Wyre Railway.. One of the features of the railway he was initially involved with the viaduct at Longton. He was brother of George Parker Bidder who was the engineer responsible for the building of the North Staffordshire Railway.

Samuel was later appointed General Manager of the Railway in 1851. We can tell how big Westbridge house was from the fact that apart from Samuel and his wife there were three sons and two daughters, his mother in law and sister in-law and three servants living there. He left Stone in June 1853 as he was appointed General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway Company in Canada.

Several readers recalled visiting circuses and a travelling theatre in the Station Meadow where the Youth Centre was later built. A number recalled how the elephant from the circus were transported by rail and when it was held other locations in the town, how they were paraded down the High Street and Stafford Street.

Another reader remembered the sidings by the footpath that leads to the canal. Apparently old railway carriages and goods waggons were parked in the sidings and as a boy he and his friends used to climb inside and have a crafty smoke until they were spotted by one of the porters from the station.

Turning now to this month's topic and from the start the Knotty ran cheap day excursions to various places including Stone at the weekend. One of the things that visitors wanted to see was the monument to Earl St. Vincent in St. Michael's church who had died just 14 years before the railway opened. Throughout his naval career John Jervis/Earl St, Vincent had become a "local celebrity." For example in the book "The Spirit of the Place" by Mike Rogers on the history of Caverswall, after John had attended the funeral of his father-in-law Sir Thomas Parker he writes:

"When the mourners left the church the villagers old and young, male and female alike pushed, jostled and scurried to gain a clear view of the hero of the day for although all felt deep and genuine grief at the death of Sir Thomas, none could resist the proud curiosity engendered by the presence of Martha Parker and her husband of only a year. Commander John Jervis, who as captain of the 'Foudroyanr' had earned respect as a fine seaman and rigid disciplinarian and had won renown by capturing a French warship Pegase off Brest in the year of his marriage.

In 1908 the railway published a book entitled "Picturesque Staffordshire and Surrounding Districts – Rambles on the hills and in the valleys." The book states: "Stone and Neighbourhood. The town of Stone, although not perhaps very attractive in itself, is a centre from which delightful rambles may be taken." It then goes on to give a brief history of the town and concludes by saying "As already stated, there are many places near to Stone well worth a visit. Swynnerton, Meaford, Moddershall (which was described as the Switzerland of England), Hilderstone, Tittensor and several other villages, all being within easy distance, while the country lanes and the views therefrom are exceedingly pretty." There are small photographs of Swynnerton and Meaford in the book but the only photograph of Stone is that of Earl St. Vincent's monument in St. Michael's.

Many of the pubs and cafes advertised the catering which they



Advert for the Unicorn Hotel 1912 Stating Ye Old Cyclists Rest, cycle storage and "steak and chips at short notice"

offered. The Black Horse (now Costa Coffee) offered "home cooked ham salad served in the garden at the rear of the establishment." For the visitor wishing to stay for a longer period there was the Crown Hotel, the Unicorn (now Superdrug) and the Temperance Hotel in Granville Square (now demolished) . All trains arriving at Stone were met by an omnibus from the Crown Hotel, which probably continued up to the start of the First World War.

These visitors wanted souvenirs of their visit and so a number of pottery manufacturers (for example Willow, Kensington and W H Goss) produced small pots, many based on ancient artefacts. As there was no town crest some potters used Earl St. Vincent's Coat of Arms, the County Crest with "stone" under it or a cairn of stones above a martyrs cross. Some bear the name of the retailer that sold them, for example A.W. Tilley of Radford Street.



Souvenirs depicting Earl St. Vincent's coat of arms, the County crest and the cairn of stones over the grave of Rufin and Wulfad above a Marty's cross

People also wanted to send postcards of the places they had visited to friends and relatives. The sale of postcards in Stone was pioneered by Thomas George Adie. In about 1890 Aidie had purchased the premises at 28 High Street of James Grundy, bookseller, stationer and printer. Grundy was also the registrar, a post he continued to undertake after he had sold his business. In 1900 Aidie started to sell black and white postcards of about twelve views of Stone. These had the tiles printed in red and his name printed on the back. These early cards are easy to dare as in 1903 he had "& Co." to his name.

By 1912 Aidie was advertising as "publisher of nearly 100 views of Stone and district."These views included views of the High Street and a large number of the other streets in the town as well as the villages.

The growing demand for postcards led to an increasing variety of cards. In 1904 Francis Frith & Co began to publish views of Stone which Adie sold in his shop. It is some of these views taken by Frith which today have been made into pictures or even things like table mats.

Due the increase popularity of the postcards in 1904 an unidentified publisher started to produce cards of Stone but they were taken over by W. Shaw of Burslem in 1905 and they immediately extended the ranch of cards of Stone.

Where people are shown on the cards they have been suitable posed. Children often received a half-penny or even a penny to stand and be photographed.

The first coloured cards of Stone were produced by Aidie in 1904 and the first real photographic cards were produced in 1909. Between 1904 and 1914 Adie was selling over 100 views of Stone and 60 views of the

The still a growing demand for cards and it is not surprising that other retailers started to have them printed. Louis Dutton, bookseller and, tobacconist started to sell Shaw cards. Another shopkeeper was Arthur Tilley, photographer and newsagent, in Radford Street who again sold cards produced by Shaw as well as a few taken from his own negatives. Tilley started to have his own cards printed in Germany.

I have been told during the Second World War when signpost had been removed the German paratroopers were given small books with views in taken from the negatives used to print postcards. This would give them an indication of where they had landed. Apparently there were a couple of photographs of Stone included in the book.

During the war years 1914-18 German printed card ceased and stocks of them slowly disappeared, Lessening demand and the rising cost of short runs of cards reduced the profit in having cards exclusively for one shop. Adie, Tilley and Shaw ceased to issue their own cards.

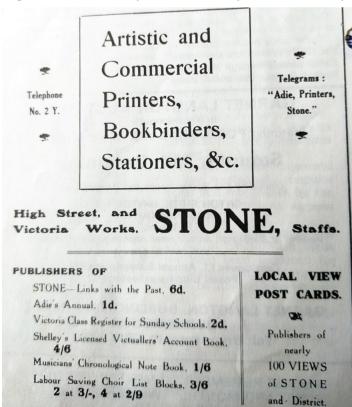
The one exception was Louis Dutton. In 1916 he moved from 26 High Street (two doors away from Thomas Adie) to large premises at 66 High Street where he traded as Louis Dutton & Son, tobacconist, stationer and fancy goods dealer. His son Philip was a photographer and had a studio above the shop and in around 1916 began using his own negatives to produce photographic post cards. Between 1916 and 1939 when the series ended over a hundred views were produced. In addition Philip took photographs and produced cards for special events in the town. For example the visit of the Prince of Wales, later Edward VIII on 13th June, 1924.

Some of these early post cards now sell for several pounds and several collectors have allowed their collections to be down load on the Staffordshire Past Track site.

A popular pass time in the early 20th century was cycling and continues to be so today. Some of the pubs specifically catered for the cyclists and there was a café known as the "Cyclists Rest" on the Filleybrooks. The Unicorn called itself "Ye Old Cyclist Rest" and had cycle

If you were really hungry after your cycle ride you could get "Steak and chips at short notice" (see advert). W. Eyre & Co, ironmongers at 34-36 Radford Street "all kinds of cycle accessorises" as did a number of other retailers.

From the 1920's with the growing number of cars more victors and tourist started to visit Stone staying at the Crown Hotel, the Unicorn Hotel and later the Brooms Hotel (now The Stonehouse). The Crown was regarded as one of the top hotels in the area. Numerous stars of stage and screen have stayed there over the years. On a Saturday's





An example of a "special event" postcard taken by Philip Dutton - the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1924

footballs teams often called there for lunch and eager youngest (boys & girls) would wait outside for to collect autographs.

Before the opening of the motorway there were a number of cafes along the A34 between Stone and Trentham to cater for the motorist and long distance coach parties. There was a wooden building alongside the Darlaston Inn which offered morning coffee and afternoon teas specifically for coach parties. Further along was the Darlaston Café (later known as the Silver Birch), a small café at Strongford and the Café Monica at Trentham. Then for commercial vehicles and lorries there was the Woodley Café.

Today a growing number of tourist from throughout the world visit Stone by canal. It is interesting to note that modern canal cursing started in Stone. Inspired by the canal travel book "Narrow Boat" written in 1944 by L.T.C, Rolt, Rendel and Jean Wyatt saw the potential of canal holidays following the Second World War. They founded the Stone Canal Cursing Company in 1948, making it the oldest hire boat operator in the U.K. The company started with a small fleet of boats and facilities on these early boats were "basic" unlike the boats of today. The company is still family-operated, now in its fourth generation.

A few years ago Karen Wyatt wrote the following about those early

days of the company.

"Breakdowns were frequent and took longer than now to sort out. For the customers it was like an adventure if something untoward happened. Waiting all day for the engineer to arrive gave you time to fish, read a book, play cards or look at nature. There was no panicking or being stressed or demanding. Life used to go by at a much slower pace.

In those days the boats were made of wood and holes in the hull were a regular thing. We used to go to the Joule's brewery tip across the canal in Stone and collect bucketfuls of barrel corks to bung the holes. They used to collect petrol in containers from a garage and transport it in the company's A35 ex-GPO van; around 60 gallons every week until the changeover to diesel engines in the 1970's

Following the war Rendel and Jean's son David joined the company. Karen goes on to write:

"Many a time David would return home after attending a breakdown wringing wet having fallen in the canal because it was dark and he forgot which side then towpath was on. Or maybe he had to get in the water to clear a prop. Or patch a hole in a sinking boat.

On one never-to –be forgotten pitch black night we were pulling a stricken boat through a bridge hole without even the light of a torch. Suddenly, one of us put their foot on the bare bottom of someone prone on the towpath. You should have heard the screaming as the embarrassed couple made their undignified getaway."

Then streets on the Whitebridge Housing estate all have links to the canal. Rendell Wyatt is honoured and remembered in the name Rendel Grove. Lionel Thomas Caswell Rolt in Rolt Close and the name of his boat "Cressy" in Cressy Close

I hope that this article has brought back memories to some readers and been 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.

Finally as this is the last copy of the Gazette for this year I would like to wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year

Philip Leason

### Swynnerton Throughout The Years

By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

This selection from Staffordshire Past Track (www.staffspasttrack.org.uk) focuses on Swynnerton. Swynnerton is a typical estate village, incorporating hall and landscaped park, churches, cottages and cricket ground.

In the Domesday Book, Swynnerton is entered as Sulverton and it was held at that time by Robert de Stafford. The population was 15 and there were seven ploughs. In the Middle Ages the Swinnetons were lords of the manor. During the reign of Henry VIII, Elizabeth, the daughter of Humphrey Swinnerton, married Sir William Fitzherbert of Norbury, so bringing Swynnerton into the Fitzherbert family.

The Fitzherberts built a Catholic chapel adjoining Swynnerton Hall in 1868 at a cost of £8,000; the architect was Gilbert Blount, an architect of the Pugin School. The chapel is a private chapel but is open for mass to parishioners of Swynnerton.

During the Second World War, a Royal Ordnance factory was built at Swynnerton. This was what was known as a filling factory where ammunition was filled with explosives and then stored in magazines on site before

being issued . The building of the factory began in 1939. Production started in 1940. By 1942 a total of 18,000 people were employed at the Swynnerton factory.

Seven hostels were built in the vicinity to house the factory workers, although some travelled daily, mainly from the Potteries. A new railway station was built at Cold Meece to accommodate the additional traffic.

There are now over 50,000 photographs, documents, maps, paintings and other images relating to Staffordshire's history and heritage on the Staffordshire Past Track website www.staffspasttrack.org.uk and more are being added all the time by staff and volunteers at Staffordshire Archives & Heritage.

If you have any photographs you'd like to contribute or any information about the images already on the website please contact the team at: Staffordshire Archives & Heritage, Staffordshire History Centre, Eastgate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ. Telephone: 01785 278379, email past.track@staffordshire.gov.uk. You can also keep up to date with what's new on the Staffordshire Past Track facebook page.



Lodge, Swynnerton, about 1900
This late 19th century lodge is sited on Swynnerton
Road at the junction with Frobisher Drive.
Photograph courtesy of Stafford Historical and Civic
Society. (Staffordshire Record Office)



Swynnerton Hall, 1841 - A sepia drawing by John Buckler. In 1562 the Swynnerton estate passed to William Fitzherbert. The present house was built by Francis Smith of Warwick for Thomas Fitzherbert in 1729. James Trubshaw made further additions and alteration in 1812, but some of these have since been demolished. The house is still the home of the Fitzherbert family. (Staffordshire Views Collection, William Salt Library)



South Chapel, St. Mary's Church, Swynnerton, about 1930
On the left is a seven-foot high statue of Christ, who is seated and pointing to a wound in his side. The statue dates from the thirteenth century and was found buried beneath the floor of the chapel. Due to its size it is possible the statue came from Lichfield Cathedral and was hidden in St. Mary's during the Reformation. Photograph courtesy of Stafford Historical and Civic Society.

(Staffordshire Record Office)



Frobisher Hall grounds, Swynnerton, 1940-1946
Mary Wayte is on the left. Together with her husband, Ernest, she managed the Frobisher Hall hostel during and just after the 2nd World War. She was the daughter of Henry Steele, a pottery artist at Minton. The other woman is believed to be June Luke of Worthing, Sussex. Frobisher Hall was a hostel for workers at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Swynnerton during and just after the 2nd World War. Workers at R.O.F. Swynnerton, a high percentage of which were women, filled shells, bombs and other armaments, including 20mm shells for Spitfires, detonators, boosters and tracer shells.

The work was unpleasant and dangerous and the explosive powder could turn skin and hair yellow. Even worse, a number of women lost fingers, hands or even limbs in explosions at the factory. 5,000 people started work in 1940, many of whom came up from Woolwich and the east end of London, housed in hostels built near the factory at Swynnerton, Yarnfield and Coldmeece. By 1942 the workforce had increased to 18,000, may of whom were recruited from the Potteries, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stone and other local towns and villages. New housing was built in Walton and Coldmeece to house the workers. The factory reduced in size after the war, but remained open until 1958. (Staffordshire Museum Service)



Wheelwright George H. Bennett at work on Swynnerton Main Street.
The wheelwrights was a family business, established during the 19th century. The ownership passed through several hands including George Pilsbury Bennett, who was killed in Belgium in 1917, and his elder brother John Pilsbury Bennett who took over the business after his death. The workshop eventually became a motor garage. Gabrielle Battrick remembers: "My grandmother, Beatrice Maud Gosling was the eldest child of John Gosling from The Firzherbert Arms and sweetheart of George Pilsbury Bennett, who sent her a letter the night before

he was killed in Belgium on 9 July 1917.
She went on to marry his elder brother, John Pilsbury Bennett, and their son, my father, George Bennett was born on 9 July 1924. In December 1926 John Pilsbury Bennett died from a head injury following a bicycle accident.". (Staffordshire Museum Service)



Viewing the Book of Lights at last year's service

### Katharine House Hospice invites community to "Light up a Life"

This Christmas, Katharine House Hospice is inviting you to come together to remember those loved and lost by dedicating a light on its Christmas tree.

For more than 25 years, Light up a Life has been a cherished tradition at the charity, bringing comfort to families at a difficult time of year. Éach dedication is both a personal tribute and gift, helping fund specialist care

for local people living with incurable illness.

Long-term hospice volunteer,

Jean Speechley, said: "The Light up a Life service trulv humbling. Families of all ages come together in this beautiful act of remembrance, and you can see just how much it means to them.



Volunteer, Jean Speechley

One regular supporter shared, "I do it every year. It's a

lovely tribute to lost loved ones."

Javier González-Fritz, who leads the Family Support Team at the hospice, said: "Light up a Life is not only a symbolic way to honour loved ones, it also funds the vital care we provide for families, many of whom may be facing

their last Christmas together.

Without the support of the local community, we wouldn't be able to provide the care that we do. Last year alone, our Family Support Team delivered nearly 2,500 bereavement sessions and 1,500 counselling sessions, thanks to your generositý.

By dedicating a light this Christmas, you are not only honouring a precious memory, but also helping us bring comfort to others, so that no one has to face illness or grief alone.

The lights will be switched on during a special remembrance service at the hospice on Sunday, 7th December at 5 pm, which is open to all – even if you haven't experienced our care or support.



Rachael Pyatt, Staff Nurse and Ammie Sloan, Healthcare Assistant

Local company, Treeway Fencing Ltd has agreed to donate the Christmas tree to Katharine House Hospice, MMS Marketing will be sponsoring the lights and KGL

Estates Ltd is supporting the appeal.
You can dedicate a light by visiting www.khhospice.org.uk/light or calling the hospice on 01785 254645.

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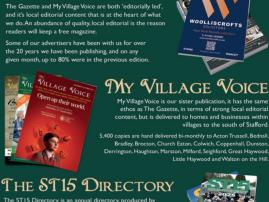
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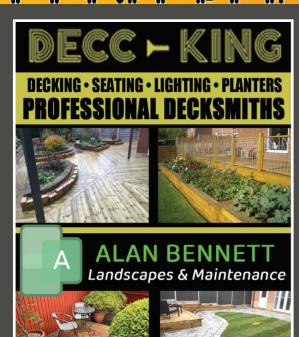
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