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SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2026

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ECCLESHALL NEWS

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**Photography in association with
Martin Robinson**

The views expressed in this publication are those of our contributors, and are not necessarily those of the publishers, nor indeed their responsibility.

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

Thank you Graham, you'll be a tough act to follow!

So much has happened since the last Gazette. England finished Third in the World Cup, smashing France 6 - 4, why didn't we play like that against Argentina? Then we've had a new Prime Minister, "King of the North" Andy Burnham has come to save us all, and the country, I do hope so.

Four heatwaves were relentless throughout July and August pushing the UK to its hottest summer on record, and the driest July recorded in England and Wales since records began in 1836, until next year!

Burston bridge has been spectacularly replaced, allowing access to the towpath at Upper Burston Bridge. The old bridge was swept downstream by a rogue willow tree in the storms of 2023.

The bridge forms part of Two Saints Way, the historic 92 mile long pilgrimage route that leads from Chester to Lichfield, through Burston. The new substantial structure will last long into the future, providing a crossing for walkers and pilgrims alike.

A community group in Norton Bridge are trying to buy/save the Railway Inn pub, to revamp it, then run it as a community asset. To help them you can buy shares from £1 each, or just make a donation if you prefer.

Staying on campaigns to save buildings, Friends Of St Rufin's, have started an online petition to save St Rufin's Church Burston, after the decision to close and sell it has come from the Parochial Church Council of Sandon with Burston.

As the only community building in the village, the permanent loss of this historic building would be mourned by

visitors, worshippers, historians and the local community alike.

Congratulations go to Melanie Baines, of Stone Scribblers' Creative Writing Group, who has won the very first Stafford Library short story competition.

And to Ava, aged 9 from Yarnfield, who has signed to Stoke City Girls Under -10 Academy, despite only starting playing football 14 months ago!

Well done to Agi Burley who runs Very Special Children, which has been named Most Supportive Children's Developmental Movement Service 2026.

A special thank you goes to Graham, who has been delivering the Gazette in Swynnerton since 2002!

Now 86, Graham has decided it's time to hang up his delivery bag, and enjoy his retirement. Thank you Graham for being our longest serving distributor, you'll be a tough act to follow!

Some great events are coming up this autumn, Stone Food & Drink Festival is bringing a brand-new celebration to town, with the launch of Oktoberfest Stone, so get your dirndls and lederhosen off to the dry cleaners, and get your tickets now, as it is a limited event, and it will sell out!

Stone Lions Club are hosting "A Night At The Proms", featuring the Lea Hall Brass Band, with the proceeds going to Walton Warriors Football Club.

There's an Alternative Car Show, in Stone High Street in September which will see around 60 cars 'with a difference' exhibited, including custom, tuned, kit and American cars.

Plus many more events inside.....

Dan Mitchell 31/08/26

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Wills and Powers of Attorney

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Kate Sutherland started Set in Stone Wills and LPAs LTD after experiencing the best and worst that the legal profession provided for her clients. Kate wanted to start a company that provided the best possible client service, which was honest, practical and personal.



Kate is Stone born and bred. Having studied law at Staffordshire University she has worked in local law firms in their Wills and Probate departments for the past 20 years, including acting as Head of Department.

Set in Stone Wills and LPAs LTD want to be your first choice for Wills and planning advice and aim to do this by being the common sense option. We will never bamboozle you with legal terminology or try to sell you trusts and complicated tax schemes.

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Hugo Wildblood, Hayley Coles and Andrew Mynors cutting the ribbon on the new Burston Bridge

Footpath In Burston Reopens With New And Improved Footbridge

The bridge is open! As is the access to the towpath at Upper Burston Bridge.

Welcome back to the reopened Two Saints Way through Burston.

Two Saints Way is an historic 92 mile long pilgrimage route that leads from Chester to Lichfield. It is named after the seventh-century Mercian saints Werburgh and Chad.

The old bridge, which was by no means the first bridge here, was swept away in the autumn of 2023 when it was moved off its foundations by a willow tree that had fallen into the river and which was then left to block the flow of water until it was moved by the flooding river with such force that it dislodged the bridge.

Sandon and Burston Parish Council has been tireless in its pursuit of ensuring that the damaged bridge was replaced. Staffordshire County Council have gone to great lengths to replace what was believed to be the third bridge at this point over the Trent, two earlier wooden bridges and the third, all metal one.

The new bridge is substantial and will last long into the future providing a crossing for walkers and pilgrims alike as well as providing a wonderful opportunity to follow in Winnie the Pooh's love of Pooh Sticks!

The new and improved structure, funded by more than £100,000 from the county council, has been designed to be larger and more flood-resilient, so the route can be enjoyed for many years.

The new bridge was formerly opened on 26th August, the opening was attended by members of the Staffordshire County Council team, members of Sandon and Burston Parish Council along with local residents.

Residents of Burston are really looking forward to using the route again.

Hugo Wildblood, Chairman of Sandon and Burston Parish Council said:

"We're very lucky today to see the River Trent bridge being reopened today at Burston. The old bridge was a lot narrower, it had been there since the late 1940s, it served its purpose but was getting a bit tired.

This bridge is going to last us a lot longer than the previous one, which is really good. This bridge looks tremendous. I'm very pleased with it and I'm sure a lot of other people are going to be using it very



(L-R) Hayley Coles, Andrew Mynors and Hugo Wildblood enjoying the new Burston Bridge with residents

regularly. Thank you very much, Staffordshire County Council."

Richard Goring, a resident from Aston, is also really looking forward to returning to his regular walking route again. He said: "It's a marvellous day, this. I know there must be at least a couple of hundred people that used this footpath and they've really missed for the last two years.

It's amazing. It's about 25 times bigger than anyone thought it would be and it's stronger and I suppose it's safer as well when you look at it. It's an engineering feat."

With the new footbridge now in place, the closure on Footpath 36 between the River Trent and Burston Lane has been lifted and the route is once again fully open to the public.





The Shane Nolan Band

Steins At The Ready As Oktoberfest Comes To Stone!

The team behind Stone Food & Drink Festival is bringing a brand-new celebration to town this autumn, with the launch of Oktoberfest Stone.

Taking place at **Westbridge Park on Saturday 3 October 2026, from 2pm until 10pm**, the over-18s event will combine licensed bars, live music and entertainment with a tempting selection of street food.

Festivalgoers will be able to fill their steins from a fantastic choice of beers supplied by local breweries and bars, while those who prefer something different will be well catered for with wine, fizz, cocktails and more.

Stone Food & Drink Festival board member Ed Stant said: "We're incredibly excited to bring this brand-new event to Stone. Our annual food and drink festival has shown just how much appetite there is for great events that bring people together, support local businesses and create a real buzz around the town."

Oktoberfest Stone will build on that community spirit while offering something completely new - a fantastic opportunity to get together with friends, enjoy great food and drink and celebrate right in the heart of Stone.

An exciting line up of live music has been announced with DJ Brett launching the party at 2pm before being joined by live saxophonist Ben Keating.

At 4pm, Tony Lewis takes to the stage with his acclaimed tribute to Robbie Williams, complete with the voice, moves and swagger of the superstar entertainer.



Robbie Williams tribute act Tony Lewis

The Bavarian Strollers will continue the celebrations from 5.30pm with traditional oompah music, German toasts, table dances and pop favourites given their unmistakable 'OompPop' twist.



The Stone Food & Drink Festival's Ed Stant getting in the Oktoberfest spirit!

DJ Brett and Ben Keating return at 7.15pm, before one of the UK's most in-demand party bands, the Shane Nolan Band, delivers a high-energy finale packed with hits from across the decades.



The Bavarian Strollers

Ange Arnold, part of the Stone Food & Drink Festival team that is organising the event, said: "We're delighted to reveal a line-up that promises fantastic entertainment from the moment the gates open."

From oompah and live sax to Robbie Williams favourites and party anthems, there'll be plenty to keep everyone singing and dancing throughout the day!"

Tickets are strictly limited and must be booked online in advance, with no tickets available at the gate.

Standard admission costs £20 per person, while VIP tickets are £25 and include access to an exclusive VIP area with guaranteed seating.

Oktoberfest Stone is strictly for guests aged 18 and over.

For more information and tickets, visit www.oktoberfeststone.co.uk

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 7.30-9.30 DISCO Stomp Stone (monthly)

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Gazette

NEWS IN BRIEF

Time for Tea Fund Sandon History Walk

There will be a guided History Walk in Sandon on **Sunday 4th October**. There is no need to book, just turn up on the day, in suitable footwear and clothing.

The walk will meet at Sandon Church at **1.45pm** for the 2pm walk.

The walk is approximately 2 miles, which is followed by tea and cake afterwards, there is £5 per person donation in aid of the "Time for Tea Fund" at All Saints Church.

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 10.45am.

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?

RIP & RECYCLE: Big Knit Workshop *Fast, fun & definitely different!*

Tutor Ingrid Wagner will teach you how to rip & recycle unwanted cotton sheets/quilt covers/curtains/towels to make a fab bathmat or seat cushion. Basic knit stitch will be used.

Learn how to handle Big Knit Needles using multiple strands of cotton yarn & create tassels.

On **Wednesday 28th October** from 10.15am-15.15pm at Upper Moreton Farm ST18 OXD. £15.00 includes refreshments & light lunch, with only 10 places available. For more details & to book: contact Ingrid on 07717 036 213 I or you can email her at ingridwagner976@gmail.com

Haywoods Repair Cafe

The Haywoods Repair Cafe have a change of venue for September Only.

The Lamb & Flag at Little Haywood is happy to host the Repair Cafe On **Sunday 13th September from 2-5PM**

We repair: Electrical items, Electronics/IT, Clothing (repairs only), Toys, Sharpen tools and maybe able to mend other things you have that are broken.

Come for lunch, stay to help save the planet, **Fix It Don't Ditch It!**

Community Hall Hire

St Michael's Community Hall on Lichfield Street in Stone, is available for bookings - private parties or regular meetings.

Competitive rates, contact: Dennis Abbott 01785 814134 for details.

Kibblestone Pool

Dear Dan,

Seeing your photograph of the pool at Kibblestone, in the last edition of the Gazette, caused me to recall an autumnal weekend spent there in the early 1960's.

Myself, Anthony Bell (R.I.P) and Michael Brown, (Sam, Little Stoke Garage) all took our Scout Swimming Badge.

We were supervised by a Mr. Deag, the Scout Commissioner, and we camped out under canvas and the stars for the weekend. Great memories....

**Yours faithfully
Robert Costello**



Tricky times for visitors to the Church at the Crossing Community Centre!
The army of cones were when the car park spaces were being marked out

The Parking Crisis Continues

North Staffs Rail Promotion Group reported in the last issue that WM Trains, who run the local London Northwestern service, wish to turn the Station Approach Road into a Car Park. Many people have seen the parking machine which has stood for several weeks wrapped in black plastic since its arrival in June. However the date of operation and the charge for parking were not revealed.

This was the hot topic at the July NSRPG meeting in the station building, which is currently a Community Centre run by the Town Council. Parking was still free that evening but that may change soon. The parking controversy attracted a much larger number than usual. There are many concerns. Unfortunately the only person to speak for WM Trains was Geoff Grant, their Stakeholder Manager, who had not been fully briefed on the details.

The principal concern raised was that people attending events at the station, or at the Church at the Crossing, at the other end of the road, will have to pay to park. The Crossing is open several days a week for various activities, and their visitors could end up contributing up to £10,000 to train company funds! Alternatively they may be told to park elsewhere and annoy the neighbours by having to clog

up nearby residential streets.

Jon Heal, who is chair of NSRPG, explains, "There are a lot of people in the community angry that this issue has suddenly arisen with no public explanation at all. Stone Town Council were aware that something might happen when WM Trains take over the lease for the Station Approach, but there has been no contact made to groups seriously affected. The Church at the Crossing came along to explain how many visitors they have during the week, but it's not clear if their stories will be listened to."

NSRPG hope to engage further with WM Trains and lobby their Director of Parking, but their contractors are already busy treating the access road as if it were a car park.

Local MP Gavin Williamson has taken up the issue on behalf of his constituents and has published a response from Heidi Alexander, the Transport Secretary, on Facebook. It is clear that somebody in WM Trains thought this an easy way to raise revenue, but it is now getting complicated!

NSRPG meet next in September, on Thursday 24th, in St. Barnabas Church, Bradwell, Newcastle at 6.30pm.

Emails to jhnorthstaffsrail@hotmail.co.uk if readers have comments to pass on.

Stone Scribbler Wins The First Stafford Library Short Story Competition

We are pleased to announce that a member of Stone Scribblers' Creative Writing Group, Melanie Baines, has won the very first Stafford Library short story competition.

The competition was launched this year to celebrate the National Year of Reading with a requirement that submissions feature some aspect of Stafford.

Melanie found out about the competition upon joining Stone Scribblers; she had recently retired and was looking to rekindle her dream of becoming a writer.

The group encouraged Melanie to submit her story **Ostara, Goddess of the Radiant Dawn** and she was overjoyed when she discovered that she had won!

Her story is to be included in a book entitled: The Stafford Contemporary Collection to be published in September this year.

Readers of The Gazette may recognise the story title, as a shorter version of it appeared in the May/June Coffee Break story.



Competition winner Melanie Baines



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Gazette

Eccleshall

NEWS IN BRIEF

Not By Accident

Towns don't stay special by accident - is what the membership leaflet of the Ecclesian Society claims. With our help by joining the Society, and helping them with the work that they do, we can all keep Eccleshall special.

For the whole household, membership is a minimum donation of £5 per year, if you are interested in protecting and improving the character of Eccleshall visit the society's website at www.eccliansociety.co.uk

Trinity Mens Fellowship

The TMF aims to promote fellowship amongst men of the Holy Trinity Parish of Eccleshall with St Chads, Slindon, with morning walks and lunches at local hostleries.

On Friday **25th September** the members will be dining at the Royal Oak High Street Eccleshall after a walk in the Eccleshall area. In **October on the 30th** they will be walking in the Seighford area and enjoying the fine dining experience at the Hollybush pub.

If you live in the Eccleshall area and are of the male persuasion you may enjoy membership of the club, why not give them a ring on 01785 302541 for more details.

Community Cinema

Eccleshall Community Cinema is still taking place, despite the weather, at least while this is being written, the presentation for September is the **Tony Curtis, Jack Lemmon "Some Like it Hot"** film on **24th September** at the Royal Oak 7.30pm in the function room.

Tickets are just £5, and available in advance from the Library, James Du Pavey and the Royal Oak. They often sell out, so it is advisable to get tickets early.

Eccleshall Guide

The 29th annual edition of the Eccleshall Guide is under preparation and expects to be with the printer at the end of September, to be distributed before the end of the year.

It will contain details of all Eccleshall businesses and organisations, and will be funded by the businesses placing paid for advertisements.

To make sure that you are included, please contact the editor and publisher Peter Jones on 01785 851381 or 07815 419166 or email him at peterwjones@btinternet.com.

The Guide is delivered door-to-door to many of the homes in the town, and is available for collection from numerous outlets, including the Library and other venues.

Ride And Stride

Staffordshire's Ride and Stride takes place every year to raise funds for our individual and county wide churches, an event as one can image involving, bikes and legs.

It is an ideal way, for those who have not heard of it, to visit churches in the area, or anywhere in Staffordshire, whilst at the same time raising money through sponsorship for a church or chapel of their choice.

It began many years ago just for cyclists, and was later extended, and now all forms of transport are encouraged. **So you can walk, cycle or catch a bus to reach the churches.** You choose your own route, go at your own pace and enjoy the day.

Half of the money raised goes to your designated church and half to the Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust, which can make grants towards the upkeep of these beautiful buildings.

Find out if your local church is involved and get involved yourself. Hazel Bradshaw is the person to contact if you would like to take part in the Holy Trinity and St Chads Ride and Stride on 01785 851259.



Back row: Alan Jenkins, Brian Barker, Graham Rutherford, Bernie Williams, Ian Wibberley, Kev Leese, Roy Hockenhull, Gordon Bancroft, Geoff Challinor
Front row: Moz Wright, Tony Rowley, John Girdwood, Mark Johansen, Dave Jones, Brendan Furlong, Tony Haughton

Burnley Clarets Invite Stone For An Over 70s Walking Football Tournament

Stone Old Alleynians Over 70s were invited to play in a friendly walking football tournament against Burnley Clarets, a team that regularly plays in the Manchester Walking Football League.

Two 7-a-side teams represented the Stone club in four 30-minute matches.

The Stone Veteran's team won one, drew one and lost two in four closely fought games. The players represented the club fairly and valiantly, with all players socialising together after the matches.

Stone Old Alleynians veterans train twice a week, the older players (over 60s) on a Tuesday morning at the Crossing Community Centre, with younger players (over 50s) on a Wednesday evening at Allyn's Academy Sports Centre.

New players are welcome, contact Gordon Bancroft gabancroft288@btinternet.com

The veterans also provide the opportunity to play **indoor cricket, bowls, and pickleball.**



Stone Lions Present A Night At The Proms

Walton Community Centre will be alive with the sound of rousing music on **Saturday 17th October** when Stone Lions Club (CIO) hosts **"A Night At The Proms"** featuring the Lea Hall Brass Band.

This concert, back by popular demand after a short break last year, is always extremely well-enjoyed by those who attend.

The first half of the evening will consist of a wide range of popular music from a number of different genres, followed by a short refreshment break where tea and coffee are available, with the second half becoming more lively and including all the old favourites from The Last Night of the Proms - Jerusalem, Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory etc.

Be prepared for an evening where audience participation is encouraged - song sheets and flags will be provided!

Ticket prices have been held at £10 per person again this year, and will be available to buy from mid-September, from Arcadia Café or Plants the Jewellers in Stone or by calling 01785 814852.

Please be aware that there will be no bar provided on the night, but those attending are invited to **bring their own drinks plus food for consumption during the interval.**

Doors will open at 7.00pm for a 7.30 start. Proceeds from this event will be used to support **Walton Warriors Football Club**, who are encouraging local youngsters to play football by actively working to provide branded kit and good pitches in a safe environment.

As all members of Stone Lions agree **"A project that encourages youngsters to be active, outdoors and away from electronic devices and social media is a project well worth supporting!"**



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Is The Railway Inn At Norton Bridge The Oldest Railway Pub In Staffordshire? – Buy Shares To Help Save It

The Oldest Railway Pub in Staffordshire?

The Railway Inn at Norton Bridge sadly closed its doors to the public in January 2025 and has stood empty and deteriorating since then. The Railway Inn Community Pub Limited is a community benefit society set up to raise funds to buy it as a community pub and our share offer is now open (more about that later) so people can buy shares to help us raise the funds we need. The pub has an interesting history and we are currently trying to establish whether it is the oldest railway pub in Staffordshire.

It is certainly one of the oldest. Its main contender is the Railway Inn in Castletown, Stafford, a traditional end of terrace town pub which opened on 13 April 1848.

We have not been able to establish exactly when the Railway Inn opened as a pub. It was certainly trading in 1849 as the first reference found to it operating as a pub is a newspaper article about the (possibly first) publican George Kent. However, part of the building itself is much older, dating from between 1775 and 1795 when it was a farmhouse known as Rushy Croft. The Victorian roadside frontage was built later, and an unverified report suggests that this was added in 1845.



The Railway Inn has an important historical past. It is an amalgamation of a Victorian frontage added on to an 18th century farmhouse, and it now needs saving.

At that time Norton Bridge was no more than its station, then situated on the Grand Junction Railway, at a crossing with the turnpike road from Eccleshall to Stone (now the B5206). It consisted of the hamlet of Hammerhouse and a few other scattered houses, Rushy Croft included. However, on 11th February 1847, the ceremony to cut the first sod of the North Staffordshire Railway branch line to Norton Bridge took place in Stone. The line was opened in April 1848 and a new station was situated at the junction of the NSR with the GJR very near to the Rushy Croft farmhouse/Railway Inn. The pub was probably open by then with a likely scenario being that the owners of the farmhouse had already seen an opportunity to open a public house to sell refreshment including alcohol, food, accommodation and stabling to railway travellers.

Norton Bridge station was the local transport hub for the district. Some passengers would transport their own carriages and horses on the trains or conveyances would attend the station to transport passengers to and from the station. Regular omnibuses from Stone and Eccleshall attended the trains arriving and departing the station.

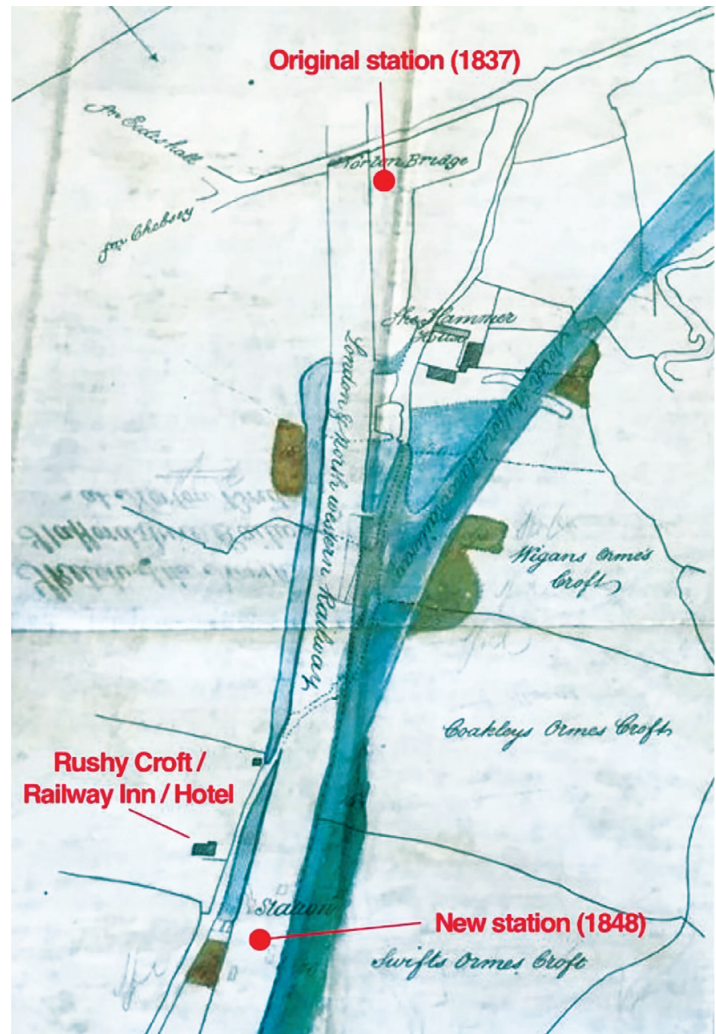
The site had ample scope to provide accommodation and stabling and was a prime business opportunity in an expanding Norton Bridge and as the Oddfellows had a strong presence in Norton Bridge at that time, they may have purchased and expanded the property. The construction of the new railway also provided a new source of clientele from the navvies constructing the new railway. Evidence of a navy construction camp nearby has been found.

Therefore, our research indicates that the pub could have been opened between 1845 and 1849, and probably somewhere in between, but almost certainly before the official opening of the NSR branch to Norton Bridge in April 1848. We welcome comments from Gazette readers.

We need to save it – Share offer now open

However, whatever the exact date, the pub has historical value and a long and interesting history and needs saving and in order to try and secure its future, our share offer is now open. Anyone can buy shares; individuals, families, groups of friends or businesses and generous tax relief is available – 50% on the first £250,000 worth of shares issued and 30% thereafter.

- Each share costs £1, with a minimum purchase of 250.
- Buying shares entitles you to vote at the AGM of the company and enables shareholders to stand for the management committee and to vote to elect the management committee. Higher values of shares also attract rewards once the pub is purchased. See our website for details.
- The Share Offer is open until June 2027.
- If, at that time, we are not near our goal of purchasing the pub, investors will be refunded.



1845 Map showing land needed for the North Staffordshire Railway, which opened in 1848. The map shows the position of the old station and the proposed new station and the building which may by then have been the Railway Inn/Hotel. Reproduced courtesy of Staffordshire Record Office

To buy shares or to find out more go to www.railwayinn.org. You can also buy shares via our Crowdfunding platform <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/save-the-railway-inn-norton-bridge> where you can find out more about our aspirations for what the pub would look like should we be able to purchase it.

Don't want to buy shares? You can donate to our GoFundMe me page.



gofundme

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us so far with our pledge and share offer or attended one of our fundraising events or donated to our GoFundMe me page or offered help and support. It shows how much our pub is needed, not just for Norton Bridge, but for the wider community too. We will be keeping the character of the pub but making it a place for everyone with a tea shop/café, meeting spaces and a place to hold events.

Get in touch – we are very happy to hear people's views and suggestions.

Save the Railway Inn Autumn Programme of Fundraising Events. We have a lively programme of events for the Autumn and Winter period. See our social media for further details. All Events are held at St Luke's Church Hall, Norton Bridge.

We are also selling limited edition prints of an original oil painting by talented local artist Tony Pugh, numbered and signed by the artist. The picture depicts a vibrant scene in the village about the turn of the 20th century when the pub would have been in its heyday. Prints of this limited-edition artwork are being sold for £20. See our website www.railwayinn.org for details of how to buy.



The things that dreams are made of - Ava signing her player contract at Stoke City Girls Academy

Stone's Ava Signs To Stoke City Girls Under -10 Academy

Ava, aged 9 from Yarnfield, only started playing football just 14 months ago, playing in her very first school football match, having never kicked a football before.

Two months later, she attended her first ever Wildcats training session at Stone Dominos FC, before joining a new grassroots team.

After only 8 weeks of playing matches, she was selected for Stoke City's Emerging Talent Centre where she's made some great friendships, and really developed her skills.

Fast forward to June, and with just 12 months of football experience under her belt, Ava has successfully trialled and earned her place in the Stoke City Girls Under-10 Academy!

Ava's parent's, Nick and Gemma said *"We're very proud of her. Such hard work, determination, resilience and her love for the game, have taken her from complete beginner to academy footballer in an unbelievably short space of time."*

Ava is now counting down the days for the new season to begin.



Give Scottish Dancing A Go!

Fancy trying something new? Why not give Scottish Dancing a go! No experience needed, no partners needed and beginners welcome!

It's a great way to socialise and keep active. The Stafford Caledonians meet at North End Community Centre, Holmcroft Road, Stafford ST16 1JG on **Wednesday evenings** and welcome new dancers.

The session for beginners and improvers starts at 7pm to 7.45pm. Then the session for social dancing continues until 9.30pm.

We started back on Wednesday 2nd September. Come along to try it out then or any Wednesday - just bring lightweight trainers and a mug for a drink at break time. £3 a session and a yearly subscription of £10 if you get the Scottish dancing bug!

See all info at the website

www.staffordscottishdancing.danceorg.uk
or phone Gerald on 07904 380760.



Stone Flower Club Demonstrations

Stone Flower Club has had 2 more fabulous demonstrations, this time with local people to the area.

June saw the return of Pam Mosley, in photo below, who many will know from her own workshops of seen at other events. Pam runs Quirky Flowers from her farm and prides herself on growing and using her own flowers to use in demonstrations, or for weddings and workshops.



This was another successful evening not only does Pam like returning to Stone the club always love seeing her beautiful creations.

In July the club welcomed for the first time Lorraine Simcox, photo below, another local lady who likes to grow her own flowers and use in demonstrations when possible.

If you have attended Stafford County Show you will have seen many of Lorraine's creations in the floral art marquee where she is very successful winning many prizes.



This was an extremely interesting evening and Lorraine was very knowledgeable thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. It is hoped Lorraine will be back in the future years to demonstrate again.

Also in July, courtesy of Graham and Barbara Maltby, a cream tea was held in their beautiful garden. This was enjoyed by all who attended and £265 was raised to support the club funds. **ED: Well done**

Graham and Barbara!

The club are extremely grateful to Mr and Mrs Maltby for all the support given to them over the years.

The club are taking a well earned rest in



August and resume again on **24th September** with a visit from **Jackie Owen** with her title *"Little by Little a Birds Nest is Built."*

29th October sees another welcome return of **Geraldine Kennedy** with her title *'Seasonal Delights'* another not to be missed night.

The final meeting of the year is on **November 26th**, where we are excited to welcome back the very talented **Rob Towersley-Wright**, with a *Christmas themed demonstration*, this will be a very popular night, so put the date in your diary's now!



The club is still looking for people to take over some committee roles from next year if you feel you could help out?

Stone Flower Club is a friendly place where anyone can come along and enjoy the beauty of flowers in a relaxed safe environment, you do not have to be a flower arranger to come along. But you do get chance to win one of the many beautiful designs in our raffle.

The club meets at Walton Community Centre, Whitemill Lane, Walton, Stone ST15 0EQ. Doors open 6.45pm and demonstrations start at 7.30pm cost is £8 to visitors. Membership is available from January for the year if you enjoy the evening and want to take advantage of being a member.

Gazette Eccleshall NEWS IN BRIEF

Grand Singathon

The 6th Eccleshall Grand Singathon takes place in the Eccleshall Community Centre ST21 6AU on **Saturday 17th October 2026** between 11am and 5.30pm.

It will include choirs, musicians, singers and performers of all ages. Adults £3 (with a free cup of tea or coffee) Children free, delicious home-made cakes. Proceeds raised will go to local music charity BEAM Music.

For more details visit Eccleshallsingathon.weebly.com or you can call 01785 280373.

Car Scheme Short Of Drivers

Providing transport for Eccleshall residents to medical appointments has been the aim of the Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme since 2018, and the voluntary drivers have been largely successful, but the number of drivers needs 'topping up'.

It is not an onerous task, but the list of drivers is now down to five drivers on call, and the number needs to be higher. If you believe that you could be one of the drivers perhaps a chat with Peter Jones, one of the coordinators, might help to make up your mind to sign up for the scheme. The only commitment is that you are willing to have your name on the list of volunteers and when a resident needs transport you are asked if you are available.

It is not a taxi service. You can speak to Peter at one of his Councillor Drop-In sessions, once a month at Eccleshall Library or call him on 07815 419166 for a chat.

Library Events In Eccleshall

The **Adult Reading Challenge Meeting** will take place on a date in September to suit most participants.

Blood On The Clocktower - Another session will take place on a Saturday morning early in the autumn. Watch out for notices for the date. Come along, participate, find the 'Traitor'!

Lego In The Library hopefully will start on Saturday mornings from September. **Hour Shakespeare** - This group of players bring Shakespeare to life and was popular last year. The event will take place in the High Street library on **Thursday 22nd October** at 7pm. Tickets are £1 from the library reception in October.

None of the events would take place without the help of our wonderful library volunteer team. We would like to thank them for all they do to make our library such an uplifting and welcoming place to visit.

Apart from all of the specially arranged events, readers will find the library's regular clubs and events below:-

IT Clinic with Tom every Thursday morning from 9.30am to 10.30am. Book a slot with Tom at reception.

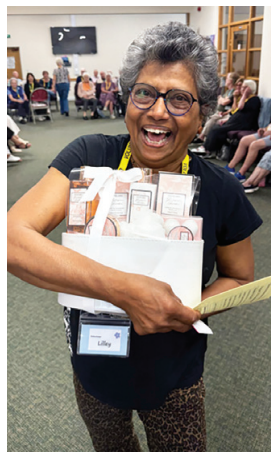
Borough Councillor Peter Jones will be happy to discuss local issues with residents during his monthly Saturday drop-in sessions on **12th September, 3rd October, 7th November and 5th December between 10am and 12 noon.**

White Lines Replace Pot Holes

Missing, or faint, white road lines have replaced pot holes as the number one source of complaints to councillors recently at drop-in sessions.

Whilst councillor's in trays are still filled with pothole complaints residents now seem to see the poor or nonexistence of road markings as a bigger health threat. The expression used in many complaints is "Someone's going to get killed unless something is done" when referring to the poor state of the white line markings.

Local Borough and County Councillors are pushing to move Eccleshall up the list of things needing done, to avoid accidents, however, it seems that little or no movement is taking place. In Eccleshall town centre, the two islands are 'marked' with white paint, but they are not, and clearly represent a hazard.



Celebrating Together

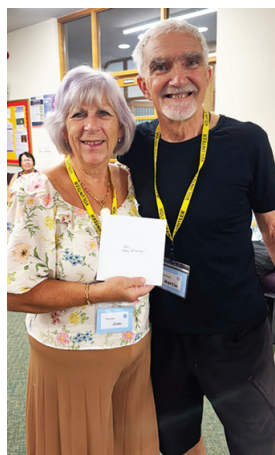
One of the many special things about Stone Alzheimer's Club is its togetherness and empathy. The Club is a beacon in the local community for those with Alzheimer's and dementia along with their carers. Navigating Alzheimer's is never going to be easy so sharing and connecting with others can make a massive difference and that is what the Club does.

Bringing people together is an important aspect of Alzheimer's support for the Club. In reality, the Club is a community made up of members, their carers and the volunteers as well as

is massive practical experience that benefits all of the members and this is always shared to make lives better.

It's not all that is shared at the Club...the Club celebrates birthdays and anniversaries and even raffle wins, as you can see in the photos.

There's usually at least one celebration each week and often many! Lead Volunteer Sandie McQueen said: "Celebrating personal events for all in the Club is a lovely part of our meetings each week and it's something the Club has always done. It brings people together, reinforces memories and creates new ones."



regular visitors such as entertainers Debbie and Damien, physiotherapist Phoebe and hairdresser Nigel along with visitors from other organisations such as The Alzheimer's Society and Stone Town Council. This informal community is what makes the Stone Alzheimer's Club special and is one of the reasons that the Club has grown so much over the last couple of years.

Caring and sharing makes a huge difference and within the Club there

She went on to say: "Some will bring in cakes so often birthdays and anniversaries become very special celebrations indeed."

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





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www.stdominicspriory.co.uk/open-events
to find out more and register

Gazette Eccleshall NEWS IN BRIEF

Cheaper Than Therapy

Paul Walker and Karen Pfeiffer local favourite musicians will be performing at the Broughton Parish Room, Wetwood, on **Friday 18th September** with their "Cheaper than therapy" tour. Bring your own drinks and glasses. Tickets are £10 available from the Croxton Service Station or call 07712 508783.

Garden Guild

"Bees and their importance" is the theme of the talk from Ron Rock, the guest speaker at the Croxton and Broughton Garden Guild meeting on **Wednesday 23rd September** at the Broughton parish room starting at 7.30pm. Johnson Hall Nurseries will be giving a demonstration of "Winter Pots" at the Guilds meeting on Wednesday 28th October starting at 7.30pm. For more information about the Guide contact Catherine Baxter on 01630 620291.

Bingo And Baps

The Katharine House Hospice Eccleshall Support Group are holding a **Bingo And Baps Event** at the community centre, in Shaws Lane, Eccleshall on **Friday 11th September** doors open 7pm eyes down 8pm. Admission £5 including ham or cheese baps. Bring your own drinks. Tickets are available from Charles Hair and Beauty, and Katharine Hospice Eccleshall shop, both on the High Street Eccleshall. No admittance for under 16s. Cash prizes for a line and full house £100 jackpot game. Proceeds in aid of Katharine House.

Historical Talks

The programme of historical talks planned by the Ecclesian Society, which meets in the Holy Trinity parish room on the **2nd Monday of each month**, starts September with the History of Printing at 7.30pm.

The October talk is about the *Women in Aviation* on the **12th October**. For details of the Eccleshall Historical Talks Society please contact John Turnock ecchistory2026@gmail.com 01785 302541.

Police Surgeries

Come and see your police representatives at one of the drop-in surgeries in Eccleshall. **Saturday 19th September 10am to 12 noon at the High Street library and Saturday 10th October between 12 noon and 2pm** on the car park of the Eccleshall Co-op store.

Community Interest Topics

Eccleshall Library presents a guest speaker each month, in the community lounge, at the High Street Library with John Potter speaking on "The Stafford Riverway Link Project" on **Thursday 17th September** from 2pm until 4pm. Then on **Thursday 15th October** Julian Maslin will be speaking on the subject of "The Changing Role of women in World War 2"

A ticket, at £1, available from the reception desk, will be required, as **entry is limited**. Tickets will be available from the first Thursday of each month for the lecture in that month only and includes coffee / tea and biscuits.

Civic Amenity Visit

The visit of the Special Waste Collection in Eccleshall, will be on **Saturday 26th September between the hours of 9am and 11am**. The collection vehicles will park in Stone Road opposite the Methodist Church and can receive household rubbish. The Eccleshall Parish Council funds the special collection for the residents of Eccleshall.

Harvest Lunch

St Peters' Church, Broughton will be holding its Harvest Lunch in the Broughton parish rooms on **Sunday 20th September at 12.30pm**. Tickets will be on sale at £10 per person and are available from Ellen Butter 07384 783 620 and Louise Butter 01630 620479. All proceeds to St Peter Church, Broughton.



Imagine....The Beatles

Stone's Summer Street Party

The Town Council's music-filled weekend got off to a great start with the Summer Street Party on 15th August in the High Street.

It was a fun-filled afternoon of live music, family entertainment, food and drink, and community spirit.

The large crowds turned out in the sunshine to see tribute acts as diverse as

the K-Pop Demon Hunters and Imagine....The Beatles entertaining the large crowd as well as fantastic cover band The Cartoon Kings.

There were street food sellers and Warwick's Funfair were also in attendance with rides and attractions for all ages.

From Martin Robinson



K-Pop Demon Hunters



The Cartoon Kings



borough care group
Life in colour

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Daughter of Shoemaker Place Resident

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Campaign And Petition To Save St Rufin's Church Burston

A campaign is underway to try and help save St Rufin's Church in Burston from closing down, and being sold off. As the only community building in the village, the residents feel it would be a huge loss to all those that live there.

The Church is a small, historic mission chapel built in 1859. It connects to the local legend involving the Mercian King Wulfhere and his son Rufin, and it sits along the long-distance Two Saints' Way walking path between Lichfield and Chester.

An earlier medieval chapel existed nearby by 1552 closer to the River Trent.



Friends Of St Rufin's, a non-profit organisation, dedicated to protecting, maintaining and sharing St Rufin's Chapel, have started an online petition at 38Degrees.org.

It comes after Burston residents received this letter below on 28th July, from the Parochial Church Council of Sandon with Burston, which read...

Dear Burston Residents

We are writing to inform you of a decision made by the Parochial Church Council of Sandon with Burston (PCC) on Wednesday 22 July.

Many residents will be aware that the future of St Rufin's Church has been in doubt for some time. It was with great regret that the PCC decided to close the church for worship with effect from midnight on Sunday 18 October and to ask the Diocese to sell the building.

We understand that even for people who do not worship, there is an emotional attachment to their local church. We know that for some, especially the few residents who support the church, this will be very upsetting.

We were advised by the Diocese that legally we were not required to consult on this proposal. To do so could not have changed the harsh facts.

Those facts are:

- The monthly outgoings exceed the monthly income; in fact there is no regular income at all.
- A recent inspection of the building has identified work which would cost in the region of

£3,800 over the next 12 months and a further £7,100 between the next 2 to 5 years. The finance is not available for this.

• Sandon Church has been subsidising Burston for many years. Many people think that the Church of England provides funding to parishes. It does not. In fact, it works the other way as parishes must pay a significant sum to the Diocese. This is called the Common Fund. No contribution has been made by Burston for some years, and before that only at a token level, which, while appreciated, did not fully cover its costs.

• Only 6 villagers and an organist attend the church services.

• There is an alternative place of worship in easy reach of the Village at Sandon, which is the Parish church where all are welcome.

• When Burston has a service, Sandon cannot have one, thereby depriving its healthy congregation of a service.

The PCC also considered very carefully whether there were any other options open to it and concluded that none were viable.

Copies of the full report will be put into St Rufin's or can be requested from the secretary by e-mail to jeannettebutt@live.co.uk

We would like to add a comment from Revd Vivienne at the PCC meeting. She pointed out that a church is not just a building, but a community.

If villagers want opportunity to meet together for prayer or bible study other venues are available.



The Friends Of St Rufin's online petition to save the church states

We, the undersigned, ask the Parochial Church Council and the Diocese of Lichfield to pause the proposed closure and sale of St Rufin's, Burston, and to allow proper consideration of alternatives before any irreversible decision is made.

Why is this important?

We ask that the local community is formally consulted; alternative community, charitable, heritage and pilgrimage uses are considered; the

excitement were absolutely priceless!

A massive shout-out to Laura, Callum and Holly, who were simply outstanding. They couldn't have been more friendly, welcoming or helpful, and they went above and beyond to make sure every child had the best time. They are a real credit to Come Into Play.

The food was absolutely fantastic too! We were treated to a huge buffet tea followed by breakfast in the morning, and there was plenty for everyone. No one went hungry, and everything was delicious!

A huge thank you to everyone at Come Into Play for putting on such an incredible experience. The children made memories they'll be talking about for a long time, and it's safe to say they'll all be sleeping very well today!

We can't recommend Come Into Play highly



Church Open - but for how long?

historic ownership and circumstances in which the church and land were provided are properly investigated; and the Friends of St. Rufin's and other interested groups are given a reasonable opportunity to put forward an alternative to sale.

St. Rufin's Church is a simple, peaceful and charming building, erected for community use by residents of Burston, and licensed in 1859 for worship.

Based on or near the site of a previous ancient church, Pilgrims along the Two Saints Way continue to visit as they did in ancient times to the place which is historically claimed to have been the site of the martyring of Rufin, in the 7th century.

As the only community building in the village, continually cared for by villagers during its existence, the permanent loss of this historic building would be mourned by visitors, worshippers, historians and the local community alike.

Please Sign the Petition to save the church at

<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/petition-to-pause-the-proposed-closure-and-sale-of-st-rufin-s-burston>

You can also get in touch with **Friends Of St Rufin's** by visiting <https://fostr.org.uk/>

Wow... What A Night!

Some of our amazing Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs at Oulton Baden-Powell Scout Group, had the most incredible sleepover at Come Into Play in Stone, and what an unforgettable experience it was!



From 6:30pm until 3:00am, the fun never stopped! There was endless playing, an epic game of Find the Squirrel, an awesome glow stick hunt in the dark, and even a well-earned 2:00am ice pop break to keep everyone going. The smiles, laughter and



enough what an amazing venue with an equally amazing team. Thank you for an unforgettable night! We can't wait to do it again next year!





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*Prices correct at time of publication, additional charges apply. See website or call for details. Images shown for illustrative purposes only.



Stone Classic Car Event

It was a fabulous turnout for the annual Classic Car Event with more than 60 beautiful classic cars on display.

The lovely weather also helped ensure there was a steady flow of visitors to the High Street event on Saturday 11th July.

The free event, organised by Stone Town Council, took over the High Street and Market Square, filling them with stunning cars, and fans that had come to admire them.

Stone Town Council worked closely with the Stone Carnival Committee to organise a superb collection of classic cars this year. **ED: Well done all involved!**

Many of the cars were local to Stone and represent some of the finest classic cars in the area. This year's event showcased cars from the 1950's and 1960's.

From Martin Robinson





New Mayor, Cllr. Andrew Best celebrates with fellow councillors, family and friends

Civic Sunday Parade and Church Service

The sun shone again for the Town Council's Civic Sunday Parade and Ceremony, on 12th July, to welcome Stone's new Town Mayor and Consort, Councillor Andrew Best and Mrs Rosie Best and Deputy Mayor and Consort, Councillor Robert Townsend and Mrs Helen Townsend.

The walking parade left Station Road at 10.30am and proceeded down the High Street to St Michael and St Wulfads

Church for the service, upholding the annual tradition of Town Mayor Making.

The event was open to members of the public too, many of whom followed on down to the church.

Mayor making is the official induction of a new Town Mayor.

Councillor Andrew Best was inducted into the Office of Town Mayor, and is the new Stone Town Mayor.

Photos by Martin Robinson



The New Stone Town Mayor - Councillor Andrew Best



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Stone Heritage Centre Guest Speaker Series Talks

The Chimney in the Field

Saturday 5th September (2pm – 4pm)

By Dr. Lee Hyland, Chair, Stoke-on-Trent Museum Archaeological Society (SoTMAS) will deliver a talk about the SoTMAS investigation into the mystery of the chimney that once stood on its own in a field in Hilderstone.

It will demonstrate how it has been possible, using the surviving archaeology, to reconstruct the development of a simple 16th century dwelling into a more substantial and prosperous one by the end of the 17th century. A period during which prosperity amongst the successful businesses began to grow and how this is reflected in the material culture of the tenants of "Chimney Field."

Tickets are free but must be booked in advance via Eventbrite by scanning this QR code to the right.



Staffordshire From Above

Saturday 10th October 2026 (2pm – 4pm)

Back in the 1920s, powered flight was in its early days and a company named Aerofilms employed brave young aviators to travel around the British Isles to take photos from the skies. Most of the pilots and observers had seen action in the recent war and were now using those skills to collect over one million images of the countryside, towns, cities and industrial sites.

Back then, such scenes would have astonished people and nowadays they are an amazing record of a dramatically different world which has now largely gone.

The talk will explore the changes that have taken place in so many areas of the county but also how little change there has been in other areas.

Tickets are free but must be booked in advance via Eventbrite by scanning this QR code.



The Heritage Centre is open to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11am to 4pm at 13 Newcastle Street, Stone, ST15 8JX. T: 01785 594767



Burma Star And VJ Day Commemoration

Another day of near perfect weather brought a large audience for this lovely event at Stonefield Park, organised by Stone Town Council. Guests enjoyed The Florence Colliery Brass Band as well as a delicious cream tea!

A touching community event that incorporates a short service organised by the Royal British Legion to remind us of VJ Day and the Burma Star Veterans.

As part of the afternoon, wreaths were laid in commemoration of the Burma Star and VJ Day, honouring those who served and sacrificed.

From Martin Robinson



Sounding The Last Post





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— Service user's family, Stone branch

9.5

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Lottie dolls outfits - by Janet

Autumn Crochet In Eccleshall

As this long hot summer draws to a close, is it time to think about a new hobby and maybe crochet this Autumn?

Crochet in Eccleshall offers small, friendly beginners classes hosted at Eagle House in Eccleshall. They are usually on **Monday at 12.30pm**. The next class is on **Monday 14 September**.

Improvers meet at Eccleshall Library, usually on the **second Friday of the month at 12.30pm**. We work on our own projects and receive tuition from the tutor. Occasionally we have crochet & chat at 2.00pm without a tutor. So, if you already crochet and would like to meet others, please contact us to book a place.

There are also crochet & chat sessions on the first and third Wednesday of the month with the Staffordshire Marquetry Group.

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** for regular updates.



Free Wellness Event For All Women!

Women across Staffordshire are invited to a free, all-day event at Staffordshire County Showground on **Saturday 26 September** in the Members' Pavilion - the Ingestre Suite and adjacent rooms..

The Wellness Day will promote health and wellbeing for women of all ages who will be given the opportunity to take time out of their busy lives to spend on themselves.

The day is being hosted by Staffordshire Federation of Women's Institutes and it is open to all women, both members and non-members.

Various activities will be available to try, such as **Hand Massages, Mindful Art, Journalling, Chair Yoga and Reiki**. Experts will lead the activities - all aimed to allow women to take time to be kind to themselves.

There will also be craft demonstrations, health checks by professionals, wellbeing talks as well as trade stalls - and the chance to learn about what the WI has to offer.

The event's brainchild is Helen Newman, Federation Trustee and former Chair. She said, 'In these days of juggling roles and tasks, many women need to consider themselves from time to time and this event will showcase activities that can provide much needed calmness in their hectic lives'. She added, 'Some activities will be offered in timed slots but mostly they will be drop-in sessions throughout the day, allowing greater attendance and participation'.

Free tea/coffee/water and biscuits will be available all day - 10am 'til 4pm. There is no need to book, just drop in at any time during the day.

Staffordshire County Showground is on Weston Road, Stafford, ST18 0BD and has free parking.

For more information, visit **sfwi.org** or scan this QR Code



Oulton Village Hall News And Events For Autumn 2026

The Village Hall has been awarded generous funding by Stone Rural North County Councillor Sean Bagguley, for the provision of two new replacement 'Green Oak' Benches in the Hall grounds, which will be sited adjacent to the natural woodland area.



The wild flower border is doing well despite the heatwaves



Two fund-raising events this Autumn are a **Film show- 'The Ballad of Wallis Island'** (a romantic comedy drama) on **Saturday 3rd October**.

Then a **70s/80s Disco on Saturday 28th November**.



Funds raised from these events will go towards ongoing major internal improvements to our 'award winning' Hall. Despite months of drought, volunteers have been able to maintain the floral displays surrounding the Hall to the usual high standards, with areas of wildflowers in early Summer and formal planters proving a long lasting seasonal display.

To keep up to date with all the latest events, visit our website at **<https://oultonvillagehall.co.uk>**

Oulton Village Hall

Film -The Ballad of Wallis Island

Saturday 3rd. October 2026

7.00pm for 7.30pm



Bar for all drinks & nibbles (card payments accepted).

Tickets £5.00 (advance sales only)

From Sue Petrulls 01785 286879

From Martin Robinson



Rev'd Rob at St Michael and St Wulfad's, meeting and greeting fellow Two Saints Way pilgrims, the historic 92 mile long pilgrimage route that leads from Chester to Lichfield.



Ecclian Society Barbeque

On Saturday 25th July, members and friends of the Ecclian Society, gathered in the gardens of Ashcroft for a barbeque provide by Perry's, and enjoyed by all, in one of the many summer afternoons our weather has been treating us to.

Thanks to the hospitality of Gill Bertram, and a small but dedicated team of volunteers, the afternoon was enjoyed by many.



Bryan and Myf Freeman and Ecclian Chairman Richard Egan



Alternative Car Event

Stone Town Council, in conjunction with Stone Carnival Committee, is organising an **Alternative Car Show**, in the High Street, on **Saturday 26th September**.

This is an exciting new event which will see around 60 cars 'with a difference' exhibited in the town centre and will include custom, tuned, kit and American cars.

The organisers hope that the event will provide visitors with a different perspective on cars!

The event is free-to-attend and will take place from **10.00 am – 2.00 pm**.

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By Stone Scribblers Creative Writing Group

Tap Dancing with Fred

I was looking forward to my daily dose of Pointless when I felt my phone buzz.

A message from my daughter Carol:-
"SO sorry, please can you collect Freddie, stuck at work xx"

I groaned, but replied "of course, no worries xx", grabbed my car keys and bag and headed for the 'D' road. Freddie went to St Joseph's in Trent Vale, but had just started staying late for Dance Club which I knew would finish at 5.30.

Traffic was kind and I was parked up outside when he rushed out grinning from ear to ear, "Hi, Granny Pat! That was amazing! Are you taking me home?"

He jumped in and we set off towards the A34. "So, what did they teach you at this dance club Freddie?"

"Loads, its Mrs Barnes who takes us, she played us some music and asked us to listen to the rhythm and talk about the way the music made us feel 'cos that's important with dancing."

"That sounds a good start, you've always liked the rhythm in a song haven't you? Did you learn any dance steps?"

"Yes we did, Mrs B told us about a dance called tap and then she showed us, she's really good at it."

"Oh lovely, tap dancing reminds me of a gentleman long ago called Fred Astaire, we can probably find him dancing on Youtube, I'll show you."

"Wow! His name was Fred like me! Guess what else Mrs B told us? You know Kai on Strictly, well, he also went to St Joe's like me and she remembers him dancing to Elvis songs."

"Well, it sounds like you made a good start at dance club, we can look for film of Kai dancing too can't we?"

We were sitting at traffic lights and I took the opportunity to turn and look at Freddie.

"Freddie, do you know what an anagram is?"

"I do Granny, Mummy has them in her crosswords, its letters all mixed up."

"Good, so you know my name is Pat but if you turn the letters round I can be called Tap if you like!"

Freddie raised both his hands above his head and cheered.

"Hoorah! That would be brilliant! I can be Fred Astaire Porter and you can be Granny Tap!"

When Carol eventually got home much later she found me seated, holding up the laptop while Freddie tried to imitate the skills of one Fred Astaire tap dancing back in 1939.

by Sarah Akhtar

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** or you can email them at **stonescribblers@yahoo.com**



The Odyssey

Director: Christopher Nolan

Starring: Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Tom Holland

The Odyssey is undeniably epic in scale, but its ambition is repeatedly undermined by a desperate need to offer a contemporary interpretation of a story that perhaps needed greater immersion rather than reinvention.

Rather than making Homer's world feel newly alive, the modernisation occasionally makes it feel strangely distant from the mythic power that has kept The Odyssey enduring for so long.

Rating: JJ Rating 2/5

Spider-Man: Brand New Day

Director: Daniel Destin Cretin

Starring: Tom Holland, Jon Bernthal, Zendaya

This new adventure feels like a welcome step up from Tom Holland's sometimes overly safe run as Spider-Man.

For once, the film really embraces the grit and relatability that make Peter Parker such an enduring character, allowing the story to sit with his loneliness rather than rushing to distract us with another oversized spectacle.

JJ Rating 4/5



The End of Oak Street

Director: David Robert Mitchell

Starring: Anne Hathaway & Ewan McGregor

The right mixture of 90s cheese, thrills and genuine affection for the kind of filmmaking that once made even the most ridiculous stories immensely entertaining.

It wears its influences proudly, never taking itself so seriously that the fun gets lost, while still understanding why this particular style of cinema remains so appealing.

JJ Rating 3/5

Buy A Limited Edition Original Artwork Print To Help Save The Railway Inn, Norton Bridge

This original oil painting has been created by talented local artist Tony Pugh and depicts the Railway Inn at the centre of a vibrant village at the turn of the 20th century.

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Fun For All At St Wulfads Fair

Although the Vikings were in town on the same day as the St Wulfads Fair, at St Michael & St Wulfads Church, we did not let that concern us too much, after all Wulfad dates from 670, and the earliest Viking raids were not until about 120 years later!

July 25th, being the closest Saturday to the actual day (*it being 24th July*) a very successful event was held in the churchyard featuring tombolas, the stocks, plant sale, book sale, and stalls hosted by our various groups.

Cream teas were served in church, and participants were entertained by Matthew Wright on the church organ.

The weather was hot and sunny and brought many people into the churchyard where they sat on the grass and listened to two sessions by Florence Brass Band, and local choir Revellation (*It is spelt with 2 l as it was once a part of Stone Revellers Musical Theatre*).

It was a real community event, and brought together the church and the town in a way that we all hope can be sustained. We will certainly be running the event next year. *Vikings beware!*

**From Dennis Abbott
Photos by Robert Icke**



Northgate Healthcare is a family-run residential care provider whose owners and managers want to foster that ethos of family care in all aspects of the way we support our residents.

We aim to provide care and service that is professional and of the highest quality. We also uphold one belief: we are making our home, your home.

Northgate Healthcare is committed to providing care in the most modern and comfortable environments available today, supported with the best services to make the lives of residents enjoyable and fulfilled.



Autumn House

Autumn House Nursing Home is an attractive modern nursing home located in Stone, Staffordshire. It is a well-established nursing home that can accommodate up to 65 clients with varying nursing and residential needs.

We take pride in the quality, cleanliness and comfort of our accommodation. All our residents' rooms are en-suite, and there are two comfortable lounges.

Residents enjoy individual care, supported by a personal care plan

designed to meet their personal needs and interests. Respect for the individual is central to our approach.

We also have a full-time activities co-ordinator who organises events and activities for residents to enjoy, stimulating interest and physical wellbeing.

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Meadowfields Care Home is a 65 bed en-suite care home situated in the picturesque area of Great Haywood, Stafford. Situated between Rugeley and Stafford (roughly 5 miles each way), it has lovely views of the surrounding fields and countryside.

We encourage visits to see the quality of the care that residents receive while residing in our homes.

At Meadowfields we are dedicated to

looking after the individual needs of each of our residents.

Our professional care team will work with each resident, with the support, where appropriate, of their loved-ones, to develop an individual personal care plan.

This personal plan underpins all the care we provide, so residents can be confident that they are always treated with respect and dignity.

We aim to provide care and service that is professional and of the highest quality. We also uphold one belief: we are making our home, your home.

Northgate Healthcare is committed to providing care in the most modern and comfortable environments available today, supported with the best services to make the lives of residents enjoyable and fulfilled.



T: 01889 270565 meadowfields@northgatehealthcare.co.uk www.northgatehealthcare.co.uk



Behind The Scenes At Army Cadets' Swynnerton Summer Training Camp

Teenage Army Cadets from Clwyd & Gwynedd took part in a week of outdoor adventure, training and skills development at Swynnerton Training Camp from 15th to 20th August.

The residential summer camp gave young people the opportunity to spend time away from home and take part in a packed programme of activities designed to build confidence, resilience, teamwork and leadership skills.

Throughout the camp, cadets took part in a range of outdoor adventures and practical challenges, alongside activities including first aid, navigation, expeditions and team-based training. The experience also gave cadets the chance to put skills developed at their local

detachments into practice, take on new challenges and build friendships with other young people.

The annual camp forms part of the wider Army Cadets programme, which gives young people aged 12 to 18 opportunities to develop practical life skills and experience activities they may not otherwise have access to.

As well as providing an exciting way for teenagers to spend part of their summer, the camp is designed to encourage young people to step outside their comfort zones, spend time away from screens and develop skills including problem-solving, communication, responsibility and working as part of a team.



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Local Woman Launches Free Endometriosis Support Group

After spending ten years fighting to be diagnosed with endometriosis, Carys Fisher has launched Kindred Flow Wellness, a community initiative aimed at supporting women living with chronic illness. As part of this, she is launching Stafford's first free Endometriosis Support Group.

Carys told the Gazette "I know first-hand how isolating endometriosis can be and how little support is available locally.

My hope is that by sharing my story and creating this support group, other women will realise they are not alone and can access free support within their community.

After spending a decade being told my symptoms were "normal

periods", growing pains, or anxiety, I was finally diagnosed with endometriosis at the age of 23.

From the age of 13, I repeatedly visited my GP with debilitating gynaecological symptoms. Despite years of seeking help, my pain was dismissed until I underwent laparoscopic surgery to investigate suspected cancer. When I woke from surgery, I was told that endometriosis had been found and removed.

The diagnosis brought relief, but also confusion.

I had never heard of endometriosis before. I was handed a small leaflet with very little information and left to research the condition on my own. I wasn't told that endometriosis is a chronic, lifelong condition or that surgery wasn't a cure. As I learned more about the disease, I felt increasingly angry, isolated, and overwhelmed.

When I looked for support in my local area, I discovered there were very few opportunities for women living with endometriosis or other chronic women's health conditions. For years I knew I wanted to build my own business, but I hadn't yet found my purpose.

Everything changed when I attended an endometriosis retreat in Wales. There, I learned more about managing my symptoms holistically, understanding my hormones, and, most importantly, connecting with women who truly understood what I was experiencing. The friendships and support I found there were life-changing.

It made me realise that everyone deserves access to that sense of community - but not everyone can afford retreats or wellness weekends.

That's why I founded Kindred Flow Wellness.

Kindred Flow Wellness exists to bring together women living with chronic illness, creating safe, welcoming spaces where no one has to face their journey alone.

Our first free Endometriosis Support Group was in Stafford on 18th August, with the aim of making support accessible to everyone, regardless of their financial circumstances. Looking ahead, my vision is to build a network of free support groups across the Midlands for women living with a range of chronic health conditions.

The group is completely free to attend and is open to anyone affected by endometriosis who is looking for support, understanding, or simply a safe place to talk with others who understand.

I hope that by sharing my story, more women will feel seen, heard, and empowered to seek the support they deserve. No one should have to navigate endometriosis alone.

For more information about Kindred Flow Wellness or to attend one of the support groups, please visit www.KindredFlowWellness.com and sign up to the mailing list or follow the social media accounts for all upcoming support groups.



Trustees Jennifer Woodyard, Emma Snowden (Chair), Sue Brereton-Banks, Jenny Johnston

Aston by Stone Village Hall Celebrates Refurbished Courtyard Opening

Aston by Stone Village Hall was delighted to celebrate the official opening of its newly refurbished courtyard on 30th July, marking an exciting improvement to this much-loved community facility.

The courtyard has been transformed with a new soft surface, additional seating, security fencing and raised flower beds, creating a safer more attractive outdoor space for everyone who uses the hall.

The improvements were made possible in part thanks to a generous grant from The National Lottery Community Fund and the Hall Committee would like to extend its sincere thanks for this valuable support.

The event was also an opportunity to recognise and thank the many people whose time, commitment and hard work keep the village hall running.

Particular thanks go to the Committee, Charity Trustees and dedicated volunteers, whose continued efforts

ensure that the hall remains a welcoming and valued facility for the whole community.

The refurbished courtyard will provide an enhanced space for hall users to enjoy and will complement the wide range of activities, events and gatherings already taking place at the venue.

The village hall is available to hire for a variety of private functions, community and social events. For further information and booking enquiries, please visit www.hallbookingonline.com/aston



Record Numbers At Uttoxeter Ladies Day

Uttoxeter Ladies Day had record attendees on Friday 27th July, with 8,351 flocking to the racecourse in their finest!

Chloe Mediumship was the special guest judge of the Style Awards, she said "Ladies Day was absolutely incredible, the biggest turn out the racecourse has ever seen! And so many glorious outfits all put together so beautifully. It made our job as Style Awards Judges very tricky, but there was a standout winner with Sharon in her amazing Sunflower headpiece!"



The 2026 Style Awards Winner was Sharon. Sharon stunned in a beautiful yellow outfit with an amazing sunflower headpiece, taking home over £1500 worth of prizes including £500 cash.

Marvin Humes (former JLS and now TV Presenter) kept the party jumping post-racing with a fantastic DJ set, there was over 1,000 bottles of Prosecco enjoyed throughout the day.

There is afternoon racing **twice in September and twice in October, and also Gents Day in October.**

For more information visit <https://www.utttoxeter-racecourse.co.uk>

Local Travel Expert Returns to Her Roots with New Eccleshall Travel Boutique

A Staffordshire travel business celebrating its 10th anniversary is investing in the future of the high street with the opening of a new travel boutique in the heart of Eccleshall.

Wanderlux by Lisa will officially open its doors on the **12th September**, within The Arcade, High Street, Eccleshall, marking a significant milestone for founder Lisa Russell, whose business whose business has grown from a home-based venture in Stone, into a thriving independent travel company with a multi-million-pound turnover and a team of four.

WANDERLUXE

By Lisa

Brand new travel boutique in The Arcade on the High Street, Eccleshall is

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The opening is particularly special for Lisa, who was born and raised in Eccleshall and grew up surrounded by local independent businesses, with her own family running a business on the town's high street.

"Opening a shop in Eccleshall feels like coming home," said Lisa. "This town has always been part of who I am, so being able to bring my business here feels incredibly special."

"I've always believed that booking a holiday should be personal, and I wanted to create a welcoming space where people can pop in for a chat, share their travel dreams and plan something unforgettable."

The boutique opening comes as Wanderlux celebrates a decade in business - ten years that have seen the travel industry face some of its greatest ever challenges.

From navigating the complete shutdown of international travel during the Covid-19 pandemic to helping customers through ongoing global events and uncertainty, including conflict in the Middle East, Lisa has continued to adapt, support her clients and grow the business.

Today, Wanderlux has expanded to a team of four and continues to specialise in tailor-made holidays, luxury escapes, cruises, family adventures and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, with personal service remaining at the heart of everything it does.

Lisa's commitment to the travel industry has also been recognised nationally. She is a TTG Sustainable Travel Ambassador, championing more responsible travel choices, and was named a Finalist in the TTG Home Worker of the Year Awards 2023.

The new boutique has been designed to offer something different from the traditional travel agency experience, a relaxed, inspirational environment where customers can browse destinations, seek expert advice and enjoy a face-to-face planning experience.

As independent retailers continue to bring character back to Britain's high streets, Lisa hopes Wanderlux will become a destination in its own right.

"We're not just opening a travel agency; we're creating a place where people can feel inspired. Every holiday starts with a conversation, and we can't wait to welcome people through the door."

The boutique opens on the 12th September at Unit 6, The Arcade, High Street, Eccleshall, welcoming customers looking for expert advice, personal recommendations and carefully planned holidays.

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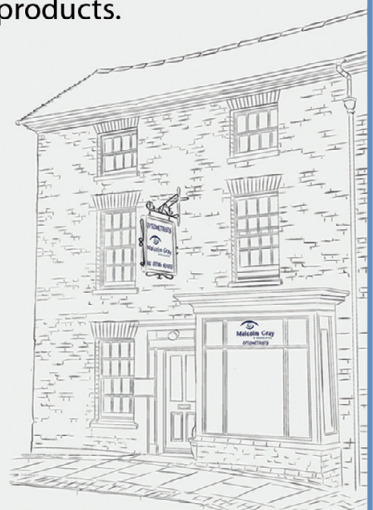


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Rooftop Studios Where confidence centre

As families look ahead to a new school year and begin choosing extra-curricular activities, one local performing arts academy continues to set the standard for dance, drama and musical theatre in Stone.

For more than three decades, Rooftop Studios has built a reputation not only for outstanding training, but for creating a welcoming, supportive environment where children, teenagers and adults can thrive. Whether a student dreams of performing professionally or simply wants to build confidence, make friends and have fun each week, every individual is encouraged to reach their own potential. And 2026/27 year promises to be one of the academy's biggest yet, with students preparing to return to the iconic Regent Theatre for a spectacular full-school production.



Following the success of **Believe** – a dazzling showcase featuring performers of all ages and abilities – the next production will once again give students the opportunity to perform on one of the region's largest professional stages, complete with stunning costumes, lighting and pyrotechnic effects. It's an experience that many young performers only dream of, and one that creates memories to last a lifetime.

Something for everyone...

While the annual show is undoubtedly a highlight, it's just one example of the opportunities available throughout the year.

Rooftop Studios is proud to be Stone's only Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) ballet school, offering internationally recognised ballet training delivered to the highest standards. Alongside ballet, the academy offers an extensive programme spanning dance, drama and musical theatre, allowing students to discover new passions while developing valuable life skills both on and off the stage.

This year has also seen the introduction of exciting new classes, ensuring there's something for every age and interest. The brand-new '**Rooftots**' programme gives children aged 3-6 the chance to 'mix & match' classes across dance, acrobatics, drama and circus skills in a fun, confidence-building environment, while the launch of aerial silk & hoop classes has opened up an



Studios: Confidence Takes Stage...



exciting new discipline for students aged 4 and up looking to challenge themselves and learn something different.

Behind every class is a team of experienced, passionate professionals, many who continue to work within the industry and bring first-hand knowledge from the West End, Disney, leading cruise lines, television and vocational performing arts colleges into the studio each week.

These industry links also mean the studio has an amazing network of guest teachers - including working actors and West End performers - who run workshops at the studio. The result is an academy where high standards and individual encouragement go hand in hand.

An approach that celebrates the individual...

The proof, as they say, is in the pudding. Students regularly achieve outstanding examination results, gain places on prestigious associate programmes and represent the academy successfully at competitions. Others secure professional performance opportunities while continuing their training at Rooftop Studios, while many former students have progressed to leading vocational colleges and professional careers within the performing arts industry.

Yet at Rooftop, success isn't measured solely by exam certificates or theatre credits. For many families, the greatest achievement is seeing children grow in confidence, discover lifelong friendships and develop resilience, teamwork and self-belief that extends far beyond the studio walls. From their very first class through to performing beneath the lights of the Regent Theatre - or being guided through auditions for leading performing arts academies - students become part of a close-knit community that celebrates every milestone, however big or small.

This combination of professional opportunities, exceptional teaching and community spirit has helped establish Rooftop Studios as the premium destination for performing arts training in Stone and the surrounding area.

Whether your child is taking their very first dance steps, looking for a new hobby, discovering a love of acting, hoping to perform in musical theatre or dreaming of a future career on the stage, Rooftop Studios offers inspiring tuition in an environment where everyone belongs.

New Term offer...

To celebrate the new school year, new students who book a trial class **by 31 October can enjoy 50% off** their first month's fees when joining a new class - for full details of classes on offer, visit www.rooftopstudios.co.uk

To secure your trial class email info@rooftopstudios.co.uk

Rooftop STUDIOS

ROOFTOTS

Ages 3-6

Disco Dance // Gym & Acro //
Ballet Dance // LAMDA
Drama // Circus Skills

A magical early years programme introducing little performers to dance, acro, circus and performance in a fun and supportive environment.

Children build confidence, coordination, creativity and social skills while discovering the joy of movement and performance.

Find out more at www.rooftopstudios.co.uk

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Prostate Cancer Awareness Event At St. Dominics Social

Local men, of any age, and also their partners or families, are invited to a Prostate Cancer Awareness Night in Stone, to listen and to understand what prostate cancer is, and what to look out for.

It takes place at St. Dominics Social Centre on **Thursday October 22nd**, with doors open at 7.15pm and the event starting at 7.30pm.

Founder & Chair of Stafford & Surrounds Prostate Cancer Group, Mark Seaton, along with Urology Surgical Care Practitioner, Eve Richards, will take it in turns on stage presenting during the evening.



Mark and Eve will be discussing

1. Prostate - where, what and what goes wrong (*where is it, what it does, and conditions affecting it*)
2. PSA testing - why it's important, it's limitations and why there isn't a national screening programme.
3. What happens if your PSA is raised - the diagnostic process.
4. Make sense of the diagnosis and why peer support groups add value.
5. Prior to a break - guests will be asked to leave any questions on post-it notes, to be raised at the Q&A.
6. Questions & Answers

The presentations and Q&A will be held in the ballroom, and during the break, which will be in the lounge bar, there will be opportunities to pick up information and have further discussions with men that have lived experience of prostate cancer.

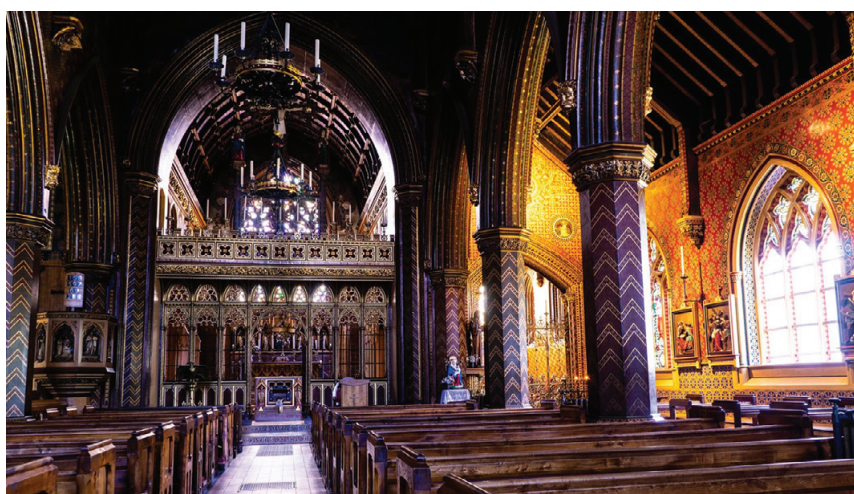
The success of this event will indicate whether there is a need for a local support offer for people effected by prostate cancer, and their partners. If such a need is identified, the organisers will be looking for ways to provide such a service locally.

The licensed bar will be open, plus hot drinks will also be available. Free side street parking on Station Rd/ Margaret Street. Or parking on Council Car Park on Christchurch Way, 200 yds away.

**There Are Only 120 Seats Available,
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TO BOOK YOUR PLACE BY TEXT OR EMAIL -**

TEXT ONLY to 07917 824625
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you would like.**

For more information about Stafford & Surrounds Prostate Cancer Group, you can visit their website at <https://staffordprostatecancersupportgroup.co.uk>



The stunning view inside St Giles Roman Catholic Church in Cheadle

Stone Scribblers Visit To Pugin's Gem

Stone Scribblers chose a beautiful hot summer's Day to meet at St Giles Roman Catholic Church in Cheadle. Some of us knew of "Pugin's Gem" but many who grew up elsewhere were learning all about Pugin for the first time.

We were relieved to step from the baking hot streets of Cheadle into the shady porch and moved into the interior at once amazed by the artistry all around us.

Our guide for the morning was David Slade, a former church architect and therefore very knowledgeable. David was able to offer much insight into the architectural design, the wonderful stained glass, Minton tiles - explaining all the crafts and processes to produce such perfect results. Wood carvings had been sent from European churches after Pugin had travelled widely abroad.

Augustus Pugin was born in 1812; he converted to Catholicism in 1834 during the period of time when Roman Catholic emancipation came about in the UK.

The funding for the building of St Giles Church was provided by John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury after Pugin had successfully redeveloped Alton Towers and was given several commissions as a result.

The style is known as Gothic Revival. All English churches had been stripped of statues and ornamentation at the time of the dissolution of the monasteries and Pugin had a central role in the revival to beautify churches again.

Pugin also was

responsible for helping Charles Barry to design the Palace of Westminster.

The interior of St Giles Church is truly stunning. Every surface had a painted design in gleaming colours which, although faded over time still glowed in the dim light.

Tracery, carvings, gilt bosses, painted murals and carvings left us speechless. Ecclesiastical designs in the sanctuary were carefully constructed and innovative. Other small details had been lovingly crafted throughout.

With so much art and crafts in one building, we left having taken photos and with much inspiration - to pen a poem or prose in praise of the day.

Scribblers braved the narrow tracks after this to reach the Ramblers Retreat, Dimmingsdale Lodge Road, in the depths of fabulous woods and forest for a cool and shady lunch together with beautiful guitar music in the background.

A perfect time to share our impressions and enjoy the sun.

From Merope Capernaros



Butterfly Observations In Eccleshall So Far

Hello everybody

I promised in the last magazine that I would do an interim matrix of butterfly observations in Eccleshall so far this year. I have included what I saw today.

There are a number of comments to make:

This has been an exceptional year for Holly Blue. The second brood is now on the wing. Likewise I have never seen so many Common Blues in Eccleshall. There are a number around in the fields at present.

So far this has been a poor year for Large and Small Whites and Green Veined White. Painted Ladies have been good

but it is not one of those exceptional years.

I have seen a Clouded Yellow for the first time since 2006 - two days running!

It is a fantastic year for gatekeeper butterflies. Ringlet seems to be continuing its slow recovery after local building works destroyed much of its habitat.

On July 13th I recorded 406 butterflies. The most I have seen in a day since we came to Eccleshall 21 years ago.

I hope some of you find this interesting. All in all, a very good first half of the year.

Best wishes,

Thomas W. W. Knowles, Eccleshall



Tohi Harada Is Coming To Newport

Newport Music Club is thrilled to welcome acclaimed young guitarist, Tohi Harada, in concert on **Saturday, 10 October, 7pm**, at Cosy Hall, Water Lane, Newport TF10 7LD.

Tohi first took up the guitar at the age of 3 and during his childhood in Japan won many competitions before gaining nationwide attention in 2021 when Japanese television broadcast his performance of 'Pictures at an Exhibition' by Mussorgsky.

Tohi has won many International Competitions including the Aalborg Guitar Competition (Denmark), 2022, the Albania International Guitar Competition and the Veria International Guitar Competition (Greece) in 2023. He won the International Guitar Competition (Croatia), Guitar Art International Competition (Serbia) and the Brussels International Guitar Competition in 2024. And in 2025, was awarded first Prize Ivor Mairants Guitar Award in the United Kingdom.

Tohi has also been recipient of the Julian Bream Trust for three consecutive years, an Award honouring exceptional guitar talent, and where he performed for the legendary guitarist John Williams.

Currently studying towards a Master's in Guitar Performance at the Royal Academy of Music Tohi has been fortunate to attend a number of Masterclasses with distinguished guitarists such as Alvaro Pierri, David Russell, Fabio Zanon, Judicael Perroy and Thibaut Garcia. Do join us for an evening of superb guitar playing, with compositions by Dowland, Arnold, Myers, Bach, Brouwer and Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

Tickets: Adults £15.00; Children/Students £2.00; payable on the door. To reserve tickets in advance please contact Newport Music Club at chairman@newportmusicclub.org or phone 07726 959233. Visit www.newportmusicclub.org for more information.

Newport Music Club's final concert of 2026 presents **Harpist, Becki Luff**, in an afternoon of beautiful music on **Sunday November 15th at 3.00 pm** at Cosy Hall.



St Saviour's News

Saturday 12th September

Staffordshire Historic Churches Trust Ride & Stride

It is planned to have the church open from 10am to 6pm to welcome riders. If you would be able to spare an hour or two to help with this please would you let me know. Alternatively, perhaps you would like to get on your bike (or walk of course) and visit a number of churches in the area; you will need a sponsor form and a list of the churches open – please speak to me about this. Funds raised in this way are divided between the SHCT and the church you nominate. for more information please visit <https://ridestride.org>

It is also planned to hold a "St Exertia's Day Celebration" or Churchyard Working Party on the same day (**12th September**), and so if you are also able to help with this please come along, together with your garden tools, and lend a hand. *Thank you.*

Harvest Festival Service – Sunday 11th October at 9.15am – we should be very grateful for offers of help with decorating the church for the Harvest Festival; if you are able to help, would you please speak to one of the Churchwardens, or Kath Lanyon.



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Stone Ramblers Walk of the Month

Aston Marina

Distance: 4½ miles circular walk **Time:** Just over 2 hours

Refreshments: Aston Marina **Terrain:** Mainly Flat Terrain

After five cancelled walks because of the hot weather, how about a nice cool walk along the canal, checking out the newly refurbished Upper Burston Bridge (No.86), which is now fully operational!

If you haven't been to Aston Marina before, now is your opportunity. This is a lovely walk beginning from the actual Marina, giving you the chance to look at the many boats and the wildlife. The Marina has 200 berths which are used for both long-term and temporary moorings and provide a colourful display of tradition canal boats.

The Trent and Mersey Canal itself, runs for 93 miles from the Bridgewater Canal at to Shardlow and was designed (as the name implies!) to link the River Trent to the River Mersey and was completed in 1777.

Josiah Wedgwood was one of the main promoters of the canal, as it allowed his fragile porcelain and china to be transported safely, without using bumpy roads. Canal traffic was heavy but now it's main use is recreational.

1. From the main car park, go back towards the entrance drive and main buildings of the restaurant and bar. Turn left to follow the paved walkway, with the terrace and bar building on your right. Bear right to stay alongside the buildings, passing the circular waterside deck on your left.

Bear left and continue on the tarmac walkway between fences, with main building on your right and the marina on your left. Stay with the path as it swings right to continue with the canal on your left and fenced fields on your right. At the end of this path, pass through the Aston Marina gates to reach a junction with the village lane. Turn left to cross the canal bridge and then turn immediately left again to join the canal towpath.

2. Walk ahead along the canal towpath with the canal running on your left. The towpath soon leads you past Aston Lock (No. 26) and Aston Lock Cottage. The towpath continues ahead, now simply a grassy canal-side bank which can be muddy in parts. You will pass the Marina across to your left, on the far bank. Stay with the canal towpath for about a further 1.2 miles, passing under Carr House Bridge (No.89), Iron Bridge, (No.88) and Long Meadow Bridge (No.87) to reach Upper Burston Bridge (No. 86).

3. Leave the canal at this point and turn right across the stile immediately before Upper Burston Bridge (No.86). Keep ahead to follow the tree-lined grass track which leads you to a metal footbridge over the River Trent. (*Fingers crossed!*). Cross the footbridge to enter the wetland pasture which is part of Aston Hall Farm.

This farmland alongside the River Trent is owned by Severn Trent Water and managed for the benefit of wildlife. Keep an eye out for wading birds (such as lapwing and curlew), waterfowl and you might even be lucky enough to glimpse the elusive water voles and otters.

Ignore a footpath signed to the left, instead keep ahead on the main path with a fence running on your right. Join a stretch of boardwalk, passing the large shallow lake on your right. Beyond the boardwalk, keep ahead and pass through a kissing gate to enter a crop field.

Keep ahead on the path. This stretch of slightly elevated path gives you beautiful far-reaching views. At the end of this first field, you will reach a wide hedge gap alongside a beautiful old oak tree.

4. Go ahead to join the grass farm track with fields on each side. You may notice some waymark symbols, showing that this is part of The Two Saints Way, a 92-mile walking route, that links Chester Cathedral to Lichfield Cathedral. In fact we are walking this in stages at the moment!

At the end of the fields, keep ahead on the farm track. This leads you past a property on your right, dog-legs right then left and leads you out to a T junction with the village road in Aston-by-Stone.

On your right you will see a tree set within a grass circle, planted in 1911 to mark the coronation of King George V. Bear diagonally right to follow the village road, leading you between houses. At the end of the road, you will see a choice of two paths. Ignore the kissing gate on your left, instead turn right to follow the stone track. Pass a couple of properties on your left and then keep ahead to join a section of grass track between fences.

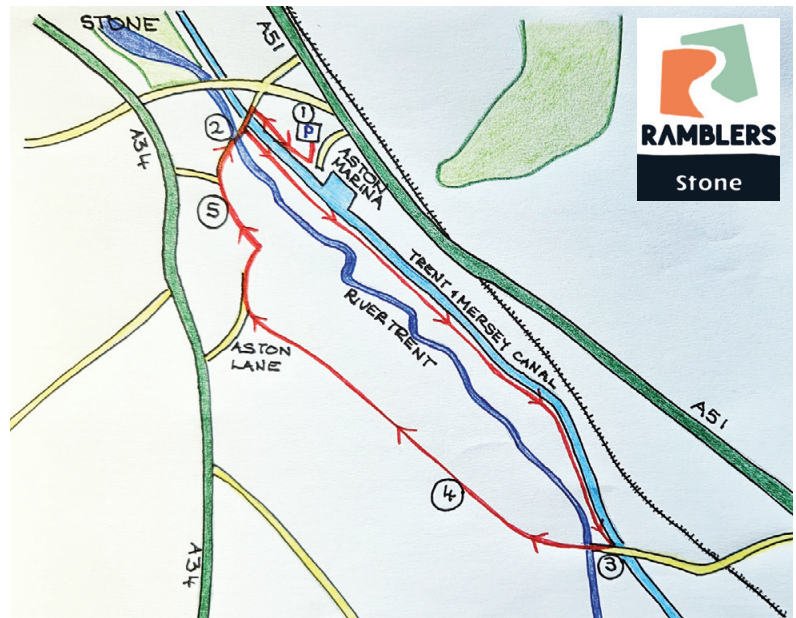
Follow the track as it swings left, now with fenced fields on your right and the converted buildings within the complex of Aston Hall on your left.

Notice the beautiful old brick wall on your left and you will have a glimpse of the lead-topped turret of the present main hall (dating from 1855) above this.

5. Keep straight ahead to join a tarmac access drive. Pass the Aston Hall Catholic Chapel on your left and keep ahead through the stone gateposts to exit Aston Grange (with the entrance gates for Aston Hall and its church on your left).

Turn immediately right to enter the grounds of the Church of England St Saviour's Parish Church and follow this access drive which leads you just to the left of this large stone church. Continue on the access drive as it swings left and you will emerge through more gates to reach a junction of lanes.

Turn right onto Aston Bridge Lane and follow this, taking care of any occasional traffic, as it leads you over the River Trent and then over the canal. From this point we will be retracing our steps back to the Marina. Immediately after the canal bridge, turn right through the Marina gates and follow the Marina path leading you ahead and then turning left. This path will lead you directly back to the bar and restaurant.



Back here at base, we've got lots of things planned! We've just had our annual Summer Stroll and Social (have a look at the pictures) and we're off to Holmfirth very soon.

I really hope that you've enjoyed this walk and that it gives you the impetus to walk more. Have a look at our website www.stoneramblers.org.uk and look at our forthcoming walks. So, get those boots cleaned and Happy Walking!

Penny Meakin Chair, Stone Ramblers

Autumn events & get togethers for all to enjoy!

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Mon	STRONG Fitness - Beginners welcome Gentle Exercise U3A Talking Books U3A Sweaty Mama (fitness class - mums & babies) Craft U3A (monthly 2nd Mon) U3A Meeting (monthly 1st Mon) Prayer Meeting St John's Church (bi-monthly) Pilates Beginners - new class starts September Slimming World Clubbercise Dance Fitness - Beginners welcome	9.30-10.15am 10-11am 10.30-12.30pm 1-1.45pm 2-4pm 1.30-4pm 2.30-4pm 5.20-6.10pm 6-7.30pm 6.30-7.20pm
Tues	Pilates Beginners Family History U3A (fortnightly) Disco Line Dancing: High Beginners & Improvers Gentle Seated Exercise to Music & Social Sequence Dancing Cryptic Crosswords U3A (1st & 3rd Tues) back Sept Papercraft U3A (fortnightly 2nd & 4th Tues) Weight Watchers Fitness Pilates Beginners Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners & Social Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly) Rock Choir	9.30-10.30am 10.30-12.30pm 11-12 noon 1.30-2.45pm 2-4pm 2-4pm 2-4pm 6-7pm 6.20-7.10pm 7.30-9pm 6.30-8.30pm 8-9.30pm
Weds	Guitar U3A Knit, Crochet & Chat Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners Diabetes Path to Remission (NHS referrals) Disco Line Dancing: Beginners & Social Conexus Tuition Stafford & Stone Combat Assassin Fitness - Beginners welcome Yoga: All Abilities Line Dancing: DISCO Stomp (last Weds monthly)	10.30-12.30pm 10.30-12.30pm 12.15-1.15pm 1-5.30pm 1.30-3pm 4-6pm 6.15-7pm 6.30-7.30pm 7.30-9.30pm
Thurs	Happy Feet Italian Beginners U3A - (back in September) Private Booking Relaxation Session U3A Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly) Sound Bath: Deep Relaxation Session (Monthly 2nd Thur) GPC Meeting (3rd Thurs monthly) Pilates 'Men on Mats' - Beginners Flower Club (last Thurs monthly)	10-11am 10-11.30am 10.15-11.45am 2.30-3.30pm 6-7pm 6.30-8.30pm 7-8pm 7-8pm 7.30-8.30pm 7.30-9.30pm
Fri	STRONG Fitness - 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
Sat	Slimming World Overeaters Anonymous Fitness Pilates Beginners Community Sewing Circle (monthly 2nd Sat) Child of Mine Playgroup (last Sat monthly) Line Dancing Tutorials, Courses & Socials	8.30-10am 9.15-10.15am 10.30-11.20am 12-2.30pm 2-4pm Various
Sun	Table Top Sale/Car Boot (fortnightly Sept-April) St John's Church - Weekly Service St John's Church - Monthly Service (last Sun)	8.30-11.30am 10.30-11.30am 6.30-7.30pm

As we head into **Autumn** why not pay a visit to **Walton Community Centre** for one of the September or October events plus the fortnightly **TABLE TOP** sale.

The Community Centre holds their annual Macmillan coffee morning on Friday 25th September - a great time to meet some new people while raising money for a fabulous cause.

The **FABULOUS Rock Choir** are singing at the Beats, Bites & Bingo event in October. It looks set to be an evening with great people, good times & a lot of laughs!

The centre is also always looking for new **volunteers** to be involved on their committee. If you need any further info about their events or helping out - get in touch direct!

Saturday 7th November

FREE Entry

FREE Parking

craft fair

from 11am to 3pm

Presidents & Chairmans Hall

Text 07711 115462 for info

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Gazette Motoring

"Perfect for seekers of 'feel good' transportation, and for those in search of a secret garden of indulgence."

Syd Taylor gets to work in the Mini - John Cooper Works (JCW)

Legends aren't born overnight. It takes time. So having put a new Mini JCW through its paces, a question popped into my head. What do you call a legend built on the back of a legend? Double brisky anyone?*

The truth is that the latest John Cooper Works Mini takes brand continuation to another level. If the previous version was a classic, the new incarnation has made it very definitely to classic status on its own account. The appeal established over time has not diminished. The latest model is winning hearts and minds in the manner of its venerable ancestors.

Unmistakable in appearance, the clever design demonstrates a confidence-inspiring certainty that the best engineering provides. This means that time spent behind the wheel is time well spent. Life's adventures were never served up so sweetly.



Behind the wheel did it disappoint? You already know the answer dear reader. This car looks the business. Cute, but not too cute, butch but not too butch, the appealing exterior is an invitation to partake of an interior quite the equal. For those who hanker after 'cool' it's cucumber cool. For those chasing trends it's a trend setting treat. Best of all it's everything a keen driver could want. The £38,540 Mini JCW provides lots of comfort, all the latest hi-tech and plenty of room for driver and front passenger and restricted room in the rear for children at a pinch. In short, every single well thought out part of it conveys the message that this is a 'drivers car'.



Sit at the wheel, sigh with contentment and wonder how the designer managed to contrive a driving position exactly right for you. I couldn't get it out of my mind that it was tailored just for me. Start up the BMW 2.0 4cyl. 228 bhp turbo engine (*It's neither ostentatiously loud nor worryingly meek*) and dream about being 'Smokin' John Rhodes (Younger readers 'Google' him) - the greatest Mini driver ever! He would love this.

You can drive in 'Green Efficiency' mode if you are taking Aunt Maude to the vicar's tea party and even get about 45mpg... and on your return - when Beelzebub whispers in your ear - you can switch into JC Works mode (*announced via the speakers with a joyous 'whoop!*) and sacrifice your eternal soul on the altar of wickedness at speeds up to 155mph (*limited*) whilst flicking the paddles controlling the 7 speed dual clutch



semi auto box and using the 'Boost' button for even more power...*'Warp factor 3'* This is a disgraceful fun car. Once addicted to one of these, the only salvation is exorcism. Let's hope it is never banned by the Ministry of Misery and Nastiness. You sense at once that here is a car able to go places swiftly - but always safely and sweetly. The phrase that springs to mind is 'civilised fun'.

It's a car for the young at heart and young in spirit: perfect for seekers of 'feel good' transportation and for those in search of a secret garden of indulgence.



Living as we do in non-binary times, it's possible to split into camps people who think one way and those who think another. The original Mini was a case in point. You either loved it or you bought a Cortina. The twenty-first century incarnation of the Mini brand may not be for everyone. But for its aficionados it's a car that never fails to deliver a tonic of motoring pleasure. Even the grind of commuting becomes something one actually looks forward to. Go to work on a Mini and you won't regret skipping breakfast. On high days and holidays you'll feel the holiday start the moment you switch it on.

The Mini JCW convinced me of two impossible things. One, that I wasn't getting any older and two that you can improve on perfection. In short, this zippy, comfy, stylish car is as characterful as they come. It's bang up to the minute in all the essentials and as a bonus you get that Mini charisma thrown in free.

To be honest, as I buzzed up to a roundabout and delighted in the grippy roadholding, precise steering, beyond powerful brakes, I experienced that rare feeling where the car becomes an extension of the driver. This impression derives from common objectives deftly achieved.

The Mini JCW points the way forward towards a world where differences are brushed aside in the quest towards harmonious motoring. Put more simply, it is addictive fun.

By Syd Taylor

* **Ed:** I had to look it up, but apparently a "double brisky" is a heavy double-patty smash burger, loaded with thick-cut smoked beef brisket, you learn something new everyday!



Lord Bamford and his family join JCB Hydromax team to celebrate the new hydrogen world land speed record on the Bonneville Salt Flats

Hydrogen-Powered JCB Hydromax Sets 406.320 Mph World Land Speed Record

British engineering giant JCB has set a new world land speed record of 406.320 mph with its hydrogen-powered JCB Hydromax.

The car recorded the average speed 400.623 mph in its first run this morning across the Bonneville Salt Flats, and 412.135 mph on its second run, giving the average of 406.320 mph - the fastest a hydrogen internal combustion car has ever travelled.

Driven by Wing Commander Andy Green OBE, the twin engined, 32-foot car completed the two runs required under FIA rules - one in each direction within an hour - comfortably beating the previous FIA-officiated hydrogen internal combustion benchmark of 185.5 mph set by the BMW H2R in 2004. The record is subject to official ratification by the (FIA), the global governing body for motorsport.

In doing so, JCB Hydromax surpassed the 350.092 mph world diesel land speed record set by JCB Dieselmex - also driven by Green, on the same salt, in August 2006.

Twenty years on, JCB has beaten its own benchmark with an engine that produces no CO₂ at the tailpipe.

The speed also exceeds the 303 mph hydrogen fuel cell mark - making JCB Hydromax the fastest hydrogen-powered vehicle of any kind in history.

The record - set in the Category A, Group XIV - Class 7 FIA World Flying Record Start Land Speed Record - was set using two of JCB's own production-based hydrogen digger engines, producing a combined 1,600 bhp and manufactured at the company's engine factory in Foston, Derbyshire, UK. They are the same engines now powering JCB machines and equipment rolling off production lines in the UK as part of the company's £100 million hydrogen programme.

JCB Chairman Anthony Bamford has led JCB's hydrogen engine project and came up with the idea of a hydrogen world land speed record bid early last year. Lord Bamford said today: "Twenty years ago we came to Bonneville with JCB Dieselmex and showed what British engineering could do with diesel power. Today we have done it again - this time with engines powered by hydrogen. This record was set by production-based engines, the same engines powering JCB diggers right now. That is the point of JCB Hydromax: it shows hydrogen works, and it works today at the highest level with zero emissions."

JCB Engineering Director Ryan Ballard, who is leading the project, said: "This record belongs to the engineering team which took a hydrogen digger engine and made it the fastest of its kind on earth. This has been an amazing challenge from the outset of the it being set in February last year. We came here fully prepared, and the car delivered."

Wing Commander Andy Green is the fastest man on earth at 763.035 mph, the only person to break the sound barrier on land, and was the driver of JCB Dieselmex when it set the FIA world diesel land speed record of 350.092 mph at Bonneville in August 2006. That record still stands.

The record comes ahead of the opening of JCB's new \$500 million factory in San Antonio, Texas, which will employ 1,500 people manufacturing machines for the US market. JCB has long pushed the limits of speed and in addition to the JCB Dieselmex success, the JCB Fastrac became the world's fastest tractor at 135.191 mph in 2019, and in 2014 the JCB GT set the backhoe loader record at 72.58 mph.






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Renault 5 E-Tech electric wins top 'Style & Design' honour with UK EV Owners

The Renault 5 E-Tech electric has won over UK drivers with its looks and fun character, winning the 'Style & Design' category in the inaugural Electric Road UK EV Owners Poll Awards.

Participants were asked to choose the features they value most about their EV, with more owners selecting styling and design as something they "really like" about their Renault 5 E-Tech electric than any other electric vehicle.

Russell Whitehouse, Co-Owner of Electric Road, said: "The Renault 5 E-Tech electric was the clear overall winner in the 'Style & Design' category in our inaugural UK EV Owners Poll Awards. It received the highest percentage of owners who selected 'Style & Design' in response to the question, 'What do you really like about your EV?'"

For Renault 5 owners, it successfully executes a retro-futurist design that taps into deep automotive nostalgia while feeling entirely modern. Owners are delighted by how closely the production model resembles the widely praised 2021 concept car, reviving the cheeky, boxy silhouette of the iconic 1970s original.

One Renault 5 E-Tech electric owner commented: "I love the design references to the original Renault 5. Best looking retro car ever made."

Its appealing design has even persuaded drivers who had previously ruled out switching to an electric car, with another owner saying: "It looks fantastic. I was an 'I'll never go EV' until I saw the R5 and fell in love with it."

Priced from £21,495 on-the-road The Renault 5 E-Tech electric brings an iconic nameplate into the electric era with contemporary packaging and advanced technology designed around real-world needs. Highlights include the OpenR Link infotainment system with Google built-in, a chassis tuned to deliver agility and comfort in equal measure, and practical charging solutions for everyday use.

It offers a WLTP driving range of up to 252 miles and can charge from 15–80% in around 30 minutes. Available with the full £3,750 Electric Car Grant, the Renault 5 E-Tech electric is priced from £21,495 on-the-road. For more information or to configure your own Renault 5 E-Tech electric, visit: <https://www.renault.co.uk/electric-vehicles/r5-e-tech-electric.html>





Walking Group in October 2025

We Are Stone & District u3a!

At a loose end this year? Looking for something different to fill some (or all) hours during the day? Then look no further. The u3a can offer **fun and social interaction**.

We have over 35 groups, running inside, and outside and all run by volunteer group leaders. Most groups run throughout the year with a few exceptions e.g. April to Sept only Crown Green Bowling, Pétanque.

Amongst the year-round activities we run e.g. **Gentle Exercise, Folk Dancing, Table Tennis, Folk Dancing, and Walking. More sedentary activities (who needs to dash about all the time?) try our Bridge for Beginners, Chess, Computers, Family History Research, Sew and Sew, Photography, Singing for Fun, Scrabble, and Ukelele**, to name a few.



Searching Family History

In July we held one of our Speaker Meeting where our speaker was Philip Caine who gave us quite the flavour of his life as a well-travelled thriller writer and hotel manager, working on North Sea oil rigs, directing projects in Kazakhstan & Russia, and finally in Baghdad, locations providing his detailed knowledge for his books.



Our volunteers also get around too, spreading the word. We were at the July Farmers' Market in the centre of Stone. **Look out for us during Autumn!**

Why not join us? There is no upper or lower age limit and no restrictions on u3a membership, which costs just £55 per year. Members can join as many groups as time allows. If you are not a member of our u3a you may attend "taster" sessions free of charge. See our website for more information, and to contact Group Leaders – <https://stone.u3asite.uk>



At the Farmers Market



Stone In Bloom How A Tidy Town Creates A Buzz For Visitors

When you walked around the town you will have noticed the tireless efforts of the Stone in Bloom volunteers, Streetscene and the countless groups of litter pickers made up of all ages.

Stone is not just clean, but is a vibrant and special place to visit and spend time in.

Being tidy no longer means cutting back every blade of grass or spraying away weeds. Visitors are happy to visit Stone due to its obvious community and environmental care which is evident everywhere. The hanging baskets, cauldrons and railing boxes full of beautiful pollinator friendly flowers and places to visit like Crown Meadow, Stonefield Park and Westbridge Park attracts visitors and they are likely to come back to the town and this means a real boost to our local economy.

This year has seen more varieties of wildflowers on Crown Meadow than ever before, and not using harmful chemical sprays is beginning to pay off.

It was great to see that during the events held in the High Street, those enjoying themselves actually used the litter bins, and the many groups of volunteers made sure when the bins were full they were replaced with new bin bags, that's what

we know as community spirit or Stone Pride!

Every resident can play their part to make us **Bee Friendly** by transforming small areas of their gardens with nectar rich plants with favourites like lavender, foxgloves and marigolds giving the bees a chance for a pit-stop. Small individual actions add up to a massive positive impact for our whole community. Let's keep Stone clean and green by working together.

During the last community volunteer work party, the Stone in Bloom group completely cleared the back of Morrisons, gathering 12 bags of rubbish a great effort by them all, **(would you believe when we went back ten minutes later someone had thrown down a cigarette packet!)**

The Anchor bed needed a tidy and sad to say the Christmas tree has not survived the hot weather.

Is there anyone out there who would be willing to look at the Anchor which needs repairing, no one on our group is qualified to carry out the work?

Thank you to you all who are proud of our town and who in your own quiet way keep our town the great place it is.



Jelly Tots Toddler Group had a wonderful visit from Katie, Dena and Emily from Mansion House Surgery who gave their time to answer important questions from our Tots' mums, dads and grandparents!

The group meets every Tuesday at St Michael's Church from 9.30am till around 10.45am.



Common Blue Damselfly

Stone C&D Garden Club Autumn Programme

In September Stone Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society's Gardening Club start the Autumn with a talk from wildlife photographer **Nick Martin** - **'The Secret Wildlife of my Garden'** on **Thursday September 10th**.

Over the last ten years Nick has transformed his bland garden into a wildlife haven and has been rewarded with some amazing wild visitors.

From nest boxes, nectar rich plants, a pond and more we'll see how the garden has changed and which wonderful species have responded.

Our **October meeting (on Thursday 8th)** sees **Neil Timmis** **'Astride the Garden Fence'** looking at wild flowers in the garden, garden escapees in the wild and some that belong to both worlds.



Snake's Head Fritillary

In November Rob Potterton returns on Thursday 12th following a trip to New Zealand where he gave talks to various garden groups. His talk - **'New Zealand Plants, People and Gardens'** chronicles that tour.

Stone Chrysanthemum and Dahlia Society's Gardening Club welcomes visitors and guests to attend meetings which are usually held on the **second Thursday of the month at 7.30 prompt at Christ Church Centre**, Christchurch Way, Stone ST15 8ZB. Refreshments are available from 6.45pm.

Further details of these and future meetings can be found on <https://stonecanddgardenclub.org>



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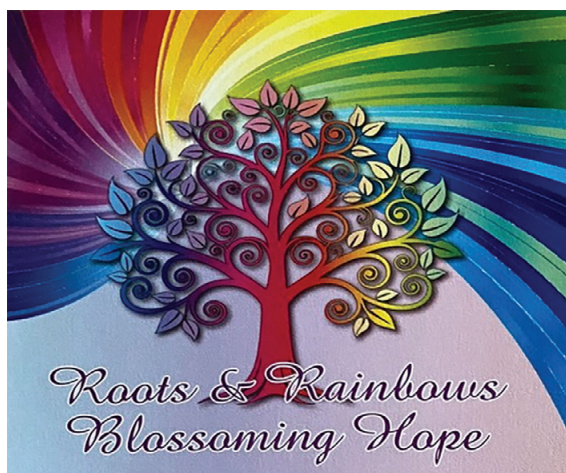
We were joined in the church of St Michael & St Wulfad on Thursday 23rd July by Rt Rev Dr Michael Igrave, Bishop of Lichfield.

The Bishop, who is retiring in September, had been invited to dedicate a chapel to St Robert of Knaresborough, a 12th Century hermit and saint who lived in a cave above the River Nidd.

St Robert was known for healing and caring for the poor. The newly dedicated chapel will be used for services of healing and anointing.

The picture above shows Rev Robert Icke (Rector of Stone) and Bishop Michael in front of the chapel.

From Dennis Abbott



Bringing Joy Through Flowers

Welcome to Roots & Rainbows, a unique floral charity dedicated to nurturing communities with the transformative power of flowers. We believe that flowers have the magical ability to brighten spaces and lift spirits, serving as a natural remedy for emotional and mental well-being. Our mission is simple yet profound: to help families, one bloom at a time.

At Roots & Rainbows, we focus on Community Support and Environmental Protection

We understand the emotional toll of losing a loved one. To ease this burden, we donate floral tributes to grieving families, allowing them to honour their loved ones without the added worry of cost.

Our commitment to the environment is unwavering. We practice sustainable floristry by sourcing eco-friendly materials and promoting green gardening techniques. Every bouquet we create is designed with the planet in mind.

Roots & Rainbows thrives on the generosity of volunteers and donors. Your financial contributions enable us to purchase supplies and sustain our various programs. Every donation helps us spread more joy and hope.

Together, let's plant seeds of hope and create a world where beauty blooms in every corner.

Email rootsandrainbowscharity@gmail.com
You can donate by finding us on GoFundMe



Diana shows of the splendid selection that was on offer at Stone Leisure Centre

Christies Charity Cake Bake Sale Success

Diana Bryce, from Stone, held a Charity Bake Sale at Stone Leisure Centre on July 10th to raise monies for Christies Hospital in Manchester.

Diana told the Gazette "It was a resounding success with many shops including Morrisons, Marks and Spencers, and the Co-op all donating many beautiful cakes, so the stall did not run out at the all day event.

Also some neighbours, and friends of myself, brought in Homemade Sausage rolls which were "to die for" according to all the local men in Bromfield Court!

As well as Homemade Scones with strawberry jam and cream, again by a very talented cook and neighbour.

What a wonderful turnout, I am absolutely humbled by all the people who did so much to contribute to this very worthy cause, as it does affect so many families everywhere.

When I called in on the day (only for about 3 minutes, as I had to go to Manchester that day for treatment) a gentleman came straight up to me and said "You are the lady aren't you?" I said "yes".

He said that he cried when he read the article because his father died of Esophagus Cancer within a few months, he was delighted I had done so well.

He too knew Christies, because his mother had since been there, she was 87 years old and she had had very invasive life saving surgery to get her cancer free. A very tough old Lady, who agreed to it knowing, that Christies do not give up on you. She now is cancer free, which is marvellous.

I said "I hope you have told her how proud you are of her."

A lot of people would give up at 87. We hugged I said "give one to your mum from me." He also knew Professor Wassat Mansoor too, who I cannot thank enough.

I have received a letter of Thanks from Christies to "The Leisure Centre" with final Amount of £525.18p. They said that they have never had a better response to a charity event before.

My husband said "No one who knew you well, would ever say to you, we will do anything to help you, because you will always ask exactly what you need."

People gave us cheques and cash so we just took it all in together.

The Leisure Centre collected £525.18p in Christies buckets and the rest came in as a cheque for £20 and lots of other cash donations, which altogether made a round £1,000!

We couldn't be more pleased, and so were they. I am very glad and grateful that so many people supported the Christies Charity. Thank you all.

Thank you also to the Gazette for finding a space to put a photo in of me, as it caught so much of people's attention. I know a lot of people in Stone, mainly because I have walked and trained 7 German Shepherds, and the only way to get a German Shepherd to be socialised properly, is to introduce them right from being a puppy, to people who want to say hello to them. So in doing that I met a lot of people who just love puppies (who wouldn't?)



From left to right - Carl (who helps people trying to get back into the gym to either lose weight, or just get back into fitness.

Me, then to the left Hannah the lovely Lifeguard who helps everyone any age (we all love her!) and Manager Sarah.

The Police even retired one of their breeding dogs to me (Nell) because they knew it would have a perfect home. We did not pay for Nell, we did not pay Vet fees, we did not pay for Food.

I have met hundreds and hundreds of people walking up and around Stone along the canals (where we have our own narrow boat "Uncle Buck" named after (John Candy) and the film which everyone loves."

From Diana

If you would like to to donate to The Esophago Gastric Cancer Research Funding, please visit www.christies.org/donate Then when it says about your donation please include "Please direct to Esophagogastric research fund A00115"

*Any cheques must have the Code "A00115 Esophagogastric research fund" written on them somewhere please.

Stafford Camera Club

Stafford Camera Club is a friendly, inclusive community for photographers of all levels. Whether you are a complete beginner or an experienced enthusiast, you will find plenty of opportunity to grow and share your passion.

The Club (founded in 1962 and formally known as St Leonards Camera Club) is a great place to learn and develop your Photography through visiting speakers, workshops, and recommended events like exhibitions and photographic venues. It doesn't matter what sort of Camera you own; it's about the Pictures you take!

The Club **meets every Tuesday evening** from September to May in the Brian Westhead Pavilion at Stafford Cricket and Hockey Club off Riverway in Stafford. We have exclusive use of a large and comfortable meeting space with a bar for hot or cold drinks and space for our practical workshops and presentations.



Advanced Class - Printed Image Winner

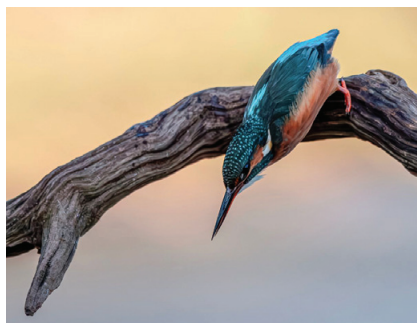
Each week we have either a Guest Speaker, a Practical Evening or a Competition night.

Entering Club Competitions is entirely optional. There are Competitions for Digitally Projected Images as well as more traditional Printed Images. We split our judging into three groups. Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced, so everyone can feel challenged, but nobody feels overwhelmed or outclassed. Sit back and judge the Competition entries yourself or enter an image of your own and see what the Independent Judge thinks. Members are always happy to provide supportive feedback as well and we can usually help with any technical questions or gremlins too!

Practical Evenings events are decided by broad consensus between the members; everyone likes to try out something new or refine efforts from a previous event. Recent Practical Evening themes have included experimenting with Macro photography, Flash Photography, Family Portraits and Painting With Light.

Upcoming Guest Speakers this Autumn include: Ian Howard on "The Colourful Side of Life".

Ian gives us a breakdown of the talks contents and structure and how we are going to turn an aspect of photography that everybody delivers into an interesting and engaging evening.



Intermediate Class - Printed Image Winner

Tracey Lund: In her talk Tracey shows a selection of Wildlife Photography images from Japan, Finland, Greece, Iceland, France and the UK as well as some stories/experiences she has encountered.

Pete Smith 'Pura Vida'; My wildlife highlights of Costa Rica.

'Pura Vida' is a talk showing his many wildlife highlights seen whilst spending a



Advanced Class - Projected Image Winner total of nearly 6 weeks across 2 recent trips to the central American country of Costa Rica. His love of wildlife & photography has taken him to some wonderful locations to see fantastic flora & fauna.

Victoria Proctor "High Fashion to High Fells.....sort of.....". This talk follows Victoria's slightly unexpected journey from the world of fashion design - to the world of capturing the landscapes of the Lake District and Snowdonia.

The Club also does occasional days out for Members who like to take images away from a studio. This year Club Members did Architectural Photography in Liverpool City Centre, Street Theme / Photobook Photography in Digbeth, Birmingham and Landscape Photography in Eryri / Snowdonia.

The Club also has a strong Social Scene, with many Members continuing to meet up informally throughout the Summer.

Members are encouraged to grow, whether that is learning basic camera skills or gaining recognition through accreditation via UK and International Distinctions. The Club aims to support its



Members on Club Trip to Snowdonia members at every stage.

Visitors are welcome to attend for a few weeks to see if the Club is what you are looking for before committing to becoming a member. Membership costs £30 for a year and Door fees are £5 for Members, £6 for Non-members, £2.50 for under 18s. Fees cover venue hire, guest speakers, competition running costs, and club equipment. Our Program of events and more information is available on the website www.staffordcameraclub.co.uk

The Club is affiliated with the Photographic Alliance of Great Britain through the Midland Counties Photographic Federation. You can contact the club for any more information at info@staffordcameraclub.co.uk or just to discuss coming along one evening!

Our new 2026/27 seasons begins in September, everyone welcome. Come along, bring your camera, give us a try!

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Acclaimed True Crime Drama 'The Ballad Of Maria Marten' Comes To Crown Wharf Theatre

A powerful all-female production reimagines Suffolk's infamous Red Barn Murder, focusing on the woman behind the headlines.

An upcoming production of Beth Flintoff's critically acclaimed play, *The Ballad of Maria Marten*, opening at the Crown Wharf Theatre this month. Running from **September 9th to the 12th**, the play provides a poignant and urgent retelling of the 1827 Red Barn Murder.

While the historic case triggered a nationwide manhunt and has been a staple of British true crime folklore for two centuries, Flintoff's script shifts the focus away from the gruesome sensationalism of the murder. Instead, it places Maria Marten at the heart of her own story, celebrating her life, friendships, and agency before her tragic death.



"The murder of Maria Marten is a story that has been told and retold with much lip-smacking enthusiasm for the gruesome details," says playwright Beth Flintoff.

"Here is the reversal of that telling. It's the story of Maria's murder, but it's an 'un-murdering.' It's a play about the people that experience violence; it's a play about love."

Directed by Kath Stanway, the production features an ensemble of six women who utilise music, movement, and vivid storytelling to bring the narrative to life. Stanway emphasises the importance of reclaiming Marten's voice in this modern context.

"Beth Flintoff's brilliant play asks us to look again, beyond the murder mystery, and see Maria as a young woman with hopes and a life of her own," says Stanway.

"The rehearsal process has already produced incredible goosebump moments. It's a production full of heart and joy, despite its intensity, and we are eager to share it with the Stone community."

Performances will take place nightly at 7:30pm. Tickets are available for £16 (Adults) and £14 (Concessions) through the Crown Wharf Theatre box office at www.crownwharftheatre.org.uk.

The production is recommended for audiences aged 14 and above.



Community Brass Band Invites Stone To Join The Singing

A relaxed evening of singalong classics is coming to Stone this autumn, as community brass band Florence Brass presents **All Together Now – The Big Family Singalong**.

The event takes place at St Michael & St Wulfad Church, Stone, on **Saturday 10th October**, from 6.30pm to 9.00pm.

Tickets are £10 for adults and £6 for children, available now at <https://tinyurl.com/FlorenceBrass> or on the door on the night.

Everyone is welcome, whatever their singing ability. Lyrics are provided, so there is nothing to learn in advance, and refreshments are available during the evening. Audience members who would rather sit back and listen than join in are just as welcome as those who want to sing every word.

Dave Chapman, Musical Director of

Florence Brass, said: "This is not a sit-still-and-be-quiet sort of concert.

We want people singing, and we want families in the room. If you know the words, brilliant. If you don't, we will put them in front of you."

Florence Brass is a friendly, non-contesting brass band based in Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, which rehearses each Wednesday at Florence Sports and Social Club on part of the former Florence Colliery site.

The band plays across Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire, with a repertoire spanning traditional brass band music, classical, film and television themes, pop and big band.

All proceeds from the evening will be shared equally between St Michael & St Wulfad's Church and Florence Brass.

Stone Quakers Discuss 'Only One Earth'



A highlight in the year for Stone Quakers is the July event at Uttoxeter, where Quakers from around Staffordshire meet up, usually to discuss the state of the planet and enjoy the sunshine in the beautiful Meeting House garden.

Uttoxeter Meeting House is an historic building dating from 1705, donated to Quakers by the previous owner when he emigrated to America.

As hoped, the sun was shining, but in the middle of the third heatwave of the summer a gazebo provided welcome shade whilst the conversation dealt with Climate Change.

The theme for the day was "**Only one Earth....the Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet**".

This was the title of a report written for the United Nations 50 years ago. The challenges faced today are just the same but the environmental issues have

become more severe.

One concern was that the continuing growth of the human population makes tackling any environmental issue more difficult - a point that has been made repeatedly by David Attenborough. There are now 4 times as many humans as when he was born 100 years ago!

Quakers have a set of principles called Testimonies and they discussed whether greater Simplicity in our lives would benefit the Earth.

Some mentioned that they have spent much of their lives acquiring stuff, and then the rest of the time trying to declutter.

Certainly this summer the consequences of burning up the planet's resources have become too obvious to ignore.

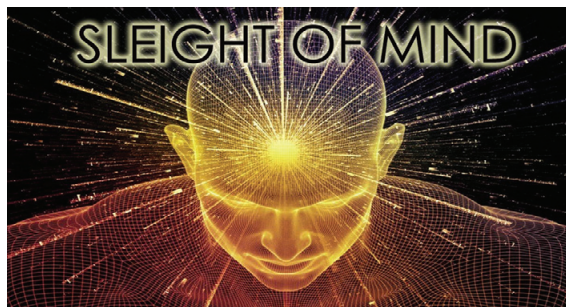
Stone Quakers meet on Sundays at 10.30am in the Stone Station Community Centre.

National Trust Staffordshire Centre Talks

The Staffordshire Centre's programme of talks at Walton Village Hall in Stafford continues on September 8th.

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.



Sleight Of Mind

by Peter Turner - 8th September

This is a fascinating exploration of the brain and perception. You will be taken on an interactive journey through the science of perception and cognitive illusion.

Did you know that the brain, despite weighing only around three pounds, is capable of astounding complexity? With a network of blood vessels long enough to circle the Earth four times, the brain shapes our intelligence, personality, and even charisma. Yet, scientists worldwide are still mystified by how it truly works.

This lecture explores the fascinating experiments designed by scientists to understand the workings of the mind. Through seven mind-bending experiments, each with a magical twist, audiences will witness firsthand how easily the mind can be tricked. From simple arithmetic tests that trip up 90% of participants to perception-based puzzles, these experiments will leave you questioning what you believe to be true.

This is not a magic show but a thought-provoking lecture that reveals the science behind perception and illusion. Sit back, enjoy the journey, and experience the mysteries of the human mind.



Passionate About Penguins

by Rodney Paul - 13th October

Rodney Paul has a keen interest in Antarctic history and reading accounts of early expeditions to Antarctica was the catalyst for his desire to experience the unique region himself.

Penguins are adorable birds that are very difficult to see in their natural habitat, but are easily recognised by their distinct characteristics and feature in many everyday products. The majority of penguin breeds are located in the coldest places on earth, but there are some colonies that live in warmer climates. This light-hearted talk will guide you through the different breeds of penguin, their habitats and personalities. We will also look at where these adorable creatures turn up in our daily lives

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>

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Petanque Club Welcomes New Members

Stone Petanque Club is hoping more people in and around Stone will come along and try a sport that is sociable, gentle, competitive (*when people want it to be*) and open to all ages and abilities.

Many people have played boules on holiday and this is how many club members started, so pétanque will feel familiar.

The aim is simple, players throw metal boules as close as possible to a small target ball, known as the jack. However, the fun can start when a player throws their boule at the opposition's boule to shoot it out of the way. Games can be relaxed and friendly, or more competitive for those who want to take things further. Stone Petanque makes new members feel very welcome. We are now looking to increase our profile and hopefully boost our numbers. This sport can be played by any age and ability.

Stone Petanque Club has been part of the town for more than two decades. It was founded in 2000, with its first home in a corner of Stone Cricket Club's ground.

Members built eight pistes there and, in the early days, the club had around 25 members. After the cricket club needed the space back, the club moved to a village pub for several years before finding its current home in 2017 on the former tennis courts at the Stone House Hotel.

The club meets at 2pm each Sunday (*weather permitting*) at the Stone House Hotel on the A34 in Stone.

The pistes can be seen from the main road. After play, many members call into the Stonehouse hotel for a hot drink and cake or something long and cold.



Members are eligible for a discount at the hotel bar and restaurant.

The club now has five pistes, each with slightly different playing characteristics.

Members can use them for extra games or practice outside the Sunday afternoon session, except Wednesday afternoons when U3A uses the terrain.

Although pétanque is often thought of as a summer sport, the Stone club plays throughout the year when the weather allows. Members have also taken part in friendly winter league games at venues across the Midlands, including Penkridge. The club joined Pétanque England in 2024 and is affiliated to the Heart of England region.

New players do not need experience to give it a try. The game can be played by people of different ages and abilities, and members are keen to encourage anyone who is curious to come and see what it is about.

Anyone interested can find Stone Petanque Club at the old tennis courts at the Stone House Hotel at **2pm on Sundays**. The club can also be found on Facebook. Any messages will be answered.

**SATURDAY
12TH
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2026**

12:30

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PRESENTS**

**Kitty,
the Admiral,
and the Diamonds**

IN 15 MINUTES

**FOLLOWED BY
A LIGHT
LUNCH..**

News from St Michael & St Wulfad's

Our church will continue to be open each Saturday from 10am until 2pm. If anyone can volunteer to cover the church for an hour or two, then please contact one of the Wardens.

Drop Inn Lunches will recommence on **Tuesday 8th September** at St Michael's Community Hall from 11.45am. Join us for soup, sandwiches and cake and a natter over a cuppa too. All are welcome.

On Saturday 12th September we will be holding a Heritage Day. At 12.30pm Mr Tim Gillow will be giving a 15-minute talk entitled **"Kitty, the Admiral and the Diamonds."** This will be followed by a light lunch.

At the beginning of October we will be hosting our **Benefice Harvest Supper** from 7pm in St Michael's Hall.

It will be a Bring and Share Supper, but please sign the list at the back of either church or contact one of the Wardens to confirm your attendance and what you will be bringing to share.

'The Green Bus'

Would you like to join us for worship at St Michael & St Wulfad's? If you need transport, a free mini bus service runs to the 11.00 am service on Sundays.

If you would like us to pick you up (and take you home again) please call to arrange it with Chris Melia on 07779 228286.



Lion Glyn Ravenscroft receives the trophy from fellow Lion Glenys Sanders

Stone Lions Club (CIO) Bowls Evening

On Wednesday 23rd July, members of Stone Lions Club took part in their Annual Bowls competition, an event that is always hotly contested by all participants.

After an evening of laughter and hilarity, with bowlers exhibiting wide ranging skills and dexterity, the winner was announced with great ceremony and the trophy was awarded to a very surprised Lion Glyn Ravenscroft, who was not quite sure how it had all come to pass.

Thanks must go to Stone Crown Bowling Club for their hospitality, help and advice on the night, Lion Graham Garner who organised the event and all members who took along a delicious pot-luck supper.

For more information, or if you are interested in joining Stone Lions, please visit <https://e-clubhouse.org/sites/stonelionsuk>

The Kettle Is On At Station Road And The Front Door Says 'Welcome To Discovering You'

Since January when they opened their base in Stone town centre, Omega Life Clinical has spent a good deal of its time doing something else than just clinical work: turning up, building local relationships, and chatting to 'drop ins' by opening the doors and listening. A free weekly play session, ongoing conversations with local educational providers and a growing list of services have all come from the same place.

A Tuesday afternoon in Stone, 1pm – 3pm

At 13 Station Road on a Tuesday afternoon, the tuff tray is out and the shaving foam is already on somebody's hands. Fuse beads are spilling across the low table, a loom band kit sits with its lid off, and two mugs of tea are going cold beside them because their owners are busy. One child is making a pattern; another is squeezing foam through their fingers to see what it does.

This is Playday. It runs **every Tuesday from 1pm to 3pm** at the Stone clinic, it is free, and there is no need to book.

All ages are welcome, refreshments are provided, and places are first come, first served. The same session runs on Wednesdays from 1pm to 3pm at Omega Life HQ in Prescot, Liverpool.

It looks like a play session because it is one. It is also, quite deliberately, often a way into the service for many.



Why a clinic runs a play session

Omega Life Clinical brings psychology, psychotherapy, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and SEND support together in one team of nine clinicians, led by Dr Carly Pointon, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Clinical Director. That is a lot of expertise behind a door on a high street, and the difficulty with expertise behind a door is that families have to know it is there before they can feel able to walk through it.

Playday takes the pressure out of that first step. A parent can come along with their children, spend an hour on messy play and crafts, and leave again without ever mentioning why they came. Or they can catch a member of the team by the kettle and ask the question they have been carrying around for months. Both are fine. Sensory play and crafts are worth doing in their own right, and the fact that they happen inside a clinical space stops the space feeling clinical.

It also gives the team something no referral form provides: time in the same room as local families, watching what children gravitate towards and hearing what the adults with them are actually worried about.

Listening to schools

The second set of conversations has been with schools. Some are formal, through the team's Support to Education work: contributing to EHCP assessments and

reviews, building a picture of a young person's needs and strengths, and turning that into strategies staff can use in a real classroom rather than only on paper. Others are simply a call from a SENCo or a headteacher describing a situation and asking what might help.

Those conversations shape what gets offered next. Emotionally based school avoidance is a good example. It comes up repeatedly, and it is one of the hardest things for a family to sit with, partly because the pressure to fix it arrives from every direction at once. The team now runs a one to one programme, Understanding school avoidance, often delivered by Suzy Seymour, Psychotherapeutic Counsellor. Sessions are weekly, from the Stone office or online, and referrals are open to parents, carers and schools alike.

The programme is not built around getting a child back through the school gates by a particular date. It is built around understanding what that young person needs in order to manage, and then working at their pace.

Services taking shape locally

Alongside that, one to one therapy also runs from the Stone office or online, starting with a free 30 minute consultation and no pressure to continue afterwards. It is open to adults as well as children and young people, drawing on person-centred, narrative, attachment-informed and trauma-informed approaches.

The team can work with many different organisations: schools, care providers, fostering agencies and businesses; they use assessment, formulation, consultation, training and supervision. The Omega Therapeutic Model, puts clinical understanding into the hands of the adults who are with a child every day and can be tailored for the services who need it.

The thread running through it all is that people should not have to tell their story more than once. Because the disciplines sit in one team, a family who arrives asking about speech and language can be helped with sensory needs or school worries without being sent elsewhere to start again.

What comes next

Omega Life Clinical is open for referrals. Families can approach the team directly, and referrals are equally welcome from schools, care providers and other professionals. A conversation is enough to begin, and the team will always be ethical about whether they are the right people to help, ensuring they signpost along the way and direct to other services where appropriate.

The ambition for the year ahead is to go deeper in Stone rather than wider: more time alongside local schools, more services built from what families here have said they need, and a building the town recognises as its own rather than as somewhere people are sent.

If you live locally and are curious, come along to a Playday on a Tuesday afternoon (1pm to 3pm) and see the place for yourself.

If you would rather talk first, the Stone clinic can be reached on 01785 847008, by email at clinicalreferrals@omegalife.uk, or on WhatsApp on 07796 523608.

Questions are welcome, with nothing expected in return.

Find us at Omega Life Clinical, 13 Station Road, Stone, Staffordshire, ST15 8JP.

www.omegalifeclinical.uk



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 once a month.

Each session has a different theme with children's games and craft activities for all ages, with refreshments provided.

In July we learnt about Joachim and Anna, the Blessed Virgin Mary's parents, as it was their feast day the following day. Dennis gave a PowerPoint presentation on the information available about them.



The children then enjoyed building up an A3 collage of what family life would have been like for Mary as a young girl living with her parents.

The next CU@4 is 4.00pm till 5.00pm on Sunday 27th September and 18th October

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



Stroke Club Members Feel The Beat

On Wednesday 12th August, members and volunteers at Stone and District Stroke Club experienced a rare treat – a visit from a local musical group.

Will and Joe from 'Madula' came along to Little Stoke Cricket Club with a selection of Djembe drums, a traditional West African musical instrument, demonstrated their use and invited everyone to have a go!

It was an amazing experience and greatly enjoyed by members and volunteers who all took part with enthusiasm and energy; by the end of the session, all were able to play a simple tune.

At the end of the meeting, everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch provided by Angie's Catering of Stone.

Members and volunteers would like to thank Stone Inner Wheel Club for their recent donation which helped towards the cost of this event.



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AGE Concern

Could You Spare Three Hours And Share A Smile?

Age Concern Stone & District is looking for volunteers to join our friendly office team!

Do you enjoy meeting people, having a laugh, and making a real difference in your community? If so, we would love to hear from you.

At Age Concern, our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. We help local people facing age-related challenges, offering support, information, friendship and a listening ear.

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help in our office for just three hours a week. Monday or Wednesday 9.30am to 12.30pm. (Sometimes Friday)

We are looking for someone with a warm and friendly personality a great sense of humour a genuine interest in helping others aged 50 plus. Essentially the ability to make a decent cup of tea or coffee.

We are a very small, friendly team, and we pride ourselves on creating a welcoming atmosphere where volunteers quickly become part of the family. Teamwork, friendship and laughter are just as important to us as the work we do.

Volunteering with Age Concern is a wonderful way to meet new people, stay active, learn new skills and make a genuine difference to the lives of those facing age-related problems in our community. Why not pop in for a chat and see what we're all about at 15 Station Rd, Stone ST15 8JP? OR Call us on 01785 817906.



Collage Café

In July group members enjoyed making pictures centred around familiar Christian symbols: cross, dove, ichthus etc. In August we produced collages about the Gospel passage (Mathew 14:30). Peter walking towards Jesus on the water.

The next session will be on **Thursday 17th September (a week later than usual) from 10.00am till 12.00 noon** at the Stone Library. For more details please contact Jill on 07491 311832.



Stone and District Probus Club Go Summer Cruising

Stone Probus Members and Friends enjoyed a Canal Cruise and Lunch on a blistering hot day in mid-July. The starting point for Georgie's Cruises was Parkgate Lock near Penkridge.

We enjoyed a plated Fish and Chip meal followed by a tempting selection of mouthwatering sweets. The attentive and friendly all-Female crew took us through a series of tight locks, tunnels and open countryside on this delightful Mini cruise.



The next Club outing for Members and Friends is on **Saturday 12th September** when we visit the Road, Rail and Ale Steam Rally at Statfold Country Park, Nr Tamworth. The Club went last year, and members were so impressed that a repeat visit was requested to this huge Steam event.

To find out more about visiting or joining Stone and District Probus Club, who meet monthly for lunch and fellowship at the Upper House, Barlaston - **usually on the first Monday of the month**, please contact our secretary Simon Cornes on 07960 811637 or visit our website www.stoneprobus.org.uk

From Martin Robinson



Incredible Exploding Boxes In Shallowford!

"Today is a Monday like no other Monday..." so declared a political reporter on July 20th this year. It was the day Andy Burnham walked into No.10 as our new Prime Minister.

This momentous event happened to coincide with the eagerly-awaited first day of Shallowford House's annual 3 day Craft Retreat at Norton Bridge.

While Andy had a lot of tricky problems on his plate, it was time for a small group of crafters, (new and some more-experienced), to let go of our own everyday concerns and indulge in a few days of spiritual refreshment, good company and pure pleasure.

The incredible exploding boxes (see photo) were just one of several new ventures into creative crafting, including cyanotype sun-photography, natural plant fabric-dyeing, glass mosaics, see-through paper sun-catchers, watercolour painting, etc.

Creative days were followed by convivial evenings of good dinners, silly games, quizzes, treasure hunts and nights at the bar.

There was also quiet time; time to sit and think in the shade of the well-tended gardens, study in the library, pray in the chapel, walk in the woods, listen to the soft call of the collared dove, hear the cool bubbling from the fish pond, and watch the resident Mrs. Peahen diligently guarding her little flock of fluffy peachicks running along beside her.

Time to relax, meditate, refresh and clear the mind.



Bel Crawford in her element, crafting with friends



I'm already looking forward to next summer's 'Creative' Retreat at Shallowford House, all are welcome.

From Bel Crawford

For more information contact Shallowford House on 01785 760233, or you can visit their website at <https://shallowfordhouse.org/>

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Stone's Agi Is Named Most Supportive Children's Developmental Movement Service, Again!

Agi Burley, who has been living in Stone with her family since 2014, runs **Very Special Children**, which has been named **Most Supportive Children's Developmental Movement Service 2026**.

Hungarian born Agi told the Gazette "I've been so lucky to work with determined and proactive families, helping physically disabled children (preterm babies, children with genetic disorders, and/or Cerebral Palsy).

I have never done any formal advertising, yet parents travel to see me from right across the Midlands which I appreciate so much.

What makes this even more special is that I also received this award back in 2023. To be recognised again is such an honour, and every day I have the absolute privilege of supporting incredible children with developmental delays and their families.

This recognition reminds me why I do what I do and brings me to one of the questions I'm asked time and time again... "Why isn't my child lifting their head, rolling, sitting or standing yet; even after months of practice?"

If you've ever felt stuck watching your child practice sitting, rolling or standing without seeing real progress, there may be a reason why. But here's the question I always ask... Is your child's brain actually ready to make that movement happen?

Thank you to every family who has trusted me over the years. This award belongs to all of us."



To find out more about Very Special Children visit their website at <https://veryspecialchildren.com/> or follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/VSpecialChildren>



Stone Lions Have Fun In The Sun At Foxfield

Members of Stone Lions Club joined forces with fellow members of other local Lions Clubs on 28th June to provide a day of fun and festivities for families with children with special needs at Foxfield Railway, Caverswall.



There was no let-up in this summer's heatwave but fortunately there was plenty of shade to shelter from the sun, with the ice cream lady doing a roaring trade. With plenty of attractions to enjoy, all provided free of charge by Lions, the site was a hive of activity with everyone having fun in a relaxed environment.

The fire engine proved to be very popular this year and all seemed to enjoy seeing the reptiles and creepy crawlies – especially the spiders, but as ever the



train ride was the highlight of the day for most visitors.

As always, the members of Stone Lions who were present on the day really enjoyed the experience. "It was a joy to see the youngsters busy matching odd socks, displaying their temporary tattoos, rolling pennies, tossing beanbags and knocking down tin cans" remarks Lion President Dave. "We may all have been tired at the end of the day, but the pleasure on the faces of everyone on leaving the site made the months of preparation really worthwhile."

The Lions Day at Foxfield is just one way in which your local Lions Club is making a difference in our community. If you would like to know more about their other activities please call 0345 8338478 for an informal chat.





Stone Cancer Support Group - A Little Bit About Us

This group was founded in memory of our dear friend, Louise Moore, whose strength and compassion continue to inspire us. Louise believed that the people of Stone deserved a local space for support - a place to connect, share, and uplift one another through the challenges of cancer.

When she had to turn to the wonderful Eccleshall Cancer Warriors for help, she wished there had been something closer to home. I promised her that if she did the talking, I'd set up the group. Sadly, Louise left us before she had the chance to share her journey-but her vision lives on.

Stone Cancer Support Group is here for anyone in our community affected by cancer-men, women, families, friends. We aim to grow gently and meaningfully, offering not just conversation and connection, but also small acts of kindness. Whether it's nominating someone for a thoughtful gift, a day out, or a relaxing Afternoon Tea, we want to lift spirits and show appreciation.

This group belongs to you - the people who attend. Your voice matters. Please join us at our next meeting and share your ideas for how we can support one another and make a difference in Stone.

We hold a meeting at the Borehole on the last Monday of each month.

Follow us on Facebook for updates by searching Stone Cancer Support Group, or by scanning this QR code.



A Staffordshire Odyssey

A Staffordshire Odyssey is a presentation by Kevin Paul Mellor, local historian and author of *Ramblings of a Free Man*.

Join Kevin for a journey home from North to South Staffordshire, calling at towns and villages, highlighting topography, produce, history, people & literary works along the way.

It takes place at Rugeley Library on **Tuesday 20th October from 2:00pm -3.15pm**. Tickets are £2.50 per person (Booking Essential) and are available from Rugeley Library on 01889 869063 or you can email rugeley.library@staffordshire.gov.uk

If you'd like to purchase a copy of *Ramblings of a Free Man*, Kevin can send you a copy for £10 including postage, just email your address to him at kevinpmellor@gmail.com

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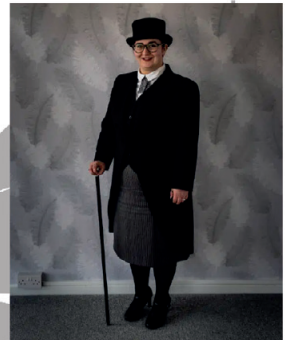


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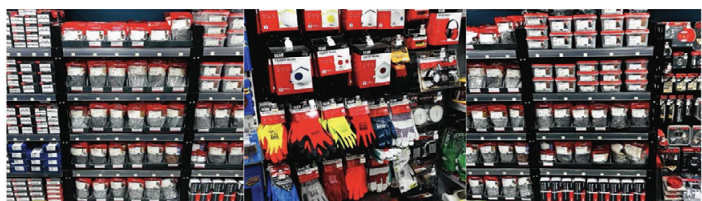
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Photograph L to R - Barbara Riddle with Michelle Daws, President Stafford Soroptimist Club, with Barbara's Support Staffordshire Volunteering Award

Barbara Awarded Staffordshire Volunteering Award

All members of Soroptimist International of Stafford are very proud to have Barbara Riddle as a member of their club, and they recently nominated her for a Support Staffordshire Volunteering Award.

For the last 25 Years Barbara has fundraised to support the work of The Dougie Mac Hospice for Children and Young People (formerly The Donna Louise)

With support from her dedicated group of "Stafford Friends" of The Hospice, she makes Jams and Chutneys all year and sells them at her own garage sales and other community events.

Local Supporters, including Littywood Farms, have been amazingly generous in providing donations of fruit and vegetables.

Other Fundraising events have included Silent Auctions, Dinners and an Annual Christmas Fair held at Wildwood Community Centre.

Over the years Barbara and her Team have donated £175,000 to support these vital services for children, young people and their families across Staffordshire, a truly great achievement.

The President of Stafford Soroptimist Club, Michelle Daws, said that "Barbara is in inspiration with all that she has achieved and Club Members are immensely proud of her."

For more information about the Soroptimist Organization visit sigbi.org or for the Stafford Club please visit sigbi.org/stafford

Join Team Dougie Mac At This Year's Potters 'Arf

The Potters 'Arf brings together runners, walkers, relay teams and families as they tackle the iconic 13.1-mile course across Stoke-on-Trent.

And, with this year's event less than three months away on **Sunday 4th October**, Dougie Mac is urging the local community to take part in support of their local hospice.

Deborah Vickers, Head of Business and Events Fundraising at Dougie Mac, said: "The Potters 'Arf is the highlight of the local running calendar and we're so grateful that Dougie Mac is always really well supported. Many people take part in memory of a loved one, while others simply want to support their local hospice.

This year we're hoping that even more people will take on the challenge, whether it's running or walking, on their own or in relay teams, to raise money for Dougie Mac and help support our specialist care and support services for local families."

While the Potters 'Arf is the main event for runners, there are also opportunities for those who want to take part at a gentler pace, including a walking half marathon and a fun run for children. There are also relay races for runners and walkers, which mean you can take part as a team, covering a shorter distance each.

Deborah added: "By taking part in the Potters 'Arf for Dougie Mac, you can be sure that every stride you take, whether on your own, with friends, or alongside your kids in the junior race, turns into vital care for adults, young adults, and children facing a life-limiting illness."

Registration for this year's Potters 'Arf, on 4th October, is open now. Visit www.potters-arf.co.uk for more information and to enter today.



Sylvia giving her talk to assembly at Springfields Primary School in Yarnfield

Springfields School Eager To Learn About Zimbabwe Pupils

Rotarian Sylvia Keris, from the Mercia & Marches Rotary Club, who volunteers with a number of organisations in her local area of Eccleshall, and also with the midlands based charity the Buddy Bag Foundation - which she promotes by dressing up full time as a mischievous elf every day in December - recently gave a talk to Springfields primary school in Yarnfield on her overseas aid project in Zimbabwe.

Sylvia had volunteered with the UK based charity Mission Direct last September, on a development aid project in Zimbabwe, where the main project for the team was helping to build an extra classroom and improve facilities at hope schools in Bulawayo - and also taking some lessons in both the secondary and primary school classrooms, other outreach work was also carried out with different charities supporting vulnerable children and their well-being.

Sylvia has been giving talks on the project work in Zimbabwe to different organisations in Staffordshire, inc at Holy Trinity Church in Eccleshall, the Eccleshall Library Lounge Group, and at Stone Trefoil Guild, and had been invited to give a talk at an assembly of Springfields school Yarnfield a few weeks before the summer holiday break - where the whole school was present and keen to hear about Hope School in Bulawayo and understand what the students in Zimbabwe were learning, what their favourite subjects were, and about their families.



Sylvia taking a lesson in Hope Secondary School

Besides learning about Hope Schools in Bulawayo, Sylvia adapted the talk for the younger pupils at Springfields, by including some wildlife pictures to show them the animals in the region. The pupils were keen to guess what the names were, for example, of a group of giraffe, a group of rhino and zebra - eagerly putting up their hands to answer. They were even more excited to see how many "noughts" there were on a trillion dollar note! One young boy was overheard, on meeting up with his parent collecting him at the end of the day, saying "Mum, guess what?.. I've met a trillionaire today!"

Sylvia produced letters handwritten by some of the students at Hope Schools, after the pupils had said they would be very keen to write back to them. There has already

been one exchange of letters from Springfields school to Hope Schools, with some more letters back from Zimbabwe before the term ended. Sylvia is hoping that the pupils at the two schools will continue to exchange further letters in the new school year - to understand each other's cultures.

If other clubs/organisations would like to hear Sylvia's Zimbabwe talk, or any of her other project talks, you can contact her either by email at: sylviakeris@yahoo.co.uk or call 01785 851005.



Children at Hope Primary School



J. Thompson, aka Jenn, meeting her fans at a book signing in Harrogate

Stone Author Brings Greek Mythology To Life Through Fantasy Romance

Stone resident Jenn Thompson has turned a lifelong fascination with Greek mythology into a successful independent writing career, publishing more than twenty novels while continuing to work full-time in dentistry.

Writing under the pen name J. Thompson, Jenn began writing after struggling to find the kind of books she wanted to read. A fan of mythology, fantasy and romance, she decided to create stories that combined all three, bringing ancient legends into the modern world with a paranormal twist.

What started as a creative hobby has grown into a successful career spanning multiple series featuring Greek gods, dragons, vampires, witches and mythical creatures. Her books have found readers across the UK and internationally through Amazon and Kindle Unlimited, with many readers discovering her unique blend of mythology, romance and fantasy.

Her most popular collection, *The Soulmate Series*, reimagines the Greek gods in the modern world, exploring what might happen if immortal beings were still living among us. Each novel follows a different god on a journey of love, danger and destiny, while remaining rooted in the myths that first inspired Jenn to start writing.

The latest novel in the series, *SoulBearer*, was released this summer and follows Hermes, the messenger god, in a fast-paced paranormal romance inspired by Greek mythology.

The book continues a series that has steadily grown in popularity with readers who enjoy mythology woven together with fantasy, humour and romance.

Alongside publishing, Jenn regularly attends author signing events across the UK, where she enjoys meeting readers, chatting with fellow authors and supporting the independent publishing community.

Recently she celebrated the release of *SoulBearer* with a launch event at *That Little Bookshop* in Stafford, giving readers the opportunity to meet her and purchase signed copies of the novel.

Despite writing for an international audience, Jenn remains proud to call Stone home. Much of her writing takes place during evenings and weekends around her full-time career, with each new book beginning the same way it did when she first started writing, by asking herself what kind of story she would love to read next.

Although she achieved USA Today Bestselling Author status in 2020 as part of a collaborative anthology with fellow authors, Jenn's greatest achievement has been building a loyal readership over the years, with many readers returning for each new release and following the worlds and characters she continues to create.



Alongside writing, Jenn continues to support the independent author community through book signing events across the UK. She is currently helping to organise Book Babes Take Christmas, a festive author signing **taking place this November, in Chester.**

The event will bring together more than 40 authors from a wide range of genres, giving readers the opportunity to meet their favourite writers, discover new books and celebrate a shared love of reading.

As well as supporting independent authors, the event will also be raising money for Gracie May's Dream a Little Dream, a children's charity that creates magical memories for children with life-limiting illnesses and their families.

With several new projects already underway, including future books in both *The Soulmate Series* and the *Elemental Dragons* series, Jenn hopes to continue introducing readers to imaginative worlds where mythology, magic and romance come together while supporting the growing community of independent authors and readers.

You can find out more about Jenn and her books at her facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/JThompsonSoulMateNovels>

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All Saints' Summer Of Celebration

Summer at All Saints' Church Sandon shaped up to be a memorable one as The National Lottery Heritage Fund project reaches new heights.

On the 20th of June, they welcomed the Cantiamo Chamber Choir for a packed out midsummer concert with cheese and wine refreshments. It was a magical evening of outstanding music that will be remembered by all.

On the weekend of the 27th and 28th June the church held a Summer Art Exhibition of pieces by "Art for Everyone", a weekly art group that meet on Saturday mornings, led by Clare Lord, local artist and finalist in Landscape Artist of the Year 2021.

The weekend was a huge success and the exhibition was visited by 185 people.

All Saints' highlight of the year, "Sandon Time Travellers" reenactment event on 1st August. This was part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund Project and a year of celebrations to mark 1000 years of the church's history.

The church was taken over by historical characters for the weekend from the History Reenactment Workshop, who were reenacting a day in the church's life in 1549. It was fascinating to watch visitors interact with the characters and ask questions about current events during this eventful year in the Tudor period. Sandon's own enthusiastic History Group had also researched and presented local historical costumed characters from a variety of periods including a WWI soldier and nurse, WWII Air Raid Warden, medieval stone mason and medieval ladies.

We also welcomed members of the Military Vehicle Trust and their fabulous WWII vehicles, which were in amazing condition. Families could also take part in crafts and enjoyed a concert of medieval choral music given by the Little Moreton Singers creating a wonderful atmosphere for a hugely enjoyable day.

The Stafford Military Wives Choir will be performing at All Saints' Church on Saturday 12th September at 7.30pm.

There will be more activities on offer at **Heritage Open Day on Sunday 20th September 10am-4pm.** This is a great opportunity to view all the conservation work that has been done to conserve the rare and beautiful historic features of the church such as the Tudor wall paintings, monuments, Royal Coat of Arms and the stained glass windows. After the church was temporarily closed for the conservation works earlier in the year, this will be the first time all the features will be able to be viewed together again in situ. Free for all the family, there will be family crafts, Butterfly and Moth Trail, an exhibition by the History Group, church history and graveyard tours and the opportunity to visit the bell tower and chime an ancient bell!

This year we have a lunchtime organ recital from 12.45 - 1.30pm to showcase how music has changed over time.

Mark Goodhew, organist at Stoke Minister and Musical Director of Moorlands Voices, will play organ music over the last 1000 years, from Veni Creator Spiritus in 900AD to Veni Creator Spiritus in 2010AD, with Bach, Pachelbel, Handel, Massenet and Dubois.

There will be family crafts and guided tours throughout the day. Our famous cake and tea/coffee stand will also be available.

There will also be a **Free Family Crafts Event Running At Half Term On 27th October 10am-12pm.** For further details and opening times please visit our website at www.sandonallsaints.com and Facebook page **All Saints' Church Sandon Facebook**



Summer Art Exhibition showcasing pieces by "Art for Everyone"



The Cantiamo Chamber Choir Midsummer Concert



Mark Goodhew, organist at Stoke Minister and Musical Director of Moorlands Voices, will play organ music over the last 1000 years, on 20th September



Members displaying their certificates and entries following a successful day at the county show

Eccleshall W.I. Celebrates Success At Staffordshire County Show

Members of Eccleshall W.I. are celebrating after achieving their best results for several years at the Staffordshire County Show in May.

This year's overall theme was **"A Day at the Seaside"**, with members entering pieces across crafts, flowers, art and cookery.

One of the group's standout results came in the Co-operative Craft class, where Suzanne Evans, Jo Edwards and Zoe Totterdell were awarded 1st prize for **"The Beach Hut."** The judges praised the collaborative entry, which was one of a number of seaside-themed exhibits on display.

Jo Edwards also received the award for Best Craft Item for her seaside-themed hat, while Suzanne Evans took 2nd prize for her beach bag.

There were further placings across the classes. Ruth Bratby gained 1st prize, Chris Timmis was awarded 2nd prize in

the novice flower class, Christine Weston achieved 2nd prize for flower arrangement, and Dawn Wakefield took 3rd prize for art.

Helen Bonsall added to the list of awards by taking 1st prize for her chutney.

Other members who entered included Eileen Forrest with a bag, Wendy Baskerville and Angela Spencer with paintings, and Jenny Turnock and Ann Bugge in the flower classes. Although not all entries received awards, the group said it was proud of everyone who took part.

The results reflected a strong showing from Eccleshall W.I. across several sections of the show, and members described the outcome as **"our best results for years."**

Eccleshall W.I. congratulated all those who entered and represented the group at this year's event.

Five Young Women Celebrate Achieving Their Gold Awards

3rd Stone Guides and 1st Stone Ranger is delighted to celebrate the incredible achievement of four Guides, and one Ranger, who have all successfully completed their prestigious Gold Awards.

The Gold Award is the highest award a Guide or Ranger can achieve and represents years of dedication, commitment, personal development, and adventure.

To earn the award, members complete a wide range of challenges that develop leadership, life skills, teamwork, community involvement, and confidence.

Each of these inspiring young women has shown determination, resilience, and a willingness to step outside their comfort zones. Their achievements reflect not only their hard work but also the encouragement and support of their leaders, families, and fellow unit members.

Although this chapter of their Girlguiding journey has come to an end, an exciting new one is just beginning.

Our four newly qualified Gold Award Guides are soon taking the next step by becoming Young Leaders, where they will support local Rainbow and Brownie units. As role models for younger members, they will help girls discover new skills, build confidence, and enjoy everything Girlguiding has to offer while



developing their own leadership experience.

Meanwhile, our Gold Award Ranger is preparing for an unforgettable adventure as she travels to India with Girlguiding this July.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will allow her to experience a new culture, build international friendships, and represent Girlguiding on a global stage.

Alongside this exciting journey, she is also beginning work towards gaining her Leader Qualification, ensuring she can continue inspiring future generations of girls for many years to come as well as Supporting 3rd Stone Guides as a Young leader.

Congratulations to all five on this outstanding achievement - we wish you every success in the exciting journeys ahead.



A group of Rotary members and friends at the Strawberry and Pimm's event

Rotary Strawberry & Pimm's

One of the regular social events in the Stafford Rotary Club's calendar is the Strawberry and Pimm's afternoon, spent in the garden of one of their members.

Being able to shelter under one of the gardens trees and a few umbrellas from the sunshine the afternoon went down well and together with a raffle amongst members and friends the afternoon raised several hundred pounds towards the international projects that the club were supporting.



Rotarys Helen Perren



Eileen and Rev Mike Newman, in whose garden the event took place

History In A Churchyard

By Philip Leason MBE

A reader had recently purchased an old postcard of St. Michaels Church (now St. Michael & St. Wulfad's) complete with a churchyard full of tombstones and she wanted to know when had they been removed and what had happened to them.

I receive a number of enquiries about the church yard and the tombs that are still in situ. So I thought that over the next two months I would write about the churchyard.

For centuries the people of Stone were buried within the bounds of the Parish Church and later in Christchurch. In 1861 the Town's Medical Officer of Health reported to the Urban District Council that both churchyards were reaching their capacity or indeed were full. The council eventually made a formal request to the Privy Council for an order to discontinue burials in both churchyards. The Order in Council was passed on 2nd February, 1899 which stated.

"Her Majesty, by and with advice of Her Privy Council is pleased to order and it is hereby ordered, that no new burial ground shall be opened in the under-mentioned parish without the previous approval of one of her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State and that burial in the said parish shall be discontinued as follows, viz: Stone, Stafford – forthwith and entirely in the Church of St. Michael's, Stone, in the county of Stafford, and in within four feet of its boundaries; and also in the rest of the churchyard after 31st of December, 1900"



Workmen removing the tombstones

This same order applied to the churchyard at Christ Church.

There were exceptions to the order for example in the case of family graves or reserved grave spaces.

It was now up to Stone Urban District Council to find a suitable site for a new cemetery and a Burial Ground Committee was formed to look at suitable sites.

A Mr. Walters offered land at Oulton Cross but Alleyne's Grammar School objected because it was too close to the school.

Two acres of land at Walton were offered by Mrs. Coleman but it was deemed unsuitable both in size, the quality of the land and near to a watercourse. A Mr. C. H. Kenerdine was approached about a site at Walton on the Fillybrooks but he required too much for the land and in addition there were also other problems associated with it. Eventually the site at Aston was chosen.

The delay in finding a site meant that another Order in Council had to be obtained. Then order granted on 13th January, 1902 stated *"the time for the discontinuance of burials be postponed in the Parish Churchyard of St. Michael and Christ Church, Stone, in the County of Stafford, until 30th day of June, 1902."*

The new cemetery, designed by the Council's surveyor Mr. Ravenscroft, was formally opened on Saturday 5th September 1903 and the first interment took place in October the same year.

So apart from a few exceptions no burials have taken place in the churchyard since 1902. You can therefore start to imagine the state that the churchyard got in. Due to how close the tombstones were to each other the grass could not be cut using a mower but by hand using a scythe. The long grass resulted in grass fires during the summer due to discarded cigarettes or broken glass. Many of the tombstones were leaning and in a dangerous state. So in the 1960's the church yard was levelled and the tombstones of all but a few notabilities were placed flat around the boundary walls and a "Garden of Rest" created.

Let's now look at some the tombs that still remain and other items of interest in the churchyard.

Perhaps the first thing of interest which people entering the church yard from Church Street walk past are the two gate piers. These are in fact Grade II listed (Numbers SJ9023-651-1/7/13 and SJ9033 651-1/7/11 and listed on 27th July, 1972) and described as *"Ashlar gate-piers with stop-chamfered angles, a cornice with acanthus moulding, and a cap topped with a pine finial."*

The top gate pier was dislodged by a reversing car in 1925 and was re-lined by Stafford Borough Council earlier a few months ago. One of the pine finials had also been knocked off by a vandal and this has been replaced.

There is evidence a hinges for gates at the top of each gate pier

The gateway adjoins a historic boundary wall featuring mixed 18th and mid to late 19th century brickwork on squared stone footings. The wall is again Grade II listed.

There is an interesting piece of folklore relating to the gates of the church. Wedding parties used the Priory Gate to enter the churchyard and funerals the West Gate.

The Department of the Environment document listing the features gives a reminder that *"The Augustinian Priory of St. Mary and St. Wulfad, founded c1135, stood on this site."*

The first thing that you see when you enter the churchyard is the table-tomb of William Crompton his wife Jane, about which I will describe later.

William Crompton was the son of William Crompton (to save confusion I will refer to him as William 1st). William 1st was originally from Stafford and made his fortune as a London merchant, who at the time of the dissolution of Stone Priory purchased half of the Priory Estates (known as the Church lands and included the Priory Church) for £1,500 from George Harper who had been granted them in 1539. William also purchased Apdale and other land in Staffordshire from Edmund, Lord Sheffield in 1662 for £1,000.

In the will of the Thomas Alleyne (the founder of the Grammar School in Stone, Uttoxeter and Stevenage) William received a gold ring. There



The table tomb of William Crompton II and his wife Jane

is a theory that it was though his friendship with William Crompton that Alleyne decided to establish one of his schools in Stone.

It would appear that William 1st was not particularly interested in the old Priory Church which was being used for public worship because between 1547 -49 the parishioners complained to Edward Seymour, 1st Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector for Edward VI that:

"One William Crompton hath lately attempted to pluck down the said church and hath uncovered a large part thereof and conveyed away the lead to his own private use."

By 1572, thanks largely due to William 1st the only remaining portion of the church that could be safely used was a small chapel on the north side. So the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield sought permission for the *"old, large and ruined church to be taken down, and the materials used to construct a new aisle on to the said chapel."*

The permission was granted by Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury (1559-1575) on 10th June, 1572.



One of the children's crests on Crompton tomb. The Crompton crest is on the right (a boy) and blank on the left indicating that the boy died before he married. Originally the names of the children were painted on the scroll above the crests



Tombstones in the churchyard in 1902

The originally Priory buildings occupied a site near and across the present Lichfield Street but the reconstructed church was further to the north west in what is today the churchyard. To give an idea of the location of this second church the table tomb of William II, now in the churchyard, was formerly in the south side of the chancel.

William 1st married Catherine, daughter of Christopher Rawson a London Merchant, and widow of Oliver Richardson. William Crompton 1st died in 1579 and his wife Katherine (spelt with a K in the church register) in 1582.

The monument to his eldest son, William 2nd is the tome in the churchyard and which I am about to write about, and the brass to this second son Thomas, which was formerly on the north side of the east window in the old Priory church, is now in St. George's chapel in the present church. The brass shows Thomas Crompton in full plate armour with a sword facing his wife Katherine across a prayer desk with his four sons and two daughters kneeling behind them. The brass was in a poor state but was cleaned and straightened in 1956, and was described as being made from latten brass, which is finer kind of brass than is generally used for such monuments.

Turning now to the tomb of William 1st eldest son, William 2nd who died in 1603 and his wife Jane who died in 1626 which is the tomb located in the church yard.

The figures on the tomb are in classic Stuart dress: Jane wears a large ruff, long dress entirely covering her feet and squared toed shoes. Her head rests on a cushion while her husband's neck rests on a helmet. William wears a suit of armour.

Jane was the daughter of Sir Walter Aston of Tixall (1530-1589) who was a Knight of the Shire (the formal title for a member of parliament representing a county constituency in the House of Commons from its origins in the medieval parliament until the Redistribution of Seats Act 1885). He was also Sheriff of Staffordshire.

William II and Jane had 14 children and the crests for each of them are displayed around two sides of the tomb. The crest are divided into two parts and the Crompton Crest is shown on the right half (dexter) for a son and on the left side (sinister) for a daughter. When they were married the crest of their spouse would be added to the blank side. If the other half is blank this shows that the child died before they were married. The nine shields on the north side represent: Isabel, Elizabeth, Walter, William (all of whom died young) Thomas (who became an M.P. and who entertained King Charles I for two nights at Stone Park in May 1645 prior to the Battle of Naseby), Maria, William, Jane and Anne. The remaining five shields on the head side of the tomb represent five daughters – Dorothy, Katherine, Judith, Joyce and Mary. It would appear that they all died young. At the other end of the tomb is the Crompton Crest.

Below the tomb is a vault and several members of the Crompton family were interred there, including Thomas (baptised



A tombstone decorated with a skull and cross bones which was nicknamed "The Pirate's grave"

25th June, 1607) and died in 1673. He lived at Stone Park and was an M.P. for the County from 1647-1660 and was married four times.

As stated earlier the tomb was originally in the chancel of the old Priory Church and was damaged when the priory church of St. Marcy & St. Wulfad started to collapse without warning. The church records state:

"The old church first began to fall after the funeral of Mrs. Elizabeth Unitt of Groundslow Fields, who was buried on Saturday, December 30th, 1749, about a quarter past seven o'clock at night. The pillars and two arches fell about a quarter before one o'clock the next morning."

It is interesting to note that it was not usual for funerals to be held at night during this period, the mourners walking alongside the cortege carrying flaming torches. It is also were noting that prior to the building of the village churches the Parish of Stone covered a wide area including Tittensor.

Then old church was beyond repair and hence the building of the present church which was consecrated in 1758.

It is interesting to read in the accounts for the building of the new church there is an entry which reads paid "John Dennis for repairing the Crompton's tomb £5 10s. 0d."

Originally there would not have been an inscription on the south side of the tomb which would have been by the side of the church wall but a brass plate was affixed at a later date.

The few remaining railings around the tomb are described in the Department of the Environment listing as "Early 19th century spear-headed cast-iron railings with some remaining angle urns." The railings were classed as historic and therefore not removed during the Second World War for salvage.

It would appear that there were never any plans of moving the tomb or the images on the top into the present church and so it has remained in the churchyard.

Just across the path from the Crompton tomb is that of the Cartwright family of Hill Hal, High Offley. Among those buried in the tomb is Thomas Cartwright, who was for many years an active magistrate and High Sheriff for Staffordshire in 1841. He died on 26th April, 1851. The plaque to his wife Elizabeth who died on 10th June, 1827 age 47 is still on the tomb.

At the front of the tomb and inscription reads "Sacred to the memory of Mary Ann, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Cartwright of Longton who departed this life to the great grief of her disconsolate parents after a few hours illness on the 8th day of July, 1818 aged 7 years."

Also buried there is Samuel Timms Cartwright whose epitaph (which has sadly been stolen) read "Weep not for me, nor lament, I was not yours but only lent, Wipe off those tears and weep no more, I am not lost but gone before."



The Cartwright tomb

Sadly over the years the tomb has been vandalised and some of the plaques have been removed and the finial in the form of a classic urn on the top has broken off.

Interestingly I was recently contacted by a descendant of the Cartwright family who has among other items the family portraits. They are keen to find a permanent home for them but have agreed that they go on display in the Heritage Centre in the old Fire Station for a while, and so when they do I intend to write a little more about the family

Across the path by the wall to the house called "The Priory" is a Yew tree which may be descendants from earlier trees. In the middle ages it was a tradition to plant yew trees in churchyards, so that after Sunday services the menfolk could cut their bows (it is said that it is the finest wood for making bows) for their Sunday archery practice (probably in the Hemp Butts).

Yew was also thought to be a deterrent against evil spirits. It was also used to decorate the churches at Easter and Christmas to symbolise eternal life, resurrection and the triumph of life over death. Mourners also carried yew sprigs during funeral processions and threw them into the grave as a sign of remembrance and hope for the afterlife.

Last year a group was set up to undertake work in the churchyard and particularly to raise money to restore the Jervis mausoleum. The money to undertake the work on the mausoleum has nearly been raised and the group are now keen to look at undertaking other projects including to uncover the tombstone that have been laid flat and which have been covered by moss and grass. **Anyone who is interested in helping is invited to a meeting in church on Thursday 10th September at 7.30 p.m.**

I do hope that you have enjoyed learning a little of the history of the churchyard, more on the churchyard in the next edition.

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 lent will be treated with the utmost care and returned safely to their owner after they have made digital copies.

Philip Leason

*** Many of these photos were taken from the church yard survey, when the tombstones were removed.**

Days Gone By In Gayton

By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

This selection from the Staffordshire Past Track website features the village of Gayton, a quiet corner of Staffordshire to the east of the Trent Valley, south-east of Sandon.

The name Gayton is believed to mean either "a primitive enclosure approached from a gate or narrow way, from the Anglo-Saxon 'geat'" or "Gaegas dwelling", derived from an Old English personal name"

Gayton (recorded as Gaitone) was listed in the Domesday Book (1086 AD), together with nearby Amerton, in the Pirehill hundred, as having 8 households, with 10 villagers and 6 smallholders, and the Tenant-in-Chief was Earl Roger of Shrewsbury. In 2001 it had 167 residents.

There are now over 52,000 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.



Wedding of Eustace Knight and Nellie Devall, Gayton, 30 September 1943

The wedding at St. Peter's Church, Gayton of Miss Enid Nellie Devall, daughter of Mr and Mrs W.S. Devall of Moat Farm, Gayton, and Eustace Knight, younger son of Mrs and the late W.W. Knight of Milwich Hall. The senior bridesmaids were Miss Mavis Devall (sister) and Miss Doris Bedson (friend) and the younger bridesmaids were Margaret and Pat Berrisford, cousins of the bridegroom. The best man was Mr W. Collier and the groomsmen were Mr J. Knight and Mr J. Devall. The couple honeymooned in Llandudno, and went on to live at Bridgend, Milwich. (Mr R. Knight)



© Copyright : Staffordshire County Council

Gayton Engineering Works, 1975

Showing the exterior from the south. Shortly before the First World War, Louis Knight opened a light engineering works on the site of the Old Smithy at the Green in Gayton. During the Second World War it was commandeered for war work. The women who worked there carried out a variety of tasks, including making parts for Spitfire engines. It closed at the end of the war. (Staffordshire Record Office)



Gayton Women's Institute meeting in Gayton Village Hall, early 1950s

A meeting of Gayton WI members, all inspecting new handbags. This photograph was taken by Uttoxeter photographer Gerald McCann in the old Gayton Village Hall. This building had originally been a barrack hut at one of the army training camps of Cannock Chase during the First World War. In 2007 it was dismantled, restored and re-erected back on Cannock Chase at Marquis Drive Visitor Centre. (Staffordshire County Museum)



Gayton Hotel, Gayton, early 1980s

Since this photograph was taken the Hotel has been demolished and houses built on the site. (Mr H. Williams)



Bagging Hay, Moat Farm, Gayton, 1949

Farm workers helping to thresh and bag hay for cattle feed. Walter Davall was the farmer at Moat Farm at the time. The threshing equipment was hired out by George Vernon of Fradswell and they are using a Marshall's machine. A photograph taken by Gerald McCann of Uttoxeter (Staffordshire County Museum)



Gayton School, about 1906

Gayton School was built in 1870 by Lord Harrowby and was named the Earl of Harrowby Parochial School. In 1910 the average attendance was 33 children. The school was transferred to the Local Education Authority in 1927 but due to falling numbers the school closed on 5 June 1946 and children in the village then travelled by bus to Stowe by Chartley primary school. (Roy Lewis Postcard Collection)



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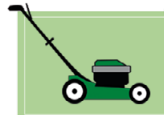
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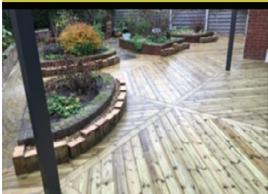
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