THE STONE & ECCLESHALL
Gazette
NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2026

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NEW SEASON NEW CHAPTER

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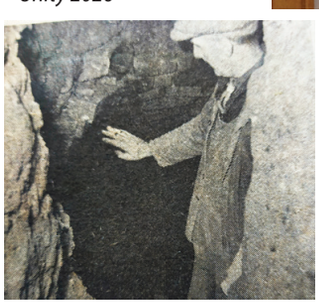

Heritage

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Days gone by in Sandon
By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

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GETTING IN TOUCH

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

Have you ever fished in a moat?

Welcome to your November/December edition of the Gazette, as usual, it's crammed to bursting with all that's been going on, and what's coming up in Stone and Eccleshall.

An appeal this edition comes from the independent charity that look after Stone Common Plot, as they are undertaking a programme of restoration and improvements, and are asking residents to support them a bit, with a small donation.

The works will include restoring existing hedgerows and planting new sections of native hedgerow, also new fencing and gates to protect the restored boundaries, it would be great to see the seasonal pond de-silted and clear once again.

Speaking of ponds, after a 6 year hiatus, I've got back into my carp fishing, my son loves it too, which is a bonus, as he's always up for joining me.

One of the free spots we've been going to is a 14th century moat in Coppenhall.

I was blown away when researching about the history of the place, it's got a real medieval feel to it, especially when the winter crows start crowing. What a privilege to be able to fish it. You could ask 1000 fishermen if they've ever fished in a moat, and I bet you wouldn't find many that have!

Well done goes to Stone Scooter Club for fundraising a fantastic amount for Stone Alzheimer's Club, and to Stone Carnival who recently donated over £7000 to local charities.

Well done also to Oulton BP Scouts who brought 23 people together, to help uncover the hidden headstones at St Michael's and St Wulfad's Church.

This year, Stone's Remembrance Sunday takes place on 8th November and Armistice Day on 11th November.

Lots of Christmas events are inside including all the local Christmas Church Services, Great Bridgeford Christmas Fair, and Festive Cinema comes to Crown Wharf Theatre, showing some of your Christmas favourites, be quick though, as tickets are already selling out.

Stone's Christmas Lights Switch-On takes place on Thursday 19th November with entertainment from 5pm, make sure you get there early to find a space!

In Eccleshall, the Lantern Parade will take place on Sunday 29th November, and annual carols around the Christmas tree take place on 21st December.

Santa, will be on his sleigh visiting various parts of Eccleshall and Yarnfield throughout December. And the dazzling Christmas Tractor Run will be passing through Eccelshall on 6th December.

Trentham Estate have their Winter Light Trail, if you've never been, it's magical, not just for children, but for grown ups too!

Musical events include a charity Elvis night at St Dominics Social Centre, a 70s / 80's Disco at Oulton.

Stone Choral Society have their Christmas Carols and Unity Brass Band concert at Crown Wharf Theatre, The Big Cheer Big Band are coming to Sandon Hall, and Newport Music Club present the amazing harpist, Becki Luff, in concert.

I know it's a bit early, but let me wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Dan Mitchell 25/10/26





Oulton Village Hall News

The next fundraising event is the 70s / 80's Disco on **Saturday the 28th of November** *(details on the poster below)*.

The Hall continues to be well used for regular group meetings, and for a wide variety of *'one offs'* such as Sales, Valuations, Parties and Celebrations.

Currently improvement projects at the Hall include; improved the internal storage area access and outside, the installation of new oak benches, and substantial improvements to the grounds and surrounds.

For bookings and enquiries please visit the website at **https://oultonvillagehall.co.uk**



The Queen's Silver Jubilee Oak looking resplendent in the sunshine - photo by Martin Robinson





How lucky are we to have this on our doorsteps? Now is the time to help improve it.

Public Appeal For Help With Major Plot Restoration And Improvement Plans

The Stone Common Plot Independent Registered Charity are undertaking a programme of restoration and improvement to the traditional field boundaries across the Plot.

The work will include restoring existing hedgerows through coppicing, laying and gapping up, planting new sections of native hedgerow and installing new fencing and gates to protect the restored boundaries.

The aim is to strengthen and reconnect the network of hedgerows across the Common Plot, providing better habitat, shelter and wildlife corridors for birds, insects and other wildlife, while preserving the traditional character of the landscape for future generations.

Another urgent project is to clear and upgrade and re-fence the seasonal pond, (*see pic right*) which over the years has become overgrown and silted up.

The objective is to improve and enable better '*visibility*' of this pond, enabling visitors to sit on new (*sponsored*) oak benches, quietly observing the unfolding seasonal tapestry of trees and plants and the abundant wildlife living there.

Just Giving is one way to support our registered charity by using the QR code on the explanatory leaflet below, but other options include direct donation with Gift Aid, Bequests and Corporate sponsorship.

For more information on these options please contact Plot Treasurer Martin Robinson - martin@oultonrobinson.co.uk



STONE
Common Plot
www.stonecommonplot.org

75 acres of farmland and woodland to explore

Open to the public throughout the year

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(but please collect and dispose of dog poo in bins provided, and be respectful of cows!)



For the residents of Stone, Oulton and Meaford

How can you help?

WORKING PARTIES

The Common Plot relies on working parties to help maintain the land;

- Clearing storm damage
- Picking up litter
- Trees and woodland work
- Maintaining paths

To register your interest in volunteering your time, email stonecommonplot@gmail.com

DONATING

You can donate to the Stone Common Plot Charitable Trust via their JustGiving page, just scan the QR code below or visit justgiving.com/charity/commonplotcharity



Stone Lions Club (CIO) Support AEDdonate

When members of Stone Lions Club heard about the sponsored walk planned by AEDdonate to raise funds for the maintenance of the 50 community defibrillators in the Stone area, they decided that this was a cause well worthy of their support and voted on a donation of £500 towards this project.

The photograph shows Stone Lion's Welfare Chair, Paul Martin, presenting a cheque for £500 to Jamie Richards MBE (*right*) and Joe Dean of AEDdonate (*left*) and sincerely hope this will help them to achieve their target of £2,500 for this valuable service.



Hats For The Winter, *Made With Love*

In the summer when the sun was hot, we were already planning a project for Christmas. We decided to crochet hats to decorate a tree, and then to donate them to the charity House of Bread in Stafford, for all the people they support. We contacted House of Bread and made the offer and they were delighted.

We started crocheting our hats and now have an amazing collection. The photo shows just a few.

The hats will be passed to House of Bread before Christmas to help people keep warm (*and colourful!*) this winter.

Crochet in Eccleshall offers small, friendly classes - Beginners at Eagle House in Eccleshall *(usually on a Monday afternoon)* and Improvers at Eccleshall Library (*usually on the second Friday of the month*).

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.

THE ERICWHITEHEAD PARTNERSHIP

NEW SEASON
NEW CHAPTER

As autumn gives way to winter and the festive season approaches, November and December can be a time of reflection, change and new beginnings. While this time of year brings joy for many, it can also place additional pressure on families, particularly where relationships are strained or circumstances are changing.

For those considering separation or divorce, the prospect of navigating family difficulties alongside the expectations of Christmas can feel overwhelming. Our family law team offers sensitive, practical advice on divorce, financial arrangements and matters involving children, helping you understand your options and take the next steps with confidence.

Sometimes, a new chapter means a fresh start. Perhaps you are moving home, finding somewhere better suited to your family or taking the next step towards a new future. Our conveyancing team can guide you through the process of buying or selling your property, helping to make your move as smooth as possible.

The changing seasons are also a timely reminder to plan ahead. Whether you need to make or update your Will or arrange a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), we can help you put the right arrangements in place to protect your wishes and provide peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

Whatever changes life brings, you do not have to face them alone.

New Season, New Chapter
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timothyhalliday@ericwhitehead.co.uk
Solicitor Director

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Gazette
NEWS IN BRIEF

St Saviour's Dates

Our **Remembrance Sunday Service** takes place on 8th November at 9.15am.

Then our **Christmas Fair** will be held on **Saturday 22nd November at 2pm** at Aston Village Hall.

There will be a variety of stalls including Tombola, Cakes & Produce, Woodwork, Willow and Corn Craft, a Church stall and the Grand Draw will be drawn. Refreshments will be available. All are welcome.

Christmas Lights Switch-On 2026 Date For Your Diary

Stone Town Council is delighted to announce the date for this year's switch on of the town's Christmas lights.

The Switch On will take place on **Thursday 19th November** and work is well underway to ensure this will be fantastic evening for all the family!

Entertainment will start at 5.00pm with a range of performances planned, leading up to the switch on of the lights at 7.00pm, as well as funfair rides and a variety of stalls.

Councillor Jill Hood, Chairman of the Council's Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee, said: *"The Switch On is an extremely popular event so please put the date in your diary and make sure you get into town early to claim a good spot!"*

New Tai Chi Movements Class

A new Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing (TMW) class has started in Eccleshall with weekly drop in classes.

TMW is a unique, easy to learn movement, meditation and self-care practice for life-long health and wellbeing. Your first class is free, so come and try it out for yourself for nothing.

Classes are **Wednesday mornings 11am to 12 midday at Eccleshall Community Centre**, Shaws Lane, Eccleshall ST21 6AU

And **Wednesday afternoon 2pm-3pm Great Bridgeford Village Hall,** Newport Road, Great Bridgeford ST18 9PR

For further information people can contact Sam Mace on 07948 717534 or samace@hotmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/TaiChiMovementsforWellbeingStaffs
Book on - https://bookwhen.com/tmwstafford
Website - https://www.tmwtraining.com/

Bus Service Changes - November

From 1 November • Service 40A (Hanley - Wedgwood) will be operated by D&G Bus with a revised route and timetable.

• Chaserider 432 (Stafford - Eccleshall) will return to the original route and timetable following the re-opening of Creswell Grove.

Jelly Tots

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 11.00am**.

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?



Stone Scooter Club Fundraising Event For Stone Alzheimer's Club

On Saturday the 19th September, at Stone Boat Yard, *"Fuel & Flavour"* was an exhibition of Classic Cars and Classic Motor Scooters, plus for the first time Motorcycles were also invited.

This was the second such event held this year, named again like it was in April. A special thank you goes to Xtraweld, who gave kind permission to use their business grounds for the events.

There was no admission fee to get in, so the only way for Stone Scooter Club to raise money for the Stone Alzheimer's Club was to have a Tombola stall.

A fabulous total of 158 donated prizes were to be won, plus a lovely solar powered garden fountain donated by Fletchers Garden Centre, thank you, which was auctioned off, and bought by Cookie & Debs, who also supplied the mouth watering food from their mobile cantering unit on the day, thank you.



The site slowly filled up, with the support from other scooter clubs within our county, and visitors were queuing up to have a go on the Tombola.

While this was all going on there was a custom Scooter show competition happening, and two appointed judges viewed all of the attended scooters.

The judges selected five winners for the five different Scooter categories and Stone Scooter Club proudly presented the trophies to the five winners.



The Tombola was doing exceptionally well, and at about 1.30pm all of the prizes had near enough been won, so the Tombola closed down, and the event itself also slowly wound down.

A few weeks later, on the 1st October, it was the presentation of the total funds raised for the Stone Alzheimer's Club. This was held at the church annex behind Christchurch Church. This Annex is the weekly base for Stone Alzheimer's Club and Oct 1st was also the 20th anniversary's of the Alzheimer's Club.

The final total of all funds raised on the day came to a figure of £836.72. and Sandie & Ray from the Alzheimer's Club were over the moon, and very thankful.

After presenting the cheque, the anniversary party and celebrations kicked in, with a singer who got every body up dancing. Stone Scooter Club would like to thank everyone who was involved in helping to put this event together.



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Rebecca being welcomed to the town by Gareth Higgins, and Cllr. Peter Jones centre

Justice For Eccleshall

One of Eccleshall's local PCSO's, Gareth Higgins, is changing his career, so we have another PCSO joining us - with a most appropriate surname – Justice.

She was most welcome, as is Justice, and has already started her own drop-ins at the various locations in the area, welcome PCSO Rebecca Justice.



Santa Is Coming To You

Santa, on his sleigh, will be visiting various parts of **Eccleshall** on the **11th, 15th, 18th and 22nd December** and stopping for a chat at designated points on the route.

He will also be dropping in to **Yarnfield** on the **9th, 16th and 21st December.** Routes and stopping points will be advertised on social media loser to the time.

Santa Claus will be on the Eccleshall Rotary Club sleigh at the parish room at Holy Trinity on Sunday 29th November from 3.45pm, listening to the children's wishes for Christmas.



First Eccleshall Scouts Christmas Postal Service

First Eccleshall Scouts will once again be providing a Christmas postal service for the delivery of festive cards to homes within the *"30 mph area"* of Eccleshall.

Each card will be delivered for the price of 50p and the funds raised will benefit the local scout group.

They will be collecting your cards outside the high Street Library in Eccleshall on three Saturday dates, **November 28th, December 5th and November 12th between 9am and 12noon.**



Stone's Inaugural Alternative Car Event

Stone Town Council held its first Alternative Car Event on Saturday 26th September. The free event, which took place along the High Street, and in Market Square, was a great success, and with the warm sunny weather, plenty of people came out to see the collection of weird and wonderful cars on display.

The cars included custom, tuned, kit and American cars, with the occasional vintage motor in there too.

Well done to all those that were involved in organising such a fabulous, free, family day out in Stone, we can't wait for the next one!

From Martin Robinson















euronics

BLACK FRIDAY

at

Hylands Electrical




Hotpoint
SALE
SALE !! SALE !! SALE !!

Gazette Eccleshall

NEWS IN BRIEF

Parish Council

Three members of the Eccleshall Parish Council have stepped down for various reasons, Dan Feneysey, Cherry Ryan-Bloor and Chris Wilkins (*who stepped down as Vice-Chairman*), and so the council advertised for replacements in the wider parish community.

There are three applicants for the three vacant posts who were interviewed at the council meeting on Wednesday 21st October, and they were Angela Bourne, Peter Lakin and David Anslow.

The successful candidates will be announced on the notice boards throughout the parish following the meeting. The results will also be announced in the parish councils newsletter Mid-November and on the Parish Councils website **www.eccleshallparishcouncil.gov.uk**

The council is made up of fifteen members which sits throughout the year and on the various committees and working groups.

Eccleshall Guide

The 29th edition of the Eccleshall Guide is with the printer, and it is hoped that it will be ready for distribution door to door in the main Eccleshall town in December and general available in a wide area shortly after that.

Peter Jones, the editor and publisher, and his team, would like to thank the advertisers for their support once again allowing it to be available to the public free of charge.

Eccleshall Street Market

The date has been announced for the Victorian Style Street Market being held in Eccleshall on **Saturday 26th June 2027**. Made up of local sellers and community groups.

For more details email: festival@eccleshall.church.

If you are struggling for ideas for a stall, think Splat-the-rat, Human fruit machine, coconut shy, hook a duck, hoopla, tin-can alley or you might have ideas of your own. ***There is no charge for a pitch***.

The organisers want to showcase the amazing talents of folks within Eccleshall Parish who all sorts of lovely thing whether that be food, drink or crafts.

Historic Talks

The Eccleshall Historic Talks Society continues with its programme of talks, meeting in the parish room **every 2nd Monday of the month at 7.30pm.**

They will be *"Following in Cook's Footsteps"* on **November 9th** and they have an evening of *"Show and tell"* on **December 14th.**

Christmas Tractor Run

On **Sunday 6th December** the Staffordshire Young Farmers celebrate the festive season with a Christmas Charity Tractor Run. The popular event will see tractors decorated with Christmas lights and festive displays take to roads creating a spectacular sight for local communities along the route.

The run will take the rame route as last year visiting the Staffordshire villages of Seighford, Derrington, Haughton, Gnosall, Woodseaves, Eccleshall and Ranton. The event has already proved a fantastic fundraising success with last year's tractor run raising more than £12,000 for the Birmingham Children's Hospital and Staffordshire YFC.

Entry for participating tractors is £20 per tractor, with drivers required to be aged 16 or over. Places are limited and booking opens on 1st November. There will also be a prize for the Best Dressed Tractor, encouraging participants to bring the most creative and festive decorations.

For further details contact County YFC secretary Ruth on 01785 248645 www.staffsyoungfarmers.org.uk.



Stone Will Remember Them

Remembrance Sunday 8th November and Armistice Day Wednesday 11th November

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

Remembrance Sunday

The annual parade, together with services of remembrance at the war memorial in Granville Square and later at the parish Church of St. Michael and St. Wulfad, will take place on **Sunday 8th November.**

The arrangements are as follows:-

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

10.30 a.m. Parade, led by Stone Scout & Guide Band, will proceed along the High Street to the war memorial, where Florence Brass Band will play.

10.45 a.m. Presentation of wreaths in accordance with an order of presentation. Persons laying wreaths should report to the parade marshal, during the assembly in the High Street, to be briefed on the wreath laying ceremony.

11.00 a.m. Two minutes' silence and service of remembrance.

At the conclusion of the service at the war memorial, the parade will proceed to the parish

Church of St. Michael and St. Wulfad via High Street and Church Street led by Stone Scout & Guide Band.

After the church service the parade will disband.

Earlier during the morning, the customary service of remembrance will be held at the Walton War Memorial, Whitemill Lane, Walton, commencing at 9.30 a.m. Persons attending should assemble at the war memorial by 9.20 a.m.

Armistice Day

A short ceremony will be held at the war memorial in Granville Square at **11.00am on Wednesday 11th November.**



Scout Hike Adventure!

Some Scouts from1st Oulton BP Scouts put their navigation skills to the test by completing a 10km hike around Trentham, Barlaston and Tittensor.!

Before heading out, they used 6-figure grid references to carefully plan their route and work out where they needed to go. Then came the real challenge… putting their planning into action!

The Scouts completed the hike independently, following their maps and using their compasses to navigate their way around the route.

It was fantastic to see them putting their skills into practice, working together, making decisions and building their confidence along the way.

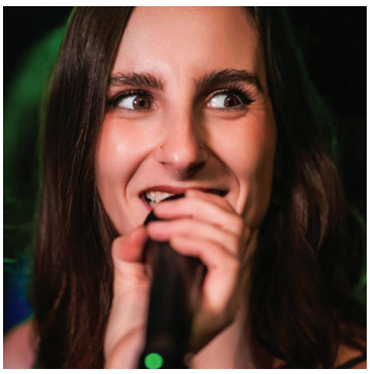
A brilliant achievement and another great example of our Scouts learning valuable life skills while having an adventure!

Well done Scouts! you should all be very proud of yourselves!

From Dan - Scout Leader

STONE'S BIG LIGHT SWITCH-ON 2026!
THURSDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

Stone Town Council will stage the annual switch-on of the town's Christmas lights on Thursday 19th November 2026.



• *Compere Samantha Lloyd*

The event opens at 5pm, with Samantha Lloyd as compere for the evening and entertainment leading up to the switch-on. The K-Pop Demon Hunters tribute act will start things off, followed by the combined schools' choir, led by Mr Harrison and Mr Cannon from Christchurch Academy.

At 7:00pm we will get to the main event - the turning on of the lights. This year the lights will be switched on by the Town Mayor, Councillor Andrew Best, and of course, Father Christmas!

They will be joined by the winners of the Mayor's school Christmas Card competition.

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

Councillor Jill Hood, Chairman of the Council's Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee, said: *"I always look forward to this event, when the High Street is lit up with Christmas trees and the school choirs sing in the town. We are excited to have a K-Pop Demon Hunters tribute act , as the one we booked in the summer went down very well with children of all ages!*

We will again be putting on a fantastic show and even Santa himself is putting in an appearance.

This is always a hugely popular event for all age groups, and I hope you will join us on the evening to welcome the Christmas season to Stone."



• *The combined schools' choir will be singing Christmas Carols to get you in the festive mood*



• *K-Pop Demon Hunters Tribute are all set to thrill the crowds*



• *The high street comes alive with illumination!*

As with previous years, we are expecting mobile traders selling light up goods to be present in the High Street. These sellers are not endorsed or authorised by Stone Town Council, as a matter of safety we discourage purchasing goods from these traders.



Stone Carnival: Bringing Our Community Together

The people of Stone enjoyed a fantastic week of celebrations in June 2026, with a wonderful programme of events including Two Wheel Tuesday, Treasure Hunt, Quiz Night and much more. The excitement continued throughout Carnival weekend, with our spectacular parade, a fantastic range of stalls, food and drink vendors, and brilliant entertainment from local performers.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who took part, supported our events, volunteered their time or simply came along to enjoy the festivities. Your enthusiasm and support help make Stone Carnival such a special occasion for our community.

We're already looking forward to next year's Carnival week starting Sunday 6th June cumulating with the Carnival weekend, taking place on 12 & 13 June 2027. We have even more activities planned, both throughout the year and during Carnival week, so there will be plenty to look forward to!

Our new website will be launching very soon, where you'll be able to enjoy photographs from this year's events, keep up to date with the latest news and find out about future activities. There will also be information for anyone interested in getting involved, including stall-holders and sponsors wishing to take part.

Giving Back to Our Community

At the heart of everything we do is a desire to give something back to the community we are so proud to be part of.

The hard work and dedication of our committee and volunteers, together with the incredible support of local residents and businesses, enable us to raise funds for local charities, organisations and support groups that make such a positive difference to people's lives.

Our annual presentation evening took place on Saturday 17th October at St Dominic's Social Club, where we were delighted to celebrate the achievements of this year's fundraising efforts and recognise the fantastic work carried out by most of the groups receiving donations.

We are pleased to share some kind words from some of the organisations that have benefited from this year's Carnival fundraising. Their feedback is a wonderful reminder of just how much can be achieved when a community comes together.

Thank you, Stone, for your continued support.
We couldn't do it without you!

We have also donated monies to the Stone Air Cadets and Army Cadets for all their support towards the Carnival team and the many activities throughout the year.

We are very much looking forward to next year's events and please look out for any upcoming activity that the Committee are promoting and supporting on our Facebook page and website.

https://facebook.com/stonecarnival www.StoneCarnival.org



Receiving the cheque for Stone Old Alleynians, Luke Askey and Rob Crawley: said *"Stone Old Alleynians Football Club represents a cornerstone of the local community and provides inclusive footballing opportunities across men's, women's, junior, and disability teams. With over 70 teams and over 1,200 members it is the biggest provider of grassroots football in the county. That scale is why supporting Stone Carnival comes naturally: We are made of the same families.*

1. Hundreds of players, parents, coaches and volunteers who pull on the shirt also live, work and go to school in Stone. For years the club has worked with schools on all girl football days and taken part in community coaching.

2. We believe sport should be inclusive and accessible. Carnival is about family fun for the whole town, and so is our football, from first kicks at the age of 3 to over 70s walking football.

3. Partnering with the weeklong Stone Carnival, offering two football tournaments to children, is our way of supporting the town.

Every carnival football tournament helps Stone Carnival Week support multiple local charities. When the community supports the club on the sidelines, the club supports the community on carnival week. On the pitch, in the park, and for good causes across Stone.

We are truly very grateful for the £1,000 donation that is being made to our football club, and this donation will go a long way to support our disability provision not only on the pitch but off it too.



Mike Ward MBE, Green Bus Organiser, and & Stephen Hicks Treasurer, receiving the cheque said

"Stone Green Bus organisers are delighted to receive a donation of £2,000 from the Carnival Committee. This money is being used to subsidies our charges as from 1st September. Our mileage charge follows the price of a litre of diesel at Morrisons, and we know how dear this has become! To assist our customers, some of whom are struggling to pay, we are reducing the mileage charge by 40p per mile for the foreseeable future. Many thanks to the Carnival Committee. Keep up your good work in bringing joy to our town"!



Andrea Pugh, Community and Corporate Fundraiser at Katharine House Hospice, receiving the cheque said

"We're delighted that Stone Carnival chose Katharine House Hospice as a beneficiary of its 2026 event. This generous £3,000 donation will help us provide specialist care and support for local people living with incurable illness and those close to them, whether at home, at the hospice or in the community. Thank you to everyone who organised, supported and attended the carnival. You've helped us be there for local families when they need us most."



Receiving the cheque, Philippa Unett, Director of Chuckle Productions CIC said

"We are incredibly grateful to the Stone Carnival team for this generous £1,000 donation. This money will help us continue providing our Complex Needs sessions, using music, movement and sensory activities to give children and young people with profound and complex needs opportunities to communicate, connect, build confidence and have fun. A huge thank you to everyone involved in making the Stone Carnival such a success and for supporting Chuckle Productions."



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Gazette Eccleshall

NEWS IN BRIEF

Civic Amenities Visit

Our next visit from the civic amenity bin man will be on **Saturday 21st November.** The special collections vehicle will be in the Stone road opposite the Methodist Church between 9am and 11am. It will collect only domestic excess waste. The service is paid for by the Eccleshall Parish Council for residents of the parish.

Carols Around The Tree

The annual carols around the Christmas tree take place on **Monday 21st December at 7pm** at the crossroads, then at the Millennium clock in the High Street and then outside John Pesrhall Court.

Hot punch will be served at Holy Trinity Church by the Ecclian Society concluding around 8pm with the last burst of singing.

Councillor's Drop-Ins

Your local Stafford Borough Councillor Peter Jones will be at the High Street library Eccleshall on **Saturday 7th November between 10am and 12 noon.**



If you would like to have chat, raise issues that you have concerns about, the recent planning applications and changes in the planning laws, when is green belt, grey belt and so do drop in and have a chat.

Peter will also be in the Library on **Saturday 5th December between 10am and 12 noon.**

Trinity Men's Fellowship

The purpose of the group is to promote fellowship amongst the men of Holy Trinity Parish, Eccleshall with St Chad's Slindon.

They meet monthly for walks and luncheons in the local area. They have a programme of walks and on the **Friday 27th November** they will meet in the Holy Trinity parish room at 2pm with a guest speaker to be announced.

Then on **Friday 18th December** they again meet in the parish room at 2pm to hear a speaker who is yet to be announced.

The TMF is renowned for holding its Christmas lunch – not at Christmas, but in mid-January, on a date – which, yes you've guessed it to be announced!

Christmas In & Around Eccleshall Trees And Lights Switch On

The Ecclian Society and friends will be checking the brackets for safety and erecting 72 small Christmas trees in the town on the Sunday 29th November, the trees are funded by the Eccleshall Parish Council and they are grateful each year for the efforts of the Ecclian Society.

The Lantern Parade will take place on **Sunday 29th November** down the High Street and folks are asked to assemble at 4.30pm at Holy Trinity Church in time for the crossroads tree lights switch on at 5pm.

Decorate your own lantern between 10am and 4pm in the Holy trinity Parish Room.

Enjoy Carol Singing as the tree is lit up for the season. Live music is inside the Little George from 4pm, then at 5.45pm after the carols conclude.



Jamie And Joe Raise More Than £5,000 For Lifesaving Defibrillators In Stone

A 20-mile charity challenge on Restart a Heart Day has raised more than £5,000 to help keep community defibrillators ready to save lives across Stone and Staffordshire.

Jamie Richards MBE, CEO and Founder of AEDdonate, and Charity Support Officer, Joe Dean have raised more than £5,000 after completing their 20-mile Jamie and Joe's Lifesaving Challenge around Stone on Friday 16 October.

The challenge took place on Restart a Heart Day, the annual awareness campaign dedicated to teaching CPR and encouraging more people to develop the confidence to respond when someone suffers a cardiac arrest.

Throughout the challenge, Jamie and Joe visited public access defibrillators across Stone, highlighting the importance of regular maintenance and ensuring these vital devices remain ready for use in an emergency. The challenge also championed CPR and defibrillator awareness education, helping spread the message that anyone can be a lifesaver by visiting all schools.

The money raised will support AEDdonate's work maintaining community defibrillators, replacing expired pads and batteries, repairing



cabinets, carrying out safety checks and delivering free CPR and Defibrillator Awareness training in schools, workplaces and community groups.

Jamie said: "*Joe and I set out to do more than just walk 20 miles. We wanted to shine a light on the defibrillators around our community, the work that goes into keeping them ready for an emergency, and the importance of knowing what to do when someone suffers a cardiac arrest.*

To have raised more than £5,000 is absolutely fantastic, and we're incredibly grateful to everyone who has donated, supported us along the way and helped spread the word.

Every pound raised will help us continue supporting lifesaving equipment and education across Stone. A defibrillator can make the difference between life and death, but it needs to be accessible, maintained and ready to use. Equally, people need to feel confident enough to act.

We want people to know that you don't have to be a medical professional to save a life. Recognising a cardiac arrest, calling 999, starting CPR and using a defibrillator can give someone their best chance of survival."



AEDdonate has supported community defibrillators at locations around Stone, including Walton Duck Pond, Oatcakes & Milkshakes, The Coppice Estate, Meaford Day Nursery and The Borehole. Fundraising also helps the charity maintain existing equipment and expand access to lifesaving training.

According to Resuscitation Council UK, around 43,000 people each year in the UK receive attempted resuscitation following an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Immediate CPR and early defibrillation are critical to improving survival, making both access to working equipment and community education essential.



The challenge forms part of AEDdonate's ongoing commitment to making communities safer through its FIRM approach: Fund, Install, Register and Maintain.

Jamie added: "*This is what community fundraising is all about. People coming together to make a real difference locally. The £5,000 raised will help us continue that work, but the message goes beyond the money: know where your nearest defibrillator is, learn CPR and never be afraid to help someone in an emergency.*"

WANDERLUXE
by Lisa

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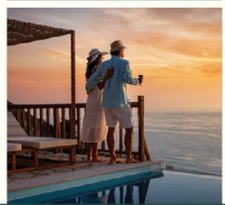


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Celebrating The Proms With Stone Lions

It was standing room only at Walton Community Centre on 17th October when Stone Lions Club (CIO) hosted another of their ever popular *'Proms Nights'* with The Lea Hall Brass Band providing the audience with an evening of stirring music, with plenty of audience participation and flag waving!

This event, back by popular demand after last-years break, was organised in support of the Walton Warriors Youth Football Club who are encouraging youngsters in Walton to set aside tablets and electronic games and participate in team sports.

To comply with the requirements of the Football Association, the club needs to have a portable defibrillator on hand at matches and they have been busy fundraising to purchase one. By working together in co-operation, Stone Lions and Walton Warriors managed to raise an incredible £1,050 which, when added to previous fundraising efforts, will more than cover the cost of the defibrillator.

Lion President Dave Handley spoke of his pride in what had been achieved by the two groups. *"There is a saying that nobody can do everything but everybody can do something,"* he said. *"We have demonstrated tonight that by working together we can achieve great things and make a significant difference in our community."*

As well as being a very successful fund-raiser, the event was enjoyed by all who attended and the atmosphere in the room was fantastic, with even a spontaneous outbreak of dancing being included. As one audience member said on leaving at the end on the evening, *"Every year I enjoy watching the Last Night of the Proms on television and this year I really feel as though I have been part of it!"*

Stone Lions Club would like to thank the Lea Hall Brass Band for providing everyone with such an enjoyable evening, all who generously provided raffle prizes and, last but not least, everyone who attended on the night and supported the raffle so generously.

If you would like to find out more about Stone Lions Club, please contact them on 0345 8338478.















Stone Scribblers Celebrate National Poetry Day

Members of Stone Scribblers led the recent Slice of Life event held at Stone Library on 2 October and used the session to share pieces of prose and poetry on the theme of '*wonder*'.

Some of the pieces were written by Scribblers and whilst others were the work of some of our most beloved authors including A A Milne, who was chosen to honour the 100th birthday of Winne the Pooh on 16 October.

The readings acknowledged and explored the many and varied wondrous things in our world; from the enquiring mind of a child to the fabulousness of nature, and the ingenuity of the human mind and the extent of human achievement.

As part of the event, there was a collaborative exercise with members of the audience sharing their thoughts on what the term '*wonder*' meant to them. These were then gathered in, and the words and phrases were used to produce the following poems. This was all done within the space of 1 hour!

Poem 1

I wonder where the rainbow ends
Treasured through time, the colours seen.
The days to see the butterflies dance
At night, sparkling starlight and moonbeams.
The millions of galaxies viewed
Or watching faces of the clouds for a while,
The tingle of rain in the sunshine,
Simple things in nature to make us smile

Poem 2

The blanks in memory are filled by wonder
It allows us to consider what we cannot comprehend.
Excuses our bad decisions
Questions a world whose answers are rhetorical..
Simple concepts beyond definition.
"Now where did I put my glasses, I wonder?"



The event was wonderfully supported by Keeley Spilsbury and her team at Stone Library and you are encouraged to look out for future '*Slice of Life*' events which are held at the library on the **first Friday of every month at 2.00pm.**

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

From Sharon Moore-Ward



Stone Town Council Upcoming Events



Sunday 8th November
Stone's Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service
The town remembers and pays its respects to those who fought in times of conflict, at our Remembrance Sunday parade and services (*Walton and Stone High Street*).

Stone Heritage Centre will also present a special commemorative display, reflecting on the courage and sacrifice of those who gave so much to protect the freedoms we enjoy today.

Wednesday 11th November
Stone's Armistice Day Service
A short Armistice Day service will be held at the war memorial (*Granville Square*).

Stone Heritage Centre will also hold a commemorative display, offering a further opportunity to remember those whose service and sacrifice helped shape the world we live in today.

Saturday 14th November
Have Yourself a Wild Christmas!
The Heritage Centre's guest speaker series continues with Kevin Reynolds exploring the fascinating connections between nature and our festive traditions.

This entertaining presentation offers a fresh perspective on the animals, plants and natural environment that help make Christmas so special.

The talk is free to attend but places must be booked via Eventbrite, you can scan this QR code to take you to booking.

Thursday 19th November
Christmas Lights Switch On
Join us to switch on the town's Christmas lights and enjoy a fun-filled evening! The entertainment starts at 5pm and culminates with the lights being switched on at 7pm *(Stone High Street*).

There will be fairground rides and stalls in the High Street which will continue operating after the lights have been switched on.

Thursday 19th November – Saturday 19th December (11am – 4pm, Thurs – Sat)
Festive Costume Exhibition
The Heritage Centre will be hosting eight displays of vintage clothing and accessories from the Hope House Costume Museum, which will showcase Christmas and New Year fashions for men, women and children, spanning the elegance of the late Regency and early Victorian eras through to the colourful styles of the 1970s.

The free-to-attend exhibition will offer a fascinating glimpse into changing festive styles and traditions across the generations.

Tuesday 29th December
Texas Flag Raising ceremony
Takes place outside Hylands, accompanied by the Florence Brass Band (**Stone High Street**).

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

In November we will hold our Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day services, poignant occasions when we pause to honour those who served and sacrificed in times of conflict. We very much hope that you will join us."

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





The Flowers That Bloom In...October! At Aston-By-Stone W.I.

Every W.I. meeting is a delight: it may be instructive, educational, funny, or all three, but some meetings are a visual delight. And so it was for our October meeting.

Gill Hancock came to demonstrate flower arranging; in what seemed a remarkably short time she produced three arrangements and a tied bouquet, giving at the same time a fluent commentary and tips and hints on how to achieve these beautiful bouquets.

Those of us with no skill in this field were amazed and impressed; those who had the skill entered the competition for a flower arrangement in a boot.

The competition was won by Julie Hughes, with Yvonne Fazackerly second and Pam Lowe third. All the entries were really beautiful, and it must have been hard for Gill to choose a winner.

At the start of the meeting we heard details of events and activities for the coming month: walking, painting, coffee morning, craft and poetry reading. There's something for everyone, so if you are interested, Ladies, please contact us at secretary.astonbystonewi@gmail.com.

Or simply turn up at **7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.** We meet at Aston-by-Stone Village Hall.



There are tea and home-made cakes at every meeting, and you'll be sure of a warm welcome.

Our November meeting takes place on the 11th, when Kevin Reynolds will invite us to *"Have a wild Christmas".* Feeling crafty? The competition is a robin in any medium....living birds excepted!

In December we meet to celebrate Christmas – *members only* – but January brings us Members' night, when the chief performers will be ourselves.

Happy Christmas, and many good wishes for the New Year when it comes.



A visit from our local PCSO!

Cubs at 1st Oulton BP Scouts, were joined recently by our local PCSO Neil, who came along to talk to them about crime prevention, and keeping themselves and others safe.

The Cubs enjoyed learning more about the work the police do, and had the opportunity to see the police car up close, including the lights and equipment used by officers.

A big thank you to PCSO Neil for taking the time to visit us, answer the Cubs' questions, and help them learn more about the important role the police play in our community.

Another great evening of learning new skills, and gaining experiences outside of the usual Scout activities.

From Kim - Cub Leader

Join us for this year's

Christmas Celebrations

@ The Stone House Hotel

Your Perfect Christmas Awaits

Step into a Christmas that feels exactly as it should: roaring fire, elegant décor, seasonal flavours, and the warmth of a traditional country house. This year make Stone House your festive destination.

Fawlty Towers - Basil's Christmas Carols Saturday 21st November

Arrival 6.30pm - £49.95pp A sell-out favourite. Immersive comedy, joined by several comedy legends. Arrival drink, 3-course festive dinner and DJ until midnight. Only a limited number of tables available.

Wreath Making Evening Wednesday 25th November

Arrival 6.30pm - £49.95pp Create your own luxury wreath with expert guidance, mulled wine and mince pies. Small workshop groups — early booking recommended.

Family Favourites

Breakfast with Santa Sunday 20th December

Arrival 10:00am - Adults £17.95pp | Children £12.95 | Infants (under 2) £5.95 Meet Santa and friends, enjoy a festive breakfast and every child receives a gift. Perfect for young families — spaces fill quickly.

Christmas Market Sunday 15th November

Free Entry - 11am—3pm Live entertainment, mulled wine, artisan stalls and a special visit from Santa. Ideal for a festive day out.

Seasonal Dining

Festive Afternoon Tea Served Daily £22.95pp

Served throughout December in the beautiful Garden restaurant. Mulled wine on arrival and a selection of festive treats. Perfect for couples, friends and relaxed celebrations.

Make it a stay to remember.....

Ask about our Festive Breaks, Christmas Party Nights, and Private Dining options for groups and corporate celebrations. Create a full Christmas experience at Stone House.

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Email: sales@lehost-stonehouse.com



Jumpers for Goal Posts

Peter's mom would knit him jumpers. He wished she didn't. It's not that he was unkind. Her jumpers just didn't do the job.

What was the job? Simple, to be the jumper of an 8-year-old that means practical. As an eight-year-old his requirements for a jumper are many. Warm when necessary. The arms must be the correct length. Especially important when tied around the waist, the essential look. Every mother must know that.

Practical for converting into a bag carrying the apples scrumped from the Bradbury Orchard down Kettle Lane where the trees were ages away from the big house. It must look especially stylish if put on the wrong way round. Easy to tell apart from the grass - if used for a goal post.

Stretchable if you want to look like a monster with swinging tentacles. Did I mention how important the arms being the right length is?

If you stretch the collar with the top of your head you must be able to see through it, or how could he chase his sister?

Now, his Aunt could knit. Her jumpers were brilliant. Terrific colours not the regular washed out blue. She bought her wool from the place next to the chemist on the High Street. Now the wool from there was amazing! Big fat figure of eight wheatsheaves in firework colours or round kitten obsessions, planets ready to be loaded into a cannon. Tricky to stack like conkers.

His mom would get the wool from Woolworths; she had to take him on the bus to the big town to get the exact shade as his bedroom walls.

Do they sell paint, he wondered. They did have a lot of things in Woolworths and when he next visited, he would look into this. Well, if he had time. The Pick and Mix is a serious business after all.

If she had knitted him trousers he would be invisible just by standing with his back to the wall of his bedroom. That would be cool. He would be able to get all the way around the room without anyone knowing he was there. Except that bit in front of the wardrobe and his desk but apart from those two places it would be easy-peasy.

Wool not in a jumper was pretty good on its own. It's had tonnes of uses. Trip wires, behind enemy lines. Get out of that Action Man! It can tie anything up. Great for strapping Cindy to the rails. Action Man becomes the Hooded Claw. Get out of that Penelope Pitstop! The cable car line for daring Eagles. Trapeze for the circus. Lasso and kite string.

But Peter's favourite thing about his jumper was the unravelling. When it became too baggy, too misshapen, and outgrown he would hold it as his mother wound the washed-out blue yarn back. Creating new balls for something else to be knitted. He hoped his sister would like the new hat and matching mittens.

by Mark Trinder

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**



Embark On A Glittering Adventure At Trentham Estate With Their Winter Light Trail This Christmas!

This Christmas, make unforgettable memories at Trentham as Winter Light Trail 2026 returns transforming the beautiful estate into a dazzling winter wonderland! Expect glittering lights, festive delights and spectacular sights, from **Friday 20th November through to Sunday 3rd January 2027.**

Expect a new route for 2026 taking in more of Trentham Gardens featuring brand-new installations, interactive experiences, and captivating sound-scapes. It's a magical adventure the whole family will love, perfect for getting into the Christmas spirit.



Wander through the illuminated gardens and discover enchanting surprises at every turn. With plenty of immersive display features, photo opportunities and never-before-seen installations, plus mesmerising soundscape designed to delight visitors of all ages, the perfect setting for making unforgettable memories.



Pause at the pit stop along the trail to warm up by the fire with marshmallow toasting. Also available will be delicious food from local independent vendors in the food village.

Wanting to end the evening in style? why not cosy up in a private chalet for hire for up to 8-10 of your favourite people!

2026 also includes a kids disco and kids' funfair. *Don't miss Trentham Winter Light Trail this Christmas!*



Tickets for Trentham Winter Light Trail 2026 are available now, but be quick, as some sessions have already sold out!



Friday 20th November 2026 through to Sunday 3rd January 2027

Prices start from £12.50 per child / £17 per adult / £50 family ticket.

Super off-peak sessions every single day we're open. Extra SEN sessions this year.

Dog friendly, Accessible trail.

Booking early is recommended to ensure you get your preferred date and time!

For more information on Trentham Winter Light Trail 2026 and to book tickets, please go to **www.winterlighttrail.co.uk/trentham**

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Topside of beef
6 pigs in blankets
1 pork pie

£42



THE FEAST

SERVES 4-6 PEOPLE

Boneless free-range turkey crown
Gammon joint
12 award-winning sausages
12 slices of award-winning bacon
1 pork pie

£75



THE CRACKER

SERVES 6-8 PEOPLE

Boneless free-range turkey crown
Topside of beef
Gammon joint
12 award-winning sausages
12 slices of award-winning bacon
6 pigs in blankets
1 pork pie

£135



THE GRAND

SERVES 8-10 PEOPLE

Free-range whole turkey
Topside of beef
Free-range pork loin joint
18 award-winning sausages
12 slices of award-winning bacon
12 pigs in blankets
1 pork pie
Sausage meat
Cranberry sauce

£175

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A Round-Up From Stone Choral Society

There's always a feeling of excitement in the room when Stone Choral's singers meet again for the start of our autumn term. What will we be singing? Is it going to be a challenge? Will there be new people joining us? It's great to see old friends again after the summer break and to catch up on news, but also lovely to be singing again and to feel that connection with others through music.

This September was a little different in that we were preparing for a Come and Sing day at the end of September when we would spend an afternoon working on a particular work and then we would perform it at the end.

We had around forty singers from various other choirs join us for this day some of whom had never sung the work before and some came because they loved this particular composition – Rutter's Requiem. It's a work of beautiful melodies, harmonies and unlike many choral requiems it was not all in Latin. One movement has a soprano soloist and we were lucky to have young Albert Atherton sing that role. He sang with accuracy, confidence and accomplishment and it was a real achievement as his debut with Stone Choral.

We also had other young talented soloists as enhancements. Local student of piano and singing Henrietta Hearn sang '*A Flower Remembered*' by Rutter and she gave a charming rendition which complemented the choral Rutter. A very talented student, Ailish from Stafford, played absolutely flawlessly some wonderful flute pieces, one by Rutter and another by Fauré. All of these were accompanied by Jenny Hames on the piano.



The free performance was given to an audience of around 40 who also enjoyed sampling the cakes we had to sustain us during the afternoon. The whole day was directed by Harriet Johnson, Stone Choral's musical director who injected us with knowledge and enthusiasm and enabled us to have a most enjoyable time.

During early July the choir hosted its Summer Concert at St Dominic's Priory Hall in Stone alongside male voice choir The Daleian Singers. Both choirs are directed by Harriet Johnson and accompanied by Jenny Hames on the piano. It was a great night with numbers performed by both choirs individually and some joint items.

The range of music was wide and varied. The concert included the Daleians singing some traditional songs; some Bob Dylan and Robbie Williams to name a few while the Choral Society's repertoire ranged from some Andrew Lloyd Webber to Randall Thompson and the evening started with a bit of Sondheim to set the mood with his '*Comedy Tonight*'. The hall was packed and a great evening was enjoyed by all. Strawberries and cream were part of the proceedings too and all rounded off by '*Sweet Caroline*' as the World Cup played on.

Our focus now is on Christmas festivities which will include our popular **Carols and Unity Brass band concert at Crown Wharf Theatre on Thursday December 17th.** We will have lots of favourite carols and some new ones too. The brass band always brings us rousing seasonal music and will get us all into a happy Christmas mood.

Do get your tickets early from the Crown Wharf Theatre website **www.crownwharftheatre.org.uk**.

If you are interested in joining our choir we welcome singers of all ages. The first term is free. Contact our membership secretary on info@stonechoral.org.uk or check our website for more information. **www.stonechoral.org.uk**

Thanks goes to Martin Robinson for these photos







Early Starts Keep Eccleshall Blooming Through The Summer



While most of Eccleshall is still asleep, Perrys of Eccleshall is already out watering the town's floral displays. From mid-June to mid-October, more than 75 sponsored hanging baskets, 48 mangers and 26 troughs require regular care to stay colourful and healthy, particularly during this summer's hot, dry spells.

The displays form part of the Ecclian Society's ***Celebrating a Town in Bloom*** programme, bringing colour and a warm welcome to locations across Eccleshall.

Generous sponsorship from residents and businesses funds the flowers, compost and display infrastructure. Our volunteers then put it all in place each summer and remove it at the end of the season.

For the past three years, Perrys of Eccleshall has carried out the weekly watering round, funded by Eccleshall Parish Council. The team rises at 4.30am to begin the work while the streets are quiet and the sun is low. This allows the displays to be watered at the most effective time, and completed efficiently before their shop opens at 8am, Tuesday to Saturday.

Perrys has invested in equipment to support the work, and its team takes on the considerable task of caring for displays in locations right across the town. It is another example of the contribution Perrys makes to Eccleshall, alongside its award-winning butcher's shop, and involvement in a range of local community projects.

The Ecclian Society would like to thank Perrys of Eccleshall for the care, time and early starts that go into keeping the displays looking their best throughout the season. We are also grateful to Eccleshall Parish Council, our sponsors and everyone who helps make this much-loved town-wide display possible.

It is a real community effort, helping to keep Eccleshall welcoming, cared for and full of pride throughout the summer.

Calling at Stone - Hixon - Great Haywood and Rugeley

A new bus service has launched, the 151 service launched in September and runs from Stone to Rugeley. It calls at Aston Lodge (*replacing service A*), Burston, Sandon, Weston, Hixon, Great Haywood, Little Haywood and Colwich.

The timetables shown below are for Mondays to Fridays, please see the link for up to date timetables, and Saturday services. **https://bustimes.app.staffordshire.gov.uk/display.aspx?Route=151&Sup=A&Line=40151&RN=151#divMainAreaDisplay**

151 Stone - Hixon - Great Haywood - Rugeley
Mondays to Fridays (Outbound) - Timing Points

Chaseider

Bus Stops/ Service Restrictions									
Stone, adj Morrisons	08:54	09:46	10:46	11:46	13:46	14:46	15:46	16:34	17:34
Aston Lodge Park, adj Ashford Grove	-	09:53	10:53	11:53	13:53	14:53	15:53	-	-
Burston, adj Greyhound Inn	09:02	10:02	11:02	12:02	14:02	15:02	16:02	16:42	17:42
Weston, opp Old School Close	09:10	10:10	11:10	12:10	14:10	15:10	16:10	16:50	17:50
Hixon, adj Legge Lane	09:17	10:17	11:17	12:17	14:17	15:17	16:17	16:57	17:57
Great Haywood, nr Clifford Arms	09:25	10:25	11:25	12:25	14:25	15:25	16:25	17:05	18:05
Colwich, opp St Michael and All Angels Church	09:29	10:29	11:29	12:29	14:29	15:29	16:29	17:09	18:09
Rugeley, Bus Station [Stand 2]	09:38	10:38	11:38	12:38	14:38	15:38	16:38	17:18	18:18

It is recommended that you are at your stop well in advance of the advertised times

151 Rugeley - Great Haywood - Hixon - Stone
Mondays to Fridays (Inbound) - Timing Points

Chaseider

Bus Stops/ Service Restrictions									
Rugeley, Bus Station [Stand 2]	08:43	09:43	10:43	11:43	12:43	14:43	15:43	16:43	17:23
Colwich, adj St Michael and All Angels Church	08:52	09:52	10:52	11:52	12:52	14:52	15:52	16:52	17:32
Great Haywood, adj Clifford Arms	08:56	09:56	10:56	11:56	12:56	14:56	15:56	16:56	17:36
Hixon, nr Legge Lane	09:04	10:04	11:04	12:04	13:04	15:04	16:04	17:04	17:44
Weston, adj Stafford Road	09:10	10:10	11:10	12:10	13:10	15:10	16:10	17:10	17:50
Burston, adj Greyhound Inn	09:19	10:19	11:19	12:19	13:19	15:19	16:19	17:19	17:59
Aston Lodge Park, adj Ashford Grove	09:27	10:27	11:27	12:27	13:27	15:27	-	-	-
Stone, adj Morrisons	09:37	10:37	11:37	12:37	13:37	15:37	16:29	17:29	18:09

It is recommended that you are at your stop well in advance of the advertised times









Prostate Cancer Awareness Night Success

Local men, along with their partners or families, attended a Prostate Cancer Awareness Night at St. Dominics Social Centre on October 22nd.

There was a great turnout, with over 30 attendees. The evening was designed so guests could understand more what prostate cancer is, and what to look out for.



Stone Town Mayor, Andrew Best, who visited on the evening, said he wants to see another event like this in the new year, at the Men's club he attends. He was very impressed with Founder & Chair of Stafford & Surrounds Prostate Cancer Group, Mark Seaton, along with Urology Surgical Care Practitioner, Eve Richards, who both presented the event, with visiting Drs and practitioners.



The visiting urology team from Birmingham and Derby Hospitals

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



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



What's On at Crown Wharf Theatre

November at Crown Wharf Theatre offers a lively mix of cinema, comedy, visiting theatre and youth performance.

Here's what's coming up this month after **Jack Absolute Flies Again, which runs Friday 6th – Saturday 14th November**.

Sunday 15th November – Cinema & National Theatre Live
Toy Story 5 Rated PG 2:30pm A perfect family afternoon at the theatre, with £1 tickets for under-16s. The latest chapter in Pixar's beloved series brings humour, heart and adventure for all ages.

NT Live: Golden Boy National Theatre Live · 15+ 7:00pm A powerful drama from the National Theatre, screened live. A gripping story of ambition, talent and the cost of success - ideal for audiences who enjoy high-quality theatre on the big screen.

Thursday 19th November – Theatre
Not Everything is Significant – Ben Moor 8:00pm An Edinburgh Fringe hit from acclaimed writer-performer Ben Moor. Smart, surreal and beautifully observed, this one-man show blends comedy, story-telling and gentle philosophical insight.

Saturday 21st November – Comedy
Knightmare Live 7:30pm The smash-hit stage adaptation of the cult 90s TV dungeon adventure. Expect chaotic challenges, audience interaction and big laughs as the classic fantasy game show is brought brilliantly to life.

Sunday 22nd November – Youth Theatre
Chicago – Teen Edition Stagecoach Stafford Present 6:30pm A slick, energetic youth production of the iconic musical. Featuring classic numbers, sharp choreography and a talented young cast, this is a fantastic showcase of emerging performers.

Saturday 28th November – Theatre
Jingle Bell Jam Miss Kym's School of Dance 1:00pm A festive dance showcase filled with sparkle, seasonal music and plenty of Christmas cheer.
A great family event and a celebration of local young dancers.

Sunday 29th November – Theatre
Sleigh the Stage Miss Kym's School of Dance 1:00pm Miss Kym's dancers return for a second festive performance, packed with energy, colour and Christmas spirit.
A joyful way to round off the month.

Christmas at Crown Wharf Theatre - A festive season for all ages
Once Jack Absolute has landed, Crown Wharf Theatre launches straight into a packed Christmas programme - a joyful mix of live theatre, youth concerts, local choirs and festive cinema designed to bring the whole community together.

Dear Santa - live on stage Thursday 3rd to Saturday 5th December Norwell Lapley Productions brings Rod Campbell's much-loved story Dear Santa to life. With charming characters, gentle humour and a magical meet-and-greet with Santa himself, every child receives a special gift - a perfect first theatre experience for young families.

Jack and the Beanstalk - Stone Revellers Musical Theatre Wednesday 9th to Saturday 12th December
A classic pantomime adventure packed with local performers, big laughs and festive fun. Expect giants, magic beans and plenty of **"He's behind you!"** as Stone Revellers bring traditional panto to Crown Wharf's stage.

MYTS: We Still Sing - Twenty Years of Stars Sunday 13th December, 2.30pm and 7.00pm Musical Youth Theatre Stafford celebrates two decades of productions with a special concert, We Still Sing. Featuring songs and moments from shows including Wizard of Oz, Narnia, Bugsy Malone, Footloose, Children of Eden, We Will Rock You, Seussical, Wind in the Willows, The SpongeBob Musical and Les Misérables, it's a heartfelt tribute to 20 years of young performers lighting up local stages.

Stagecoach Christmas Concert Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th December
Stagecoach students take to the Crown Wharf stage for a festive showcase of song, dance and performance. It's a chance to see the next generation of talent in a warm, family-friendly Christmas celebration.

Stone Choral Society Christmas Concert Thursday 17th December
A beautiful evening of choral music, seasonal favourites and community singing - a staple of Stone's festive calendar and a perfect way to ease into Christmas.

A Little Big Christmas Saturday 19th December, 7.30pm A heart-warming Christmas variety show featuring local performers, festive music and plenty of sparkle, bringing together the best of community talent for one big night.

Festive Cinema at Crown Wharf
Alongside live theatre, Crown Wharf's Christmas cinema programme offers some of the best value family entertainment in the area - with screenings of beloved seasonal films throughout December.
This year's lineup includes: **Frozen II, Bridget Jones's Diary, Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger! , Home Alone 2: Lost in New York, The Grinch, Die Hard, and Elf** (*already close to selling out*)
With family-friendly timings, affordable tickets and a cosy Christmas atmosphere, the cinema season is ideal for festive outings, after-school treats or introducing younger audiences to classic Christmas films.
For tickets and full listings, visit **www.crownwharftheatre.org.uk**



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^Terms and conditions apply, offer ends 30.11.26. *Prices correct at time of publication, additional charges apply. See website or call for details. Images shown for illustrative purposes only.



Full Steam Ahead At Probus

Club members from Stone and District Probus Club visited Statfold Country Park (*Nr. Tamworth*) on Saturday 12th September for the '*Road, Rail, Ale and Steam Rally*'.

This was our second visit to the annual event, as usual the park was packed with vehicles and enthusiasts of all ages.There was much to see, and the atmosphere evoked distant memories, with the smoke, steam and sounds produced by these mechanical behemoths.

Also on site are several permanent installations, the Steam Railway and Museum and the Fairground Museum, which contains a wide range of vintage fairground attractions for visitors to engage with and enjoy.



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





















Rainbows Helping The Bumblebees



1st Walton Rainbows recently gained their Bee Rescuer Badge. They were helped by local volunteer, Ron Rock, who volunteers with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Ron led the Rainbows on a bumblebee hunt on the school grounds, helped them create a bumblebee mobile, and shared lots of interesting facts about the 24 species of bumblebees that can be found in the UK; who knew that bumblebees have 5 eyes? and Ron told them how to tell if a bumblebee was getting angry; they start to raise their middle leg!

The Rainbows also created their very own bumblebee baths in their own gardens , using bowls of water filled with pebbles (*see pic right*).

Jane West, one of the Rainbow Leaders, said *"It was lovely to see the Rainbows really engaged, and Ron was brilliant with his imparting his knowledge and love of bumblebees. Well done, Rainbows!"*.

The badge is one of 12 new badges that have been introduced to the Rainbow programme.

Ron awarded the Rainbows with their badge, and £25 was collected and handed over to Ron for the valuable work of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Stone Quakers Make 50



In 2027 Stone Quakers will celebrate 50 years since they began to meet in the town. Quakers nationally have a much longer history.

The term "*Quaker*" began as a nickname, and they are correctly known as the Religious Society of Friends. Their principal founder, George Fox, was born in 1624 and Quakers trace their story back to the 1650s.

Peter Holland, who has been a member in Stone since 1977, is hoping to assemble information for a booklet on what Stone Quakers have achieved in the past 50 years. Anybody who has had a connection in the past is welcome to contribute stories or photographs.

Quakers are a Christian group who broke away from the established church in the 17th century. Their meetings have no set pattern and often contain much silent contemplation.

On September 21st there was such a meeting at the Quaker Service Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum near Alrewas. The memorial was actually designed by Rosemary Barnett from Ipstones, who was a member in Stone for many years.

This meeting commemorated the UN International Day of Peace. It was attended by several Friends from Staffordshire, but they were joined by Quakers from Shropshire, the Midlands and even as far away as Grimsby.

Regular meetings are held in Stone Station Community Centre at 10.45am on Sundays. Even after the introduction of parking charges in Station Approach, there is relief that it will be free on Sundays.







Cuttlestones' Ben Gamble with the £3,000 vinyl of The Beatle's Please Please Me

Beatles Album Gets Bidders In A Spin With £3,000 Auction Result

An original UK mono pressing of The Beatles' debut album, Please Please Me, proved music to collectors' ears when it sold for an impressive £3,000 at Staffordshire auction house Cuttlestones.

The highly collectable record led a strong selection of vinyl in the Staffordshire sale room's recent Autumn Antiques & Collectors' Auction, with the highlighted lots achieving combined hammer prices of more than £12,000.

Released by Parlophone on 22 March 1963, Please Please Me was the album that announced the arrival of The Beatles. Ten of its 14 tracks were famously recorded during a marathon session at EMI Studios on 11 February 1963, capturing the raw energy of the group's early live performances. The album went on to spend 30 consecutive weeks at the top of the UK album chart before being displaced by the band's second album, With The Beatles.

Offered as Lot 137, the record bore the mono catalogue number PMC 1202 and the distinctive black-and-gold Parlophone label associated with the earliest UK pressings. Both its sleeve and vinyl were graded Very Good.

The album's track listing includes early Beatles favourites such as I Saw Her Standing There, Love Me Do, Please Please Me and Twist and Shout – the latter famously recorded at the end of the day-long session as John Lennon battled a heavy cold and increasingly strained voice.

The £3,000 result was the high point of an excellent showing for vinyl records throughout the sale. Around 60 Northern Soul 7-inch singles achieved £650. Featuring a host of dancefloor favourites, the collection included recordings by Major Lance, Darrell Banks, The Exciters, The O'Jays, Martha Reeves, Dobie Gray, Chuck Wood and The Elgins.

A further group of seven LPs, which included stereo copies of Please Please Me, With The Beatles, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and Help!, sold for £550. Meanwhile, seventeen LPs by artists including Whitesnake, Rush, Deep Purple, Judas Priest and Def Leppard fetched £500, while another 17-record collection featuring Scorpions, Rainbow, Metallica, Neil Young and a limited-edition Cheap Trick album on red vinyl made £400.

Cuttlestones' Ben Gamble said: *"These results show that sought-after pressings, enduring artists and carefully assembled collections can still strike the right note with bidders.*

The Beatles album was undoubtedly the standout lot, but we also saw strong demand across a broad range of musical genres, from Northern Soul to classic rock and heavy metal. Collectors are often looking for particular pressings, labels and formats, so it is always worth seeking specialist advice before assuming an old record has little value."

Cuttlestones is inviting owners of vinyl records and wider music collections to take advantage of its free, no-obligation valuation service. Anyone with records gathering dust in the loft, tucked away in a cupboard or forming part of an inherited collection can email photos and details to valuations@cuttlestones.co.uk, send them via WhatsApp to 07949 603872 or call 01785 714905 to arrange an appointment.

When Wildlife Becomes a Messenger

Local artist Claire Valentine-Gibson is turning a collection of wildlife paintings into a fundraiser for a Staffordshire wildlife rescue centre.

What started with a love of the natural world has grown into a rather unusual collection of paintings and this Halloween, those paintings will be helping some of the very creatures that inspired them.

Stone-based artist Claire Valentine-Gibson has spent the past year creating paintings of British (*mostly*) wildlife for a new oracle deck, Nature's Messengers. The 42-card deck explores the qualities, and symbolism Claire sees in the animals and birds around us, from the quiet wisdom of an owl to the transformative nature of a dragonfly.

But there is another story behind the paintings....

Claire has decided that the original wildlife artworks should not simply disappear into a box once they have been reproduced for the cards. Instead, she is offering them for sale and raising money for a British Wildlife Rescue Centre just outside Stafford.



For Claire, the connection feels natural. *"I've always been fascinated by the way we can learn from the natural world,"* she says.

Spending time outside changes the way I feel. Whether I'm camping, walking through woodland or simply sitting outside at dusk, there's something about being around nature that makes everything else seem a little quieter."

That fascination has become central to her work as an artist.

Claire describes herself as an artist inspired by the magical side of nature, creating paintings and sculptures that explore woodland, wildlife and folklore. She also tries to use recycled and reclaimed materials wherever possible, reflecting her belief that creating beautiful things does not need to cost the earth.

The animals behind the cards

Nature's Messengers brings together 42 creatures across six realms: Sky, Forest, Night, Water, Earth, and Hearth & Familiar. Each animal has been chosen because Claire feels it carries something worth noticing a quality, lesson or different way of looking at life.

The paintings themselves are much more than illustrations for a card deck. They are individual original artworks, each painted by Claire before being transformed into part of the finished oracle deck.

And it is those originals that will form the centrepiece of the fundraiser.

"I wanted the paintings to have another life," Claire explains. *"These animals have given me so much inspiration while I've been creating the deck, so being able to give something back to wildlife felt like the right thing to do."*



A Halloween Launch

The full collection of wildlife paintings will be available **from 31st October**, when Claire will also be going live on Facebook.

During the live event she will show a selection of the original paintings, share some of the stories behind the animals and introduce Nature's Messengers. Viewers will also be given a live link to the complete collection of original paintings available to purchase.

It will be a rather fitting date for the launch.

For an artist whose work draws on folklore, witchcraft and the mysterious side of nature, Halloween provides the perfect backdrop for unveiling a collection that has been inspired by the creatures of the British landscape.

But underneath the magic is something very real: *helping wildlife*.

How to join Claire's wildlife launch

Claire is encouraging anyone interested in the paintings, the oracle deck or British wildlife to join her email list. Those who sign up will receive notification of the 31st October Facebook live, along with the link to view the complete collection of original wildlife paintings when they go on sale, and the paintings will be for sale from that date until they are all gone. Scan the QR code below to join Claire's email list and make sure you don't miss the launch.

For Claire, the project is ultimately about bringing people back into a closer relationship with the natural world and perhaps reminding us that the wildlife around us has something to say, if we take the time to notice.

On 31st October, those messengers will have a chance to do just that through art, and in the process, help support wildlife on our own doorstep.

For more information please visit **https://www.clairevalentineartist.com**



Tittensor Wine Tasting Led By Dragon's Den Former Contestant Will Willis

We enjoyed a fantastic Wine and Cheese Tasting evening on Friday 11th September at Tittensor Village Hall.

60 people attended and we had a willing group of volunteers to watch and listen to Will Willis of Zeno (*from Dragon's Den*) walk us through 5 wines and matching cheeses…… with a wonderful raffle and local donations raising the sum of £1300.



The evening raised the money towards St Lukes Church Roof Appeal.

There were some very enthusiastic speeches, some Spanish guitar and some rather extravagant moustaches were enjoyed.

The evening raised a very welcome amount and brought members of the local community together for an informative and entertaining evening enjoyed by all.

From Martin Robinson









Good News And Bad News On The Railways

"Much of my recent campaigning has been about car parking, so it's good to have a comment about train services," says Jon Heal, the current chair of North Staffs Rail Promotion Group.

"But there is some positive news about changes to the London Northwestern train service."

As from December, the Crewe to Stafford service that calls at Stone will carry on to Birmingham again. This helps commuters into the West Midlands, although it does not follow the most direct path. Its route is via Tame Bridge Parkway, a route that was judged as taking too long when it was withdrawn three years ago. But most people consider it better than chasing up and down stairs to make a connection at Stafford.

The other news was that in May next year the route will extend beyond Crewe up to Manchester Airport. In fact it is being publicised by LNWR as a direct service for Brummies to travel to the Airport.

Times remain unchanged to Crewe in the December timetable. Going south, the time changes from xx05 to xx 26, so 21 minutes later each hour. New services begin on December 13th.



Crewe to Stafford service that calls at Stone will carry on to Birmingham again

Another positive is that East Midlands Railway will have trains running from Stoke to Derby and Nottingham on Sunday morning for the first time since the 1970s.

As for the **car parking in the Station Approach**, the train company have advised that they aim to **introduce charges in early November.** It will be £5.90 at peak times, £4 off-peak. It will be free on Sundays and bank holidays.

There is a slight concession of a few free passes for hirers of the Station Community Centre, but it is not clear how this will work.

However the Crossing Community Centre that hosts community activities all through the week is clearly going to be penalised and may not be able to continue with all their community work if visitors are charged. The train company have refused to negotiate with them, as they claim their only obligation is to make money.

The next meeting of NSRPG is due to take place on **Thursday 26th November at 7pm** in Stone Station Community Centre. However Jon Heal warns that since charges may be in place by then and the permit system has not been explained, anybody who wishes to attend should contact the group at jhnorthstaffsrail@hotmail.co.uk to confirm arrangements.

All are welcome at the meeting, all the same.



Science Experiments

Playtivity STEAM Club Celebrates Ofsted Registration And A Fantastic First Six Months In Stone

Since launching in April, Playtivity STEAM Club has been inspiring young minds across Stone and beyond through creative, hands-on activities that combine science, technology, engineering, art and maths *(STEAM)*.

The club has quickly grown from Saturday morning sessions into a busy programme of holiday clubs and after-school activities in local primary schools.

Designed for children aged 5–11, Playtivity offers something a little different. From programming robots and building futuristic cities to colourful art projects, science experiments and engineering challenges, each screen free session encourages children to explore their ideas, solve problems and develop confidence through play and curiosity.

An exciting milestone for the club has been achieving Ofsted registration, providing parents with additional reassurance that Playtivity meets the relevant childcare registration requirements, including those relating to safeguarding and children's welfare.

But perhaps the most rewarding part of Playtivity's journey has been the overwhelmingly positive feedback from local families.

One parent shared:*"My 7 and 10 year old absolutely love Playtivity, they give it a 10/10 every week... It's so lovely to see them come out absolutely buzzing with excitement."*

Another family, praised the inclusive and welcoming approach: *"This session truly felt inclusive in every sense. The structure, the encouragement, and the way activities were adapted meant they could both take part in a way that suited them."*

Parents have also appreciated the opportunity to enjoy a little time to themselves while their children are happily occupied. As one family put it, Playtivity is *"a great addition to Stone"*.

For Lianne, hearing these experiences has been particularly special. She told The Gazette *"When I started Playtivity, I wanted to create somewhere children could be curious, imaginative and confident enough to try new things without worrying about getting everything right. Seeing them come out of sessions bursting with excitement, proudly showing off their creations and talking about what they've discovered is exactly what I'd hoped for.*

The support we've received from local families has been wonderful, and one of the loveliest things has been seeing so many children return time and time again. It's given us the opportunity to really get to know them, build relationships and understand their individual personalities, interests and needs. I'm especially proud that we're creating an environment where children of all abilities feel welcome, confident and excited to come back. Achieving Ofsted registration is another exciting step forward for us."



Creative Fun

Playtivity now offers a growing range of opportunities for local children, including its popular Saturday morning sessions at the Frank Jordan Community Centre in Stone, themed school holiday clubs and after-school STEAM programmes in Staffordshire schools.

The club has also been delighted to support families through the Staffordshire Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

With plenty of exciting activities planned, Playtivity continues to welcome budding scientists, enthusiastic artists, imaginative inventors and children who simply love getting creative. To find out more about upcoming sessions or book a place, visit **www.playtivity.co.uk**.

Follow Playtivity on Facebook at Playtivity or Instagram @playtivityuk for the latest news and activities.

REVIEWS MOVIE

by Joe Jenkinson





Heart of the Beast

Age: 12A Time: 1h 41m
Director: David Ayer

An earnest, endearing tale of brotherhood that takes the idea of a man's best friend to new heights.

Anchored by a powerhouse performance from Brad Pitt and an equally compelling canine companion, Heart of the Beast is a short, straightforward and heartfelt journey that should strike a chord with dog lovers everywhere.

Rating: **JJ Rating 4/5**

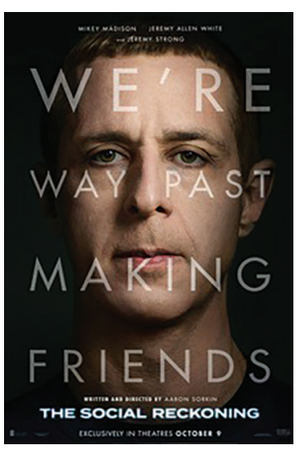
The Social Reckoning

Age: 12A Time: 1h 12m
Directed by Aaron Sorkin

Following an almost impossible act to match, The Social Reckoning struggles to justify its existence alongside The Social Network.

Despite intriguing subject matter and three hugely talented leads, its uninspired structure wastes much of its dramatic potential. A timely story with plenty to say, but one that never quite delivers the gripping, incisive cinema its subject deserves.

JJ Rating 3/5





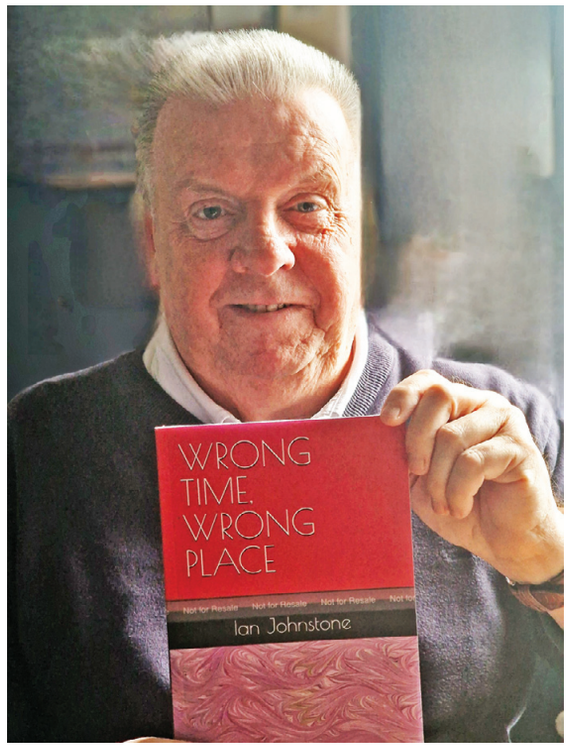
Digger

Age: 15 Time: 1h 29m
Directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu

Ambitious and boasting superb performances, particularly from a wonderfully against-type Tom Cruise, Digger certainly dares to be different.

Unfortunately, its lofty ambitions prove its undoing. Genre-hopping surrealism and a relentless desire to surprise leave the film feeling disjointed, struggling to turn its bold ideas into a satisfying whole.

JJ Rating 2/5



Ian Johnstone

Local New Author Releases His Second Horror Book

A new local author, Ian Johnstone, originally from Eccles, Lancashire, moved to Swynnerton 19 years ago when he met his wife, has recently written his first novel called – *"Wrong Time Wrong Place."*

This is a fast read collection of six short horror stories, which is currently available on Amazon.co.uk **https://amzn.eu/d/03Laylvtk**

The stories range from Ian's first attempt at a Western, through to a group of Ramblers who get lost and face horrific consequences, to a Retirement Living Complex Manager who loses control, plus three other gruesome tales.

Recently retired from a post as an Administration Officer in Newcastle-Under-Lyme, Ian told The Gazette *" I have always enjoyed writing different stories, but have always found the horror genre more creative. Now being retired, it gives me more time and freedom to produce more tales.*

People always ask me – How do I get my ideas? Many are based on people I know, and I create a story around them. Or more frequently the ideas come to me in dreams. Regarding one of the stories, I have always wanted to write a Western and this gave me time to do research into the American West."

Retirement has also allowed Ian to join local writers group Stone Scribbler's, which he says, *"Ive found interesting meeting the people of the group who provide many varied and differing styles."*

Ian has just completed his second book – *"The Man in the Woods".* Another collection of short Horror stories which is due to be released on Amazon at the end of October.

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Stone Ramblers Walk of the Month

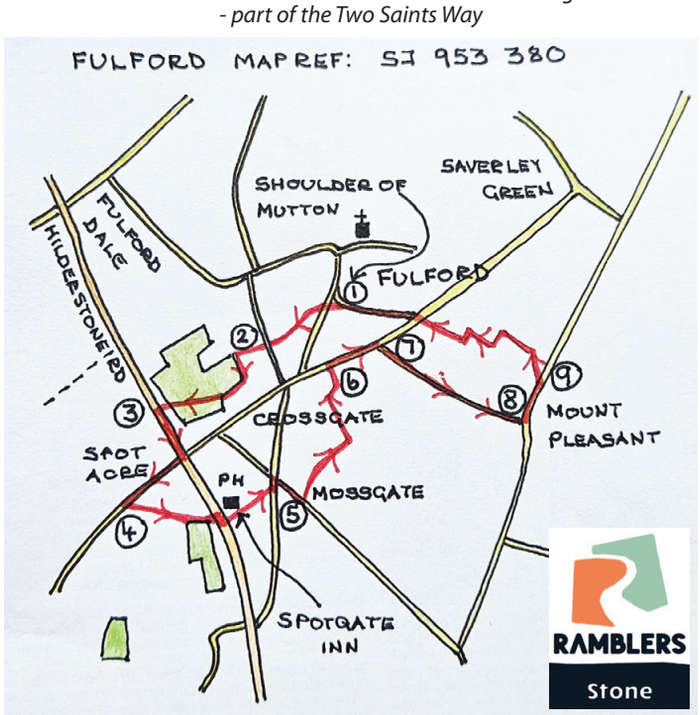
I can't believe that it is winter already and we're thinking about Christmas! That is crazy! Here at the Stone Ramblers, we have continued to walk and have made excellent use of our wet weather gear and have put Alfred Wainwright's quote '*there is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing*' to the test!

As usual, we are keeping ourselves busy, planning our Annual General Meeting in November and arranging our Christmas and New Year meal in January.

Thanks to Nicky Davis and Dave Franklin, we are walking the Two Saints Way over the next year, from Lichfield to Chester. We're doing it in manageable chunks of approximately 6 miles. It really is great fun.



Stone Ramblers check out the new Burston Bridge - part of the Two Saints Way



Walk of the Month - Fulford

As winter is with us, this is a shorter walk of approximately 5 miles / 8km and there are 22 stiles. It should take you between 2 and 3 hours.

Parking is available at the Shoulder of Mutton or outside on the road. Refreshments are available at the Shoulder of Mutton in Fulford. At the time of going to print the Spotgate Inn, Spotacre remains closed.

This month's walk begins in the in the quiet village of Fulford, with its village green and ancient well. Bearing in mind, that we have experienced torrential rain, please make sure that you wear appropriate footwear.

In the early 1800's Fulford gained the reputation as the Gretna Green of North Staffordshire on account of the number of runaway couples being married at St Nicholas Church. Records show that in 1828 no less than 84 marriages were Solemnised most of which came from the nearby Longton district of Stoke on Trent.

1. Leaving the car park at the Shoulder of Mutton, turn right, having the village green and well on the left. After 70 yards turn left into Baulk Lane. Just past Ivy Cottage take a path on the right which has formed a short tunnel in the hedge and takes us over one stile and a little further on to another two stiles. Take the left stile, heading for the top right hand field corner with the hedge on the right. Passing through a gate, continue alongside a holly hedge to a further stile onto a quiet lane.

2. Cross the lane and head up the opposite field keeping the fence line on the left, up to the top left-hand corner. Here, follow the direction of the finger post to a further stile alongside a gate onto a surfaced track. Now turn left and follow the track taking advantage of the distant views of the Weaver Hills.

Continue along the track for 200yds until you see a waymarked path on the right leading into woods. Follow the left of two paths as it goes to the rear of a builders' yard and keep the fence on our left. As the wood on the left of the fence ends, you will see two fenced enclosures which are Sites of Special Interest where orchids can be seen growing.

Now pass back into the wood veering slightly to the right until you reach a stile alongside the busy Hilderstone Road.

3. Crossing the road, turn left and (with care) proceed along the grass verge facing the oncoming traffic. At the cross roads, turn right and after passing the Equestrian Centre entrance, walk a further 200 yards where we then turn left into a waymarked track.

4. Crossing the stile alongside the gate and proceeding down the track to a further stile, you enter a wood.

Keeping the hedge line on the right and then going through an area of rhododendrons you will come to a post and wire fence and hidden lake both on our left.

Continuing over a stile and keeping to the left of a green shed we come again to Hilderstone Road directly opposite the Spot Gate public house.

Crossing the busy road and keeping to the right of the pub, go past the gas tank to the stile ahead. Entering the field (watch out for rabbits) we climb up between the gorse bushes to a stile in the top left-hand corner partly hidden under holly bushes. This path has recently been cleared by the Stone Ramblers and Fulford Parish Council, working together for our wonderful communities.

Following the winding path past Flatts Farm it becomes a track which soon leads to a lane. Turning left at the lane, turn right in 50 yds, go past the telephone box and then right again at Moss Gate.

5. Following the lane for 100yds, take the turn left alongside a cottage onto a track. Passing over stiles, now go diagonally left across the next field to a waymarked stile.

Keeping to the hedgerow on the right pass over a stile alongside a gate and proceed through a gated compound onto a track/lane.

Follow the lane around to the left and carry on for about ¼ mile until we meet the village road (note the George VI letter box on the right, this house used to be the post office).

Legend has it that Dick Turpin rode down Post Office Terrace in 1739 as he fled from London or perhaps it was just to visit one of the two blacksmiths which were in the terrace at that time.

6. Turn right and follow the road footpath past the village hall down to the cross-roads. This area is known as Townsend.

7. Turn right again into Long Lane and stay on this lane for the next ½ mile. Passing Long Lane Head Farm, keep to the bridle path on the left. This track is an old green lane and during wet weather periods will have a small stream down the centre.

8. After a ¼ mile we come to the main Hilderstone to Cresswell road and turn left up the hill staying on the left-hand verge and noting the milestone on the opposite verge with the top triangle indicating that we are in the Parish of Draycott.

Having passed Willow Bank Farm, you soon come to a stile on the left with a finger post, crossing into the field,

9. Now follow the hedge on the right to the brow of the downward slope. At this point, take a diagonal route to the left, which takes you to the bottom left-hand corner. Here, go through a gate opening. Keep sharp left and then immediately left again over a stile and follow the hedge on the right to a stile into the next field.

Continue to walk alongside the hedge until you reach a double stile in the corner. You will now catch sight of a pond below us. Cross the double stile and keep to the left above the pond and across to a further stile. Cross this and keep right alongside the hedge. At the bottom of the field keep left for 20 yards to cross a further stile. Proceed down the field. Stepping over the narrow stream, climb up the hill, aiming for the left one of two large trees and on to the tall hedge alongside the road.

Steps now lead down to the road level. Crossing the lane, which can be busy, into Meadow Lane, proceed back to the Shoulder of Mutton.

Once again, this walk is taken from our 'Stone Circles' book, available via our website **www.stoneramblers.org.uk** or from our regular market stalls at the Stone Farmers' Markets.

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

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers, happy walking, we hope to see you soon and try to stay dry!

Penny Meakin

Chair, Stone Ramblers



Ramblers at the Trig Point on High Wheeldon

AMG Nursing & Care Services



Members of AMG Nursing & Care Services' nursing team

> "Thank you to all the ladies who've looked after our mum. Very caring and a great support to us as a family. They attended to all her needs and more, giving her the confidence to get back to a bit more of being herself."
>
> — Service user's family, Stone branch

9,5 AMG Stone
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Aston Rainbow Leaders and Young Leader with Norah - May

First Gold Award For Aston Rainbow

Norah-May, a Rainbow with Aston Rainbows, was presented with her Gold award (*just before the Rainbows broke up for the summer holidays.*) This was the first Gold Award to be presented at Aston Rainbows and a huge achievement for Norah- May.

She joined Aston Rainbows when she was 4 years old and was also the very first 4-year-old to be admitted. From the moment Norah-May joined the unit she was always confident, keen and enthusiastic; especially when it came to doing badges either in Unit meetings or on her own. She also took part in all the unit activities and also attended Division outings.

Linda, one of her Rainbow Leaders commented, *"I can count on one hand how many Rainbow meetings Norah-May has missed over the 3 years she has been with us. Congratulations Norah-May on your Gold Award and good luck in the rest of your guiding journey, as you start Brownies in September".*



The Collage Café Collection



At the October session group members produced collages that can be reproduced as greeting cards.

The new *'Collage Café Collection'* will cover a wide range of occasions; birthday, baptism, sympathy etc.

Cards will include Bible quotations and beautiful inspirational Christian messages.

The collection will be on display in St Michael and St Wulfad's Church. The suggested donation of £2.00 per card will go towards Church funds.

Collage Café will meet again on **Thursday 26th November and Thursday 10th December** from 10.00am till 12.00 noon at Stone Library.
For more details, please contact Jill on 07491 311832.



Christmas Church Services In Stone

Christ Church, Stone And Oulton With Moddershall [Anglican]:

Saturday 19th December
4.00 p.m. Christingle crafts and short service at Christ Church, Stone

Sunday 20th December
9.15 a.m. Morning Prayer Service at Christ Church, Stone
3.00 p.m. Carol Service at St John the Evangelist, Oulton
5.00 p.m. Carol Service at Christ Church, Stone

Thursday 24th December
9.30 a.m. Advent Windows trail
11.00 a.m. Final Advent Window opening at Christ Church, Stone
5.00 p.m. Carol Service at All Saints, Moddershall
11.00 p.m. Late night Carols and Communion at Christ Church, Stone

Friday 25th December
9.15 a.m. Christmas Day Communion at Christ Church, Stone
11.00 a.m. Christmas Day Communion at St John the Evangelist, Oulton

Sunday 27th December
11.00 a.m. Joint service of Carol Praise at St John the Evangelist, Oulton

Sunday 3rd January 2027
11.00 a.m. Joint service of Holy Communion at Christ Church, Stone
with bring and share lunch to follow

The Church At The Crossing [Baptist, Station Road]

Beers and Carols: Sunday **6th Dec 6:00pm - 8:00pm**
Festive fun and food for all the family!

Christingle Service: **Sunday 13th Dec 10:30am**
A joyful celebration for all ages, filled with light and meaning.

Silent Night Service: **Wednesday 16th Dec PM**
A quiet reflective service exploring the peace of Christmas.

Christmas Day Service: **Friday 25th Dec 10:00am**
Join us to celebrate Christmas Day with all ages together!

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

Christmas Eve: St. Dominic's : 4pm Mass. 7pm Mass.
Christmas Day: 9am Mass at Sacred Heart, Eccleshall.
10.30am. Mass at St. Dominic's, Stone.

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

December 20th at 10.30am. Annual Carol Service.
December 25th at 9.30am. Christmas Day. Rev. Samuel Silungwe.

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

Dec 6: Christingle (4:00 p.m.) St. Michael's
Dec 7: Scouts Carol Service (7:00 p.m.) St. Michael's
Dec 13: Civic Carol Service (3:00 p.m.) St. Michael's
Dec 16: W.I. Carol Service (2:00 p.m.) St Saviours
Dec 19: Carols from the Past (11:00 a.m.) St Saviours
Dec 20: Parish 9 Lessons and Carols Service (4:00 p.m.) st Michael's
Dec 24: Christmas Eve: 3:00 p.m.: Crib Service St Michael's
6:00 p.m.: Crib Service St Michael's
6:30 p.m.: Carol Service St. Saviours
11:30 p.m.: Midnight Service St. Michael's
Dec 25: Christmas Day 9:15 a.m. St. Saviours, Aston

Age Concern Stone & District:
Here to Help
When You Need Us Most

As families across the area continue to face rising energy bills, increasing food prices and the ongoing pressures of the cost of living, Age Concern Stone & District wants local residents to know that help and support are available.

Our dedicated team is based on the ground floor offices in the Council Building, 15 Station Road, Stone, and we are here to offer practical advice, support and a friendly welcome.



Our drop-in sessions are open:

Monday: 9.30am to 12.30pm
Wednesday: 9.30am to 12.30pm
Friday: By appointment only contact us on 01785 817906.

We understand that many people are worried about making ends meet, and may be unsure where to turn for help. If you visit us, we will do our best to address your concerns and assist with a wide range of paperwork and applications, including:

Attendance Allowance
Blue Badge applications
Pension Credit claims, which could unlock valuable additional weekly income
Hospital Car Transport. Volunteer run driving scheme for medical appointments Stoke Cannock Stafford.
Many other enquiries and support services

Please don't sit at home worrying. Come and see us and let us help. We are here to listen, offer guidance and support you through whatever challenges you may be facing.

Last month, through the Stone & Eccleshall Gazette, we appealed for volunteers and were delighted by the response from local people willing to give their time to help others. However, there is always room for more volunteers. The two qualities we value most are simple: a smile and understanding. These can make a world of difference to someone who may be feeling isolated or worried.

If possible, we encourage people to phone us before visiting so that we can arrange for you to see the most appropriate member of our team. And, of course, when you come along, we'll always have a warm welcome and a cuppa waiting for you, at 15 Station Road, Stone St15 8JP. Telephone 01785 817906.

At Age Concern Stone & District, we believe nobody should face their worries alone. Whether you need advice, practical assistance or simply a friendly conversation, we're here to help.

For more information or to arrange an appointment, please call 01785 814691.



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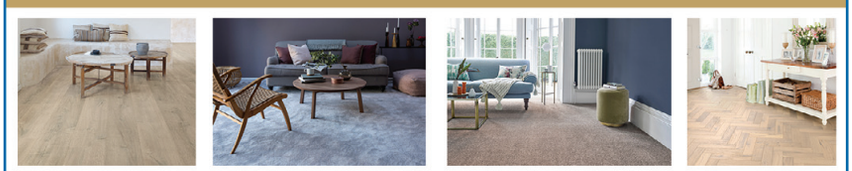

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The Stone And District Ploughing Match

The Stone and District annual Ploughing Match took place on Sunday 20th September.

It was held by kind invitation of H Sant and Son at Model Farm, Hanchurch, Stoke-on-Trent.

The weather was perfect, and the event attracted entrants in all the classes, including Ploughing, Hedge Laying and Flail Hedge Cutting.

The refreshment marquee offered respite and refreshment to visitors and contestants alike.

From Martin Robinson





















Duo Tanwen.
Ruby Howells, flautist and Bonnie Scott, harpist.

Adbaston Concert Society



Sunday 6th September was our Keyboard Trust sponsored concert with virtuoso Sean Godden *(pictured on the right)* was an absolute masterpiece, and a true privilege to hear the young man deliver such an incredible performance.

Our next concert will be on; Sunday November 1st. 5.30pm at Adbaston Church.

We will welcome; **Duo Tanwen**. Ruby Howells, flautist and Bonnie Scott, harpist.

Ruby is a local girl from Market Drayton, she and Bonnie met as children and studied together at The Royal Academy of Music.

Tickets: £10 at the door or pre book in advance *(recommended)* via Pam Trafford 01785 280373 or trafford.pam@gmail.com. Visit our website at **www.adbastonccs.org.uk**

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Stone's Advent Windows Is Coming!

Join us **every day in December at 11.00am** to hear part of the Christmas story, sing a carol and take part on our Advent Window opening.

The ***dates, locations and window creators*** are listed below. We look forward to seeing you there!

1 Tues - Vantage Point Creative
- St Dominics Priory School
2 Weds - 3B Barbers - St Dominics Primary
3 Thurs - Woolliscrofts - Oaktree Farm Rural project
4 Frid - John Burton - Pirehill School
5 Sat - Library - Hub Craft Group
6 Sun - Wedding Belles Love
- Oulton Guides & Brownies
7 Mon - AED Donate (1) Clothes shop
- The Crossing Community Centre
8 Tues - Cats Protection League
- Christ Church 1st School
9 Weds - British Heart Foundation
- Smarty's Day Nursery
10 Thurs - Co-op Funeral Care 2
- St Michaels School
11 Frid - Specsavers - Springfield 1st School
12 Sat - Gavin Williamson Surgery
- St Mary's Nursing Home
13 Sun - Christ Church (1) - Sunday School
14 mon - Childrens Society - Oulton 1st School
15 Tues - Co-op Funeral Care 1 - Walton Priory School
16 Weds - Shear Genius - Christ Church Academy
17 Thurs - AED Donate (2) - Furniture Shop
- Manor Hill School
18 Frid - Mums Flower Shop
- Meaford Fields Day Nursery
19 Sat - Mud Pottery
- Waterways Chaplaincy/Canal Cruising
20 Sun - Bod Bar & Coffee Shop
- The Early Years Academy Nursery
21 Mon - Millies Pie Shop - Oulton Church
22 Tues - Nick Griffin Butchers - Mumbles Day Nursery
23 Weds - Auto Care Car shop - Kids Planet Day Nursery
24 Thurs - Christ Church (2) - Christ Church

Thursday December 24th
Carol singing walk round the town.
Starts at 3B Barbers Salon at 9.30am (*join in at any point*)
Ends at Christ Church 11.00am for Final Window opening and refreshments.



Oulton BP Scouts Making A Difference In Our Local Community!

Today was all about teamwork, hard work and giving something back to our local community!

An incredible 23 of our leaders, young people and parents came together to help uncover the hidden headstones at St Michael's and St Wulfad's Church. *What a fantastic effort from everyone involved!*

Armed with spades, tools and plenty of enthusiasm, we got stuck in! We dug away the layers of grass, soil and moss that had built up over time, while also tackling the ivy bushes and branches that were covering the area.



Before

Little by little, we began to reveal the headstones and help bring this important part of our local history back into view. It was hard work, but seeing what we achieved together made every minute worthwhile!

A HUGE thank you to Paul Evans for organising this fantastic opportunity with us. We are so grateful that you thought of us and invited us to get involved. It's wonderful to be able to support our local community, make a real difference and give our young people opportunities to learn the importance of helping others. Thank you also for the other opportunities we have discussed, we are really looking forward to seeing what we can achieve together!

Today was about so much more than clearing grass, soil and ivy. It was about teamwork, community spirit, respect for our local history and showing that even our youngest members can make a BIG difference.



And after

23 people. One community. A fantastic amount of hard work. And a real difference made!





Becki Luff, Harpist

Newport Music Club Present Becki Luff

Newport Music Club is thrilled to present, Becki Luff, harpist in concert on **Sunday,15 November, 3.00 pm**, at Cosy Hall, Water Lane, Newport TF10 7LD.

As the days shorten and the evenings draw in, an afternoon of beautiful harp music might be just what we need to bring cheer. Becki came as part of the Chroma Harp Duo two years ago and we are delighted to welcome her again.

Graduating with a Masters Degree from The Royal Northern College of Music in 2018, under the tuition of Eira Lynn Jones, Becki performs regularly as a soloist and chamber performer, and holds teaching positions at a number of schools.

Passionate about working alongside composers to develop new music for the harp, Becki's standout experiences include: performing the work of Tansy Davies at The Wigmore Hall and premiering Amir Konjani's Anima Projection. Becki worked extensively with the composer Paul Patterson and showcased his harp solo Lizards' as part of the World Harp Congress in Hong Kong. As part of the Chroma Harp Duo has performed at Leeds International concert season and Buxton International Festival, and on BBC Radio 3.

Drawing on folk elements from her Welsh and Irish background, as well as her passion for contemporary classical music, Becki uses these to create immersive and ambient soundscapes.

Becki has a passion to see music impact lives with hope and joy. She is honoured to have worked with Live Music Now, Epiphany Music, Streetwise Opera, Music Action International and Odyssey Ensemble.

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.

This is the final concert of the season. Newport Music Club returns in the New Year with AERA Ensemble on Sunday January 24th 2027 at 3.00 pm at Cosy Hall, Newport.



The Big Cheer Big Band Coming To Sandon Hall

The BIG CHEER BIG BAND (*The Grammar School Big Band*) will perform at Sandon Hall on **Friday 11th December at 7.00 PM.**

Tickets are £15, including mince pie, and are available from Rose 07876 540491 or Steve 07972 838140.

There will be a Bar available on the evening, and proceeds raised are going to the All Saints Church Time for Tea Fund.





Eccleshall Transport Consultancy Are Shortlisted For A National Award

Wynns Limited, a Transport Engineering Consultancy in Eccleshall, has been shortlisted for Consultancy of the Year (*Fewer than 10 Employees*) at the 2026 Consultancy and Engineering Awards, organised by the Association for Consultancy and Engineering (**ACE**).

The awards recognise achievement across the UK's consultancy and engineering sector, with entries independently assessed by a panel of industry experts.

Wynns is an independent transport engineering consultancy specialising in the movement of abnormal loads – the exceptionally large and heavy components required for major energy and infrastructure projects.

With a small team of specialists, the business supports the development and delivery of major energy projects across the UK, including electricity transmission, renewable generation, nuclear power and emerging energy technologies.

The consultancy's work spans early-stage feasibility assessments, complex route planning, swept path analysis and road and marine transport engineering. Its independent approach enables developers and energy infrastructure owners to identify transport constraints, assess viable solutions and make informed decisions throughout project development.

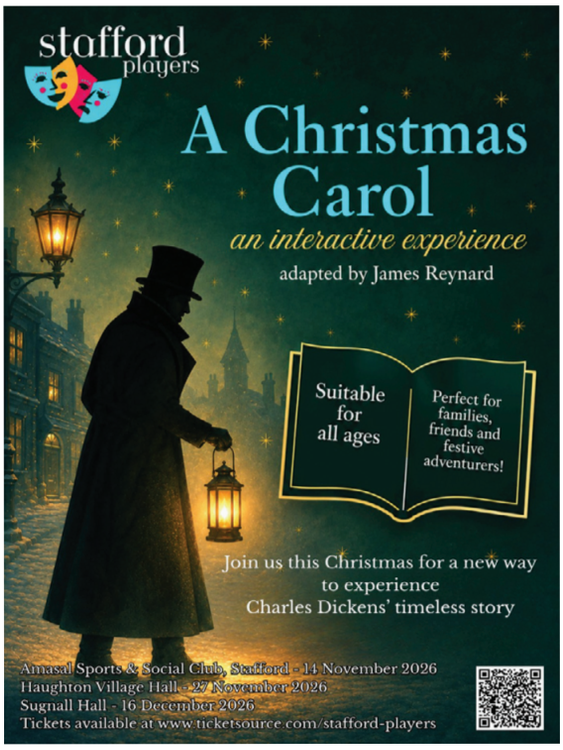


Building on more than 30 years of specialist consultancy experience and a much longer heritage in heavy transport, Wynns continues to apply its expertise to the evolving requirements of the UK's energy infrastructure.

Tim West, Director of Wynns Limited, told The Gazette :

"We're delighted to have been shortlisted for this award. As a small, independent consultancy operating in a highly specialised area of engineering, it's particularly pleasing to see the expertise and dedication of our team recognised alongside businesses from across the wider consultancy sector.

Our work often takes place at the earliest stages of major energy developments, helping clients overcome complex transport challenges. This shortlisting is a welcome acknowledgement of the contribution our team makes to those projects."



A Christmas Carol Is Coming To Stone And Sugnall

Stafford Players are currently working on a production which is a retelling of Charles Dickens' much-loved tale of '*A Christmas Carol*'.

This faithful adaptation by James Reynard includes an interactive element where the audience can become part of Scrooge's journey. Throughout the performance, there will be opportunities to participate, respond to the characters, sing along and help bring the world of Victorian London to life.

The audience will meet Scrooge, Marley and the three Christmas Spirits as they are taken on a magical, haunting and sometimes hilarious journey through Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come.

We hope it will make this Christmas one to remember! It's a perfect evening for a festive get together with family and friends!

Ticket price includes a festive mince pie and mulled wine (*or non-alcohol alternative*).

** The interactive element is entirely optional. Audience members can just relax, sit back and enjoy the performance without joining in if they wish.*

Tour details are below:

14th November - Amasal Sports and Social Club
21st November - Walton Community Centre, Stone
27th November - Haughton Village Hall
11th December - Acton Trussell Community Centre
12th December - Gnosall Grosvenor Centre
16th December - Sugnall Hall

Tickets can be purchased from
https://www.ticketsource.com/stafford-players
Or direct from ACP Bars for Gnosall and Acton Trussell, or direct from Walton Community Centre.

CU@4

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. Refreshments are provided.

The next CU@4 is **4.00pm till 5.00pm on Sunday 22nd November.** Come along and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming environment where you can connect, learn, and grow in faith together. We can't wait to see you there!



Isobel Whittaker Funeral Services Annual Christmas Memorial Service

As the year draws to a close, we recognise that this time of year can be particularly difficult for those who are grieving. The festive season often places a strong emphasis on family, friendship and togetherness, which can make the absence of a loved one feel especially painful.

We are here with you in your grief.

Whether your loss was today, last week or many years ago, and whether or not the funeral was arranged by Isobel Whittaker Funeral Services, you are warmly invited to join us for our annual Christmas Memorial Service. Held on **Thursday 10th December at 7pm** in the President's Hall at Walton Community Centre.

Now in its 3rd year, our memorial service offers a place to come just as you are, whatever your grief may look like. It is an opportunity to pause amid the busyness of the festive season and take time to remember.

There is no dress code or expectation, simply a welcoming space where you can feel comfortable being yourself. Our short, non-denominational service will offer time to reflect on the lives of those we have lost, the happy memories we hold dear, and the lasting place they continue to have in our lives.

Each year, we invite everyone (*including those not able to attend*) to contribute a photograph of their loved one, alongside their name, to be included in our memorial photo tribute. This simple but meaningful gesture celebrates the lives of those we remember and the connections that remain, even when someone is no longer physically with us.

Following the service, you are welcome to stay for light refreshments and to spend time with others who understand the experience of loss. Whether you wish to talk about your loved one, share memories or simply sit among others, there is no expectation to do anything more than feels right for you.

If you would like your loved one's name and photograph included in the tribute, please contact Isobel on 01785 336722 or email isobel@iwfuneral.co.uk.

Young Litter Heroes Step Up for Stone

Two students from Alleyne's Academy School, Stone, have been quietly making a big difference to the town through their dedication to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze Volunteering Section.

Molly Birch and Mara Macdonald (*supported by their school and families*) have now completed an impressive 12 litter-picking sessions in and around Stone, helping to keep local streets, pathways and green spaces looking their best.

Whatever the weather, the pair have approached their volunteering with enthusiasm, reliability and a strong sense of community spirit.

You may have spotted Molly and Mara out armed with litter pickers and bags, tackling everything from discarded wrappers to cans and bottles. While litter picking may not sound glamorous, their efforts have helped make a visible difference across the town.

What has stood out most is their commitment. Throughout their volunteering, the girls have never shirked their responsibility, turning up session after session and demonstrating exactly the kind of perseverance and community-minded attitude that the Duke of Edinburgh's Award aims to encourage.

There have undoubtedly been occasions when a lie-in seemed more appealing than spending time collecting litter, but Molly and Mara have shown remarkable determination. Thanks to their efforts, countless pieces of rubbish have been removed from the local environment, helping to make Stone a cleaner and more welcoming place for everyone.

From Jill Hood





Sylvia sorting & labelling up teddies for The Buddy Bag Foundation

'Buddy's Elf' Sylvia Receives Support Staffordshire Award

Sylvia Keris from Eccleshall, also known as Buddy's Elf to her friends, has recently received a Support Staffordshire Award, after being nominated by The Buddy Bag Foundation for her volunteer work with the charity, which supports vulnerable children - who have escaped domestic abuse to the safety of a refuge/ emergency accommodation - with a backpack of essential and comfort items.

Sylvia was honoured to receive the Award, which is pictured alongside photos of some of her work with the Buddy Bag Foundation.

Sylvia is a collection point in Staffordshire for people sending teddies they have knitted, and other knitted or sewn items for Buddy Bags; and everyday receives in items which she sorts, labels up and delivers to the charity at their bagpacking sessions near Lichfield - where Buddy bags are appropriately made up for children ranging from age 0-2 up to teenage boys and girls.

She additionally promotes and raises funds for the charity, which also awards grants from the newly established Buddy Fund to mothers when they are in a position to leave the refuge for a new safe home, which pays for furnishing their children's bedroom with a cot or bed, bedding and other basic essential items - as the home given to them will be completely bare of furnishings.

Sylvia's main fundraising events are held in December, where she has been challenged every year since lockdown in 2020 to become a full time, 24hr a day Elf: from 1st December (*or even earlier*) right up to Christmas Day. So wherever she goes - whether to a festive fun event with Santa, GP appointment, Rotary meeting, yoga classes, on public transport or food shopping - she has to be always dressed as Buddy's Elf to bring smiles. She even has Elf pyjamas!





Photos are captured of Buddy's Elf getting up to *"elf mischief"* every day, which are posted for people to view both on local Facebook pages, and on her own page under the name Buddy's Elf, to raise some laughter while promoting the Charity and its vital work - as well as raising money through collections, and an online Christmas campaign webpage Buddy Bags have set up at:



www.justgiving.com/campaign/elf2026

and here you can leave a festive message for family and friends, if you wish, at the same time as kindly making a donation.

The just giving page will be active from about mid-November until around end of Feb 2027, and Sylvia would like to thank everyone for their kind support of BBF during 2026 - whether through donations to the festive fundraising campaign, or by knitting and sewing comfort items included in the children's Buddy Bags.

Stone Carnival presents another
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Purchase more on the night.
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Gazette Motoring

From bimbling around in eco mode, to whizzing in 'responsive' sport mode
Syd Taylor Takes The Toyota Corolla Touring Sports For A Spin

There's an old adage which tells us that *'If it's not broke, don't fix it'*. In my view this applies most particularly to the estate car (or '*tourer*'). A sensible concept if ever there was one.

Many motorists, having had their heads turned by cross-over carriages, are now realising the error of their ways. To put it simply, if practical motoring is your aim, an estate car will take you far along the road to perfection.

One of the latest which portrays serious potential towards being one of the best is the new, built in Britain, £35,595 Toyota Corolla Touring Sports.

It's a functional family/business tourer designed to sweep away the blues. This Toyota is a magic broomstick with magic right down to its rubber souls.



It's a splendid self-charging hybrid estate - which means no charging at night while you try to squeeze milliamps into the battery and no trailing cables to trip the unwary visitor to your property. There's a smallish battery that drives the electric motor and takes its charge from recaptured energy through braking, so there are no worries about finding the nearest malfunctioning public charge point where the electric highwayman would have robbed you anyway. You just call at the parish pump and ask the attendant to '*fill 'er up*' with petrol.



I am delighted to tell you that this is a car that serves up sweetness on a plate without the nasty afterbite of hefty fuel costs. It's an outstanding family estate: and most importantly it is a great pleasure to drive. In my opinion it is a far better quality product than rivals from Peugeot, Ford, Renault, Fiat and VW. I suggest the Corolla wins hands down. You are also reassured by the 10 year warranty if you have it serviced at a Toyota dealer..

With a jolt of volts, you're on a roll with a double of power for propulsion when needed The 176bhp Hybrid Synergy Drive system comprises a 2.0 4 cylinder petrol engine and an uprated 131kW electric motor driving through a CVT transmission which conveys a feeling of a continuous powerband.

It's not so much a hybrid, but more a way of life - and more a way of giving good sense a whirl. So - if you're very green, the new Corolla Touring Sports could be the start of a beautiful friendship for you. My pal Dr. Frankenstein - who has always had a healthy interest in hybrids - swears by his.

Way back in time (*over half a century ago*) the estate car was functional and '*worthy*'; but a tad mundane. Evolution changes things. Now, responding to demand for interesting and inspirational cars, the new Corolla Touring Sports fulfils that demand. You get enjoyment behind



the wheel and the mental relaxation of knowing you are doing the right thing for the right reasons, at the right time and at the right pace. No sensible motorist wants to be up there with the fast lane '*johnnies*', of course (*for them perdition is just around the corner*) - but, surprisingly, the Corolla Touring Sports is a deceptively smooth and rapid car. Near 115mph top speed is not that fast these days, but the zippy way it gets there is impressive. And here's another surprise. Toyota claims an ultra modest '*overall economy figure*' of 61.4 mpg. Driven sensibly and observing speed limits I easily achieved 75 mpg. (*There are reports of over 80mpg*).

To put things in perspective, five minutes ago a good sports car would struggle to 120 mph and over a long journey the driver would be exhausted. You'd do the same journey more quickly today in a Corolla Touring Sports and arrive totally relaxed.

As for looks... styling of this very practical family estate is pleasant and appealing. Inside, it's equally attractive, beautifully assembled and uses top quality materials.

There's comfortable and supportive seating and there's ample room to stretch out in the front and adequate room in the back plus a particularly large luggage space. Naturally you are protected by a



proliferation of airbags. Also guarding against disaster, electronic monitoring of car and driver slaps you on the wrist should you stray - which makes for top safety. There's even an 'e-call' system that automatically alerts emergency services and gives your precise location should you be involved in a crash.

There are all the features for comfort, convenience and safety that you will ever need. You'll also find the usual electrically powered adjuncts to modern motoring for the terminally atrophied. Typical Toyota fixtures and fittings say, good ergonomics, good quality, good assembly and bomb-proof durability.

Over many test miles, your correspondent was impressed by the seamlessly smooth performance, secure handling and fine ride qualities: and the overall relaxing driving experience.

Whether bimbling in eco mode, whizzing in '*responsive*' sport mode, or crawling in traffic on battery power alone, I contend that the time has come to jettison uncertain connotations that append to the 'hybrid' label and accept that Toyota has indeed *'squared the circle'*, punched the ball in the eye, so to speak, and achieved what - for want of a better word - one might call '*total motoring*'.

In the twinning of internal combustion and ingenious electrics, the Corolla is a bright spark in anyone's language. This car deserves the imperial thumbs-up for spooning our future medicine in a sublimely acceptable way. It is remarkably good.

By Syd Taylor



Will celebrates with his team

Will Jenkins Crowned 2026 Porsche Carrera Cup GB Vice-Champion

Stone's Will Jenkins has wrapped up second position in the final 2026 Porsche Carrera Cup GB standings, after bringing his fantastic season to a close with two strong results in the final round at Brands Hatch (*10-11 October*).

Will has been a force to be reckoned with throughout his second Carrera Cup GB season. Securing three pole positions in the opening three rounds and a brilliant maiden overall victory at Snetterton, he ended up finishing in the PRO class top three in 12 of the 16 races.

Returning to the scene of a spectacular triple victory in the Sprint Challenge GB two years prior, the Staffordshire racer showed encouraging pace from the off again around the Brands Hatch Grand Prix layout as he lapped fourth quickest at the end of Friday's free practice sessions.

Jenkins, who is competing as part of the Wera Alliance Academy, sadly saw qualifying not go his way however. A small mistake behind the wheel cost him the opportunity of improving in the final few minutes of the session, dropping him down from the top three to seventh in the times.

The Team Parker Racing ace was confident of the pace in his Porsche 911 GT3 Cup car heading into the final race day of the season though. A great start to the opener saw him gain a position off the line, before benefitting from a mistake from a driver ahead to slot into fifth.

Following a safety car period, the Stone-based driver was straight back on the offensive as he grabbed fourth with a slick move into Graham Hill Bend. From there, he was hot on the heels of the final podium contender but had to settle for fourth-place at the chequered flag.

Crucially, that result earned Jenkins the reverse grid pole position for race two in front of the live ITV4 television cameras. A good launch secured him the lead initially, however a slight moment through Druids corner led to him slipping back to second position.

Running well in a four-way battle at the front of the field as the race developed, he found himself in the unenviable position of trying to attack and defend at the same time. A dive down the inside by another driver forced him wide at Surtees, ultimately shuffling him back to another fourth-place result.

Jenkins has competed this season thanks to the crucial support of his loyal personal partners Asset Alliance Group, The Reefer Trailer Centre, Hopkins Race Transporters, Barkers Finance, SAF Holland, The Green Group and WS Transportation.

Will Jenkins: *"I'm incredibly proud to finish second overall in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB. It's been a fantastic season that has well exceeded my expectations and I'm extremely happy with the achievement for myself, my family, Team Parker Racing and all of my loyal partners.*

I came into the weekend knowing what I needed to do to secure second in the points, so it was mission accomplished in that sense. Sadly we didn't quite have the front-running pace we'd have hoped for, and qualifying certainly put me on the back foot for race day.

It was solid progress in race one and it was great to get the reverse grid pole from that. Although we made an improvement with the car, it still wasn't quite enough and it was frustrating to end up just missing out on a trip to the podium to finish off the season. It takes nothing away from what has been a really positive season for me. I've made big strides forward as a driver and proven that I can race at the front and win in one of the most competitive championships in the UK. I'm excited to see what next season brings now."

The image used is from Porsche GB.

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Drivers urged to make simple 20p tyre check as wetter weather returns



Motorists are being reminded to check their tyres before autumn journeys, with illegal car tyres carrying potential court fines of up to £2,500 each.

Drivers are being urged to carry out a simple 20p tyre check as wetter autumn conditions make grip and stopping distance increasingly important.

The Highway Code states that stopping distances in wet weather are at least double those needed on dry roads, because tyres have less grip. Drivers should leave more space behind the vehicle ahead and adjust their speed to the conditions.

How to check your tyre tread with a 20p coin

A 20p coin can provide a quick indication of whether your tread needs professional attention:

Park somewhere safe and switch off the engine. Insert a 20p coin into the tyre's main tread grooves. Check whether the outer band is visible. If you can see it above the tread, your tyre may be below the legal minimum and should be checked immediately by a qualified tyre professional. Repeat across the tread and around each tyre. Check at least three positions around every tyre, as a single spot can miss uneven wear. The coin test is an initial guide. A tread-depth gauge provides a more precise measurement, and neither check replaces an inspection for damage.

What are the current fines and penalty points?

For cars, the legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the tread width and around the entire circumference. Tyres must also be free from dangerous defects. A defective-tyre offence can result in three penalty points. Cases may be dealt with through a £100 fixed penalty, while court fines for illegal car tyres can reach £2,500 per tyre. The maximum court fine is not an automatic roadside charge; the outcome depends on the circumstances.

Two checks the 20p test cannot replace

Tyre pressure: Use an accurate pressure gauge and follow the vehicle manufacturer's recommended settings. Do not wait for a dashboard warning before checking.

Tyre condition: Look for cuts, cracks, bulges and uneven wear. A tyre can have enough tread but still be unsafe because of damage. Get any concerns assessed by a tyre professional."





Eccleshall Show - Saturday 5th September

The 2026 Eccleshall Show was held on a perfect sunny Saturday, this attracted large crowds, along with many entrants and exhibitors.

Your intrepid Gazette reporters, with their four-legged connoisseur of *'all things edible',* were once again thrilled by the diversity, interest and quality of everything they saw, especially the friendly atmosphere and the helpful, dedicated volunteers.

In a way this show is a delightful step back in time, to the traditional Country Show era of yesteryear, but with a modern twist or two.

Next year will be an important milestone, with it being the Show's 80th Birthday.

The awesome produce and craft displays, the entertainment in the show ring, the stalls, the mouthwatering refreshments, together with the Equestrian, Dog and Vehicle displays make visiting this annual event essential, and so worthwhile.

From Martin Robinson

















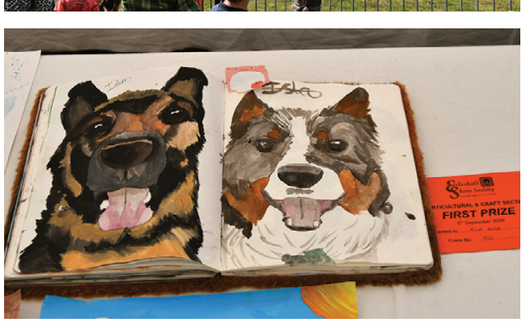

















The Stone & Eccleshall Gazette

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

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A Further Walk Around The Churchyard

By Philip Leason MBE

Last month I started to write about St Michael & St. Wulfad's churchyard and I have received several comments from readers saying how interested they found it particularly about the shields around the Crompton tomb. This month we look at the Church Street side of the churchyard.

By the path leading to the war memorial is a bench which depicts soldiers and poppies and was purchased by the Richard Vernon Trust to commemorate the men from Stone killed in the First World War. You may be wondering who Richard Vernon was.

Richard Vernon, a self-made and very successful shoe manufacturer, was born in 1812, the son of George Vernon, a cordwainer *(a skilled artisan shoemaker*) of Church Street *(a little distance from where the bench is located*).

In the 1841 census return Richard is described as a shoemaker living with his wife Margaret and three children in Oulton Road. He developed his business there and in the 1851 census is described as '*shoe manufacturer'.*

Richard's business rapidly expanded and in the 1860's he opened a factory in Mill Street and at its height employed over 500 people. The factory was on the site where Morrison's supermarket is today. The factory was extremely large and included a clicking room (*where craftsmen cut out the leather for the shoes using a press - which made a click hence the name*), machine room, sewing room, a waxing room, making and finishing room, drying room, packing room, riveter's shop, carpenters shop, as well as a large warehouses for raw materials and finished goods. A large part of his production was taken to the ports by canal and exported to the colonies including Australia.

Richard bought land in Newcastle Road and built a house which he named Holly House. In 1868 his wife of 35 years Margaret died. He then married Harriet Birtles of The Grange, Darlaston. In 1888 she too died and within six months in April 1889 he married again. Ann Yates was a shoemaker's daughter from Leicestershire BUT she was only 26 and Richard was 76 and they married quietly in Lichfield. The couple moved to their new house in Mount Road, Melbourne House which Richard named after the profits he made from exporting to Melbourne in Australia.



The well discovered in the church yard

Richard died in 1892 and was buried in the church yard at Christ Church with his daughter Elizabeth (1836-1886) where there is an impressive monument to them.

His business was sold shortly after his death and the company was purchased Lewis and Adie who continued the manufacture of shoes. Over the years the site has been used by a number of companies including The Gilt Edge Safety Class Company, one of the sites in the town used by Alvis Limited during the Second World War following their factory in Coventry being bombed, Quickfit & Quartz, Townson & Coxson and Broadcrown before being cleared for the building of the Safeway supermarket (*becoming Morrisons in 2004*).

Among the legacies in his will he left: *"a sum sufficient but not exceeding £1,000 for the purpose of erecting in the town of Stone, a drinking fountain with a trough attached thereto for the use of horses, cattle and dogs."* The legacy was to come into effect on the death of his wife. The problem was that his young wife outlived him by over fifty years, and so when the Urban Council got the money there was no need for a horse trough. The problem was solved by the change in the terms of the will in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in 1957 and is now used to provide and maintain public seats in the urban area of Stone. The Trust is now administered by Stone Town Council with three Councillors appointed as trustees.



The Granite Cross War Memorial

Back to the churchyard and by the path is a stone circle which originally was a 17th century sun-dial. In the days before clocks became commonplace sun-dials were one f the only methods for people to tell the time. In 1958 as part of the church's bicentenary the sun-dial was restored with a dial plate and gnomon (*raised pointer*) but this was later vandalised and the plate stolen. In 1988 the column itself was pushed over by two youths fighting and broken in several pieces and was beyond repair so that only the base now remains.

Following the First World War the church decided to commemorate permanently the 41 members of the congregation who had been killed. A committee was set up and at first they thought of moving the organ from the chancel in the church into the north gallery and erecting a side chapel in its place. Various people offered money towards the cost and others offered items for the chapel, for example the Women's Bible Class offered a cross, and the Scouts an Altar desk.

All seemed to be going well and there seems to have been a real enthusiasm for the project until in September 1919 the committee were told that north gallery was not a suitable place in which to put the organ and so the idea of a chapel was scrapped.

The following objects were suggested as memorial instead of the chapel: a granite cross to be placed in the churchyard, a chancel screen, a reredos, a pulpit and a font. In the end it was decided to go with the granite cross. I often wonder how different the church would have looked if they had gone with one of the other suggestions.

In March 1920 the tender of Messrs. G. Maile and Son, of London was accepted to *"supply a 12ft. high Cross in grey granite, with two steps and carve on it the inscriptions desired for £255."* In addition there would be a cost £30 to being it from London and erecting it on the site chosen.

The war memorial was unveiled by General Sir Hill Child and dedicated by Dean Savage, of Lichfield Cathedral on 5th June, 1921. Later the names of those who died in the Second World War were added and dedicated on 12th November, 1950.

A little further from the memorial is a bed of roses which is a Garden of Remembrance for the burial of cremated remains and this was dedicated on 15th January, 1985.

In the path in front of the church steps is the tomb of the Rev. Richard Buckridge, LL.B., who was Rector from 1802-1824.

He was born in Lichfield in 1765 and baptised in St. Mary's Church, Lichfield on 2nd May, 1765. At the age of 19 he entered St. John's College in Oxford and was ordained a priest in 1784 aged 24. He was a very keen Latin scholar and often wrote in it. He died in 1824 and as he had requested he was buried in the path leading to the church and his tombstone written in Latin.



The Richard Vernon bench, the base of the sundial, and the Parish War Memorial

Near to the tomb is another bench to commemorate the Centenary of the First World War. A plaque on the rear reads, *"This bench was presented to the people of Stone by the Rotary Club of Stone and District to commemorate the centenary of the First World War, November 2018."*

In October 1965 during the course of laying a new sewer for toilet facilities in the church an old well was discovered about eight feet away from the north porch door of the church. The well was described as *"a little over four feet in diameter, narrowing at the top, the circular construction was beautifully done without the use of cement, skilfully locking of the bricks."*

Nothing was known about the well and so historian Norman Cope (*the former Headmaster of St. Michael's School and man who got me interested in local history*) looked in the old minute books of the church between 1753 and 1758.



The grave of Richard Buckridge in the church path

He discovered that in order to build the present church the trustees had to buy additional land, both for the site itself and for extensions to the churchyard. Part of the land was occupied by six old cottages. They were purchased by the church and as the tenants moved out and they became empty they were used as store-houses for the materials and tools used in the building.

The workmen's source of water for the mixing of the materials was the well at the back of these cottages, which faced "*The Rowe*," the old name for Church Street. The work of building the church was originally undertaken by a Mr. Gibson but when the work was only at the foundation stage, he gave up. The work was then taken over by Charles Trubshaw (of Great Haywood) and Samuel Webb. The minute book for 31st August, 1754 lists all the materials and tools which Gibson had left behind in the cottages.

When the church was completed the cottages were demolished and the well was filled in and the ground levelled. During the 200 years the rubble in the well had settled leaving the top dix feet or so empty with the narrow top of the well still supporting the layer forming the path.

As the work on the new sewer progressed part of the wall of one of the cottages was revealed, a brick floor or a hearth and a hand-cut piece of stone from the old priory. Many pieces of broken pottery, pieces of clay pipes and two pieces of old glass were also found. These were carefully collected by Mr. Cope and put into boxes and these are now in a cabinet in the Stone Town Council chamber.

Another well from the cottages is actually in the Baptistery of the church and although it was capped the stone floor above is quiet often damp with condensation and extremely cold.

A little further up Church Street a hole has been cut into the church wall. I was told by a schoolgirl visiting the church that her Grandfather had told her it was there so that people could watch for body snatchers. Unfortunately the hole doesn't have such historical origins. It was put in when the church had oil fires central heating and the tanker could not get up the church drive and so it parked in Church Street and put a pipe though the hole to fill the fuel tanks. Whenever I drive up Church Street and see it I always smile.

I hope that the above will be back memories to some readers and will be of interest to others.

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

Finally, as this is the last edition for this year, I wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy 2027.

Philip Leason

National Trust Talks

The Staffordshire Centre's programme of talks at Walton Village Hall in Stafford continues on **November 10th.**

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.



The Magic Of Pantomime

10th November - *A Talk by Dean Nixon*

This amusing and informative talk is interspersed with entertaining videos. Pantomime is an amazing part of our cultural heritage and the script often reflects society and what is happening in the world at a specific moment. It is 'a genre for whole families based on fairy tales, nursery and real-life stories, usually staged at Christmas but not directly referencing Christmas'.

So where do the stories come from? They come from old, verbal or traditional stories and novels. Many pantomime tales come from Charles Perrault and the Grimm brothers (*Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Puss in Boots*). From the Arabian Nights, we acquired Aladdin, Ali Baba and the Voyages of Sinbad and Robinson Crusoe gave us Dick Whittington.

There are many traditions associated with pantomime, such as gender switching, the inclusion of animals, audience participation, tried and tested pantomime jokes and specific characters. We will hear about some of the famous men and women who had played principal boy or dame, including Dan Leno, Samuel Simmons, Lucy Vestris, Vesta Tilley and Marie Lloyd.



Christmas Crackers

8th December - *A Talk by Nigel Holmes*

In this seasonal, interactive talk, Nigel will look at the origins of some of the traditions and celebrations that take place over the festive season. In the meantime, here are a few questions for you to consider: – Do you know the difference between Father Christmas and Santa Claus? Why do you hear the same songs being played in the shops at this time every year? Why do the mince pies on sale, have a 'best before' date of 15th December… and why does the mincemeat filling in the pies, not contain any actual meat?

When does Christmas begin… and when should you take your decorations down? Why do we pull crackers… and who came up with the idea in the first place?

All of these questions and more, will be answered in this fun talk. And, no doubt there'll be a mince pie to have with your cuppa afterwards.

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**

Days Gone By In Sandon

By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

We continue our tour around the villages in the area with a visit to Sandon. Situated on the busy A51 road a few miles south-east of Stone, the current village is what was Little Sandon at the time of the Domesday Book, and largely consists of buildings built for the Sandon Hall Estate around 1905.

There was a second village, Great Sandon, which stood by the church and the moated Old Hall. This village was deserted by 1717 and some of the roads and house platforms can be seen as earthworks in what is now livestock grazing land.

Earlier this year, extensive conservation work took place in All Saints' Church funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, including Sampson Erdiswicke's remarkable 17th century tomb and wall paintings in the chancel. It's well worth visiting the church on one of their open mornings or special event days. You can find out more at the church's website: **www.sandonallsaints.com**

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.



Sandon and District British Legion Dinner, late 1950s
This photograph was taken in the function room upstairs in the Dog and Doublet Inn, Sandon. (Kathleen Dewberry)





Above: Last day, Sandon School, July 1981
Children playing under the watchful eye of Mr N. Cooper and Mrs Percival. This photograph was taken on the last day of the Dudley Ryder School, Sandon in July 1981. The school opened in 1825. (Mrs H.W. Sargent).

Left: Game Keepers at Sandon Hall, October 1963
Pictured at Sandon Hall Park are, from left to right: Geoff Merrick (Head Keeper at Sandon), Fred Culpin (Gardener Chauffeur at Hilcote Hall), Harry Poole (Gamekeeper at Hilcote Hall). (Helen Frost)



The rear of Sandon Hall, 1860s
The original moated Sandon Old Hall was acquired by the Erdeswick family in 1338, but was sold to Lord Harrowby in 1776. The original building no longer remains, but was still standing in 1852. By this date the hall had been abandoned for the New Sandon Hall, constructed in the mid-eighteenth century. The present hall, pictured here, was built around 1850 after the earlier building had burnt down. It was designed in the Jacobean style by William Burn. This photograph is from an album of local views taken by Edward King Tenison (1805-1878), a highly regarded photographer in the early decades of photography. His family seat was at Kilronen, Roscommon, Ireland and he married Louisa Mary Anne Anson, daughter of the 1st Earl of Lichfield, also an accomplished amateur photographer. This image were probably taken during Tenison's visits to his wife's family home, Shugborough. (Staffordshire County Museum)



The Village Club, Sandon, about 1910.
The Village Club was built in 1905 at the same time that the Dog and Doublet, on the opposite side of the road, was rebuilt. Both buildings were designed by Sir E. Guy Dawber and paid for by the Earl of Harrowby. The cricket ground lies behind the Club. Postcard published by William Shaw of Burslem. (Jake Whitehouse Collection)



Sandon Station, about 1910
A postcard view of Sandon Railway Station looking north from the nearby Stafford Road B5066 bridge. The railway station at Sandon was built in 1849 for the convenience of guests visiting the Earl of Harrowby at Sandon Hall. The 'porte cochere' (a large covered entrance) provided protection to the Earl when he alighted from his coach during bad weather. The station closed in 1955. When the line was electrified in 1962 the platform and portico were removed. In 1970 the station was bought by the Sandon estate; the building was restored in 1985 and is now a private residence. This postcard was published by W H Smith & Son, Stafford. (Arthur Lloyd Collection)

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Mon	STRONG Fitness - Beginners welcome	9.30-10.15am
	Gentle Exercise U3A	10-11am
	Talking Books U3A	10.30-12.30pm
	Sweaty Mama (fitness class - mums & babies)	1-1.45pm
	Craft U3A (monthly 2nd Mon)	2-4pm
	U3A Meeting (monthly 1st Mon)	1.30-4pm
	Prayer Meeting St John's Church (bi-monthly)	2.30-4pm
	Pilates for All Levels - Beginners Welcome	5.20-6.10pm
	Slimming World	6-7.30pm
	Clubbercise Dance Fitness - Beginners welcome	6.30-7.20pm
Tues	Pilates for All Levels - Beginners Welcome	9.30-10.30am
	Family History U3A (fortnightly)	10.30-12.30pm
	Disco Line Dancing: High Beginners & Improvers	11-12 noon
	Gentle Seated Exercise to Music & Social	1.30-2.45pm
	Sequence Dancing	2-4pm
	Cryptic Crosswords U3A (1st & 3rd Tues) back Sept	2-4pm
	Papercraft U3A (fortnightly 2nd & 4th Tues)	2-4pm
	Weight Watchers	6-7pm
	Fitness Pilates for All Levels - Beginners Welcome	6.20-7.10pm
	Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners & Social	7.30-9pm
	Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly)	6.30-8.30pm
	Rock Choir	8-9.30pm
Weds	Guitar U3A	10.30-12.30pm
	Knit, Crochet & Chat	10.30-12.30pm
	Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners	12.15-1.15pm
	Diabetes Path to Remission (NHS referrals)	1-5.30pm
	Disco Line Dancing: Beginners & Social	1.30-3pm
	Conexus Tuition Stafford & Stone	4-6pm
	Combat Assassin Fitness - Beginners welcome	6.15-7pm
	Yoga: All Abilities	6.30-7.30pm
	Line Dancing: DISCO Stomp (last Weds monthly)	7.30-9.30pm
Thurs	Happy Feet	10-11am
	Italian Beginners U3A - (back in September)	10-11.30am
	Private Booking	10.15-11.45am
	Relaxation Session U3A	2.30-3.30pm
	Disco Line Dancing: Absolute Beginners	6-7pm
	Pregnancy Loss Support (bi-monthly)	6.30-8.30pm
	GPC Meeting (3rd Thurs monthly)	7-8pm
	Pilates 'Men on Mats' - Beginners	7.30-8.30pm
	Flower Club (last Thurs monthly)	7.30-9.30pm
Fri	STRONG Fitness - Beginners welcome	9.30-10.15am
	Singing for Fun U3A (fortnightly)	1.30-3pm
	Dressmaking & Needlecraft U3A (fortnightly)	2-4pm
	Taekwondo	7-8.30pm
	BINGO - Community & Social Group	7.30-9.30pm
Sat	Slimming World	8.30-10am
	Overeaters Anonymous	9.15-10.15am
	Fitness Pilates for All Levels - Beginners Welcome	9.30-10.20am
	Community Sewing Circle (monthly 2nd Sat)	12-2.30pm
	Child of Mine Playgroup (last Sat monthly)	2-4pm
	Line Dancing Tutorials, Courses & Socials	Various
Sun	Table Top Sale/Car Boot (fortnightly Sept-April)	8.30-11.30am
	St John's Church - Weekly Service	10.30-11.30am
	St John's Church - Monthly Service (last Sun)	6.30-7.30pm
	Sound Bath:Deep Relaxation Session (Monthly 2nd Sun)	6.30-7.45pm

*There's been **a lot** going on at Walton Community Centre in the last couple of months! The **ROCK CHOIR Afternoon Tea** was a hit and the **MacMillan coffee morning** raised a FABULOUS **£440** by people eating a lot of cake and chatting...! **Looking to** the week's ahead the community centre's **TABLE TOP & Car boot sale** will continue fortnightly up until the end of **November**. The **CRAFT FAIR** in November is set to be a great **SHOPPING** event, PLUS why not get a ticket for Saturday 21st November 7.30pm & come to see Stafford Players in a fun family adaptation of **'A Christmas Carol'** - its set to be a brilliant event....! Contact **Trish** on **07711 115462** for more info.*

AFTERNOON TEA WITH THE ROCK CHOIR..!







Unity 2026: "Your World of Possibilities"

Unity 2026: *"Your World of Possibilities*" was the 10th International Camp hosted by Girlguiding Staffordshire.

The camp takes place every four years and this Unity camp was some two years in the planning. It took place from July 25 to July 31, 2026, at Statfold Country Park in Tamworth, Staffordshire, welcoming members aged 10–18 from across the UK and around the world for a week of adventure and skill-building.

A group of 62 Guides and Rangers, accompanied by 10 Leaders from Girlguiding Stone Division , enjoyed a week jam packed full of water activities, up cycling, crafts, science experiments, specialised STEM activities, the girls took advantage of a contentment area, environmental awareness activities, climbing, cycling and many more besides. One of the highlights for many was an afternoon of enjoying all the fairground rides in the fairground museum at Statfold. There was also an opportunity to enjoy activities in the International tent and to enjoy refreshments in the pop-up camp cafe.

The girls enjoyed making friends with Guides from across the UK plus Guides from Canada, America, Australia, Gibraltar and New Zealand and loved swapping badges with each other *(a well-known Girlguiding tradition*). The days were full on, and the evenings were busy too, with opening and closing ceremonies; a Western night, Chappell Roan and Taylor Swift tribute acts, which set everyone up on their feet and dancing, a film night and a campfire where the international visitors entertained the camp with songs and sketches.

The weather was of course very hot throughout the week and the girls and volunteers did extremely well to cope with the heat. For some it was their first time camping with Girlguiding and what an experience to be camping with 1100 other Guides and volunteers from across the globe.

Even though Guides of 2026 are not collecting firewood for cooking on open fires or sleeping in bell tents or making wash stands out of wooden poles, (*as Guides would have done in 1910 when Guides were first established*) the ethos of Girlguiding remains as strong and true today; friendships and adventures across the oceans.

None of this, however, would have been possible without all the amazing volunteers who had spent the last two years planning the camp and to the guiding and scouting adult members of Stone who volunteered their time as part of the engineering team, the core team, security, first aid and those leaders who camped with the guides.

One mum commented, *"my daughter had talked non-stop about the whole experience on her return from Unity and loved every moment of it"*. Friendships and memories are made of this.

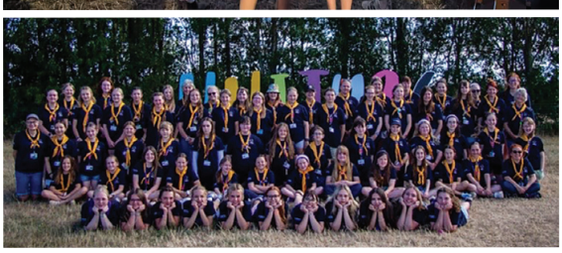
Freya, a guide, said, "*I absolutely loved the giant assault course at Cliffe Lakes, scary but great fun!*" Chloe, a Ranger and Young Leader, commented," *I loved meeting other people, especially from other countries, like Gibraltar*".

There are lots of exciting international opportunities for girls in Girlguiding and several of Stone Division Guides, and a leader, are off to Norway next year and also to Mexico with Girlguiding Staffordshire.

Lisa Kane, Stone Division Commissioner, who helped at Unity for the week with the whole of her family, commented, *"Unity is a fantastic opportunity for girls to make new friendships, rekindle those that were made at previous camps and experience a whole host of activities and experiences. It is amazing how a blank canvas of a field can turn into a hive of fun and friendship and memories are made forever. Here's to Unity 2030. I would also like to say a huge thank you to all the leaders and volunteers who give up their time to take the girls on camp and also to the huge army of family and friends who helped behind the scenes preparing for the camp, checking and cleaning kit and transporting it for us - without them, it would not be possible."*

If you would like more information about volunteering with Girlguiding Stone Division, please register your interest on the girlguiding website **www.girlguiding.org.uk** or contact me at stonedivision8@gmail.com



















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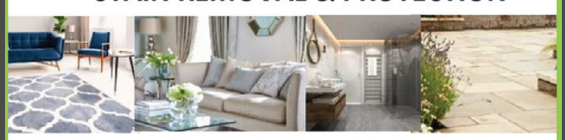

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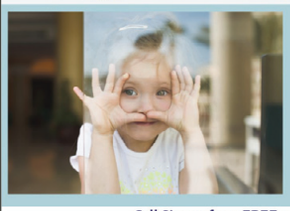

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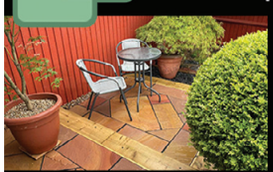



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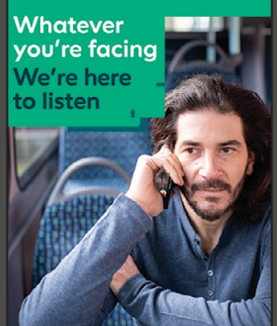

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An Amazing Weekend At Kibblestone!

Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs, from Oulton BP Scouts, joined in for an incredible two night sleepover at Kibblestone in September

We got up to so much fun and packed an awful lot into the weekend. On the Saturday we had a fantastic range of activities, including: Paper airplanes / Straw rockets / Marshmallow shooters / Penknife safety and shaving sticks / Flint and steel and practising lighting fires / Pioneering and learning basic knots / Using the toy pistols and rifles.

After all that, we headed off to explore Kibblestone and were lucky enough to be the first group to try their brand-new picture quiz, which was brilliant! We then cooked our own pitta bread pizzas, choosing our own fillings, before making smores over the fire and finishing the evening with a good old camp sing song.

On Sunday it was Kibblestone Fun Day with another brilliant selection of activities:

Crossbows / Soft axe throwing / Pioneering / Cave Bus / Compass work / Animal trail / Nightlining / Scavenger hunts



The children had a fantastic time, demonstrating the skills they already had while learning lots of new ones along the way. We think we may have sent home some rather tired children!

A massive well done to every single one of you. You have all made us incredibly proud and have shown exactly what Oulton BP Scouts are all about, great behaviour, fantastic manners, teamwork and kindness towards one another.

We hope you all had an amazing weekend and made lots of memories that you'll be talking about for a long time to come!

Well done Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs you were brilliant!

From Jenn/Katie - Squirrel / Beaver Leader

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Heritage Committee with distinguished guests at the celebration event

All Saints' Autumn of Celebration

It has been a busy time for All Saints' Sandon as we delivered another fantastic Heritage Open Day along with many other events and have welcomed a number of school visits as part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund Project.

Heritage Open Day this year was held on 20th September and it was a wonderful opportunity to show off the amazing work the conservators have done on the historic features of the church.

Members of the history group were on hand to give visitors detailed information about the history and conservation of each of the features such as the wall paintings, Tudor monuments and stained glass windows.

This was the first time that visitors have been able to view the Royal Coat of Arms which was finally reinstalled on 10th September with much excitement as it arrived larger than when it left the church! The conservators discovered that the canvas had been folded around the frame and so the wooden frame had to be widened to accommodate the full size canvas. Visitors were also treated to a lunchtime organ recital, family crafts and graveyard tours so there was plenty to do for all the family.

September was a musical month for Sandon as the church also welcomed the Staffordshire Military Wives Choir on Saturday 12th. It was a super evening of music and song led by musical director Dan Hollinghurst.



October has been a busy month for the Activities volunteers who help with school visits. School children from Hanley St Lukes enjoyed activities including a history trail, chiming the bells and exploring the nature and biodiversity of the church yard with the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

We were also able to trial a brand new *'escape room style'* lock box mystery with teenagers from St Peter's C of E Academy from Fenton, who were visiting as part of their annual retreat. They worked really well together in teams to crack the codes to the boxes using features they could see and read around the church and had great fun in the bell tower, ringing handbells, dressing up as Tudors and exploring the outside of the church with the outdoor trail.



It was perfect weather for the history walk on the 4th October with nearly 40 attending for a fascinating talk and walk.

On 7th October, All Saints' held a celebration event to celebrate all the work that has been done so far as part of The National Lottery Heritage Fund Project. In the presence of the Lord-Lieutenant and other distinguished guests, the project partners and volunteers attended a special event which included speeches from key individuals and each visitor was given a token goody bag as a memory of the project.

It was wonderful to see everyone come together and admire the amazing work that has been achieved over the last few years.

The work isn't finished yet though, as there are still a number of events running throughout the autumn, from **25th October to the 22nd November, each Sunday afternoon** the church will be open to view the display of 2000 poppies that have been knitted by the dedicated and hardworking knit and natter group.

There will of course be a drop in on **Remembrance Day, 11th November** from 10am until 12 noon.

All Saints' is holding a **Christmas Tree Festival each Sunday from 29th November to 20th December 1.30pm – 4pm and each Saturday from 5th to 19th December 10am -1pm.**

There will be ten trees to see decorated by local organisations as well as a children's **Christmas Tree Trail and refreshments, with crafts on the 29th November, 12th December and other selected days.**

For further details and opening times please visit our website at **www.sandon allsaints.com** and Facebook page All Saints' Church Sandon Facebook



The Coat of Arms



The History Walk







Singing for Fun



Sew and Sew

We Are Stone & District u3a!

HOW do you see yourself spending the Winter months, and then extending into the rest of the year? Active-dancing or walking? Settling down with a good book, or a card game? Learning a new skill? - or simply being with like-minded people from all walks of life with oodles of life experience, all raring to go in whatever subject they choose, having fun whilst participating, and group leaders, all volunteers willing to share their skills and knowledge.

Stone u3a have a wide variety of meetings covering all the above, and many more besides for example.– ***Art Drawing, Computers, Chess, Global Politics, Photography, Reading, Sew and Sew, Table Tennis, Walking.***



Computers

We hold **Speaker meetings** where a variety of subjects are enjoyed given by seasoned speakers. Our next speaker is John Ruggiero; ex Stoke City footballer, policeman, and now a well-known wildlife photographer.

We also run occasional **outings**, as last month a repeat of the fungi foray was arranged, this time at the Monkey Forest, Trentham.

Membership of a u3a is open to all who are retired or no longer in full-time employment and whatever you choose to take up, the overall cost is a mere £55 per year, which works out as just over £1 a week, for as many different subjects as you can fit in.

Why not try us out? A **taster** might be your introduction to a whole new way of thinking and doing. Just contact the Group Leader, details on our website below.





Top: Our Walking group out in October

Above: From the recent fungi foray
***ED:** watch out for them fly agarics!*

For all our group activities, speaker meetings, membership and news about Stone u3a see our website at **https://stone.u3asite.uk**

Aston Brownies Reach Gold

Aston Brownies celebrated the end of term in style at the end July with a family BBQ, game of rounders and awards presentation.

We had all families join us, which was lovely, and gave them an insight as to what the girls get up to on a weekly basis, and what they can achieve.

We had six girls make their promise, four girls achieve there bronze award, which means they have completed two theme awards and at least two interest badges, two girls achieve silver, for completing four theme awards and three girls achieve gold, which means they have completed all six theme awards, and at least three interest badges.

The gold is the highest award a brownie can achieve before they '*fly*' up to Guides.

In addition to the girls achievements our Young Leader made her promise and will start her young leader's qualification, and we said goodbye to two of our Young Leaders - Butterfly and Woodpecker who have just completed their qualification and go off to University in September.

Lisa Kane, Brownie Guider said *'It was a lovely evening and we went full circle, new girls getting enrolled, brownies achieving their gold award and saying goodbye to the girls who were both former brownies at Aston over ten years ago'*

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The EYA Stone Celebrates Nursery Transformation With Community Open Day

The Early Years Academy Stone welcomed new and existing families on Saturday 17 October to celebrate its newly refurbished nursery, with animal encounters, menu tasting and Forest School exploration helping to make it a special day.

Families explored the transformed learning environments, met the nursery team and enjoyed meeting the furry friends brought along by Oaksley's Farm. Existing families had the opportunity to visit the rooms their children will move into next, helping them feel familiar with the spaces and talk through the next steps with the team. Visitors also sampled dishes from the nursery's menu and discussed everyday milestones, including potty training.



Outside, families explored the nursery's Forest School environment and gathered beside the fire pit to enjoy warm apple cider, experiencing the outdoor learning opportunities available to children.

The nursery received lovely feedback throughout the day, with new registrations adding to the celebrations.

The refurbishment has been carefully considered from a child's perspective, creating spaces that encourage curiosity, communication, creativity and independence. Alongside areas for investigation and imaginative play, quieter spaces offer children somewhere comfortable to pause and feel secure.

A spokesperson for The Early Years Academy said:

"What a wonderful way to celebrate this next chapter for The EYA Stone. It was lovely to welcome new families, spend time with our existing families and see children



exploring and enjoying the environments.

The furry visitors from Oaksley's Farm brought plenty of smiles, while our menu tasting and time around the Forest School fire pit gave families a little flavour of everyday life at The EYA Stone.

We were delighted with the positive feedback and thank everyone who joined us, alongside our team who put so much care into making the day special."

The newly transformed spaces complement the experiences offered through The EYA's specialist Academies and programmes, including outdoor discovery through the Forest School Academy and practical learning through the Baking Academy.

The spokesperson added:

"Every decision within the refurbishment has been made with our children at the centre.

We want them to feel comfortable, confident and inspired, with opportunities to explore independently, build friendships and discover something new.

At The EYA Stone, our approach is rooted in nurturing relationships, meaningful experiences and creating awe and wonder in every moment."

Families who were unable to attend are welcome to contact the nursery to arrange a visit and learn more about its provision for babies, toddlers and preschool children.

For further information, visit **www.theearlyyearsacademy.co.uk** or call 01785 901 203.









Exceptional Ofsted Success For St Dominic's Primary

We are absolutely delighted to share the wonderful outcome of our recent Ofsted inspection, which places us in the top 1% of schools nationally.

St Dominic's Catholic Primary School was judged to be:

- Exceptional for Achievement
- Exceptional in Early Years
- Strong Standard for Attendance and Behaviour
- Strong Standard for Curriculum and Teaching
- Strong Standard for Inclusion
- Strong Standard for Leadership and Governance
- Strong Standard for Personal Development and Wellbeing
- Safeguarding Standards Met

The report celebrates the ambitious education provided throughout our school, the exceptionally strong outcomes achieved by our pupils and the caring, purposeful environment in which every child is encouraged to flourish. It also recognises our children's excellent behaviour, enthusiasm for learning, kindness and respect for one another.

"Leaders take highly effective action to raise aspirations and ensure all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, succeed. Consequently, outcomes in statutory assessments are consistently above national averages."

Inspectors found that pupils make *"remarkable progress"* and described our Early Years provision; *"Children in the early years, experience a calm, welcoming and highly stimulating start to school life. Through a highly ambitious and carefully structured curriculum, they quickly acquire the knowledge and confidence needed to succeed.",*

We are immensely proud that inspectors saw our mission, *"As Children of God, We Love One Another,"* lived out so clearly across our school community.



This exceptional outcome belongs to everyone: our wonderful children, dedicated staff, supportive parents and carers, governors, parish, St Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Academy Trust and wider school family. Thank you for the part you play in making St Dominic's such a very special place.

We could not be prouder of our children and of everything we continue to achieve together.

Read the full report here: **https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/142210**

Please contact the school office if you are interested in registering for our open morning sessions at office@st-dominics-catholic.staffs.sch.uk

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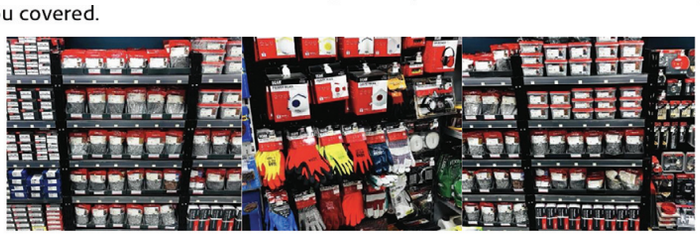

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Stone Hockey Club Former Members Luncheon At Stone Golf Club

Former members of Stone Hockey Club gathered at Stone Golf Club on Tuesday 6th October 2026 for their annual celebration of many happy memories of their days at the Club.

30 veterans aged between 50 and 91 years travelled from many parts of the Uk to share a 3-course lunch followed by entertaining addresses from Mike Calverley, Leonard Bassett and John Hartley.

Next year's luncheon is fixed for **Tuesday 5th October 2027.**

From Martin Robinson



See what joy the shoeboxes bring!

Operation Christmas Child Good News, Great Joy

Each shoebox gift is a tangible expression of love for a child in real need, if you would like to fill a box with gifts for a child, please pick up a box from church.

The boxes, together with the leaflets, are now at the back of St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone and St Saviour's in Aston.***Please note that the boxes should be returned to church by the 8th November at the very latest.***

Alternatively if you have your own shoeboxes, these can be used, but please cover them with Christmas wrapping paper. You may also donate a shoebox online.

Fill your shoebox with a selection of fun toys, hygiene items and school supplies. If possible, include one or two special items you know a child will love such as a doll, cuddly toy or deflated football with pump. The leaflets give more details or you can check online. ***Please note that liquids, soap, toothpaste and sweets should NOT be included in shoeboxes.***

Please also include a donation of £5 to cover project costs, including shipping. This may either be placed in the box or made online, when you will need to printout the bar code. If you make the donation online, then it is possible to track where the box is sent to.

Enjoy gathering together the items for your shoebox gift and please remember to pray for the child who is to receive your box.

The boxes will be taken to St Saviour's in time for the service on Remembrance Sunday when they will receive a blessing. I shall then be able to take them to the local drop off point during the **National Collection Week, which this year is the 9th to the 16th November.**

For more information, or to donate a shoebox online, please visit the Samaritan's Purse website – **https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/**

Thank you for your support of this amazing project.



Rooftop Studios Launches New Musical Theatre Packages

Young performers in Staffordshire are being offered an exciting new opportunity to develop their talents, as Stone-based Rooftop Studios launches two specially priced Musical Theatre Class Packages.

With its popular Junior and Senior Stage Academy classes currently fully booked, the established performing arts school has introduced the new packages to give more youngsters the opportunity to access specialist training in singing, acting, dance and performance.

Each package combines four weekly classes – Acting Through Song, LAMDA, Musical Theatre Jazz and Vocal Smash – at a significantly reduced price compared with booking the sessions individually. The Junior Musical Theatre Package costs £79 per month (instead of £128) saving £49, while the Senior Musical Theatre Package is priced at £96 per month *(instead of £140)* representing a saving of £44.

Based in the heart of Stone, Rooftop Studios has a long-established reputation for nurturing young talent, with a teaching team boasting extensive professional performing arts experience. The studio also maintains strong links with the professional theatre industry, regularly welcoming West End performers and other industry specialists to deliver exclusive workshops and masterclasses, giving students valuable insight into life on the professional stage.

Studio Director Laura Keeling said:

"With our Junior and Senior Stage Academy classes currently full, we wanted to find another way for young people who love musical theatre to access the fantastic training opportunities we offer here at Rooftop Studios.

Our teaching team brings a wealth of professional performance experience into the studio, and we're passionate about passing that knowledge on to the next generation. Alongside our regular classes, our industry connections mean we can offer some really exciting opportunities for students to learn from performers working at the highest level.

These new packages bring together four complementary disciplines, helping students become more confident, versatile performers. Whether they dream of a career on the West End stage or simply love singing, dancing and acting, there's so much to gain from training across different areas of musical theatre. We've worked hard to make the packages affordable for families, offering significant savings compared with taking the classes individually."

The new packages are designed to develop performance technique, creativity, communication and confidence in a supportive environment.

For further information or to enquire about booking, visit **www.rooftopstudios.co.uk,** or you can email info@rooftopstudios.co.uk or call 01785 761233.



Jack Absolute Flies Again Takes Flight

Crown Wharf Theatre is heading into one of its most exciting seasons yet, beginning with its next major in-house production - Jack Absolute Flies Again, a sparkling wartime comedy by Richard Bean and Oliver Chris.

Originally co-produced by the National Theatre, the play blends farce, romance and razor-sharp wit, all set against the backdrop of the Battle of Britain.

Directed by NODA show award-winning director Leo Capernaros, this production promises the same imagination, pace and heart that audiences loved in Crown Wharf's acclaimed opening show Shakespeare in Love.

In just its first year, the theatre's in-house work has become known for inventive staging, strong ensemble performances and a thriving community spirit - qualities that have helped fill more than 10,500 seats and establish Crown Wharf Theatre as a cultural anchor for Stone and the surrounding villages.

A comedy soaring through the skies

Set in 1940 at RAF Ascot, the story follows dashing pilot Jack Absolute as he returns to duty — only to discover his former flame Lydia Languish is stationed nearby with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force.

What unfolds is a riot of mistaken identities, romantic entanglements and brilliantly British humour, echoing everything from Sheridan's The Rivals to the farcical energy of classic wartime comedies.

Audiences can expect: High-energy physical comedy, clever wordplay and quick-fire malapropisms, Tender moments amid the chaos of war, Inventive staging and ensemble work

It's a show that celebrates bravery, love and laughter - even when the world is upside down.

Jack Absolute Flies Again runs **Friday 6th – Saturday 14th November,** with tickets available via the Crown Wharf Theatre website.



President Handover At Stone Hockey Club

The photo shows the outgoing fourth president, who served for over a decade at Stone Hockey Club, Mr Len Bassett (*centre*)with the incoming new President Mike Topley (*left*) being interviewed by a presenter from Hockey Uncut website.

Mike has also supported the club on and off the pitch in many forms. Mike was club chair for a decade, is current club treasurer, and also a regular umpire until recently post his playing days.

We welcomed Mike as President this year, following Len retiring from his role.

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Stone Old Alleynians Girls and Women FC 2026-27

Stone Old Alleynians' Girls Section Continues To Go From Strength To Strength

Stone Old Alleynians FC's girls section celebrated another remarkable milestone recently, as more than 200 young female players came together for the club's annual girls' section photoshoot.

The rapidly growing section is the largest female football club section in Staffordshire, with around 200 active players ranging from u6 level through to open-age football. With a wider membership approaching 500 people, it is also one of the largest girls' football sections in the Midlands.

The girls' section forms just one part of a thriving football club which now boasts more than 2,000 members and over 70 teams. The club was recently named Staffordshire FA Club of the Year and has also achieved the highest national accreditation available from The FA – 3-Star Accreditation.

Staffordshire FA representatives were also in attendance at the photoshoot, filming the event to capture footage for their annual awards evening at St George's Park in October. It will be a particularly special occasion for Stone Old Alleynians, who will officially receive the prestigious Club of the Year award at the event.

The scale of the girls' section was certainly evident during the photoshoot, with approximately 200 players lining up for the cameras – representing around 80 per cent of the entire girls' section. The event has grown in size year after year, with the cameraman having to move ever further backwards to fit everyone into shot.

Club Chairperson Richard Jones said the growth of the girls' section had been "*Phenomenal*".

"The size of the girls' section is phenomenal, with sixteen teams playing all over the county and further afield on Saturday mornings.

What is particularly pleasing is that we now have a full pathway from junior girls' football through to the open-age game. Several of our junior players from last season are now competing in the FA Cup this season for the women's team, having progressed through our junior ranks – with one player having been with us since u9s.

In order to achieve what we have achieved, we are exceptionally grateful to all of the volunteers who give up their time to make the club the success that it is today. Across the whole club, we have more than 280 registered volunteers.

We hope to continue what we are doing and are very welcoming to both new players and volunteers alike."

With the girls' section continuing to expand and a clear pathway now established from junior football into the women's game, Stone Old Alleynians FC is demonstrating the strength and opportunities available to female players at every age.



The girls' section volunteers

Stone Flower Club Christmas Presentation

September saw a resume of the meetings of Stone Flower Club we welcomed a new demonstrator Jacqui Owen.

Jacqui is a very different demonstrator where all her designs are eco friendly she does not use any floral foam and buys British flowers. Jacqui also informed those present of other things that are not good with plastics. Along with the fabulous designs and her information led to a very enjoyable night.

We will have met up in October as the Gazette is published so will feed back on this in the new year

Our next not to be missed night is our **Christmas Presentation on Thursday 26th November** where we are thrilled to welcome back a Staffordshire demonstrator Rob Towersley-Wright a very talented demonstrator.

Rob likes to set his designs into a staging set so expect to be wowed at the visuality of this event.

This is at Walton Community Centre, Whitemill Lane, Stone. Doors open at 6.45 demonstration starts at 7.30 pm there will also be mince pies and a glass of shloer along with the normal tea and coffee.

Get there early as it will be a well-attended evening guests cost is £8

The next event will be in the New Year when we have our **AGM on 28th January** at Walton Community Centre, Whitemill Lane, Stone

At the last committee meeting we have managed to secure the major roles for another 12 months but we are still hoping others will step forward to join us on the committee to keep the club going strong.

We wish everyone a Happy Christmas and look forward to welcoming even more new faces in 2027 where you will always find a warm welcome.

