

STRETTON FOCUS

JANUARY 2023

COMMUNITY VOICE OF THE STRETTONS

£1



Carding Mill Valley

STRETTON FOCUS



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Founded 1967

Average monthly sales 1,550 copies
(About 67% of dwellings in Church Stretton)

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Outlets

STRETTON FOCUS may be purchased by annual subscription (delivered) or directly from Vine & Co (Sandford Avenue), Co-op, Family Shopper, Church Stretton Library, Mayfair and the Churches.

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This Month in Focus

- 26 All Stretton Am. Dram. Society
- 52 Amnesty International
- 54 Anglican Voice
- 30 Crossword January
- 30 Crossword Solution December
- 38 CS Leisure Centre
- 10 CSTC Community Matters
- 3 Editorial: Dave Lyons
- 41 Engaging Issues
- 20 Flicks in the Sticks
- 42 Friends of CS Library
- 16 Gardening Club
- 3 Good Neighbours
- 41 Historic Church Stretton
- 54 History Group
- 51 Letter
- 15 Long Mynd/Stiperstones Shuttle Bus
- 22 Marmaladies WI Update
- 34 Mayfair Lottery
- 34 Mayfair News
- 33 Methodist Voice
- 51 Quaker Voice
- 8 Recipe of the Month
- 33 Rotary Club News
- 50 Royal British Legion
- 43 RSPB Nature Notes: Robins
- 36 SACWG
- 18 Scout Group News
- 26 SHI Event: Ranagri
- 25 Shropshire Hills Conservation
- 3 Shropshire Ornithological Soc. Talk
- 43 Stepping Stones
- 8 Stretton Choral Society
- 16 Stretton Climate Care
- 55 Strettondale Patient Participation Group
- 52 Strettons Arts Forum
- 28 Student Journalists
- 51 Thank You
- 54 Trivia Answers
- 16 Trivia Corner
- 25 URC Voice
- 4 What's On
- 18 Wreathmaking at All Stretton

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES AND PHOTOGRAPHS FOR PUBLICATION

should be made to the editors by
email at

editor@strettonfocus.co.uk

Please use this address even if you are contacting an individual editor. If you do not receive a response within **48 hours** please check the address carefully and send your email again.

If you are unable to use email, your material may be submitted to

Wrights, Estate Agent,
32 Sandford Avenue,
Church Stretton, SY6 6BW

clearly labelled 'Stretton Focus'. These items are collected on the deadline date.

When are the deadlines?

The deadline for receipt of all submissions by all methods is

**12 NOON on the FIRST
MONDAY OF EACH MONTH**

for the following month's edition. If the Monday is a Bank Holiday, the deadline will be

12 NOON on the TUESDAY of that week.

No submissions will be accepted after the deadline unless prior arrangements have been agreed with the editors.

For the **February** issue the deadline is **Tuesday 3rd January, at 12 noon.**

For the **March** issue the deadline is **Monday 6th February, at 12 noon.**

The **February** issue will be distributed on **Friday 27th January**

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Focus can be purchased by subscription and delivered to your door for £12 per year.

If you wish to use this facility, please phone the Subscriptions Manager on 01694 725533 or 724184 or email **focus.subscription@gmail.com**

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Focus has a scheme whereby clubs, societies, organisations and individuals can apply for a grant up to a maximum of £1,000 for projects which have a direct benefit to the community of the Strettons. For details and an application form, please see the Focus website

www.strettonfocus.co.uk



Carding Mill Valley

Photo: Simon Whaley

Editorial

Well, here we are again. Another 12 months put to bed and the Lyons clan begin our seventh year in the Strettons and me as an editor of *Focus*. It seems a suitable opportunity to answer the question that many of us 'incomers' get asked: What made you come here?

We discovered Stretton when on a family holiday at Manor Adventure near Craven Arms. We had one daughter at university and one at that age where it was uncool to holiday with the parents. Manor allowed her to mix with kids her age doing adventure stuff leaving us to do guided walking. This led us to discover the scenic splendours of the Long Mynd and the surrounding area. She ended up working as a group leader at Manor and as dutiful parents we felt compelled to travel the 130 miles or so to go and see her while boosting the local economy by staying in Stretton B&Bs.

Anyway, we loved the place so much that we decided to move here. I still have fond recollections of arriving in the cold of a winter's evening and discovering that while our removals men had left a mattress accessible in the lorry, there was no bedding to accompany it. Though on the bright side we did have a Christmas tree.

The next day we bought a copy of *Focus*. Featured inside was an advert for an editor. I took this to be an omen and considered that it would be a great way to get to know people and get involved in the community. Six years later I still think this was a defining move and it is a privilege to continue to volunteer with *Focus*.

So that is my 'why move to Stretton?' story. But it would be remiss of me to not to mention the things that caught my eye this month.

Firstly, I must give a #shoutout to our student journalists. I think it's essential that our younger writers are given a voice to express their views so that us older readers can see what is important to them. And it is a great opportunity for them to hone their journalistic skills. In this edition you can read about family values at Christmas, New Year traditions around the world and the dangers of technology.

On the arts scene we can look forward to a fine programme of Flicks in the Sticks (page 20) and the new Live Screening at Mayfair (page 34). Events at the SHI continue with an amazing folk band. I looked them up on YouTube and in my view, they are a must-see (page 26). It may be January, but the Strettons Arts Forum is looking forward to next summer. Check out its plans and how you can get involved on page 52.

And finally, as we plan to get this to you just before New Year, I get the chance to wish all our readers a safe and happy (belated) Christmas and 2023.

Dave Lyons



Your New Year's Resolution...

Become a Good Neighbour! and join us as a...

Driver Co-ordinator

- Work from home, one day a month
- Take telephone calls between 9am and 4pm
- Match drivers to clients needing transport to medical appointments

Driver

- Drive clients to medical appointments, usually twice a month
- Fuel and parking costs reimbursed

Mayfair Meals Deliverer

- Stretton's local 'meals-on-wheels' service
- Join a two-person delivery team
- 90 minutes a month
- Fuel costs reimbursed

To find out more...

Tel: 01694 724242
Email: csgoodneighbours@gmail.com



Shropshire Ornithological Society

The Church Stretton branch of Shropshire Ornithological Society presents 'Living with Swifts', a talk by Carol Wood, on 23rd January 2023. The branch AGM will precede the talk.

The venue is the Methodist Church Hall, Watling Street South, starting at 7.30pm. Refreshments provided. Admission £3 for non-members, free for members. Everyone welcome.



David John

What's On in the Strettons in January

If you wish to make contact with societies and groups, please see the list in the yellow pages

The What's On section continues to evolve. All the weekly meetings are now listed separately from the main diary of less frequently occurring and one-off events. We welcome your feedback on the new look.

The 'What's On' diary may also be viewed for free on our website: www.strettonfocus.co.uk.

Any amendments and entries too late for the print edition may be added to the website WO by emailing us at editor@strettonfocus.co.uk.

WARM WELCOME PROJECT:

Over this winter, a 'warm space' initiative aims to offer warmth and shelter for people who are in need. Local 'warm hubs' include:

All Stretton Village Hall

Facilities: toilets, café, mobile library.
Some Tuesdays, dates to be confirmed.

Church Stretton Library

Facilities: Easy access for all, disabled toilet, books, computers, wifi, info.
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9.30am to 5pm

Mayfair Community Centre

You can always expect a warm welcome.
We can also offer advice on cost-of-living concerns. Facilities: easy access for all, disabled toilet, café, information and activities. Please see main Mayfair article for more details.
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

St Laurence Parish Church

Facilities: Easy access for all
Open every day

Warm Welcome at the Methodist Hall

Anyone who wants a warm place to go to is welcome. Hot drinks, and companionship provided.
Every Wednesday
12.30-4pm Methodist Church Hall

WEEKLY EVENTS/MEETINGS:

Babies and Toddlers Group

A friendly, informal group for babies and children until they start school. Children to be accompanied by a responsible adult. Parents-to-be are also welcome.
Every **Wednesday** in term time
10am-12noon Methodist Church Hall

Badminton Club

Including Junior, Adult and Disability Badminton. All abilities welcome from age 7 to adult. Sports wheelchairs and rackets available free of charge.
Info from Alan Fox 07977 060303
Every **Wednesday** in term time
6.30-8pm CS Leisure Centre

Balance/Strength: Be Strong Be Steady

£7 per session (cheaper block booking price available).
Improve your balance and strength with Wendy Southorn.
Every **Tuesday**; Book at Mayfair
12.15-1.15pm Mayfair

Bridge Club, The Strettons

Duplicate Bridge in a relaxing atmosphere for players of all standards.
Teaching for those new to the game.
Visitors are welcome. Contact:
Maxine Lainchbury 07971 191664
www.bridgewebs.com/churchstretton
Every **Thursday**
1-5pm All Stretton Village Hall

Chess Club, CS

All ages and abilities welcome.
Contact: Tom Williamson 722767.
Please enter via rear entrance to avoid contact in bar area.
Every **Thursday**
7.30pm Kings Arms, CS

Christian Meditation (online via Zoom)

We are a non-denominational group welcoming everyone. Christian Meditation is a modern name for a form of contemplative prayer found in early Christian monastic communities and in other major faith traditions. More information from John Dennison: 1johndennison@gmail.com
Every **Tuesday and Thursday**
8pm via Zoom

Christian Meditation (meeting in person)

As above, but meeting in person. More information from Janice Hicking: 07889 850265 or email janice@hicking.co.uk
Every **Friday**
2pm URC Vestry

Dancing: Learn 2 Jive

Great fun, improves fitness, no partner needed, join anytime, easy to learn and no experience needed. £6 per class.
Contact Matt or Sarah: 01989 750354, info@coolmovesdance.co.uk, www.coolmovesdance.co.uk
Every **Monday**
7.30pm beginners/8.30pm intermediates SHI

Dancing: Scottish

Former and new dancers welcome to this lively social evening, where tuition and support is available. No previous knowledge needed, so why not come and give it a go?
Contact 722107
Every **Monday**
7.30-9.30pm All Stretton VH

Energy Advice from Stretton Climate Care

Our knowledgeable volunteers will be on hand to offer advice on a wide range of issues to do with energy saving, renewable technology and the growing climate emergency.
Info from Jon Cooke: 720353
Drop-in session, every **Thursday**
10am-12 noon HWBC

Family History Research

Our history volunteers will guide you in your local and family history research. Free internet access to Ancestry.
Please note: we were given incorrect information last month and we are pleased to confirm that these sessions are open to everyone.
Every **Thursday**
1-4pm CS Library

Football: Three Touch Passing

All over 50s welcome.
Contact Ken: 328514
Every **Wednesday**
5-6pm CS Leisure Centre

**Stretton Focus
Website**



www.strettonfocus.co.uk

What's On continued

Handbell Ringers, Hope Bowdler

New members are most welcome; you do not need to be able to read music.
Contact: Ruth Jenkins: 724919
The group is available to ring for local community groups and care home residents in return for a small donation towards their new bell fund.
Every **Thursday**
2pm Hope Bowdler Village Hall

Knit & Natter Group at Ley Gardens

Would-be knitters welcomed.
Details from: 722328
Every **Monday**
2.30pm Ley Gardens, SY6 6GA

Netball Club, Stretton Scarletts

A fun, sociable club with the focus on enjoyment and taking part, for players of all standards, ages (18 years plus) and experience. £3 pp
Contact Amy: 07837 596297
Every **Tuesday**
7.30-8.30pm CS Leisure Centre

Pickleball Club, CS

Pickleball is a fun sport that combines many elements of tennis, badminton and ping-pong. £5 pp
Contact Carol: 07803 329106
Every **Thursday**
7-9pm CS Leisure Centre

Rhyme Time

Fun, songs, stories and rhymes for children under 5 years of age.
Booking may be required.
Every **Tuesday**
10.30-11am CS Library

Singing: Breathing Space Singing Group

Singing for health and wellbeing.
Contact Kate: 720358 or 07974 382989 or kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk
Every **Wednesday**, from January 11th
3-4pm Mayfair

Singing: Harmony In The Hills

Formerly Stretton Community Singers. Stretton's Natural Voice community choir, welcoming all who would love to sing. People who have lost confidence or have been told they can't sing are especially valued.
Contact Kate: 07974 382989 or kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk
Every **Thursday** from January 12th
7.30-9pm Mayfair Activity Room

Singing: Stretton Choral Society Rehearsals

New members welcomed. No need to book in or audition – just arrive at about 7.20pm and introduce yourself to a committee member. Although having basic music-reading experience helps, you do not need to be able to sight-sing or to read music fluently.
Every **Thursday**, from 12th January
7.30-9.30pm URC

Strength Balance and Flex with Nina

£7 per session (cheaper block booking price available).
Gentle approach to exercise: no jumping or floor work. Ideal for 55 years plus.
Standard class includes more seated exercises. Book with Mayfair.
Every **Thursday**
12.15-1.15pm Mayfair

Strength Balance and Flex PLUS with Nina

Details as above. Plus class is mainly standing exercises, but still no floor work.
Every **Thursday**
1.30-2.30pm Mayfair

Table Tennis

New players are most welcome.
Contact Chris Smith:
rushburytabletennisclub@gmail.com
7-9.30pm every **Monday** (all standards)
9.30am-12noon every **Saturday** (intermediate and above)
Rushbury VH

Whist Drive at Westhope

Come along and join our friendly band of whist players.
Every **Monday**
7.30pm Westhope VH, SY7 9JL

Yoga at Mayfair

With Liz Curtis. £7.50 per session (cheaper block booking price available). Small class for all levels of experience. Beginners welcome. Includes floor work. Contact Mayfair: 722077
Every **Monday**
5.15-6.45pm Mayfair

Yoga at SHI

£8 per session. Open to all.
Call David Hedge: 07870 936889
Every **Tuesday** in term time.
10-11.30am SHI

Yoga at Westhope

With Sue Pugh. Numbers are limited.
Contact Betty Manley: 07860 447397
Every **Thursday**
10.30-11.30am Westhope VH, SY7 9JL

Yoga: Vita Bona Yoga at CS Library

Booking: Sue 07432 349933
Every **Monday**
9.30-10.30am Improvers
11-11.45am Chair Yoga

Yoga with Becca

£6 per class or £30 for 6 classes.
Contact Becca on 07905 236805 or yogawithbecca@hotmail.com
Tuesday: 6.30-7.30pm Mayfair
Wednesday: 9.30-10.30am SAPA
Wednesday: 6.30-7.30pm SHI
Thursday: 7-8am Scout Hut

Youth Club: CS Youth Drop-In

A relaxed and inviting space for school years 8 to 11 to meet up outside of school hours to participate in a range of activities or just chat. Sessions are staffed by trained and DBS checked youth workers.
Contact: Richard 01743 430005 or email at info@sya.org.uk
Every **Tuesday** in term time
6-7.30pm Pavilion, Russell's Meadow

GENERAL DIARY:

4 WEDNESDAY

u3a History of Plants and Gardens Group

New members welcome.
Information: 723387
10.30am-12.30pm CS Library

CS Library Reading Group

Friendly, informal group.
With Felicity Thomas.
2.15-3.15pm CS Library

CS Amnesty Group

Meet first Wednesday of the month.
All are welcome; we are a friendly inclusive group.
Contact csamnesty@outlook.com
7.30pm SHI

Flicks in the Sticks: Cardington

The Railway Children Return (2022)
Cert: PG RT: 1 hr 39 mins
Tickets: £4. Contact: 771295
7.30pm Cardington VH, SY6 7JZ

Continued overleaf..

What's On continued

5 THURSDAY

Westhope Clover Club

A friendly, social group for the over 60s, meeting on the first Thursday of the month with a varied programme of events in the hall and occasional outings. All welcome to come along. Enquiries to Kathleen 01584 841254
2.30pm Westhope Village Hall

6 FRIDAY

Hearing Loss Support Hub

Monthly service, offering hearing aid tube changing, battery collection and advice on hearing aid care. Staffed by NHS audiology trained volunteers. Appointments must be pre-booked: 01743 342168
10am-12noon Mayfair

u3a Reading Group 1

1st Friday of the month.
2-3pm CS Library

8 SUNDAY

Healing in the Hills Sound Bath

Deeply relax while bathed in the healing sound frequencies of crystal and Himalayan singing bowls, wind gong, rain stick and Koshi chimes.
Aids stress & anxiety reduction, rebalances. Suggested £10 donation. Booking is essential. Contact Maria 07985 744038
3pm Scout Hut

9 MONDAY

Coffee Hour Drop-In with CS u3a

Opportunity to chat with a u3a member and find out about our groups.
We meet second Monday of the month.
10-11am HWBC

Royal British Legion 'Drink & Chat' Hour

If you are ex-Service or have a connection to the Services and would like to join us, do come along and say hello. Non-RBL members welcome.
Note: We'll be back to our usual first-Monday-of-the-month from February.
5.30-6.30pm King's Arms, SY6 6BY

10 TUESDAY

Stretton Stitchers

An informal, friendly sewing group.
Info: Katy 720200, Frances 722656
10am-1pm URC Hall

u3a Writers Group 1

With Jenny O'Shea
2-4pm CS Library

Engaging Issues Talk

With guest speaker Lucy Easthope: 'When the dust settles – post-disaster stories of love, loss and hope.'
To find out more or see full details of this season of talks, visit our website: www.engagingissues.org.uk
We ask for a £3 donation per talk.
7.30pm URC

Flicks in the Sticks All Stretton

Foreign Language Film:
The Hunt (2012)
Cert 15. RT: 1 hr 55 mins
Danish, with subtitles.
Tickets £6. No interval
Enquiries: 07812 583113
8pm All Stretton VH

11 WEDNESDAY

Strettons Classical Music Group

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month, until June 2023. A small fee is requested to cover expenses.
Contact Barbara Hall: 724578
10am-12noon URC

Flicks in the Sticks: Hope Bowdler

Elvis (2022)
Cert 12A RT: 2 hrs 39 minutes
Admission: adults £4, children £2
Tickets on the door. Tea, coffee, cakes & ice cream served in the interval
Enquiries: 723648
7.30pm Hope Bowdler VH

Long Mynd Camera Club

We welcome speaker Darren Matthews on 'A close encounter with nature.'
www.longmyndcameraclub.co.uk
7.30pm URC Hall

12 THURSDAY

CS Stroke Support Group

Support for stroke survivors, friends and family. Meetings take place on the second Thursday of each month.
2-4pm Jubilee Room, Mayfair

Marmaladies CS WI

With guest Dave Cowton from 'The Shropshire Ukulele Massive' – Hear about the instrument, their group, and have a go too!
We welcome new members to join us for creative, informative and discussion sessions. marmaladieswi@gmail.com
7.30pm Mayfair

13 FRIDAY

u3a Writers Group 2

With Lesley Dench
10am-12noon CS Library

Shuttle Bus New Ideas Workshop

Come for a cuppa before sitting down for a short presentation about the bus at 2.30pm. This will be followed by facilitated group discussions.
Book your place via our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/shrophillsaonb), via phone on 01743 254740 or email shropshirehillsAONB@shropshire.gov.uk
Please see main article for details.
2.15-4pm SHI

14 SATURDAY

Monthly Drop-In Council Surgery

Second Saturday of the month.
With Councillor Hilary Luff.
10am-12noon CS Library

Stretton Climate Care Repair Café

Please contact us to book in your item, giving details and a photo if possible: info@strettonclimatecare.org.uk
Walk-ins accepted after 11am.
10am-12noon Scout Hut

CS Ballroom & Sequence Dance Club

Come and enjoy an informal evening of socialising and dance (Ballroom, Latin and Modern Sequence with the odd line dance thrown in!) £7 per person.
All abilities welcome, with or without a partner. Bring your own refreshments.
Info from Christine: 723386
8-10.30pm SHI

16 MONDAY

CS Area Local History Group (CSALHG)

A talk by Penny Ward: 'Researching the people of the Shrewsbury Flax Mill' Non-members: £4, pay on the door.
Contact: csalhg@outlook.com
2pm URC Hall

Flicks in the Sticks All Stretton

Downton Abbey: A New Era (2022)
Cert: PG RT: 2 hrs 4 mins
Enquiries: 07812 583113
Tickets £4. Interval refreshments.
2pm All Stretton VH

17 TUESDAY

All Stretton Women's Institute

'Who's for wine?' Wine making in Spain, with Thomas Holt.
Email: allstrettonwi@gmail.com
7.30pm All Stretton VH

What's On continued

19 THURSDAY

Carer Support at Mayfair

Café-style support group for unpaid carers. With Shaz Malins of MAYSI and Lisa Wright of the Alzheimer's Society. Please book via Mayfair Reception on 722077 or email us on information@mayfaircentre.org.uk 2-3.30pm Mayfair

Flicks in the Sticks Church Stretton

Mrs Harris goes to Paris (2022)
Cert: PG RT: 1 hr 55 mins
Tickets £5 adults, £2 under 18s, to include a cup of tea/coffee in the interval. Please pay on the door.
Enquiries: 07508 072206
7.30pm SHI

FoCSL Stepping Stones Talk (via Zoom)

A talk on the Stepping Stones nature conservation programme, with project officer Charlie Bell of the National Trust. The talk is free but donations, which go towards supporting the library, are welcome. To request a place for this talk please email churchstrettonlibrary@outlook.com 7.30pm via Zoom

20 FRIDAY

SHI Event: Folk Band 'Ranagri'

Tickets £15 adult, £7.50 for 18 and under, available from the CS Town Council office or from the Outdoor Depot, Sandford Avenue, or online: silvesterhorneevents.co.uk
Enquiries to Mike Walker: 720132
7.30pm SHI

21 SATURDAY

CS Ballroom & Sequence Dance Club

8pm (see Sat 14th for details)

22 SUNDAY

Healing in the Hills Sound Bath

3pm (see Sunday 8th for details)

23 MONDAY

u3a Local & Family History Meet

Members of the public are welcome but will need to join the u3a first.
4th Monday of the month.
2-4pm CS Library

Shropshire Ornithological Society, CS Branch

'Living with Swifts', a talk by Carol Wood. The branch AGM will precede the talk. Refreshments provided.
All welcome. £3 for non-members.
7.30pm Methodist Church Hall

24 TUESDAY

Stretton Stitchers

10am (see Tues 10th for details)

u3a Writers Group 1

With Jenny O'Shea
2-4pm CS Library

Engaging Issues Talk

With guest speaker Paul Richmond who will guide us in discussion about the future shape of the BBC.
To find out more or see full details of this season of talks, visit our website: www.engagingissues.org.uk
We ask for a £3 donation per talk.
7.30pm URC

Flicks in the Sticks Acton Scott

The Outfit (2022)
Cert: 15 RT: 1 hr 45 mins
Tickets: £5 adult, £3 child.
Ample parking and level access
Enquiries: 781260
7.30pm Acton Scott VH

25 WEDNESDAY

Yoga with Sue at CS Library

4th Wednesday of the month.
Booking: Sue 07432 349933
3-4.30pm CS Library

Long Mynd Camera Club

Club Competition No 4
Subject: People (dpi) and Open Mono (prints).
Judge: Peter Gennard
www.longmyndcameraclub.co.uk
7.30pm URC Hall

27 FRIDAY

u3a Writers Group 2

With Lesley Dench
10am-12noon CS Library

National Theatre Live Screening

The Crucible (2022)
Cert 15
Adults £15. Bar and refreshments available to purchase. Bookings and enquiries through Mayfair: 722077
7pm Mayfair

Bingo Night at Westhope

Licensed bar. Eyes down 7.30pm
Contact Amie on 07486 414742 or Betty on 07860 447397
7.30pm Westhope VH, SY7 9JL

Flicks in the Sticks All Stretton

The Phantom of the Open (2021)
Cert: 12A RT: 1 hr 46 mins
Enquiries: 07812 583113
Tickets £4. Interval refreshments.
7.30pm All Stretton VH

28 SATURDAY

CS Ballroom & Sequence Dance Club

8pm (see Sat 14th for details)

31 TUESDAY

CS & District Gardening Club Meeting

We will commence with our A.G.M. followed by our guest speaker Mr Howard Franklin who has been a flower arranger for the Royal Court.
We look forward to seeing you.
2pm SHI

Key to Abbreviations/Addresses:

CS – Church Stretton
CS Leisure Centre – Shrewsbury Rd, SY6 6ER. Tel: 720051
CS Library – Church Street, SY6 6DQ Tel: 722535
CS Medical Practice – Easthope Rd, SY6 6BL. Tel: 722127
CS School – Shrewsbury Rd, SY6 6EX Tel: 722209
St. Laurence's Church/CS Parish Centre – Church St, SY6 6DQ
Mayfair – Mayfair Community Centre, Easthope Rd, SY6 6BL. Tel: 722077
HWBC – Health and Well Being Centre, next to Mayfair, SY6 6BL
Methodist Church – Watling St South, SY6 7BG
SAPA – Shropshire Academy of Performing Arts, Lutwyche Close, Lutwyche Rd, SY6 6AT
Scout Hut – Church Street, SY6 6DQ
SHI – Silvester Horne Institute, High St, SY6 6BY. Tel: 720132
St. Milburgha's Catholic Church – Watling St North, SY6 7AR
URC – United Reformed Church, High St, SY6 6BY
VH – Village Hall
VIC – Visitor Information Centre, in library, see above.
Contact Numbers – only numbers OUTSIDE the CS dialling code area (01694) will include the full number.

Recipe of the month

Meatball pie

I found the basis for this recipe via an online feed recently and adapted it for a friend which was an enormous success. It was also disturbingly satisfying to make and played to my slightly obsessive desire for orderliness and pattern making. It can be set up in advance and simply slipped into the oven around 45 minutes before eating time. It makes your mince go a long way so is economical and can, of course, be varied to your heart's content.

Use your favourite meatball recipe or add in different veg and spices. Throw in some cooked and cooled or canned pulses when shaping the meatballs or why not go completely veggie and make with a bean burger type mix, omitting the mince entirely. Vary the sauce and cheese topping too or maybe add a tomato sauce before the Bechamel topping. The possibilities are endless, and it just needs a side veg or salad to serve.

Ingredients

3 medium potatoes peeled
1 medium onion – finely chopped
500g mince of choice
1 stick celery finely chopped – optional
½ bulb fennel finely chopped – optional
Smoked paprika – optional
Seasoning to taste
1 egg beaten
30g butter
30g plain flour
Mustard powder to taste
2 bay leaves
Freshly grated nutmeg – optional
300ml milk approx.
Mozzarella cheese ball or grated
Paprika



Method

Parboil the whole potatoes in salted water for 5 minutes then cool.

Make the meatballs by combining all the ingredients down to and including seasoning in a mixing bowl. Add the beaten egg and mix then form into balls the size of small clementines – I made about 10 balls (2-3 per person).

Cut the cool potatoes into medium slices and line bottom and sides of an ovenproof dish

with a single layer. Place meatballs on top of potato and use remaining potato slices on edge to enclose each meatball (see photo).

Make white sauce by melting the butter and stirring in the flour to make a roux. Add mustard and season well before gradually adding in the milk, stirring constantly, to give a moderately thick sauce. You want it to run down in between the meatballs.

If assembling to cook later leave sauce to cool first to avoid it heating up the meat in advance.

Preheat oven – 190 deg C, 160 deg fan, Gas 5.

Pour sauce over the meatballs and add torn/grated mozzarella on top. Sprinkle with paprika.

Bake uncovered in moderate oven for around 45 minutes until golden and bubbling.

I'm really wanting to make this again – it was gorgeous



– but I'm thinking I might lose some of the carbs by substituting thinly sliced aubergine in place of the potatoes, perhaps lightly dry fried (sprayed with olive oil?) or baked first to start the cooking process.

Heidi



As preparations are made across the country for a day of national celebration on 6th May, Stretton Choral Society are about to begin rehearsals for a summer concert to be presented the following evening. In addition to the two major works already planned for the programme – Dvorak's lyrical *Mass in D* and Haydn's expressive *Missa brevis Sancti Johannis de Deo* – it is hoped to include a suitably celebratory item to mark the Coronation weekend. The concert will be presented in the Silvester Horne Institute at 7.30pm on Sunday 7th May.

We will rehearse every Thursday at 7.30pm in the United Reformed Church, High Street, Church Stretton, starting with our first rehearsal on Thursday 12th January. New members are always very welcome – we don't hold auditions so just arrive at about 7.20pm and introduce yourself. We have space in every section of the choir but are particularly keen to recruit more tenors. We will provide the score, introduce you to others singing the same vocal part and help you to learn the music. After warming up our voices with a light-hearted sequence of vocal exercises our Music Director Michael Turner ensures every rehearsal is a productive and entertaining learning experience. Do come and join us!

Mark Tocknell



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Church Stretton Town Council Community Matters

Remembrance Sunday

A sincere thank you to all who took part in this year's Service of Remembrance, and in particular to the Royal British Legion and St Laurence's Church for organising the event. It was an honour also to have been joined by His Majesty's Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for Shropshire, Col Michael Evans.

At a time when many towns are abandoning a formal parade, it was heartwarming to see so many residents march in honour of the fallen, including many young people, and together representing the Scouts, Army Cadet Force, Fire and Rescue Service, Regular Forces and many others. The town also welcomed the return of serving members of the three services who grew up in the town who joined the parade.



As frequently seems to be the case, the service at the town's war memorial was basked in winter sunshine, a total contrast to the annual service for children from St Lawrence's Primary School held the previous Tuesday. Centred on the Commonwealth War Grave cemetery in Cunnery Road, the service allowed the children to mark the graves of those who fell in WW1 with Union flags. Despite the very heavy rain the children set to with enthusiasm, learning something of the history of those who rest there, and thanks to the RBL for organising this annual mark of respect. A final mention to the CSTC outdoor team who made both the cemetery and the war memorial look extra special.

Graham Lewis

The Town Council held a minute's silence in memory of Graham Lewis at its meeting on 22nd November. Graham passed away on 12th November and had been a valued member of the Council team. Well known for his early leadership of the Save Snatchfield group, he was also a key driver behind the alliance of local groups which worked

hard through the planning system to protect the countryside surrounding the town before himself joining the new Council in 2021, where he was elected Chair of the Strategy Committee. He will be deeply missed.

Housing Needs Survey

The Housing Needs Survey (HNS), which Graham Lewis had helped initiate by interviewing prospective consultants, was adopted by the Town Council in November, and is now available in full on the Town Council website. The conclusions are, in short, that the town wants one and two bedroom units, that we can build sufficient homes on brown field sites within the development boundary and meet the need for smaller starter homes, and move-down homes, without concreting over the countryside.

The next steps are to arrange for the results to be presented to residents in a public meeting, and the thinking is that it would be good to make housing advice and information available at the same time. The idea of a 'housing conference for the town' appeals. We also need to launch the Neighbourhood Plan – Shropshire Council moved consideration back to January although they assure us that this was pressure on the agenda, something with which we can empathise! Stage 2 of the Examination in Public of

the Shropshire Local Plan is also scheduled for the Spring, and we are now in a position to feed the results from the HNS into the Inspectors, which has been the long term objective.

In many ways, as 2022 draws to a close, it feels that this initial chapter is also coming to an end. After Christmas we must share the results in a way which is accessible and use the results to progress the town's agenda as confirmed by the survey. The next chapter will be about the Neighbourhood Plan, building on the results of the HNS, and creating the strategy for the town's future. It will be incredibly exciting and will need lots of help. It will also need to be developed bottom up by the community, not imposed top down, if it is to be successful.

Christmas Lights and Santa's Grotto

Another big thank you to everyone involved in this year's Christmas Lights switch on. It was a really great afternoon and evening, and the weather, though cold, was a step change from Storm Arwen which had wrought havoc and cancelled the event this time last year.



Particular thanks to the team in the Silvester Horne for their work as Santa (there can only ever be one although he did seem a little different after lunch), the Snowman, the Gingerbread man, the Elves, the Grinch and the army of tea makers and cake bakers beyond the hall. A special mention to the many traders for their kind donations for the raffle. Thanks also go to the 'switch on team' for the entertainment, and the Rotary for their magnificent tree and help with marshalling. And who will forget our own 'Stretton's Got Talent' to choose the young person to pull the switch, with congratulations to Lottie for her win.

And finally, a thank you to all who came: in these challenging times it is important that we continue as a community to make family events like this accessible to everyone and by taking part in the raffle, by baking cakes and buying teas it keeps the net cost down and allows the Town Council to keep organising events.

PS. Next fun day 24th June 2023

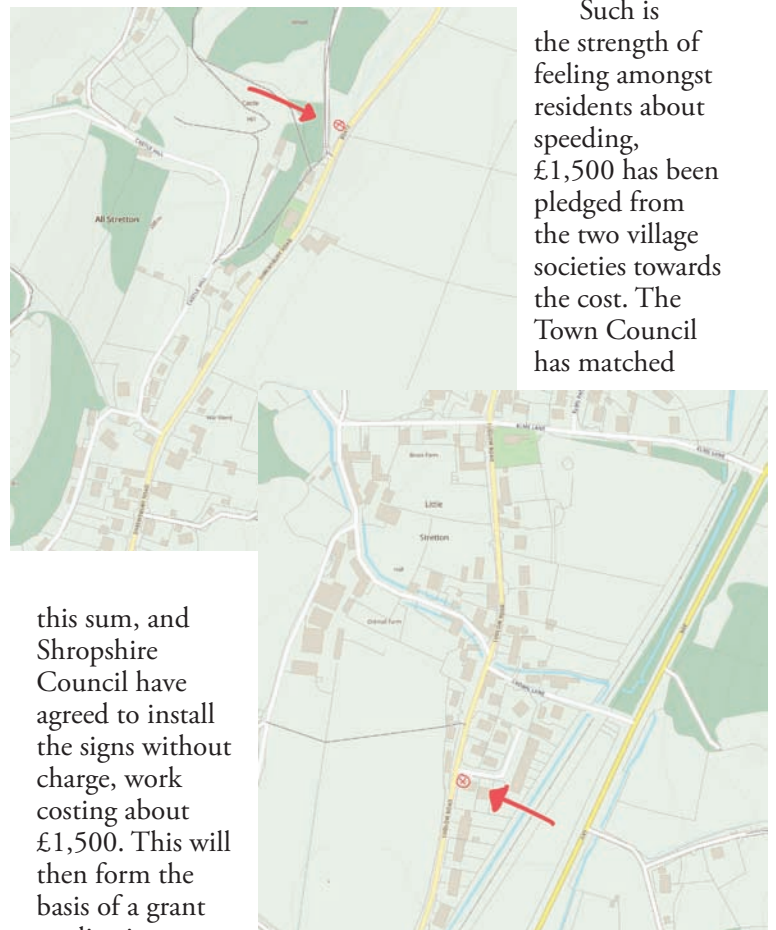
Vehicle Activated Radar (VAR) signs.

Concerns about speeding in the parish are near the top of the in-tray, and at its last meeting the Council received a report it had commissioned into the feasibility of installing Vehicle Activated Radar signs covering the northern and southern approaches.

The proposal is to install two VAR signs – one each in Little Stretton and All Stretton – both on the B5477 covering the approaches to both villages along the main routes off the A49. For the avoidance of doubt, the All Stretton sign will face north and control vehicles heading south into the village past St Michael's church, and the

sign in Little Stretton will face south towards Ludlow and control vehicles coming over the railway bridge. It is planned that three additional 'SLOW' signs will be painted on the road, one before the bridge and two after, to help protect the homes on the eastern side of the B5477 outside the village sign and before the VAR sign. The exact positions are marked on the maps below. These locations were recommended by Shropshire Highways team following site visits. Both locations are positioned just inside the 30mph zones with a good line of sight to allow the radar equipment to easily measure the speed of approaching vehicles, and for drivers to be able to see and comprehend the messaging.

Such is the strength of feeling amongst residents about speeding, £1,500 has been pledged from the two village societies towards the cost. The Town Council has matched



this sum, and Shropshire Council have agreed to install the signs without charge, work costing about £1,500. This will then form the basis of a grant application to the Police and

Crime Commissioner who holds a fund for such signs. The request will be for £3,000 (40%) to give an overall budget of £7,500, including installation by SC Highways.

That villagers have fundraised these monies is very powerful, and the agreement of CSTC to match it will only strengthen the case. The support of the West Mercia Police and SC Highways is also essential, and we are optimistic the remaining monies will be granted. When will they be installed? No dates are set but whilst it is unlikely that Santa's sleigh will be warned, March hares should stay alert.

Continued overleaf...

Taffs Well class 197 mock-up

About a dozen representatives from the Marches Line joined TfW at the end of November for a look at the Class 197 diesel multiple units which will be introduced to the line progressively during 2023. TfW's plan is that by the time all the new trains are introduced all the services serving Church Stretton will have five carriages, either as part of the locomotive-hauled formations, (the introduction of which impacted timetables and has filled these pages in previous months), or as a set of a two car and a three car Class 197. What's not to like?

However, while this is not the official line, the introduction of entirely new classes of trains in recent years



Class 197 interior.

The panel on the right of the driver's cab hinges left when not in use to allow access through to the next set.

has seldom proceeded smoothly, with in-service reliability targets being missed massively. The trains are significantly more complex and typically take a while to bed in. And if units fail the likely consequence is that the five car sets will end up being two or three car trains. And although the TfW marketing team don't say this, I understand that a number of the older class 175 DMUs are having their leases extended which, if necessary, could take up the strain.

Bottom line is the new Class 197s will be a great improvement, but there may be some bumps on the track over the next twelve months. The TfW team are a genuine pleasure to work with and the local Church Stretton Rail User Group will undoubtedly be keeping a close eye on progress, as they always do. The Town Council will also keep up its now regular meetings with TfW where we continue to emphasise the importance of the train service for local residents, business trips and leisure.

Shuttle Bus

The summer shuttle bus run by the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership has become an important fixture of the walking calendar, but its existence is now threatened. Figures are still provisional, but last year it made a loss of around £10,000 on a budget of around £28,000. Data suggests that as many as 70% of the 3,000 passengers carried annually are local residents. Grants from the Town Council, Shropshire Council and the National Trust contributed £11,250. A complicating factor is the regulatory environment which now requires buses classified as 'service buses' to operate with digital booking and live timetables, but this is not economic for the small mini coaches used which do not operate as service buses beyond the 30-35 days a year of the shuttle. Going forward it is important that the shuttle bus is preserved, even with a reduced service in the short term whilst longer term solutions are developed, and the current level of grants should hopefully facilitate this. Longer term, new operating models will need to be developed, and all interested parties are meeting to explore options. Look out for updates in *Focus*.

And finally...

As 2022 closes and we reflect back there have been many challenges, not least those flowing from the war in Ukraine. As I complain about shifting the thermostat down one degree, it is worth thinking about those in Ukraine and even many in this country for whom that is simply not an option. Against this background the town has welcomed many and also put on a full range of activities and provided support and volunteers across a wide spectrum. The town responded magnificently to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth and the proclamation, and the Remembrance Parade and I believe ultimately it has been a successful year for the town and the Town Council. My thanks go to all those staff, volunteers and councillors who have worked so hard for the community. 2023 promises to be exciting as we get to grips with the Neighbourhood Plan, yet no doubt the year will also have its share of challenges. However, I know the town will pull together as it always does. Best wishes for 2023.

Andy Munro

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New Ideas for the Long Mynd and Stiperstones Shuttle Bus

This has been a particularly challenging year for the shuttle bus service. Unfortunately, passenger numbers have been much lower than previous years, despite the hugely valued rally of support from local people. I'm aware that many travelled on additional days to show their support, which was hugely appreciated by the team here at the AONB office.

But despite that, it's a bit of a double whammy. In the same year the cost went up, passenger numbers overall have gone down. Even the number of passengers travelling with concessionary fares was less than in previous years.

There are many possible reasons for this. It may have simply been the heat, it was a very hot summer. Now that travel restrictions have been eased for most countries, it's possible more people took the opportunity to holiday abroad. There are also the changes we made to the route last year to consider. The bus now turns around at the Stiperstones Inn rather than looping through Minsterley, Pontesbury and Pulverbatch. This change didn't seem to have a negative impact last year, but it can take more than a couple of years to get a feel for how well changes have gone.

The economic downturn and cost of living increases may also have had an impact. Increased fuel and other costs forced us to increase the cost of the tickets. It's possible that this was a step too far.

There are so many things that may have contributed, it's difficult to really understand which are the most significant.

And that's why we want to talk to local users. We know that there are many people in the Church Stretton and wider community that regularly use the shuttle bus. There may also be people who would use it, but there's something about how it works that doesn't work for them. That's why we are looking for your help to make sure what we are providing and how we are providing it, is as good as it can be.

But before I give you details of how you can get involved, I'd like to tell you about the history of the bus...

Keeping the wheels rolling

I started working in the Shropshire Hills in 1998 on a European Funded project promoting walking, cycling and exploring in our wonderful hills. During that time, I met Pete Carty, then the National Trust's manager for the Long Mynd. Pete had the idea to set up a shuttle bus to help people get up onto the hill and reduce the number of cars parking on the top. At the time the Mynd was a popular place, but nothing like how busy it is today. Within a couple of years Tom Wall at the Stiperstones Nature Reserve also had a bus running, and it seemed a good idea to link the services, and then make them one.

These were heady times; people liked the bus, and there was plenty of grant funding available to keep them going. We even experimented with other bus links, including connecting Church Stretton to Much Wenlock through the autumn and Christmas holidays.

The goal throughout was to reduce the need for people to use their cars. The Long Mynd and Stiperstones bus has regularly carried 3,000-4,000 people during the season, which on average was about 40 days (weekends and bank holidays through the summer months). That's in the region of 2-3,000 cars a year not being used to explore the area. A significant reduction in CO₂. The value of all those people in local pubs and other businesses has also been significant. Many have travelled on Sundays for legendary lunches at the Bridges and Stiperstones Inns, not to mention teas and cakes at the Bog Centre. We've regular visitors to the area that book their holidays in the Church Stretton area to use the bus.

This all took off whilst I wandered away for a short time to pursue other ambitions. During this time, the management of the service was taken on by Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership, which I returned to in 2014. It was in great shape, but as the subsidies decreased it became more necessary to focus on the bottom line. How could we continue to ensure the bus washed its face?

Re-imagining the service

Well, we have tweaked, and evaluated and tweaked some more. We've reduced costs and the long circuit to focus on where the people are. We've used the best deals, and benefited from local expertise, like the dynamic Mick Boulton, innovative Alixe Gough and tireless Bob Welch, all champions in the community and for our bus. Your bus. We should also recognise the continued and invaluable support of the

doughty Pete Carty, not to mention Chris Purcell in the Council Transport department. Despite all that, the service is becoming more and more costly to run.

We've started to address this by talking to the Town Council, National Trust, Natural England and Shropshire Council, who have always contributed towards the costs of the service. In our recent meeting we explored ideas for a community-based scheme, perhaps working with new partners like the

Mayfair Centre. As ever, we are also looking for new funding opportunities. Re-imagining the service potentially opens this up, especially if we look at improving the service's accessibility. We've also been looking at community bus schemes in other parts of the country. Now we need to hear your views.

If you'd like to tell us what the bus means to you, please come to our **New Ideas for the Shropshire Hills Shuttle Bus Workshop on Friday 13th January** in the **Silvester Horne Institute from 2.15-4pm**. Come for a cuppa before sitting down for a short presentation about the bus at 2.30pm. This will be followed by facilitated group discussions where we can hear your views on a range of topics including, how you use the service, accessibility, ticketing and frequency. You can book your place through our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/shropshillaonb), contact us at the office on 01743 254740 or email shropshirehillsAONB@shropshire.gov.uk.

I hope to see you there.

*Nigel McDonald,
Sustainable Tourism Officer, Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership*



Photo: Tom Blackwell, National Trust

COP 27

Although the COP27 meeting in November at Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt agreed to a 'loss and damage fund' provided by rich nations to support vulnerable countries bear the immediate costs of climate-fuelled events such as flooding and storm damage, **it failed to make progress** on the underlying cause of such damage.

Little progress has been made on further cutting down on the burning of fossil fuels which are the underlying cause of global warming and the extremes of weather. There were strong attempts by the 'petrol states' to roll back on agreements to keep global temperatures rise below 1.5 degrees. Emissions, which are still rising fast, must peak by 2025 before a tipping point is reached.

The final conference text included a reference to 'low-emissions and renewable energy' which is seen as a loophole to allow the further development of gas resources as gas produces fewer emissions than coal or oil.

Stretton Climate Care continues to offer its free home energy audit to help householders have a detailed look at their use of energy (gas and electricity) and find ways to



the Health & Wellbeing Centre, 10am-12 noon. We all have a responsibility to reduce demand on our national energy infrastructure which at the same time will cut our energy costs. It is time we were more proactive rather than waiting for the crisis

before we reduce our emissions.

Stretton Climate Care recently held 'Conversations 2' about 'Doughnut Economics'. Nothing to do with that tasty indulgence but a bringing together of the climate emergency and social justice, by asking: Where is a safe and just space for humanity? The meeting on 16th November last year gave us an introduction to the concept, and the following discussion groups looked at specific topics, both global and local. (The results are being circulated to members and participants.) But can we now apply this new way of thinking to the Strettons? A working group is being set up to address the question, with a focus on gathering evidence and producing practical recommendations. If you are interested in being a part of this group, contact David Howard on dahowardscc@outlook.com.

At our AGM we welcomed David Matthews as our new Chairperson and thanked David Howard who has stepped down after nearly 10 years in the role. David Matthews is leading a drive to help local traders reduce their energy costs and cut down on their use of single-use plastic. He and other members of Stretton Climate Care were recently seen in the entrance of the Co-op helping customers be more aware of the Co-op's plastic recycling facility.

Stretton Climate Care
info@strettonclimatecare.org



Jon Cooke (past chair of Stretton Climate Care) wearing a fetching little outfit in recycled cardboard with matching plastic accessories, all recyclable at the Co-op!

reduce their energy costs without compromising the comfort of their home. With the ongoing war in Ukraine there really is a growing energy crisis. Gas and electricity costs have risen dramatically and by next April it is expected that even with some Government subsidy (which will then reduce) the average household energy bill will exceed £3,000. We also offer a free Thermal Imaging service to help householders identify where their homes are losing expensive heat, and don't forget our free energy advice 'drop in' every Thursday morning at

Trivia Corner

by Ken Willis

1. What was the name of the Ewing family Texas ranch in the original TV series Dallas?
2. Who was the name of the tiny boy in stories by the Brothers Grimm?
3. What was Mr Spock's home planet in Star Trek?
4. Who wrote the novel Les Misérables?
5. What is another name for the upper incisor teeth of elephants?

CS and District Gardening Club

The January meeting is on Tuesday, 31st January at 2pm in the Silvester Horne Institute. We will commence with our AGM followed by our speaker Mr Howard Franklin, who has been a flower arranger for the Royal Court.

Evelyn Dapling

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Scout Group News



At the recent Annual General Meeting of the 2nd Longmynd, Group Scout Leader Terry Davies thanked his team for their work in holding the Group together over the past two difficult years and bringing it back to full strength. He was able to make practical recognitions and rewards.

Three Scouters received the coveted Wood Badge, the top adult training award: Niall Morris, David Betton and Adele Parker, while Gareth Jones, Diana Parsons and Matt Dunn received the Chief Scout's Commendation for Good Service. Alan Hall's 25 years as a Scouter was recognised as was that of Andrew Spurling, Cub Scout Leader of the Wednesday Pack, who has served 40 years with the 2nd Longmynd.

At the earlier AGM of the Borders District four of the Group's Scouters received special awards from the Scout Association: Angie Walshaw, Explorer Scout Leader, with the Award of Merit, and the Silver Acorn, one of the highest awards in Scouting, went to Cub Scout Leader Jane Wrench, Assistant Cub Scout Leader Christine Faulkner and Scout Leader Neil Crumpton. Between the four of them they have given over 120 years' service and for three Silver Acorns to be awarded in one Group at the same time is an unusual occurrence and reflects the high regard with which the 2nd Longmynd is held in the Borders District.

Nikki Phillips, Commissioner for the District, came to the meeting to present the Commissioner's Special Award for Community Service to Angie Walshaw and Terry Davies for their work in Church Stretton. This covers a wide range,

from delivering Meals on Wheels to aiding primary school trips.

Six young people who are taking the Duke of Edinburgh's Award through their schools have elected to work with the 2nd Longmynd for the Service section. One of them, Siobhan Morris, was so impressed with the Group that she asked to join. At the AGM she took the Scout Promise and became an Explorer Scout.

Finally, Brian Faulkner, former Group Scout Leader who has been in Scouting for over 50 years, was invited to become Group President, a position he accepted to warm applause.

All meetings are held at the Group's headquarters in Church Street and are open to both boys and girls. More information from the Deputy Group Scout Leader Angie Walshaw on 07484 717317.

Monday 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th

Beaver Scout Colony. Ages 6-8: 5.30-6.30pm

Scout Troop. Ages 10½-14½: 7-9pm

Explorer Scout Unit. Ages 14-18: 7-9pm

(Check with Deputy GSL for Explorer dates)

Tuesday 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st

Cub Scout Pack (Tuesday). Ages 8-10½: 6.30-8pm

Wednesday 11th, 18th, 25th

Cub Scout Pack (Wednesday). Ages 8-10½: 6.30-8pm



Nikki Phillips (left) presents Angie Walshaw and Terry Davies with the Community Award



Siobhan Morris becomes an Explorer Scout after making the Scout Promise

Wreathmaking at St Michael and All Angels

St. Michael and All Angels, All Stretton held their annual wreathmaking workshop on 3rd December. The church is trying to use more sustainable products when doing floral arrangements and with this in mind Carolyn Bates demonstrated how to make a wreath with moss that can be gathered from the garden. Proceeds from the afternoon of £200 will be given to WaterAid.

Lesley McIntyre.





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January 2023 Screenings

Acton Scott

Acton Scott Village Hall, Tuesday 24th January 2023, 7.30 pm

Tickets on the Door, Adults £5 Students £3 Refreshments available

***The Outfit* (15)**



From the Academy Award-winning writer of *The Imitation Game* (Graham Moore) comes *The Outfit*, a gripping and masterful thriller. Leonard, a master English tailor who's ended up in Chicago, operates a corner tailor shop with his assistant where he makes beautiful clothes for the only people around who can afford them: a family of vicious gangsters. One night, two killers knock on his door in need of a favour – and Leonard is thrust onto the board in a deadly game of deception and murder.

The hall has ample car parking available and level access.
Acton Scott enquiries: Tel. 01694 781260

Cardington

Cardington Village Hall, Wednesday 4th January 7.30pm

Adults £5.00

***The Railway Children Return* (PG)**



Inspired by one of the most beloved British family films of all time, *The Railway Children Return* is an enchanting and heart-warming adventure for a new generation. 1944 – As life in Britain's cities becomes increasingly perilous, three evacuee children – Lily, Pattie and Ted Watts – are sent by their mother from Salford to the Yorkshire village

of Oakworth. There to meet them on the train station platform are Bobbie Waterbury (Jenny Agutter, reprising her iconic role in the original film), her daughter, Annie and grandson Thomas, and with their help the evacuees are soon settling into their new life in the countryside. When the children discover injured American soldier Abe hiding out in the railyard at Oakworth Station, they are thrust into a dangerous quest to assist their new friend who, like them, is a long way from home.

Cardington enquiries: 01694 771295

Church Stretton

Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton, Thursday 19th January 7.30pm

Adult £5

***Mrs Harris Goes to Paris* (2022) (PG)**



In partnership with the House of Dior, *Mrs Harris Goes to Paris* tells the story of a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress and decides that she must have one of her own. After she works, starves and gambles to raise the funds to pursue her dream, she embarks on an adventure to Paris which will change not only her own outlook, but the very future of the House of Dior.

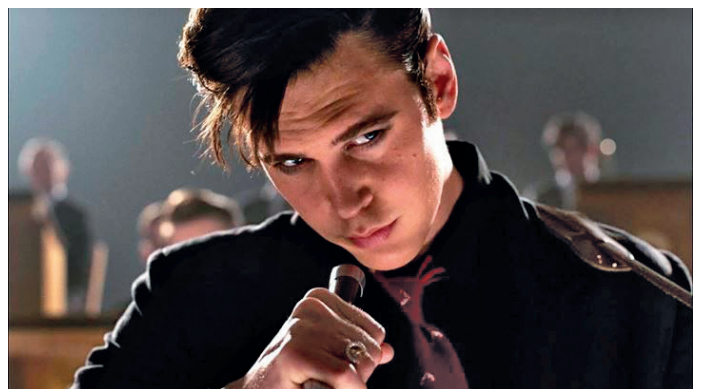
Church Stretton enquiries: 01694 720132

Hope Bowdler

Hope Bowdler Village Hall, 11th January 7.30pm

Adult £5.00; Under 16 £3.00

***Elvis* (2022) (12)**



Elvis is Oscar-nominated filmmaker Baz Luhrmann's musical drama about the life and music of Elvis Presley,



seen through the prism of his complicated relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The story delves into the complex dynamic between Presley and Parker spanning over 20 years, from Presley's rise to fame to his unprecedented stardom, against the backdrop of the evolving cultural landscape and loss of innocence in America. Central to that journey is one of the most significant and influential people in Elvis's life, Priscilla Presley.

Tea, coffee, cakes and ice cream served in the interval
Hope Bowdler enquiries: 01694 723648

All Stretton

All Stretton Village Hall
Tuesday 10th January 8pm
 Adults £6

The Hunt (15)

(Danish with subtitles)



Mads Mikkelsen is superb as Lucas, a well-liked kindergarten teacher in a Danish town who's getting back his life after a divorce and negotiating custody of his teenage son. Then one of his pupils, a five-year-old girl, makes a startling accusation against him, and he suddenly finds himself ostracised by people he believed were his friends.

Monday 16th January 2pm matinée

Adults £4

Downton Abbey: A New Era (PG)



Welcome back to Downton. With stunning revelations, glamorous journeys, and the arrival of the Jazz Age, *Downton Abbey: A New Era* will be the Crawleys' biggest adventure yet as they grapple with their future and new intrigue about the past.

Friday 27th January 7.30pm

Adults £4

Phantom of the Open (12)



The Phantom of the Open tells the remarkable true story of Maurice Flitcroft, a crane operator and optimistic dreamer from Barrow-in-Furness who, with the support of his family and friends, managed to gain entry to the 1976 British Open, despite never playing a round of golf before. With pluckiness and unwavering self-belief, Maurice pulls off a series of stunning, hilarious and heartwarming attempts to compete at the highest level of professional golf, drawing the ire of the golfing elite but becoming a British folk hero in the process.

All Stretton enquiries 07812 583113

Marmaladies Church Stretton WI

Hi, it's time for a catch up to say what the Marmaladies have been doing for the last six months. I try to update you a couple of times a year.

As ever we've had a fun and varied set of meetings and the associated craft club has also managed to meet and create, once a month. New trials this year have included a coffee morning once a month and a walking club held every Friday.

We made a visit to The Shropshire Flower Company looking at how they are part of a farm setting, using a biomass fuel source to keep their greenhouses warm. A beautiful evening full of colour and joy.



We next went on a scavenger hunt organised by a small group of Marmaladies, that had the rest of us racing (!) around the streets of Church Stretton hunting for clues. Many thanks to the poor bystanders caught up in our frenzy to photograph dogs, firemen, and even beg for lollipops from the very helpful people in the Jaipur. Great fun and ending up as ever at the King's Arms. Other fun things were bingo, and an evening with a local storyteller. We also celebrated ten years of Marmaladies. Some of us also helped at Strettfest.

At Marmaladies, we do like to include some more serious discussions and talks as well. A talk on 'power of attorney', wills etc by local solicitors PCB, reminded us of the need to consider these to protect our loved ones and ourselves. The local police gave us a talk on the current scams, designed to cleverly relieve us of our money, and how to combat scams in general.

The year was rounded off with a lovely Christmas do, where we met for a festive gathering, before girding our loins for the Christmas season.

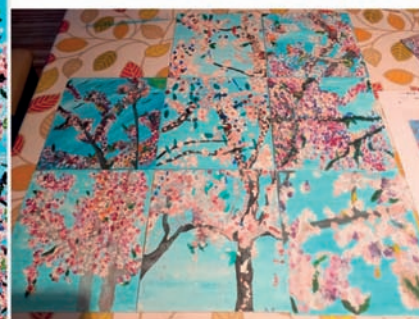
The craft club has really taken off this year having regular monthly meetings. It's such a joy to learn new skills and create something different to take home at the end of the evening. My favourite was probably the Christmas treats where we created fudge, decorated biscuits, chocolate bark and truffles, chilli jam etc to take home, supposedly to share



at Christmas, but I suspect it was all gone within a couple of days (and lovely they were!).

We tried candle making and collaborative art, the latter taking a famous piece of art, dividing into nine squares and each, individually creating that square. We each have a small artwork to take home but together they make a much bigger and innovative display. We also made glass mosaic coasters and several cordials. Each time, we try something new and decide if this craft is for us, but we also have a great evening with our friends.

We have the programme for next year set and this will include ukulele playing, craft, local history, a visit to the 'proper good dairy', training women to be secret agents in WW2, a car-based scavenger hunt, line dancing, forensic psychology and a book review. The craft club and walking group look to continue as well. Marmaladies WI is primarily



Church Stretton Marmaladies WI

Damien Hirst

an evening-based group catering for many of our members who work or have daytime responsibilities. We are always keen to welcome new members and new ideas for off-shoots, so why not come along to our next meeting and see if you like us. We normally meet on the second Thursday of each month, at Mayfair, at 7.30pm. Off-site visits will be notified at the time.

Please contact me, Carol Greswell on 07803 581580, or email marmaladieswi@gmail.com for details or just drop into a meeting when you can.

Carol Greswell

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Look beyond the edited highlights

Another Christmas done and dusted! What were the highlights for you? A visit from grandchildren, or a visit to them, a family meal, or a party with good friends. Modern Christmas is dedicated to the new religions, shopping (now often online), football, and inane TV light entertainment featuring so-called celebrities. Were any of these among your seasonal highlights?

The Christmas story told in the gospels of Matthew and Luke has its light entertainment too. The highlights include a sky teeming with cherubim and seraphim. That would be spectacular, a bit like the New Year fireworks. A packed inn with only a stable to house a mother about to give birth. I do not believe that in historical times people were that callous or unthinking. There was humanity in ordinary people then just as there is in *Call the Midwife* today. Matthew also includes a massacre of children inspired by a vicious autocrat after a visit by wise men. A bit on the dark side, albeit today's international politics feature autocrats and dark stories too.

There is certainly some creative work in the Gospel accounts of Christmas. They were highlights, probably written sometime after 70CE and there was not a first-hand record to draw upon. There was an urgent need to give Jesus a background story because Christianity was expanding

beyond its Jewish roots and new converts wanted to know more. Give a creative writer half an inch and they will go a mile to offer a good yarn.

Does the idea of creative writing mean that we should just ignore the nativity story? Of course not. There is 'no smoke without fire'. There is certainly a core of truth somewhere in the edited highlights, something rational and recognisable which we could draw upon if only we could spot it, or had a bit more contemporary information to take us beyond the edited version.

In the meantime let's keep it simple: a boy was born who grew up to be an inspirational teacher and radical philosopher whose revolutionary ideas seem ordinary and normal to us because they underpin our society today. Wouldn't you want to know more, hearing that headline version?

Thus the edited highlights in the Christmas story are only a reminder but they take us into religion and there the story gets wrapped in ritual and dogma. The child's full story is about humanity and spiritual faith that is worth celebrating. So keep your eyes and ears open, and endeavour to find the full version; it would make us all a lot happier.

Roger Wilson

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Aladdin 2022



Aladdin 1968 (published with the kind permission of Shropshire Star)

SHI Events

Ranagri

Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton
Friday 20th January 2023 at 7.30pm

Ranagri are a folk band and combine voices, guitars (Donal Rogers), flutes/whistles (Eliza Marshall), harp (Eleanor Dunsdon) and bodhran (Jordan Murray) to create their unique sounds and storytelling. They have forged a new and contemporary sound on the folk scene winning audiences at home and internationally, an energetic festival band and have recently completed a tour in Germany.

They are equally at home with their more intimate writing and thought-provoking lyrics. Happy to make you smile or shed a tear creating uplifting music to lyrics with great depth.

"Voices and instruments combine to astound the listener with some of the most attention-grabbing music I've heard in a long time" – FRUK 2022

I would agree with that and why I am pleased that they are coming to play for us.



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My name is Evie Jackson and I am currently in my last year at school, where my favourite subjects include Spanish, history and biology. I enjoy playing the guitar (or trying to), reading fantasy novels and being a member of Girl Guiding. After I leave school, I look forward to beginning my A-levels, completing my Silver Duke of Edinburgh award and one day I hope to travel the world.

With the festive season now just a recent memory, I would like you to picture a traditional Christmas domestic scene. The room is adorned with decorations, shining lights and merry cards, with a tree in the corner dressed to the nines in reds, golds, and greens under which there are gifts wrapped in an array of garish patterns. There is a roaring fire in the grate and last, but certainly not least, filled stockings hanging from the mantle.

The tradition of filling a stocking at Christmas is an old and well loved one, and there are various legends of

its origin, such as one in which St Nicholas helped to save a poor man's family from poverty. While visiting the family one winter, St Nicholas heard the man talk about selling his daughters to save them from starvation. After the man refused to accept the Saint's offer of charity, St Nicholas threw three bags of gold down the chimney as an anonymous gift, and one such bag landed in a stocking drying by the fireplace. So began the tradition.

Sadly, there is no doubt that the humble Christmas stocking has become yet another victim of the rampant consumerism present at holiday seasons and family occasions. Traditional Christmas stocking fillers included oranges or tangerines, pennies, sweets, or even a lump of coal in the Victorian tradition. It is clear to see that we have come a long way from such superstitions, but quite how far might come as a shock to many people. When researching stocking fillers today, you will not simply find suggestions

New Year's Traditions

Usually, New Year's Eve means being surrounded by the people that you love, for the whole night. Perhaps being squeezed into tiny gaps in a tiny room because it simply isn't big enough for the number of people in there. It means having your favourite drink beside you in order to clash glasses to glasses and say "cheers" when the clock strikes twelve. Firework displays of blue, gold and red are set off all over the country so, even if you didn't have any yourself, if you look out of your window, someone else has put on an incredible display for you: so, you get to sit back in your armchair to observe the glistering sky without having to stand outside in the cold for hours. Finally, when the time comes, voices scream "Happy New Year" so you hug and kiss your beloved friends and family to say goodbye to 2022 and say hello to 2023.

But that's just the tradition in Britain. So, let's fly to the other side of the world, all the way to China where New Year's Eve doesn't have a specific date; next year it will be celebrated on 22nd January but the day changes due to the phases of the moon in January. They celebrate New Year in different ways. To start with, they might watch a spectacular display of millions of red lanterns being sent into the sky above or they might share their joy by gifting a little, red envelope containing a small amount of money, to the young people, to bring them luck in the new year. Alternatively, the people across China might spend their Lunar New Year by feasting on a reunion dinner with all of the family members that you haven't seen since the last New Year celebrations. Also, before the year changes the house is cleaned like it's never been done before, to sweep away the

Technology is consuming us

Hello readers! My name is Wioletta and I am currently a student at Church Stretton Secondary School, taking part in the Student Journalist Program. A few interesting aspects of me are, I can speak 4 languages (Polish, English, Spanish and French), I have taught myself how to play the piano and have been playing the violin for over 10 years.

I remember when I was younger, we had to organise sleepovers to meet with our friends, or knock on people's doors to ask if they could play, beg our parents to let us out to the park after school. Whereas now we call our friends online, text them and occasionally go out together, socialising without even leaving our homes. Whilst I understand the benefits we gain as we slowly emerge out of our childhood bubble, I believe there are many cons that are quite often overlooked. Tolerance for social interaction, which has significantly lowered, partially due to the pressure

increase as we age but more primarily: the increase in use of technology and is today's inertia.

In some ways this is hypocritical because I am a part of the demographic that uses it, it allows you to connect across the world and it's versatile. Google can give you the answer to anything, in almost seconds. With just a click of a button be talking to your friends and in a completely different world. Especially in lockdown, we could stay in contact with our friends, and then a minute before we needed to be somewhere we just disconnect... and connect to the next call. Yet people still felt their social needs weren't met and, in some cases, lead to mental health problems. The internet is fast paced, and the 'fast food' of interaction. Is it the same quality of interaction? Meeting someone face to face, is enriching and fulfilling and in some ways, more authentic. You use all your senses and can look into the whites of someone's eyes and truly not connect but create that bond

of chocolate bars and books, but also expensive luxuries that are increasingly becoming standard in the lavish world of gift giving. Jewellery, clothing and electronics are considered by most as suitable gifts to stack under the tree. These stand out as important presents from loved ones, but they are fast becoming stocking stuffers that, unfortunately, many children and young people take for granted. As our young people become accustomed to a life filled with these novelties, gratitude within society is slowly wearing away.

Perhaps a change of approach is called for in how extravagant gifts are bestowed on the younger generation, and not just at Christmas. In our current financial climate, when giving such gifts is next to impossible for many families, perhaps we need to re-set our gratitude scales. It is not hard to see why the average family spends 29% more in December than in any other month of the year, when considering those lights and that tree, and the seeming

endless festive decorations, but at least 8 million people are already struggling to pay their bills. So, is it time to revert to fruit and sweets to stuff our stockings, and consider alternatives to giving on other important events such as birthdays and anniversaries? Or are we too far gone down the road of consumerism? There is much to be learnt from the legends and stories of our past: the importance of charity, the value of family and the beauty of simplicity to name but a few. In a time when the necessities of life are already stretching the budgets of people and Government alike, the simpler aspects of life must be appreciated as they once were if we hope to celebrate our life events as times of more than financial difficulties and blatant greed.

Evie Jackson

ill fortune and to make way for the incoming good luck that the New Year may bring.

Equally, in a country not so far away from Britain, is Spain where, at midnight, the people eat twelve grapes for each strike of the clock in *las doce uvas de la suerte*. It is said that if you manage to complete the challenge, all the evil in your life will be ward off and your New Year will be a lucky one. So, this year, whether you believe in legends or not, why not try eating twelve grapes at midnight because, not only will you be eating one of your five a day but, 2023 for you, may be filled with prosperity and joy. In the capital of Spain, Madrid, people gather around the clock tower in La Puerta del Sol Square, to count down with the thousands of other people, to experience the joyful atmosphere. The square transforms into an enormous, shared party and

strangers become long-lost friends to celebrate the precious night.

Evidently, New Year's Eve is spent in different ways doing different things at different times across the globe. But despite these contrasts, everyone is brought together during a time of celebration and joy to ring in the New Year. Thus, it doesn't matter if you are in China, Spain or Britain to celebrate because the changing of the year is one event; it connects each person despite their background, status or ethnicity. Everyone becomes equal for that one special occasion. So, have a Happy New Year and I hope that the traditions that you partake in, bring you luck in 2023.

Daisy Swain

and relationship that has weight to it. Do we get that same level of social interaction from screens?

If we look at social media for instance and how it's built on a foundation of fictitious elation, fuelling young people's insecurities and half of it isn't even real, it's plastic surgery, filters, poses, the one picture out of the thousands taken, and nothing is real. It's all exaggerated to create a false sense of reality to immerse us, and the amount of effort they put into deceiving the impressionable is almost psychotic. They get paid to manipulate; it's not complicated. Platforms are wired to be simple. All you need to do is swipe, tap and be susceptible for brainwashing. Now, it's the same with interaction using technology, tap a few buttons and send a text, swipe on a game a couple of times, and we get an instant dopamine hit. However, I would argue that socializing is anything but simple, it's a skill that is being lost due to the accessibility of phones, and I'm

beginning to see toddlers using phones, children not going outside anymore and people my age sell their life away at a detrimental cost. These age groups are individuals who have time, children especially. The increasing use within technology is causing people to become too apathetic. Why would you risk embarrassment, when you can have security handed to you? Easy isn't sustainable but our perception has been warped to lose the value of meeting face to face.

So, what's next? Are we not going to face the hardships of life and potential social embarrassment because it's easier to stay in your comfort zone? Is technology censoring the beauty of life, which includes the effort and the ugly too?

Is it conditioning us to our ultimate downfall? A world where we don't know how to do the one thing humans crave... communicate.

Wioletta Sewry

Cryptic Crossword by Stan Yelds

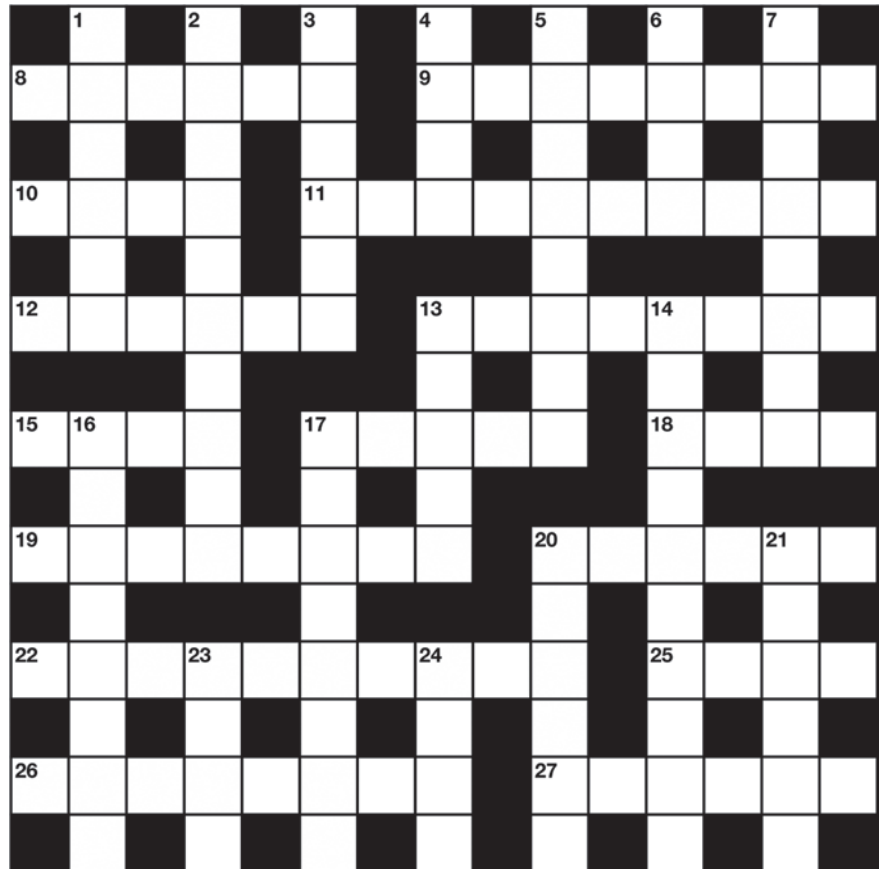
Find 7 12 20a, all undefined.

Across

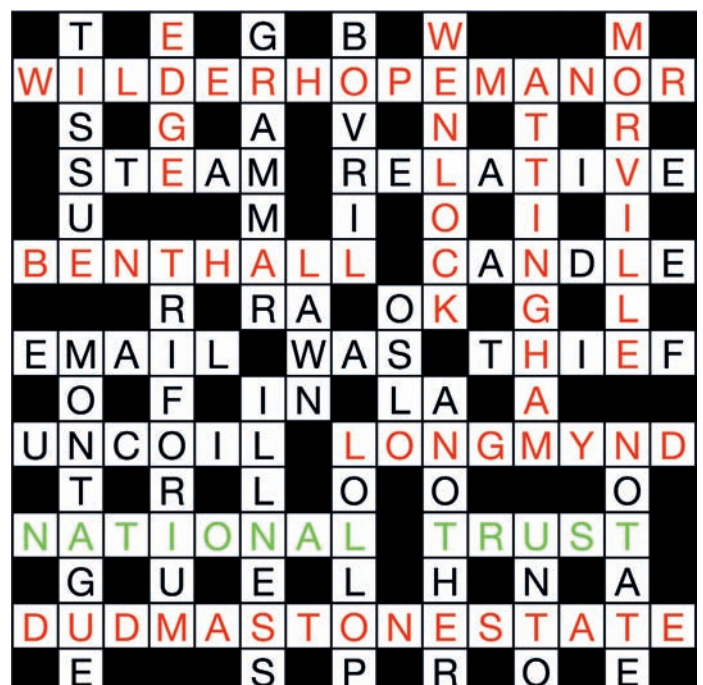
8. Purchase offensive weapon from Dr Spooner – that will put a stop to it (6)
9. Aid row gets calls for assistance (8)
10. Most important conduit for salt water (4)
11. Put vessel with others from ancient Rome (10)
12. Irrigate when getting in for a cold period (6)
13. Wind instrument backing by Chinese unknown (8)
15. You, with nothing to lose, associating with the French (4)
17. Elevate one among many (5)
18. By necessity engineers are rational leaders (4)
19. Monopolise a large number of housing associations at first (8)
20. Impressive achievements seen around southern gorges (6)
22. Wrongly massaged – it's my ankle! (10)
25. God can be seen in good individuals (4)
26. Maybe unseal it? On the contrary! (8)
27. Local-run city centres for northern people (6)

Down

1. One rule I had overturned (6)
2. Feathers fly in mouth's direction (10)
3. Search organised for hunter (6)
4. Stimulate briefly with the fancy (4)
5. Charitable person left Thailand and is in a rut (8)
6. Some powerful narcotic in the arm (4)
7. I sing in a dicky, and get a badge (8)
13. I defy trauma and improve (5)
14. Stay with me and finish off some beers (4,6)
16. Between you and me, leading Scot produces dreamers (8)
17. I'm surprised at end of some yarn about this country (8)
20. Pilot: head for ditch! (3-3)
21. Unimportant things sometimes pursued on board (6)
23. Praise for Yorkshireman's exit (4)
24. A refusal to join the Spanish (4)



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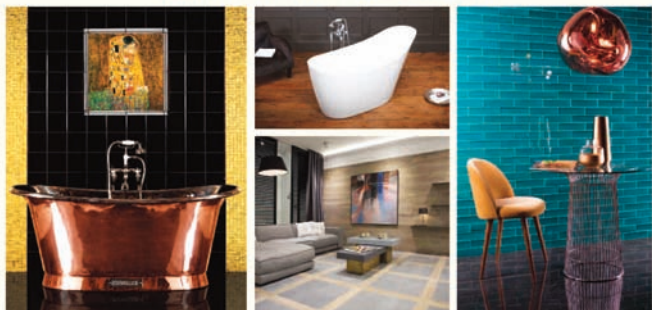
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These warm wishes often accompany Christmas greetings. January acts as a doorway between the old year and the new. 2022 has been a year of many troubles, some very severe and continuing. But let us never forget the good things that have happened. There were and are people who give generously in many ways, especially including acts of kindness. The smallest kindness can be like sunshine illuminating one's life. We are thankful for people who recognise others, whoever and in whatever circumstances are fellow human beings.

In January we look forward to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18th to 25th) and hope for progress with this. Holocaust Memorial Day is on 27th January. We look back, aghast at such inhumanity which since has echoes in Srebrenica, Rwanda and elsewhere. In recent years in the local Inter-Faith Group, a Jew and a Muslim have gone together to local primary schools to show friendship between differences. They plant a cherry tree in the school garden as a reminder.

Methodists have a special service at the beginning of a new year, the Covenant Service. Being Nonconformists, we do not generally have fixed liturgies: Covenant and Holy Communion are exceptions. John Wesley invited Methodist people to renew their covenant relationship with God. He

used the same material from 17th Century Puritans which has been revised since then. The emphasis is on God's continually generous love, not depending on our deserving. We respond in penitence and gratitude. The Covenant is not only between individuals and God, but an act of a community of faith. The words are a powerful reminder of what it means to serve God revealed through Jesus of Nazareth. A few lines may indicate this:

*I am no longer my own but yours,
Your will, not mine, be done in all things,
wherever you place me,
in all that I do,
and in all that I may endure;
when there is work for me
and when there is none;
when I am troubled
and when I am peace...*

In different parts of the country, I have found Anglicans sharing the service with Methodists or separately, but always followed by communion. It includes prayers of intercession, our unity with humanity.

May 2023 be a year of kindness, one to one, nation to nation; a Happy New Year.

Pam Rush

Rotary Club News



It is almost two years since Church Stretton Rotary held their first Young Heroes Awards and it is now time for nominations for those special young people for the Young Heroes Awards 2023.

Do you know someone between 6 and 18 years who has made a significant difference to their family, an individual or the community through a single act of selfless, bravery or sustained effort during the last 18 months? Nominations for the Church Stretton Rotary Young Heroes Awards can be submitted until the end of end of March. Following the selection process the Awards Ceremony will take place at the end of June 2023.

You can nominate them by completing the online form, using the QR code or typing bit.ly/ssyha2023 into your web browser. Alternatively send an email to youngheroes.rccs@gmail.com requesting a printable copy.

All who are nominated will receive a certificate and a token prize, with the winner in each age-group being awarded a cash prize, trophy and shield.

Church Stretton Rotary look forward to celebrating these amazing young people who are amongst us.

Peter Burt



Church Stretton Rotary Club lost a wonderful member at the end of November when George Roby moved to so called 'higher service'.

It was only in September last year that we announced his completion of 50 years of service as a true Rotarian. As explained then without George there may not have been a Church Stretton Rotary Club today.

George was a legend throughout our District and was totally involved with Club activities right up until the day he died. He was an inspiration and an excellent supporter for all our new Rotarians.

He was a very well-known figure locally through his tireless work both for our organisation and the annual Arts Festival for most of the 40 years he and Maureen, his wife, had lived in Church Stretton.

George was a true gentleman with a good brain, an excellent memory, a strong sense of humour and a very large heart. Our Club and town will not be the same without him.

Don Lovejoy



Mayfair News

Warm and welcoming

As a registered Shropshire Warm Welcome space, anybody is welcome to come and spend time in Mayfair this winter in both our Community Centre and our Health and Wellbeing Centre. We are open from 9 to 5 on weekdays. Although different spaces in our buildings are booked for activities throughout the day, we will always have somewhere you can sit and relax. Just ask at one of our receptions if you're unsure where to go.



Although you are welcome on any weekday, on Tuesdays and Thursdays in January and February our Cafe area in the main Community

Centre building will be set up as a special warm welcome area. Tea and coffee will be provided for you to help yourself to, as well as magazines and activities. At lunchtime on these days we will have soup available free of charge.

If you're worried about the cost of living and how this impacts on you, your family or friends, you are not alone and there is support available. We have key contacts at Mayfair for how to get some help, whatever your situation may be. Call in and ask for the 'Worrying about money' leaflet. Please let your friends and neighbours know we're here too.

Be part of something amazing!

Have you considered volunteering as a new year's resolution? Research shows that volunteering can "enhance wellbeing, including improved life satisfaction and increased happiness" (The Institute for Volunteering Research, University of East Anglia). What better way to start a new year?!

We're lucky to have a wonderful team of volunteers here at Mayfair who are the backbone of all the services we provide in the community. But we are always in need of extra support with a huge variety of activities to choose from including catering jobs, youth work, front of house/ welcoming roles, driving with ring and ride, supporting vulnerable members of our community and helping at events and fundraisers. Get in touch with Eve, our Volunteer Coordinator, if you would like to find out more: eve.simmonds-jones@mayfaircentre.org.uk

Mayfair Digital Support Service – two exciting new areas where we can help

Our digital support team are made up of friendly, knowledgeable volunteers who can guide you through all

your digital dilemmas. Here are just two new ways in which they can help:

NHS online: Working with the GP practice here in Church Stretton we can help you to get access to online services either through your computer, tablet or smartphone. Once active you will be able to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and use the online consultation service. It's easy to navigate and saves time for both you and the practice.

Cost Comparison sites and reducing bills: We have a wealth of knowledge about IT costs (lowest cost broadband and mobile phone contracts). In addition, we can show you how to use online cost comparison sites to check whether or not you are getting the best rates for items such as home and car insurance, etc. Whilst we can't advise on what is the best deal for you, we can show you how to navigate and find out for yourself.

To contact the Digital Support Team, call Mayfair on 01694 722077.

Keep moving with Mayfair

Mayfair has a wealth of different dance and exercise classes available throughout the week. We also have free Mayfair Health Walks on most weekdays. If you're keen to keep moving, meet new people, improve your balance and strength or improve your fitness, you can find out more on our website here: www.mayfaircentre.org.uk, or by popping into the centre or giving us a call on 01694 722077. See the list of current classes opposite.

An exciting programme of Theatre and Music Screenings at Mayfair

Following the success of our first gourmet meal and National Theatre screening in November, Mayfair are putting together an exciting programme of shows for 2023. Our next screening will be another exceptional National Theatre Live production:

Mayfair Community Centre, Friday 27th January, 7pm
Adults £15; Bar and refreshments available to purchase
The Crucible (15) National Theatre Live Screening



A witch hunt is beginning in Arthur Miller's captivating parable of power with Erin Doherty (The Crown) and Brendan Cowell (Yerma).

Raised to be seen but not heard, a group of young women in Salem suddenly find their words have an almighty power. As a climate of fear, vendetta and accusation spreads through the community, no one is safe from trial.

Mayfair Lottery Results for November

105	119	76	569
£100	£50	£20	£10

Lyndsey Turner (Hamlet) directs this contemporary new staging, designed by Tony Award-winner Es Devlin (The Lehman Trilogy). Captured live from the Olivier stage at the National Theatre.

Bookings and enquiries through Mayfair: 01694 722077.

Look out for our wider programme on the Mayfair website: www.mayfaircentre.org.uk or call 01694 722077.

A non-stop November and December...

November and December were packed with events at Mayfair. Thank you to everyone who attended or supported these occasions, which have helped raise a huge amount for Mayfair and the work we do in the Stretton community. Take a look at this selection of pictures documenting our busy end to 2022:



Mayfair book sale



Raffles were drawn for a fantastic knitted Santa and a beautiful quilt in memory of the late Kate Johnson...

Continued overleaf...

Class	Days and times	Details
Monday Yoga with Liz	Monday 5.15-6.45pm	Small class for all levels of experience. Beginners welcome. Includes floor work.
Zumba Gold with Wendy	Tuesday 9.30-10.30am	Low impact, Latin-inspired, easy to follow exercise. Dance yourself fit!
Upright and Active with Wendy	Tuesday 10.30-11.30am	Maintain strength and balance, along with promoting health and posture.
Gentle Yoga with Mary	Tuesday 10.30-12.00am	Gentler practice to help you to relax, improve and increase flexibility and posture.
Eastern Mystique with Angela	Tuesday 4.45-6.00pm	Shimmy your way to improved core strength. Balance based on belly dance moves fused with other dance styles.
Chair yoga with Mary	Wednesday 10.30-12.00am	Gentle exercise and relaxation in a seated position or standing with the chair for support.
Angela's just Dance	Wednesday 6.00-7.00pm	Move to music at your own ability as you follow short combinations or embrace freestyle fun.
Strength, balance and flex	Thursday 12.15-1.15pm	Gentle approach to exercise: no jumping or floor work, ideal for 55 years+. Standard class includes more seated exercises.
Strength, balance and flex PLUS	Thursday 1.30-2.30pm	As above, but the Plus class is mainly standing exercises, but still no floor work.
Tai Chi	Friday 9.30-10.45am	Gentle exercise involving specific postures at a slow constant pace without tension in the limbs. Relax mind and body while improving balance, coordination and posture.



Lower Deckers Shanty Band entertained a full house of 'land lubbers' at the SHI

A craft sale with handmade items created by the Mayfair Crafty Ladies and cardmakers



Art appreciation

Mayfair are extremely grateful to local artist Diana Nuttall who generously donated her entire collection of artworks to Mayfair when she retired last year. This enabled us to hold an art sale in November which raised a staggering £1,411 for Mayfair. Diana's beautiful paintings and pastels proved very popular, with many selling within half an hour of opening the doors at the Health and Wellbeing Centre on the morning of the sale. Diana, who also helped out on the day, said "I am delighted I was able to contribute to Mayfair and thank all those who supported the event for such a good local cause." A few remaining pieces are still for sale in Mayfair, displayed in our Community Centre Café.



Co-op Thank you

The Strettons Mayfair Trust would like to say a huge thank you to Midcounties Co-operative Society and all those members who have kindly donated to us from their 2021 share of the profits. We really appreciate being part of this great community scheme. We have received a cheque for the amazing sum of £1,093.29 which will help to support our continued work within the community. Thank you to everyone who has kindly donated for your generosity.

Stretton Area Community Wildlife Group

Save Our Curlews Project – *Appeal for Funding in 2023*

Previous editions of *Focus* have included news of our joint work with Shropshire Ornithological Society, to find curlew nests and protect them from predation with electric fences. When the chicks hatch, we attach radio tags and track them to see what happens to them.

We are repeating the project in 2023, but it costs money. We had a grant in 2022 from Stepping Stones, but that funding is not available in 2023, so we have relaunched our Strettons Area Save Our Curlews Appeal. You can find a report on the results in 2022, with the Appeal Leaflet and a donations page on how to contribute, on our website www.shropsCWGs.org.uk.

ShropsCWGs.org.uk. We hope you will consider contributing.

If you want to find out more about the project, or you would like to help locate the curlews by joining our bird survey, please come to the Strettons area joint meeting with Church Stretton SOS branch, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd March, at the Methodist Church Hall, Watling St., Church Stretton, or contact leo@leosmith.org.uk.



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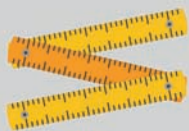
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Church Stretton Leisure Centre



It's easy to miss this wonderful facility, which is a rare find in a small town like Church Stretton even when the populations of our local villages are taken into account. The Church Stretton Leisure Centre is located at the far end of the car park that sits between St Laurence's primary school and the Church Stretton Academy School on Shrewsbury Road. Teme Leisure ran it until responsibility was taken over by Shropshire County Council (SCC) in April 2020.

It's now managed by a team of approximately 20 staff, some of whom are part-time and some full-time, with Mike Wilson and Sue Wells as the duty managers. Mike says, "I worked part-time at the Ludlow leisure centre when I was a student, so when this job became available after I graduated, I jumped at the chance. I trained as a teacher, which is a good background when working with Stretton schools and their pupils."

The team are a helpful bunch, but be prepared to leave a message if you telephone because there are busy times and many tasks that need constant attention. Fin Townsend explained that the role of each day's duty officers is to open up the building ready for the day's activities to begin, close up at the day's end and help customers at the front desk. Then there's all the cleaning a health and fitness facility needs, lots of admin, membership applications to process, clients' fitness programmes to monitor, equipment to be moved around and first aid to be administered – infrequently, hopefully – to name just a few of the myriad tasks that keep the place in good working order.

The building is bigger than it looks from outside. There's a 20m swimming pool, an air-conditioned fitness suite, four badminton courts, a dance studio and a meeting room inside, and tennis courts outside. Many of the classes held in the dance studio are run by independent fitness trainers. The list of activities is long, and the centre has a busy schedule, with several local groups using the sports centre for netball, pickleball, badminton and much more. So, there's something for almost everyone, no matter what age or level of fitness, and all the details and timetables are available on leaflets from reception, or on the SCC's website or by telephone.

The pool house was built in 1971 and is older than the rest of the building. School children learn to swim

here during term time, and they have exclusive use of the changing area to ensure compliance with current safeguarding regulations.

The pool was at risk of closure until the Stretton Pool Action (SPA) was set up to protect and improve its facilities. The group campaigned hard to keep it open when it was at risk of closure a few years ago, and now raises funds for maintenance in this energy-hungry facility together with an upgrade programme. Much has already been accomplished, with the installation of a new roof, complete re-decoration and the purchase of new lockers for users' property. Duty manager Sue says, "New changing rooms for the public at the pool would be wonderful. They've been painted, and are clean and bright, but they will be upgraded as soon as possible." Denise Cottom, of Stretton Pool Action (SPA) says, "SPA was awarded charity status last year. We're planning to improve the facilities, specifically in changing provision for families and access for people with disabilities who need them, just as soon as we can raise the funds. A recent 2022 survey should show us much more about what local residents need. I'd also like to pay tribute to the staff at the leisure centre, who are wonderful in their support for the pool."

Here's a question. Did you know that the mezzanine floor – past reception and up the steps on the right towards the pool entrance – is an art gallery space, featuring local artists? No, nor did I to my shame. Mike says, "Some clients have suggested that we should have a café space here, but the reception area and the art gallery mezzanine can be really busy at times, especially when school children gather here before and after their swim classes, so it's hard to see how these spaces could accommodate a food service area with tables and chairs. Still, who knows what the future holds?"

It's often said that people who live in the Strettons and its environs are blessed by all its benefits. There are a number of venues available for art, music, theatre and festivals, Mayfair health and wellbeing facilities. Our wonderful town park and the proximity of the Long Mynd with its National Trust (NT) custodians come to mind easily, but the leisure centre is tucked away from the road and easy to overlook. It's January folks, just in case you hadn't noticed, and time, so I'm told, to make a resolution to accomplish something new during the next 12 months. So why not swing right, into the car park, as you pass by on the main road, and find out what might be on offer for you? Need a room for a meeting or training course during the school holidays? Perhaps a gentle swim to loosen up those niggling joints, or maybe you fancy a spin on a bike without braving winter weather? Or perhaps you don't know where to begin. Ask for advice from Kletos Trachonitis on the best and safest way to raise your heart rate, brighten your eyes and loosen your waistband. What do you have to lose?

Contact SCC at www.shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-leisure-time/church-stretton/


Email: churchstretton.leisure@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01694 720051

SPA are at: www.facebook.com/groups/StrettonPoolAction for information on timetables, memberships and more.

Christine Williams, Focus Journalist

Church Stretton



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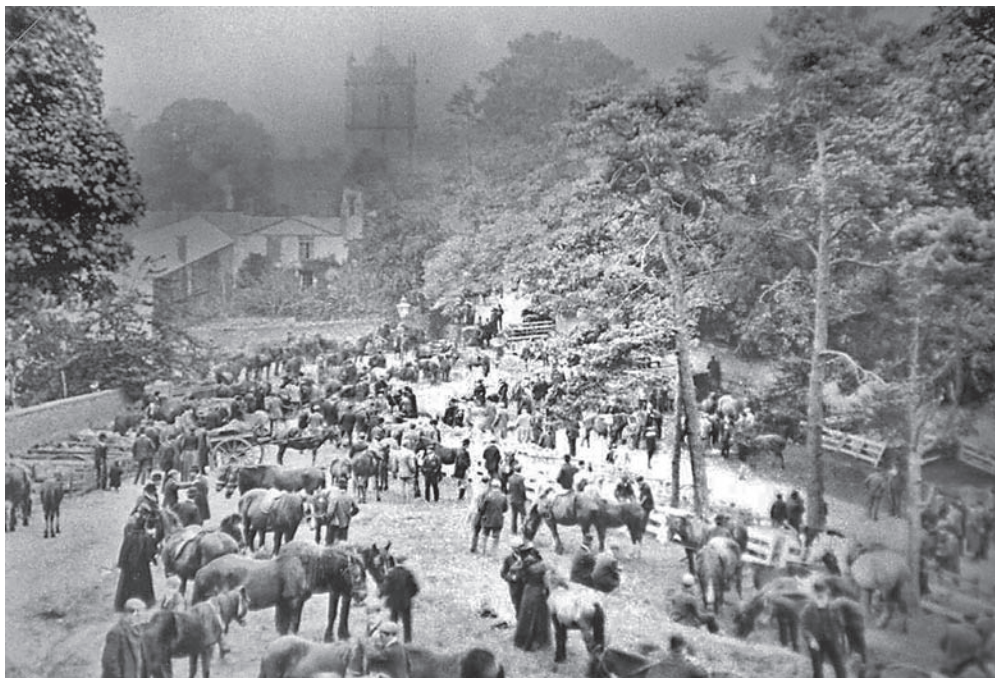


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Historic Church Stretton – The Horse and Pony Fairs



The horse and pony sales were held at the corner of Burway Road and Longhills Road after the Market Square and the High Street became too crowded. A 1905 photograph

From the late 12th century, a town's right to hold a fair was granted only by a royal charter or by command of the king. This would specify the day or days on which the fair could be held. Fairs were usually established for the buying and selling of cattle, sheep and horses at the appropriate time of the year. Fairs were not restricted to these commodities; all types of commerce took place and pedlars travelled the country with their wares. They were places for the exchange of news and gossip and for the hiring of labour.

Over the years, Church Stretton had been granted several fairs. By 1888 these had grown to six which were held on:

- The second Thursday in January
- The third Thursday in March (for cattle and sheep)
- The 14th of May (the statute and hiring fair, the so-called Mop Fair). At this fair, prospective servant girls brought with them a new mop which they held to indicate that they were available to be hired. The new mistress would give the chosen girl a shilling for the mop thus hiring her for one year until

the next Mop Fair, a tradition carried through to the 1930s. This fair was important for the sale of cows and calves. There was also a funfair with swing boats, gallopers, sideshows, acrobats and shooting galleries – one of the main events in the town's social life.

- The 3rd of July (the wool fair)
- The 25th of September (the sheep and pony fair)
- The last Thursday in November. This was the last fair of the year and became known as the 'dead man's fair' because over the years a number of people had lost their lives going home over the Long Mynd due to bad weather.

Horse breeding and rearing was an important part of the economy of Shropshire's uplands from the Middle Ages. Later on, many ponies were brought for use in the mines. In the 20th century,

partly as the demand for pit ponies fell, the number of horse fairs held in the country declined.

Livestock sales in Church Stretton were originally held in the town's main street, originally called Bristol Road and now called High Street. As the Market Square grew smaller with the encroachment of buildings, the various livestock fairs had to find locations elsewhere in the town. The sheep and pony fair was moved to a triangular piece of ground at the junction of Burway and Longhills Roads but would often extend down to Shrewsbury Road. Wooden pens were erected against the perimeter walls and along the lower Burway Road for the large numbers of sheep which were sold at this fair. When increasing traffic levels made this arrangement inconvenient the sheep fair was held on the Lion Meadow in Easthope Road until about 1982 when King's Court was built on the site in 1984.

Tony Crowe and Barrie Raynor from Church Stretton through the Ages

Engaging Issues

Engaging Issues returns in the New Year with some major themes. On Tuesday 10th January, we welcome Lucy Easthope with 'When the Dust Settles – Post-disaster stories of love, loss and hope'. Lucy is a world-leading authority on recovering from disaster. She has been at the centre of the most seismic events of the last few decades, from the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami to the Grenfell fire. When a plane crashes, a bomb explodes, or a city floods, she is the one they call. She holds governments to account, helps communities rally together, returns personal possessions to families, and holds the hands of the survivors. Her recent book (available at Burway Books) – and her talk too – shows us that humanity, hope and humour can – and must – be found on the darkest days.

Then on Tuesday 24th January we turn to the BBC. 100 years after its foundation we are now at a time when public service broadcasting is under severe threat, both from private providers and from new technology, and when standards of truth and accuracy, not to mention freedom of expression, are being challenged in the jungle of social media. How does the BBC maintain its commitment to a vision of the common good? Paul Richmond knows the organisation from the inside, having been Head of Production from 1997 to 2007, and will guide us into discussion about the future shape of the BBC and the relevance of the original mission – to inform, educate and entertain.

Talks take place at 7.30pm at the URC. A donation of £3 is requested to cover expenses.

David Howard

Friends of Church Stretton Library

Stepping Stones Project Talk

On Thursday 19th January at 7.30pm Friends of Church Stretton Library will present a Zoom talk on the exciting Stepping Stones nature conservation programme. Project officer Charlie Bell of the National Trust will talk about this programme that aims to restore or create 'stepping stones' and corridors of wildlife habitat between the two core sites of Long Mynd and the Stiperstones, and beyond. This means creating or improving areas of heathland, flower-rich grasslands and broadleaved woodland and linking them by a network of wildlife-rich hedgerows, road verges, hillsides and streamside wetlands.

The project area covers more than 200km² within the Shropshire Hills AONB, stretching from the Stretton Hills in the east to the Stiperstones ridge in the west. The National Trust currently leads the project, with the other main partners being the AONB Partnership, Natural England and Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

Charlie Bell's talk will give an overview of the project – its aims, achievements to date, and plans for the future.



View towards the Stiperstones from Asterton Bank showing much of the area covered by the project

To request a place for this talk please email churchstrettonlibrary@outlook.com.

All donations raised by this talk will be used to support the work of our Library.

Madeline Haigh

Remembering Graham Lewis

Graham Lewis had been involved in supporting the library since 2017 when he joined Church Stretton Library Support Group to help with the campaign to keep the library open in Church Stretton. In 2019, when Shropshire Council announced the library was staying in its current building, Graham helped set up the charity Friends of Church Stretton Library to support the library through fund raising.

His background in music and running an Arts Centre came in useful. He organised a successful musical soirée by Ragleth



Recorders in the Tan House, Little Stretton. This was followed by a brilliant concert for Five French Horns in the URC Church where the audience learned from Graham why French Horn players need to 'dump their spit' regularly.

In the last year, while unwell himself, Graham continued to help by keeping us up to speed on the development of a new Library Strategy by Shropshire Council. Sadly, Graham died on the 12th November after a long illness. He will be greatly missed.

Sheila Davies

Use the NHS App and help others

Most people will at some time have experienced the frustration of trying to telephone their GP practice only to find it engaged or that you are being held in a long queue. If your call is urgent this can be extremely stressful. The NHS app is an online application which allows you to:

- order repeat prescriptions
- book and manage appointments
- view your GP health record
- download your NHS COVID Pass

By carrying out non urgent activities such as these online, you are freeing up GP receptionists so they can

concentrate on taking the more urgent phone calls where people need to speak to someone that day.

The NHS App can be found at www.nhsapp.service.nhs.uk/patient

It is fairly easy to use, but if you are not very confident in using the internet then one-to-one training is available in Church Stretton Library for free.

This training is being rolled out through libraries across Shropshire including Church Stretton library to help people become confident in accessing reliable medical information on the internet and access the NHS App.



The one-to-one training is provided free of charge and people can bring their own phone/iPad/tablet with them into the library so they learn on their own equipment.

People can book for up to three one hour sessions, though it is anticipated most people will only require a single one hour session.

Library staff have received training through the Digital Health Champions Network to provide this tuition.

People can book a time to suit them by popping into Church Stretton Library or telephoning 01694 722535.

This is how one local resident described the training:

"I have limited IT knowledge and can only do the very basics on my iPad so these sessions at the library were

perfect for me. My tutor was very patient with me and competently went through the many stages necessary. I would thoroughly recommend these sessions for anyone wishing to have the ability to use this technology for convenience and to reduce the workload for the medical practice."

NB If you want to access your own medical records during the training you will need to first ask your GP practice for access to their online patient service by taking proof of your identity and address to the surgery. You will need to allow at least one week in advance of your library appointment.

Sheila Davies

Stepping Stones

How can nature help local people in the Shropshire Hills?



We often hear about people helping nature, and we're often invited to get involved and do more. Now a new project is turning the idea upside down and asks how nature could help people more. Stepping Stones managers want to understand better the needs and wishes of local people and communities, including businesses and visitors, across the board, not just in relation to nature.

The Stepping Stones project, led by the National Trust with its partners, aims to restore nature by connecting habitats from Stretton Hills to Stapeley Common, taking in Long Mynd and Stiperstones. Many local people have got involved in helping to restore nature. But now

Stepping Stones managers are going further, to get a better understanding of all local needs before examining how nature-based and other local activities can help meet them. Now we are looking for community-minded individuals interested in helping to research a bit deeper with their local groups, communities and businesses.

Resources for Change is organising this research for the Stepping Stones project, and would love to hear from you. We offer training and support, and a contribution to your local group or charity in return for your help.

Contact Helen Fairweather helen@r4c.org.uk,
Tel: 01743 891617 or text 07962 425515.

RSPB Nature Notes: Robin

Regarded as Britain's favourite bird, the familiar robin is often depicted on Christmas cards. Known as the gardeners' friend, often seen waiting for the soil to be turned over by the spade, they can become remarkably tame. Sometimes they will sit on your spade waiting for you to start digging. In continental Europe robins are much shyer, preferring to forage around the woodland edge. Though friendly to us robins are very quarrelsome amongst themselves and spend much time fighting.

They feed mostly on the ground, hopping and flitting in search of spiders, insects, worms, berries, and seeds. They



will visit our bird tables.

Easily identifiable, both cock and hen are red breasted, although juveniles have no red at first.

They sing a beautiful, wistful, and melodic song all year round but in winter it is particularly melancholic. Sometimes they are heard singing all night, especially where there are streetlights.

In springtime they will nest in our gardens and sheds, often using old flowerpots and we can

encourage them by putting up open-fronted bird boxes amongst the cover of ivy or shrubbery.

Carol Wood





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Churches in the Strettons



ANGLICAN CHURCH, STRETTON PARISH: St Laurence, Church Stretton, St Michael & All Angels, All Stretton, and All Saints, Little Stretton. Rector: Rev'd Steve Johnson (Tel: 722585)
Website: www.strettonparish.org.uk

Sunday Services

St Laurence's

Weekly	8.00am	Holy Communion
1st & 3rd Sundays	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Deeper
2nd Sunday	10.30am	Morning Worship
4th Sunday	10.30am	Altogether

On the 1st-3rd Sundays in the month the children's activities are in the Parish Centre. Children join the service at 10.30am and then are taken over to the Parish Centre by the leaders.

St Michael's

1st & 3rd Sundays:	10.30am	Morning Worship
2nd & 4th Sundays:	10.30am	Holy Communion (URC on 2nd Sunday)

All Saints

1st Sunday:	11.00am	Holy Communion (Order 2)
2nd Sunday:	11.00am	Morning Prayer
3rd Sunday:	11.00am	Holy Communion (Order 1)
4th Sunday:	3.00pm	Evensong

Where there is a 5th Sunday in the month, all three churches join together for a United Parish Service at 10.30am in St Laurence Church.

Midweek Service

Holy Communion will be held weekly in St Laurence at 10.30am every Thursday

Online Service

As well as the services above, you can join us from home for our pre-recorded online service available from 10am each Sunday. Please visit www.strettonparish.org.uk and click on the "Online Services" blue button. The same service can be listened to by phoning 01694 631066.

The Parish Office is in the Parish Centre, Church Street. (Tel: 724224).
Open 9am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday. Email: office@strettonparish.org.uk



METHODIST CHURCH Minister: Rev'd George Heinz (Tel: 07538 480626)

Website: www.churchstretton-methodistchurch.org.uk

Hall bookings: Carole Coles (Tel: 724958)

Sunday Services

10.30am Morning Service

Wednesday Activities

Babies and Toddlers (School term time only) 10am-12noon

Cuppa and Chat 2.30-4pm. All welcome



RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) Co-clerks: Lesley Richards and Charles West (Tel: 722068)

Email: csqm@gorswen.co.uk

Sundays:

10.30am Meetings for Worship in the Silvester Horne Committee Room; Children on 4th Sunday in month

For details of home discussion groups please telephone the Clerks.



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH Priest: Canon Jonathan Mitchell (Tel: 01694 658091)

St Milburga's, Church Stretton

Email: stmilburga@gmail.com

Sunday: 9.30am Mass

Tuesday-Saturday: 9.30am Daily Mass

Saturday: 5.30pm Evening Mass

St Walburga's, Plowden

11.15am Sunday Mass



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH Minister: (vacant)

Website: churchstrettonurc.org.uk

Sunday Services

10.30am Morning worship, followed by refreshments in the church hall
Communion is celebrated on Sundays notified in URC Church Newsletter

Weekday Activities

Mondays/Wednesdays: Monday Group and Ladies Link are currently suspended

Wednesdays: Discussion and prayers – currently suspended

Fridays (non-denominational): Meditation – in the Vestry at 2.00pm

Church Contact: 722123; Email: urcchurchstretton@gmail.com

Church and Hall bookings: 722092

Clubs and Societies in Church Stretton with names of Secretary and contact details

Allotment Gardens Association	Ben Warren	07779 437871	greenhillsallotments@gmail.com
All Stretton Amateur Dramatics Society	Nicola Simcock		allstrettondrama@gmail.com
All Stretton Village Hall	allstrettonvillagehall@gmail.com		www.allstrettonvillagehall.org.uk
All Stretton History Society	Ruth Grafton	723187	janegra@waitrose.com
All Stretton Village Society	Caroline Crump	723283	carolinecrump68@icloud.com
Alzheimers Carer's Support (Mayfair)	Jackie Pennington	722077	[Monthly, 2nd Friday, 2.00pm] www.mayfaircentre.org
Amnesty, Church Stretton Group	Barbara Parnell	720040	
Ancient Greek Study Group	David Langslow	723538	stretlang@gmail.com
Archers: Bowmen of Caradoc	Ros Healy		Roshealy1@gmail.com
Archers, Long Mynd	Sue Williamson	722767	sue@chelmickforge.co.uk
Army Cadet Force	Lt Wheelden	01743 231779	info.shropshireac@rfca.org.uk
ArtsAlive (Church Stretton)	Michael Walker	720132	fontenay1@btinternet.com
Arts Festival, Church Stretton & South Shropshire		07763 985707	info@strettonfestival.org.uk
Badminton Club (Monday 8-10pm)	James Kirkwood	07979 474326	home@jameskirkwood.co.uk
Badminton Club (Junior and Adult, Wednesday)	Alan Fox	725588	alandavidfox@live.co.uk
Beacon (Activities and Care at Mayfair)	Joy King	722077	(Mayfair) www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Books (Mayfair/Health & Wellbeing Centre)	Sue Hird	724235	smhird@btinternet.com
Bowling Club, Church Stretton Probus	Glyn Morgan	722388	crocrus2@tiscali.co.uk
Bowling Club, Indoor	Alan Mileson	723999	amileson@lineone.net
Bowling Club, Ladies'	Lucy Taylor	720115	
Breathing Space (Singing for health and wellbeing)	Kate Buttolph	720358	kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk
Bridge Club (Thursday 1-5pm, All Stretton Vlge Hall)	Maxine Lainchbury	07971 191664	www.bridgewebs.com/churchstretton
Bridleways Association, Long Mynd and District	Lynn Townsend	722667	
Brownies, Church Stretton	Judy Russell	724056	davejudy1@googlemail.com
Busy Bees Preschool	Church Stretton School	722209	
Camera Club, Long Mynd	Amanda Page		secretary@longmyndcameraclub.co.uk
Cancer Research UK	Sue Toghill	722713	susantoghill@outlook.com
Cancer Support Group, Stretton	Lesley McIntyre	723427	
Chamber of Trade, Church Stretton	Stuart Wright	722237	
Chess Club, Church Stretton	Tom Williamson	722767	tswilliamson337@gmail.com
Choral Society, Stretton	Ru Trew	724297	strettonchoral@gmail.com; www.strettonchoral.org.uk
Churches Together	Lesley Richards	722068	
Church Stretton School Theatre	Alan Fox	725588	or 07977 060303; alandavidfox@live.co.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau	c/o Mayfair	722077	(Mayfair) [Thursdays] www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Civic Society, The Strettons	Charles Simmonds	724117	candp.simmonds@googlemail.com
Climate Care, Stretton	David Howard	722904	
Country Market (ex WI)	Ann Lloyd	07889 143057	or (01694) 731274
Credit Union	c/o Mayfair	722077	(Mayfair) [Wednesdays] www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Cricket Club, Church Stretton	Rob Whittall	07967 571044	churchstrettoncricketclub@gmail.com
Croquet Club	Fane Conant	722610	fanessue@aol.com; www.churchstrettoncroquet.org.uk
Cub Scouts, Longmynd (Tuesday Pack)	Jane Wrench	723923	janewrench2@gmail.com
Cub Scouts, Longmynd (Wednesday Pack)	Andrew Spurling	723429	aspurling@btinternet.com
Cycle Group, Stretton Steadies	Clive & Fiona Hunt		strettonsteadies@gmail.com
Darts, Church Stretton and District League	Mark Davies (Verd)	07588 517955	verddavies72@gmail.com
Dementia Carers' Support	Emma Wilde	01743 341800	
Dominoes, Church Stretton and District League	Martin Salisbury	723253	
Dramatic Society, All Stretton Amateur	Nicola Simcock		allstrettondrama@gmail.com
Explorer Scouts	Angie Walshaw	723477	angiewalshaw@hotmail.com
Extend (Gentle Exercise) Mayfair	Nicola Daniels	722077	[Thursday mornings] www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Fitness Instructor	Pam Allsop	723899	pamallsop@churchway.plus.com
Fitness for the Young at Heart	Pam Allsop	723899	pamallsop@churchway.plus.com
Flicks in the Sticks (All Stretton)	Kate Latchford	723378	terri@artsalive.co.uk
Flicks in the Sticks (Church Stretton)	Andrew Hall	07508 072206	aahall2002@yahoo.co.uk
Football Club, Church Stretton Town	Nick Cole	724362	nick@eloc.eclipse.co.uk
Football Club, Magpies (5-16 years old)		07816 686139	enquiries@csmf.co.uk
Football Club, Stretton Red Rovers (6-15 years old)	Martin Watts	723543	contact@redrovers.org.uk
Friends of Church Stretton Library	Sheila Davies	723455	www.strettonlibraryfriends.org.uk
Gardening Club, Acton Scott	Terri Clegg	781572	actonscottgc@gmail.com
Gardening Club, Church Stretton & District	Evelyn Dapling	723648	evedapling@waitrose.com
Gliding, Midlands Gliding Club Ltd	Office	01588 650206	office@midlandgliding.club
Golf Club	James Townsend	722281	secretary@churchstrettongolfclub.co.uk
Good Neighbours Care Group	Office	724242	churchstrettongoodneighbours.org.uk
Guiding, 2nd Church Stretton	Jane Hurst	771622	janehurst77@hotmail.co.uk
Harmony In The Hills	Kate Buttolph	07974 382989	kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk
Hockey Club, Stretton Juniors (5-15 years old)	Martin Watts	723543	mlwatts@yahoo.co.uk
Hope Bowdler Hand Bell Ringers	Ruth Jenkins	724919	
Hope Bowdler Village Hall	Evelyn Dapling	723648	
Horse Show, Church Stretton	Sarah Davies	771370	daviesblackhurst@aol.com
Interfaith Forum, South Shropshire	Canon Noel Beattie	725530	
Judo, Junior	Roger Houston	01743 358415	RogerHoustonJudo@aol.com
Karate Club	Dave Shephard	724212	daveshepard1379@gmail.com
Keep Fit, Stretton	Lisa Ryan	751369	
Languages Group	David Langslow	723538	stretlang@gmail.com
Leebotwood Village Hall	Colin Bore	07970 523591	cbore@btinternet.com
Leisure Centre, Church Stretton	Sue Wells	720051	info@teme-leisure.co.uk
Lesbian & Bisexual Women, Border Women Social Group			borderwomen.net
Line Dancing	Dave Bishop	07527 264846	southerncrossldc@gmail.com
Lions Club, Middle Marches	Brian Dawson	01584 831508	thefirs38@btinternet.com
Local History Group	Madeline Haigh	723627	csalhg@outlook.com
Long Mynd Adventure Camp	Peter Jenkins	724919	
Martial Arts, Freestyle	Phil Hatton	07852 961675	freestylmartiaarts.com/stretton
Masonic Lodge (Caer Caradoc)	Graham Williams	07939 109726	caeracadocldodge@gmail.com
Masonic Lodge (Longmynd)	Charles Hennell	01584 856716	charles@hennell.net; www.longmyndlodge.org.uk
Mayfair Health Walks	Trish Howard	722077	trish.howard@mayfaircentre.org.uk
MAYSI Project (Mayfair Supporting Independence)	Janet Williams/Shaz Malins	722077	maysi@mayfaircentre.org.uk
More Singers, The	Alistair Auld	07981 399482	
Mothers' Union, Church Stretton	Diana Coles	723548	
Music: Strettons Classical Music Group	Barbara Hall	724578	
Netball Club, Flames			hello@flamesnetball.co.uk; www.flamesnetball.co.uk
Netball Club, Stretton Scarlett's	Amy	07837 596297	
Ornithological Society, Stretton Branch	David John	724772	poolbrook12@gmail.com
Footpath maintenance volunteers (Parish paths Partnership)	Tim Parker	07493 659514	tim.parker111@gmail.com
Parkinson's UK	Hilary Bowman	07823 523696	hjb Bowman@live.com
Photography, Marches Independent	Geoff Taylor	723301	gtaylor.photo@btinternet.com
Pickleball Club	Carol	07803 329106	
Pilates (exercise)	Sandra Liebrecht	781600	selenaorme@yahoo.co.uk

Play On Performing Arts	Kate Buttolph	07974 382989	kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk
Pride of Place, Church Stretton	Trevor Halsey		trevorhalsey@btinternet.com
Probus, Strettondale	Alan Stockbridge	722317	alan.stockbridge@btinternet.com
Rail User's Association, Church Stretton	Alison Bradley	722138	www.strettonrailusers.org.uk
Radio Control Model Club, Church Stretton	Tim Goodwin	720392	tmgdwn@gmail.com
RAF Roundel Club	John L Davies	724703	
Rainbows, Church Stretton	Judy Russell	724056	davejudy1@googlemail.com
Ramblers, The South Shropshire Group	Darren	07837 021138	
Rangers (Girl Guides) Church Stretton Group	Ana Ireland	723390	anaireland001@gmail.com
Readers Group at the Library	Felicity	722535	churchstretton.library@shropshire.gov.uk
RNLI	Brian Bradley	722138	b.glenmoar@gmail.com
Rotary Club of Church Stretton	Pat Stokes-Smith	723189	patstokessmith@hotmail.com
Royal British Legion	Les Mackey	724992	sulesmackey@btinternet.com
Rugby Club, Church Stretton Samurai	Martyn Longhurst		martynlonghurst@hotmail.com
Rushbury and Cardington WI	Kaye Smith	771554	
Save the Children	Ann Hurst	771622	ann.hurst46@gmail.com
Scottish Dancers, Stretton	David Thomas	722107	
Scouts, 2nd Longmynd Group	Terry Davies	723477	mrtterrydavies@hotmail.com
Scrappies - Shropshire Children's Scrapstore		328508	info@scrappies.org
Shropshire Strummers	David Rae	722459	d.j.rae362@gmail.com
Singers, The More Singers	Alistair Auld	07981 399482	alistairauld@gmail.com
Soaring Association, Long Mynd (model gliders)	Tim Goodwin	720392	info@lmsa.org.uk www.lmsa.org.uk
Soaring Club, Long Mynd (Hangliding & paragliding)	Tim Dunn	01588 672919	coaching@longmynd.org
Stepping Stones Nursery	Anne Arkwright	722341	
Stretton Players	Simon Cleaton	07510 390981	strettonplayers@gmail.com
Stretton Pool Action	David Betton	07977 221171	dmbetton@googlemail.com
Stretton Stitches	Katy Webster	720200	or Frances Williams 722656
Stroke Group, Church Stretton and District	Hilary Parker	723419	
Swing Band, Stretton	Jamie Wrench	723923	jamie.wrench@lineone.net
Table Tennis, Church Stretton	Leisure Centre	720051	
Table Tennis, Leebotwood	Will Priestley	724223	
Table Tennis, Rushbury	Ian Pennington	771410	ianpennington133@btinternet.com
T'ai Chi	Marc Lacey	722077	(Mayfair) www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Taiko Drumming	James Barrow	720169	James@taikowest.com
Taoist Tai Chi, Longmynd	Jo London	01743 369787	jolondon@hotmail.co.uk
Tennis Club	Claire Hatfield	720123	mail@strataassociates.co.uk
Theatre & Concert Group, Stretton	Jenny or Graham Heath	722216	heath@knollcrest.co.uk; strettontheatreandconcert.net
Thursday Lunch Club (Ley Gardens)	Margaret Hamer	722407	or Dawn Longmore 722328
Traidcraft (fairly traded goods)	Maureen Clow	722000	
Tree Group, Church Stretton	Hilary Hymas	723208	hilaryhymas7@gmail.com
United Nations Association, Shropshire Branch	Ruth Davies	724304	daviescs@btinternet.com
University of the Third Age (U3A)	Lesley Brown	724330	u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton/contact
Upright and Active (falls prevention strength & balance)	c/o Mayfair	722077	(Mayfair) www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Walking Football	Ken Willis	328514	gordonwillis@go-plus.net
Wildlife Group, SACWG, Community	Julie Cowley	722310	sacwg@shropscwgs.org.uk
Wildlife Trust, Strettons Branch	Wally Blake	724040	
Women's Institute, CS Marmaladies WI	Carol Greswell	07803 581580	marmaladieswi@gmail.com
Women's Inst., Rushbury and Cardington	Kaye Smith	771554	kayerubetta.smith@btinternet.com
Women's Institute, All Stretton	Kate Ratcliff	724422	allstrettonwi@gmail.com
Yoga (Mayfair)	c/o Mayfair	722077	(Mayfair) www.mayfaircentre.org.uk
Youth @ St Laurence's	Sally Ciliverd	724224	sally@strettonparish.org.uk

Additions and corrections to this list should be addressed to: The Editor, Stretton Focus, by email: editor@strettonfocus.co.uk

Church Stretton Town Councillors

Town Clerk (Locum): Nicky Hook; **RFO:** Gillian Bailey; **Office Hours:** Monday to Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm and 2.00 - 4.30pm
Council Office: 60 High Street, Church Stretton SY6 6BY. Tel: 722113, Fax: 723608. email: reception@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk

South Ward

John Burns 07767 477334
Ryan Foulkes 07528 372471
Daniel Hartshorne 07802 610277
Mark Morris 722741
(Vacancy)

North Ward

Nicola Carter 07581 300498
Sheila Davies (Deputy Mayor) 723455
John Luck 725596
Bob Welch 722998

Little Stretton Ward

Colin Carson 722784
Julie Lawton 723750

All Stretton Ward

Andy Munro (Mayor) 725554
Helen Stowell 07879 848168

Shropshire (Unitary) Councillors for the Area

David Evans 01588 672179 email: david.evans@shropshire.gov.uk
Hilary Luff 07890 056084 email: hilary.luff@shropshire.gov.uk

MP for Ludlow Constituency: Philip Dunne, 54 Broad St, Ludlow, SY8 1GP, 01584 872187.

StrettonDale Local Joint Committee (Details pending)

Responsibilities for Public Services

Domestic rubbish: Shropshire Council 0345 678 9007 Street cleaning: Shropshire Council 0345 678 9006
Electricity power failure: 105 Gas emergencies 0800 111999
Last collection at Family Shopper letter box Weekdays 6.00pm, Saturdays 12.00 noon, No collection Sundays and Bank Holidays

Some useful numbers

Medical Centre		Church Stretton School	722209
appointments and general enquiries	722127	St Lawrence C of E Primary School	722682
out of hours	111	Sports and Leisure Centre (Teme Leisure)	720051
NHS Choices	111	Church Stretton Library	722535
Ring and Ride	720025	South Shropshire Furniture Scheme	01584 877751
Shropshire Council (Shrewsbury)	0345 678 9000		

Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 783 1359 - 24hr support
Visitor Information Centre and Shropshire Customer First Point: 723133
South Shropshire Housing Association: 0300 3031190 (Housing and Support)

Police - Non emergency only 101, Emergency 999

Church Stretton Safer Neighbourhood Team: Sergeant Jenni Price; Constable Steve Mellor: 07870 218762

Team contact: 101 ext 7704505 or csca.snt@westmercia.police.uk

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs):

Daz Barnett: 07866 215007; David Baron: 07870 163156; Julia St John Martin: 07870 163199

Neighbourhood Watch Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111. Twitter: @SouthShropCops

Police Station closed, but there is a 24 hour telephone service there connected to another centre.

Support at Mayfair Community Centre - run by the Community for the Community 722077

For activities and support groups at Mayfair, please refer to the entries under 'Clubs and Societies' and to their advertisement.

Stretton Directory: Index to Advertisers

Occasional Adverts not indexed

Accommodation see Hotels, B&B, Self Catering	Clothes Entertaining Elephants 39	Integral Gardens..... 24 John Stephens Services..... 24 Karkloof 24 Keith Warrington..... 24 Mike Russell Designs 24 Paul Forrester..... 31 Paul Tinsley 37 Peter Tipton 24 Shropshire Lawn Co..... 24 Stretton DIY 37 Tidy Garden..... 24 Unique Landscapes..... 24 Whitehead Trees 24	Outdoor Clothing and Equipment The Outdoor Depot..... 53
Accountants and Bookkeeping James, Holyoak & Parker 13 RLW Accountants 13	Coaches Caradoc Coaches..... 27	Community Centre Mayfair..... 17	Painters & Decorators Andrew Webster 23 D R Tipton Painter & Decorator 23 DWS Property Services..... 23 E B Jones 23 G H Jones & Son..... 23 Paul Forrester..... 31 Roger Lucas 23
Architects, Town Planning Batch Valley Design..... 32 Christopher Roscoe Assocs 32	Computing, Graphic and Web Design Jason Gough 19 Nic Sansom 19 Stretton Internet..... 19 Webbex Technical Services..... 19	Garden Machinery Newington Garage..... 27 Stretton DIY 37	Pest Control Chris Sansom Pest Control 13 Keith Warrington 24
Bathrooms see Kitchens, Bathrooms	Cycle Repairs Go Cycling 53	Hairdressers, Health, Beauty Anthony's Hair Studio 56 Health & Beauty Clinic..... 56 Katerina White 9 Shampers 56	Pet Food and Pet Care John R Thomas 49
Beauty, Slimming see Hairdressers, Health, Beauty	Decorators see Painters, Decorators	Health, Therapies see also Chiroprodists & Physiotherapists Birch Tree Reflexology 56 Bodylogic Mobile Massage..... 56 Cate Gowellt..... 56 Forever Living Products..... 56 Mayfair..... 17 Shropshire Acupuncture 56 Stretton Podiatry..... 17	Pharmacy Hillside Pharmacy..... 39
Bed & Breakfast, Self Catering see Hotels, B&B, Self Catering	DIY & Hardware Cyril Bason Hardware..... 27 Mynd DIY 27 Stretton DIY 37	Hobbies Burway Books..... 53 Philip Hooper 49 The Prolific Crafter..... 49	Physiotherapists Chris Turner 39 Marion Murdoch..... 39 Physio Pilates 39
Bookshop Burway Books..... 53	Domestic Appliances & Repairs Continental Fireplaces..... 53 Norman Jones 53	Home & Garden Caradoc Charcoal..... 49 The Garden Room..... 49 The Prolific Crafter..... 49	Piano Tuner and Repairs Philip Hooper 49
Builders, Plant & Equipment A J Lewis-Price 31 A Morgan 32 A.2.Z Construction..... 31 E J & G J Groom 32 EMT Drives 31 Farmer Plant Services..... 32 Homden Excavations..... 31 Joe Drury 37 K J Morris 31 Keith George 37 Mark Terry..... 32 Morris Maintenance..... 37 Paul Tinsley 37 Richard Sherratt Builders 37	Electrical Services, Lighting AMP Electrical 23 Boxall's Electrician..... 23 Charles Ephraim..... 44 M C Electrical 23 Stephen Morgan 23	Home Furnishings Abbey Carpets..... 53 Louise Watney..... 53	Plumbers, Heating Gary Paris..... 44 Homefix 44 J Morris 44 K & J Davies Gas Services..... 44 Lee Brown 44 Morris Maintenance 37 Peter Floyd 44 Whiting Heating 44
Cafés see Restaurants, Cafés, Pubs	Estate Agents Bluestone..... 40 Miller Evans 40 Samuel Wood 40 Wrights Estate Agents 40	Hotels, B&B and Self Catering Eaton Manor 9 Haybarn 9 Mynd House 9 Willowbatch 9	Printing, Copying, Photo Products Craven Design & Print..... 19 Marshbrook Print 19 Stretton Print & Supplies 19
Cards and Gifts Entertaining Elephants 39 Stretton Print & Supplies 19	Event Venues Eaton Manor 9 Haybarn 9	Insurance see Financial Services, Insurance	Restaurants, Cafés, Pubs Berry's 39 Royal Oak, Cardington 39
Care - Homes and At Home Bluebird Care..... 17	Financial Services & Insurance Caleb Roberts..... 14 Crown Wealth Management..... 14 Philippa Gee Wealth Mngment. 14 Wrights Yorkshire Building Soc. 13	Keep Fit see Health, Therapies, Keep Fit	Skip Hire John Stephens Services..... 24 Peter Tipton 24
Carpenters & Joiners E J & G J Groom 32 Keith George 37 Mark Terry..... 32 Mike Webster..... 31 Paul Forrester..... 31	Fine Art Restoration Stretton Fine Art Restoration 49	Kennels Netley Kennels 27	Solicitors FBC Manby Bowdler..... 9 PCB Solicitors..... 9
Carpets Abbey Carpets..... 53	Florist John R Thomas 49 Shropshire Flower Company 49	Kitchens, Bathrooms A J Lewis-Price 31 A.2.Z Construction..... 31 County Tiles & Bathrooms 31 Homefix 44 Lee Brown 44 Mark Terry..... 32 Paul Forrester..... 31	Storage Ludlow Self-Storage 14 Self-Storage Containers 14
Catteries and Kennels see Pet Food, Pet Care	Food, Delicatessen Entertaining Elephants 39 van doesburg's 39	Logs & Charcoal Caradoc Charcoal..... 49	Sweep Shropshire Sweep 13 Stanton Sweeps 13
Chemist Hillside Pharmacy..... 39	Funeral Arrangements A S Morris and Son..... 17 South Shropshire Remembrance Park 17	Mobility Stretton Mobility Store 17	Taxi Longmynd Private Hire 27
Child Care Hilary's Childcare..... 49 Wistanstow Nursery..... 49	Furniture Restoration Johnathan Callwood 49		Tree Surgery Whitehead Trees 24
Chiropodists Caroline Crump 39 Stretton Podiatry..... 17	Garage Services Burway Garage..... 27 Central Garage..... 27 MOT Clinic..... 27		Watches, Batteries, Straps The Outdoor Depot..... 53
Classic Car Restoration Johnathan Callwood..... 49	Garden Design, Services, Supplies Ben Carter Landscaping..... 24 Farmer Plant Services..... 32 Homden Excavations..... 31		Windows A Morgan 32
Cleaning and House Care Chris Sansom Pest Control 13 Cleanrite Services 44 In Depth Cleaning..... 13 Shaw Clean 13 Shropshire Sweep 13 Stanton Sweeps 13			Window Cleaning Handyman Services 13



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Royal British Legion



Phone box topper, Laura Loves Crochet

a few, as well as to all those who hosted collection tins. A particular mention must also go to Laura Loves Crochet for this fantastic post-box topper.

Remembrance 2022

November is the busiest month of the year for the Church Stretton and District Branch of the Royal British Legion. 2022 was especially important as the Branch celebrated the centenary of its inauguration, and so we're especially grateful for the marvellous support offered to our Poppy Appeal and Remembrance Day activities.

During the poppy appeal period it was wonderful to see so many inventive Remembrance displays at AB Optics and Richard Child's Photography to name



Photo: Helen Stowell with permission of St Laurence's

On Tuesday 8th November, the brave pupils of St Lawrence's Primary School took a rain-lashed walk to the War Memorial for a talk about Remembrance. The sun made a brief appearance and treated us to a rainbow before we headed to Cunnery Road cemetery to place flags on the headstones of the war dead that are laid there. So many thanks to the pupils of Year 5 who must be commended on their cheerfulness in the face of the really unappealing weather. Thanks too, to the Rotary Club of Church Stretton who ensured that we made our way safely there and back.

On Friday 11th November there was a short service and minute's silence held at the war memorial in Church Stretton, but also at the memorial in All Stretton.



Photo: Helen Stowell

We had two collection weekends which raised an incredibly generous £5.5k. All monies go to the good work of the Royal British Legion, helping ex-service personnel in need. We're also really grateful to our collections team, old and new, and their dogs and children that helped.



Photo: Penny Hayward

Church Stretton then assembled in force on an initially overcast morning for Remembrance Sunday. It was heartening to have so many groups and organisations partake in the day. From the serving personnel and veterans of the parish, the civic leaders, emergency services and the youth groups, and many more in between. The parade was led by the horses of the Long Mynd Bridleways Association followed by the Union flag, RBL standard, RAF Roundel and the organisations represented. The standards led the parade to St Laurence's Church which filled up to the extent that the parish centre was used as an overflow.

After a moving service led by Rector Steve Johnson and Curate David Andrews – who is the RBL's branch curate – the parade was led up to the memorial. And as the cloud lifted to reveal the surrounding hills, the last post was sounded and a minute's silence observed.

We'd like to pay tribute to our dear late Vice-Chair and friend, Peter Gardiner whose funeral was held during Remembrance week. He was instrumental to Church Stretton's Remembrance for many years and his passing leaves a huge hole in our lives and in those of many in the town. For many of us on the day, the familiar refrain 'We will remember them' was said with Peter in mind.

Thank you also to the rotarians of Church Stretton who ensured the parade safety on the day.

For those that have a military connection and would like to get involved, the Church Stretton and District branch of the Royal British Legion meets regularly in the King's Arms on the first Monday of each month – do join us.

LETTER

The way to travel

My daughter just booked a birthday treat for her daughter's 16th birthday: as a family of four, two days in London, train tickets, hotel, The Eye, river cruise, *ABBA*, etc. The hotel produced a cake, given the tip off by the travel agent she has learned. All this arranged by the travel agent in Church Stretton who has many years of experience. Why people mess about with internet bookings when you have a human, several in fact, who listen to your every whim I shall never know. Don't they realise it costs no extra – travel agents live on the commission given to them by the airlines, hotels etc. Keep it all local I say.

Maureen Bond

PS The travel agent was, of course, Terry Jones.

A Quaker Voice

Global Quaker Parenting

In Church Stretton there are not many Quakers, and in our Meeting, there are certainly no other Quakers with children under eighteen. In our local Area Meeting of Worcestershire and Shropshire there are a few other Quaker families and we do get together when we can. During the Covid lockdowns we held regular Zoom sessions.

An important reminder in our Advices and Queries booklet focuses on children and young people, and states:

"19. Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care ... How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?"

For support and for learning, I have joined with an online global Zoom meeting of Quaker parents. This is an hour's session in a series of twelve fortnightly meetings to support Quaker parents across the globe.

What I am aware of straight away are the similarities and the differences between the ways Quakers work and worship in the UK and in other countries. Some countries have programmed meetings where there may be Quaker pastors who lead Friends in singing and in prayer, or periods of reflection. This is very different from Quaker meetings in the UK, where there aren't any pastors and where meetings are largely quiet unless someone gives ministry. What I'm also aware of are the similarities between us and what we want for our children: to be able to question, to value silence and quiet, to experience things directly for themselves and to become more open-minded, curious, courageous and kind.

I am committed to attending this online group to learn more about myself as a Quaker parent and to learn from others too. Let's see how it goes ...

Rach Braybrooke



Thank You

Friends of Church Stretton Library

A huge thank you to Geoff Taylor and Malcolm Phillips who helped refurbish the notice boards in the Visitor Information Centre in the library.

The job turned out to be a lot more complicated than originally envisaged but they persevered. Having volunteers carrying out the work helped greatly in keeping the costs down. Thank you also to Suzanne Phillips from 'A Stitch in Time at No 9' who helped replace the fabric on the boards.



Refurbished noticed boards with exhibition of calendar photos

Friends took on this work after seeking feedback from members at our AGM on what improvements they would like to see at the library. A suggestion was made to replace the fabric on the notice boards as they were looking very faded and past their best.

Geoff also helped Friends produce the calendar for 2023 and hung the photographs from the calendar in the library for an exhibition in December.

Thank you also to Vicky Munro for the fascinating talk about 'Living Longer Better' which she gave in the library during November. It was well attended by an appreciative audience.

Sheila Davies

Strettons Arts Forum

**Look out for: Strettfest carnival...
... on Saturday 27th May 2023**

This is the Arts Forum's public and community launch and is an extension of the pilot in July 2022. Among the many positive comments from 16th July people said they'd love to see it again next year with even more people and events in Rectory Field. Have a look at the video from last year: bit.ly/strettfest2022

We are planning a bigger parade, more inclusive of local organisations, colourful and creatively noisy. And this time we really want community organisations to be present and active in the StrettFest23. Express what your organisation is about in a colourful carnival way. CARNIVAL is the theme. We plan that the parade is followed by many cultural activities in which all can participate.

It is about celebrating what we have – and something new.

The 'Arts' or cultural activity and events in many forms do bring communities together and enliven the places where we live and work. Last year, the Arts Festival and Friday Night at the Horne, Stretton Players, All Stretton Panto and many other events made their welcome return.

Let's capitalise on this cultural output, value all that there is; that includes pantomime, painting, poetry, photography and performance; certainly music, mirth and mystery.

For wider community participation, particularly from among young people, the cultural offer has to represent yet more different experiences.

Who is behind this? The Strettons Arts Forum had its genesis from the Community Led Plan focus groups

and conversations. There was a shared wish for a collaborative body to bring things together. It is indeed what the Forum is about: enabling the coming together of the wide diversity of arts and cultural life of the town and its environs. We want to assist the development of new ideas; trying out new forms; reaching new audiences and welcoming new participants; to offer opportunity to include the young, old, in between, families and all; and to reward



all that energy with visiting audiences who come to the Strettons for its cultural events around the year.

So, join in with your organisation now. In January, we will invite you to a briefing session for the parade to learn what you are working on and, any help that community groups may need.

StrettFest is a showcase for what we can do together and from there how much more?

Strettons Arts Forum team, email: noelbt8@talktalk.net

Write for Rights 2022

The Amnesty Group hit a new record on 3rd December. Members and supporters completed 77 cards of greeting and solidarity for victims of oppression in ten different countries, and then managed an additional 101 letters of appeal to the authorities in those countries. With more letters and cards being sent in the following weeks, Church Stretton is playing its full part in the world-wide campaign. One of those targeted last year, an imprisoned environmental campaigner in Guatemala, wrote: "Amnesty International gave me hope of freedom and now I am free. I am now with my family, I am now with my daughters, I am now with my partner. My mother has already cried with happiness to see me free. Thanks to each one of you for spreading and sharing my letters."

David Howard



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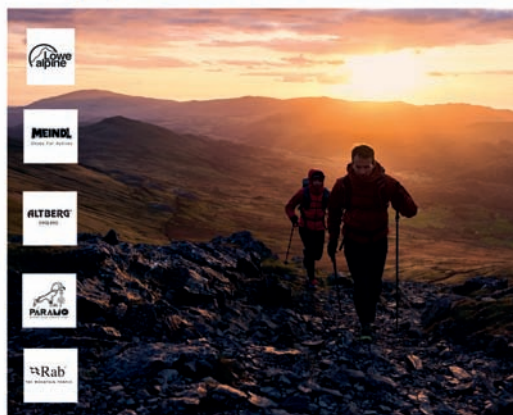
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Church Stretton Area Local History Group

2pm Monday 16th January 2023 at the URC Hall:
Researching the People of the Shrewsbury Flax Mill by Penny Ward

Our first meeting of 2023 is the talk originally scheduled for last September which had to be postponed because of the Queen's funeral. Penny Ward of the Friends of the Flax Mill Maltings will report on a research project which the Friends initiated a decade ago. Its object was to build a picture of the lives of the many people and families who worked at the Flax Mill over its 90 years of operation and the community that developed in the area around the site. No personnel records for the Mill survive, and so the project has had to use a wide range of records both in Shropshire Archives and online to tease out the many different stories that are now beginning to emerge.

Ditherington Flax Mill opened in 1797 and was the first iron-framed building in the world, described as 'the grandfather of skyscrapers'. Its restoration, with another three of the seven other important buildings on the site, officially opened to the public on 10th September 2022 and the Friends made a very significant contribution to making this possible.

Visitors are welcome to attend Penny's talk for £4. Recent talks have been very popular so please arrive in good time for our 2pm start.

Madeline Haigh



The Mill in the days of horse and cart

Stretton Parish Voice

New Year, New Challenge

I feel amazed that 2022 has been and gone! A year with more normality than the couple preceding it, and more things achieved than I might have dared hope for. However, it has still finished with me saying 'Well, we didn't get around to that project' or, probably even more frustratingly, there are several projects we challenged ourselves to complete, and we did start, but they remain unfinished.

Well, 2023 is a year when I am determined that one challenge I am going to take up and complete is reading the Bible in One Year. The Bible is still the best-selling book of all time with over 5 billion copies sold. Over many years I have read most of the Bible but I know there are definitely some parts that I have missed, so I am looking forward to knowing this plan ensures I cover everything. I am also looking forward to the explanations by Nicky and Pippa Gumbel which go alongside the daily readings, as they are so good at presenting their insights clearly and making them relevant for life today. The plan is easily accessible either through an app on your phone, a daily email, an audio version or a book, so I can find a version to work no matter what I am doing on a given day. There is also an express version (just 15 minutes) for days when time is short, and a youth version. The good news is I am not doing this on my own. At Stretton Parish we are encouraging



everyone to join in, so I will feel supported and encouraged throughout the year.

How about joining us? Maybe it is a challenge you have always meant to do but never got around to it, or perhaps you have never opened a Bible before, but know there is something spiritual missing from your life and you have been meaning to discover more. So how about finding out what the Bible really says and how it is relevant to you. Do join the challenge and please have a look on our website strettonparish.org.uk/bible-in-one-year for more information and to let us know you are taking part.

*Sally Clilverd
Children's and Families Worker, Stretton Parish*



Stretton Parish

Trivia Answers

1. Southfork
2. Tom Thumb
3. Vulcan
4. Victor Hugo
5. Tusks

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Patient Participation Group

Your Patient Participation Group committee met on 17th November. We have been made aware that the comments box in the surgery is not very obvious. It is to the right of the checking-in screen in the waiting room. We have been working on a notice to be positioned above the box to improve its visibility. We hope this will be done by the time you read this.

The practice manager reported that they were experiencing some difficulty in recruiting new reception staff at the moment but they were continuing to advertise and interview. Again, we hope this will have been achieved by the time you read this. The reception team have been working under a lot of pressure for some time now and the increasing verbal abuse from a small minority of the Church Stretton population has made it even harder. The practice understands that patients get frustrated at times but being rude to the reception staff is unfair and counterproductive.

The flu and covid vaccination programme was considered a success with a majority of eligible Church Stretton patients now fully vaccinated. Every year the practice team reviews and makes changes as necessary. They will be looking at how to reduce the queuing time for next year.

Unfortunately, the first vaccination clinic prompted quite a few patients to go elsewhere for their vaccinations. Whilst the practice understands that the queues put a lot of people off, they have been left with quite a surplus of flu vaccine. These vaccinations are ordered by the practice roughly 14 months in advance and the amount ordered is based on the number of eligible patients. Whilst it is possible to return a small number at the end of the year the practice remains liable for the cost of any left-over vaccine so would encourage patients to have their vaccinations at their organised clinics.

One of our committee members applied to join the Joint Overview and Security Committee and was accepted. This meets regularly with various providers of care in the NHS in Shropshire and will give us an idea of the issues and possible solutions being looked at. It appears that our medical practice is one of the more efficient ones in the area with appointment waiting times below the national average.

We shall next be meeting at the beginning of February and amongst other matters will plan when to have an open meeting for any patient to attend. Please feel free to put any suggestions for this in the comment box in the surgery.

Alison Phillips (chair)

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