

STRETTON FOCUS

MARCH 2023 COMMUNITY VOICE OF THE STRETTONS £1.30



STRETTON FOCUS



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

Founded 1967

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

Chairman

Richard Fillenham 723119

Editors (editor@strettonfocus.co.uk)

Patricia Thomas
Sandra Davies (Events Diary)
David Lyons, Janet Du Cros
Clare Patterson

In-house Journalist

Christine Williams

Cover Editor

Geoff Taylor 723301

Design and Layout

Barrie Raynor 723928
Graham Cossins, Rowland Jackson
Steve Moore, Andrew Fenton

Proof Readers

Catherine Macartney, Bronwen Taylor,
Catherine Redfern, Linda Bishop,
Cynthia Wood, Nina Marsh

Subscriptions and Distribution

Chrys Bonds 724184
Peter Whitlock 725533

Advertising (Business)

Sara Hewitt 658086

Finance Director

John Rowlands

Secretary

Chris Moores 722940

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Richard Fillenham, John Rowlands,
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Long Mynd ponies
above Townbrook Hollow



Photo: James Russell

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

For the **May** issue the deadline is **Monday 3rd April, at 12 noon.**

The **April** issue will be distributed on **Friday 31st March**

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

Editorial



As your newest member of the editorial team, I was wondering about our readers and what they enjoy most in *Focus*.

Many of you were probably born here and have always enjoyed this wonderful community. Many more probably moved here from other parts of the UK or even further afield and may have known the area as walkers. When we moved to Shropshire from Cornwall, we

knew very little about the Strettons and it has been a real surprise to discover so much on offer here. Because it was in between two Covid lockdown periods, we relied almost entirely upon *Focus* to find out about our new home. You have only to look at the list of clubs and societies and What's On to appreciate how much happens here.

That's why I volunteered when *Focus* advertised last year for an additional editor. There's been a lot to learn and it's been good to take on a new challenge and join a great team.

Of course it's always valuable to acquire new skills and a great comfort to know that "the editor is always right"!

It's heartening to see how many people in this community volunteer – apart from the *Focus* team, Mayfair and Beacon helpers and club leaders, I've met litter-pickers, walk leaders and gardeners at the rail station and churches. So much going on and so much good will. You'll see some really worthwhile events (the Ukrainian evening) and people (Karuna, Long Mynd Music, Save our Curlews and our first responder, Tracey) to support this month.

From personal experience I should like to recommend the Saturday morning concerts, Engaging Issues and Flicks in the Sticks (especially the excellent choice of foreign films), not to mention the different walking groups. It's been amazing to have so much to choose from.

The National Garden Scheme yellow booklet will also hopefully be available this month and of course you can search for theirs and other gardens open for charity online, an excellent way to get to know the area or revisit old favourites. Spring is here!

Clare Patterson

L E T T E R S

Update on Felling in Brockhurst Wood

In the November edition of *Focus* you printed our article on Felling in Brockhurst Wood. We said in the article that felling would start in early 2023.

Our contractors did start the work but after felling one of the oaks and clearing a way to drag it out to the top of the wood they realised they needed a larger winch and cable to do the work safely. Unfortunately, they are unable to get hold of a larger winch and cable until later in the year. This means our felling along the bottom of Brockhurst Wood has been put on hold until next autumn or winter.

After reading our article in the *Focus* many people have said how pleased they are that we are thinking about the future of the woodland and want to improve the age structure and the diversity of tree species. Clearing the oaks along the boundary with the houses on Ludlow Road and replanting with a mixture of species will have the added benefit of removing tall woodland trees adjacent to properties.

If anyone would like to contact us about our management of Brockhurst Wood please use the email address: cstreegroup@gmail.com

Frances and Paul Eade

Flicks in the Sticks

Can I just say what a brilliant idea it is to include Flicks in the Sticks programmes each month. It's so easy to plan what you are seeing. In December we saw two films in Acton Scott and Church Stretton. This month we are going to All Stretton and Acton Scott. Many thanks.

Helen Sansom

Biography

Our family moved to Church Stretton in 1963 and lived in the area until the mid-1980s. I am now writing a biography

on my mother Vera Connor as part of an MA in Biography with the University of Buckingham.

I am interested to hear from anyone who remembers her or the family and is happy to contact me with their memories or any archive information.

Her name was Vera Connor, my father was Captain Owen Connor, and he was present intermittently as he was in the merchant navy. My parents, myself and my brother Robert lived in 10 Churchill Road from when it was first built and were one of the first families to move onto the Ashbrook estate. Robert and I attended Church Stretton Primary School between 1964 and 1975.

I recall my mother being a member of the Young Wives group which I think was part of the Methodist Church. The group then changed its name (presumably they no longer felt so young!) to the Tuesday Group and met together for years in each other's houses. Vera also delivered meals on wheels for a time and the meals were prepared and distributed from a café, shop or kitchen in the town, I think, but I am not sure.

She was also a Brownie Guide leader for a time.

In 1972 we moved to Heighway Lane, All Stretton and then my parents moved to North Wales in the 1980s.

The writing of biographies of ordinary people is overshadowed by those written about famous, influential or high class folk and I am keen to get as much information about her and Church Stretton in the 1960s and 1970s as I can.

Any contributions will be referenced and I look forward to hearing from you in anticipation.

*Dr Lynne Wright née Connor 07919 950250
85 London Road
River Dover, Kent
CT17 0SQ*

What's On in the Strettons in March

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

All the regular weekly meetings are now listed separately from the main diary of less frequently occurring and one-off events.

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:

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-12noon HWBC

Family History Research

Our history volunteers will guide you in your local and family history research. Free internet access to Ancestry.
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 table tennis. £3 per hour.
Contact Carol: 07803 329106
Every **Monday**
7-8pm (or 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**
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**
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**
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 55years 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

£7 per class or £36 block of 6 classes.
Contact Becca on 07905 236805 or yogawithbecca@hotmail.com
Tues: 6.30-7.30pm Mayfair
Wed: 9.30-10.30am Scout Hut
Wed: 6.30-7.30pm SHI
Thurs: 7-8am Scout Hut
Thurs: 9.30-10.30am Leebotwood VH

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:

10 FEBRUARY – 27 MARCH

Art Exhibition: Inspired by Darwin

Work by local artist, Thelma Thompson, including original paintings, photographs and poems.
10am-5pm daily, Discovery Centre, School Road, Craven Arms

28 FEBRUARY

CS & District Gardening Club Meeting

Our guest speaker today is Nancy Lowe, the Natural Gardener on Wildlife Gardening. We look forward to seeing you.
2pm SHI

1 WEDNESDAY – 18 SATURDAY

Nature in the Strettons Exhibition

Highlighting threatened species and habitats in the Strettons, and the monitoring and conservation efforts of local nature groups. From 20th March, the exhibition will move to the HWBC.
Viewing during library opening hours

Continued overleaf..

What's On continued

1 WEDNESDAY

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

Where the Crawdads Sing (2022)
Cert: 15 RT: 2 hrs 5 mins
Tickets: £4. Contact: 771295
7.30pm Cardington VH, SY6 7JZ

2 THURSDAY

Citizen Advice at CS Library

Trained advisors on hand to give advice.
Sessions by appointment, 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month.
See main library item for details.
10am-12noon CS Library

World Book Day at CS Library

During the day, local nurseries and schools will be joining us for stories.

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

3 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

World Day of Prayer Service

WDoP is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women. 2023's service has been written by the women of Taiwan. All are welcome to join us (not just women!).
10.30am Methodist Church Hall

u3a Reading Group 1

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

Mayfair Theatre Screening: *Othello* (12A)

A 'National Theatre Live' production.
Adults £15, Under 18s £10.
Bar and refreshments available to purchase.
Bookings/enquiries: 722077
See main Mayfair item for more info.
7pm Mayfair

Flicks in the Sticks All Stretton

Top Gun – Maverick (2022)
Cert: 12A RT: 2 hrs 10 mins
Enquiries: 07812 583113
Tickets £4. Interval refreshments.
7.30pm All Stretton VH

6 MONDAY

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.
We meet first Monday of the month.
5.30-6.30pm Kings Arms, SY6 6BY

7 TUESDAY

Stretton Stitchers

An informal, friendly sewing group.
New members are very welcome.
Info: Katie 720200 or Frances 722656.
10am-1pm URC Hall

Mayfair Quiz

With quizmaster Ken Willis.
Tickets are £5 per quizzier and you need to book as a team, so get your family and friends together and join us from 7pm. Call Mayfair reception on 722077 to book your table.
7pm Mayfair

Flicks in the Sticks All Stretton

Coup 53 (2019)
Theatrical feature documentary.
Cert 15. RT: 2 hrs
Tickets £6. No interval
Enquiries: 07812 583113
8pm All Stretton VH

8 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

The Mule (2018)
Cert: 15 RT: 1 hr 56 mins
Admission: adults £5, children £3
Tickets on the door. Tea, coffee, cakes & ice cream served in the interval
Enquiries: 723648
7.30pm Hope Bowdler VH

Long Mynd Camera Club

Results and showing of the Shropshire Inter-Club competition.
www.longmyndcameraclub.co.uk
7.30pm URC Hall

9 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

Craft Carousel – a variety of craft stations to have a go at something new. With an Easter theme, create a craft to take home.
We welcome new members to join us for creative, informative and discussion sessions. marmaladieswi@gmail.com
7.30pm Mayfair

10 FRIDAY

u3a Writers Group 2

With Lesley Dench
2nd and 4th Friday of the month
10am-12noon CS Library

Ukraine Fundraising Evening

Local Ukrainian refugees are holding an evening of traditional Ukrainian food, dance and song. Please come and support this event. Tickets £20 adult, £10 children, available from Vine and Co or Caroline Crump on 723283.
7-9pm SHI

11 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

What's On continued

Saturday Morning Music

With Brenda Stephenson, Claire and Mark Tocknell playing music for violin, viola, clarinet and piano.
Free admission, retiring collection, with net proceeds going to local charities.
10.15am URC

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

13 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

Stretton Cancer Support Group Meeting

Michael Nielsen will talk about the importance of exercise in rehabilitation after cancer treatment. He will be joined by Sharon Williams from the '5k your way' team. Everyone welcome.
For more info contact:
Lesley McIntyre: 723427
Rosemary Williets: 722112
2.30pm Jubilee Room, Mayfair

14 TUESDAY

u3a Writers Group 1

With Jenny O'Shea
2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month
2-4pm CS Library

South Shropshire RSPB Local Group Talk

With guest speaker Gary Slaytor: 'Your optics, your choice'
Members £2, Visitors welcome £5
Enquiries: Carol Wood 07807 068304
7.30pm Diddlebury VH, SY7 9DH

15 WEDNESDAY

SACWG Annual Public Meeting

All are welcome and refreshments are provided.
7.15pm All Stretton VH

16 THURSDAY

Citizens Advice at CS Library

10am (see Thursday 2nd for details)

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

17 FRIDAY

Rotary Club St Patrick's Day Race Night

Event consists of a series of horse races and the entrance fee (£10 in advance from Mayfair or any Rotarian, or £12 on the door) will include hot food. There will also be a bar. Raising funds for CS First Responders.
Time TBC SHI

18 SATURDAY

CS Ballroom & Sequence Dance Club

8pm (see Sat 11th for details)

19 SUNDAY

RSPB South Shropshire Local Group Walk

Venue: Sowdley Wood, Clunton
See main RSPB item for more details.
Walk lasts approx. 3 hrs. Sorry no dogs.
Picnic or pub lunch.
9.30am meet at car park. Grid Ref: SO 33788 80668

20 MONDAY

CS Area Local History Group (CSALHG)

Our guest speaker is Tony Birdwood from Llanwrda. Tony will tell us about the Heart of Wales railway.
Non-members: £4, pay on the door.
Talks are popular so please arrive in plenty of time for the 2pm start.
Contact: csalhg@outlook.com
2pm URC Hall

21 TUESDAY

All Stretton Women's Institute

AGM followed by Easter tasting quiz.
Email: allstrettonwi@gmail.com
7.30pm All Stretton VH

Flicks in the Sticks Acton Scott

Brian and Charles (2022)
Cert PG RT: 1 hr 30 mins
Tickets: £5 adult, £3 child.
Ample parking and level access
Enquiries: 781260
7.30pm Acton Scott VH

22 WEDNESDAY

Friends of CS Library Talk

'Turkey through its writers' – by Janet Longstaff.
2.30pm CS Library

Yoga with Sue at CS Library

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

Curlew and Lapwing Survey Project Briefing

New helpers wanted. All welcome.
You only need to be able to recognise both birds. Training provided.
Contact Leo Smith: phone 720296 or email: leo@leosmith.org.uk or David John: phone 724772 or email: poolbrook12@gmail.com
7.30pm Methodist Church Hall

Long Mynd Camera Club

Indoor workshop: studio/practical evening. Exploring options for a more unusual choice of subject.
www.longmyndcameraclub.co.uk
7.30pm URC Hall

23 THURSDAY

Flicks in the Sticks Church Stretton

Dream Horse (2020)
Cert: PG RT: 1 hr 53 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

Pazapa Annual Quiz with Ben Warren

£5 pp, teams of up to six.
BYO drinks and nibbles.
Booking via 723061 or pazapachurchstretton@yahoo.co.uk
7.30pm Parish Centre

Red Grouse Count Project Briefing

New helpers wanted. All welcome. No expertise required. Training provided. Refreshments provided.
Contact Joe Gomme: 07779 664394
email: joegomme@gmail.com
7.30pm NT Chalet Pavilion, CMV

24 FRIDAY

Stretton Stitchers

10am (see Tue 7th for details)

u3a Writers Group 2

With Lesley Dench
2nd and 4th Friday of the month
10am-12noon CS Library

Continued overleaf..

What's On continued

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 Courier
Cert: 12A RT: 1 hr 52 mins
Enquiries: 07812 583113
Tickets £4. Interval refreshments.
7.30pm All Stretton VH

SHI Event: An Evening with The 309s

Tickets £12 adult, £6 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

25 SATURDAY

Mayfair Screening: *Anything Goes* (PG)

Filmed live at the Barbican, London in Oct
2021.
Tickets: £15 adults, £10 under 16s
Pre-show dinner available, £15
7pm Mayfair

The More Singers Spring Choral Concert

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Tickets: £10 at the door or go to
www.ticketsource.co.uk/The-More-Singers.
Enquiries: 07896 761149
7.30pm Methodist Church

CS Ballroom & Sequence Dance Club

8pm (see Sat 11th for details)

26 SUNDAY

Healing in the Hills Sound Bath

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stick and Koshi chimes. Aids stress and
anxiety reduction, rebalances. Suggested £10
donation. Booking essential.
Contact: Maria 07985 744038
3pm Scout Hut

27 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

Parkinson's Support Group, CS

We meet on the 4th Monday of the month.
Members, guests and visitors are all
welcome.
2.30-4.30pm Jubilee Room, Mayfair

Shropshire Ornithological Society, CS Branch

Our guest speaker is Geoff Hall:
'Lockdown Wildlife in Shropshire'
All welcome. £3 for non-members.
Refreshments provided.
7.30pm Methodist Church Hall

Stretton Climate Care Talk

With Gerry Jewson, Chair of wind energy
developer Wind2.
Please see Stretton Climate Care article for
more information.
7.30pm Methodist Church

28 TUESDAY

Save the Children Soup & Pudding Lunch

Includes tea/coffee. There is a raffle.
£10 at the door. Please book your place
before 23rd March by calling Ann or Grahame
on 771622
12noon-1.30pm Parish Centre

CS & District Gardening Club Meeting

Our speaker today is Mr Richard Rawlings
from Mynd Hardy Plants.
His talk is 'Living the dream'
Tea/coffee and biscuits will be served at the
end of the meeting.
We look forward to seeing you.
2pm SHI

u3a Writers Group 1

With Jenny O'Shea
2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month
2-4pm CS Library

31 FRIDAY

Mayfair Screening: *Life of Pi*

Filmed live in London's West End
Tickets: £15 adults, £10 under 16s
Bar and refreshments available to purchase.
7.30pm Mayfair

WHAT'S ON IN EARLY APRIL

1 SATURDAY

Saturday Morning Music

Free admission, retiring collection, with net
proceeds going to local charities.
10.15am All Saint's Church, Little Stretton

Key to Abbreviations/Addresses:

CMV – Carding Mill Valley
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
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
Scout Hut – Church Street, SY6 6DQ
SHI – Silvester Horne Institute,
High St, SY6 6BY. Tel: 720132
St Milburga'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.

STRETTON FOCUS

Stretton Focus AGM

Will be held at the
Silvester Horne Institute
10am

Wednesday 12th April

Members of the public are welcome
to attend to observe

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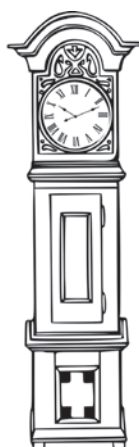
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Mayfair News

A Busy Beacon

The Beacon (activities and care) is looking ahead to the better weather and planning a varied activity programme for the year. It will include quarterly outings to places such as The Discovery Centre at Craven Arms, as well as inviting visitors of all ages to come into The Beacon and provide entertainment or taster sessions. We have already been treated to a visit from Little Acorns Nursery and Ken, our multi-talented caretaker, telling stories of his time in the Navy and singing to us.

All this will be in addition to all the day-to-day activities that are always provided in The Beacon including quizzes, arts and crafts, reminiscence, singing, puzzles and much more. We also provide support to access Mayfair's exercise classes, support groups and appointments.

If you would like more information about what The Beacon will be doing, please contact Katrina or Helen C at Mayfair.



One of our more recent services to open is our Calmer Café. This service is run by professionals and supported by Shropshire Mental Health Support. Every Thursday evening from 5.15 to 6.30 or 6.45 to 8pm our Health and Wellbeing Centre provides a relaxed safe place for people who may be struggling with their mental health. Please note that booking is essential for these evenings, so please give us a call on 01694 722077 and ask to speak to Shaz, Janet or Nic. Alternatively you can email shaz.malins@mayfaircentre.org.uk

Time to Sow...

We will be holding our Mayfair plant sales again in late April and May so if you're feeling green-fingered please keep Mayfair in mind and grow a few extra plants for us this spring. If you would like to know more about contributing plants for these sales, which are a fantastic fundraiser for the community centre, please leave a message with Mayfair on 722077 and one of our plant sale volunteers will get back to you. Dates for the sales will be published in the April *Focus* and on our website: www.mayfaircentre.org.uk

West End Magic here at Mayfair

Mayfair have a fantastic line-up of theatre screenings booked throughout the spring and summer. With a varied programme of Shakespeare, a five-star musical, and dazzling puppetry, we're sure that there will be something to interest everyone this March. All our shows can be booked by calling 722077. We recommend booking early as availability will be limited. Check out www.mayfaircentre.org.uk/whats-on for a full line up of shows into the summer and to sign up to our mailing list for future screenings.

Friday 3rd March, 7pm – *Othello* (12A)*

by William Shakespeare, directed by Clint Dyer
An extraordinary new production of Shakespeare's most enduring tragedy, directed by Clint Dyer with a cast that includes Giles Terera (Hamilton), Rosy McEwen (The Alienist), and Paul Hilton (The Inheritance). She's a bright,



Hannah (Beacon staff member) with Ken during his Navy talk

Friendship, Support and our new Calmer Café

Mayfair is always a place you can come if you need a friendly welcome and a caring ear. We have various services which help care for people of all ages and needs in our community. Our Friendship Volunteers give their time to listen and offer friendship to anyone who would like it. They are here in Mayfair Health and Wellbeing Centre on a Tuesday morning and at our Lunch Club in the Community Centre dining room every Monday and Wednesday lunchtime (12-1pm).

For a more active way to meet and chat, we also offer free Mayfair Health Walks most weekdays with friendly, trained walk leaders. These regular social walks are a great way to meet people and put a spring in your step, no matter what your age or fitness level. Take a look on our website, give us a call or email mhw@mayfaircentre.org.uk for more information.



headstrong daughter of a senator; elevated by her status but stifled by its expectations. He's a refugee of slavery; having risen to the top of a white world, he finds love across racial lines has a cost. Wed in secret, Desdemona and Othello crave a new life together. But as unseen forces conspire against them, they find their future is not theirs to decide. Othello is filmed live on the Lyttleton Stage of the National Theatre.

Adults £15, Under 18s £10; Bar and refreshments available to purchase.

*Please note this screening has been flagged for Photo Sensitive Epilepsy.

Saturday 25th March, 7pm – *Anything Goes* (cert PG).

Directed and choreographed by Tony Award Winner Kathleen Marshall



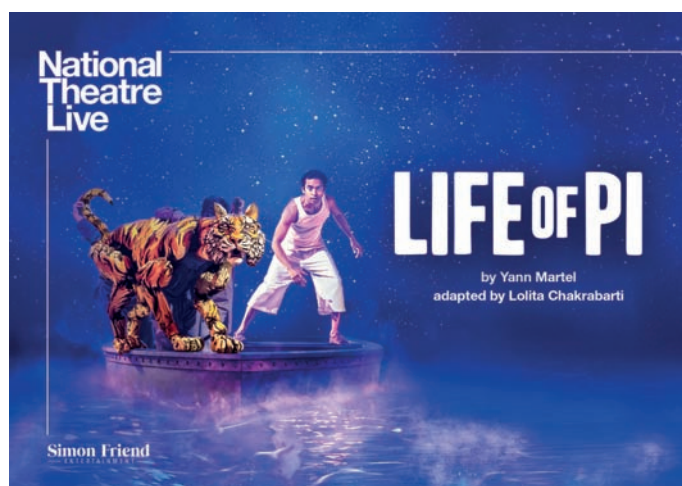
Dubbed 'the show of the year' (★★★★★ *The Telegraph*) and a 'fizzing tonic for our times' (★★★★★ *The Guardian*) we're sure that *Anything Goes* will be a sell-out here at Mayfair. Filmed live during its sold-out 2021 run at the Barbican in London, this major five-star production of the classic musical comedy features an all-star cast led by renowned Broadway royalty Sutton Foster as Reno Sweeney, alongside Robert Lindsay (*My Family*), Felicity Kendal (*The Good Life*) and Gary Wilmot (*Chicago*). A heart-warming romance with spectacular dance routines and some of

theatre's most memorable songs, *Anything Goes* is 'a joyously shipshape revival' (★★★★★ *The Observer*).

Adults £15, Under 16s £10; Gourmet two-course dinner served at 5.30pm for an additional £15 per person.

Friday 31st March, 7.30pm – *Life of Pi* (cert TBC)

by Yann Martel, adapted by Lolita Chakrabarti
directed by Max Webster



Puppetry, magic and storytelling combine in a unique, Olivier Award-winning stage adaptation of the best-selling novel. After a cargo ship sinks in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean, a 16-year-old boy named Pi is stranded on a lifeboat with four other survivors – a hyena, a zebra, an orangutan and a Royal Bengal tiger. Time is against them, nature is harsh, who will survive? Filmed live in London's West End and featuring state-of-the-art visuals, the epic journey of endurance and hope is brought to life in a breath-taking new way for cinema screens.

Adults £15, Under 16s £10; Bar and refreshments available to purchase.

Quizzical fun!

Following on from a fantastic Christmas Quiz party hosted by Ken Willis at the end of last year, Mayfair hopes to hold more regular quizzes in the Health and Wellbeing Centre throughout 2023. Ken's next quiz will be on Tuesday 7th March. Tickets are £5 per quizzier and you need to book as a team, so get your family and friends together and join us from 7pm. Call Mayfair reception on 722077 to book your table.

Mayfair Lottery Results for January

603	564	218	172
£100	£50	£20	£10

Historic Church Stretton – The Resort



The Church Stretton Posting Establishment in Burway Road, 1908

When William McDowall arrived in Church Stretton in 1872 he stayed at Stretton House with William Hyslop, an old friend from the Dumfries area of Scotland from where other Scottish families had settled in Church Stretton in the mid-19th century. McDowall's observations upon Church Stretton are interesting; he called it a street-town straggling irregularly over some 500 yards. He described the older tenements as quaint and queer looking but admits that at least there were a few dainty houses of a modern type! The town was already attracting tourists drawn here in great numbers especially invalids searching for health. He was struck by the number of public houses whose old-fashioned signs formed a feature of the town. The Hotel came in for praise. He seemed to be impressed by the Long Mynd with its sheep and wild ponies and he described "antiquarians tracing the footsteps of Claudius in the remains of Bodbury Ring" and, of course, poor old Caratacus confronting the Romans from his camp on Caradoc. On his return home he wrote his story for the Dumfries and Galloway Standard, subsequently reprinting it as a booklet.

The coming of the railway in 1852 encouraged visitors to spend a day in the town and the local countryside and, from the 1870s, make use of the riding and carriage facilities provided by the Posting Establishment. Later on in that century visitors from further afield were coming to the town and staying at The Hotel and various inns. Visitor numbers had increased to such an extent that The Hotel was extended in 1899 and again in 1906 and three other hotels were built in the town in the early 1900s.

During its Edwardian heyday Church Stretton prospered. In 1905 it was advertised as 'the Highlands of England' and recommended as a winter resort by the medical profession. From the 1890s, day excursionists formed an important part of Stretton's custom. At the 1898 August bank holiday nearly 700 arrived by rail, whilst in August 1913 excursions from the Shrewsbury and Wellington districts and also from Birkenhead and Liverpool brought in over 800 whose day on the hills and in the valleys brought no casualties.

After the war Carding Mill Valley, long felt to be romantic and free of industry increasingly became the principal attraction for day-trippers. In 1918 the influx of Whitsun visitors was "quite on a par with old times" and on the Monday the valley was well patronized. People then came in by brake but by 1926 it was cars, buses and charabancs that brought them to the valley. A "tremendous rush" of visitors that August, when the valley was the centre of attraction, packed the town streets with cars, though many also came by charabanc. By August bank holiday 1927 the valley was "simply one mass" of cars "of all descriptions", the hills scattered with trippers "dressed in various colours"; children paddled and bathed while "their elders were content to lounge on the banks".

In 1937 one motorist who regularly visited the valley wrote to protest that for weeks past it had been spoilt by "hordes of holiday makers from certain parts of the Midlands who with their motor coaches and barrels of beer gave the valley the appearance of a fair ground". He suggested supervision or a nominal charge. By Easter 1938 the scene



An Edwardian family outing to Carding Mill Valley complete with picnic basket



"had to be seen to be believed": thousands in the valley and climbing the hills, both sides of the valley road parked up from the valley entrance as far as the swimming pool, and the town full of parked cars too.

Plus ça change!

Tony Crowe and Barrie Raynor from Church Stretton through the Ages

An Edwardian postcard

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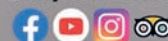
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Coffee & Craft
1st & 3rd Monday
of the month
4pm - 6pm

Church Stretton Town Council Community Matters

Full of the joys of spring

By the time this edition of *Focus* hits the stands, the worst of the winter will be behind us, the evenings will be drawing out and the Council will be preparing for its third year in office. Time has flown. Overall the Council is in good form, with the auditors recently concluding “in our view the council’s system of internal controls is in place, adequate for the purpose intended and effective...”. Auditors always have a few points, but this is now how it should be. The precept request has been submitted to Shropshire Council to collect (1.84% increase or 7p/week for a Band D as detailed in last month’s *Focus*) and the new Citizens Advice service funded by the Town Council has started to operate.

Thus CSTC is pleased to be looking positively ahead. The work in the parks, having been widely consulted upon (see February *Focus*), was confirmed by Councillors on 24th January and is now happening with funds being deployed from the Park Charities, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the Town Council. It will start by replacing some play equipment to ensure there is something for children in the summer and by repairing pathways.

Event-wise, the Coronation weekend on 6th May will see local events and 10th June will see the third ‘Beat the Burway’ 10k run as part of the Church Stretton Running Festival. It will also include a 5k run around the town and a new 50k ultra. On 1st July the town will hold its 2023 Fun Day in the Sandford Avenue Park. With free entry, it is planned to have a helicopter on display from RAF Shawbury as well as a range of face painting, story-telling, a dog competition and refreshments. The Church Stretton Arts Festival will return between 29th July and 12th August.

Meanwhile, the Neighbourhood Plan will have received its consent from Shropshire Council in February. Delayed by Shropshire’s diary congestion, it can now begin in earnest and its progress will be reported here in *Focus*.

There is much more work which is undertaken by the Council beyond the headlines reported above, and it is pleasing to see a growing number of residents attending meetings. The full Council meetings are typically the last Tuesday of the month. It is a relaxed atmosphere and everyone is made very welcome. Full details, agendas and papers are available on the Council website.

It promises to be an exciting year.

Drug Action Group (DAG)

The DAG held a training session for its committee members on 19th January and welcomed representatives from West Mercia Police (WMP) and local youth services. The briefing focussed on understanding the current levels of drug use in the town and WMP were keen to stress that although nowhere has zero incidents, Church Stretton was considered to be a low prevalence area. However, a concern also emerged that whilst a number of reports were being made by residents, these may not filter down to our local Safer Neighbourhoods Team. Residents are therefore asked to continue reporting any suspicious activity to either CSCA.SNT@westmercia.police.uk or www.crimestoppers-uk.org or preferably to both. WMP explained that the burden of proof which they need to obtain a warrant or take action has recently increased, and that they now need multiple reports of criminal activity before they can get a warrant.

You may ask why this threshold has increased, and you will have an opportunity to ask the recently appointed Chief Constable Pippa Mills who has very kindly agreed to address a public meeting to be organised by the DAG in Church Stretton. It will also be a chance for the DAG to present data about what is happening in the area. In the meantime it is also worth noting that representatives from WMP provide a report on crime and local police activity each month to the Town Council at its full meeting, which is open to the public (see above).

Scouts

A big thankyou to local businesses who responded to a call for IT equipment to support our local Scouts. A special thankyou goes to Gestamp and their Group Finance Director, local resident Alan Crump, who kindly donated six laptops which are already being put to good use by Scouts working for their Digital Badge.

Electric Charging Points

Eagle eyed *Focus* readers will have noticed work in the Lion Meadow car park which is the beginning of a programme by Shropshire Council to install eight new vehicle charging points in the town, bringing the total number of public charging points to eleven. Four will be installed in the car park nearest the Fish Bar, and another four will be placed in Essex Road between the junctions of McClintock Place (rear of fire station) and Lutwyche Road.

Congratulations – National awards

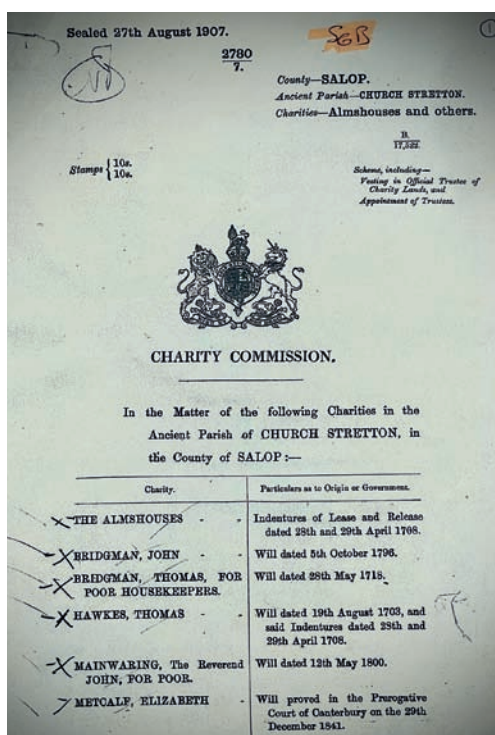
Congratulations to both John Vine and Darren Barnett for their recent success in national competitions which recognised their work. Vine & Co has been named Sustainable Retailer of the Year by the Federation of Independent Retailers whilst our local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Darren Barnett won the ‘Innovation’ award. Selected from more than 300 PCSOs nominated for recognition from all forces in England and Wales, Darren has been named ‘PCSO of the Year.’ Church Stretton is lucky to have them.

Church Stretton Consolidated Charities

In 1907 the Charity Commission approved a scheme to consolidate ten local charities dating back 339 years to the formation of the Stretton Pools Meadow in 1684, and thus the Church Stretton Consolidated Charities was born. Originally charged to use any income “... for the benefit either of the poor of the Ancient Parish of Church Stretton, or of such deserving and necessitous persons resident herein...”, for over three centuries the charity has been quietly working to help residents of the town. These objects were recently modernised and approved by the Charity Commission, and now read for “the general benefit of the poor [within the] Parish of Church Stretton”.

In 2022, in response to the many events which have impacted the cost of living and in recognition of the arrival of a number of refugees, the charity set up the Community Fund, with the Town Council helping with administration, to ensure that 100% of funds donated to the fund go to help people living here in Church Stretton.

This Christmas the charity assisted four individuals, two couples, and nine families with grants and also gave £500



each to both the Church Stretton Food Bank and Church Stretton Ukraine Support, bringing total grants to £4,400 since the Community Fund was launched. Identification of families who may be in need of help is very sensitive, and this is therefore undertaken with the help of relevant professionals who are able to respect and protect confidentiality.

In coming months it is hoped to further increase donations to the Community Fund to enable greater levels of support for Church Stretton residents. Even small regular monthly gifts will together provide an important source of funds.

Donation forms can be obtained by emailing community.fund@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk or from the CSTC office.

And finally...

The High Sheriff of Shropshire, Mrs Selina Graham will have visited the Town on 13th February when, as at the time of writing, she will visit both of the Town's Local Nature Reserves, Cudwell Meadow, Mayfair and the town parks. She will also join local volunteers and community leaders for lunch in the SHI. Look out for photographs in the next *Focus*.

Andy Munro

Church Stretton – becoming a dementia-friendly community

A dementia-friendly community is “A city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. In a dementia-friendly community people will be aware of and understand dementia, and people with dementia will feel included and involved, and have choice and control over their day-to-day lives.”



We are a recently formed group of professionals and volunteers who have set ourselves the aim of enabling Church Stretton to be recognised as a Dementia-Friendly Community. It will be no surprise to learn that Church Stretton is already a considerable way towards achieving this recognition, thanks to the efforts of our numerous volunteers, organisations and groups, the Mayfair Community Centre and our trading community. The next steps will involve co-ordinating their existing efforts, information, training and talks to raise awareness, and by listening to carers and those living with dementia to find out what they need to enable them to engage more fully in our community. “Defeating dementia won’t just happen in a lab or care setting, we need a whole societal response.” (Alzheimer’s Society)

Although those people living with dementia in our community only form a small percentage of our population, making Church Stretton a Dementia-Friendly Community will not be an expensive exercise and should provide widespread benefits, and not just for those living with dementia or their carers.

Look out for further updates and the dates for some public meetings in the near future, as we are looking for some quick wins while we identify and prioritise areas for local action.

If you’re interested in joining us or have ideas or experiences you would like to share, we would love to hear from you.

Image credit: Alzheimer’s Society

*Caroline Crump and Vicky Munro
alancrump@sky.com or vicky@hurst-wood.co.uk*



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--	--	---

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Recipe of the month



Black lentil pot

Always one to promote the humble lentil, I was excited recently to stumble on hitherto unknown little black ones. Intrigued, I bought some and was then excited to find them used in a recipe in a recent addition to my cookery book collection. I put my stamp on said recipe (Mr Heidi despairs of me ever being able to obey a recipe) and was very pleased with the flavoursome result which is high in fibre and protein whilst being low in fat and sugars.

This makes a good hearty and cheap meal, and all ingredients are available locally which is always a bonus in my world. The beauty of black and green lentils for this recipe is that neither need overnight soaking and both hold their shape (unlike their red counterparts) giving texture, the former giving a glorious glossy black colour.

Black lentils can also be found on the shelves as black beluga lentils.

This recipe was fantastically hands-off using my slow cooker but would be equally good cooked on the hob for 30-40 minutes, although your timing will be shaped and possibly extended by any additions you may make to the recipe. Please see note about liquid at bottom of recipe.

Don't be put off by the long list of ingredients, many of which are simply seasonings and store cupboard spices.

Serve your 'dhal' with rice or chapattis and yogurt or sour cream, or over pasta with a grating of cheese or simply with a crisp green veg side. Any leftovers can have stock and vegetables added to give the basis of a comforting soup.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp coconut oil or similar
- 1 large onion – chopped
- 3 garlic cloves – finely chopped
- 1 large carrot – diced
- 1 stick celery – sliced thinly
- Large chunk of root ginger grated* (see below)

- 2 tsp cumin seeds – bashed
- 1 medium chilli to taste – deseeded and chopped** (see below)
- 3 cardamom pods – bashed
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- A few drops of tabasco – optional
- 200g black lentils – rinsed
- 55g green lentils – rinsed
- 2 teaspoons vegetable stock powder (bouillon)
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- Coriander leaf chopped to serve – optional.

Method

On stove top:

Put all ingredients up to and including the green lentils into a saucepan then add 4 cups*** (just under 1litre) of hot water to the saucepan and stir until the coconut oil melts.

Don't add the stock at this stage as the salt in it will prevent the lentils from softening.

Cover pan, bring to the boil then simmer and cook for 30-40 minutes or so in a saucepan on the hob, checking that there is sufficient water periodically and topping up if necessary.

Ensure lentils are cooked through.

Slow cooker:

Put all ingredients up to and including the green lentils into slow cookpot then add 3 cups (700ml) hot water.

Don't add the stock at this stage as the salt in it will prevent the lentils from softening.

Cover and cook for 7-8 hours low, 5-6 hours high in slow cooker, again check occasionally and add more water if necessary. Mine required more to be added about half way through the cooking time.

Just before serving add the veg stock powder, lemon juice and any seasoning required.

Serve scattered with coriander if liked.

As usual, take this as a base. The veg and spices are yours to play with, change, add to or remove. Some tinned tomatoes can be added (may need slightly less liquid), aubergine, courgette, mushrooms would all work well here. Some diced halloumi cheese added towards the end of cooking time could be good too.

Notes

* You can freeze the rest of your ginger root and easily grate it from frozen.

** You can use a whole chilli for a milder flavour and easily remove it from the pan once desired level of hotness is reached. Remember that the seeds will still be in the chilli so be careful not to split it whilst stirring.

*** This is an estimate of liquid based on the fact that more is required for stovetop than for slow cooker but do be cautious as you don't want to be drinking this stew, nor do you want it to weld to the pan! My advice is to proceed with caution, be attentive and add more in as required.

Heidi

Strettonia Boxing Club

Did you know that Church Stretton has its own boxing club? It's tucked back from the pavement on Lutwyche Road, so you could be forgiven for not having noticed it, but here's how it came to be there.

Steve Ricketts came to Church Stretton nine years ago, when he was 22, from Presteigne, Powys. He now runs the boxing club in the premises that previously housed The Original Factory Shop (TOFS). It's just around the corner from the Stretton Mobility Store and Barbara's Framers on Beaumont Road.

Following an example set by his father, Steve began to box at age ten, when he was given his first set of gloves, and he fell in love with the sport. Four friends started the



Strettonia Club together: Steve, Micky Wilding, Nathan Jones and Lewis Sear, but with other commitments crowding in for Nathan and Lewis, Steve and Micky now run the four-year-old club together. All four of the friends are from boxing backgrounds, with Micky having over 80 boxing matches under his belt. Steve has competed in competitions all over the country and has even competed in Thailand and Malta. He now works at the club full time, with the fitness gym open most days and boxing classes in the evenings. He also hosts 1-to-1 fitness training and small group sessions during the day, plus women only sessions at pre-set times. Steve says, "I've boxed on the semi-pro British & Irish Boxing Authority (BIBA) professional circuits all over England, and after five years of competition, I began acting as 'second' for boys at my coach's boxing club and enjoyed it so much



I decided to become a trainer myself. I completed a Hatton Academy for Boxing Skills advanced boxing course, which teaches professionals how boxing skills can be incorporated into safe and effective fitness training. I also completed my BIBA coaching, managing and corner courses as well as safeguarding training, Disclosure and Barring Service checks (DBS), health and safety at work and first aid courses. I'm also a trained fitness instructor." Phew, that's quite a list!

Creatures of many kinds have wrestled and skirmished hand-to-hand since the animal kingdom evolved. Kangaroos are effective boxers – using legs and feet as fists – as are hares, from which the term 'mad as a March hare' derives. Some apes also use a form of boxing, circling their arms like windmills as they try to deter or strike rivals.

Sumerian carvings dating from two to three hundred years BCE are the earliest evidence we know of that depict human boxing, with the introduction of rules-based sport dating back to Ancient Greece, where boxing became an Olympic sport for the first time in 688 BCE. In Great Britain, boxing evolved through the bare-knuckle prize-fights of the 16th and 17thC, to the introduction of the



Marquess of Queensbury rules in 1867. John Sholto Douglas, 9th Marquess of Queensberry (20th July 1844 to 31st January 1900) lent his name to the 'Queensbury Rules' that form the basis of modern boxing. He was one of the founders of the Amateur Athletic Club, now the Amateur Athletics Association of England.

The Club published a set of 12 rules governing the conduct of boxing matches, which Queensbury didn't write but which he sponsored. These rules govern the sport worldwide today.

Boxing can be a hazardous sport even when practiced at top professional level with many safeguards in place, although it might be argued that many other activities are just as dangerous, or even more so. Have you ever watched a child climb a tree or charge down a football field? But what about encouraging children into boxing? Many parents would be wary, but Steve is passionate about this, too. He believes that boxing teaches self-discipline, determination, and respect for others. The high fitness levels acquired during training also promote self-confidence and self-belief, something that many children and young people struggle with in our increasingly social media addicted world.

Steve explains, "I want to give children and young adults something more constructive to do other than congregate on street corners, hunch over computer games or go to the pub or club. We cater for all ages at the club; we have parent



and toddler classes, a fitness squad, a boxing squad and classes for older people, too, as well as for women only."

Twenty-two club members compete currently in competitions up and down the country. Chris Preece, 33 years old, is Shropshire champion and Birmingham champion at welterweight, Robin Spence (24) is champion of the Midlands and of Shropshire at middleweight, and Adam Buckler (28) is Derbyshire light heavyweight champion. Clearly, their training is outstanding, but improving and maintaining physical fitness is what motivates most club members. The boxing element is also about learning a lifelong skill, weight loss if needed, muscle toning, and developing strategies for coping mechanisms and stress relief in order to maintain a sense of mental and physical wellbeing. There are risks, of course, with the most obvious being injury, but modern head gear, gloves, coaching, supervision, medical training and referees at every boxing event reduce these risks to an achievable minimum.

The Strettonia Club has 70 members currently – 40 juniors and 30 seniors. Club premises are open 6 days a week and Steve can be reached on 07488 904099. There's a Facebook page as well at www.facebook.com/Strettoniaboxingclub from which you can send a direct message (DM). Who knows, there might be another budding champion out there in Stretton-land.

*Christine Williams, Focus Journalist
Photographs – Steve Ricketts and club members*

Local and Family History

For over 10 years members of Church Stretton Area Local History Group have been in Church Stretton Library each week offering help, advice and guidance to people researching local and family history. During and since Covid Lockdown more queries have been received by phone or email to the library or via the Local History Group website. These enquiries come from around the world, not just locally. Remote enquiries take time to deal with because more questions need to be asked to determine exactly what the enquirer is seeking. However, there are always members of the Group in the library every Thursday from 1 to 4pm to help in person.

If you come to see us, we are able to use research websites free of charge together with books and other printed materials, some of which are available for loan. There are also microfiche Birth, Marriage and Death records. The Church Stretton Advertiser from 1898 to 1938 is available on microfilm and has not yet been digitised, so it is a valuable, if not particularly easy to use, resource.

Hopefully, we can simply answer your questions or point you in the right directions to take your own research further. We will enlighten you to the pitfalls and, maybe, break down some 'brick walls' – but beware, this can take some time and can become addictive!

Do come along to chat with us, bring your queries or just find out how to get started. Always bring with you everything you already know about a house, an area or a person, including dates, even if approximate.

Take a look at our website (churchstrettonhistory.com), click on research and find out about our latest research on Church Stretton Workhouse. This project is now well under way and you may be able to help with information you have which we have not yet found.

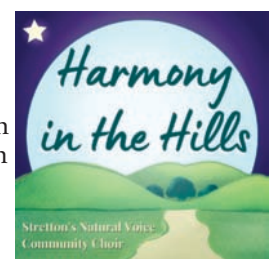
Harmony in the Hills

Thanks to a grant from *Stretton Focus* and ongoing support from Mayfair Community Centre, over the past few months we've been able to undertake some organisational development with our lovely Natural Voice community choir. We've also been so lucky and excited to work with talented film maker Robin Fellows-Weir to help us tell the choir's story.

I would like to thank all the members past and present for helping to shape the choir and hone its identity: both the people who strode through the door carrying suitcases full of confidence and experience and those who needed all their courage to put a toe over the threshold.

There's only one word to sum you all up and that's generosity. If you're thinking about coming along, do have a look at the film and the Harmony in the Hills website: harmony-hills-choir.uk to see what members think is special about the group.

Kate Buttolph, artistic director



**“Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd –
Do the little things in life”**

Welsh tradition has it that these words were among the last ones that Saint David of Wales spoke to his people. As March begins with St David's day, I thought we might begin a Lenten reflection there. It is recorded in the annals that he was preaching at Llandewi Brefi and when people at the back of a very large crowd shouted out that they could not hear him, the ground on which he stood rose up to form a hill. David knew that it is heart, courage and commitment that matters in the important things of life. Whatever you do, let it be done well, be it small or great.

It was 6th century AD where we are dealing with vivid imaginations being kindled around such a big figure in the story of Wales. Wales is full of myths and legends around larger-than-life characters. They inspired JRR Tolkien to imagine Middle-earth fantasies in *Lord of the Rings*. Such mythologies inhabited Middle Eastern writings. The central character of the Christian story is likewise set in an aura of miracles and the fantastical.

We are in Lent, i.e. the time when Christians are invited to reflect on the journey to the Cross. Along the way we are told the story of Jesus doing all manner of good things, teaching, healing the sick, and even raising the dead.

He too was an extraordinary, charismatic figure. He talked in stories, often humorous, ridiculous even; about living beings, like us, hard pressed, flawed, confused, controlling, kind – happy – sometimes. We get to know his human compassion towards people, understanding lives in a subjugated vassal State. He obviously engaged with people, made time for those whom no-one else did. Why else would people follow this man, if they did not hear and see something relevant and actually new, for their lives? And they did. The 'peasants', ordinary folk of the day were attracted to him and many from different positions in society followed him and were compelled by his attention, his vision, and the spirit of hope he ignited. He called them "the salt of the earth", a phrase used even today. It was the little things like making time for people that mattered; being present; affirming people, which are life-giving, and really not such little things.

His stories had connection to the way things were ordered in their world, one with very little opportunity for change towards the better. Living in this kind of world, you cannot go around doing that without upsetting the elites

in power. Control is maintained by making people believe their situation is the only way of life that is available, such as it is in Iran right now, in Afghanistan, Russia... So, his execution was very likely inevitable.

Dylan Thomas, famous poet in Wales, in one of his darker poems upon the death of his father wrote:

*Rage, rage against the dying of the light...
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night*

When such things happen now, in our modern world, it does seem like the dying of a light and a new darkness setting in. The vision Jesus prompted was of a better world, not heaven above, but earth below. It is the common well-being, 'the good society' in our terms, which takes centuries for humanity to learn and to build, is happening and is still to be. It is identified by the spirit and actuality of human freedoms – liberation really, not confined by over-zealous religious or political beliefs or obsession with guilt or dogma that later followers were. Rather, it was about reconciliation, peace, and justice with compassion, and in loving relationships. It is these that develop human flourishing in supportive communities and justly ordered societies.

Here the Christian story takes off, in the theme of resurrection. Never mind the myths and magic of an earlier age. In a freedom-challenged world of today, with democracies threatened, or found not good enough, and autocracy gaining ground I found it pertinent that the Reith Lectures in December were about the Four Freedoms, from FDR Roosevelt State of the Union speech in 1941 – the freedoms of speech, of worship; freedom from want, from fear. All these were the big themes in the teachings and life of Jesus.

His words did and does 'fork lightning'. He did go gently into that good night. If you project the things he was teaching you can see how civilisations have developed, reluctantly, awkwardly and not in a reliably upward progressive line, but tentatively towards the light. They called him the 'light of the world'. This journey is more than a religious pursuit, rather a spiritual, transformational experience – resurrection, reformation... in which all can walk together. To reach out to this, so often dangerous and deathly, but the pursuit of it is essential for our survival and flourishing on the planet.

Noel Beattie



We are looking for a small amount of storage space in Church Stretton for our excess wool and fabric. Please get in touch if you can help. Thank you. Tel. 01694 328508 or email: info@scrapppies.org.

Check out our Facebook Page – 'Scrapppies Scrapstore' – where you will find regular daily updates, including photos of stock and 'crafty creations'. This also includes important information regarding up-coming sales, workshops and craft demonstrations!

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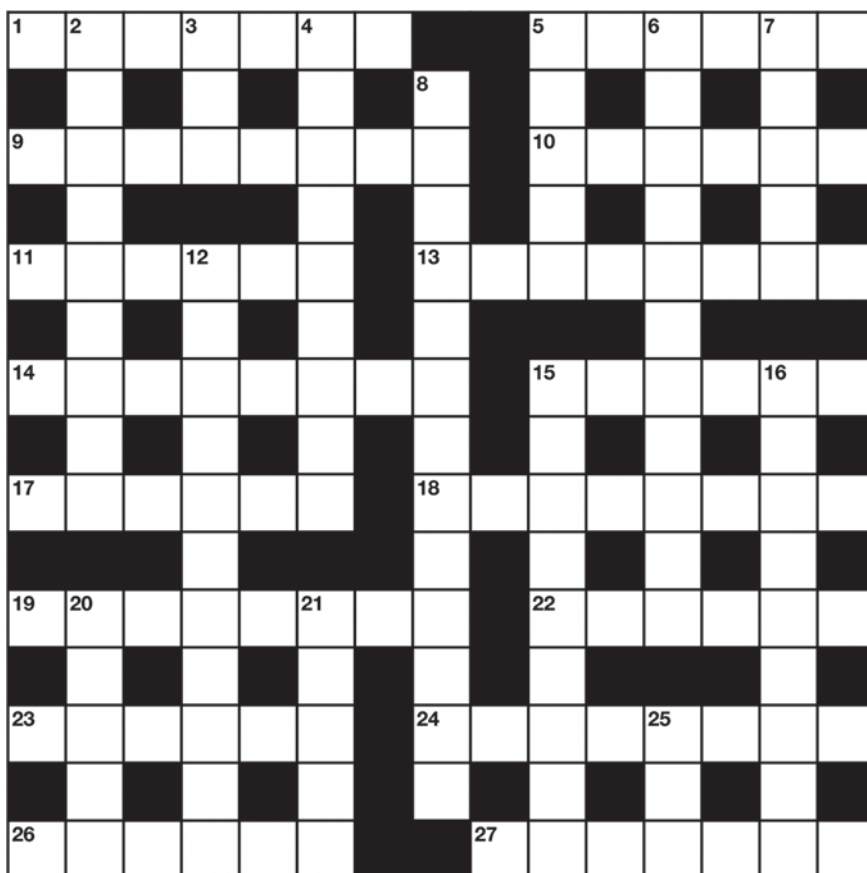
Cryptic Crossword by Stan Yelds

Across

1. A particular fish rises out of 12 26 (3,4)
5. Full exposure of untidy mess (6)
9. Bully on high ground runs down to 12 26 (3,5)
10. Minister associated with service rule (6)
11. Native American acer originally variegated, we hear (6)
13. I loan VIP dicky in 12 26 (8)
14. Totter biliously, holding back words (8)
15. "Job's child" – silent drama returns in early January (6)
17. Circle round a giant's ground (2,4)
18. The woman's joining EU, not converted to this (8)
19. Immaculate keyboard instrument (8)
22. End of term after school is split (6)
23. Have a high opinion of Slough following publicity (6)
24. Annihilation for noble civic zone interiors (8)
26. See 12
27. Rogue scraps looms (7)

Down

2. Mark of the beast provides thin proof, strangely (9)
3. Standard chant from the South (3)
4. OK, let's end redevelopment at Derbyshire hall (9)
5. Tyneside greens retreat and desert (5)
6. Drunk lush vomited over 12 26 (6,5)
7. Trunk found in East or South (5)
8. Innovative waste pound, with nothing in it, drains into 12 26 (3,4,6)
- 12,26. Stretton locality has very ill-clad and malign constituents (7,4,6)
15. Preserve free WI in ancient city (9)
16. Most trod a rambling route out of 12 26 (5,4)
20. Country maid Nicola holds back (5)
21. Poverty-stricken US city harbouring rising river (5)
25. Contest regularly avoided (3)



February Solution



Trivia Corner

by Ken Willis

1. What is the largest county in the Republic of Ireland?
2. Who played Eva Peron in the film *Evita*?
3. Who is the Patron Saint of the impossible and lost causes?
4. Which sea is classified as the largest lake in the world?
5. Who killed the Trojan hero Hector?

Answers on Page 40

March Screenings

Acton Scott

Acton Scott Village Hall, Tuesday 21st March, 7.30pm

Adults £5, Students £3. Refreshments available.

Brian and Charles (PG)

Brian lives alone in a remote Welsh valley. Something of an outcast, he spends his spare time inventing things and one day decides to build a robot for company. 'Charles' is not only Brian's most successful invention, but it appears to have a personality all of its own. However, it creates more problems than Brian bargained for, and the timid inventor has to face up to several issues in his life; his eccentric ways, a local bully, and a woman he's always been fond of but never had the nerve to talk to.

The Hall has ample parking available and level access.

Acton Scott Enquiries: Tel.01694 781260



All Stretton

All Stretton Village Hall, Friday 3rd March, 7.30pm

Adults £6

Top Gun – Maverick (12)

After more than thirty years of service as one of the Navy's top aviators, Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell is where he belongs, pushing the envelope as a courageous test pilot and dodging the advancement in rank that would ground him. Training a detachment of graduates for a special assignment, Maverick must confront the ghosts of his past and his deepest fears, culminating in a mission that demands the ultimate sacrifice from those who choose to fly it.



All Stretton Village Hall, Tuesday 7th March, 8.00pm

Adults £6

Coup 53 (15)

Theatrical feature documentary on the story of Operation Ajax, the CIA/MI6 staged coup in 1953 in Iran that overthrew Prime Minister Mossadegh.



All Stretton Village Hall, Friday 24th March, 7.30pm

The Courier (12)

Benedict Cumberbatch is back with another formidable performance in this Cold War espionage drama. The film follows the true story of Greville Wynne, an unassuming British businessman recruited by the Secret Intelligence Service to deliver messages in the 1960s. Wynne develops a dangerous partnership with Oleg Penkovsky (Merab Nibidze), with the pair coming together to provide important intelligence to prevent nuclear intervention during the Cuban Missile Crisis. *The Courier* is an exciting thriller that will keep you guessing throughout.

All Stretton enquiries: 07812 583113



Cardington

Cardington Village Hall Wednesday 1st March, 7.30pm
Adults £5

Where the Crawdads Sing (15)

From the best-selling novel comes a captivating mystery. Abandoned as a girl, Kya raised herself in the dangerous marshlands of North Carolina. For years, rumours of the marsh girl haunted Barkley Cove, isolating the sharp and resilient Kya from her community. Drawn to two young men from town, she opens herself to a new and startling world. However, when one of them is found dead, Kya immediately becomes the main suspect. As the case unfolds, the verdict as to what happened becomes increasingly unclear, threatening to reveal many secrets.



Cardington enquiries: 01694 771295

Church Stretton

Silvester Horne Institute, Thursday 23rd March, 7.30pm
Adult £5

Dream Horse (PG)

The film tells the inspiring true story of Dream Alliance, an unlikely racehorse bred by small town Welsh bartender, Jan Vokes. With very little money and no experience, Jan convinces her neighbours to chip in their meagre earnings to help raise Dream in the hopes he can compete with the racing elites. The group's investment pays off as Dream rises through the ranks with grit and determination and goes on to race in the Welsh Grand National showing the heart of a true champion.

Church Stretton enquiries: 07508 072206



Hope Bowdler

Hope Bowdler Village Hall, Wednesday 8th March, 7.30pm

Adults £5, Under-16 £2

The Mule (15)

Clint Eastwood stars as Earl Stone, a man in his 80s who is broke, alone, and facing foreclosure of his business when he is offered a job that simply requires him to drive. Easy enough, but, unbeknownst to Earl, he's just signed on as a drug courier for a Mexican cartel. He does well – so well, in fact, that his cargo increases exponentially, and Earl is assigned a handler. But he isn't the only one keeping tabs on Earl; the mysterious new drug mule has also hit the radar of hard-charging DEA agent Colin Bates.

Tea, coffee, cakes and ice cream served in the interval

Hope Bowdler enquiries: 01694 723648



Long Mynd Music Academy

Husband and wife team Alison Dodd and Ryan Foulkes run Long Mynd Music Academy and believe music should be available to all children who want to learn to play an instrument. So after witnessing the rising cost of living having an impact on families, they have decided to set up a new scholarship fund to ensure money isn't a barrier to young people who would like to have lessons.

They believe that music is an inclusive fun activity that should be accessible to everyone, improving their coordination and motor skills, boosting their self-



Pupils taking part in last year's summer recital

esteem and confidence and providing them with a creative outlet. To help raise money for their scholarship fund, the couple have signed up for Mammathon – a tough 26-mile course starting from Craven Arms Discovery Centre out over the Shropshire Hills.



They have set themselves a target of raising £500 for the fund from Mammathon, which takes place as part of the Shropshire Way 80K Festival on April 1.

The Academy, based in Lutwyche Court, offers tuition in instruments including piano, violin, cello, oboe, guitar, bass guitar and drums as well as singing lessons, theory and composition. There's a Holiday Club and Little Rockers, open to four to seven-year-olds

To find out more about the Music Academy or the scholarship fund visit longmyndmusic.co.uk or email longmyndmusic@outlook.com.

Anglican Voice

**I lift up my eyes to the mountains –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Psalm 121 is one of my favourites, looking to hills and looking to God and so it was always good to end up serving God in the Hills. I and countless others have found the Book of Psalms in the Bible a good place to go to in any situation. There we find the range of earthly emotion being poured out to God, from anger, joy, sadness and grief.

I find that the hills are a good place to escape and clear the head, that's one of the glorious things about living and working here in the Strettons – the surrounding hills. Nothing like a good brisk walk to sort you out.

But as we go about life in and around the town, there can also be something claustrophobic about the surrounding hills, especially during the winter, when depending on where you live, the sun never quite reaches you!

But I always remind myself that there is 'life beyond the hills' too and that's the wonderful thing about being part of the Church, we have family beyond the hills and all over the world. The Church of England is part of the Anglican Communion, which has tens of millions of members in over

165 countries. A reminder that when we talk about the Church, we are of course talking about people and not the bricks and mortar of a building.

In a previous job I had the amazing opportunity to visit people serving God around the world, within the Anglican Communion. It was so wonderful to see what people were doing to come alongside and help others, from teaching in the largest slum in Africa, to medical help in a red-light district, to serving street children.

Not only was it good to see how people were serving each other, seeing the good in each other and building each other and not knocking them down. It was also good to hear other voices from beyond the hills to help me understand the culture and the world we live in.

No matter where we are in the world, it is very easy to be in our own bubble, hearing only the people we agree with and hearing one side of an argument. But by hearing a different voice, whether a global one, it challenges us and helps us to understand our place within the global community.

And in the midst of all this, I find that God speaks to me alongside time in prayer and reading the Bible – but how do we make sure we are listening?

Rev'd Steve Johnson, Rector Stretton Parish





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Church Stretton Rotary

Church Stretton Rotary Young Heroes Awards – Time is running out

You have only until the end of March to nominate a young person aged 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, brave or sustained effort during the last 18 months.



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.

Thank you,

*Peter Burt
Youth Team Leader*

Tree of Light

Church Stretton Rotary wishes to thank all who contributed to the appeal. Despite the economic situation we are currently experiencing, £3,000 was raised. The three recipient charities, Hope House Children's Hospice, Severn Hospice and Midlands Air Ambulance, will receive an equal share of the total.

The 'Message on a Bauble' appeal was a big hit with both children and adults. We are pleased to announce that £125 was raised. This will be going towards the education of Carlos, a child living in Guatemala. Church Stretton Rotary has supported Carlos with his education for several years and it is good that, with your help, we can continue this.

Church Stretton Rotary wishes to thank Stuart Wright of Wrights Estate Agents for sponsoring the tree, Will Worthington of Burwarton Estates, Huws Gray (Leebotwood) for transporting the tree, Matt Stephens of John Stephens Landscaping and his crew for the erection and removal of the tree, Gareth Jones of Caradoc Tree Care, PCB Solicitors and Church Stretton Town Council.

If you think that you might like to support Rotary with the work we do in the local community and further afield why not contact Pat Smith on 01694 723189, patstokessmith@hotmail.com

Peter Burt

Rotary Club of Church Stretton Tree of Light Co-ordinator

Race Night on St Patrick's Day – change of beneficiaries

Our Race Night on the evening of St Patrick's Day (17th March) at the Silvester Horne Institute will now be on behalf of our local First Responders, Tracey and Warren, to help them replace their response vehicle.

The event will still consist of a series of horse races. Sponsorship for naming the individual races and naming individual horses within races is available, so that local

businesses or individuals can have their own race or horse. Bets can be placed on each horse to win the races.

The entrance fee will include hot food. There will also be a bar (run by Kings Arms staff).

Tickets will be available from the Mayfair desk or any Church Stretton Rotarian at £10 each (or £12 on the door).

Please look out for posters for more detailed information nearer to the time of the event.

Don Lovejoy

Tracey Prosser, First Responder

A coffee morning was held at the Ragleth Inn, where Julian Hargreaves of Rotary, handed over a cheque to Tracey Prosser, First Responder, for £1,000, having rounded up the £937 from Carols in the Square last December. This money will go towards them getting a replacement car. Their old one is 16 years old and it will not pass its next MOT.

With the current ambulance response times being so poor, Tracey and her husband Warren are more essential than ever and a reliable vehicle is so important. With no help from the NHS for this, Rotary are going all out to find a garage that might be happy to sponsor them, as happens in other parts of the country.

We were pleased to see on their First Responder Facebook page that people have since given them further cheques and hopefully more people will help the cause. If you want to donate, please contact Tracey on 07956 428623, email: tracey.prosser@hotmail.co.uk or through their Facebook page.

Derek Smith, dereksmith42@hotmail.com

Pazapa Annual Quiz



**Friday 24th March, Parish Centre
7.30pm**

Cost per person £5 with teams up to six people

Quizmaster: Ben Warren

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

Booking required to manage numbers

Payment can be made in advance online or cash on the door

Please contact Helen on 01694 723061 or pazapachurchstretton@yahoo.co.uk for more details and bookings.

Registered Charity: 1167025

Pazapa school and Clinic for disabled children is up and running in spite of the turmoil in Haiti.

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In Praise of Carers

It is estimated that there are over seven million carers in the UK, statistics suggest that one in eight of us will be a carer at some point in our lives.

Career carers working in our community have become vital to society as we are living longer and as support from other sources diminishes. More and more people rely on carers to enable them to live independently in their own homes. The closing of cottage hospitals has meant that many people are sent home from hospital earlier than is desirable. It is carers who are charged with caring for these people. Increasingly people are choosing to have live-in twenty-four-hour care which enables them to stay in their own homes rather than have to move into residential care. People taking on the role of carer in these situations have complete responsibility of the individual they are caring for.

They are away from their own family missing Christmas and birthdays and other important events. Carers working in nursing and residential homes are also essential to ensuring that our elderly and vulnerable are looked after. With families becoming more geographically dispersed, fewer older people can rely on the support of relatives. Nursing and care homes are also having to take on more responsibility for medical care as support from other health care professionals is reduced.

Other people become carers in a non-paid capacity. Looking after elderly parents, aunts and uncles and children with mental and physical disability. These people sacrifice a great deal to give their loved ones the support they need often seven days a week 365 days of the year. And what about the approximately 700,000 young people who are

The Long and Winding Road

I grew up in a football-loving household. My dad is an avid Arsenal supporter, a devotion passed down from his mother and grandmother and much begrudged by his Tottenham-supporting father. This love for our ex-local club is something I've inherited from my dad. My deep-rooted love for 'the beautiful game' is central to some of my earliest memories. I remember distinctly, the day when I was allowed to join my primary school's team, finally able to experience the same thrill as the players I watched on TV. I joined a local club as well. I loved the game. My coach was as clued-up on women's football as he was on men's and we were perhaps, even more privileged than the boys in terms of opportunities. We were often trained by an Arsenal Women's coach and we attended tournaments at the Arsenal training grounds where I met my idols: Leah

Williamson and Jordan Nobbs. I had no reason to believe this was not normal. Something I will be ever grateful for, is the exposure to women's football my dad gave me. From an early age, he would take me to matches where I witnessed the classy way these women played: falling and getting straight back up, supporting and respecting opposing players and accepting the referee's decisions without rancour. But, I also began to see how different it all was from what I saw on television. I began asking my dad why. Why the women didn't play at the Emirates like the men did, why the women's match tickets were £128 cheaper than for the men's game, why the women's team were known as 'Arsenal Women' whilst the men were known simply as 'Arsenal'. I wanted to know why the sheer genius of Beth Mead and Vivianne Miedema wasn't recognised

Art is Dead

Art is dead: the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

As Bo Burnham once said, art is dead. The song is quite interesting (although not very family friendly), but the concept is that the arts are losing their meaning and become a form of sadistic income. Oddly enough, I've noticed this when in school as the education system does not favour the typically creative subjects, but rather the more logistic 'fundamental' Sciences, Maths, and English. Yet when we see modern artists, they are vastly different to what the core idea of so-called art is, modern musicians tend to be more focused on lights, fame and profit than the actual

performance of music. Art is supposed to be perfect and spontaneous when being the creator, and to bring pleasure to the beholder, it's supposed to be an experience, when viewing or listening, that catalyses inspiration and evokes emotion. Where do we have that now?

Art galleries are decreasingly popular as are museums and libraries. I mean music didn't even run in my year as a GCSE due to the lack of students wanting to participate, and as a person who plays music outside of school, I too chose to not select it as one of my options because I felt as if it was not as valued as say Science or a Humanity. In my year alone, only a handful of people play music, although many tried at one point in their life not many continued. We are losing patience as the generations go on, and I can understand the reason. The violin is incredibly

carers in the UK? Many of them work over 50 hours a week and are twice as likely to not be in education, employment or training as their contemporaries. They have greatly reduced life chances and opportunity to enjoy the freedom that being young should provide.

The huge role that carers play in our society was highlighted during the Covid pandemic. These poorly paid people went to work from the very start of the lockdown, before we had a vaccine, before they had suitable PPE and before we knew exactly how dangerous this virus was. Day in day out they continued to work as normal, they could not work from home or offer a substitute service via Zoom or Teams. They worked in close contact delivering personal care because there was no technology that could replace them. Families were reassured that their loved ones, who

may well be living some distance away, were being looked after by these selfless individuals. Without them the country would have been in crisis and hospitals undoubtedly under even greater strain. Some carers even went to live in the homes in which they worked to optimize the safety of residents. In recent months we have heard many workers call for greater pay and recognition; what about carers? Surely if anyone deserves better pay and respect it's them.

Sadly, more and more carers are leaving their job; this will have a disastrous effect on the quality of life of our elderly and vulnerable. As a society we need to value these hard-working people and acknowledge the vital role they play in our communities.

Louisa Crump

beyond the confines of their rather humble shared pitch whilst that of Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Jesus was a thing of national celebration. My answer was a confident promise that in the coming years, the popularity and equality of the women's game would increase dramatically. I was frustrated and angry. I still am. If we compare directly, the salaries of England's two international captains, Harry Kane makes in one week, what Leah Williamson earns in a year. However, on the 31st of July 2022 things started to change for the better. The Lionesses finally bringing football home, has resulted in much recognition for women's sport and their incredible attitude has allowed them to create an uproar (no pun intended) about why only 63% of schools in the UK give girls equal access to football. For me, the 31st of July that year, began to heal that frustrated little girl. It was a

day of great emotion; joy, excitement but mostly hope, that the nation would receive the wakeup call it so desperately needed: women can do it too. And they do. Now, a glimmer of hope. In the 2022/23 season, Arsenal Women are playing six games at the Emirates Stadium. Ticket prices have increased to a heady £8. It seems my dad's promise may be coming to fruition. So, although we still have a long way to go and a 99.9% pay gap to close, the road ahead doesn't look quite so long and winding. Just last month, both Wales and USA announced an equal pay act for their male and female international players. Maybe, in fifteen years' time, when I'm taking my daughter to her first football match, it will be at the Emirates stadium. My bank account will be weeping afterwards.

Daisy Deards

complex as you must count the beats, read the music, play the notes making sure it is not too sharp or flat, have your bow flowing in the correct direction, stay in time with the accompaniment and also make sure that you replicate the authenticity of the piece. That creative skill is no longer valued in society though, as synthetic machines and autotuned voices are what make it to the stage.

The value of Art still isn't appreciated; the scraps of it that are, are extremely commercialised and engrained into the media, and whilst I can understand the audience develops as time goes on, and there are different needs than the historical ones to meet, on a personal level, I am concerned. What if this modern art isn't out of passion, or for the history and release it brings, but simply just for money? Scientifically art stimulates a dopamine response,

and with the diversity in the field, something is bound to interest everyone, as historically orchestras, paintings and theatre were extremely successful careers and enticing too. With that knowledge and the rate of success associated with it, if the media took advantage of that and used the chemical response against us, the quality wouldn't matter. The sound wouldn't have to be raw; the drama wouldn't have to be moving... fancy lights and shiny objects are all it takes to convince someone that work is beautiful. Artists could easily manipulate us to essentially encourage us to fuel their profit. They could stand on us to project their names in lights, get their pay cheque and continue to thrive off our vulnerability to their so called 'art'.

My question is what is art, and what is fabricated to appeal?

Wioletta Sewry

Strettons Residents – Informal Survey

December 2022/January 2023

Residents across the Strettons having kindly responded positively to our recent survey, I felt we should return that compliment by offering a short factual summary of the key points for *Focus*. The survey was delivered by hand door-to-door, just ten questions to make it easy to complete, with the stated aim to get “residents’ views on South Shropshire issues”. As we’re lucky to have a very good town council and councillors here, this was deliberately not framed as a ‘knock the Council’ survey. In draft form I ran it past the Mayor Andy Munro, and have already let him have a summary. Nearly 150 residents have responded so far (early February).

In response to our question “Which of the issues below are you most concerned about in South Shropshire?” the top three most frequently cited were better health services (66%), better social care for the elderly/vulnerable (52%) and more buses and trains (44%). Sustainability/climate crisis came a close fourth (38%); housing, crime, business/jobs all rated around 25%. Many selecting housing added a note that it should be ‘affordable’.

We then asked “Would you like to see more community policing locally?” which attracted a very positive response: over 75% said yes.

Next were two questions about emergency ambulance response times, and about hospital/GP services. We asked respondents to rate both these on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very poor and 5 excellent. Responses showed a clear skew in concern towards the emergency ambulance services. On a scale of 1-5, 56% rated them 1 or 2, i.e. very poor or poor. GP/hospital services did much better: on the same 1-5 scale 54% rated them 3 or 4, i.e. OK or good.

(In hindsight – or for anyone repeating these questions! – it might have been helpful to check whether concern about those emergency ambulance response times was based on actual experience or not. As well, several respondents did suggest the survey might have asked separately about GP and hospital services.)

We then asked “How concerned are you about the cost of living – food, fuel, energy bills, housing?”, again on a scale of 1 (not very worried) to 5 (very worried). Responses indicated

serious concern, nearly two thirds of respondents (62%) quite or very worried. Only four people circled option 1.

We also asked about “local problems” – the top two problems cited, potholes (top) and dangerous pavements (second), attracted almost twice as many responses as the other options listed (drains, street lights, fly-tipping) put together. Many respondents gave specific locations; there was widespread concern about road surface quality, for drivers, cyclists and indeed elderly pedestrians trying to cross the road. (Some of these specifics we have tried to follow up already, but one example we reported – the potholes on the railway bridge, dangerous to cyclists – resulted in two vans coming out to mark the holes with white paint, and then a ‘case closed’ email though nothing had been done!)

Several other questions asked about respondents themselves, and the data may suggest some overall bias in replies. We were delighted by the wealth of knowledge amongst respondents, but didn’t attract many replies from families and younger people. Responses were mainly from couples (53%) and single people (28%). Most had lived in the area for some time – 59% more than 20 years, indeed 40% more than 30 years. Respondents included supporters of all the main political parties, but also included a high proportion (39%) of ‘don’t knows’.

While this survey was conducted by one party locally, we do hope this information is of interest to readers of all parties and none. With responses kindly offered from across the political spectrum, it feels as though there is some consensus on the key issues and problems facing us here in the Strettons and South Shropshire. We are circulating this summary to all who have given us contact details and we will endeavour to raise (or pass on) any specific local problems with the relevant authorities. We hope to follow up with a further survey later in the year to ask a bit more detail on some of these points. For any more information – or indeed to suggest topics of interest – please do contact me at thebatch5195@gmail.com.

Chris Naylor

Acting Chair, Strettons Liberal Democrats

A Quaker Voice

Certainty, change and courage

Ecclesiastes chapter 3 starts with a whole list of ‘there’s a time for this and a time for that’, contrasting seemingly different activities. For example, v6 ‘... a time to keep and a time to cast away.’ In our religious communities, it feels as if there is a time for certainty and a time for change. There are those who see the churches as a bastion of certainty in an uncertain world and are worried by those within their church who are pushing for change. If you change something, might not the whole edifice come tumbling down? But there are others of us who, as our understanding of other aspects of our lives change, see clinging to the old ways as stagnation and death for the institutions we value.

Treading a path between these is not comfortable, for Quakers any more than any other group. When we meet this discomfort, it is very easy to retreat into the safety of what is familiar and comfortable. The trouble is that, if you put off

change, then when it becomes inevitable, it is more radical, more painful, than it would have been if you had screwed up your courage and embraced change sooner.

The details are long and boring, but I have been running consultation sessions with Quakers in Scotland who are perhaps in this situation. The most valuable thing that anyone said in that consultation was, “I’m sorry I didn’t hear you before.” My title was certainty, change and courage; to apologise is to show courage. Historically Quakers may have changed sooner than other faith groups, people will cite slavery or gay marriage. But that doesn’t mean we haven’t been through that difficult period before we have changed our position. What helps us out of it, is when we openly acknowledge that we should have changed sooner; when we say to those hurt by our delay, “I’m sorry I didn’t hear you before.”



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Church Stretton Store Wins Award for Sustainability



A commitment to sustainability and using local produce has earned a village store in Church Stretton a top award from one of Europe's biggest employers' associations.

Vine & Co was named Sustainable Retailer of the Year at the exclusive 2023 Fed Awards.

The glittering ceremony was hosted by BBC presenter Naga Munchetty at London's Royal Lancaster Hotel on 24th January.

The Fed (Federation of Independent Retailers) is a not-for-profit organisation with more than 10,000 members throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Store owner John Vine said: "Being sustainable is very important to us. We've changed every light to an LED bulb. Every fluorescent tube in our shop has been replaced.

"Part of our shop is a hardware shop as well, so we only sell LED bulbs. We try and show people the benefits of making the switch and we lead by example."

The store also recycles batteries and lightbulbs which are collected once a month. "We do have a lot of people from the local area who recycle with us," said John.

One of the biggest innovations introduced by Vine & Co is a milk vending machine. The milk is supplied by Proper Good Dairy, a farm just four miles from the shop.

John said: "From when the cows have been milked till it's in our shop, only takes three hours. We have a new tank put in every day.

"The idea is that our customers bring their own glass bottle to be filled by the machine. We also sell these in our shop if it's your first time using the machine, or you've forgotten the bottle. Glass milk bottles are a great way to reduce the amount of plastic you use, both in your store and at home.

"We sell about 100 litres of milk a day, which I think is remarkable really. The kids also love to use the machine.

"We strive to ensure that the fresh products in our store are all provided by local suppliers. Not only does this help the local economy but it also reduces the number of food miles and is better for the environment.

"All the water we sell is from Wenlock water which is about five to six miles away from the shop. All our sandwiches and cakes are locally made. All our fruit and veg comes from a local market. This means that they are also all unwrapped. Customers have the options to put them in paper bags if they want.

"We promote sustainability and believe that shopping local is really important. The whole pandemic has been life-changing for people, both shops and their customers. I honestly believe shopping local is the only way to go now. We've all got to try and support each other."

Church Stretton Area Local History Group

Route of the Heart of Wales Railway

On Monday 20th March at 2pm at the URC Hall our speaker will be Tony Birdwood from Llanwrda. Tony will tell us about the Heart of Wales railway which we used for our 2022 summer outing.

The Heart of Wales line is one of the most scenic railway routes in Great Britain. It stretches through the heartland of Wales from Swansea via Llanelli to the border town of Shrewsbury. The route takes in industrial and rural regions, forests and mountain ranges, swooping valleys and dramatic mountain tunnels and two viaducts.

Construction of the line began in the 1840s and continued in stages over many years. Nine miles from Craven Arms to Bucknell opened in 1860 and the 3 miles to Knighton opened in March 1861. The next section of the line, 17 miles as far

as Penybont, opened in 1864, and finally Penybont to Llandrindod Wells was completed in 1865. In all the line includes over two dozen stops.



Following a varied career Tony Birdwood spent 20 years working for the Welsh Government as a Field Officer with the Rural Inspectorate Wales.

Tony says "I have always been interested in railways: I am a shareholder in the Gwili Railway and was a founder member of the Heart of Wales Travellers' Association. I am currently Secretary for the Friends of Llandovery Station and a member of the Rhondda Tunnel Society and Cambrian Heritage Railways."

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

Madeline Haigh

Karuna Insight Design

Your intrepid *Focus* journalist embarked on some fascinating research to help compile this article, necessary because I wasn't at all sure that I understood many of the terms used by our subject this month, which is a local business called Karuna Insight Design. So, are you sitting comfortably? (Only those of you of a certain vintage will remember that!) Here goes. According to Buddhist teaching, the word "karuna" means compassion – an empathy with others who are suffering and an imperative to do something to help. "Insight design" is a term that means to achieve business success whilst integrating the needs of people and, in this case, also the needs of nature, together with the potential presented by modern technology.



Now for a bit of nature. Nitrogen deficiency is a major challenge to world agriculture, it's one of the most important nutrients for the growth and survival of plants. Roughly 78% of the Earth's atmosphere consists of nitrogen, but plants are unable to use vital nutrients from this gaseous form – they must find it in soil. Natural solutions, as an alternative to damaging artificial nitrogen fertilisers, are beginning to prove effective. Ancient agricultural methods rediscovered, you might say.

And permaculture? Permaculture is a method of farming in a self-sufficient and sustainable way, which is based on crop diversity, rotation and natural fertilization. Bacteria living in the root nodules of nitrogen-fixing plants also help to transfer atmospheric nitrogen to the soil, where it can be taken up as fertilizer. Some of our native trees, shrubs and plants are alder, sea buckthorn, comfrey, laburnum, gorse, broom, lupins, everlasting sweet pea and more. In the edible garden, peas and beans are good nitrogen fixers.

Bringing all this together with ways of offering calming, peaceful and natural visitor appeal is Karuna Insight Design, which was established at Picklescott, near Church Stretton, in 2005. The founders, Janta and Merav Wheelhouse, invested their savings, and the funds from the sale of their home, into the risky business of buying a piece of agricultural land at auction. "We were really surprised to have made the winning bid," says Janta. "We faced an epic journey through the planning system, which was a traumatizing experience all the way to the London High Court, but we got there in the end."

Since then, bare fields have been transformed into a diverse, multi-purpose permaculture demonstration project of mixed woodlands, natural meadows and large

forest gardens. This small family of four has planted over 10,000 trees, including traditional fruit trees, nitrogen-fixing trees, herbs, fruits, nuts, vegetables and medicinal plants. Robert Hart, who lived at Rushbury for many years until his death in 2000, pioneered temperate climate forest gardening on his smallholding. He has been an inspiration to the Wheelhouse family. He noticed that a small bed of perennial vegetables and herbs, growing among other plants, was looking after itself with little or no help from him. These provided interesting and unusual additions to his diet and, he believed, promoted health and strength in both body and mind.



Janta explains "We wanted to pioneer this reforestation and rewilding project to reconnect with a natural and sustainable way of living, and to pave the way for more people to do something similar. Our commitment paid off, and we were finally granted permission to build a straw-bale roundhouse, which we built ourselves." Funding from generous donors followed, which paid for materials, and the house they live in, is now used by volunteers, visitors and participants in the many skills courses they run.



The Nest [Mark Albom]

The Nest, which is the third phase of the project, has just begun. This new centre will provide an educational space, a performance space, a conference room, therapy room, kitchen, café serving organic and locally grown

produce, an office and more. It will be built using locally sourced, eco-friendly materials, including a highly insulating material made from hemp stalks and lime. Glamping pods, which will be added later, will add to the wellness retreat character of the project.

Projects such as this present 'chicken and egg' challenges for their founders and leaders. Visitors and other users provide income, but only when development is complete, or almost so. Backing 'angels' and grants provide funds in advance, but competition is fierce and soaks up many hours of drafting the necessary bids. This leaves the bit in between



– overcoming the challenges of development using unusual and sustainable materials. These projects take enormous amounts of thought, time, energy and determination, and entrepreneurs, such as this dedicated family, who keep going should be commended.

If you'd like to visit Karuna, you can find out more at the website www.karuna.org.uk or call Janta on 01694 751374. Visits are by appointment only and attendance at courses must be booked in advance.

Christine Williams, Focus Journalist
Photos by Janta Wheelhouse

Turkey through its writers **A talk in the Library by Janet Longstaff** **on Wednesday 22nd March at 2.30pm.**



Janet Longstaff lived in Turkey for four years and has visited many times, on occasions to experience locations where some of the books included in this talk are set.

She will explore the country through 14 of its authors of both fiction (especially crime) and non-fiction, including history. Writing in Turkey can be a dangerous activity: two of the books discussed were smuggled out of prison, where their authors were political prisoners. Two writers were killed in the street for their views.

Janet has a wide collection of Turkish literature translated into English. She may also sell a few copies of her own books to raise funds for Friends of Church Stretton Library. Admission is free but donations are welcome.

The library has books by some of these authors (don't worry – they are translated into English) and staff can order you any of these books, to read them for yourselves.

The University of the Third Age in Church Stretton is delighted to announce that it now has 20 interest groups, all of which get our members reading, writing, listening, singing, dancing, walking, playing games, painting, discussing and trying out new things.



STOP PRESS: One of our members has offered to organise a new recorder playing group. It will be aimed at the lower end of expertise. If you are interested contact our Groups Coordinator via our website or phone 01694 724330.

You can find out more about all of our groups by looking at our website: u3asites.org.uk/churchstretton or come along to our drop-in session on the second Monday of the month between 10 and 11am at the Health and Wellbeing Centre

Church Stretton Library Events

'Under Threat' – 28th February to 15th March

This event will look at what local nature groups are doing to conserve threatened species and habitats in the Strettons. The Mayor, Andy Munro will open the exhibition at 6.30pm on 28th February and all are warmly welcomed to attend.

The exhibition will celebrate the launch of '**Nature in the Strettons**' – the coming together of Stretton groups focusing on appreciating, recording and conserving the diverse species and habitats which surround us in this area of outstanding natural beauty.

Refreshments will be provided and members of the various groups will be present to chat with people about their activities and the work they are involved with. Do take advantage of this opportunity to come and find out more about what our local nature groups are doing.

Citizen Advice – on the **1st and 3rd Thursday** **of the month between** **10am-12 noon.**

Trained advisors will be available to give advice on issues such as benefits, pensions, debt and money, housing and consumer problems and work-related issues.

Sessions will be by appointment on their Freephone Number 0800 278 7894 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm); Textphone 18001 0800 144 8884.



Church Stretton Library

Phone 01694 722535

Churchstretton.library@shropshire.gov.uk

Alexis Seabourne

Scout Group News

Group Scout Leader Terry Davies is making a double appeal this month. First, for spare Lego and Duplo pieces for a project in the group and, second – and extremely important – for adult help in the Beaver Colony and the Scout Troop. Please ring the phone number below with any offers.

The five sections of the group are now well into their spring programmes with the Explorer Unit concentrating on survival swimming, but always looking for something different to augment their activities, which in February included a fascinating evening with Hough the butchers learning the mysteries of sausage making! It also included investing their latest member.



Scout Leader Neil Crumpton wishes to thank Church Stretton Mayor Andy Munro who obtained six laptops from a local businessman to

enable the troop to take part in the World Jamboree on the internet in October.

As part of their Personal Health programme the Tuesday Cub Pack spent an evening at the Leisure Centre, where they learned not only to use the equipment but many other ways to promote a healthy lifestyle.

The Wednesday Cub Pack has begun an outdoor programme of Road Safety allied with a project on teamwork.

All meetings are held at the group headquarters in Church Street and are open to both boys and girls. For more information contact the Group Scout Leader on 07484 177317.

Monday 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th March

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 GSL for Explorer dates).

Tuesday 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th March

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

Wednesday 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th March

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

Fred Reeve



Catholic Voice

At the time of writing, I am just about to pay my taxes to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs which made me question why does the traditional financial year begin in April? The answer: that for our Medieval forebears New Year began at the end of March. More specifically, the 25th of March which is the solemn feast of Annunciation of the Lord (when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary). This was called 'Lady Day' and marked the beginning of Jesus' life among humanity (in the womb); March is also linked more or less to spring, and the agricultural cycle. This was the case until the adoption of the Gregorian calendar in England in 1752, when the New Year started on January 1st – the Roman Empire's civil/legal New Year.

The tax/financial year is one of the elements of an inherited, Pre-Reformation physical and social landscape which was lost at the end of the Early Modern period. It speaks to a time when Faith and nature was embedded in people's lives inside and outside the buildings of the Church. Faith was very much part of the life events of birth, marriage, and death, it set the much-valued holidays (Holy Days) for labourer and Lord alike, marked the times and seasons of the year and placed everything firmly within the truth of Divine Providence of our God and Creator.

As people of the 21st Century we have almost eradicated all the natural rhythms of life – both personal and social. We can now shop twenty-four hours a day. We can get impatient because we expect our desires to be met speedily whether it be home deliveries and services, or the use of 'credit now and pay later' rather than waiting for the item until we have saved up. In modern life convenience and speed drives us. Part of that drive has spawned an increase in labour-saving devices both big and small to give us more time. Yet what have we done with the extra time except fill it with more stuff and busyness?

Rather than having more time and space for our recreation and simply time 'to be ourselves' alone and with others.

The Catholic vision of humanity, her anthropology, is far too complex to be fully expressed here. It involves the whole of human experience and relationships, i.e. with God, Creation, and one another. Humanity's relationship with God conveys ideas surrounding the meaning and purpose of life, our irreplaceable value, gifts, talents, vocation and how we live as a child of God acknowledging his presence and care in our prayer and outlook.

Humanity's relationship with Creation concerns a vision which is about belonging and stewardship. Humanity does not 'own' creation but is part of it and (despite our best efforts) subject to it, e.g. weather, and called to care for this planet which is our home. This can mean working with creation in all its diversity, and limiting our needs and wants when necessary.

Finally, Humanity's relationship with itself. This involves our moral lives on all levels collectively and as individuals. Our identity is not something we simply create but also involves the social world in which we inhabit. Everything we are – physically, sartorially, psychologically – involves the 'other' of another person or group. Humanity's relationship with itself also involves our relationship with God and Creation.

As human beings, whilst we may wish to imprint our mastery on the natural and on the social world in which we live, we cannot ignore natural-social rhythms of life. If we do try to do so then we are building lives on quicksand. Let us wisely embrace our 'reality in relationship' and the need to mark the differing times and rhythms for a healthy, sustainable, life.

Canon Jonathan Mitchell





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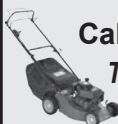
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Church Stretton Stroke Support Group

We meet every second Thursday in the month, 2pm to 4pm, in the Mayfair Centre. Our meetings consist of a variety of different activities, from outside speakers, craft activities, singalongs and occasional visits outside of Church Stretton.

The role of the group is to provide a friendly secure environment where people can chat and feel supported. The

group is affiliated to the Stroke Association and members receive regular publications.

All are welcome. If you think this might be a group for you please contact:

Jane 07763 825175

Hilary 07909 501029



A recent visit to the Discovery Centre for lunch

The Strettons Probus Bowls Club

Are you new to the area or newly retired and would like to take part in some not too strenuous sporting activity? If the answer is yes, then why not try the Strettons Probus Bowls Club? We are a friendly Crown Green bowling club of about 30 bowlers, of varying abilities and are always looking for new members. We meet for practice sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the bowling season, which runs from the beginning of April to the end of September. If you fancy having a go or have played before and would like to take up the sport again, why not drop in on one of these sessions? You don't

have to be a member of Probus to join the bowling club and you don't have to attend every practice session, unless

of course you want to! We have spare sets of bowls that you can borrow to start with and there is always someone available to help you learn the rules and how to play the game. This season, for at least the first half of April, we shall be assembling at the pavilion near the bowling green in the Town Park at 2pm to start about 2.20. From May onwards we will assemble at 9.30am and start playing about 9.50. If you would like to talk to someone first, then you can ring our secretary Glyn Morgan on 01694 722388.



The 2022 competition prize winners at our AGM in November

Trivia Answers

1. Cork
2. Madonna
3. St Jude
4. Caspian Sea
5. Achilles

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Nature in the Strettons Exhibition

An exhibition highlighting threatened species and habitats in the Strettons, and the monitoring and conservation efforts of local nature groups is available for viewing in Church Stretton library from Wednesday 1st March until Saturday 18th March. Please do take the opportunity to pop in and learn more about local species and the efforts of our various nature groups to monitor and conserve their habitats. It will be a great way of finding out about all the amazing work that happens in our local area.

The exhibition will be officially opened by our Town Mayor, Andy Munro, on Tuesday 28th February at 6.30pm. All are welcome. The new 'Nature in the Strettons' website will also be available for viewing that evening.

On Monday 20th March the exhibition will move to the Mayfair Health and Wellbeing Centre (next to the Medical Centre in Church Stretton). Do visit and enjoy looking around. You might like to take the time to enjoy an excellent coffee or lunch while you visit (from 10am to 1.30pm every weekday).

Bird Survey – Project Leader Leo Smith

Helpers are required for all three of our Bird Surveys in 2023, on lapwing, curlew and other species, red grouse, and dippers. All these surveys are conducted jointly with the Church Stretton branch of Shropshire Ornithological Society, and the National Trust is a partner in the red grouse survey. People who have helped previously will be asked to help again, but new helpers will be very welcome.



Curlew, Photo: Gareth Thomas FRPS

Lapwing, Curlew, and other species

The bird survey area is bounded roughly by Leebootwood, Marshbrook, Shipton and Hughley. It is divided into 32 squares, each of 2 x 2 kilometres. Participants take on one of these survey squares and visit on three separate dates to suit you, around 1st April, 1st May and 15th June. Each visit takes less than half a day, so it doesn't take much time. It's easy to do, and participants are provided with simple survey instructions and a map to record sightings on. If possible, we'd also like you to record kestrel, cuckoo, and other target

species, but that's an optional extra. Last year we found seven pairs of curlew, between three and six pairs of lapwing and six pairs of kestrel.

If you want to find out more about the survey, or you would like to help locate the curlews, please come to the meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22nd March, at the Methodist Church Hall, Watling St, Church Stretton, or contact leo@leosmith.org.uk. There will be a practical training session, explaining how to go about the survey, and record what you see, around the end of March, if you feel you need it and want to come.

Save our Curlews Project and Appeal

The survey also directly helps 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 found seven breeding pairs of curlew in 2022. Results have been summarized in previous issues of Focus. 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. At the current rate of decline, we haven't got long to save the curlews from local extinction, so please help if you can.

You can find a report on the results in 2022, and the Appeal Leaflet, with a donations page on how to contribute, on our website www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk. The Save our Curlews nest-finding and protection project will continue in our area in 2023. We need to raise more money to pay for it, and readers are invited to make donations. The amount of conservation work we can do is dependent on how much the Appeal raises.

Red Grouse

The red grouse survey takes place on the Long Mynd, for around two hours around sunset on several evenings in April and May. Most watchpoints are close to the road, and the grouse are usually conspicuous and easy to recognise, so the survey doesn't require any particular expertise. A recruiting leaflet with details of what's involved can be found on our website. A briefing meeting for new participants will be held at 7.30pm on

Thursday 23rd March, and again there will be a practical 'on the job' training session for those who want it.

Dipper

Dipper monitoring doesn't involve actual survey work, we would just like reports of any you see please. If you get a good view, please check the left leg for a colour-ring.

More information on all three projects can be found on our Website www.shropscwgs.org.uk/strettons-area-wildlife-group. Reports for 2022 will be posted on the website before the SACWG Annual Public Meeting on Wednesday 15th

March. If you want further information, or to volunteer, or you want to report a curlew or a dipper sighting, please contact Leo Smith (leo@leosmith.org.uk).

Annual meeting of SACWG

The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) brings together local people to encourage and enhance interest in wildlife, to survey priority wildlife and habitats and to actively promote nature conservation. We are holding our annual meeting on Wednesday 15th March, at 7.15pm in All Stretton Village Hall, SY6 6JR. This is always an excellent way of gaining up-to-date information on the work of our project leaders who survey a wide variety of

fauna and flora within the local area. We will have reports on topics including swifts, curlew, dormice, butterflies, wetlands and habitat surveys. There are a couple of new proposals for projects.

All are welcome and refreshments are provided. Do come and find out what activities you might like to engage with from bird watching to plant ID, butterfly surveying to stream dipping!

Dr Penny Bienz



Tree Notes from the Church Stretton Tree Group



Photo: Paul Eade

Uses: The wood from mature trees is used in the construction of furniture, flooring and wine barrels. Historically the timber was used in ship building.

Folklore: Traditionally the yule log was cut from an oak; druid worship and marriage ceremonies were conducted in oak woodlands; acorns were traditionally carried to bring good luck and good health; seen as a symbol of strength.

General: There are two native British oaks: the English oak, also known as the common oak or the pedunculate oak (*Q. robur*) differs from the sessile oak (*Q. petraea*) in having stalked acorns and a short leaf stalk hidden by two small leaves. Accurate identification of the example on Clive Avenue will be possible once the leaves appear. Can grow to 40m tall.

Did you know: Acorns have been used as flour in bread making; tannin in the bark has been used to tan leather since Roman times; acorns were once used as a coffee substitute.

Significant UK specimens: Royal oak at Boscobel; Powis oak at Powis Castle; Bowthorpe oak at Bourne; Major oak in Sherwood Forest; Croft Castle oak, and many others.

Jane Fallows (membership secretary)



Check the location of this tree on the database map at churchstrettontreegroup.co.uk

Name: Oak (*Quercus* sp)

Location: On the grass verge adjacent to 'Westcroft', Clive Avenue

Coordinates: 52.5339667; 2.802215

Value to wildlife: Host to numerous insect species which provide a food source for birds; in the autumn fallen acorns act as a source of food for badgers, squirrels and deer; holes and crevices of mature trees provide nesting places for birds such as flycatchers and redstarts; rotting leaf litter attracts various invertebrates including stag beetles; and leaf mould supports fungi.

Shropshire Ornithological Society

Church Stretton Branch

Monday 27th March

Our guest speaker will be Geoff Hall:

'Lockdown Wildlife in Shropshire'


All welcome. £3 for non-members.

Refreshments provided.

7.30pm Methodist Church Hall



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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	
Dominos, 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@csmfcc.co.uk
Football Club, Stretton Red Rovers (6-15 years old)		723543	contact@redrovers.org.uk
Footpath maintenance volunteers (Parish paths Partnership)	Tim Parker	07493 659514	tim.parker111@gmail.com
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 Hattton	07852 961675	freestylmartiaarts.com/stretton
Masonic Lodge (Caer Caradoc)	Graham Williams	07939 109726	secretary@caercaradocldodge.org.uk
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
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	781660	senaorme@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	anairland001@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
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

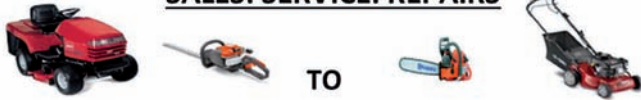
For activities and support groups at Mayfair, please refer to the entries under 'Clubs and Societies' and to their advertisement.

Accommodation see Hotels, B&B, Self Catering	Clock & Watch Repair Adrian Donnelly Clock Repairs... 9	Garden Design, Services, Supplies Ben Carter Landscaping..... 41 Homden Excavations..... 39 Integral Gardens..... 41 John Stephens Services..... 41 Keith Warrington..... 39 Mike Russell Designs..... 39 Paul Forrester..... 21 Paul Tinsley..... 22 Peter Tipton..... 41 Shropshire Lawn Co..... 39 Tidy Garden..... 39 Unique Landscapes..... 41	Outdoor Clothing and Equipment The Outdoor Depot..... 53
Accountants and Bookkeeping James, Holyoak & Parker..... 56 RLW Accountants..... 56	Clothes Entertaining Elephants..... 53	Garden Machinery Newington Garage..... 49	Painters & Decorators Andrew Webster..... 39 D R Tipton Painter & Decorator 44 DWS Property Services..... 39 E B Jones..... 39 G H Jones & Son..... 39 Paul Forrester..... 21
Architects, Town Planning Batch Valley Design..... 27 Christopher Roscoe Assocs..... 27	Coaches Caradoc Coaches..... 49	Hairdressers, Health, Beauty Anthony's Hair Studio..... 44 Health & Beauty Clinic..... 33 Katerina White..... 44 Nails by Nancy..... 44 Shampers..... 44	Pest Control Chris Sansom Pest Control..... 60 Keith Warrington..... 39
Bathrooms see Kitchens, Bathrooms	Community Centre Mayfair..... 16	Health, Therapies see also Chiropodists & Physiotherapists Birch Tree Reflexology..... 29 Bodylogic Mobile Massage..... 33 Cate Gowlett..... 29 Mayfair..... 16 Shropshire Acupuncture..... 29	Pet Food and Pet Care John R Thomas..... 13
Beauty, Slimming see Hairdressers, Health, Beauty	Computing, Graphic and Web Design Jason Gough..... 9 Nic Sansom..... 9 Stretton Internet..... 9 Webbex Technical Services..... 9	Hobbies Books by Moonlight..... 13 Burway Books..... 13 Harold's Toy Store..... 13 Long Mynd Music Academy..... 13 Peter Youngs Photography..... 16 Philip Hooper..... 13 The Prolific Crafter..... 13	Pharmacy Hillside Pharmacy..... 44
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Bookshop Books by Moonlight..... 13 Burway Books..... 13	DIY & Hardware Cyril Bason Hardware..... 41 Mynd DIY..... 41	Home Furnishings Abbey Carpets..... 13 Louise Watney..... 13	Piano Tuner and Repairs Philip Hooper..... 13
Builders, Plant & Equipment A J Lewis-Price..... 22 A Morgan..... 21 A.2.Z Construction..... 22 E J & G J Groom..... 21 Homden Excavations..... 39 Joe Drury..... 22 K J Morris..... 21 Keith George..... 22 Mark Terry..... 21 Morris Maintenance..... 41 Paul Tinsley..... 22 Richard Sherratt Builders..... 21 Telford Building Contractors..... 22	Domestic Appliances & Repairs Continental Fireplaces..... 9 Norman Jones..... 9	House and Garden Clearance Peter Tipton..... 41	Plumbers, Heating Gary Paris..... 29 Gasco..... 29 Homefix..... 33 J Morris..... 29 Lee Brown..... 33 Morris Maintenance..... 41 Pete Carroll..... 29 Peter Floyd..... 33 Whitfield Plumbing..... 33 Whiting Heating..... 29
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Care - Homes and At Home Bluebird Care..... 16	Event Venues Eaton Manor..... 56	Kitchens, Bathrooms A J Lewis-Price..... 22 A.2.Z Construction..... 22 Homefix..... 33 Lee Brown..... 33 Mark Terry..... 21 Paul Forrester..... 21	Skip Hire John Stephens Services..... 41 Peter Tipton..... 41
Carpenters & Joiners E J & G J Groom..... 21 Keith George..... 22 Mark Terry..... 21 Mike Webster..... 21 Paul Forrester..... 21	Employment Bluebird Care..... 27	Mobility Stretton Mobility Store..... 16	Solicitors FBC Manby Bowdler..... 27 PCB Solicitors..... 27
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Chemist Hillside Pharmacy..... 44	Food, Delicatessen Entertaining Elephants..... 53 Saxtons Deli..... 53		Taxi Church Stretton Taxi..... 49
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Birds of the Mynd in Spring

The Long Mynd is one of the most important areas for birds in the West Midlands. You can see them in the hills and valleys throughout the year, and this can add so much enjoyment to any walk.

After the quieter winter months, the hill bursts into life in springtime. Migrant birds such as willow warbler, whitethroat, redstart, tree pipit, cuckoo and whinchat return from their African winter quarters and fill the hills with their song. Resident birds skylark and meadow pipit song can be heard again – another sure sign that winter is over.

These birds sing in the air – an adaption to open habitats. Dippers rarely sing but can be heard from February singing in Carding Mill Valley, Batch Valley and Ashes Hollow. Also, look out for the spectacle of ravens performing their ‘loop the loop’ manoeuvre; they are the only birds that can fly upside-down!

Our Rangers and their volunteers spend time in early spring making sure conditions are right on the hill for nesting birds. For example, they have been busy in recent years cutting back the soft rush near Wildmoor to create ideal habitat for snipe. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of breeding snipe pairs on the hill – a great success story.



Photo: Patrick Edwards

Threatened Species

Probably one of the most important – but also most threatened – birds on the Long Mynd is the curlew, which returns to the hill in March. These tall waders are approximately the same size as a female pheasant, but with much longer legs and a long, thin, downward-curving bill. They are well camouflaged, with a mottled brown and grey plumage and a white wedge on their rump in flight. Their haunting, evocative song is unmistakable and can be heard through to July.

Once a common species in the UK, their population has sadly declined rapidly in recent decades, such that the curlew is now on the UK Conservation Red List, meaning urgent conservation action is needed. On the Long Mynd only two breeding pairs were observed in 2022, and more research is urgently needed into the reason behind this dramatic decline to prevent this iconic bird from being lost forever. Please be careful if you hear them; they are very vulnerable to disturbance by walkers and especially dogs. If you are interested in getting involved in the survey, please contact www.ShropsCWGs.org.uk or Leo Smith at leo@leosmith.org.uk.



Photo: Adam Kirkland

Short-Eared Owls

Over our rough marsh and heath lands we may be fortunate to observe a short-eared owl flying silently above us. On long wings it will peer down searching for voles, its usual prey. In years when these rodents are numerous, short-eared owls can rear two broods of young. Their nests are a hollow scrape on the ground and the hen does most of the rearing.

It is active throughout the year but more often seen flying at dusk in cold midwinter skies. This is when our resident breeding birds are joined by migrants from the continent.

Named after their feathery tufts which are not really ears and are hardly visible, it is the large round face and piercing eyes that are so striking.

This quite scarce owl is well worth watching out for on winter walks.

Carol Wood



Photo: Geoff Hall

Best Bird Hotspots

All the hills and valleys are bustling with courting and nest-building birds at this time of year. However, there are several different places that are particularly good for springtime bird-spotting. Dotterel (first week in May), skylark and wheatear can be seen near the Gliding Station, with tree pipit and reed bunting at Pole Cottage. Cow Ridge and the Reservoir are good places for seeing cuckoo and tree pipit, while Batch Valley often hosts redstart, pied flycatcher and willow warbler. In Carding Mill Valley, grey and pied wagtail can be seen around the tea-room area, and wheatear frequent the Burway. Also, the Pipe Walk offers a varied mix of



habitats, which ensures the best chance of hearing and seeing a wide range of birds and is ideal for hearing the spring dawn chorus.

Of course, this is just a selection of the birds that can be seen on the Long Mynd. So grab your identification book (or app) and see how many you can recognise on your next walk.

Maria Darlington, National Trust

Tree and Hedge Planting in Rectory Field

In November 2022 and January 2023 members of the Tree Group and other volunteers planted some trees and a native hedge in the top part of Rectory Field. We received 315 whips, canes and spiral guards from the Woodland Trust which provide a wide range of varieties for the benefit of wildlife and year-round colour. Species included hawthorn, rowan, hazel, blackthorn, cherry, silver birch, dogwood, oak and dog rose. It was a challenging task working at the top of the field and clearing the site before we could plant, but the result is a credit to the hard work of the volunteers.

The hedge follows the boundary from the gate at the top car park right up to the seat and the access to the wood, and is complementary to an earlier hedge we planted in the lower part of Rectory Field. Although there are some failures



from this earlier project many of the plants are getting established. At the top area of Rectory Field we have also planted three Scots Pine. In addition, and funded by the Tree Group, a field maple, hornbeam (lower down) and a small alder buckthorn (by the pond) have been planted as well as two oaks in the lower field. Many thanks to all who helped with this worthwhile project.

*Hilary Hymas,
Chair, Church Stretton Tree Group*



RSPB – What's on in the Strettons

Tuesday 14th March

RSPB South Shropshire Local Group has a talk by Gary Slaytor – 'Your Optics, Your Choice'. Gary is a People

Engagement Officer for RSPB Shrewsbury.

Members £2, visitors welcome £5

Enquiries to Carol Wood: 07807 068304

7.30pm Diddlebury Village Hall, SY7 9DH

Sunday 19th March

We have a circular spring walk (approximately three hours) through mixed habitat looking for early migrant passerines, raptors, and winter species such as crossbill.

Meet at Sowdley Wood, Clunton, SY7 0QH car park Grid Ref SO 33788 80668, 9.30am.

Bring a picnic lunch or pub lunches are available at The Crown Inn, Clunton or the Hundred House Inn at Purslow (pre-booking recommended). Sorry no dogs.

Walk Leader: Dave Pearce 07791 180488

The South Shropshire Local Group of the RSPB has a programme of talks and walks throughout 2023. Talks (including refreshments) are £2 to Local Group Members and £5 to visitors, under 18s half price. Walks are £2. For further information visit our website www.group.rspb.org.uk/southshropshire or Facebook – RSPB South Shropshire Local Group

Saturday Morning Music

The next Saturday Morning Music event is on 11th March at 10.15am at the United Reformed Church, SY6 6BY. As usual, admission is free of charge and there will be a retiring collection.

We are delighted to welcome back Brenda Stephenson, a former URC minister who has both preached and played the piano here in the past, to join Claire and Mark Tocknell to play music for violin, viola, clarinet and piano. They are presenting us with a lovely programme including music by Grieg and Schumann.

The other composers featured are less well-known, but of importance: Jan Vanhal was Czech by birth, but spent much of his working life in Vienna, where he was praised by Mozart, with whom he performed.

Carl Reinecke was Danish by birth (born 1824) and spent his final decades as Director of the famous Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig. This is the orchestra that Mendelssohn had conducted, and which has now appointed Andris Nelsons (formerly of the CBSO) to be its director. Reinecke was also an important composer whose students included Grieg, Stanford, Albéniz, Janáček and Max Bruch.



Finally, William Alwyn, an English composer who died in 1985: amongst whose many other works were over 200 film scores. His greatest claim to fame was to hear that his film scores were regarded as so important to public morale that he was placed on a Nazi death list.

This will be a lovely concert. Come and join us!

SHI Events – An Evening with The 309s

Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton
Friday 24th March at 7.30pm

West Yorkshire five piece, The 309s have been rocking and rolling for the last 14 years with their swing repertoire at events all over the country. Think Hank Williams, Bob Wills and Louis Jordan.

The 309s bring the sounds mostly from the southern states of America between 1925 and 1950, giving a good range of music from Western Swing (Jazz with a cowboy hat) created by Bob Wills in Texas, right through to Rock 'n' Roll's early days in Memphis, Tennessee, with their infectious songs and swinging beats and other influences, including country



boogie and jump blues. Rod Boyes who fronts the 309s with his stunning vocal has been the main attraction in bluegrass and Cajun bands and has added lead guitar and harmonica.

Most surprising is that he actually lives in Church Stretton!

Two top vocalists backed by soaring fiddle and a lap steel guitar with a good rhythm section. This mixture of old songs delivered with humour and energy should make for a cracking night.

So why not dress in style for a great night out?

Tickets: Adult £12, 18 and under £6 on www.silvesterhorneevents.co.uk or from C.S. Town Council office, or from Outdoor Depot, Sandford Avenue.

For more information please phone 01694 720132

Mike Walker

Church Stretton Pride of Place

During 2022 our 17 litter pickers have continued with their monthly early Sunday morning collection of litter and leaves around the centre of Church Stretton and the ten gardeners have continued with the maintenance of Church Stretton station gardens. Both activities improve the appearance and cleanliness of our town for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

We would like to thank Church Stretton Town Council for a grant of £171.20 to cover the cost of insuring our

volunteers and Patsy Smith for a donation of £25 to help maintain the station gardens.

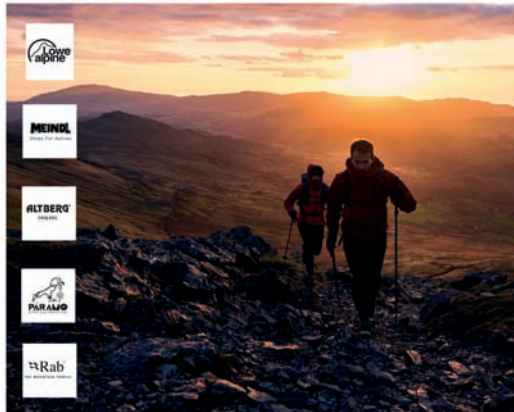
The number of donations we have received in recent years has been falling and consequently our funds are reducing. If any resident or business appreciates our work and would like to help with a donation, we would be very grateful. Please contact me in the first place. Thank you.

Trevor Halsey, Co-ordinator and Treasurer
Church Stretton Pride of Place
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Cardington Youth Camp: 1944

Life goes on even in times of War. Here is an account of a Youth Camp at Cardington in 1944 organised by Jean Priestley (then Vincent) as written in the magazine of the National Association of Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs (to become the National Association of Youth Clubs).

We are pleased to be able to publish in this issue an account by Miss Vincent of the Summer Trial Camp arranged by Birmingham D.A. for factory youth. Like thousands more in London we have been living in billets, sleeping in surface shelters, carrying on as best we may having been driven out of our house by a flying bomb. We do not often take refuge in excuses but ask our readers' indulgence if our present leader does not please them any more than it may please the writer. We survived so have much to be thankful for but the humblest literary effort now requires concentration. This most worthy effort (by Miss Vincent) may bring a new experience and fresh outlook into the lives of our young people at their most impressionable age and satisfy that craving for romance and adventure.

Editor

"I would like to jot down an account of the Trial Camp for factory youth held at Whitsuntide at Middle Hill Farm, Cardington, Shropshire, in the hope that it may be of interest to Club members and especially to members of the Youth Camping Association.

The tents were found to be locked up in the station-master's office at Longville, so it meant a trek some three miles down the line to get to him and pull out the huge sack which contained five large tents. After procuring a home-made trek cart from our cottage we tramped back to the station to collect them. The day was hot and sunny and the long road seemed endless. In the village of Cardington we made a call at the shop to collect two dozen loaves and a large raisin cake made by the shopkeeper in her baker's oven, ordered in advance. We wondered, after piling up our little cart, including a few odd parcels sent in advance by the campers, whether it would ever get to the camp-site intact! The farm was yet some distance right up in the hills, the road petering out into a stone lane and still on to a winding grassy pony track to the cottage. Built of grey stone, it stood sturdily surveying undulating hills and sweeps of brackened fields. However the journey was made without incident, and it was an easy matter to pitch the camp with the brand-new tents with bright green ground-sheets, and with a swing of the mallet. They were nestled down by the bracken in the large, sheltered field below the Cardington Hill.

The party arrived in twos and threes, with bicycles laden with blankets and other gear. Some faces were already red with the sun and all were moist with perspiration after the long push up the hilly lane. The boys went over to the tents, unloaded their bicycles and endeavoured to make themselves at home in these new surroundings. Four girls came with the party, so two of the tents were pitched in the paddock near the house, and I camped with them in my "Itisa". As they were all first campers, (including most of the boys) the night was spent in shifting about the tent and trying to wriggle into a comfortable position. A bit scared perhaps by the quietness, interrupted by hooting of owls and cries of the foxes. The boys down the vale slept three in one tent and four in another. The girls preferred to sleep altogether and use the other tent for equipment or wardrobe. Later, pretty frocks were produced

from nowhere, or perhaps from somewhere under the mudguards of their bicycles (!) and hung from coat-hangers along the ridge-pole of the spare tent.

Next morning (Whit Sunday) everyone got up quickly to dig up a neat square of turf and chop logs into chips for fires. Milk was fetched and breakfast completed. Some had carried eggs all the way from Birmingham – unbroken (not dried). Then we all set off to Cardington to church. We were publicly welcomed from the pulpit by the Vicar, the Rev. Gwyn Rhees. We certainly swelled the numbers in the church as we occupied solidly the three front pews, and we certainly swelled the volume of sound during the hymn singing. The atmosphere in the church was lovely and cool.

After the service we sauntered back to the camp, had lunch, and prepared to walk over the hills to the Devil's Punch Bowl on the Long Mynd for a swim. Clad in shorts and sun tops, the walk over the springy turf was delightful, and it was fun to see rabbits sometimes darting right from beneath our feet. On the way over Hope Bowdler Hill we saw a buzzard. Dropping down from the hills Church Stretton lay in a saucer shaped depression in the valley. Immediately behind, the Long Mynd rose in swelling mounds that looked like velvet in the sunlight.

We reached Cardingmill Valley and the Long Mynd slowly and made our way to the Devil's Punch Bowl – a perfectly natural swimming pool, but just concrete steps round the edge for easy plunging. The water was simply delicious. We rolled about like porpoises and surface-dived, without bathing-caps to feel the cool caress of the water on our hot heads; then sat on the grass and sunned ourselves a bit before jumping into the water again and again!

Plans were made there and then to get going with the digging of our OWN bathing pool near the camp-site. This had previously already been started but needed a bit more spade before the pool would be sufficiently deep. We collected our party of 16 and made a meal of bread butter jam and cheese and drank water from a hill stream relayed by the boys in a bathing cap. A merry afternoon was had there and later in the cool of the early evening we returned over the hills to the camp. We had all caught the sun during the day and some backs were feeling very sore. Calamine was produced and offered a balm. The girls seemed to have brought everything. It was altogether very surprising; everyone had come sufficiently equipped. Only one plate had to be loaned out as one had broken in a saddle-bag on the way.

On another day, after breakfast we had a demonstration and talk by Max Madders on the art of a camp fire and were shown the proper way to dig the trench and replace the earth afterwards. That evening we had a communal camp fire with fried pancakes of dried egg, milk and flour – great fun. The boys larked about producing rhythms from a fork, tin can and frying pan and sung several tunes. The girls listened to Dobbie singing "Old Folks, Young Folks" etc.

The days soon go in camp. Time passes quickly pottering about on camp duties and exploring the little grassy fields and glades around the Middle Hill, the pretty Nant Valley and Wondrell Coppice with colourful spring flowers. In the evenings there were glow-worms in the streams and badgers were disturbed.

The last day came all too quickly. Bicycles were brought out again and harnessed for the journey back to "Brum". The

weather being so hot – surprisingly so for Whit. made all the difference to this long-looked-forward-to camp. At about three o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, the party set off back home all looking sun-tanned! Three of us were left, surveying the empty-looking field with only a few chips of wood and a slight burnt scar on the turf. The campers had cleared up their tents, stacking them in the yard of the farm, and replacing unused logs and empty tins, so we were left with nothing much to do. We voted the Trial Camp an unqualified success.

Jean Vincent, Youth Leader. 1944

Postscript

My mother Mrs Jean Priestley (1919-1986) and my father LV (Tom) Priestley, a Youth Club volunteer moved to Middle Hill Farm in 1940, during the War. They were not then married but got married a few years afterwards. Max Madders was an Olympic swimming coach for the Helsinki Games 1940 (which was ultimately postponed) for which my mother was shortlisted. In later years she would speak with great affection and nostalgia of the times they had at Middle Hill.

Will Priestley

REJOICE!

The More Singers Spring Choral Concert

Britten & Vaughan Williams and other twentieth century British composers
Saturday 25th March at 7.30pm, Methodist Church, Church Stretton



The More Singers are a chamber choir, founded in 1973 and based in Church Stretton. They are directed by Alistair Auld. As winter finally gives way to spring, it is a time to be thankful for the benefits of this much awaited seasonal change. The More Singers are getting in celebratory mood with a programme of uplifting choral music which features two of the greatest twentieth century British composers, Benjamin Britten and Ralph Vaughan Williams.



(1593-1633) and are reflections of Easter and the Resurrection with baritone solo in meditative mood, accompanied gently by the choir. By contrast, his anthem *O Clap your Hands* is a thrilling fanfare-like burst of energy and the coronation anthem *O Taste and See* (1953) is tender throughout.

We are fortunate to have the organist Anthony Pinel, as our accompanist for the concert. Anthony is Director of Music at St Chad's, Shrewsbury.

The concert will also include works by other British composers – Herbert Howells' *Like as the Hart desireth the Waterbrook* and movements from *Mass for the Spirit* by contemporary Scottish composer, Helen Mackinnon. Many of the pieces performed include solos which will be taken by members of the choir.

Alistair Auld, now in his ninth year as the More Singers' Musical Director, says: "As the title suggests, this concert rejoices in British Choral Music with selected works written between 1934 and 2019. A most uplifting evening and a treat for all music lovers. An event not to be missed!"

Entry to the concert is by programme which can be purchased at the door or ordered online at £10 (see below).

- Concert begins at 7.30pm. Doors open 7pm
- Venue: Methodist Church, Watling St, Church Stretton
- Parking and full wheelchair access
- Duration of concert approx. 60 minutes. No interval
- Entry to the concert is £10 at the door or go to www.ticketsource.co.uk/The-More-Singers
- For any enquiries please call 07896 761149

After concert expenses, all profits and donations will go to a chosen charity. The More Singers are affiliated to Making Music, a UK organisation for voluntary music-making. For further information about the choir please contact Alistair Auld on 07981 399482.



Britten – New Music for the Modern Age

Britten's music is strikingly new and fresh even today. The main work in this concert is his cantata *Rejoice in the Lamb* written in 1943 to a poem by the eighteenth century 'mad' poet, Christopher Smart. The music has a depth of expression that perfectly matches the quality of the words: sometimes quirky and always vibrant.

Britten creates a beautifully constructed setting in ten sections. Vocal fanfare-arpeggios, the organ metamorphoses into cat and mouse solos; dancing rhythms and tender harmonies bewitch heart and soul.

Another celebratory work by Britten also featured is the *Te Deum in C*, written in 1934 when he was just 20. The work is a magnificent setting of the well-known canticle *We praise thee O God* and has drama, energy, variety and clarity, with a haunting soprano solo.

Vaughan Williams – Majestic and Mystical

Known and loved for his heartfelt musical portrayals of the English countryside through a lifelong pursuit of folk song, Vaughan Williams' *Mystical Songs* are beautiful settings of poems by the Welsh poet George Herbert





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Public meeting about the future of the Shropshire Hills Shuttle Bus

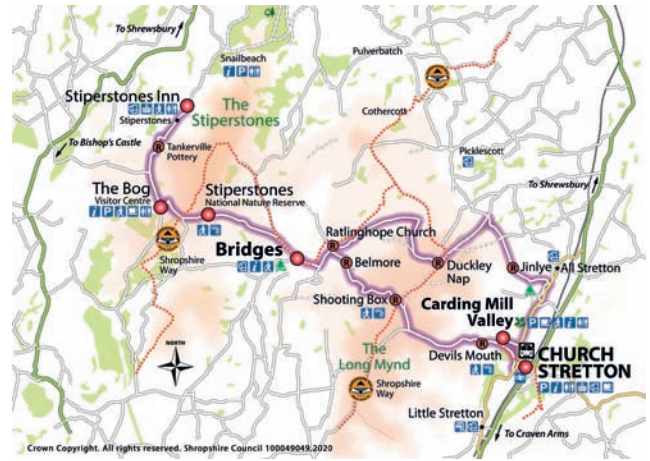
Thank you to everyone who came along to the Shuttle Bus meeting in January. Over forty people, mostly residents from Church Stretton, joined members of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership team to talk about the future of the service.

The buses run from Church Stretton at weekends through the summer months, taking passengers onto the Long Mynd and over the Stiperstones.

2022 was a particularly challenging year for the service. In the same year the running costs went up significantly, passenger numbers overall went down and we made a loss of around £9,000.

At the meeting people were able to give their views on a range of topics including, how they use the service, accessibility, ticketing and frequency. As you might imagine, there was overwhelming support for the Shuttle Buses. No-one wants to lose the service, but it needs to run in a different way to make it financially sustainable.

The feedback was extremely valuable and is helping to shape the future of the service and we will be able to confirm details of the 2023 service in next month's *Stretton Focus*.



The Shuttle Buses are a partnership initiative, led by the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership team and involving Church Stretton Town Council, National Trust, Natural England and Shropshire Council, who have always contributed towards the costs of the service.

For more information, please contact our Sustainable Tourism Officer, Nigel McDonald, nigel.mcdonald@shropshire.gov.uk

Awe!

“That’s awesome!” replied the young dental receptionist on hearing the rather less than astonishing news that my teeth were fine. I was not awestruck in that moment, but maybe she had been looking at dental records! However, it got me thinking about awe.

When did you last experience awe? And did you know that, when you do, it is good for you? These were the opening words when Awe was explored on a Radio 4’s *Start the Week**

Asking myself the same questions, I remembered a number of occasions where I experienced a real sense of awe – that rather elusive emotion of wonder that held me transfixed for a moment, lifting my spirits and taking me, somehow, beyond myself. Some were the obviously dramatic like a sunset or mountain view, but the most powerful were more subtle, like the moment when our new dog came and sat by me on a wild hilltop and we somehow ‘connected’ and shared the experience together. The benefits of these fleeting occasions remained with me and, even as I remember them, take me out of myself.

Research conducted by the social psychologist Prof. Dacher Keltner points to significant benefits through experiencing awe to both our mental and physical health. In his new book (unsurprisingly entitled *Awe*) he describes the “transformative power of everyday wonder”. Awe, he says, is “the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your current understanding of the world” and “can be discovered in many different ways because it simply involves pausing to gain a sense of wonder.”



I guess we can all think of times when we have been stopped in our tracks by a stunning view, an uplifting experience or when captivated by a powerful piece of music. In my experience, these were unplanned and each had a fleeting, evanescent quality where the feelings, although intense, resisted simple description. Rather surprisingly, Keltner suggests that we don’t have to be passive, instead we can attune ourselves to “be amazed at things outside ourselves” so that awe becomes a regular occurrence and helps us reap the benefits of a happier mood.

This almost transcendent quality of awe can seem to take on tangible form when we engage with a beautiful work of art or a stirring piece of music. Awe can also emerge in a group of people, such as a choir, where there is unity of purpose, bigger than any one person, leading to what some have called, a ‘collective effervescence’. Awe takes the focus away from ourselves, helping us become less egocentric and, even better, gives our ego a rest.

This is most evident in the spiritual realm, where, as a Christian, I may experience awe as I take a moment to connect with God. It is certainly a mind-stretching wonder that Jesus, who died a long time ago, might still relate to me in a personal way and open up an unexpected glimpse of heaven.

Surprisingly, I am finding these moments can be closer than I thought – and I certainly feel happier when I give my ego a rest! Maybe you might feel like indulging yourself in a little wonder and discovering some awe in the year ahead?

*Radio 4 *Start the Week*, Boxing Day 2022, www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001ghy5

Paul Green

The year 2023 is now in full swing and we are preparing for our May production.

The following synopsis will give you a flavour of the play we've selected and all that remains is for us to bring this comedy to life.

With an important match imminent, captain Roger Dervish wants his team firing on all cylinders, but it seems not everyone has read the memo. From fur coats to plasters, injury to sun-bathers and from petty rivalries to marital misdemeanours, all is not going according to Roger's meticulous plan. Richard Harris's *Outside Edge* is a homage to the joys and sorrows of the local cricket club, its characters, their foibles and the passion of the game.

The play was so popular that it spawned an award-winning 'sitcom' in the nineties that continued the adventures and adversities of the club. But let's go back to where it all began, that match against the British Railways Maintenance Division, Reading East. Left arm, round the wicket, six to come. Play.

We hope to see you on the boundary where seats will be provided and the bar will be open. See the attached poster for details of how to get to the match. Tickets available from mid-April.



Church Stretton's
Amateur Drama Company
present



OUTSIDE EDGE

a comedy by Richard Harris



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2023 at 7.30pm**

**The Silvester
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available from
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or online at
www.ticketsource.co.uk
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facebook.com/strettonplayers

Ukrainian Fundraising Event

As some of you may already be aware, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine last spring, a small group of local people have been raising money and collecting items to help support the Ukrainian people. This work has been a coordinated response involving local Ukrainian refugees. The aid has been specific to ensure that it is of optimum benefit and goes directly to the people that are in greatest need. Money raised has been used to purchase much-needed generators to enable garages, hospitals, vets and other vital services to carry on their essential work. Can you imagine trying to operate by candlelight?

Money raised has also enabled the purchase of a four-wheel drive vehicle to take essential supplies to the front line and bring the injured away from the war zone. Collections of warm clothes, toiletries and four-seasons sleeping bags and blankets have also been well supported. We have been truly humbled by the response of the people of the Strettons and surrounding area and thank everyone who has contributed in any way. Sadly, we cannot win the war but if we can help make the lives of these poor people just a little easier, we have achieved something.

On Friday 10th March some of the local Ukrainian refugees are holding an evening of traditional Ukrainian food, dance, and song at the Silvester Horne Institute. There will also be traditional clothing, art and photography for sale.

Doors open at 6.30pm for 7-9pm. Please come and support this event, tickets (adult £20, children £10) available from Vine & Co and Caroline Crump on 01694 723283.



Stretton Stitchers

We are a small group with varied experience, who enjoy sewing in all its forms: dressmaking, patchwork, embroidery etc, with or without a sewing machine. We meet twice monthly, at the URC Hall on alternate Tuesday mornings from 10am-1pm and are a very

friendly, casual group. New members will be most welcome. Why not come and meet us?

If you would like to know more, please call Katie 720200 or Frances 722656.

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Urgent Action Needed

It is fascinating to reflect on the contrast between the speed at which environmental projects can get under way in a local community (the Wetlands, High Leasowes), and the snail's pace of activity at Westminster. Last July the Committee on Climate Change noted "major policy failures" on achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and "scant evidence of delivery". This January the Environment Audit Committee pointed out again the lack of urgency: the country needs both a national "war effort" on energy saving and efficiency and a speed-up in the transition to renewables. At Stretton Climate Care, we agree.

If you want energy at an affordable price, you choose renewables. If you want secure energy, you go for renewables. If you want sustainable clean energy, you put your money on renewables.

Since 2009 the costs of solar energy have dropped globally by 90%. On-shore wind power is now the cheapest form of energy generation of all.

As part of our ongoing programme of educating ourselves about the

prospects for the future, Stretton Climate Care welcomes Gerry Jewson, Chair of wind energy developer Wind2, on Monday 27th March (7.30pm at the Methodist Church). Though no-one is proposing to cover the Long Mynd with wind turbines, there is much to learn about what is happening with other projects.

The final word is with the Environment Audit Committee: "Accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels will enhance the UK's energy security, shield households from future energy shocks, and reduce the ability of aggressive and repressive regimes to use oil and gas supplies as an economic weapon". We could not put it better.

David Howard



Strettfest 2023 – Come and Join in the Carnival

Sample a plethora of new cultural activities and arts opportunities for all ages: crafts, singing, dance, drama and story-telling and all kinds of musical instruments to try, plus live performances including Ukrainian guest artists and food and drinks stalls on Rectory Field.

The workshops will be followed by a colourful Carnival Parade around the town, with shop windows dressed for a whole community celebration. Strettfest will conclude with a special Carnival Play by the Stretton Players with a pre-theatre meal.



For all our community organisations – there is still time this month to join together in the Parade or offer support in other ways.

Enquiries: Strettons Arts Forum
Lesley McKnight – lesleymcknightuk@aol.com
or Kate Buttolph – kate@playonperformingarts.co.uk



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