

STOCKTON'S NEWS

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December 2023

Issue 162

Magazine Deadline:- 15th of the month

emails: *Magazine Items* - stocktons.news@gmail.com

Adverts - stockton.ads@gmail.com

Web Page:- www.stocktonnews.org.uk

**Wishing all our readers a Merry Christmas
and a Happy Healthy 2024**



View from School House 1947

THE NELSON CLUB at STOCKTON

Napton Road, Stockton Tel: 01926 812613

**OPENING HOURS:- Mon - Thurs:- 5pm - 11pm Friday 4pm - 12.30am
Sat 2.00pm - 12.30am Sun 12 Noon - 11pm**

December

12th - OPEN FOLK NIGHT 8pm

16th - 3rd ALERT 9pm

17th - XMAS PRIZE BINGO 7pm

XMAS DAY - Open 11.00 - 1pm

31st - N.Y.E. - GUITAR HEROES 9pm - LATE - ALL WELCOME

January 2024

27th - THE WARNING - LIVE BAND - 9pm

Join us for sporting events with BT and Sky Sports

For last minute events or changes to the current planned events please see the following:

Web page: <http://nelsonclub.co.uk/index.html>

Find us on **Facebook & Twitter**

Stockton Football & Cricket Club

Napton Road, Stockton CV47 8JU **Facebook: @StocktonFCCC**

Email Stocktonfccc@outlook.com

About Us: We are a non-profit, Community Amateur Sports Club, run by a team of volunteers for its members & the wider community.

The Club House

Recently extended to include disabled facilities and additional changing rooms.
Well stocked bar with Sky Sports & BT Sports. Pop into the clubhouse or see Facebook for information on upcoming **events** or to become a member.

Our Teams:

**Stockton Football
(Mens, Girls & Boys)
Stockton Stars Cricket,
Stockton Ladies Netball,
Stockton Petanque,
Warwickshire Grizzlies
Baseball,
SFCC Darts Team**





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Join Rachel in January 2024 - a qualified fitness and yoga instructor residing in Stockton.
Offering 4 – 8 week passes to her weekly yoga classes:

Mondays

6.15pm at Long Itchington Community Centre

Thursdays 6.30pm at Stockton Village Hall

Online live classes also available that you can join from home.

Explore the benefits of yoga poses for joint health, good posture, and a stronger spine.

Focusing on breathing with movement to wind down after work or a busy day.

**For further info: email rachellcoggins@icloud.com
or message on FaceBook or WhatsApp**



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Magazine Policy

Deadline for articles **15th** of the month and can only be accepted if in the form of a typed/written copy to Stockton's News Editorial Team or email stocktons.news@gmail.com. The Editorial Team 1.) Reserve the right to withhold or shorten items as views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Team. 2.) Contributors can request that their names be withheld but the team cannot accept anonymous items for publication. 3.) Reserve the right to edit each edition of the magazine to be put on the Web. 4.) No Liability will be accepted for loss or damage caused by error or omission from advertisements or content. 5.) Income is aimed at covering all costs generated by the production/circulation of Stockton's News. 6.) Any surplus funds will be distributed within the Parish of Stockton. Village groups are invited to apply for funds to the betterment of our community.

Copy of Magazine Guide Lines reinstated from the 1980's Parish Mag

8.) We will try to print anything that wont land us up in court 9.) We do not endorse ALL the views expressed. 10.) We don't judge between those in dispute. 11.) We want to provide news, views, opinions and reports. We do not want to be unfair, biased, censorious or condemnatory.

Airing a view is an opinion but a continual airing of that view and/or it's opposite becomes an argument.

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Many thanks to all those who have already contributed towards
the cost of producing **Stockton's News**
it is great to have your support.

If you wish to make a donation you can do so by **Bank Transfer** to -

Account: Stocktons News **Sort Code:** 40-42-15

Acc. No. 91456652 **Reference it as** *SNews*

Cash/Cheque in envelope addressed to Stockton's News to -
Steve Kittendorf - The Limes, Marion Stringer - 12 George Street
Wendy Rumsey - 1 St. Michael's Crescent.

**The magazine is run entirely by volunteers
and any surplus monies are used for the benefit of the village.**

Click on the link for this month's magazine.

<http://stocktonsnews.org.uk>



Village Calendar



Regular Weekly Village Events

Monday :~

Senior Day Centre: Village Hall ~ 9.00am - 3.00pm

Knit & Natter: Church ~ 2 - 4pm

Tuesday :~

Create & Play: Church 9.30 - 11.00 am ~

Clubbercise: Village Hall ~ 7.00 - 8.00pm

Wednesday :~

Chess Club: Nelson Club ~ 5.30 - 7.30pm

Lazy Cat Yoga: Village Hall ~ 7.30 - 9.00pm

Thursday :~ Home Grown Yoga ~ Village Hall ~ 6.30pm

Friday :~

Toddlersaurs: Village Hall ~ 9.30 - 11.30am

W.I. Craft Morning: Football Club ~ 10 - 12noon

Saturday :~

Bingo: Eyes down 8.00pm ~ Nelson Club (Top Room)

Regular Monthly Village Events

Monday

Women's Institute: 1st Monday of Month ~ Nelson Club ~ 7.30pm ~

Parish Council Meetings: 3rd Monday of Month ~ Village Hall ~ 7.15pm ~ **Dec**

18th Jan 15th

Tuesday

Brewed Awakening: Alt. Tues Nelson Club ~ 9.30am - 12noon - **Dec 5th, 19th**

Jan 2024 2nd, 16th & 30th

Folk Night: Last Tuesday of the month ~ Nelson Club ~ 8.00pm ~

Wednesday

Friends Lunch: Every 2nd Wed~The Crown ~ 12.30pm ~ **Dec 13th & Jan 10th**

Church Lunch: Every 3rd Wednesday ~ 12noon ~ **Dec 18th & Jan 17th**

Thursday

Afternoon Bingo ~ Alt. Thursdays ~ Nelson Club ~ 2.00pm ~ **Dec 7th & 21st**

January 2024 4th & 18th

Friday

Charity Fun Quiz Night: Every 3rd Friday ~ Nelson Club ~ 8.00pm ~ **Not Dec**

Saturday

Coffee Morn. & Library: Every 1st Saturday ~ Village Hall ~ **Dec 2nd Jan 6th**

Whist Drive: Every 2nd ~ Village Hall ~ 7.30pm start ~ **Dec 14th Jan 11th**

Stockton Cinema: Every last Saturday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.00pm ~ **Jan 27th**

WHO'S WHO

Parish Council	Chairman	Howard Collerson	813181
	Clerk	Robbie Robinson	814094
	Councillors	John Emberton	814267
		Helen Kittendorf	815376
		Chris Millidge	812991
		Terry Warner	813424
		Wendy Rumsey	813730
District/County Councillor	Andy Crump	815745	
Member of Parliament	Jeremy Wright	01926 853650	
St. Michaels	Priest in Charge		
	Administrator	Susan Holloway	812383
	Church Warden	Wendy Turner	812694
	Church Flowers	Wendy Turner	812694
Village Hall Bookings		Helen Kittendorf	815376
Stockton School	Head Teacher	Mrs. Ann Bedgood	812483
Little Acorns			813789
Toddlersaurs		Jo Harvey	811120
Group Scout Leader		Jo Brough	07568 653158
Scouts		Andrew Griffiths	07877 881012
Cubs		Emily Howard	07410 137037
Beavers		Jo Brough	07568 653158
Women’s Institute	President	Sue Gill	460278
	Secretary	Joan Ford	810220
Football		Rick Musson	813018
Football Club House		Luke Cole	07710 864192
Magazine Editorial Team		Wendy Rumsey	813730
		Marion Stringer	812887
Advertising Editor		Steve Kittendorf	815376
Magazine Treasurer		Steve Kittendorf	815376

Stockton church

Methodist and Anglicans in unity

The Bridges Group of Parishes
email:admin@thebridgesgroup.org.uk.

www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk
Tel:01926 812383

December 2023

BCP – Book of Common Prayer CP – Common Worship

THE BRIDGES GROUP	<u>3rd Dec.</u> <u>Advent 1</u> <u>Purple</u>	<u>10th Dec</u> <u>Advent 2</u> <u>Purple</u>	<u>17th Dec</u> <u>Advent 3</u> <u>Purple</u>	<u>24th Dec</u> <u>Advent 4/</u> <u>Christmas</u> <u>Eve</u> <u>Purple</u>	<u>CHRISTMAS</u> <u>DAY</u> <u>WHITE</u>
PRIORS HARDWICK	Prep. for Christmas Family Service 9.00am	Evensong 5.00pm	Holy Comm BCP 9.00am	Carol Service 6.00pm	
PRIORS MARSTON	Morning Worship 10.30am	Holy Comm CP 10.30am	CAROL SERVICE 6.00PM	No Service	Morning Worship 10.30am
WORM-LEIGHTON			<u>20.12.23</u> CAROL SERVICE 7.30pm See details other list		Holy Comm BCP 9.00am tbc
NAPTON	Holy Comm CP 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am	CAROL SERVICE 4.00pm	Midnight Comm CP 11.00	Family Comm CP 10.30am
STOCKTON	Morning Worship Lay Led 10.30am	Holy Comm In the Methodist Tradition 10.30am	Carol Service 4.00pm	Crib Service 4.00pm Midnight Comm 11.45pm Methodist Tradition	
LOWER SHUCK-BURGH				CAROL SERVICE 4.00PM	

OTHER SERVICES etc

SUNDAY 3RD DECEMBER – 9.00AM AT PRIORS HARDWICK
PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS - A FAMILY SERVICE FEATURING
THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM

**WEDNESDAY 6TH DECEMBER 6.30PM – CHRISTINGLE SERVICE AT
NAPTON**

**FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER 6.30PM CAROLS AROUND THE VILLAGE
AT STOCKTON MEET AT CHURCH**

16TH DECEMBER - LOWER SHUCKBURGH FETE 2-4PM

**TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 5.30PM CAROLS AT THE Lychgate AT
PRIORS HARDWICK**

**WEDNESDAY 20TH DECEMBER YOUNG FARMERS' CAROL SERVICE
WORMLEIGHTON AT 7.30PM**

**FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER – 7.00PM FOREST CHURCH IN NAPTON
CHURCHYARD**

**SATURDAY 23RD DECEMBER – TEA AND MINCE PIES IN THE
CHURCH AT LOWER SHUCKBURGH**

**SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER THE GATHERING AT LOWER
SHUCKBURGH HOLY COMMUNION LED BY REV MARTIN SAXBY
FROM RUGBY**

**SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY 2024 – 9.00AM AT PRIORS HARDWICK - THE
EPIPHANY A SERVICE FOR EVERYONE – ESPECIALLY FAMILIES
FEATURING THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN**

The Bridges Group Church Services
January 2024
BCP – Book of Common Prayer CP – Common Worship

THE BRIDGES GROUP	07.01.24 EPIPHANY White	14.01.24 EPIPHANY 2 White	21.01.24 EPIPHANY 3 White	28.01.14 CANDLEMAS White	
PRIORS HARDWICK	Family Service 9.00am	Evensong 5.00pm	Holy Communion BCP 9.00am		
PRIORS MARSTON	Morning Worship 10.30am	Holy Communion CP 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am	4 TH Sunday	
WORM-LEIGHTON				Morning Worship 10.30am	
NAPTON	Holy Communion CP 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am	Holy Communion CP 10.30am	Evensong 5.00pm	
STOCKTON	Morning Worship Lay Led 10.30am	Holy Communion In the Methodist Tradition 10.30am	Messy Church 4.00pm Venue tbc	Morning Worship 10.30am tbc	
LOWER SHUCK-BURGH				Holy Communion BCP 9.00am	

The Bridges group NOTICE BOARD

LOWER SHUCKBURGH, NAPTON, STOCKTON
Priors Marston, Priors Hardwick & Wormleighton

Programme for Children and Youth

Create & Play: Tuesday mornings from 9.30 – 10.45am (term times) in Stockton Church – for further details, contact: Deborah Dutton on 01926 819016 or deborahduttoncreative@gmail.com

Babies & Toddlers Group: Monday mornings from 9.30 – 11am (term times) in Napton Village Hall – for further details, contact: Helen Eadon on 07811 010440

Messy Church – on 3rd Sundays of the month at 4pm – venues TBC

Mid-week programme for Adults - Home Bible Study Groups

The following groups meet for Bible study, prayer and fellowship. If you would like to join, please contact the Vicar or a Group leader:

Every Wednesday at 8pm in Stockton	Wendy	01926 812694
	Rachel	07915 056184
1 st & 3 rd Thursdays at 2.30pm in Stockton	Jan	01926 817991
Every Thursday at 8pm in Napton	Julia	01926 811476
Weekly (day varies) at 7.30pm in Napton	Angie	01926 812225

Social get-togethers

Knit & Natter: Mondays at 2pm in Stockton Church	Jan	01926 817991
Knit & Natter: Mondays at 2pm in Napton	Jayne	01926 813227
Coffee & Chat: 1 st Thursdays at 10am in Priors Hall	Anna	07870 685124

Parish enquiries

For initial enquiries about baptisms, weddings, funerals and graveyard matters etc, please contact Susan, our Group Administrator, on 01926 812383 or email: admin@thebridgesgroup.org.uk. Please note that Susan works part-time but she will get back to you as quickly as she can.

See elsewhere in the magazine for details of other church activities & events or visit our website: www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk

LOCAL EVENTS

Events and News from Our Neighbouring Villages

Long Itchington History Group **Meeting at Community Centre 7.30pm** ***Www.longitchingtonhistory.org.uk***

WEDNESDAY 13th DECEMBER

“Bring and Tell” - come along with an object, photograph etc and give a brief talk.
Followed by seasonal refreshments.
Admission £3.

For further details and to request transport please contact David Williams 01926
812573
Programmes available on request

Southam Ramblers in your area

We are a friendly group of ramblers who organise walks on alternate Wednesday mornings throughout the year. Distances are usually 4-5 miles with a stop for coffee and a snack, although there are also some longer and shorter walks. We have a wide choice of routes in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire or Oxfordshire, but welcome ideas for new ones.

All are welcome to join us, meeting either at 9.30 in Wood St car park, Southam, or at the start of the walk (Sorry, no dogs). The first couple of walks are treated as ‘tasters’, but we do require walkers who intend to continue regularly to join the Ramblers.

Please see www.southamramblers.org.uk for details of all our walks, maps of previous walks, photo gallery and much more, or call Richard on 07969 960968.

Southam Summer Strollers

Southam Ramblers invite you to join us for our guided Summer Strolls, which take place on alternate Thursday evenings from 16 May to 8 August. The walks start at the entrance to Wood St car park, Southam CV47 1PP at 7 pm, with the exception of our Midsummer walk on 27 June, which starts at 6.30.

All walks are 3-5 miles long apart from the Midsummer walk, which is 6 miles and includes a short stop for a drink at the Blue Lias, near Stockton. Walks are free, you don’t have to be a member of Ramblers, but unfortunately we can’t include dogs.

Please see www.southamramblers.org.uk for full details, maps of previous walks and a photo gallery, or call Richard on 07969 960968.

Community Hub and Café

Next to Galanos House, Banbury Road, Southam CV47 2BL

Café open daily 9am - 5pm.

For a full list of events visit our facebook page: [@RBLCommunityHub](#)
or contact us on 01926 812185 Ext 5365

Warm Hub - Every Monday 2:30pm - 4pm

Drop-in and have a cup of tea with us, stay as little or as long as you like. With a warm welcoming atmosphere, the community hub is a place where people feel safe and there's always someone to talk to, if you want to. Each week we will have various groups joining us, such as Warwickshire Fire & Rescue, Citizens Advice, Think Active, Cadent (slow cookers) and community advice services, local history groups to name a few. Our friendly staff and volunteers will be here to welcome you - open to everyone.

Chatty Café Table - Every Tuesday from 10-11:30am

Our café is warm and welcoming every day, but we are privileged to have wonderful volunteers who will be hosting our chatty table on Tuesday mornings. You can find our 'Chatty' table over on our comfy chairs by the window. Our Chatty Table volunteers will be wearing yellow. Why not drop-in, have a cup of tea with us, stay 5 minutes or an hour. We have a real community feel here and everyone is welcome.

Armed Forces Veteran's Breakfast Club - Last Wednesday and Saturday of every month

Come along, purchase your own Hub Breakfast, and join in with the banter

Next dates: Wednesday 27th December, Saturday 30th December

10am > 12noon

Sporting Memories (Free) - 2nd Wednesday of each month 10.30am - 12.30pm

Reminisce about all things 'sport' and some gentle exercise with guest speakers

Open to everyone, come along on the day. **Next date 13th December**

Next date: Wednesday 12th July & Wednesday 9th August 10:30am - 12:30pm

Silver Sunday (Free)

Every other month

Join us, bring a friend, and have a dance. The Harvesters will be here to entertain us. Everyone is welcome to come along. Please telephone to book your place.

Next date: Sunday 10th December and 11th February at 2:30pm

Nosh and Natter

First Wednesday of every month.

Everyone is welcome to come along, booking is essential.

Cost £10.00 - 2 Course homemade hot lunch and dessert.

Next date: Wednesday 6th December 12 noon - 13:30pm

Please telephone to place book your place.*Free transport available from Southam library to the Community Hub – Please book

Collection outside Southam Library: 11:45 Return to Southam Library: 14:00



Will be
visiting Stockton on
Thursday 14th December 5.30pm
His route will be Elm Row, Nelson
Way, Church Street, Jubilee Fields
and Laurel Drive.



Southam Indoor Market
Grange Hall, Coventry Road, Southam
10am to 12.30pm.



Free Admission Free Parking

Wide variety of **local producers & suppliers**
meat, cheese, eggs, fish, honey,
wholefoods, cakes, savoury bakes,
homewares, gifts, cards, arts and crafts.

Refreshments available from the **Market Cafe**

Saturday 16th December

Stallholder enquiries by email only please to: southamfirst@outlook.com
Find us on Facebook: Southam Indoor Market



DIARY DATES

Include your village event for free



December

2nd Coffee Morning & Stockton's Archives ~ Village Hall ~ 10am - 12noon

7th Stockton's News A.G.M. - Village Hall - 11.00am

14th **SANTA'S VISIT** Route on page 15

18th **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** ~ Village Hall ~ 7.15pm

22nd Last day of Autumn Term - **9th Jan** Spring Term Starts

January 2024

6th Coffee Morning ~ Village Hall ~ 10am - 12 noon

15th **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** ~ Village Hall ~ 7.15pm

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday wishes for December go to Dave Rudge and to
Esme Cooper for January.

To include birthdays/anniversary please contact magazine.

Tel: 01926 813730/812887 or email before 15th of month

Refuse & Recycling

Food Waste - *Weekly* - Every Friday

Grey Lid Bin - 3 *weekly* - Dec. 8th, **Saturday** 30th Jan 19th

Blue Lid Bin & Green Bin - 2 *weekly* - Dec 1st, 15th, **Saturday** 30th
Jan 12th & 26th

Missed Bins Tel: 01789 260616

Stockton Recycling Centre: To book a slot over the phone please ring
01926 410410 - Customer Services at W.C.C .

Mobile Library

Stockton Church 2.10 ~ 2.30pm ~ 1st December & 5th January

For further information, ring Mobile Library enquiries on 01926 851031

or visit the Mobile Library on-line at

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mobilelibraries.

Create and Play in the Church ~ CV47 8JG

Tuesday - Term Time Only - 9.30 til 11.00am

Contact: email: deborahduttoncreative@gmail.com Tel: 01926 819016

All sessions suitable for all under-fives, including babies who can find things to
discover, hold and investigate, all parents and carers welcome.

December - 5th - Decoration Time, 12th - Do it yourself - 19th Nativity Things



VILLAGE MATTERS

To have your news included please
Contact by email - stocktons.news@gmail.com
or by hard copy to Editorial Team



VILLAGER OF THE YEAR 2023

The Parish Council is asking for nominations for Villager of the Year. This could be somebody who has worked hard for the village or who has provided support for another person who may have needed help. Please send your nominations by 28th February with your reasons to the Parish Clerk at 74 George Street or email to clerk@stockton-warks-pc.gov.uk. Last year's winner, Luke Cole.



The brand new **Veterans' Career Development Fund**.

The £700,000 grant fund will enhance provision of **qualifications, training and skills development** to **veterans and their families** right across the UK.

Applications for **up to £70,000 - live until 8th Jan 2024**.

You can find out more online, including **eligibility & programme guidance** at:
<https://covenantfund.org.uk/programme/veterans-career-development-fund/>

The objective of the Government's Household Support Fund is to provide support this winter to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs, specifically food, energy and water bills. In recognition that an unexpected increase in costs can create real challenges for our residents who are experiencing financial hardship, another county wide utilities voucher campaign will launch in November 2023. Short-term financial assistance in the form of a one-off voucher payment will be available to help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills. This will supplement ongoing emergency support from the Local Welfare Scheme for residents in financial crisis. Families and households in Warwickshire can apply whether they use pre-payment meters, pay by direct debit or on receipt of a bill. Residents are invited to contact the Local Welfare Scheme team for a confidential discussion about their situation. All applications for the payment must be made between 20 November and 8 December 2023. Anyone entitled to benefits eligible free school meals will have received this support in October/ November. Vulnerable residents in Warwickshire who are struggling financially can apply for support by contacting the Local Welfare Scheme directly on 0800 4081448 or 01926 359182. For further information please visit:
<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/localwelfarescheme>
<https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/>



News From Andy Crump

WCC Councillor for Southam, Stockton & Napton

SDC Councillor for Southam Central and East and Stockton

**Mobile: 07771335273 - cllrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk
andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk**

PLEASE NOTE RE THE FIRE SERVICE – THERE IS A CONSULTATION OUT FROM EARLY DECEMBER PLEASE MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

RESOURCING TO RISK WCC CABINET PAPER 9/11/23

Firstly, I wish to state that our firefighters (both wholetime and on call) are extremely professional and do a great job serving Warwickshire. The proposed changes are no reflection upon them and Chief Fire Officer Brook and I are only taking action due to the current model being not effective for the communities of Warwickshire.

I would like to let everyone know the reasons for the proposed changes: HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services) identified that WFRS required improvement at making best use of its resources. Specifically:

“The service’s workforce model still doesn’t always allow it to carry out its core functions effectively and efficiently. There is evidence of under-resourced areas of the service, which lead to increased risk and affect staff welfare.... We were pleased to see that the service is evaluating its mix of crewing and duty systems, including analysis of its response cover. Following this review, the service will be able to show how it should deploy its fire engines and response staff to manage risk more efficiently.”

On call availability in Warwickshire is around 35-40%, (35 in September and 40% October) - roughly 4/5 of that availability is at night, whilst 78% on incidents happen between 8am and 10pm. Many years ago, on call availability was 90%. Some stations have availability between 4-12% and can't be relied on to tackle emergencies - meaning other (usually wholetime) stations have to cover anyway – some other on call pumps availability range from high teens to 34% (there are some that are around 70% too).

Society has changed over the last 10-15 years, with the change being more marked since March 2020. Many people don't work in the community now and whilst homeworking has increased markedly over the past year or 2, many employers still require staff to be available during core hours i.e. not available to be an on call firefighter, usually during the day. Also, I believe we are now experiencing some evidence of climate change with the country experiencing temperatures around 40 degrees centigrade, contributing to numerous wildfires locally and nationally – usually between 12-4pm.

Attendance time targets aren't being met. The aim is to arrive at the most serious of incidents within 10 minutes. This is only achieved in 64% of occasions

against a target of 75%, with an average attendance time of 10 minutes and 37 seconds. This is something HMICFRS has commented on too.

Furthermore, in correspondence to all Cabinet Members of Warwickshire County Council the FRSA (Fire and Rescue Services Association – which mainly represents on call firefighters), agreed with FLT (WFRS’ senior leadership team) that the service is experiencing difficulty in providing a consistent and reliable service to the public, and also agreed that the status-quo was not an option, and that swift action needed to be undertaken, welcoming innovative proposals to overcome these difficulties

The FBU are also looking on with interest and in a recent article they said that normally it is easy to criticise such proposals but in this case the service was responding to 15 years of cuts with fire officers trying to find new ways of providing fire and rescue cover. Nationally FBU has challenged some shift patterns, that WFRS also operates, and unless WFRS changes those shifts, it, too, is likely to receive a legal challenge.

Between 8am and 10pm Southam will be fully staffed (100%) which is the time period when 78% of all incidents happen.. It will change from be an on call station as it currently is, to wholetime during the day and a surge station from 10pm. Availability in Southam on average over the last 6 months has ranged from 46 to 63% (roughly from 12-33% during the day and 80 -95% at night). I've been accused of feathering Southam's nest (as I live here) by people in other parts of the county.

The Chief Fire Officer would like on call firefighters to become part-time firefighters as well as joining the ‘surge’ teams, mentioned in the report. Full details will be available when the proposals go out to consultation from early December.

It has been implied (not in Southam/Stockton etc) that it was likely that WFRS would press ahead regardless of public opinions or facts of the matter – I and the Leader of Council (at Cabinet) gave the assurance the consultation would be meaningful and would run from December 2023 to March 2024. I encourage residents to actively participate in this consultation. The consultation will be open to practical suggestions that increase availability and ensures WFRS has the right resources available at the right time and in the right place. There will be a public meeting in Southam during that time.

As well as contributing to Stockton News , I am often in the village and I also, provide weekly updates on the 3 main local Stockton Facebook pages. I try to be proactive as possible but can't be everywhere at all times, so I rely on community intelligence to alert me to issues. Over the past few months, I've been dealing with Broadband Contractors in many parts of my ward and there have been one or 2 issues, particularly regarding access and quality of work, which lead to one having its permit temporarily suspended by WCC. Residents should have prior notification of any works as part of the permit application approval – please let me know if it doesn't happen, highlighting details of the contractor, vehicles etc.

I work hard for our community but am old enough (and pragmatic enough) to realise that, as a councillor, I won't be able to please all the people all the time. I try to communicate as much as possible, as well as regularly attending Parish & Town Council meetings. I do know that locally and nationally, councils are struggling to get councillors

Streetlights – one or two in the village , again, have been reported to me but again these mainly belong to the parish council. Clerk - Stockton PC
clerk@stockton-warks-pc.gov.uk

Workload – usual Highways issues, hedges etc plus housing, parking and traffic problems, planning applications. I am often contacted by residents who I am not their County or District Councillor as I appear to be more accessible.

STAY SAFE

It is getting dark quite early now – even more so now as the clocks have gone back, so please ensure you and your children are wearing reflective clothing and if on a bike, make sure it has lights on – BE SEEN BE SAFE

Road Safety

Recently I was in a meeting when someone wanted a road made into one-way street, to allegedly make it safer. I disagreed it would, saying there would be unintended consequences of such actions, particularly around blue light services' access. That person wrongly stated that the fire, ambulance etc vehicles could routinely ignore the one way restriction. Again, I disagreed so I said I would find out as I'm the Portfolio Holder for Fire and Safety at WCC – here's what I found.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WF&RS) has no legal exemptions to a one-way sign when responding to an incident unless the police, are already in attendance and then if they allow WF&RS through (they take responsibility for the dynamic risk assessment that it is safe to) - EVEN THEN WF&RS would do so at reduced speed.

All WF&RS IS doing then, is complying with highway code rules ' *when a police officer in uniform instructs you* '.

Hopefully this has clarified the situation

Commonwealth Games Inclusive Communities Fund

Communities across Warwickshire are being encouraged to apply for a share of the £9 million Commonwealth Inclusive Communities Fund.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4735/-9-million-commonwealth-games-legacy-fund-seeks-to-unite-communities-across-the-west-midlands>

Staying well this winter

As the shorter days and colder weather approaches, winter viruses are starting to make an appearance.

Find out how you can keep you and your family safe this winter: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4692/staying-well-this-winter>

Riot Act Road Safety Theatre

The Riot Act has been further commissioned to deliver road safety theatre in education performances to secondary schools throughout the county between the 6 – 12 December 2023.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4713/innovative-road-safety-education-theatre-touring-warwickshire-secondary-schools-this-december->

Brake Road Safety Week 2023

The theme of this year's Road Safety Week is: Let's talk about...Speed, with the goal of starting essential conversations about safe speeds on our roads.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4703/let-s-talk-about-speed-for-brake-road-safety-week-2023>

Shop locally this Christmas

A Christmas campaign encouraging Warwickshire's independent town businesses to shout about why shoppers should buy from them this year is making a comeback.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4706/warwickshire-christmas-campaign-encourages-customers-to-shop-locally>

Powering innovation and business growth

Coventry and Warwickshire has been selected to receive up to £7.5m of new investment to drive local innovation and business growth, building on the region's existing strengths in video game development.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4715/multi-million-pound-investment-will-power-innovation-and-business-growth>

Sustainable Futures Strategy

It's great news for the environment as Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved the Sustainable Futures Strategy and its supporting delivery plan.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4726/warwickshire-takes-next-strides-towards-net-zero-as-cabinet-approves-sustainable-futures-strategy>

Small business funding

A grant funding scheme created by Warwickshire County Council eight years ago has proved an immense success, supporting more than 100 small businesses with grants totalling in excess of £2.5million.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4716/small-businesses-in-warwickshire-reap-benefits-of-funding-scheme>

Country parks year in review 2022/23

Warwickshire County Council has published Our Year 2022-23, the first publication summarising all that has happened in Warwickshire's Country Parks over the past year.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4699/warwickshire-country-parks-celebrates-achievements-in-our-year-2022-2023-report>

November 2023 Cabinet

Find out more about everything that happened during the November 9

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet meeting here: [https://](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4727/warwickshire-county-council-)

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4727/warwickshire-county-council-

cabinet-9-november-2023

School places sufficiency update

The provision of education and childcare places for children and young people aged from 0-25 years was considered at WCC Cabinet with endorsement for the council's Education Sufficiency Update.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4725/future-school-places-plan-endorsed-by-cabinet>

WFRS Inspection

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet endorsed a plan of action to address the issues raised following an inspection by HMICFRS.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4728/cabinet-endorses-warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-response-to-inspection-findings>

Building stronger family connections

Every family under the care of midwives at South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust will now receive a free resource to help families effectively communicate with a baby or young child.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4719/local-council-and-nhs-trust-working-to-build-stronger-family-connections-in-warwickshire>

Winter Vigilance Campaign

It only takes a couple of minutes to report anything that doesn't feel right when you are out and about.

Simply tell staff, security or police or report to www.gov.uk/ACT and share your concerns.

In an emergency call 📞 999.

You won't be wasting anyone's time.

#CommunitiesDefeatTerrorism

Let's Talk Warwickshire Podcast

Have you listened to our [#LetsTalkWarwickshire](#) podcast?

It's a great place to learn more about what we are doing as a local authority on key issues such climate change, tackling the cost of living, social care support and much more.

Want to know more? Then why not listen now: [https://](https://letstalkwarwickshire.podbean.com/)

letstalkwarwickshire.podbean.com/

to Friday 18 November, from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Financial support for households

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4629/helping-households-find-financial-support>

Bin Collection Calendar

SDC no longer post out the A5 bin collection calendar as a matter of course.

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/waste-recycling>

A pdf can also be downloaded or printed


Paper copies can be requested still either by emailing info@stratford-dc.gov.uk


or ringing 01789 267575. Residents in my ward of Stockton and Southam


Central and East can use my contact details (andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk) or 07771335273 if they need my assistance.


Help from Warwickshire County Council


If you are struggling with money and need help now, Warwickshire County Council can help with:

 food, energy and water bills

 money advice

 aspects of family life

 accessing emergency food

 mental health support

Find help here: <https://costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/home/i-need-urgent-help>

Reporting highways issues – or let me know !!

cllrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk

Warwickshire County Council is urging residents to report any Highways faults that they encounter while driving or walking in the county via its website.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4085/warwickshire-county-council-encourages-residents-to-report-road-issues>

School attendance issues

If your child is struggling to attend school because of a particular issue happening at school, the first thing is to talk to your child's school about it. You can also visit: <https://youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/school-anxiety-and-refusal/>

Fire Safety in the home

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is taking proactive steps to raise awareness about fire safety in the home.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4538/fire-service-urge-residents-to-stay-safe-and-well->

Business Fire Safety

Businesses across Warwickshire are being advised to that they are familiar with the changes in fire safety legislation that took effect on the 1st of October 2023. Find out what this means for your business: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4540/warwickshire-businesses-urged-to-make-fire-safety-a-priority-ahead-of-changes-to-legislation>

Missed Bins – please continue to report to SDC – the App is very useful for doing so and **make a note of your reference**. It helps SDC hold the Contractor to account.

Missed bins -. Contacts are streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk or Telephone: 01789 260616

Or download the app.

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/missed-bin-report-form.cfm?fbclid=IwAR3vkf03zQgXUSeHH04ODEqfid1b1msbwpVg8DG6nQn47HoAcw mw5LL9Joc>

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/missed-bin-report-form.cfm>

PAVEMENT PARKING/PARK IT RIGHT – the excuse, I won't be long isn't sufficient – it only takes a few seconds for a collision to occur. THINK ABOUT OTHERS NOT JUST YOURSELF

Every week, I get reports of some terrible parking – with cars blocking pavements (especially dropped kerbs), making it impossible for people with mobility scooters or with push chairs to get by, without going into the road. In some cases, too, emergency services vehicles (particularly fire appliances) would struggle to pass. PLEASE THINK OF OTHER PEOPLE, NOT JUST YOURSELF

PLEASE REPORT ANY ASB , however trivial it may seem. Small incidents can lead to bigger ones, so better to stop them before they escalate .Also, the more calls/incidents the Police have, the sooner they will realise there is a problem in a certain area. PLEASE ALSO ENSURE YOUR PROPERTY AND CAR IS LOCKED AND SECURE.

Reporting out of hours highways issues can be challenging, the best number for that is 01926 415000.

streetlighting@warwickshire.gov.uk or 01926 412515 (not all are currently owned by WCC – some owned by town or parish council.)

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/reports/Warwickshire>

It is worth noting for future reference that anything immediately dangerous on the highway should be reported direct to the Police on 999, which is the same process for any pressing issue Out of Hours.

During normal office hours - 8:30am to 4:30pm, WCC call centre is best on 01926 412515

Councillor groans –

What do call a magician who has lost his magic? Ian

Was going to make a carpentry joke but wasn't sure it woodwork.

My tip for making Atlantic ocean pudding is to use big strong currents

A ladder with no rungs??

You couldn't make it up!!

Kind regards

Andy



STOCKTON'S WEATHER STATION



STOCKTON'S WEATHER STATION - OCTOBER 2023

Headlines - the headline is there were no headlines this month - we managed to escape any floods, storms, late heatwaves or air frosts experienced elsewhere in the country.

The **average minimum temperature** was 8.6 deg. C, about one degree above the average (7.5 deg. C). The lowest temperature was 1.2 deg. C on the 16th October. The **average maximum temperature** was 15.7 deg. C, again about one degree above the average (14.4 deg. C) The highest temperature was 21.6 deg.C on the 9th. **Rainfall**, at 95.5 mm was about 40% above the average (69.4 mm) and the wettest day was the 20th with 25mm,. It rained on 13 days. **Sunshine** levels were in line with the long term average. The **wind** blew mostly from the west, south-west and south(16 days).

Trivia of the month - the first ground frost of the winter was experienced on 14 October, 10 days later than the long term average.

The Weather Monitor

STOCKTON HISTORY GROUP

Meeting Bi-Monthly in Stockton Village Hall

*An informal meeting of those interested in sharing photograph's
and information about the village we live in.*

The group met in early November to look at the history of Post Office Lane, The Green and Church Lane. Thank you to Roger and Linda Facer, Melanie Versey, Sheena Bennett for providing so much detail on the families that lived there during the last 150 years, and also to Albert Cox for writing down his memories of the people he knew and his experiences growing up in the area. Our next meeting will be next Spring and the aim is to cover High Street, Mount Pleasant, School Street and Becks Lane. We are also lining up a talk by David Fry from Marton about the postcards of Stockton and the surrounding area and the people who produced these postcards. Thank you to everyone who came along and made it such an enjoyable evening.



STOCKTON VILLAGE HALL

Bookings - Helen Kittendorf Tel: 815376

helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk

Hourly Rate £9

December, Really, Wow, 2023 is nearly done Christmas is just a few weeks away.

Firstly, the Village Hall trustees want to say a massive Thank You to each and every one of you that have supported us throughout by coming along to a coffee morning, cinema night, tabletop sale, supporting a local group, hiring the hall for an event or even just popping along and saying hello. We appreciate each one of you.

Our amazing coffee morning is still going strong, with the next one being **December 2nd 10.00 -Noon** - why not pop a long for a slice of cake & a cuppa with the option to eat in or take away, perfect start to the weekend! We do so love seeing everyone, and it is always a pleasant morning spent with friendly faces old and new. We also have Stockton's News making their regular appearance with the Village Archives for people to browse our history and see how the village has grown and changed over the years.

The afternoon tea, booked at Galanos Hub, was amazing. Everyone that attended really enjoyed it and the "High Tea" offered was fantastic. Thank you

to everyone who attended.

The Friends' Lunch at the Crown will be 13th December at 12.30pm and comes highly recommended as a great way to have a nice Carvery meal in the company of friends, with no washing up!!no-one should feel lonely at any time especially Christmas time. To book your place please phone Val on 814640. There will be **no cinema night at the end of December, but we will be back 27th January 2024** booking for supper is essential so please contact Helen or Steve on 01926 815376 . Our new style film club at cinema night is working well, the film title is no longer advertised around the village but feel free to contact Steve Kittendorf on 01926 815376 or stevekittendorf@hotmail.co.uk for information on how to join the club or what the film choice is for the month.

A few dates for those lovely 2024 Diaries received as gifts,

The first coffee morning of 2024 will be on **Saturday 6th January 10am - noon,**

Friends Lunch will be **10th January 2024 at 12.30pm**

Stockton Cinema night will be **27th January 2023**

Finally, we wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas & a wonderful New Year, see you all in 2024!



Chairman – Richard Rushton
Administrator – John Emberton 01926 814267
Club Captain – Rich Powell 07957848075
www.stocktonpetanqueclub.org.uk

Pétanque November Newsletter

The Club's Winter League started on 7th October with John Emberton in the lead with 20 points, closely followed by Anthea Sansom (19 points) and Richard Rushton (18 points).

The Club's annual Singles League has five weeks to run, and Sarah Jerger is in the lead with 17 wins, just ahead of Richard Rushton with 16 wins and Catherine Black with 14 wins.

Just 8 players turned up for the November melee with bad weather forecast and we all got soaked! After three rounds there was just one unbeaten player - Emily Adams with a +25. As one of our novices, this was a great performance. The best of those with two wins was Catherine Black with +12 who continues to show great talent for the sport.

Our next melees will be Saturday 2nd December & 6th January. Everyone is welcome – we will provide the boules and tuition in the rules.



Garden Jottings

from Bridge Nursery - your local Hardy Plant Specialists



*Christine Dakin, Bridge Nursery
Tomlow Road, Napton.*

*Tel: 01926 812737
www.bridge-nursery.co.uk*

¼ mile from Crossroads Garage – look for our Tourist Sign

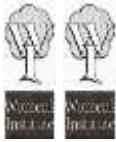
DECEMBER

Rather than suggesting you should get outside and do things in the garden I thought I'd offer a seasonal mini quiz for you to do in the comfort and warmth of your home. Just match the common names with the Latin names. Some are easier than others.

Holly	Corylus 'Contorta'
Witch hazel	Hedera
Christmas rose	Viscum Album
Dogwood	Euphorbia pulcherrima
Snowdrops	Ilex
Christmas box	Pyracantha
Mistletoe	Picea abies
Ivy	Helleborus
Poinsettia	Sarcococca
Twisted hazel	Galanthus
Firethorn	Hamamelis
Christmas tree	Cornus

Seasons greetings to all.

Christine Dakin



WOMENS INSTITUTE

Meeting 7.30pm at Nelson Club first Monday of Month
President:- Sue Gill Tel: 01926 460278
Secretary: Joan Ford Tel: 01926 810220



Our November meeting was opened by Sue who welcomed the members and we all sang Jerusalem.

It was lovely to see Joan back at the helm after her recent accident and she read out the various events taking place in November giving us all the details.

Our Christmas party is to take place at our December meeting and members were requested to look at the buffet list to choose which item they would like to contribute. The committee will be making the desserts.

Our annual meal will be at the Bowling Green in January.

There followed the presentation by Mary Lee and Marion Stringer of a cheque for £553.00 to Laura Eaton from Myton, which was monies raised at the recent Coffee Morning in support of Myton Hospice. We were really pleased with this amazing total and thanks go to everyone who baked, donated, helped or attended that day.



We then got down to business and held our AGM. As well as our existing committee deciding to continue in their roles, we have a new committee member Josie Winfield who will be a great addition to the team.

Sue then introduced our speaker Debbie Ellis, known as DL, who entertained us for the next hour with her poems, limericks and singing. She writes her poetry about everyday life and will rise to a challenging word to make up her comical limericks. This talented lady also plays the banjolele, a combination of banjo and ukulele.

Our delicious cream tea came next, the scones being made by some of the committee. All in all a delightful afternoon was had by everyone.

Our next meeting will be **Monday 4th December 2023 at 7.30 pm**, upstairs at the Nelson Club when we will hold our Christmas Party with entertainment by

A Bit of Christmas Fun

As the AI summit is taking place only 40 miles from Stockton we thought that it would be a bit of fun to ask the latest AI software "Chat GPT" for a Christmas quiz. So pull up a comfy chair open the mince pies and pour a glass of Sherry, have a go and see if you can outfox AI. Good Luck!

1. In the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas," how many total gifts are given?
a) 78 b) 144 c) 364 d) 456
2. Which country is credited with creating the first printed Christmas card?
a) United States b) Germany c) England d) France
3. What is the name of the traditional Christmas cake made with dried fruits and spices?
a) Yule log b) Fruitcake c) Stollen d) Panettone
4. In the movie "A Christmas Carol," what is the name of Scrooge's deceased business partner?
a) Jacob Marley b) Ebenezer Scrooge c) Bob Cratchit d) Tiny Tim
5. What is the name of the famous Christmas ballet that features a young girl named Clara and a prince?
a) The Nutcracker b) Swan Lake c) Sleeping Beauty d) Romeo and Juliet
6. In the song "Frosty the Snowman," what brings Frosty to life?
a) A magic hat b) A magic wand c) A magic scarf d) A magic snowflake
7. What is the name of the traditional Italian Christmas Eve dinner?
a) Feast of the Seven Fishes b) La Befana c) Panettone d) Babbo Natale
8. In the movie "Home Alone," where are the McCallisters planning to spend Christmas?
a) Paris, France b) London, England c) New York City, USA d) Chicago, USA
9. What is the name of the famous Christmas poem written by Clement Clarke Moore?
a) 'Twas the Night Before Christmas b) The Christmas Carol c) The Gift of the Magi d) A Christmas Memory
10. Which country is known for the tradition of hiding a pickle ornament in the Christmas tree?
a) Germany b) Sweden c) Norway d) Poland

Final question is on what page can answers be found!?

Ten things you may not know about Christmas

1. In Japan, it's a tradition to eat KFC for Christmas dinner, thanks to a successful marketing campaign in the 1970s.
2. The world's tallest Christmas tree was a 221-foot Douglas fir in Seattle, Washington.

3. In Ukraine, it's common to decorate Christmas trees with spider webs as they symbolise good luck.
4. The largest gathering of Santa Clauses occurred in 2014 in Portugal, with 14,963 Santas in one place.
5. Christmas was illegal in England from 1647 to 1660, as it was seen as a wasteful and decadent holiday.
6. The world's most expensive Christmas tree was valued at over \$11 million in Marbella, Spain, adorned with diamonds, sapphires, and other precious gems.
7. The world's largest snowflake, recorded in 1887, was 15 inches wide.
8. The word "Christmas" comes from the Old English phrase "Cristes Maesse," meaning "Christ's Mass."
9. The concept of Christmas cards was popularised in 1843 by Sir Henry Cole in London. The first cards featured a happy family enjoying the holiday.
10. The highest-grossing Christmas movie of all time is "Home Alone," released in 1990

The logo consists of the text "Stockton's Archives" in a stylized, black, serif font. The text is centered within a thin, black, horizontal oval border.

Stockton's Archives

STOCKTON'S NEWS FROM THE PAST - NO. 6 - A DROWNING

From a newspaper report of March 1893 - A Woman Drowned in the Canal

- An inquest was held on Tuesday afternoon at the Blue Lias Inn before Mr D R Wynter (Coroner for Central Warwickshire) respecting the death of Emma Jane Hodson, aged 22, wife of Edward Hodson, a boatman, who was drowned in the canal at Stockton on Saturday night. Edward Hodson said he was a boatman residing at Longford near Coventry. The deceased, Emma Jane Hodson, was his wife and was 22 years of age. At between a quarter to and half-past eight on Saturday evening they were going up the locks just beyond the Blue Lias Inn, his wife was in the boat steering and he was driving the horse. The boat was in the lock when he missed his wife. He last saw her alive when they got out of the second lock. He went back to the end of the lock where his wife ought to have been and looking about, saw her in the water about 10 or 12 yards below the lock. She was struggling and he saw her head rise up once. She did not call out. He ran back to the boat and got a shaft and tried to reach her but she had then worked herself to the far side. She was some distance from the boat. Finding he could not reach her he ran across the lock to the other side but when he got there he could see nothing more of her. He at once raised an alarm and a lot of people came. He then got the boat back and a young man named John Harding, hearing the alarm, also ran up and got a second shaft and succeeded in getting hold of her with it. He brought her to the side and they got her out, but she was quite dead. From the

time he (witness) missed her until until she was got out of the water it would be about a quarter of an hour. By the Coroner "Witness thought she had got into the water when she was walking across the gates. Either she must either have slipped or her dress must have caught on something which caused her to fall. They had been married three years in May and the deceased had been used to shutting the gates during the whole of the time. She was also well used to the boats and the locks and was quite sober at the time. In reply to jurors, witness said he did not think a man could have saved her by getting into the canal." He did not know hardly what to do for the best, being so much upset". John Harding said he was a boatman living at Orpington. On Saturday night he was coming up with his boat behind the Hodson's and when he got to the locks above the Blue Lias he heard an alarm given. He ran up as soon as he could and when he got to the spot Hodson was at the bottom gates near where the deceased fell into the water. Witness ran and dropped the paddles, got a shaft from the first boat and came back to the place. He felt about with the shaft and got hold of the deceased, finding her about a boat's length below the locks. He pulled her to the side and with assistance got her out, but she appeared to be quite dead. He could not see her before getting hold of her with the shaft. He did not hear her cry at all. The last time he saw her alive was at the first lock above the Blue Lias Inn. She was then steering the boat and quite sober. In answer to questions witness said he should fancy deceased fell into the water in stepping the gates. He did not think Hodson could have saved deceased because he could not swim. The jury returned a verdict of "Accidentally drowned by falling into the canal".

Off The Boats

It was five years after I was born on a canal barge, moored in Kay's Cement Works arm of what was then the Grand Union Canal, that I moved with my parents into 'Rose Cottage', School Street, Stockton. The year 1892. My mother, Emma Goddard had married Henry Cox, the owners of the narrowboat they re-named the Henry and Emma, after their marriage in 1864. The pair spent the next 28 working years on the canal network, their barge being registered as part of the Nelson Cement Works fleet in 1879. It was moored at Paddington in the 1891 Census.

With little settled education themselves, they were determined that Fred, my brother and myself would attend Stockton Boys School in St. Michael's Hall, just behind the churchyard wall, next to the Manor Bed. Their hopes were soon dashed.

On the first Monday morning of the September term 1892 I went to school grasping my sixpence to pay for my first weeks tuition. A mistake was made. The schoolmaster sent me home for my dinner. I never returned to school, preferring to teach myself to read, write and do my sums.

By 1901, my brother Fred with me as helpmate are recorded as bargemen, aged eighteen and boatboy now 14 aboard a barge in the arm of the Nelson Works on the border of Stockton with Broadwell and Leamington Hastings parish. We were bringing coal for the cement work kilns and taking cement to London and Birmingham. We knew that the Nelson family's famous 'Cock' brand had been used in the construction of the London Embankment.

By 1911, our roles on the boat had changed. We renamed our barge 'William' and I assumed the responsibility of finding cargo's, buying forage, settling accounts, collecting payments in short, running the 'William' as a two man travelling business.

Over the years that followed, we passed frequently through Stockton Locks. At the first flight out from the Nelson Works Jobe Woodhouse lived with his family and acted as lock-keeper and lengthsman. The elder son and his sister became our good friends, Sarah, the sister growing from a child into a very attractive young woman!

The war came. The canals formed an important part of the transport system and our occupation was exempted from war service, but events on the Western Front prompted Fred and me to enlist. In 1916, I became a gunner and Fred went into the medical corps. Sarah went to Coventry to stay with my elder brother, to work in a munitions factory.

I was sent to Hong Kong by way of the Suez Canal to help garrison the British base there. Less than two years later I had been posted back to England travelling back through the Panama Canal. By August 1918, I had circumnavigated the Globe.

Despite Sarah having protested that she would not marry Bill Cox if he was the last man left on earth, we walked back down the aisle of St. Thomas' Church, Longford, Coventry, before I set out for the final carnage on the battlefields in France and Belgium.

Before I left England to cross the Channel I promised anyone who would listen that hostilities would soon be at an end as soon as I was there. A little less than ten weeks later, four years of conflict were at an end.

The boss at Kays wrote to my regiment saying that a job awaited me on demobilisation. There is no doubt that this letter worked its magic and I was reunited with my bride of six months.

We moved back to Stockton the place of our birth. My sister Emma named after our mother, had lived in and paid the rent for 'Rose Cottage' while I had been away. My Dad had died at 'Rose Cottage' on the 13th of August 1913 and our mother had moved to Coventry in 1916 to live with my family in Longford, where she died in 1918.

We started married life in our own home which we later bought from Mr. John Cleaver's estate for £126 in 1926. We had rented 'Rose Cottage' for 34 years.

Authors note: *This short piece represents my recollections of conversations with my parents. They would rarely speak of their time on the canal and I always had the impression that they were ashamed of their background.*

Now it is too late. There is very little written narrative. There are the entries in

the National Census, snippets in magazines devoted to life on the barges and my fathers 'Army Papers' . I found 'Rambling Rose' too difficult to read, touching, as it does, on intimate details of the harsh, hard life and death of the canal boatmen and women.

My mothers family, Woodhouse, continued working on the canals until the trade virtually died after the network froze over in the winter of 1947. My uncles and aunts with their families settled in Tamworth.

I am so grateful that my Grandparents came to 'Rose Cottage' in 1892. My Grandad died there on the 13th August 1913, my dad on the 22nd July 1964 and my mother on the 27th February 1984.

The next generation of Cox surname, my sisters Lily and May Gladys (who married an American Airman in 1943 and emigrated to the United States after the war) William Henry, the Coldstream Guardsman, who joined the Colours in 1940 and survived the war and me, as you might have gathered, still alive and who is now the third eldest surviving bred and born Stockton resident, were all born over a period between 1919 and 1936 in that little old black castiron bedstead at 'Rose Cottage'.

We are off the boats and I am immensely proud of that heritage.

Albert Cox

Rose Cottage, Church Street

(now School Street).

Left to right: Henry Cox,

Emma Cox, William Cox

Taken about 1908.

Birthplace of:

Lily Cox

28th November 1919

William Henry Cox

30th December 1920

May Gladys Cox

30th December 1923

Albert Edward Cox

20th March 1936



Stockton and I

By Victor Neal 1896 - 1978

Part two of the autobiographical writings of Victor Neal, kindly loaned by his daughter in law, Mary Neal.

Well, if we go on lingering thuswise, we shall find our story told without leaving the wheelwright's yard, so let's get away, temporarily at least, to The Square, popular playground of our childhood. Oranges and Lemons, Puff-ti-Muff, Tip-cat, where are they now? Ting-a-ring-a-bell with our dens by the old bakehouse cart hovel (modernised now to house the motor vans) and by the little outhouse belonging to Dick Shelton's shop (now the Co-op). The hours we spent here! Any new recruit to our games was likely to be initiated by being allowed to play the name part of White Horse, which necessitated his being haltered and blinkered and trotted a little way along High Street to be tethered securely to old Sammy the Bear's doorknob. The horse then being induced to kick viciously - a proceeding which, being quite in keeping with his equine character, seldom roused his suspicions - a little judicious handling to aim his kicks in the right direction usually inclined the victim to lose all desire to play the lead again, though he seldom lost his eagerness to play the lesser roles.

If we cared to wander up Beck's Lane now, I could help you find the mounting-block across the road from the King's Arms, which I doubt you could find yourself, for it is almost buried, and what ponderings we could have over that. But let's get down to the village green and make this a preliminary survey; we can always come back, we hope, as our jottings necessitate. This green, part to the front and right of the Barley Mow (to our right as we face the latter, that is), larger part in front of the church, is not so large as some village greens, Long Itchington, our neighbour's for instance, but it has had its moments (more strictly, its days, I suppose), which again I leave to their proper place, but I wanted to tell you here, I remember a post, long since gone, standing in the grass, which some of my elders contended was the last remnant of the stocks. If we follow the road by the churchyard wall, which swings left, with the rectory on the right, we pass under the old conker trees rooted in the rectory grounds and overhanging the lane (at least one of these has gone now) which provided our conkers so handily - for this was the way to our old boys' school - we find that the road ends at the gate to the little (about one acre) field known as the Manor Bed. A smaller gate on the left here leads us, still skirting the churchyard, to the old school, with the Manor farmyard over the bordering wall in front of us, but we'll leave this for the moment to return to Post Office Lane and call to mind as we pass the one-time post office, that next door, which is now the Misses Badger's shop, was the yet older post office.

We could, as we hope to do later, let the village hall we are now passing again, help us seek the inner Stockton, yet fearful of repetition we'll just skip round Wilkes's corner once more to mention the 'Pibble', which may be puzzling you;

that is, the boulder standing on the point of the 'Little Town', which was enclosed in iron railings until the last war's exigencies [*Victor was writing in the 1960's - Ed*] demanded their removal. My late father -in-law used to tell me he had played fivestones on it, in The Square before the Rev. Tuckwell - of 'Radical Parson' fame - worked out (he had a scientific bent, I'm told) it was a stranger to our district and was one of those fancy oolites or something with a name no-one is expected to remember, which probably came down our Hill in the glacial age. No oldest inhabitant daring to dispute this, the rector fixed it up, according to father-in-law, first on the other side of the road near the old working men's club, but someone apparently fell over it here and did dare to dispute and the parson seemingly shifted it over, and had an inscription, now regrettably illegible, put on the cement base.

But how dare we get back to The Square once more and pass the old blacksmith's shop opposite The Crown, without some talk of this versatile little building? Our Dickens would have revelled in this; first (and as I first remember it) as really a blacksmith's shop, though no spreading chestnut tree here, yet the sparks flew in the dusk no less fascinatingly and still do in my memory, and though I'd hardly say our smith a mighty man was he - he was somewhat deaf, I recollect, was Master Garrett and lived at Southam actually - nonetheless in his leather apron, bellows roaring, the horse inside being shod and another or so tied up outside awaiting their turn, the old picture loses nothing, if I could only adequately paint it.

With changing times it evolved into a butcher's shop for a short period - and what a colder look this gave it - then for some years garaged a car where once the horses stood. Again it was cleaned out and lo! we had warmth again with another kind of roaring fire to attract the children - a newer generation, the other children's children, in fact our children. Not that our generation weren't attracted also it became a fish and chip shop, forging suppers instead of shoes. Did I say shoes? Queer, because its next change brought the old shop back to shoes and man re-shod where once were horses; in short a cobbler's, or shoe minder's if you like.

At the moment of writing the cobbler, who was not a Stocktonian, has gone like the rest and the shop stands unused, still displaying on its window panes the slogans of its last occupants trade, so neatly executed that I often think in passing that he would have been as good at signs as shoes, and then I wonder what next? Well, that's taken you twice round the village; first geographically, then sentimentally,; so let's have a go at the junior partner, not that his importance merits this, but just in case, a century hence, someone says, 'I wonder what was this old fogey's background?'.

It's as well I got myself born in our first paragraph, otherwise we could easily have found ourselves grown up in these wanderings before that event took place. Anyway I was born in the house I have introduced as my son Neville's house, and bred there, apart from a couple of years in Coventry (and then mostly home at weekends and holidays) and another couple in the First World War army (and then seldom home for weekends and holidays) until my marriage.

I'm sorry I didn't verify the time of this (to me) most important event - I'm speaking of my birth here - whilst my parents were living; I have a vague idea it was something like five o'clock in the morning, an unusually early hour for me to be about washing and dressing. My father, I suppose, had been up and about earlier still, for these events usually entailed a two-mile walk to Southam for our nearest doctor, as these were the days before the telephone kiosk or the motor-car had simplified (or complicated) our way of living. Still, perhaps father consoled himself that I was not quite so upsetting as my eldest brother Wal, who made his appearance just in time for Christmas dinner, and thereby robbed my father of his, or rather as he used to tell, 'plenty of everything in the house; all the Christmas fare, but no-one and no time to cook it, so I had a hunk of bread and cheese for my Christmas dinner'.

That was Wal in 1891, Ern who was to grow up to be killed in the First World War, was born on 1st October 1893, and my own debut then completed our parents' family; three boys, no sister.

If you would have us go back further, there's my father Albert Neal, grannie-reared at Polesworth owing to my Uncle Fred's following him so closely. Of course this stay with his maternal grandparents was only to be a temporary one, but went on until (as he would relate) he used to cry at both ends when he took his occasional holidays with his mother, which I don't wonder at, as everybody who knew my grannie - and plenty did, for this was when they kept The Wharf - agreed she was one of the best ('never refused any old tramp on the road a good meal'), and my own little remembrance bears this out (she died when I was only five or six). On the other hand, although I never had the pleasure of knowing them myself, my father never tired of singing the praises of grannie and granddad Crowshaw.

I often think of a picture he would conjure of the last-named, the old chap used to sit o' nights by the fire with his newspaper in one hand and his benzole lamp in the other, patiently struggling in this dim glimmer to glean the news. An exceptional man, I should think, in those days, to have a newspaper at all; and if you like to complete a cosy picture, remember their house was a lonely one by the canal-side (Gramp Crowshaw was something on the canal; foreman, lock-keeper or something like that) and bleak enough to weave stories about. So bleak was it on one occasion that my father, who would have scorned the idea that his grannie's warnings to be careful were at all necessary as he knew every inch of the way, returning from his 'wenching' (as he called it), gets into the last field on this pitch-black night and loses the footpath under the snow. 'Oh, of course, I know the way well enough,' he says, but did he? 'I wandered that field for hours, frightened almost to death,' he goes on, 'because, you see, the canal ran along one side of it and I had to feel carefully every step I took for fear I was on the brink. No doubt I was more often than not feeling carefully in the middle of the field. I should have liked to have seen my tracks in the daylight.' He did eventually get out of the field; at last he struck a hedgerow and carefully followed it along until he saw a glimmer of light from the cottage, and was able to allay the old people's anxiety.

My father would tell how, at the time of the fair, fete, club or whatever they called it, he would be ‘dolling’ himself up excitedly enough, and Gramp would dole him out a golden sovereign, answering Gran’s protests (You silly old article) by quietly saying, ‘Oh, let the lad enjoy himself; he’ll only be young once.’ Father says, ‘Aren’t you coming, Gramp?’ and is perplexed that he is not. ‘Ah,’ says his elder, ‘you won’t wonder when you get to my age. You go and enjoy yourself;’ and father didn’t wonder, when he got to his age. No wonder, anyway, that my own grannie was a good’un, being the daughter of these folk. My father had a bit of schooling there - I nearly said luckily, for those times, but I’m not sure he would have agreed with that term, for he claimed he was such a champion copyist (a form of education which cost him a small fortune in halfpennies and apples, conkers, etc, to keep up diplomatic relations with his desk-mate who happened to be a really good scholar) that he was accepted as being one of the best of pupils himself, until one day his schoolmaster had a boy out in front of the class at the blackboard, chalk in hand, struggling to elucidate a very simple sum. Finally, exasperated, teacher says, ‘Come out Neal, and show him.’ Of course my father’s system hadn’t taken anything like this into account, and completely broke down, he looked beseechingly at his mate, but neither pennies, apples nor whatever that father’s eyes tried to convey, could suggest any way to make his chalk behave any differently from his predecessor’s. After an uncomfortably long time the astounded master burst out, ‘What, Neal, do you mean to say you can’t do it?’

But then, you see, father was just beginning to acquire a more interesting - to him at least - education than the three Rs, and his love of birds was laying the foundation of his amazing wealth of bird-lore, a hobby which was to last all his years up to his last - almost his only - illness. He has made me, at times, almost blush for shame at my own ignorance, for a countryman born and bred, on this intriguing subject, and almost childishly console myself that I think I could whack him at wild flowers, particularly on herbs with medicinal value. Oh, his unerring instinct for finding nests (in his later years he would say, almost apologetically, ‘I’m as bad as a kid now.’); it took me years to realise how he found a nest after seeing a bird fly away, whilst I very seldom did. Of course he instantly knew the bird and knew then whether the spot was a likely nesting place for that species, and whether it built top, bottom or middle of the hedge the number and colour of its eggs; its type of nest; a thousand things; and all this from his own sheer observation, for he never was much of a book man. I have asked him many a time why he didn’t get hold of all the valuable books on birds available from any library, but no, he seemed content with his own personal seekings. Dare we say which is the richer education?

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