

# STOCKTON'S NEWS

March 2025

Issue 174

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**Coffee Morning**  
**In aid of Alzheimers Society**

**Stockton Village Hall**  
**Saturday 15th March 2025**  
**10am to 12pm**



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**Stockton WI**

# Stockton Football & Cricket Club

**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**

## THE NELSON CLUB at STOCKTON

**Napton Road, Stockton Tel: 01926 812613**

**OPENING HOURS:-** Mon - Thurs:- 5pm - 11pm Friday 4pm - 12.30am

Sat: 12noon - 12.30am Sun: 12noon - 11pm

**Brewed Awakening ~ 11th & 25th ~ 10.00am - 12.30pm**

**Afternoon Bingo ~ Every week ~ Door open 1.30pm E.D. @ 2pm**

## 21st Quiz Night

**Sat. 29th "Third Alert" 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>

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Many thanks to all those who have already contributed towards  
the cost of producing **Stockton's News**  
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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 Donation**

**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>



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## WHO'S WHO

<b>Parish Council</b>	Chairman	Howard Collerson	813181
	Clerk	Robbie Robinson	814094
	Councillors	John Emberton	814267
		Helen Kittendorf	815376
		Chris Millidge	812991
		Terry Warner	813424
		Richard Rumsey	813730
Wendy Rumsey	813730		
<b>District/County Councillor</b>	Andy Crump		815745
	<b>Member of Parliament</b>	Jeremy Wright	01926 853650
<b>St. Michaels Church</b>	Priest in Charge		
	Administrator	Susan Holloway	812383
	Church Warden	Wendy Turner	812694
	Church Flowers	Wendy Turner	812694
<b>Village Hall Bookings</b>		Helen Kittendorf	815376
<b>Stockton School</b>	Head Teacher	Mrs. Ann Bedgood	812483
<b>Little Acorns</b>			813789
<b>Toddlersaurs</b>	Rebecca Makepeace		07733107197
<b>Scouting</b>			
Group Scout Leader	Jo Brough		07568 653158
Scouts	David Brough		07432 358259
Cubs	Toby Leeman		07866 563301
Beavers	Jo Brough		07568 653158
<b>Women's Institute</b>	President	Sue Gill	460278
	Secretary	Joan Ford	810220
<b>Football</b>	Rick Musson		813018
Football Club House	Luke Cole		07710 864192
<b>Editorial Team</b>	Wendy Rumsey		813730
	Marion Stringer		812887
Advertising Editor	Steve Kittendorf		815376
Magazine Treasurer	Steve Kittendorf		815376

# Stock ton church

Methodist and Anglicans in unity

The Bridges Group of Parishes

www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk

email:admin@thebridgesgroup.org.uk. Tel:01926 812383

THE BRIDGES GROUP	02.03.25 Last before Lent Green	09.03.25 First Sunday in Lent Purple	16.03.25 Lent 2 Purple	23.03.25 Lent 3 Purple	30.03.25 Lent 4 Purple
PRIORS HARDWICK	Morning Worship 9.00am	Evensong 5.00pm	Holy Commu BCP 9.00am		Holy Comm BCP 10.30am
PRIORS MARSTON	Morning Worship 10.30am	CW Holy Comm 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am		MOTHERING SUNDAY SERVICE 10.30AM
WORM-LEIGHTON				Morning Worship 10.30am	
NAPTON	Holy Comm CW 10.30am		Holy Comm CW 10.30am	Even-song 5.00pm	MOTHERING SUNDAY MESSY CHURCH AT STOCKTON 10.30AM
STOCKTON	Morning Worship Lay Led 10.30am	Holy Comm In the Methodist Tradition 10.30am		Holy Comm BCP 9.00am	MOTHERING SUNDAY SERVICE  MESSY CHURCH 10.30AM
LOWER SHUCKB'GH				Holy Comm BCP 9.00am	

ASH WEDNESDAY, 5TH MARCH

LOWER SHUCKBURGH 6.00 PM

HOLY COMMUNION WITH ASHES

REV GILLIAN ROBERTS



## The Bridges group NOTICE BOARD

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



### Programme for Children and Youth

**Create & Play:** Tuesday mornings from 9.30 – 11.00am (term times) in Stockton Church – for further details, contact: Deborah Dutton on 01926 819016 or

[deborahduttoncreative@gmail.com](mailto: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 Tuesday at 6.45 on Zoom	Katie	07965 209 075
Every Wednesday at 8pm in Stockton	Wendy	01926 812694
1st & 3rd 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: 1st Thursdays at 10am in Priors Hall Anna07870 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](mailto: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](http://www.thebridgesgroup.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 ~ (Term Time)

Cubs & Scouts: Stockton Scout Hut 6.45pm - 8pm (Term Time)

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* :~**

Afternoon Bingo ~ Nelson Club ~ Doors open 1.30pm Eyes Down ~ 2.00pm

Beavers: Stockton Scout Hut 6.15pm - 7.30pm (Term Time)

#### ***Friday* :~**

Toddlersaurs: Village Hall ~ 9.30 - 11.00am (Term Time)

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 ~ **3rd**

Parish Council Meetings: 3rd Monday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.15pm ~ **14th**

#### ***Tuesday***

Brewed Awakening: Nelson Club ~ 10.00am - 12.30pm ~ **11th & 25th**

Folk Night: Last Tuesday of the month ~ Nelson Club ~ 7.30pm

#### ***Wednesday***

Church Lunch: Every 3rd Wednesday ~ 12noon

Friends Lunch: Every 2nd Wed ~ The Crown ~ 12.30pm ~ **12th**

#### ***Thursday***

#### ***Friday***

#### ***Saturday***

Coffee Morning & Library: Every 1st Sat ~ Village Hall ~ **1st**

Pétanque Melee ~ F.C. & C.C. ~ All Welcome ~ 1.00pm ~ **8th**

Whist Drive: Every 2nd Sat ~ Village Hall ~ 7.30pm ~ **8th**

Stockton Cinema: Every last Saturday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.00pm ~ **29th**

## LOCAL EVENTS

### *Events and News from Our Neighbouring Villages*

#### **Napton Art Group Easter Exhibition**

Easter Art Exhibition. Napton Art Group are holding their annual Easter Exhibition of members' work at Napton Village Hall (CV47 8LS) on **Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th April 2025 between 10am and 4 pm.**

There will be about 200 paintings in all media including oils, watercolour, acrylics and pastels and greetings cards of some of these will be available.

Admission is £1 with free entry for children and there will be light refreshments in the pop-up cafe. Everybody who comes can vote for "The People's Favourite" painting. The nominated charity this year is the Air Ambulance. Group members will be displaying small paintings that will be for sale at a cost of £10 with the proceeds going to the charity. Payments for items for sale can now be made by card/ phone as well as cash/ cheques.

The Art Group has a membership that now stands at over 50 and meets every Thursday afternoon at Napton Village Hall and has a programme featuring a wide range of demonstrations and weekend workshops.

Visitors who might wish to join the group are welcome on any Thursday afternoon 2 - 4 pm.

Further details from Howard Collerson 01926 813181

#### **Long Itchington History Group** *Meeting at Community Centre 7.30pm* *[Www.longitchingtonhistory.org.uk](http://www.longitchingtonhistory.org.uk)*

**Wednesday 12th March 7.30pm**

'Leamington Sky Garden'

Natalie Rothwell/ David Snart

For further details and to request transport please phone 01926815119  
Programmes available on request



**Southam Gardening Club**  
[thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk](http://thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk)  
 Tel: 01926 813986 or 815086.



Diane Clement will give an illustrated talk  
 'A Garden for all Seasons'

at **7.30pm on Monday 17th March**

at the Catholic Church Hall,  
 next to Wood St Car Park.

All are welcome. Non-members £4.50. Refreshments included.  
 Further information: [thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk](http://thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk)  
 or tel 01926 813986 or 815086.

**GALANOS HOUSE**

**EASTER BINGO**

**MONDAY 7TH APRIL 7PM**

LOTS OF PRIZES TO BE WON & A GENEROUS RAFFLE

All proceeds go to the Galanos House Residents Anxiety fund which provides the residents with opportunities to further enhance their lives.

**R.L. ROYAL BRITISH LEGION** Community Hub and Cafe  
 Salisbury Road, Southam, Wiltshire, CV47 2B.  
 RBLCommunityHub ☎ 01926 817185 Fax 5363

**Silver Sunday**  
**FREE and OPEN to everyone**  
 Come and join us for refreshments and LIVE entertainment

**Sunday 6th April at 2.00pm**  
 Helen Preston - Vintage singer

**Sunday 19th July at 2.00pm**  
 Tony Spinks - Easy listening singer & guitarist

Worshippers Welcome to the Community Hub & Cafe, Salisbury Road, Southam, CV47 2B.

**NATIONAL SILVER SUNDAY**  
**The National Day for Older People**  
 Sunday 16th October at 2.00pm  
 Live Music from the Community Hub & Cafe, Salisbury Road, Southam, CV47 2B.  
 Let us know you will be joining in. Call us on 01926 817185

venue: The Orange Hall, Community Hub, Salisbury CV47 2B.

**SILVER SUNDAY** **age UK** **R.L. ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

Have you been thinking about day care for your loved one? We know that this can be a very difficult decision. We are here to support you and happy to answer any questions or concerns that you might have.



#### Our Day Club Opening Hours Monday-Friday 10am - 4pm.

The cost is £62 for the day and includes a three-course meal, and all refreshments throughout the day. If you would like to join us for a trial session and have your lunch with us, from 11.30am, there is no charge for this.

We have a great time and get involved in lots of activities including art, crafts, games, reminiscence, exercise, quizzes, baking etc.

We also enjoy some quiet time and relaxation.

For more information and to check eligibility, please contact Galena House on 01924 812181 or email us galenahouse@warwick.gov.uk

# Nosh & Natter

£10  
2 Course  
Homemade hot lunch and dessert



Everyone is welcome to come along  
"Bookings Essential"

FREE return transport  
Pick up at 11.45am

First Wed, Southam Library  
Third Wed, St Wulstan's Court  
& Walsingham Lodge

First and Third  
Wednesday  
of every month  
12 noon - 2pm



**Community Hub and Cafe**  
Sentry Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2L  
@RBLCommunityHub | 01924 812181 Sat 526



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**Community Hub and Cafe**  
Sentry Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2L  
@RBLCommunityHub | 01924 812181 Sat 526



**VILLAGE MATTERS**  
**To have your news included please**  
**Contact by email - [stocktons.news@gmail.com](mailto:stocktons.news@gmail.com)**  
**or by hard copy to Editorial Team**



**Locations of Defibrillators and Bleed Packs**

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**&**

**Football Club House, Napton Road**

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and they talk you through how to apply tourniquet and wound dressings.

**Refuse & Recycling**

**Food Waste** - *weekly*

**Grey Lid Bin** - *3 weekly* - **14th**

**Blue Lid Bin & Green Bin** - *2 weekly* - **7th 21st**

Missed Bins Tel: 01789 260616

Missed bins -. Contacts are [streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk)  
 or Telephone: 01789 260616

**BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**

Happy Birthday wishes for this month go to

Amy Cooper, Josh Tolley, Leane Rudge, Gina Rudge,  
 and Mick Childs

*To include birthdays/anniversary please contact magazine.  
 Tel: 01926 813730/812887 or email before 15th of month*

**Mobile Library**

**7th Stockton Church** 2.10 - 2.30pm

For further information, ring Mobile Library enquiries on 01926 851031 or Mobile Library on-line at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/)

On **Monday 3rd March** we will be saying our goodbyes to **Bill Stanley**. Bill was taken ill on 5th January and passed away on 1st February, in Warwick hospital.

His funeral will be held at **Rainsbrook Crematorium, Rugby at 11:00 am** and afterwards a wake at the Nelson Club Stockton, all who knew Bill will be most welcome.

Family flowers only. We would like to invite donations to be made to the British Heart Foundation.

### **Reflection's of Childhood by Albert Cox**

It is possible that the thunder storm had brought our waterborne adventure to start. We were regular visitors to the flooded claypit owned by Mr. Sid Lines. He allowed us to use the flat-bottomed punt to cross and re-cross the muddy grey waters, reputed to be a hundred feet deep.

Responsible we were not. None of us could swim yet, but that did not stop us from throwing the paddles overboard and taking up the boards from the bottom of the boat and using these for propulsion the storm forced us to take shelter in the open fronted cart shed. A huge clap of thunder and a flash of lightening caused us to retreat to the back of the barn.

I found my arms clutching Bill Stanley and him similarly entangled with me. We grinned at each other sheepishly. How my Mother heard that we had been on the pond I never did discover but I received a box on the ear as I walked into our living room.

We could not have been more than eight years old. But eighty years on, I grin at the recollection, as I do when I remember the Easter Holidays of 1949. Now our adventures revolved around the cement works quarries.

The works had been closed for some years. Bill's dad had driven a lorry. Roger Warner's dad had driven the crane. My dad had long ago fallen out with George Blyth and asked for his cards, As a result of the closure, the quarries were littered with the tracks where the engines used to run and the bogies (wheels and chassis) of the trucks carrying rocks and spoil that used those rails.

Bill and the rest of us put the bogies back on the rails pushed the bogies to the top of an incline and jumped aboard. The aim was to see how close we could get to the end of the track which headed towards the cliff edge of the quarry. As the quarry edge neared we would abandon the bogies.

No one broke a leg or an arm or bumped their head. Looking back, the fates were very kind to us. even to Fred Neal who found himself straddling the gap between two bogies when the one in front was travelling faster than the

one behind. Or, when "Morse" Cantellow (an evacuee) shifted the points and the bogie we were on was diverted directly on to a shorter length of track heading towards the drop.

The slag heaps presented another challenge. Bits of bicycles were salvaged from the tip (still there on the Rugby Road) Wheels, frames, saddles were patched together, taken to the top of the slag heap and we would ride them down the slope we did not have brakes.

Somebody suggested a diversion. We would build a raft, lengths of timber were scavenged, where the rope came from to bind the bits of wood together, I do not know but we finished up with something which we thought would hold two people I just happened to be one of them, "Neffy" Roger Warner the other.

Needless to say, the construction was far from stable. Not many yards from shore, Neffy attempted to stand up. The raft tipped to starboard and both of us finished in the water, me submerged completely but I found that I could swim despite my wellingtons being full of water. Neffy was not as wet as I was. It was decided that Bill would nip home and fetch a box of matches.

We would light a fire and dry our clothes. Bill went home but here was one problem, we waited and waited'

Bill's mother refused his request for a box of matches, worse still, he was kept at home

Soaking wet and an hour or two later, I walked home. My own mother was in Ms. Maskell's Shop where the three houses, five, six and seven the Square, now stand. "Look at that silly b\*\*\*\*\* walking down the street dripping water". She had failed to recognise her own son.

Home to Rose Cottage, the tin bath was fetched from the back yard. Kettles of water were boiled on the kitchen range I took my wet clothes off and climbed into the tin bath in front of the blazing fire.

The end of the story. The end of the Easter Holidays The end of our childhood. But not the end. of a lifetime friendship.

The bird nesting, the skills with the catapult. the roaming across the fields, helping with the hay making and the harvest at Grange Farm, the threshing time and killing the rats as they came out of the rick, learning to drive the old Fordson tractors, tea at Grange Farm, learning to use Mick Elson's air rifle, cutting forked ash sticks to make the catapults- the list of things that Bill and the rest of us did is endless. A golden time, long gone.

Now it is time to wish my mate, Bill (Ike) Stanley goodbye. Thank you old friend

As remembered by Albert Cox (88 and 11/12ths). A little older than Adrian Mole.





## STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meetings held every 3rd Monday in Village Hall 7.15pm.  
*Full copies of approved minutes available from Clerk*  
*Mr. W.J. Robinson Tel: 01926 814094 or*  
*website .www.stockton-warks-pc.gov.uk*

### **STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL - FEBRUARY 2025 MEETING**

Please be aware that these are informal notes only, for a formal record please refer to the authorised minutes on our website.

**County and District Matters** - the County Council has agreed to put up its **council tax** by 4.99% (including 2% for social care costs) and Stratford have put up their tax by 2.99%. The bid by Warwickshire County Council to become a **Unitary Authority** in the first wave has not been accepted by the Government.

**Village Facilities** - The Council's grave digger has moved the large pile of soil from the corner of the **old cemetery**. In future all spoil will be taken away. **Stockton Football Club** have agreed with the parish council as their landlords to thin out the hedge between the netball court and Nelsons Way as the roots are affecting the tarmac in the court. The parish council will identify any areas that need more regular street sweeping or gully emptying and inform the District and County. Access to the dog poop bin near to the Football Club may be hazardous and will be investigated. The parish council noted moves to form a **road safety group** possibly registered with Speedwatch, and agreed in principle to provide a start up grant of £200 if needed.

**Richborough Estates** - several residents of Laurel Drive attended to voice their objections to the proposed development of 80 houses off Sycamore Close. Councillor Crump explained that at this stage this is only pre-planning consultation although it is likely that an outline planning application would be made soon. Richborough have apparently put in similar proposals for development at Bishops Itchington, Wellesbourne and Kineton. The parish council explained the current planning rules that in its view would seem to not allow the development. There was discussion about the lack of any need for more housing, traffic issues, capacity at Stockton School, the crossroads, noise from the quarry and the dangers of a construction access off the A426. It was agreed that the parish council would seek to undertake a new Housing Needs Survey that could be fed into any outline planning application and also to prepare some "headlines" that residents could use in any submissions during the consultation stage of any outline planning application.

**Next meeting - 7.15 pm on Monday 14 March 2025.**

**Howard Collerson (Chairman)**



## 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](mailto:cllrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk)  
[andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk)

**I've been providing these updates for many years, initially from 2017 as your County Councillor and since 2023 as both your District and County Councillor. In the time I hope you have found them informative and also laughed at the odd pun.**

When I was at SDC meeting the week , in Stratford, I was approached by a member of the public, in my role as Chair of Scrutiny, who complained that his SDC Cllr never responded to his emails and could I help to get a response (he had also noticed that the Cllr's attendance record for SDC meetings was poor). He said his previous Cllr had been more responsive and available – I did say that people who wanted change, don't always get change for the best and that the grass isn't always greener on the other side. Whilst I accept that I won't be able to please or agree with everyone, I try to be as responsive as possible to residents who contact me – often getting 100+ emails, calls, texts and Facebook messages/tags in a week. When they aren't in either of my WCC or SDC wards, I like to signpost them to the correct place.

I attend as many meetings as possible and residents can check my attendance record at WCC or SDC on their respective websites.

Last month (February) I spent several days in the village delivering my leaflets, attending the PC, talking to residents and also helping residents with claim forms and issues with landlords. I even went out on Valentine's Day , you could say I'm all heart ! – hence the puns at the end of the report.

**For those who may have missed the news the other week, I can confirm that WCC elections will now take place in May 2025**

**As usual, I attended the PC to present my update as your district and county councillor. Here is my take on the meeting  
Stockton PC 18/2/25 at the Village Hall**

About 15 residents, joined myself and the PC and clerk , with the main topic in the 'open' part of the meeting , being the potential 80 home development. The item was discussed for around 45 minutes, with many questions and answers. The points I tried to make were

**1.** It is a speculative application – similar potential developments are appearing in several parts of our district.

2. It will be a major application (probably submitted end of next month, I've heard) -SDC will have 13 weeks to validate and process it.
3. Any responses to it will need to be evidence based using 'experts' if and when necessary.
4. I and the PC/clerk in our roles as community leaders, will need to arrange future meetings, once the application has been submitted. Whilst we can probably have an educated guess on what is likely to be in the application, it will be sensible to respond once we have seen the application that is in front of us.
5. Stockton is open to some small scale developments, in the right place and with appropriate infrastructure.
6. The SWLP will require 2,178 homes to be built, once the plan has finally been accepted by the Planning Inspector, likely to be several years in the future.
7. It is important that if residents have a chance to go to SWLP Consultation at Southam Library 10-4pm to express their views. If you cannot make the presentation, you can still arrange to be part of online presentations on Monday 24th February 6pm-7:30pm via MS Teams by [emailingswlp@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:emailingswlp@stratford-dc.gov.uk) Consultations on the preferred sites is now open, it is important you have your say. It is important to remember not all sites will be included. You can view all the sites by visiting the website <https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/>.
8. There is no such thing as a stupid question/comment, please stay engaged with me and the PC. It is vital that the village presents a unified approach to this.

### **I then updated the meeting with my report**

#### **Jobs:**

Sign on crossing, to Napton, knocked over. **Rated job raised for this**  
Big pothole on corner of High St/Napton Rd – 1<sup>st</sup> turning into village  
Marked and a FTFP 30 day job raised to repair  
Water pooling in Elm Row, by drain, on left. Will inspect but no reports of this  
Other emails re verge by Crown Pub. Will send a separate email about this Pothole George St – will look into

#### **High St - Planter**

The grassed area is within WCC Highway extent  
The person install the planter will need to indemnify WCC against any claims arising from the planters being sited on the highway.  
The planter cannot be concrete, the preferred material would be a wood or plastic, the dimensions should be 1m x 1m x 0.6m high maximum.  
The planter must be placed at least 1.5m back from the road edge.  
The installers may place up to one planter of this size and material at an agreed location and proof of public liability insurance is passed to our

selves .

Should the need arise, the planters will be removed by the Parish .

WCC reserve the right to remove the planters without consultation should the need arise.

WCC will not be maintaining this structure or its contents.

There is also the possibility of bollards being put there using my delegated Highways Budget

### **Community Speed Watch**

Sent out a vetting form

Got a good contact with Police

**Flytipping** – reported

### **New Warwickshire fire plan given permanent funding boost**

**<https://www.warwickshireworld.com/news/politics/new-warwickshire-fire-plan-given-permanent-funding-boost-4992448>**

The additional funding required for Warwickshire Fire & Rescue’s new operating model (resourcing to risk) has been made a permanent part of county council spending plans.

WCC, who oversees and funds the fire service, had committed the extra money for three years – the length of the community risk management plan (CRMP)

**However, a further £602,000 – increased funding that takes account of likely inflation and staffing costs – has been budgeted for in 2028-29 with another £614,000 coming forward for 2029-30, taking things to the end of the council’s five-year spending plan.**

That plan is refreshed each year but any removal of this money would now require a fresh budgeting decision as it has been allocated as a permanent spending feature moving forward as opposed to a time-limited one.

### **WCC Cabinet – 13 February 2025**

Find out more about what was discussed at the WCC Cabinet meeting on

Thursday 13 February: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5975/warwickshire-county-council-cabinet-13-february-2025>

### **A Dress to Impress**

A beautiful dress crafted by refugees and asylum seekers across Warwickshire is on display at Market Hall Museum, Warwick until late April.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5959/a-dress-to-impress-community-creation-is-a-breathtaking-symbol-of-unity>

## **The Lunar New Year in Warwickshire**

On Saturday, 1 February, Warwickshire County Council, Nuneaton Methodist Church, and the Hong Kong community came together to organise and host the Lunar New Year Festival 2025.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5961/warwickshire-celebrated-the-lunar-new-year-with-a-vibrant-community-event>

## **Adopting a child**

Adoption is a life fulfilling opportunity to provide a home for a child who needs the care, support, love and encouragement that can only be offered through a permanent home.

Find out more about becoming an adopter: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5969/have-you-ever-thought-about-adopting-a-child>

## **Fostering: The Power of Relationships**

This Valentine's Day, Warwickshire Fostering invites local businesses to join their initiative, "The Power of Relationships," to support children in care.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5964/power-of-relationships-ways-for-businesses-to-show-how-much-they-care>

## **National Apprenticeship Week**

Apprenticeships are a hugely important part of workforce development at Warwickshire County Council (WCC), offering individuals of all ages the chance to gain valuable skills and experience.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5962/warwickshire-county-council-celebrates-national-apprenticeship-week>

## **Youth mental health features in new podcast**

The Warwickshire Youth Council has launched #VoicesofTomorrow, a podcast series tackling important topics for young people. The first episode is all about mental health.

Listen now on Let's Talk Warwickshire: <https://ow.ly/eo8850UYHpR>  
#ChildFriendlyWarwickshire

**The Local Welfare Scheme** remains open with the current extended welfare offer to help Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents at times of unavoidable crisis when they have no other means of help. Residents can enquire or apply for support, by calling on 0800 4081448 or 01926 359182. Further information on support available can be found here <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/localwelfarescheme>

## **Cost of Living Support - SDC**

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/benefits-support/cost-of-living-support.cfm>

### **Be prepared for cyber-attacks**

Cyber-attacks can have significant, lasting impacts on your business.

Learn some of the simple steps you can take to become #BetterPrepared for cyber-attacks at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/cyber-attacks/>

### **New active travel funding**

It's great news for Warwickshire's Active Travel schemes as the County Council receives close to £3 million to support the design and delivery of active travel schemes across the county.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5970/warwickshire-s-active-travel-ambitions-get-an-important-cash-boost>

### **New school admissions arrangements for 2026/2027**

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved the admissions arrangements for the 2026/2027 academic year.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5974/warwickshire-county-council-s-cabinet-approves-admissions-arrangements-for-2026-2027>

### **New highways maintenance contract**

Improved use of AI to improve efficiencies, more timely delivery of delegated budgets schemes and moving the winter gritting fleet to ownership of the contractor are among the key changes in the new highways contract set to go out to tender.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5973/warwickshire-county-council-approves-procurement-for-new-highways-maintenance-contract>

### **Pothole repair funding**

Warwickshire County Council is delighted to announce the continuation of funding for its highly cost-effective pothole repair service, ensuring that road maintenance remains top priority for 2025-26.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5971/warwickshire-s-roads-to-benefit-from-continued-pothole-repair-funding>

### **Flooding in Warwickshire**

With water levels remaining high across Warwickshire, emergency services and partners are calling on the public to take care when driving or walking near flood water.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5868/warwickshire-residents-urged-to-take-care-amid-widespread-flooding>

**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.

### **Log highways issues and report feedback**

Warwickshire County Council has launched a new platform to support the way customers can report a highways problem or log customer feedback through its website.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4953/updates-to-the-way-customers-log-highways-issues-and-report-feedback>  
**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

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

### **Valentine’s Day recycling**

Every year, across the UK, over 24 million people will mark Valentine’s Day and buy 220 million roses, 25,000 tonnes of plastic and cardboard packaging, 25 million cards and 13,500 miles of gift wrap!

Find out more about recycling Valentine’s Day waste: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5968/show-some-love-to-that-special-someone-and-give-a-big-hug-to-our-planet-too>

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk)) or 07771335273 if they need my assistance.

**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](mailto: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](https://www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/missed-bin-report-form.cfm?fbclid=IwAR3vfkf03zQgXUsEHH04ODEqfid1b1msbwpVg8DG6nQn47HoAcwmw5LL9Joc)

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

### **Councillor groans –**

For the past 25yrs I've received a Valentine card from a secret admirer, I'm so upset ,I didn't get one this year ,first my gran dies and now this.

Looking for a bit of advice. - What's the best number of Roses to give the girlfriend for Valentine's Day?

6. 12. 24. ....Or the whole tub

Just back from a lovely Valentine's night at the club where I had a few really nice kisses. My snooker game is in great shape these days.

My wife loves Greek food. So on the 14th I'm going to serve up my own version of the St Valentines Day Moussaka.

As a treat for my wife I got her thousands of insects from the capital of Italy. Well, she did say she wanted lots of Rome ants on Valentine's day.

### ***Andy***

07771335273 – [cllrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cllrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk)

WCC Councillor for Southam, Stockton & Napton

SDC Councillor for Southam Central and East and Stockton –

[andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk)





## 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](http://www.bridge-nursery.co.uk)  
¼ mile from Crossroads Garage – look for our Tourist Sign

I have started to propagate plants for this coming season on those rare days when it isn't too cold. But the big question is what shall I grow and how many of each plant? If I'm dividing a clump of say Geranium shall I make 10 or 20 or more? The same with taking cuttings, maybe start with 10 then do more in a month or so. There are fashions and trends which I can't keep up with. Hydrangeas, Mexican daisy and shrubby salvias were some of the best sellers. But bamboos, hostas and ferns were more or less shunned last year. The ornamental grasses were less popular than in recent years. The only thing I can do is to keep growing a good range of plants, offer advice when needed and hope for the best.

This can be a busy time of year depending on the weather so here are some reminders.....

Prune roses, sow hardy annuals, sow sweet peas, when daffodils have finished flowering remove seed heads and allow the foliage to die back naturally, lift and divide snowdrops and replant, prune winter flowering jasmine and honeysuckle, cut back ornamental grasses and late flowering clematis, plant garlic and onions, sow broad beans and peas and parsnips. Once again I am (wistfully) hoping for perfect gardening weather this year.



Chairman – Richard Rushton  
Administrator – John Emberton 01926 814267  
Club Captain – Rich Powell 07957848075  
[www.stocktonpetanqueclub.org.uk](http://www.stocktonpetanqueclub.org.uk)

### Pétanque Report for February

16 players braved a damp afternoon for the February melee. After three rounds there was only one unbeaten player, Steve Neale, – Unbelievable winning his first melee after being close many times. – The best of the rest was Catherine Black on 2 wins and 12 points, and joint third with 2 wins and 7 points were Emily Adams and Anthea Sansom

The 2024 Winter League is heading into the final month with Catherine Black on 81 points and Steve Neale on 79, Looking like a two-horse race for the title.

The 2025 singles league is underway, and, whilst early in the year, it looks like its going to be a tight year, with five players all on 3 wins so far at the top of the table.

The regional International Women's Day competition is taking place in **Whitnash on the 9th March**, with a strong line up from Stockton, and Catherine Black and Sarah Jerger looking to defend their title from last year. Good Luck Ladies!

The next melee will be on **March 1st with a 1.00pm start**. Everyone is welcome – we will provide the boules and tuition on the rules.



### **1st Stockton Scout Group**

**Group Scout Leader:** Jo Brough    Tel: 07568 653158  
**email:** [GSL.Stockton@LeamingtonScouts.org.uk](mailto:GSL.Stockton@LeamingtonScouts.org.uk)/  
[1st.Stockton.Scouts@gmail.com](mailto:1st.Stockton.Scouts@gmail.com)

### **BEAVERS**

The Beavers have been so busy since Christmas! We have set personal challenges for everyone which is a vital section of the Chief Scout Bronze Award. We first enjoyed Spy Week - searching all sorts of gadgets and writing secret messages! Then we moved on to bird week, making bird feeders from toilet rolls, peanut butter and bird seed, a game to identifying different bird species and designing our own birds with feathers.

We then celebrated 9 Beavers being presented their Chief Scout Bronze Award, along with investing 3 new Beavers and awarding tons more badges to everyone. Our oldest Beavers then "Swam the dam" up to Cubs.

Next, we worked on our Builder Badge, designing and then building matchbox cars and racing them down a track, which was so much fun!

We finished this half term making Valentine's cards and making sweetie bags to hide around Stockton and Napton. Were you lucky enough to find one? #randomactsofkindness

### **CUBS & SCOUTS**

We started back with a fantastic problem solving night -, as they were all concentrating so much, it has never been so quiet! The following week, we welcomed the eldest Beavers, who have begun their transition into Cubs. We set our Code of Conduct and learnt all about online password safety. To celebrate Chinese New Year, the Cubs learnt to write their names in Chinese.

Cubs = 小熊队

Decorating Valentine's biscuits and team work games were a great way to end this half term.





## STOCKTON VILLAGE HALL

**Bookings - Helen Kittendorf Tel: 815376**

***Hourly Rate £email: [helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk)***

Spring is not far away, and the longer days will hopefully mean better weather is on the way soon!

Everyone is welcome to join us at one of our regular events: the Coffee Morning will be on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 10am-midday, the Whist Drive on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm and the Lunch Club on 12<sup>th</sup> March 12.30pm at The Crown – it will be great to see you.

The next Stockton Cinema Night is on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March - if you want to join the mailing list for Stockton Cinema, please contact Steve on [stevekittendorf@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stevekittendorf@hotmail.co.uk), to find out what film is coming up and the supper on offer.

Exciting News - Hold The Date! It's never too early to book a Panto so pencil Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December in your diary for a matinee performance of Sleeping Beauty. More details will follow later in the year, but this is a very exciting new adventure for us, and we know you will enjoy it too!

We have set up a Foodbank Donation Point in the Village Hall with items to be donated to the Fosse Foodbank. Any donations will be taken to the Graham Adams Centre in Southam which is a donation hub on behalf of the Foodbank. For an up-to-date list of urgently needed items please visit their website: <https://fosse.foodbank.org.uk/> but currently they urgently need: UHT milk, packets of instant mash, long life fruit juice, sponge puddings (non-refrigerated), laundry powder/liquid/capsules and shampoo. The donation point will be open on Coffee Mornings between 10am-midday or alternatively please give any items to Wendy Burrows or Sarah Redgrave. Any donation you can give is very much appreciated. We would love to hear your thoughts on other activities we can hold at the Village Hall - please let any of the Village Hall Committee members know.

We look forward to welcoming you into the Village Hall very soon.

**The Village Hall Trustees**



## WOMENS INSTITUTE

Meeting 7.30pm at Nelson Club first Monday of Month

President:- Sue Gill Tel: 07502207380

Secretary: Joan Ford Tel: 01926 810220



We met as usual on the first Monday of the month and Sue opened the meeting and we sang Jerusalem (chosen long ago as the anthem of the WI for its urge for social change)

Joan read out the trips and outings to come including afternoon tea at St Mary's Church in Warwick, the Recycling Centre in Coventry, our Fashion Show by Wanda coming up on 12th May (open to everyone so save the date) and a trip to Thursford Christmas Extravaganza Show in November.

We were informed about the arrangements for our Coffee Morning in aid of Alzheimers at the Village Hall on the 15th March and members were requested to provide donations of cakes for this. There will also be a tombola, a ladies jewellery, bag and scarf stall, some bric a brac, count the sweets competition, raffle, some craft made items and our usual delicious refreshments. Please come along to support this worthy cause, it is open to all 10 am til 12 noon. (see Poster with details in this issue).

Mary is taking a break from looking after the WI planter, outside the village hall, a fine job she's been doing too. The roses and other plants were beautiful last year. Sue and Howard are kindly taking this on.

Our speaker for the evening Heather Wilson was very lively and told us about the mad and beautiful things she makes. She has a studio at Hebden Bridge where she paints bespoke water colour pictures which tell her client's life story including details from photos they provide. She copies the people, pets, cars, bikes, favourite places etc sort of a story of their life in a picture. She showed us quite a few of these and they were beautiful and unique. She also embellishes hats for all occasions, the madder the better. She brought quite a selection but the green hessian one with a model cow lying down was interesting; she called this one her Lying Cow hat!

We then dealt with our annual choosing of the Resolutions and enjoyed tea and delicious cake.

Our next meeting will be **Monday 3rd March 2025 at 7.30 pm** upstairs at the Nelson Club when the speaker is Jess Nash - a London Bus Driver. The competition - Salt and Pepper Pots.

## STOCKTON AND I

The autobiographical writings of Victor Neal (Part 14)

THAT PARLOUR of ours: what happy memories it evokes, especially linked with Christmas, those few days when, on arising, we turned right at the foot of the stairs instead of left into the kitchen, for it was our mother's practice to indulge the whim of living in the parlour at these annual occasions, a change of atmosphere accomplished in a step or two, more lovable than anything a journey across the world could have brought about. One felt tears very near when, the season over, one turned left again and left fairyland on the right.

Freddy Sargent from the cottages across the road would spend Christmas Day with us, and looking into the overmantel mirror he says: 'Well, what room's that, in there?' And as we grew up we would all have our friends there, and later still our girls, and Albert Alexander Andrew (Bertie) White sang 'Flora' with a mixture of sweat and hair-oil running down his over-heated face. And Billy Todd, who was a better comic than cricketer, sang 'The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo' or 'At Trinity Church I met me doom', then stops the show with his impersonation of the newfangled phonograph. One year PC Smith, our village constable – very skilled on the piano, he was – sang 'On Mobile Bay' and stamped its haunting lilt in my memory to this very day. With mother or brother Wal on the piano we all sang carols, of course; and in the course of time progressed, if that is the right word, on to ragtime – Dixie and all that. I'd rather forget my own attempts in this last field and remember, more pleasingly, that I would be requested to give 'Until' or 'Till the sands of the desert grow cold'.

Later on still, when the gramophone had improved on the phonograph that Billy Todd had impersonated, we would adjourn to the parlour (or is it 'front room' nowadays?) for a recital. I remember the late radio gardener, Mr Middleton, saying at his turn on the BBC's *Desert Island Discs* that he wasn't much of a highbrow in music. 'Give me melody, close your eyes, lean back in your chair and listen to this.' And 'this' was the Barcarolle from *The Tales of Hoffman*, which remarks and melody coincide with my own ideas. In fact, if I had to choose *my* desert island discs, I couldn't improve on my collection at this early stage of my youth, and which discs we still possess, albeit so much more worn, a trait they have in common with their owner. Next to the Barcarolle, the one and

only Caruso in that incomparable burst ‘Vesti la giubbi’, then Nellie Melba with simple ‘Annie Laurie’, John McCormack’s ‘I hear you calling me’. Lest you think I’m pandering to the classical after all, let me say: far from it, for after the few pieces I include here you can keep the lot – Bach, Beethoven, symphonies and all – as far as I’m concerned. If there is anything in them (and I’m not saying it’s impossible as there are so many different tastes) beyond a snobbish pretence then I’ve never been able to see it.

I’ve dutifully searched the National Gallery in an attempt to find what’s wrong with me, and found only two pictures I’d give tuppence for and – dare I tell you? – decided the work of a pavement artist just outside the famous building was more to my depraved taste. One wasn’t supposed to find a mysterious something in his work, but some of it was really lovely.

Then again, my wife and I turned into Oxford Street one fine day and dropped on Epstein’s masterpiece ‘Jacob and the Angel’; sixpence a time, reminiscent of a fairground, which was nothing against it. ‘Think again,’ some of the notices said, ‘perhaps your first guess was wrong,’ or something to that effect. It would surprise me if Epstein had thought again about it, and I bet he doesn’t half laugh if he thinks of it again now, and imagines you looking for that ‘something’ that isn’t there. If my grandson of seven years hacked out anything so crude I should never dream he could possibly become a sculptor.

Well, those are my ideas – ‘take ’em, leave ’em or go home without ’em,’ as that chap with the crockery stall on the Green used to say when he reached his rock bottom price. Shall I go on? Because I don’t mind saying that there’s more bunk written about so-called Art than about a lot of things.

Take literature: Gray’s *Elegy* is grand; it’s easily understood, but like that couple of pictures in the National Gallery there’s not much more like it. Shakespeare himself is like grand opera: hours of boredom waiting for the few brilliant bits. I can read Jane Austen and the Brontës all right, but they leave me guessing as to what particularly makes them stand out from scores of other writers ancient and modern whom no-one fusses about. Dickens and George Borrow are more up my street; they *are* different. Perhaps that’s enough to go on with.

My next disc is ‘The Volunteer Organist’; let the moderns say what they like about sentiment; I’d have at least one of those early lilting guitar things, before Yank syncopation knocked the mellow sweet bell-like tone out of them; lazy tunes as their names suggested: ‘Drowsy Waters’ and ‘Dreamy Hawaii’. Nelson Eddy and Jeannette MacDonald in ‘Ah, sweet mystery of life’ or ‘Indian love-call’. Lastly (I think we’re allowed eight) there’s that delightful rendering of ‘Oh come all ye faithful’ by some choir I can’t be bothered to look up at the moment.

The old horsehair-seated chairs and sofa gave way to the new three-piece suite, moving with the times, in this parlour of ours, and all too rapidly we moved on towards that First World War, the war to end all wars.

Back at the Klondyke quarries worked Frank Bull with his own dry brand of humour. He listened for some weeks to the tales of a new hand there, how the latter had so many years in India, so many in Canada perhaps, so many in any place that happened to crop up in conversation that Frank finally says: 'Wait a minute, old feller, how old are you, before you go any further? I've reckoned you up now to be well over ninety.'

Frank watched one day old Harry Wall – who had unluckily lost an arm in an accident at the works, and was given such jobs as this – drilling holes in the bottoms of some new metal wagons to be added to our rolling stock to allow the water to drain out. Harry completed one, stood back, power drill in hand with an air of admiring contemplation. 'Fetch a bucket of water, Harry,' says Frank, 'and see if it works.'

Then, they tell me, Frank was in the Crown or one of the other pubs, with a goodly company which included Tom Wilks who was renowned for his long-winded stories. The latter had started a tale about Rugby, but naturally he had to get there first and was so long on the first mile – in the telling, that is – in fact he hadn't reached our station (not far from the quarries) and was stuck with a man working on the road, which involved so much detail as to what he was doing and their conversation about it, that when at last he moved on and was toiling up station hill, old Frank says: 'Half a minute, Tom, what size shovel was he using?' You see, Tom was a quarryman and these chaps are very finicky about the correct size shovel (Size 4 or 5 as the case may be) to suit themselves and the job in hand. And now only the other week poor Frank, much older now, rode his cycle out of a side road straight into a speeding car and was killed.

There's another closure to a source of memories: again in the last week of two our local branch line has been closed to passenger traffic, and although the buses save the mile walk to and from the station, yet what enchantment lingers there, and on that very mile walk which prolonged any pleasures from which we were returning by giving time for reflection, as well as having enhanced our anticipation on the outward journey.

Toddling down with mother for rare visits to Leamington; that different clip-clop of the horses' hooves in town, more resonant than in our countryside; bewitching snacks of pork pies or potted meats my mother would procure and take with us into a coffee-house for the eating; the penny bazaar; and noting from our compartment window on our journey in or out the men gathering osiers in their season.

With the advent of the buses people grouched more about that mile walk to Napton & Stockon Station than their parents had about walking the whole eight or nine miles to Leamington, and so today do people grouse more



about cycling two miles to Southam than we did about cycling to Leamington, Rugby or Coventry. Such is life, and progress.

As we grew older we went further afield on the trains: there were trips to the Birmingham

pantomimes in their season; to Shrewsbury Flower Show and the like; and to the Wembley Exhibition in 1924 and 1925. There were also those sad leave-takings of the 1914-18 war; after final leaves, bound for France or farther east. I was involved in one myself, only a few weeks after my brother Ern had been reported killed at Ypres. Poor, poor parents; and I'm not thinking only of my own. There were worse cases: poor Mrs Carter who lost three sons, Harold, John and Perse, all school contemporaries of ours. I know, with youth on my side, it was far easier to go myself than to watch my son go to the next Great War, and he hadn't just lost a brother, either.



I often think what repositories of emotions stations are, and if our own little Napton & Stockton is incapable of retaining these feelings, then old Wal Gardner, who has been porter and signaller, etc, right from those days to the present time,

certainly shouldn't be. But I'd rather dwell on the other, happier, side: the home-comings of those of us who, by the grace of God, were permitted that happiness. Wal watched it all: the sadness and the gladness; and manœuvred his points and signals and attended to our tickets. Then, brighter still, he

watches us off for holidays; for sunny seashores – when seashores were sunny; and to be fair they usually were for us, particularly when children came along in due time and enhanced our week's respite on the shore. Wal watched us early in the morning catch the 7.09 for Euston and watched us, according to his shift sometimes, on our return on the 7.05 from Euston, which – or rather the connection from which – was our line's last train of the day, arriving soon after ten o'clock and known as 'the ten o'clock' anyway. The last train, that is, apart from any of those excursion times, when we might keep him up until four in the morning, awaiting our return from gadding about at Wembley and, come to think of it, having had him there about that same time to get us off the previous morning.

That 7.09 served us well for a little village, you know. Euston about ten, giving us a good nine hours in town and, on the occasions we have spent long weekends there, there was a remarkable earlier return train: 4.30 Euston, one stop at Blisworth to change, and we have been in our own home by 7 o'clock when fortunate to catch a lift from the station.

We have jumped ahead of our youth again, though, the youth that gave us the exuberance to trot off down that Station Road on winter Saturday nights to meet the 'seven o'clock' from Leamington which brought the evening papers (*Birmingham Evening Dispatch*) with all the football results. Not that that was so much in my line as my pals', yet it pleasantly passed the time in those days when we didn't ask such a glut of hectic excitement, and the old mile-long road would be quite lively with the crowd of us. It got to be more lively still later on, when the late train from Leamington was put on, Saturdays only, and the happy chatter of the surprisingly large contingent, who had been to the Spa for the Colonnade Cinema or what not, could often be heard in the village getting on for midnight.

All this time Walter, the porter, would have his little office like an oven; it hits you still the same today if you have reason to open the door for any business over goods, but then was also merited a roaring fire in the waiting room stove; so cosy to await the opening of the booking office window and the bump-bump of the machine stamping our tickets.

Stations – partings, meetings, off-for-honeymoonings, racing for trains and just catching 'em, the smell and noise of them, ah!

*Photos by courtesy of Sid Wilks.  
Napton & Stockton Station, 1950's & 1911*

*(To be continued)*



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