

STOCKTON'S

May 2025

NEWS

Issue 176

keeping you informed ...

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Magazine Deadline:- 15th of the month
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To remember and reminisce VE Day 80th Anniversary
Join us at the Village Hall for Afternoon Tea & Music

On Saturday 10th May 2-4pm

Cost: £7.50 per person

Booking is essential – please contact:

Helen Kittendorf - tel: 01926 815376

or by email: helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk

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
FOUNDED 1894

(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

PLEASE NOTE NO DAY BINGO ON THURSDAY 1st MAY

3rd BIRDINGBURY TRACTOR RUN

will be stopping off at the Nelson Club

25th PUDDING CLUB 7pm ~ more info on facebook or in the club

27th FOLK NIGHT ~ 7.30pm All Welcome

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**



Fashion Show



By Wanda Fashions

Monday 12th May 7.30pm

Stockton Village Hall

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stephenw26268@googlemail.com

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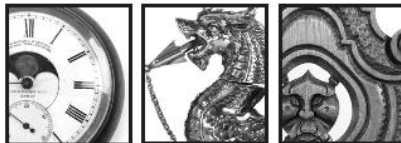
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Many thanks to all those who have already contributed towards the cost of producing **Stockton's News** it is great to have your support.

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 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

Parish Council	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		
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. A Bedgood	812483
Little Acorns			813789
Toddlersaurs	Becca Makepeace	07733107197	
Group Scout Leader	Jo Brough	07568 653158	
Scouts	David Brough	07432 358259	
Cubs	Toby Leeman	07866 563301	
Beavers	Jo Brough	07568 653158	
Women's Institute	President	Sue Gill	07502207380
	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



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 ~ 7.30 - 8.30pm

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 ~ **5th**

Parish Council Meetings: 3rd Monday ~ Village Hall *** **7.00pm ~ 15th**

Tuesday

Brewed Awakening: Nelson Club ~ 10.00am - 12.30pm ~

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 ~ **14th**

Saturday

Coffee Morning & Library: 1st Sat ~ 10am - 12Noon ~ Village Hall ~ **3rd**

Pétanque Melee ~ F.C. & C.C. ~ All Welcome ~ 2.00pm ~ **3rd**

Whist Drive: Every 2nd Sat ~ Village Hall ~ 7.30pm ~ **10th**

Stockton Cinema: Every last Saturday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.00pm ~ **31st**

STOCKTON 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	04.05.25 Easter 3 White	11.05.25 Easter 4 White	18.05.25 Easter 5 White	25.05.25 Easter 6 White
Priors Hardwick	Morning Worship 9.00am	Sung Evensong 5.00pm	BCP Holy Communion 9.00am	
Priors Mars-ton	Morning Worship 10.30am	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am	
Wormleigh-ton				Morning Worship 10.30am
Napton	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30 Lay Led APCM 11.15am	CW Holy Communion 10.30am	Sung Evensong 5.00pm
Stockton	Morning Worship Lay Led 10.30am	Holy Communion In the Methodist Tradition 10.30am		CW Holy Communion 10.30am
Lower Shuckburgh				BCP Holy Communion 9.00am

<p style="text-align: center;">THE BRIDGES GROUP NOTICE BOARD LOWER SHUCKBURGH, NAPTON, STOCKTON PRIORS MARSTON, PRIORS HARDWICK & WORMLEIGHTON</p>
--

The Bridges Group of Parishes

Notices

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 to pray for our communities. 4 groups are in person, or 1 is online. If you would like to join, please contact the Group leader below:

Every Tuesday online at 6.15	Zoom	Katie	07965 209 075
Every Wednesday at 8pm	in Stockton	Wendy	01926 812694
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.

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*

LONG ITCHINGTON HISTORY GROUP MAY
MEETING IN STOCKTON.

WEDNESDAY 14th MAY STARTING AT 7.00pm.

Please meet outside Stockton Church

For further details and to request transport please contact 01926 815119

Programmes available on request



Southam Gardening Club

thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk

Tel: 01926 813986 or 815086.

Southam Gardening Club



Susie Hickman will give an illustrated talk
‘How to enjoy your Houseplants’
at 7.30pm on Monday 19th May
at the Catholic Church Hall, next to Wood St Car Park.

Also a Plant Sale with many bargains.

All are welcome. Non-members £4.50. Refreshments included.

Further information: thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk
or tel 01926 813986 or 815086.

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

UPDATE:

Monday Club (Warm Hub) as this is no longer running.

Nosh and Natter

When: 1st Wednesday of each month at 12-2pm

Where: Community Hub Hall

What to expect: The group is a fantastic way to meet new people and enjoy a delicious homemade 2 course meal.

We also, enjoy a light-hearted, fun quiz.

Free collection and return transport from:

Southam Library/Tithe Lodge and St Wulfstan Court

£10 per person - Booking is essential. Everyone is welcome.

Please call 01926 812185 Ext 5365.

Dementia Cafe – FREE

When: **Every Friday at 2:30-4pm**

Where: Community Hub Hall

What to expect: A dementia friendly café with various games and activities including reminiscence through music and sport.

Open to people with dementia and their careers.

Everyone is welcome to come along – no booking required.

Sporting Memories

When: **2nd Friday of the month at 2:30-4pm**

Where: Community Hub Hall

What to expect: Sporting memorabilia, guest speakers and gentle exercise.

Musical Memories

When: **Last Friday of the month at 2:30-4pm**

Where: Community Hub Hall

What to expect: Live Music and dancing.



Spring
**CRAFT
FAYRE**

Saturday 17th May
10am-4pm

We have lots of local artists and crafters joining us. Everyone welcome - come along and browse at your leisure. Our café will be open serving breakfasts until 4:30pm. We also have a selection of hot drinks, homemade cakes and lunches available.

RBL ROYAL BRITISH LEGION Community Hub and Cafe
Banbury Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2BL
f RBLCommunityHub t RBLCommunityHub



80
VE DAY
80th ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATING THE VICTORY IN EUROPE
8 MAY 2025

**DESIGN A
VE DAY
80
BEACON
COMPETITION**

Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of the Victory in Europe

Let's get creative!

We would like you to design a VE80 beacon using any materials that you like e.g cardboard, a pencil sketch, 3D printer, clay, metal, wood etc. Your entry can be to scale, a prototype or just an idea.

Please bring your entry to Galanos House Reception before Friday 9th May at 4pm.

Prize Category
Group entry | Adults 18+ years | Children

RBL
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

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

Sunday 6th April at 2:30pm
Helen Pearson-Vintage singer



Sunday 13th July at 2:30pm
Tony Sparks-Easy listening singer & guitarist



Venue: Community Hub & Cafe, Banbury Road, Southam, CV47 2 BL

NATIONAL SILVER SUNDAY
The National Day for Older People
Sunday 5th October at 2:30pm
LIVE Music from the brilliantly entertaining Lincoln Knowles.
Let us know you will be joining us.
Call us on 01926 812185



Venue: The Grange Hall, Coventry Rd, Southam CV47 1QA

 SILVER SUNDAY
CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE

 age UK

 **RBL**
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION



VILLAGE MATTERS

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



Locations of Defibrillators and Bleed Packs

Telephone Box, The Square
&

Football Club House, Napton Road

Stop the Bleed Pack - For use in a catastrophic bleed and does not contain normal first aid items like plasters etc.

Dial **999**

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

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday wishes this month go to Jon Howard

To include birthdays/anniversary please contact magazine.

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

Mobile Library

Stockton Church 2.10 - 2.30pm ~ 2nd & 30th

For further information, ring Mobile Library enquiries on
01926 851031 or Mobile Library on-line at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mobilelibraries.

Refuse & Recycling

Food Waste - weekly Grey Lid Bin - 3 weekly - 16th

Blue Lid Bin & Green Bin - 2 weekly - 2nd, 16th & 30th

Missed Bins Tel: 01789 260616

Stockton Football & Cricket Club

Rick Musson 813018

Luke Cole 07710 864192

Stockton Mini's 2025

For girls and boys currently in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 (5, 6 and 7 year olds), (unfortunately we cannot take any older children). No official kit is required as bibs will be provided, just ensure your child has shin pads on.

Each session costs £2 per child

The sessions are for one hour on a **Monday night 5.30pm to 6.30pm.**

Cricket Friday is back!!!! This is our huge summer hit!!! Sign up now for the All Stars and Dynamos children's cricket sessions! Details on our Facebook page.

Family Bingo - 7pm Friday 9th May!!! So many amazing family friendly prizes to be won, including days out, pub meals and even a boating holiday! Pre booking essential, get your tickets from the bar or via SportsMember. Price includes bingo book!

The club will be hosting the **annual family fun day on Sunday 24th August** from 12pm. This is the bank holiday weekend when the village holds the beer festival and scarecrow trail. We are offering stall pitches to local businesses for £10, young entrepreneurs £3, and non-for profit organisations for free; money raised goes to the chosen charity of the year. There will be food, bouncy castles, a raffle, different beers, sports to try and a dog show at the event. We ask stalls to set up by 12 and stay as long as they wish. We will advertise the event and stalls attending via our Facebook page.

Please get in touch if you would like a stall!

Could you be a cricket umpire??!

We have an exciting opportunity for an experienced or brand new cricket umpire to be our club cricket umpire for the upcoming cricket season! Be part of our cricket and club family!!!

It is a paid position after completion of a free accredited online ECB course. You would be paid £40 if sharing with a league umpire, or £60 if standing alone. You would be required every Saturday from 19/04 until 13/09, from 12pm until about 8.30pm.

If you think this is for you- please get in touch!!!

STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL STOCKTON VILLAGER OF THE YEAR 2024

The nominations were (in alphabetical order)

Bill Biddle ~ For help putting bins out, sorting recycling, mowing my lawn, helping fix things in the garden, house and car. He is a model neighbour and member of the community in Stockton.

Jo Brough ~

For her ongoing dedication to the provision of Scouting in the village.

Bec and Juan Celebrian-Mitchell ~ A husband and wife team who have supported scouts, giving free Spanish lessons open to all, and now trying to raise awareness and make changes to the dangerous traffic situation in our village.

Stuart Hemmings ~ Our wonderful Postman who watches out for people on his daily round as well as being cheery and; having time for everyone. I feel he goes beyond his normal call of duty.

Josie's Place/ Dorne Jones ~ Dorne has done such a fantastic job of bringing Josie's cafe to the village. The cafe is such a vibrant friendly place for all members of the community to go to and Dorne and her staff are so welcoming.

Helen Kittendorf ~ For all the work she does on the Village Hall committee, especially the catering at events.

Toni and Toby Leeman ~ For their volunteering to the Scouts group, specifically the Beavers and Cubs group. They give their own time every single week, not expecting anything in return, benefiting dozens of kids of Stockton and surrounding area.

Becky Makepeace ~ For her dedication to supporting families in the village.

Seb Neale ~ For helping the Nelson Club voluntarily with their maintenance etc. If anyone needs any help at home he is the first to offer up his services. He has helped villagers in emergency situations and with his background in the army he is good in a crisis.

David Noon ~ He clears the path this side of The Hill throughout the year in bad weather too and has done so for many years. In doing so makes the path safer to use.

Rachel Stubbings ~ For not only organising some fab events at the Nelson Club for adults and children of the village, but she also helps out on the PTA for the School

Dave Checkley, Jim Gaskins, Kerry Rowe, Mandy Gaskins ~ For all their hard work keeping the church yard tidy. It's looking so much better than it has in years. They transformed a well-overgrown churchyard to a very tidy, good-looking area using their own equipment until the whole area was done.

The decision over who should become Villager of the Year was reached by each parish councillor ranking all of these nominations on their merit and then totalling a final score.

The outcome was to confirm Dave Checkley, Jim Gaskins, Kerry Rowe, Mandy Gaskins as Villagers of the Year; in second place was Becky Makepeace and in third place was David Noon.

It has been really encouraging to see so many people take an interest in building our community by making these nominations. It also gives me great pleasure in saying a great big THANK YOU to all the people who were nominated for giving up their time and their hard work and dedication in making life in our wonderful community even better.

Howard Collerson

(Parish Council Chairman)

Stratford on Avon District Council Recycling Update

From Monday 14 April 2025, residents in Stratford-on-Avon District will be able to recycle more from their doorsteps.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is introducing an additional recycling service for the collection of plastic bags and wrapping, collected fortnightly within your normal fully commingled recycling service.

Recycled plastic bags and wrapping can be used to make new plastic products such as plastic packaging, 'bags for life', boxes, bins, and agricultural and construction materials.

Recycling plastic bags and wrapping is easy! Just make sure that:

1. Your plastic bags and wrapping should be empty and free from food residue and other contaminations.
2. Place your plastic bags and wrapping into your recycling bin, **loose**, with your other recyclables.
3. Place your recycling bin at the kerbside on your collection day.

Items should not be put within one another or fill bags with recycling.

What can now be recycled:

All plastic bags
Confectionary wrappers
Foil lined packaging
Cheese, fish, and meat wrapping
Outer layer bags and wrapping
Plastic film and sleeves
Bubble wrap and cling film
Fruit and vegetable net bags

What **not** to include:

Pouches, sachets and packets - microwaveable food, baby/pet food, cosmetics, detergent and cleaning
Balloons
Blister packs, pills, and tablets packaging
Compostable or biodegradable bags and wrapping
Crisp tubes
Disposable gloves or masks
Foam or polystyrene of any kind
Plastic straws or cutlery
Textiles and clothing - put these in a bag at the side of your bin

Find out more on SDC's recycling webpages:

Our Recycling Collection | Stratford-on-Avon District Council



STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL

Meetings held every 3rd Monday in Village Hall 7.15pm.

Full copies of approved minutes available from Clerk to Parish Council

Mr. W.J. Robinson Tel: 01926 814094 or

website .www.stockton-warks-pc.gov.uk

Please note this is an informal record only, for a full record please refer to the authorized minutes on our website.

STOCKTON PARISH COUNCIL - APRIL 2025 MEETING

Village Facilities - Parking in The Square: Following complaints about careless parking in The Square, the parish council will contact Warwickshire Highways about painting a “Bus Stop” box on the road surface.

Solar panels for the Village Hall - the parish council agreed to support in principle the bid from the Village Hall Committee for a grant from Stratford District Council to install solar panels to reduce heating costs. **The Barley Mow wall:** the low wall at the entrance to The Barley Mow car park has been further damaged and is now a danger to pedestrians on the footpath. The parish council will draw this to the attention of Warwickshire Highways. The parish council’s mowing contractor has complained about **dog poo** that has been left on a grassed area in George Street so they could not mow the area. Please be considerate to others and clear up after your dog

Warwickshire Highways Action Fund - Warwickshire CC have a £1,000,000 fund for highways projects that parish councils can bid for up to a maximum grant of £25K. The parish council will look at projects that could be funded together with some matched funding from parish council reserves.

Villager of the Year 2024 - Once again the parish council has received an overwhelming response with 24 nominations for 12 nominees. The parish council decided that the Villager of the Year Award for 2024 should go to the group of four people (**Dave Checkley, Kerry Rowe, Jim and Mandy Gaskins**) that took on the task of clearing up the churchyard. The second place went to Becky Makepeace for her support for families in the village and the third place to David Noon for maintaining the footpaths on The Hill. Please see elsewhere in The News for full details of the nominations. Congratulations to all those who were nominated for their part in improving village life and thanks to those who made the nominations.

Planning Matters: 11 Victoria Terrace, rear extension (25/00747) - the parish council will respond before the consultation deadline.

Mick Childs: The parish council were made aware of the recent death of Mick Childs who served as the village handyman for many years. It paid tribute to Mick for his service to the village that often went beyond his paid duties.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be the Annual Parish meeting followed by the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council. The Annual Parish Meeting is

an opportunity for any parishioner to address the parish council on any matter that concerns them. The Clerk will give the financial report and the Chairman will give his annual report.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DATE AND START TIME OF THIS IS DIFFERENT TO THE USUAL COUNCIL MEETINGS. IT WILL START AT 7.00PM ON THURSDAY 15TH MAY 2025 IN THE VILLAGE HALL.

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

andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Local Councillor update for Stockton News May 25

I've been producing these reports for Stockton News for 8 years now as your County Councillor (and jointly as your SDC councillor since 2023). You may think it seems longer.

I feel it is important that I regularly attend Stockton Parish councils and public meetings, so I can give and receive feedback and answer questions first hand. I also believe in the importance of me effectively representing Stockton at WCC and SDC. My excellent attendance at both reflects that.

As your Councillor, I try to be as informative, helpful and responsive as possible. Always responding to concerns, I do so in a practical, realistic and pragmatic way, meaning that I don't always say what people want to hear, nor raise expectations falsely, but will go out of my way to help wherever possible.

I first became a Councillor to help local people, who need it the most (sick, vulnerable, people who struggle to access the internet etc.) and those who can't help (or do things for) themselves. That still holds true today.

I know that Stockton News is published before the start of the month so I'm firstly asking you to vote in the WCC elections on 1st May and secondly to vote for me. If I do not get re-elected to WCC, I will still be your SDC councillor to May 27, although it may be extended to May 28, depending on local government reorganisation.

A busy month, lots of emails, calls, meetings etc. I've also been out and about delivering leaflets etc and talking to residents, especially those with friendly dogs and cats. Recently, I've had an interesting discussion on

Facebook with someone who when losing the argument (I would say that ha !) said I was belittling them when I was actually pointing out facts that would have taken them less than a minute to verify. I pointed the facts out in a fair and reasonable way. Frequently I get contacted for help with people who start the communication with 'I know you're not my councillor but.....' . A Councillor is for 4 years not just for elections.

Local government reorganisation

An article in the Local Government Chronicle by Mark Smulian on 21/3/25 summarised the situation succinctly (I've slightly condensed)

Warwickshire councils (WCC + the 5 Districts and Boroughs) put both a single county and two-unitary options to local government minister

McMahon in response to a call for interim proposals on reorganisation.

The county council and its five districts are working together with WCC producing an interim plan for a county unitary, in preference to the two unitary plan backed by districts. The county council's interim plan said: "A single tier of local government would cover the whole of Warwickshire County and preserve the economic area."

Warwickshire Councils in the north of the county (North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby BCs) serve 323,000 people and Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon DCs to the south have a 295,000 population between them.

It said in a two unitary model, each new council would have very different financial challenges, "with issues of scale potentially affecting financial sustainability. Further work is needed to disaggregate costs to better quantify this risk".

It said any proposed Northern Warwickshire Council "would be significantly more exposed to the business rates reset, with correspondingly higher grant income than a southern unitary. Conversely, the south would be more exposed to council tax risk and impacts of national funding reform which would see grant funding redistributed based on deprivation and council tax equalisation in future."

However districts/boroughs though wish to still explore the two-unitary option and in a recent report it was noted that : "A single unitary would also be significantly exposed to the business rates reset and funding reform.

However, a more balanced spread of funding sources would help spread financial risk."

The report also noted "at present, there is not unanimity among the six principal councils. More work will be done to identify which structure will feature in the proposal submitted by 28 November, with a view to reaching agreement upon it.

"However, all councils recognise that ultimately there might be competing proposals."

Basically the message is watch this space

Warwickshire's High Sheriff reflects on historic year

As her tenure as High Sheriff of Warwickshire comes to a close - the county's first Sikh woman to hold this prestigious office - Rajvinder Kaur Gill looks back on a year of service, learning, and community engagement.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6140/warwickshire-high-sheriff-reflects-on-an-historic-year-of-service>

The Bike Month Challenge 2025

There is an extra incentive to get those bikes out, as throughout May, Warwickshire County Council is supporting Love to Ride's Bike Month 2025 Challenge, which aims to get businesses, communities and individuals to take up cycling.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6135/ride-five-miles-this-may-with-love-to-ride-warwickshire>

Free event for learner drivers, parents and carers

Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership are excited to announce an event, on 30 April, designed to support parents and learner drivers to navigate learning to drive.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6137/together-on-the-learning-to-drive-journey-free-event-for-learner-drivers-parents-and-carers->

World Health Day 2025

Throughout April, Warwickshire County Council is supporting World Health Day and raising awareness of the importance of health.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6133/council-promotes-health-and-wellbeing-services-in-warwickshire-for-world-health-day>

Top community safety priorities for Warwickshire

Organisations tasked with community safety matters in Warwickshire have come together to share and review the results of their latest public surveys.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6138/residents-reveal-their-top-community-safety-priorities-for-warwickshire>

Finding hope through volunteering

Over the past 3 years more than a thousand Ukrainian nationals have begun a new chapter in Warwickshire.

This was enabled through over 950 hosted relationships and the support from generous Warwickshire residents.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6142/finding-hope-through-volunteering>

Better prepared for industrial accidents

If you live near a site that handles industrial materials, you can read #Warwickshire Resilience Forum's tips on how to become #BetterPrepared for industrial accidents, at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/industrial-accidents-major-fires/>

Fire Service On-Call Recruitment

Applications for on-call firefighters in Henley-in-Arden, Wellesbourne, Bidford, Polesworth & Southam open soon
WFRS is looking for dedicated, community-minded people to join the team
Register your interest to be the first to know once applications go live:
<https://ow.ly/3iMr50ViXws>

Do you live within a 5-minute drive, walk or cycle from Southam Fire Station?

Applications for on-call firefighters will be opening soon and we're looking for dedicated, community-minded people to step forward and join our team. Be the first to know when applications open, register your interest today, click here to register your interest: <https://ow.ly/3iMr50ViXws>

WFRS protection team re-inspection

WFRS have had their "cause for concern" discharged following a recent reinspection from HMICFRS.

The service has taken significant steps forward and implemented robust plans to manage their protection activity.

Read more <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce306x6n215o>

Improve your home fire safety by quitting smoking

Smoking is still a leading cause of deadly fires in the home, with more people dying in fires caused by cigarettes and smoking than any other cause. Find out how quitting smoking can be good for your health on more ways than one: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6139/improve-the-fire-safety-of-your-home-by-quitting-smoking>

Enhancing patient safety with Hospital to Home service)

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) is helping hospital patients return home safely with their Hospital to Home service.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6120/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-enhancing-patient-safety-with-hospital-to-home-service>

Accommodation-related support

Accommodation-related support provided to residents in Warwickshire changed from 1 April 2025, aiming to provide better information and advice.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6119/improved-access-to-accommodation-related-support-for-residents-in-warwickshire-at-risk-of-homelessness>

Cost of Living Support - SDC

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

New contract for short break and family care services

Warwickshire County Council is pleased to announce a new contract to provide a range of short breaks and family care services for eligible children and young people.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6126/local-authority-announces-new-contract-for-short-break-and-family-care-services>

Childminder recruitment

Do you enjoy working with children?

Find out more about becoming a childminder and the range of support that is available in Warwickshire: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childcare/become-childminder>

Summer opening and recycling centres

Warwickshire County Council is reminding residents that recycling is even easier with extended summer opening times now in operation.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6136/longer-summer-opening-makes-recycling-easier-at-local-centres>

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. 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=IwAR3vkf03zQgXUsEHH04ODeqfid1b1msbwpVg8DG6nQn47HoAcwmw5LL9Joc>

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

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

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>

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 –

The council have taken away my allotment and I can't understand why. I've completely lost the plot.

A Council worker threw me out the local park today. I was trying to arrange squirrels by size. Guess they don't like me critter sizing!

I contacted the Council EH team about some rabbit holes in my garden and they said I needed to contact the Burrough (Burrow) Surveyor.

I rang the council and asked if I could have a skip outside my house . Of course you can, they replied. You could do with the exercise I'm in so much trouble. I've not paid the annual charge for my allotment for 2 years. The Council are sending in the bayleaves.

Andy



STOCKTON'S WEATHER STATION - MARCH 2025

Headlines - the sunniest March on record

In March the average **minimum temperature** was 3.8 deg. C, about half a degree above the average (3.2 deg. C.). The lowest temperature was -1.5 deg.C on the 1st. The average **maximum temperature** was 12.6 deg. C, two degrees above the average (10.6 deg.C.). The highest temperature was 17.5 deg. C on the 9th. **Rainfall** was 27.5 mm, about 60% below the average of 46 mm. Nearly all of this rain fell the 22nd with 25mm. It only rained on 4 days. **Sunshine** levels have been 50% above the average for March and on 31 March we had 11.8 hours of sunshine, the sunniest March day in 130 years locally. **Winds** blew mostly from the north, north west and west (18 days).

Trivia of the month -There was a prolonged dry spell from 26 March until 22 April when no rain fell at all in Stockton and this compares to the same time last year when 50mm fell.

The weather monitor

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



MAY

Last month I went to the meeting for all who open their gardens for the National Garden Scheme in Warwickshire and the West Midlands. It's a kind of pep talk to let us know how much was raised in the region last year (£70,000) and to hear representatives from two of the beneficiaries speak of how important the donations are for their charities. Please try to visit some of the gardens listed online, there are many different styles of gardens and often tea and cake to be enjoyed. Bridge Nursery is open every weekend and Bank Holiday Mondays until the end of September where you can see a wide range of plants growing (mostly) quite happily in the heavy clay soil. I raised £1,800 last year so many thanks if you were among my visitors.

There is lots to do later this month when the risk of frosts should be over. You can plant out summer bedding plants half way through May...sow more hardy annuals such as cosmos, marigolds and asters....plant out cabbages, cauliflower and lettuces....sow sweet corn, hardy cucumbers and courgettes.....also sow dwarf French beans and runner beans either direct into the ground or in cell trays for replanting later....feed roses....leave any greenfly to let the birds or ladybirds feast on them. And don't forget to visit some open gardens.

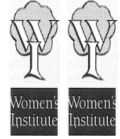
Christine Dakin



WOMENS INSTITUTE

Meeting 7.30pm at Nelson Club first Monday of Month

President:- Sue Gill Tel: 0750 2207380



Sue opened the meeting and after singing Jerusalem Joan thanked everyone who had helped with the recent coffee morning which had been one of our best ones.

We had finalised the arrangements for the Fashion Show - clothes by Wanda of Dunchurch - on Monday the 12th May at the village hall at 7.30 pm. (see poster elsewhere in this edition - open to all, not just the WI).

Joan told us that the diaries are now available and names of those who want one should go on the list. Also the federation raffle tickets are now available. Some events to come are Making the Most of your Sewing Machine, a Guided Walk at Stoneleigh and our Games Evening with fish and chip supper on the 1st of May at the Nelson Club.

Our speaker was then introduced and Paul Wilkins, a genealogist, gave a very interesting talk about the women, who after marching to have the right to serve in WWI, carried out munitions work working 12 hour shifts which was highly dangerous. Male hostility was encountered as resentment grew but eventually it was accepted that the women were doing a good job! The canary girls, as they were known, were munitions workers whose job was filling shells. The girls were prone to suffer from TNT poisoning from the explosive Trinitrotoluene which turned the skin yellow of those who regularly came into contact with it. Some women died from working with TNT and others suffered terrible injuries from accidents and even death.

Our next meeting will be **Monday 5th May 2025 at 7.30 pm** upstairs at the Nelson Club when following Resolutions the speaker is Sue Moore with Mrs Moore's Jury Duty. The competition - a Piece of Embroidery.

Stockton WI would like to thank everyone who was involved in organising, donating, baking and running our recent Coffee Morning in aid of Alzheimer's charity. We would also like to thank Stockton Village Hall, the Nelson Club and Tescos for their generosity. We received a nice letter from the Alzheimer's charity for the 'kind and generous donation' of £709.83.



STOCKTON VILLAGE HALL

Bookings - Helen Kittendorf

Tel: 815376 **email:** helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk

Hourly Rate £9

Thank you to everyone who supports the Village Hall activities – all of the much-needed funds raised are used to keep the building in good repair, pay the running costs and provide a space that the whole community can use. Thinking about holding an event for friends and family – maybe a one-off or perhaps a regular event? Then please consider the Village Hall – we have parking, good kitchen facilities, disabled access, a stage and tables and chairs – contact Helen on the number above for more information or to arrange a viewing.

Advance Notice - we will be holding our AGM on Thursday 26th June at 6.30pm in the Village Hall – all are welcome to attend.

Please join us at one of our regular events: this month the Coffee Morning will be on **Saturday 3rd** from 10am-midday, the Whist Drive is on **Saturday 10th** at 7.30pm and the Lunch Club on **Wednesday 14th** at 12.30pm at The Crown – it would be great to see you.

We also have other great activities going on including:

Every Monday - Senior Day Centre - 9am - 3pm

Every Tuesday – Clubbercise – 7.30pm - 8.30pm

Every Wednesday - Lazy Cat Yoga - 7.30pm - 9pm

Every Friday – Toddlersaurs - 9.30am - 11.00am

The next Stockton Cinema Night is on **Saturday 31st May** - if you want to join the mailing list for Stockton Cinema, please contact Steve at stevekittendorf@hotmail.co.uk, to find out what film is coming up and the supper on offer.

Don't forget! We are having a VE Day 80th Anniversary Afternoon Tea with Music on **Saturday 10th May** from 2-4pm to remember and reminisce priced at £7.50 per person – if you would like to join us booking is essential – please let Helen know either by phone or email, using the contact details above.

We have set up a Foodbank Donation Point in the Village Hall with items to be donated to the Fosse Foodbank. For an up-to-date list of urgently needed items please visit their website: <https://fosse.foodbank.org.uk/>. 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

Just for fun May

1. Everyone's a
2. Full of Eastern Promise
3. In 1988 who became the first British golfer to win the US Masters tournament?
4. Which astronomical feature takes its name from the Latin for 'cloud'?
5. The island of Madeira is in which ocean?
6. What makes your hands as soft as your face
7. What makes Tea Bags make Tea?
8. Beer at home means

Answers to April's Just for fun

1. Sheffield
2. H. G. Wells
3. Danger Mouse
4. Tony
5. Fudge
6. Shake n Vac
7. Smash
8. Fruit Gums



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

Stockton PC were drawn to play a strong Whitnash Windmill team in the second round of the 2025 Euro Cup for Clubs on 15th April. A valiant effort by the Stockton squad ended in a very narrow 2-3 defeat, with the final decider 10-13 to Whitnash.

The West Midlands Summer League started on 9th April, with teams from Stockton, Solihull, Hampton-in-Arden, Coventry, and Whitnash playing a round robin over 14 weeks. Matches are played on Wednesday evenings and will involve all of the top players in the Heart of England Region. Stockton are fielding two teams – The Knights and The Yeomen.

On the domestic side Catherine Black is Winter League Champion! In what became a two-horse race, the championship was only settled with the final game on 29th March in which a win by Catherine put her 2 points ahead of Steve Neale. Congratulations to Catherine for adding the Winter League title to her 2024 Summer League and Singles League titles.

The 2025 Stockton Summer League started with the melee on 5th April when 15 players turned up on a bright spring day. After three rounds there were just two unbeaten players – Steve Neale and Jeff Rand, Steve taking the honours with a +25 point advantage, well ahead of Jeff's +11. The best of those with two wins was Richard Collyer with +15.

After two rounds of the Summer League Steve Neale is the only unbeaten player, and in the annual Singles League Anthea Sansom and Nouri Beladaci are tied in first place with eight wins each, closely followed by Catherine Black on 7 wins.

The next Open Melee will be **on 3rd May**. Everyone is welcome – we will provide the boules and tuition on the rules.

Stockton's Archives

These autobiographical writings last appeared in Stockton News (a subscription only magazine) in 2004, when Mr. Martin Robinson was Editor. We thought it might be of interest to our readers.

STOCKTON AND I

(Part 16)

BUT THIS ISN'T the adventure I started to tell. By the time all this delightful memory was being etched, it had begun to snow and to turn colder, and by the time we had to drag ourselves away from that sumptuous farmhouse meal, the snow lay thick on the ground. Bob discovers some fault had developed in the three-speed hub which necessitates that he must run with the bike to start the engine, and I must go ahead a little way and hope to mount the pillion seat by a flying leap as he goes along. We both achieve our separate parts, so far so good, then Bob finds he has to hold the small operating lever of the three-speed in position with his fingers, which naturally isn't very comfortable, so he asks: 'Can you get a penny out of your pocket, Vic? We may be able to wedge the thing.' I manage to, and we drop the first coin between us. I manage again and we succeed. My friend says: 'We're all right now if only we can keep going. Goodness knows if we'd ever get away again if we have to stop.' Alright, but it was so cold after a few miles, and after more miles so much colder that I was driven to express doubts as to whether I could stick it out. But Bob says: 'Oh, we can't possibly stop now. Stick it!' I did my best. I don't know how the driver was feeling, but my numbed legs were making it difficult not to recall all those polar expeditions we had read about, with the symptoms of frostbite. To cut the story short, Bob resisted all my pleadings to allow me to stamp some life back into my limbs, and we reached Outwell where, at the garage near the footpath mentioned before, the bike was usually left. I slid off into the snow and, remembering about polar exploits, reminded my fellow explorer that one should rub snow into the frosted limbs. I really thought we would have to do this but very, very slowly life and use returned and we were soon over the field; hot tea and all was well.

I hadn't gathered until this visit how much earlier and how much more severe the wintry conditions developed in this area. Bob informed me they would soon be skating into Wisbech again, down river and back, to go to the cinema, and seemed delighted about it. No wonder old Mr Martin, the Southam saddler who hailed from the Wisbech area, astounded me as a lad,

on the rare occasions when the Blue Lias reservoir froze over, by his smooth artistry at cutting figures of eight and so on.

I have said that I paid Bob Rumbelow a second visit after his marriage; he and his wife were then occupying a one-story cottage, quite a fascinating little place built too early to be called a bungalow. Their welcoming little gathering of friends one evening – which I was assured was a feature of their neighbourhood – made me think they had quite a lot in common with what we read of Canada. It was November again, four years after my first visit, and we spent an enjoyable evening, that party night, at table-games: tip-it and the like, with cosy fire and lights aglow, these lights provided by Bob's own installation of an intriguing acetylene plant.

We had another motorbike ride on this visit; I had made the journey there on my old Rudge Multi and, remarking that I hadn't at that time seen the coast, Bob proposes that we run to Hunstanton one day, which we do, deviating a little from the road to take in a glimpse of Sandringham House. I relate this only to remark on a queer incident as we stood on the beach at Hunstanton: looking out to sea, I noticed the sun was going down that way, and as I knew we were on the east coast, how could that be? I was grateful to my companion for dispelling my bewilderment by drawing out in the sand the contours of the Wash – which I should have known – which proved that this is the only west-facing resort on the east coast of Britain!

We had no snow that day, and in any case, even if the old Multi-gears needed no gearbox, neither did we have a three-speed hub to require pennies to wedge it. We did have a tyre burst on the return journey, though, and no patch big enough to repair it, but were quickly saved by the timely arrival of a RAC man who fixed us up.

Bob later moved into Wisbech town, lost his first wife, and later married again. For some years we have lost touch and now and then I threaten to spend a day or two hunting him down.

Back to the Midlands and Coventry, where Bob and I found time amongst those long working hours to explore the city's eating possibilities. Many a grand feed we found, usually on Friday pay-night; outstanding now those grills and chips, at the Craven Arms Grillroom, with a bottle of Export to wash it down; this last a preference of my friend, who was a better judge of ale than I have ever been.

So to another adventure in the snow. It would be 1916, I think, Christmas Day falling on a Sunday, and we had been uncertain whether we would be working Saturday morning. Someone decided we could dispense with those few hours, and I thought I might as well ride home on the Friday evening and gain an extra night at home for the holiday. But on Friday morning it started to snow, and as I went out to lunch, I decided it would be better to wait for Saturday's daylight to contend with the twelve-mile ride in the slush. Knocking off at five, though, I found the snow had stopped falling and the slush was almost gone, so yielded to the Christmas temptation of that extra

night in home's cosy glow. On Bill's advice (not forgetting my bicycle) I set out; but what I hadn't allowed for was the fact that while the traffic in town had churned the snow practically all away, no sooner was I out in the country than I found things much different. Remember that there was not so much traffic away from town in those days, still I managed not too badly until at the top of the hill at Princethorpe, that nicely-named village at the half-way home mark, I decided it would be safer to walk down – you know how it is to put on your brakes on a snowy surface – so I dismounted and started to walk down.

I'm not going to pretend to any particular bravery here, but I am going to say in my own defence, and in case you say I imagined things, that I honestly hadn't been thinking of any ghostly matters whatsoever, though Christmas-time, darkness and the proximity of Princethorpe Priory [now Princethorpe College – Ed] could easily enough have been conducive to such thoughts. No, I think my head was too full of the anticipation of that holly-decorated home scene.

But I hadn't taken many steps down the hill when I heard other steps crunching in the snow, sounding from the far side of the hedgerow on my left, which was puzzling as that side was extra darkened by the wood which then grew almost up to the roadside. 'Ah, an echo', I supposed as the steps were about as regular as mine. To prove this to myself I varied my steps, trotted, hesitated and slowed, and sure enough the other steps seemed to do likewise. Then, just as I was feeling reassured, unmistakably the other steps were quicker than mine, much quicker, and now were running fast. My thoughts ran fast, too, and I remembered a gate half-way down the hill and fastened on to the idea that my 'echo' was trying to reach this gate first and so confront me.

'I'll chance the skidding,' thought I and jumped on my bike and, far from applying brakes, sped like anything down the long slope, luckily not skidding at all, away from the shadowy wood and into the comforting surroundings of Princethorpe village itself.

And that's all there is to it; make of it what you will; I never made any more of it. Long years afterwards I was to purchase and cart away some of the cordwood [wood cut up and bundled – Ed] from this very spot, from the very shadowing trees which had now been felled, but, although I thought of that little episode, no intuition from closer association offered any explanation.

My mention of the Priory in this ghostly connection reminds me that I had heard a tale years ago, and from old people then, of some young girl student there who was murdered in a train in Catesby tunnel. Whether that could have been round about Christmas-time, going on or returning from a holiday, I'm not clear. Another memory: when we youths used to ride to the Hippodrome, as recorded earlier, we read of a midnight robbery at the Priory, and we were pretty sure we must have been passing the entrance gate near

the bottom of the hill at about the same time. We weren't to know it at the time, of course, but it added to the eeriness of that vicinity.

Less ghostly experiences were looming up, though. Somehow my brothers and I had never been carried away by any of those passing spells of uniform glamour, often brought about by the home leaves of some fellow villagers, resplendent though their scarlet or blue used to be. Nevertheless we were each to don the dowdier khaki. We had attested under the Derby scheme of 1915 [By the end of 1915 215,000 men had been enlisted over 2,000,000 had attested an obligation to come if called up – Ed]. Why? Oh, well, you know what youth is: perhaps a fed-up moment, perhaps because everyone else did. I know one or two of us at the Maudslay got cussed at the recruiting office and told we were only seeking a day off, as we knew our work was so important. Someone got busy in early 1917 and Wal, Ern and I were all in the army within a month or so. Wal was in the Grenadier Guards in February, Ern in the Gloucesters in March, and after my 21st birthday and Easter Monday I had to report to Budbrooke Barracks on 10th April. I remember the Board passing me AI, until the Staff Sergeant who weighed and measured me in my nakedness said: 'What's the matter with your hand?



Victor Neal in RAMC uniform

Did the Board notice this?' and back I went and was reduced to BII immediately; that was my gammy hand that I had got tangled in the conveyor at the cement works.

When I was back in the Staff Sergeant's hands, he said: 'What do you want to go in?' and I, wondering if I could join my brother Wal, said: 'The Grenadier Guards.' He had just slammed the measurer down on my head and said: 'Five foot seven and a quarter. You're a bloody fine Grenadier! You can only get in the RAMC with that category,' and while I hesitated, he went on: 'You bloody fool – they're in billets at Blackpool!' 'Put me down,' said I. This was an illustrative beginning – I mean, offering me a choice that was no choice.

So one night only at the local barracks and off to Blackpool the next day.

Blackpool Tower and the Army not being Stockton, perhaps I'd better keep my notes on these connections as brief as possible.

I naturally couldn't help some eagerness as our train was nearing the coast for, until then, holidays for the millions hadn't yet succeeded holidays for the few, and I had never seen the sea, although it had been impressed on us

that it was part of an Englishman's heritage. The Army, whatever else it did, soon remedied that: it gave me six months at Blackpool, which was so much more marvellous then than it could ever be as I've grown older; it was to give me more than a year at a premier French resort, Trouville-sur-Mer, adjacent to the famous Deauville, to say nothing of the crossings of the sea itself.

Training at Blackpool: after a fortnight in the Provisional Company billeted in Palatine Road, to good old Troughton's at 6 West Caroline Street, a billet like a second home. My grateful thanks to them after all these years. Fourteen of us were here, and goodness knows how many others before and afterwards, to retain – or who should retain, providing they were permitted to return safely from what travels followed this training (and feeding) – those grateful memories.

Charlie Bush (Co-op manager from Coventry), Tom Syrett (butcher from the same city), Billy Bird (restaurateur, Birmingham), Tom Gregory (milk roundsman, also Birmingham); Taffy – where are you all now? Why doesn't one of us seek out another? I've threatened it long enough.
(To be continued)

Photo from Stockton's Archives



STOCKTON'S NEWS FROM THE PAST - NO.16 - MR GRIFFIN'S FUNERAL

From a newspaper report of June 1905 - Death and Funeral of Mr John Griffin - The death of Mr John Griffin took place under painfully sudden circumstance at his residence at Southam on Monday evening. Deceased had not been in the best of health for some years and had frequent spells of indisposition from which, however, he soon recovered and continued his many public and private duties as cheerfully as before, so that his death came as a very great and unexpected shock, not only to his fellow townsmen but also to his widow and relatives. Mr Griffin appeared to be in his usual health on Saturday but a short and painful illness set in on Sunday, death resulting from internal complications on Monday evening. Deceased was essentially a busy man and gave up much of his time to the service of the public. In private life he was a lime and cement manufacturer at Stockton, a wine and spirit merchant at Southam and a farmer in both parishes. He was a vice-chairman of the Southam Board of Guardians, a member of the Southam Rural District Council, assessor of taxes for Stockton, president of the Southam Building Society, Chairman of the late School Board for Stockton and of the school managers, a director of the Southam Gas Co. Ltd., an hon. member of the Ancient Order of Foresters and in fact a prominent member of practically all the local institutions. He was in his 70th year and although ailing at times the public had fervently hoped that he might be long spared to continue his useful work. His death consequently creates a loss to the town and district which it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to replace. Deceased was of a philanthropic nature, a free and unostentatious giver to this in need and none, except the many actual recipients of his generosity, will ever know the good he so quietly and continuously accomplished. The funeral took place at Southam on Thursday and many tearful faces of his poorer neighbours who had assembled in large numbers to pay their last respects to deceased, testified more than words can do to the great and irreparable loss they have sustained by the death of a real benefactor and true friend to all. In politics deceased had always been a Liberal, but he never allowed politics to get the better of a sounder judgement and was, although always outspoken, respected by all parties. He was, in short, one of those true types of Englishmen, impulsive, cheerful and outspoken, with whom one rarely meets nowadays. The coffin was borne to the grave by six of the deceased's employees where it was placed in the family vault. The wreaths were very numerous, including some of great beauty and many other, simpler tributes from deceased's poorer neighbours.

NOTE - John Griffin is buried in one of the tomb graves in Stockton churchyard on the left hand side of the main path.



Does anyone information on this photograph of men marching along Becks Lane?

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