

STOCKTON'S NEWS

keeping you informed

March 2026

Issue 184

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**Marie Foster, Mary Lee and Marion Stringer
busy knitting for the premature baby units. Pg 20**

THE NELSON CLUB at STOCKTON

Napton Road, Stockton Tel: 01926 812613

OPENING HOURS:- Mon - Thurs:- 5pm - 11pm Friday 4pm - 12.00 midnight
Sat 2.00pm - 12.00 midnight Sun 12 Noon - 11pm

10th & 24th - Brewed Awakening - 10.30 - 12.30pm

Every Wednesday Chess Club - 5.30 - 7.30pm

Every Thursday Day Bingo - Doors Open 1.30pm for 2.00pm start

Every Saturday Evening Bingo - Eyes down 8.00pm

14th - Six Nations Super Saturday

28th - Third Alert - Live Band

Join us for sporting events with BT and Sky Sports

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

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

Find us on **Facebook & Twitter**

Stockton Football & Cricket Club

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

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

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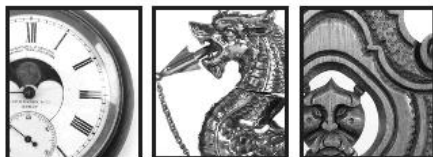
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- Greyscale £26.00
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**50% discount for 6 or more
consecutive issues.**

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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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.



Village Calendar



Regular Weekly Village Events

Monday :~

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 :~

Seated Chair Exercise ~ Village Hall ~ 11a.m. ~ **starting 5th March**

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

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

Friday :~

Toddlersaurs: Village Hall ~ 9.45- 11.15am (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 ~ Village Hall ~ 7.30pm ~ **2nd**

Parish Council Meetings: 3rd Monday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.15pm ~ **16th**

Tuesday

Brewed Awakening: Nelson Club ~ 10.00am - 12.30pm ~ **10th & 24th**

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

Wednesday

Friends Lunch: Every 2nd Wed ~ The Crown ~ 12.30pm ~ **11th**

Church Lunch: Every 3rd Wednesday ~ 12noon

Friday

Community Singing Group ~ Village Hall ~ 6.30 p.m. ***Bi-weekly 6th March**

Quiz Night ~ Village Hall ~ 7 pm ~ * **starting 13th March**

Saturday

Coffee Morning & Library: 1st Sat ~ 10am - 12Noon ~ Village Hall ~ **7th**

Whist Drive: Every 2nd Sat ~ Village Hall ~ 7.30pm ~ **14th**

Stockton Cinema: Every last Saturday ~ Village Hall ~ 7.00pm ~ **28th**

Pétanque Melee ~ F.C. & C.C. ~ All Welcome ~ 2.00pm ~ **7th**

STOCKTON CHURCH

METHODIST AND ANGLICANS IN UNITY

The Bridges Group of Parishes

www.thebridgesgroup.org.uk

THE BRIDGES GROUP	1st Lent 2 <i>purple</i>	8th Lent 3 <i>purple</i>	15th Mothering Sunday <i>purple</i> Holy Comm 9.00am	22nd Passion Sunday <i>purple</i>	29th Palm Sunday <i>red</i> Procession 9.00am Followed by Morning Worship	5th April Easter Sunday <i>white</i> Morning Worship 9.00am
PRIORS HARDWICK	Morning Worship 9.00am	Evening 5.00pm	BCP Holy Comm 9.00am			Morning Worship 10.30am
PRIORS MARSTON	Morning Worship 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am	Holy Comm CW 10.30am	Morning Worship 10.30am		Morning Worship 10.30am
WORM LEIGHTON				Morning Worship 10.30am		
NAPTON	Holy Comm CW 10.30am		Family Service 10.30am	Evensong 5.00pm		Holy Comm Easter Sunday 10.30am
STOCKTON	Morning Worship 10.30am	Holy Comm Methodist Tradition 10.30am		Holy Comm CW 10.30am	Holy Comm CW 'The Gathering'	Morning Worship 10.30am
LOWER SHUCK-BURGH				Holy Comm BCP 9.00am		

THE BRIDGES GROUP NOTICE BOARD

LOWER SHUCKBURGH, NAPTON, STOCKTON
PRIORS MARSTON, PRIORS HARDWICK & WORMLEIGHTON

Programme for Children and Youth

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

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

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

Mid-week programme for Adults - Home Bible Study Groups

The following groups meet for Bible study, prayer and fellowship 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

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 07771335273
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 07902775078
Stockton School	Head Teacher Mrs. A. Bedgood 812483
Little Acorns	813789
Toddlersaurs	Becca Makepeace 07733107197

Group Scout Leader/Scouts	Jo Brough 07568 653158
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 07706155358
Magazine Treasurer	Steve Kittendorf 07706155358

LOCAL EVENTS

Events and News from Our Neighbouring Villages



Southam Gardening Club

thesouthamgardeningclub.blogspot.co.uk

Tel: 01926 813986 or 815086.



Andrew Mikolajski will give an illustrated talk
‘The Unkindest Cut’

which will be all about pruning, including a demonstration,
7.30pm on Monday **16th March**

at the **Communal Hall, Tithe Lodge**, Little Park, off Park Lane, Southam.

All are welcome. Non-members £4.50.

Refreshments, from 7.15pm, included.

Long Itchington History Group

Meeting at Community Centre 7.30pm

www.longitchingtonhistory.org.uk

WEDNESDAY **11th MARCH** STARTING AT 7.30.

“Sir Frank Whittle” - Midland Air Museum.

For further details phone 07745110666.

To request transport call 07771953139

Programmes available on request.

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



GALANOS HOUSE
EASTER BINGO
MONDAY 23RD MARCH 7PM
LOTS OF PRIZES TO BE WON & A GENEROUS RAFFLE
All proceeds go to the Galanos House Residents Amenity fund which provides the residents with opportunities to further enhance their lives.
65 47 76 7 3



Galanos House & Community Hub
Banbury Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2BL
@ RBLCommunityHub ☎ 01926 812185 Ext 5365



Bring your own project and enjoy the company.
Includes refreshments. £2 per person.
SIT AND CRAFT
17th March, 21st April, 19th May,
16th June, 21st July at 7pm
3rd Tuesday of each month. Everyone welcome



Community Hub and Cafe
Banbury Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 2BL
@ X RBLCommunityHub Tel: ☎ 01926 812185



Crime Prevention Event

Stratford District Council's Rural Crime Advisors will be holding a crime prevention drop-in session at:

The Community Hub and Café (Galanos House)

Tuesday 10th March

Between 10:00am and 11:30am

If you are interested in crime prevention ideas for your house, shed, outbuildings, bicycle, car, van, caravan, horses

or trailer please pop in and see us.

Equipment available to view on the day will include:

Window alarms, van alarms, shed alarms, switch timers, TV simulators, can hideaways, faraday pouches, personal alarms, RFID card blockers, purse dipping bells, property marking kits and property marking pens.

A selection of security leaflets / booklets / window stickers and some crime prevention equipment will also be available for you to take away.

VILLAGE MATTERS



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



Create and Play in the Church - Open ended play, snacks and songs for all
3rd Building with boxes **10th** Let's paint flowers **17th** Sensory bottles **24th** Easter things - Easter break for two weeks.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday wishes for this month go to Amy Cooper, Josh Tolley, Leanne Rudge and Gina Rudge

To include birthdays/anniversary please contact magazine.

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.

Mobile Library Stockton Church 2.10 - 2.30pm **13th**

For further information, ring Mobile Library enquiries on 01926 851031 or

Mobile Library on-line at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mobilelibraries.

Refuse & Recycling Missed Bins Tel: 01789 260616

Food Waste - weekly **Grey Lid Bin - 3 weekly - 6th & 27th**

Blue Lid Bin & Green Bin - 2 weekly - 6th & 20th

Southam Pharmacy: 4 Market Hill, CV47 0HE Tel: 812287

Opening Hours:- Mon - Friday 8.30am - 6.15pm Sat 9.00am - 5pm

Wheelchair Short-term Loan:-

Stockton Church - 812383

Stockton's News - 813730/812887

**PLEASE NOTE THERE WAS NO PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING IN FEBRUARY DUE TO REFIT OF VILLAGE
HALL FLOORING**



News From Andy Crump

WCC Councillor for Southam, Stockton & Napton

SDC Councillor for Southam Central and East and Stockton

Mobile: 07771335273 - ellrcrump@warwickshire.gov.uk

andrew.crump@stratford-dc.gov.uk

The Local Councillor update for Stockton News March 26

Time is going quickly this year and my workload is still as heavy as ever. Recently I've helped 2 Stockton organisations get grants as well dealing with resident queries, potholes and Stockton Crossroads RTCs – see below for a major update. With one exception, a significant number of local residents welcomed the news – however we are only at the start of a long road (no pun on this occasion). The person said the crossroads works would cause more traffic/journeys, it was only a simple junction and the money (her council tax) would be better spent elsewhere. I did say to her that although it was Shrove Tuesday, not April 1st, so I assumed she was joking. She wasn't! I did offer her the chance to come to Stockton PC and/or the Stockton Road Safety partnership to explain her interesting viewpoint but I didn't receive an answer.

STOCKTON CROSSROADS - MAJOR UPDATE.

Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning as Winston Churchill once said. .

Many of you may be aware that for the last 12 months or so (interrupted by 2025 WCC Election) I've been trying to get a long-term solution to the ongoing issues with Stockton Crossroads

After the election, I was able to announce that WCC had secured funding to undertake a Feasibility Study of the site and come up with potential designs for the location. I believe that they are not far from completion.

One of the major stumbling blocks has been the cost of any works. However, stubbornness and persistence are some of my strengths (maybe weaknesses at times too) and I have been lobbying hard for a long time now. I put a bid to WCC's Capital Investment Fund for £1.5m for the cost of the works.

On 17th February as part of WCC 's capital budget resolution 26/27 , it was agreed that

The Council will ask officers to bring forward proposals for the following capital investments:

- Home to School Transport Fleet
- Mobile Children's Centres
- Highways Maintenance – Stronger focus on flexibility over the maintenance programme
- Additional Children's Homes
- Changes to investment in schools sufficiency

- Investment in Residential Schools
- Investments in Innovative Technology e.g. BioChar/Waste Incineration
- Solar Panels on car parks and roofs of council buildings
- Stockton Junction

All proposals will continue to be subject to a robust scrutiny process prior to approval to ensure widespread support for capital investments, a strong business case and the deliverability of the project to ensure benefits for those who live, work and visit Warwickshire.

AS USUAL I WILL KEEP RESIDENTS INFORMED OF PROGRESS.

I was saddened to hear the news about the closure of Lloyds Bank later in the year, this is in addition to the announcement about the Original Factory Shop (TOFS). It is a shame to see its Closing Down Signs when I walk past. My thoughts go out to all those who work there, I do hope that they all achieve a positive outcome from this. I know some residents who felt that the staff in those establishments were more than workers but friends, who had time to speak to them and ask how they were. It was more than a job to the staff and they showed true community spirit when dealing with customers.

I will be contacting 'Link' about facilities in the town, particularly how it potentially adversely affects elderly and vulnerable residents.

Whilst, the TOFS car park has been potentially earmarked for development, we must protect the shop itself as well as Lloyds bank, and ensure that they remain as retail outlets. We have already seen with the granting of permission to demolish the Police Station and replace with 21 flats (a terrible decision in my opinion and I will maintain that stance even if I get into trouble for saying so – SOME OF MY POLITICAL OPPONENTS READ THESE UPDATES). That decision certainly won't help maintain the vitality of the town in my opinion. I know at least one local business owner who feels the same.

Carriageway Resurfacing Works - Welsh Road East - Monday 23rd Feb to 2nd March 2026

Resurfacing work is due to start on Monday 23rd Feb to 2nd March 2026 (no weekend working planned).

The site extends from the junction of A425 Daventry Rd to the junction of Spitfire Rd - 840 metres.

Resurfacing works will be carried out under a 24hr road closure, working hours 0900 -1530. Outside these times there will be a soft closure operating, allowing access for residents and business.

During working hours residents will need to speak to the traffic management operatives to ensure safe exit and entrance. They will receive a letter too.

Any problems please let me know. There has been a query about potentially digging up the resurfaced road in April – I'm checking with officers.

PLEASE DON'T SHOOT THE Messenger -CHANGED FOR THE BETTER Notification of the traffic lights on the A425 by the Polo Grounds from Monday 23rd February to Friday 20th March 2026. (Movement/Diversion of utility

works) The road closure will now be from 9.30am to 3.30pm on Thursday 12 and Friday 13 March

Have your say on Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has launched a consultation to invite residents to have their say on what Local Government Reorganisation should look like in Warwickshire.

Share your views through this online survey: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation/warwickshire/>

Portraits of the Shire Hall walking tour

A new and exclusive walking tour at Shire Hall, Warwick, is offering art and history lovers a rare opportunity to explore one of the county's historic portrait collections - while directly supporting a major conservation project.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7418/-portraits-of-the-shire-hall-walking-tour-to-support-henry-viii-painting-restoration>

Admissions arrangements 2027/2028

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved updated school admission arrangements for the academic year 2027/2028.

Find out more about what this means: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7424/cabinet-agrees-updated-school-admission-arrangements-for-2027-2028>

Emergency contacts

Do you know who to contact in an emergency?

You can find your key contacts near you on the #Warwickshire Resilience Forum website!

Select a risk and enter your postcode at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/emergency-contacts/>, and find out who's here to help near you.

National HIV Testing Week

This HIV Testing Week residents who are sexually active are being encouraged to get involved in regular HIV testing, which can be at least once year, to help look after their sexual health.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7411/warwickshire-county-council-and-coventry-city-council-highlight-the-importance-of-regular-hiv-testing-during-national-hiv-testing-week>

Share your views about Direct Payments

Residents who use Direct Payments to support their social care needs are invited by Warwickshire County Council to take part in this year's Direct Payments survey.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7410/warwickshire-residents-invited-to-share-their-views-about-direct-payments->

Children's Mental Health Week 2026

To help children and young people feel safe, valued and connected online and in the places where they live, play and learn, Warwickshire services are supporting Children's Mental Health Week 2026.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7407/championing-safe-and-supportive-places-for-young-people-this-mental-health-week>

Celebrating Warwickshire's apprenticeship success

Warwickshire County Council is showcasing the impact of apprenticeships and celebrating the positive role they play during National Apprenticeship Week.

Find out more about apprenticeships in Warwickshire: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7408/celebrating-warwickshire-s-apprenticeship-success>

Safer Internet Day 2026

Safer Internet Day took place on Tuesday 10 February and young people in Warwickshire are being encouraged to stay safe and act responsibly when using Artificial Intelligence.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7404/safer-internet-day-young-people-encouraged-to-use-ai-safely-and-responsibly>

Voice of Warwickshire residents panel sign-up last call

Warwickshire County Council is reminding residents aged 18 and over that while the deadline to sign-up (15 February) is fast approaching there is still time to register to join the online panel.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7413/final-call-for-residents-to-share-their-views-through-voice-of-warwickshire>

How many smoke alarms do you have?

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, as part of the Fire Kills campaign, is asking people to make sure they fit smoke alarms on every level of their home and to test them regularly.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7357/how-many-smoke-alarms-do-you-have->

Warning signs before an electrical fire starts

With so many electrical appliances in our homes, it's crucial to stay vigilant and follow simple safety tips to prevent fires. □ □

□ For essential tips and links to more information click here: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7398/could-you-spot-the-warning-signs-before-an-electrical-fire-starts->

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>

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>

Cost of Living Support - SDC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councillor groans –

Didn't want to continue my job as a florist, there was no Fuchsia in it

I just rang half a dozen of my cricket team pals but they were all out

I entered a speed fishing competition last week. I got first plaice.

I went to lunch with a champion chess player. It took him 8 minutes to pass me the salt

Apparently, keeping tropical fish at home can have a calming effect on the brain
Must be all the indoor-fins.

Andy -07771335273 – 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



STOCKTON VILLAGE HALL

Bookings - Helen Kittendorf Tel: 07902 775078

email: helenkittendorf@hotmail.co.uk

Hourly Rate £10

As the clocks spring forward at the end of the month, it heralds the start of Spring and lighter days and nights, so why not join us at one of our many events! By the time you read this update, the joists and flooring in the Village Hall will have been replaced – this will be a great job done and ensure that it remains in good condition for years to come.

Our usual monthly events are scheduled as followed:

Coffee Morning will be on **Saturday 7th** from 10am-midday

Lunch Club is on **Wednesday 11th** at 12.30pm at The Crown

Quiz Night is on **Friday 13th** starting at 7pm

Whist Drive is on **Saturday 14th** at 7.30pm

Cinema Night is on **Saturday 28th March** at 7pm – if you want to join the mailing list, please contact Steve at stevekittendorf@hotmail.co.uk, to find out what film is coming up and the supper on offer

We are also starting two new great activities – weekly Seated Chair Exercise classes and a bi-weekly Community Singing Group:

The first **Seated Chair Exercise** class will be on **Thursday 5th March** starting at 11am – all are welcome – no need to book, just come along and join in - depending upon numbers the cost will be £3.15-£3.65 per person per class

The first **Community Singing Group** session will be on **Friday 6th March** at 6.30pm - it will be a fun session, good for wellbeing and managing stress. The cost is £2 per person (per session) – no need to book, just turn up on the night

Bookings are now being taken for the production of Oscar Wilde's 'An Ideal Husband' on **Friday 1st May** at 6.30pm and tickets cost £15 – the show is being put on by Aunty Jen Productions who put on the recent pantomime and Murder Mystery Evening, so a great show is guaranteed!

We are also hosting **PSA Testing** on **Saturday 18th April** between 10am-2pm calling all men 40 and over, take a PSA test for prostate cancer and it could save your life. In its early stages, prostate cancer generally produces no symptoms, so it is important to diagnose the disease before symptoms arise and while it is still potentially curable. A PSA test is nothing more than a simple blood test. It's currently the best readily available indicator of a possible prostate problem. So for something so simple that delivers such benefits why wouldn't you invest a few minutes of your time taking a test. It costs £26 and you must pre-book. Go to <https://stocktonvh.mypsatests.org.uk> and book your place.

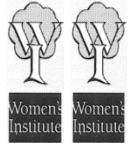
Thank you for your continued support and use of the Village Hall - we hope to see you very soon at one of our events.

The Village Hall Trustees and Management Committee



WOMENS INSTITUTE

Meeting 7.30pm at Village Hall first Monday of Month
President:- Sue Gill Tel: 0750 2207380
Secretary: Joan Ford Tel: 01926 810220



Sue opened our February meeting welcoming the members and a couple of guests and we all sang Jerusalem.

Joan mentioned that we should suggest a Charity for this year's choice. She also told us that the Napton Art Exhibition is to be held on 4th and 5th April this year at Napton Village Hall. Names were also needed for My Fair Lady in March.

There was quite a good turnout for our first regular meeting back and we had a long discussion about our choice of speakers and ideas for events or crafts. The bring and buy stall we held was very successful, there was a table full of items and most people went home with something they didn't know they needed!

Josie told us that this year's Group Meeting competition is for a book marker, any media, and this should be brought to the May meeting so that a winner can go forward to the Group Meeting in June. She also went through the roles of the Committee.

Pauline explained about the payment of subs which are now due. We are coming to the end of our WI year so this is the ideal time for non members to come along to see what we do. If you are interested please ring Joan or Sue on the above numbers. There is no charge for the first visit but you may wish to participate in the raffle. Tea and biscuits are provided.

We ended our meeting with our fun Irish Bingo and we enjoyed it so much we did it twice!

Our photo this month shows Marie Foster who has made hundreds if not thousands of sewn bonding hearts over the years. These are taken to the special care baby unit for mothers and premature babies. Also shown are Mary Lee and Marion Stringer who have knitted so many tiny baby hats and bonding squares. It's amazing how many these three ladies have produced together with Anthea Knight who also has knitted so many items for the babies and mothers over the years.

Our next meeting will be **Monday 2nd March** 2026 at 7.30 pm at the Village Hall. The competition is a small ladies mirror or compact mirror.



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*

Once again it was a very wet January which means not much 'proper' gardening was done so I'm feeling a bit gloomy about all the things that need doing as soon as the weather gets a bit better. I can now own up to being a fair weather gardener along with most other people.

I have a theory that gardening mostly consists of removing stuff including prunings, dead stems, dead plants, grass cuttings (unless you have a mulching mower), leaves in the autumn and weeds. I have creeping buttercup, thistles, ajuga, hairy bittercress, rosebay willow herb, groundsel, docks, dandelions, brambles and nettles. (I've probably missed some). But the one I'm really finding difficult to control is wild carrot. It wasn't here for the first few years (maybe a bird introduced it) but it seeds prolifically often into the middle of a plant making it hard to remove. It has moved all over the site and is threatening to take over. I'm convinced that weeds have some sort of survival instinct because they often put themselves among similar plants or deep under a shrub where they get overlooked unless you have beady eyes like mine! Perhaps I should have a 'Know your Weeds Workshop'?

Other jobs include feeding and pruning roses, sowing hardy annuals, peas, broad beans and parsnips, plant onion sets and shallots.

Christine



STOCKTON'S WEATHER STATION



JANUARY 2026 Headlines - Being in the Midlands we do seem to miss the worst of the winter storms, with no flooding or snow the year.

In January the average minimum temperature was 2.5 deg. C, about half a degree above the average (1.9 deg. C.). The lowest temperature was -6.1 deg. C on the 5th. The average maximum temperature was 6.6 deg. C, half a degree below the average (7.3 deg. C.). The highest temperature was 11.0 deg. C on the 12th. Rainfall was 78.5 mm, about 30% over the monthly average of 61 mm, and half of the rain fell on two days, the 7th and 15th. The wettest day was the 10th with 22 mm. It rained on 16 days. Sunshine levels have been 30 % below the average for January. Winds blew mostly from the north in the first half of the month and then from the south and east in the second half when a high pressure developed over Scandinavia.

Trivia of the month - with only 70% of average sunshine levels, this has been the dullest January since 1997. Over half the days in January saw no sunshine and this continues a trend since last October, making it the dullest three month winter period since 1969.

The weather monitor

Stockton Pétanque



Chair – Catherine Black
Administrator – John Emberton
Club Captain – Rich Rushton
www.stocktonpetanqueclub.org.uk

24 club members attended the Club's annual Awards Evening on 30th January. We started with a take-away meal for everyone, and the formal proceedings opened up with a review of the year from Catherine Black, the Club Chair.

The competition awards were then announced as follows:

- Winter League Champion – Catherine Black
- Summer League Champion – Nouri Beladaci
- Annual Singles Champion – Nouri Beladaci
- Club Pairs Champions – Rich Rushton and Alfie Potter

The accolade of *Player of the Year* went to Nouri Beladaci for his outstanding performances in the Summer and Singles leagues.

The accolade of *Member of the Year* went to Rich Rushton for his great effort in stage managing the extension of our terrain and actively supporting all of the Club's playing and social activities. A special mention was made of Becky Rushton who underpinned all of our social and fund-raising activities, and played an important role in the project to finally obtain a lease with Cemex for SFCC's ongoing use of the playing field.

The evening then concluded with very competitive games of indoor pétanque.

Four teams from Stockton competed in Round 6 of The Heart of England Winter Pairs league on 8th February at Whitnash in a field of 26 pairs. Rich Rushton/Alfie Potter are 2nd in the league with 16 wins from their 20 games, and Nouri Beladaci/Richard Collyer are 3rd with 15 wins from their 20 games, so both Stockton teams are well placed to challenge for the trophy. Catherine Black/Steve Neale are 5th with 12 wins from their 16 games and will have the opportunity of closing the gap to the leaders. Jeff Rand/Gaz Potter are also doing well at 9th with 10 wins from 16 games.

Stockton's Winter League started on 4th October and after 20 weeks Sarah Jerger is in the lead with 74 points, ahead of Steve Neale on 70, Catherine Black on 67 points, and Richard Collier on 65 points.

25 players turned out for the February melee on a wet and windy day. After three rounds there were three players who won all of their games. Nouri Beladaci was the champion with an impressive points advantage of +29, followed by Rich Rushton on +21 just ahead of Jenny Lowe on +19. We played timed games to ensure a prompt finish, that ended with the unusual situation of a draw - involving three players who won their other games and were therefore also unbeaten – Alfie Potter, Catherine Black and Diane Emberton.

The next **Open Melee will be on 7th March**. Everyone is welcome and we will provide the boules and tuition on the rules.

Stockton and I by Victor Neal
1896 - 1978

PART 4: THE ROAD AHEAD

Lead on then, road; if oft a gate,
Some joys are sent to compensate,
And travelling on, let's try and learn
The new world born at every turn.

Another break of some months' duration in my scribblings whilst my wife recuperates once more in the good care of daughter Mavis at Broadwell; by no means forgetting the kindly aid of daughter-in-law Mary at the Stockton end. And time is marching on at an ever-increasing rate, vividly illustrated by the fact of my now reaching pension age, so I feel it's time to curtail these comparatively trivial remarks and get on to something that really matters. [Here Victor launches into several pages of his opinions about religion, politics and other weighty issues, which we have decided to omit – Ed] Coincidentally with my resuming my writing here, we had also resumed our life in Stockton in a new home, new to us, that is to say, at No.2 Manor Road, one of the four little bungalows built by the council just before the last war, primarily for the accommodation of old folk. And while this fact 'makes us think' as the French say, we are quite happy about the change, which all happened miraculously.

It makes things much easier for my wife with no stairs to climb when she is up and about, and it makes things much easier for her old man, too, when she may be knocked up – no stairs to climb for me, either. It fell in, so that it released our old home in Mount Pleasant to Mr William (Bill) Clarke and his wife, so that in its turn solved Neville's problem and brought him and me the invaluable help of the said Bill, for Bill used to help Ed. Gardiner for many years and I dare say is the world's champion rush-seater. I know he makes me ashamed of my slowness and I try to console myself with the fact that I am not the only one who cannot approach his speed; neither could his (and our) late boss or anyone else we know.

Well, Bill's willingness and ability to return to his old job (which, like Neville and me, he says he always liked) releases me to accept our pensions and become a part-timer, enabling me to be a greater help – I hope – to my wife and relieving our willing children of some of the burden. Now, if you can tell me that a combination of circumstances like that could work itself out so favourably and wonderfully by chance, then you or I must be a Dutchman!

I should fancy there were tremendous odds against our getting the bungalow, for a start, as there were against our former landlord reletting the cottage to Bill, particularly in these days when most people pounce to cash in on vacant possession.

The whole set of circumstances fell into place, beautifully timed, when one problem could have wrecked the whole thing.

Well, here we are. Delightful tiny bungalow, fascinating little job for work time: what more could we want? What do I want with a million pounds, a hundred electrical gadgets or a dozen cars? I am as contented as one can be in this topsy-turvy world.

As I said in my obituary for Ed Gardiner:

Can empires, crowns or coronets; can gold

Such simple satisfaction give?

Can they more wisdom give us to grow old,

Or teach us better how to live?

Manor Road is more delightful than I had realised, as we have no through road and are a small community on our own, not unlike Mavis's Broadwell but within easy reach of the shops. The church of the Ven. Archdeacon Colley and the pub of John Cleaver (and in both cases of their predecessors and successors) are about equidistant; as you might say: 'On my left St Michael's and on my right the Barley Mow'. Two old but often friendly antagonists which we can see if we pop to the front window, then to the back, of our living room. I find an equal need for either, being a poor customer to both.

Part 30

Now this situates us near the Village Green, of course; in fact we enter Manor Road from between those two sections aforementioned, though the road did not exist at the time. Between the Barley Mow section, where the cheapjack and his fellow-salesmen of varied lines and charming memory had stood, and the church section, on which my wife was crowned Queen of the May not so long ago – 47 years if we must face it – and where John Monk's steamhorses stood each year. On the right is the site of the old stocks where old Wal Worrall's grandpa – reputed to be their last occupant – so enjoyed his stay on the day of the 'Club', and the left part is divided by the way in to church and the creepy path to the manor house from which our road obviously takes its name.

This path will take you by a particular gravestone amongst many others, on which we are reminded that 'Mark Varney aged 16 met his death by a sad accident on Jubilee Day, June 22nd 1897', a sad event which my parents often related (I was only one at the time) and which had naturally shocked the village. It occurred during a race, a wheelbarrow race in which the pusher of the wheelbarrow was blindfold and relied on the occupant of his barrow to give him directions; but Mark, no doubt excitedly, had turned his head to look the other way at the cheering spectators and failed to warn his colleague of the danger ahead: they ran into the bandstand which unfortunately was of just such a height to catch his head or neck, which was broken, as I understand. It goes without saying that no blame whatever could attach to the blindfold partner in this grievous episode; but the rest of the day's celebrations were immediately cancelled, as the village's heart for such things had understandably gone.

So we pass the gates to the churchyard, the wrought iron gates that are a pretty new replacement and carry an inscription to the memory of Geo. Wilks, brother to Frank who became my brother-in-law (more or less as we married sisters, as I think I have

told you before) and which two brothers had started the shop with the intention of taking early retirement. Now both have retired beyond these gates – how time marches on!

On the left section of the Green – it’s taken us some time to get there – here’s the spot where stood the Ven Archdeacon Colley’s famed speakpipe (and earlier still ‘Rawbone’s Pond’; the speakpipe then moved to the Rawbones, our friends at Leamington Hastings), not far from the conker trees on the way to the old Boys’ School.

What a catalogue of events the Green has for us, when we come to think. How many May Queens it has seen crowned as well as t’missus, how many musters of processions and bonfires to celebrate Jubilees, Coronations, Peace Days after wars to end war, on occasions helped out, when more space was needed, by the Jubilee Field (still known by that self-explanatory name) or sometimes the Pump Field or the Cricket Field, and once, I remember, by the ‘Hills and Hollows’, (or ‘Hillocks and Hollocks’, as it was also known) the field at the hill-top near where the windmills used to stand.

The times we have all passed between these two sections of the Green and through those gates now commemorating Geo. Wilks who once hustled us in his car to Rugby Station on the first stage of our honeymoon. There have often been contrasting emotions as we went to baptisms (beginning with our own, then our children’s and their children’s), to weddings (including our own and our children’s), and alas to funerals, too. These funerals through the years had filled the churchyard to overflowing and sometimes gave Job Rawbone, sexton and clerk, the embarrassing task of discreetly disposing of the bones of the village forefathers he would unearth in his attempts to find a vacant spot for yet another grave, until we were driven to seek room in that little corner of the Manor Bed (or Bit) where the baker family Badger’s delivery horse used to lodge, which is now the cemetery.

A more cheerful note has entered my head on mention of the weddings, when I was reminded of young Wallace Maskell’s great day (‘Young Wallace’ to distinguish him from his father ‘Old Wallace’) when Percy Shaw, whose mind never grew up according to modern thinking (but was less harmful than a good many that reputedly did) said: ‘Wallace is getting buried today, ain’t he?’ Knowing Wallace well, the village maybe assumed that’s what he was wondering himself! His mother (they lived opposite us at the time, in the house the Sargents had occupied) said to him: ‘I should think you’ll hire a chara, won’t you, to bring all your old girls to the wedding?’

The Sargents! Did I tell you about old Fred, generally called ‘Captain Sargent’ – I don’t know why, but he proved himself entitled to that honorary name in the long-ago episode of Bob Campbell. Bob had taken a party of cronies to Southam for a night out in his old Ford van, in those days when a little over-indulgence was not so seriously frowned on, there still being so little traffic on the roads. After turning-out time we are told Bob and his van were making a few swerves and near the top of the slope just running out of town wobbled on to the grass verge and not too dangerously turned over in the ditch. The whole crew managed to surface safely in spite of unsteady sea-legs, and managed to get their vessel on an even keel again, but the

majority discovered an inclination to walk the couple of miles home as it was a nice night! ‘Oh, b— that,’ says the Captain, ‘I’ll stick to the boat till she goes down.’ But then the old chap was usually cheerful under most circumstances and many a time when his legs were playing him tricks and swerving about like Bob’s van. I would hear his happy challenge: ‘I’ll fight anybody under nine or over ninety!’ This of course was Fred senior, father to the Freddie we talked of earlier, who with his brothers – or some of them – was near our age (we three brothers on our side) so we were often pals together.

When George Wilks had landed us at Rugby Station on the first stage of our honeymoon and we were on the second stage of our journey on the train, heading for that other railway centre, Crewe, we had found the coaches so packed that we were obliged to sit in the corridor on our suitcases. This brought about one of those rare, inexplicable feelings that seem to happen just once or twice in our lives. Looking down the length of the corridor was like a vista down the years ahead. With my bride at my side, ‘till death do us part,’ it seemed like a big question mark: what did that long corridor hold? We had freely linked ourselves together for life. How long was that corridor and what did it hold?

And now we have travelled along that passage-way some considerable distance, and by the Grace of God have been helped over many an obstacle on the way. We are not grumbling on that point; far from it, nor do we envy the youngsters taking our places at that end of the corridor where we sat on our suitcases. God bless them all and bon voyage!

We changed at Crewe and got seats all right on our next stage. There were two or three others in the carriage but reasonable room to relax at last, find my hat in the way and take it off. Then my newly-acquired wife whispers: ‘There’s some confetti in your hair,’ and I felt a creeping redness and sympathy for the proverbial schoolgirls afflicted by the blushes. Talk about the blushing bride!

But I deserved it, and it was one of those early lessons in the fallacy of believing in one’s own cleverness, for as we had left our little reception party to board Geo.

Wilks’s car we had undergone the usual peppering and stuffing of confetti in our pockets and all that, and too cockily I had thought: ‘Oh, alright, get on with it; we’ll get rid of it during the car ride before we’re among strangers.’ We had turned out our pockets and everything so thoroughly, and I was pleased to have remembered my trouser turnups, but had completely overlooked the other end.

Before our honeymoon was over we were both blushing again. We had fondly imagined we looked like old married people so that no-one suspected us, when a fellow-boarder on holiday with his wife – from Manchester: he was a master-builder, he told us, and we were all getting on famously together – at lunch one day bursts out in such a loud voice: ‘Well, missus, how’re y’ enjoying your honeymoon?’

I remember, too, he said: ‘Ah, well, may all your life be one long honeymoon; you’ll have your ups and downs but always stop and ask yourself if you’re in the right or the wrong.’ God bless the old chap! There wasn’t much wrong with his sentiments or advice. They were such a typical old North Country couple, and I can’t resist quoting what I consider the most typical remark for them in their local accent: this was at

another lunch-time and we had sat down at the table when the master-builder's wife comes in alone and says: 'I've left t'owd mon on't prom readin' t'pairper.' But here we are with another couple of shows coming off at which we are invited to demonstrate our chairmaking again, and the later one in the mighty metropolis, the one-time 'heart of that mighty Empire on which the sun never sets,' in short, at Olympia in London town. So to work.

Have I told you about the lady of that party of ladies from Stratford-on-Avon? What was it? WI, no, I remember, Townswomen's Guild. Visiting our workshop (as now and again these various parties do) she was quizzing me about the rush-seating. I had remarked that I liked it because it was one of the few jobs nowadays that left time to think, and I believe I added that maybe a lack of time to think contributed to the world's troubles. She surprised me by responding vehemently: 'Time to think? They don't want to think!' And so to work – and to think.

And so ends our acquaintance with Victor Neal, who died in 1978 at the age of 82. We have accompanied him as a child, schoolboy, young man, magician, in France with the RAMC in World War I, as shopkeeper, sales representative, firewood seller and chairmaker. We hope you have enjoyed his tales of the Stockton area in times past, his eccentricity, gentle humour and eternal curiosity.

We would like to thank Victor's Grandson Lawrence, for giving us this most lovely written history of Stockton and all it's wonderful pictures that is has painted of life in Stockton of old.

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