

Stretton Focus

Community Voice of the Strettons



June 2002 50p



**The Golden Jubilee
1952 ~ 2002**

STRETTON FOCUS

(founded 1967)

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(About 62% of households in Church Stretton)

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Copy day is normally the first Monday of the month. For the July issue it is Wednesday 5th June 2002.

Diary items should be sent directly to Rev. Ward Davies, 1 Central Ave, CS, SY6 6EE. (Tel. 724304) by Friday 14th June 2002.

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Out and About in June

Jubilee Celebrations in Leebotwood

Monday 3rd June 3pm - midnight

Fun and games for all, delicious food and drink, hog roast, fireworks and music 'till the early hours'
Further details, Joan Brooks 01694 751278.

Wednesday 5th June. Shropshire Wildlife Trust are organising a wildlife guided walk including expert guidance on trees, flowers, ferns and bird song.
Book on Ludlow 495741.

Sunday 9th June Walk up the Stiperstones to see the record-breaking trees on Brook Vessons Nature Reserve.
Meet Stiperstones Inn at 2pm.

Saturday June 15th - Garden Fete at Sayang House, Hope Bowdler.

Attingham

Sunday 16th June - Father's Day

21st - 30th June Anna Ravenscroft Exhibition

29th- 30th June **Painting Weekend** Booking essential (01743 708162).

Sunday 23rd June there will be a 3 mile walk led by Peter Carty, the National Trust Property Manager, from the Chalet Pavilion in the Carding Mill Valley, looking at the flowers, birds, butterflies and dragonflies that live and grow on the Long Mynd,

If you have visitors this summer, take them on a **Walking Tour of Shrewsbury**. Guided tours are daily at 2.30pm and depart from the Tourist Office in the Square. Or how about a cruise on the Severn from **Victoria Quay, Welsh Bridge**, every hour from 11am to 4pm. More information 01743 343444.

Some Shropshire Gardens

Sun. 2nd June - Gate Cottage, English Frankton, Ellesmere

2nd June - The Patch, Acton Pigot, Acton Burnell

3rd/4th June - Walcot Hall Arboretum, Lydbury North

13th June - Preen Manor, Church Preen, Church Stretton

16th June - Harnage Farm, Cound, Shrewsbury

30th June - Holly Grove, Church Pulverbatch



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Stretton Golden Jubilee Celebrations – 1887 Style!



Queen Victoria had reigned for fifty years in 1887 and the Strettons decided to celebrate in some style. Moves were already underway to commission and erect a Jubilee Drinking Fountain, when, at a public meeting on 18th April, the "Church Stretton Jubilee Rejoicings Committee" was set up. The committee worked very hard under the chairmanship of the

Rector, the Rev. Charles Noel-Hill. Collectors were sent out to various regions of the parish and when by 12th May they had collected £61-15s-1d, it started to plan. Ideas evolved gradually but finally "Rejoicings" were organised, lasting over two days.

The main celebrations took place on Tuesday, June 21st 1887 and the next day "A Treat" was given by the Rector to over 300 children of the parish

Jubilee Rejoicings

Tuesday, June 21st dawned fine and bright. Tables were set out along the main street from the "corner by Preece's" (the cross-roads) to the Buck's Head. Every inhabitant decorated his home and the street was in "most festal costume".

At 12.30pm a procession set off, headed by the Bettisfield Brass band, from the Hotel in the town centre. The Rector and members of the Rejoicings and Fountain Committees led the parishioners to the Parish Church. A service at 1 o'clock was followed by the unveiling of the Jubilee Memorial Fountain by the Squire's wife, Mrs. Ralph Benson of Lutwyche Hall.

450 people, who had previously been issued with tickets, sat down to dinner at 3 o'clock. A meal of beef, ham, potatoes, cheese and salad was served by carvers at the head of each table. One pint of beer was provided to each diner or tea "for those who approved of that beverage rather than beer".

During the meal, the Rector gave a speech and proposed a toast. It is recorded that "unfortunately the speech could not be heard by the people at the extremes of the tables at the north and south ends". However, there were three cheers with "each one joining in lustily and waving his hat".

At 4 o'clock the company adjourned to a field near the station for "athletic sports". These included a mile cycle race from All Stretton, flat races, tug-o-war, an egg

and spoon race and a greasy pole with a prize (worth 5 shillings) on top. The Rector had donated a silver tankard which he had won himself in a mile race in his younger days. It was made clear that this and other prizes were only open to members of the Parish.

The Rector opened his gardens at 6 o'clock to all but the children and there was a promenade concert and dancing until 9 o'clock. Then, after the National Anthem, the men of the parish carried torches and, led by a drum and fife band, a torchlight procession headed for a bonfire on the hill behind the Burway.

At a signal from a rocket from the centre of the town a chain of fires was lit on Caer Caradoc, Hope Bowdler Hill, Ragleth, Helmeth Hill and the Longmynd

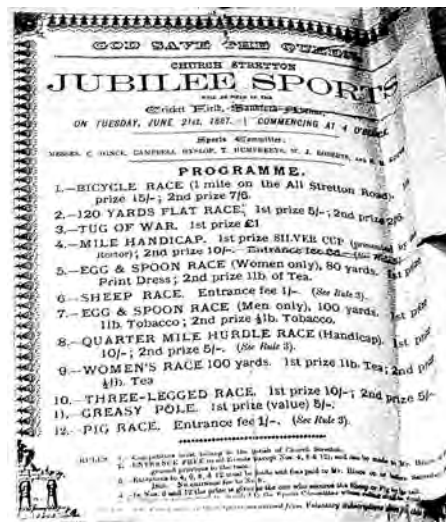
The Children's Treat

The children's festivities were entirely financed by the Rector. This was greatly appreciated as it had released funds for 150 extra people to be invited to dinner on the previous day.

On the Wednesday, 325 children assembled at the School at 1 o'clock and Miss Haverkam of the Manor House presented all who had passed a recent examination with gold coloured medals and others were presented with silver coloured medals. (The workhouse children were given medals by the Rector.) Afterwards they all marched to the rectory where they left their cups and saucers before attending a special service in the Parish Church. The children then returned to the rectory grounds where there were races with prizes, games and a Punch and Judy. The band played during tea under the cedars. Finally each child filed by the Rector and was given an orange.

A good time was had by all and the Rejoicings Committee had its final meeting on July 4th when the only problem seemed to be how to dispose of the financial surplus. Congratulations to them all!

Norma Taylor



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What were you doing on Coronation Day?

I was in Edinburgh doing my Part 1 midwifery course. I was not there as part of a 'career plan' – such a well organised thought never entered my head – but because I thought every nurse should be able to deliver a baby, and anyway I wanted to go to the famous Edinburgh Festival. The omens were not good. The overnight, 15 hour, coach journey (at a cost of 30 shillings) ended in Edinburgh on 1st April and it was snowing. The culture shock was severe. After the noisy bustle of the Whitechapel Road, the city seemed lifeless, cold, grey and, apart from the clanking of the trams up the Mound, very quiet – especially on Sundays when it verged on the sepulchral. I was shocked to see trains running through Princes Street gardens and thought longingly of Victoria Park in the East End.

The hospital was large, modern and famous so the student intake every month consisted of highly qualified nurses from all over the world, except Scotland. Obviously they knew something we didn't. On entering the school one was 'reduced to the ranks' and treated like recalcitrant fourth formers and, to add insult to injury, my salary went down from £16 to £12 per month. Lectures were compulsory, and teaching methods old-fashioned, pupils should be seen and not heard. We were taught the history of Midwifery, it seemed that the Scots were the only people who knew anything about the subject, obviously Simpson (he of the chloroform) was someone to be proud of, but did we really need to know about William Smellie, the first male midwife? Many of the nursing practices seemed archaic, particularly that of keeping the babies in the nursery at all times, apart from the strictly four-hourly feeding times. The unfortunate fathers were only allowed a glimpse of their baby at the door of the nursery.

Because of the number of students, each pupil was only allowed to deliver ten babies, the minimum requirement for the examination. In practice this meant

that you had two glorious weeks delivering babies, arguably the most exciting thing you'll ever do in your life, and five and a half months of unrelieved drudgery. Within days of my arrival I was suffering from incurable homesickness. I missed the cheerful chattiness of the London patients, even the ante-natal patients seemed to be suffering from depression, and the tutors were totally humourless and viewed us Sassenachs with deep suspicion, especially if we dared to ask a question.

Preparations for the Coronation came as light relief. There seemed little real enthusiasm for the event indeed there was some antagonism towards it. As soon as the flags with ER II appeared they were replaced by flags saying ER I, the Scottish Nationalist students obviously held no brief for our Gloriana and continued their campaign up until the big day. It was these students who had taken the Stone of Scone from under the Coronation chair in Westminster Abbey in the mistaken belief that it belonged in Scotland. They took it on Christmas Day, and it says much about the security, or lack of it, at the time, presumably the Dean and Chapter were listening to the King's broadcast. The stone was found in Forfar some 15 months later and was, presumably back in situ in time for the Coronation. The only Scot on the course told me, in reverent tones, that it was rumoured that our grim-faced tutor's nephew was involved in the daring raid.

To my delight I was sent to the labour ward where I was instructed in the exciting art of delivering babies and on Coronation Day I was to be on duty until 6 pm. A huge television screen was erected in the nurses' sitting room and those on duty would be allowed a 20 minute break to watch the day's events. An air of excitement filled the ward, radios were relaying the progress of the procession to the Abbey and it seemed that every time the National Anthem was played another baby popped out. Each time I tried to leave the ward for my break I was

called, either to deliver a baby or to clean the room ready for the next patient. As I delivered my third baby of the day the supervisor asked me how many babies I had delivered 'Eleven' I said smugly. She glared – I glowed, I'd beaten the system! Eleven babies were born that day, all the mothers delighted to have produced a child on such an auspicious occasion. There were mugs, spoons and commemorative books for each child. I was quite overcome when asked to sign my name where it said midwife.

As I soaked my aching limbs in a hot bath I realised that I had hit the high spot of my midwifery career, and it was going to be downhill all the way. I crossed another day off my calendar and went to the Usher Hall for a wonderful performance of the Coronation music, it was the first time I heard Zadok the Priest and I've loved it ever since, and I was cheered by the thought that perhaps the Scots do know how to celebrate.

I survived the next few months and got to some of the Festival shows. I never did see 'The Lass wi' the Muckle Moo' whatever that meant, but I did get to a rendition of 'Twa corbies', but the highlight was the Tattoo, Rob Roy on the battlements and hundreds of kilted soldiers dancing faultlessly – in spite of being well lubricated with the malt. A few days later I was on the train to the Smoke, the journey was three times quicker, and three times more expensive, I had to get back to start a new job.

In March this year I spent a delightful weekend in Edinburgh. It was freezing cold, of course, but the City was lively and bustling, full of places of interest and superb restaurants, a far cry from the Auld Reekie of 50 years ago. I walked up Arthur's Seat and rejoiced in the fact that I could still get to the top. As I wandered around the city, I found myself looking for 50 year old women and had this urgent desire to tap them on the shoulder and say "Excuse me, is your name Jessica.....?"

Anne Moffatt

A Place Like No Other

My father fell in love with my mother when she was giving a speech. They were both students in college. Children aren't normally inclined to take interest in their parent's romantic lives, but I think it's a wonderful story. This just fits the type of people that they are - even today. My father witnessed my mother using her gifts. His first impression of her was when she was at her best.

How often we hear stories about 'first impressions'. Just recently I was talking with a group of women about how we responded to the first few hours of being with our newborn children. Although it has been a number of years now since my last child was born, I have distinct memories of overwhelming love. Fortunately I had a relatively easy time in childbirth (don't worry I will spare you the details!), which I am sure allowed me to bond very quickly with my children. I don't even consider myself a baby person, but I was captivated. It was truly 'love at first sight'.

In fact, if I have had a rotten day with my daughter I often tell her about the day she was born. When she has rebuffed any words of reconciliation or flinched at my affection, I balance myself on the edge of the mattress and tell her about that cold winter's morning when she came into the world. The little girl trying to hide, like a turtle, under the covers begins to poke her head out. The grimace she has held on her face for so long gradually wanes. It is fair to say that we have had many bad days together so the story is undoubtedly familiar, and yet it works. It's as if we both need reminding about the joy I experienced when we met for the first time.

As I get to know more people in the Strettons, I have talked to many people who first met this area while on holiday. They came with a group of rambles and watched the sun set from on top of Caradoc or they brought the caravan for a long weekend and ate ice cream after a busy day of sitting by the stream. Church Stretton, on a bright day in June, can make an unforgettable first impression.

The first feelings of love, in a marriage, for a child or even for a place are not typical of the whole relationship. The hills which surround our community are not a shield. Cancer, divorce, substance abuse, suicide. They are here. So are many other problems. Some days are very bleak. Some days are full of pain. Perhaps Church Stretton is ideally situated, but it is not some 'ideal'. For some it might be good to think back, to recall the excitement of discovering this beautiful area - to remember what attracted you here in the first place. There are so many good things about the Strettons. For those who might be visiting now, it's also important to know that this is a real place with real people and in many ways this is.....*a place like no other.*

J. Wyeth

What are you doing for the Golden Jubilee?

Let us hear your stories and send in any photographs you have taken of events.

Queen Elizabeth II Slept Here

Accounts of royal visits to the Strettons are few and far between and mainly based on rumour. However, there is strong evidence that our present Queen slept here, even if her feet did not touch the Shropshire earth on that occasion.

When the Queen visited The Royal Welsh Show on July 21st 1983, she arrived at Builth Wells station at 10.30 am. The Royal Train had certainly not travelled from London that day.

A British Rail spokesman told the Shropshire Star, at the time, that the train had been in the sidings at Church Stretton overnight but did not know if the Queen herself were on board. The press officer at Buckingham Palace confirmed that the Queen was making the journey by Royal Train but added that they did not normally give details of her travelling arrangements.

There seems little doubt that the Queen spent the night in sidings, north of the bridge. Workers remember being able to see right into the train from windows of the Polymer Laboratories - but not into the curtained Royal compartments!

Security was tight. Ted Bishop, a lengthman with British Rail at the time, told the Focus that he had to collect all the newspapers in the morning for the Queen and was given a police escort to do so!

A similar event occurred in 1952 when the Queen, as then uncrowned, carried out some of her first duties as monarch. On October 23rd she had opened the Claerwen Dam near the Elan Valley and the next day she was to visit Shrewsbury and take part in the Shrewsbury School fourth centenary celebrations.

This time, although she spent the intervening night in the Royal Train nearby, the train was parked on the old Much Wenlock branch line near Marsh Farm close to Acton Scott. The Strettons cannot quite claim this as a visit!

Norma Taylor

A market has been held in Church Stretton since the days of King John in the 13th century. The Market Square on the High Street still hosts a variety of markets during the week.

Farmers Market Every other Friday 9:00 - 12:00
(14th and 28th of June)

Flea Market Every Tuesday 9:00 - 4:00*

Arts & Crafts Market Every Saturday 9:00 - 4:00*

General Market Every Thursday 9:00 onwards

(*Weather can affect the length of the Market.)

A History of the Parish Church Building

II The Cruciform Church

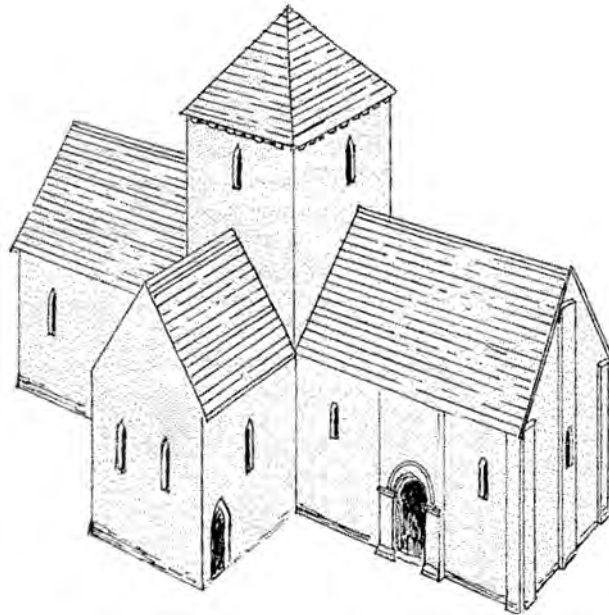
In the early years of the 13th century, when King John's reign was moving towards a dramatic climax, the little settlement at Stretton experienced a period of remarkable development. It was almost certainly at this time that a new town was laid out just east of the Norman church, with a wide market street (now High St.), lined by deep burgage plots with narrow frontages, and a back lane (Church St.) providing rear access to those on the west side.

It was for this expanding community that the king (for Stretton was a royal manor) in June 1214 ordered the Sheriff of Shropshire to advertise a weekly market on Wednesdays and an annual fair on the Feast of the Assumption (15th August). As the smallest settlement in the county to enjoy these privileges, Stretton's importance and chance to prosper were greatly enhanced. What more natural, then, than in praise to God for His goodness it should be proposed to extend the hundred-year-old parish church? There is no documentary proof that it was at this moment that the Norman building was transformed into a cruciform church, but there is clear architectural evidence that this great change occurred at the end of the 12th century or early in the 13th when the Gothic style was being introduced but some Norman features persisted.

The year 1214 saw not only the royal market initiative, but also the appointment of the first known rector. Ralph de Neville was a senior officer in the royal Chancery and nephew of the King's Forester – who held the castle at Brockhurst. At this important moment, therefore, Stretton had wealthy and powerful friends able to give generously to the building fund and to persuade local landowners to donate timber or give access to quarries. There were also skilled masons in the area, for Holy Trinity, Wistanstow, bears a strong

resemblance to Stretton's church and there are indications that it was built first.

The people of Stretton, wishing to see their church enlarged to accommodate the growing population and as a mark of its new importance as a market town, invited the masons to extend their two-cell church into a cruciform structure with a central tower as at Wistanstow.



Imaginative reconstruction by David Bilbey

The Norman nave was preserved, perhaps because of the high cost of total rebuilding, but the chancel was pulled down. It was replaced by a larger one, with two transepts and a central crossing with tower above. Like the original nave, the chancel and transepts were 18 feet wide, but the whole church was nearly doubled in length. The builders used Hoar Edge Grit, as in the nave, and sandstone probably brought from Soudley.

The beautiful Transitional arches, in creamy Grinshill sandstone, remain the outstanding feature of the interior. They are pointed in the Gothic Early English style, clearly different from the semi-circular arched doorways of the Norman nave, but the 'abaci', the flat slabs on the capitals, are square and moulded in the characteristic Norman manner.

The carved heads are 13th century in style but, as Pevsner remarks, 'much renewed'. The tower was initially more squat and only later extended – in the Perpendicular style. As there was no ringing chamber, the crossing rose to a greater height than it does now, and was illuminated by the still visible slit windows.

North and south of the crossing rose the new transepts, each with a door granting access from the outside. The south transept door was originally not central but in the south-west corner; the door of the north transept is still in place but is best seen from inside the much later Emmaus Chapel. The transepts served as side-chapels, with their altars no doubt positioned to take advantage of the light from the splayed lancet windows on the eastern side. The chancel, not at first separated from the church by a screen, has its own priest's door on the south side.

The roofing timbers are all many centuries old, the fine trussed-rafter roof of the nave probably added later in the 13th century. As there was no seating, people stood or knelt to observe the celebration of Mass, but the floor would have been strewn with rushes. The church was unheated and, with only lancet windows, quite dark.

Yet Stretton's new church would have been the pride of its inhabitants. Within half a century of its construction records reveal the dedication to St. Laurence and the town's new name of Church Stretton.

Douglas Grounds

Apology

Some copies of last month's *Focus* had faulty page makeup. The Printer apologises for the error at the stapling stage of production. If you ever receive a faulty copy of *Focus* in the future, please let the Distribution Manager, Jon Cooke, know.

United Nations Association

Afghan Education Day – 15th June 2002.

The Church Stretton Branch will be supporting education in Afghanistan as their project over the next 12 months and they are hosting *Afghan Education Day* at Church Stretton School from 10am-4pm.



There are few things in Afghanistan which are more important than improving the education system. Under the Taliban it was estimated that only 39% of boys and 3% of girls had access to education and the situation has got more chaotic than ever since the recent war.

Members are currently acquiring information about different aspects of education in Afghanistan and will be reporting their findings during the morning of the 15th June. The afternoon session will open with two guests from Afghanistan talking about their country and its education system. Following which, David Oliver, Branch President and Head of Church Stretton School, will talk about setting up an education system. Final plans for the project will then be discussed and approved.

The Branch are hoping for strong support from the people of Church Stretton and everyone who comes will be made most welcome. The day is being organised by Barrie Oxtoby (Tel 723199) and Matthew Elliott (Tel 771282) who will be pleased to give further information.

Robin Jukes-Hughes

Shropshire Records & Research Centre

On Monday 10th June, Shropshire Records & Research Centre will be 'opening the archives' at a coffee morning from 10-12noon. Senior Librarian, Tony Carr, said, "People can come and see what the archives hold – old newspapers, photographs and documents and much more. Find out about the work we are doing to make our records more widely available. There will be the chance to meet the staff and members of the Shropshire Family History Society and Friends of Records & Research who are keen to tell you about their work and what we can offer you."

People can also book for a tour of the Conservation Studio to see the painstaking work needed to preserve historic records for the future.

Numbers for this tour are limited so please ring the Centre on (01743) 255350 to book.

Strettons in Bloom!

Not the Eden Project – the gardens in the Strettons are more beautiful!



The Rotary Club of Church Stretton and the Ladies of Inner Wheel are jointly organising a series of **Open Garden Visiting** in All Stretton and Church Stretton on **Sunday, 30th June from 2-6pm**. At this stage eight gardens will be open for charity. Refreshments, plant sales, gardening advice and other attractions will be available.

A **Garden Passport**, which will include a map showing the location of the gardens will be available from Burway Books, Wrights and members of the Inner Wheel or Rotary clubs.

Anyone seeking further information should contact Chris George on 724785 or Barbara MacIntyre 723246

Stretton Cancer Care

Open meeting - the Care of Cancer Patients

Stretton Cancer Care are holding an Open Meeting in the Parish Centre at 7.0pm Monday 17th June, at which Dr. Colin Bates will be talking about the care of cancer patients. Colin is a GP and was appointed Primary Care Cancer Leader for Shropshire in July 2001 and his role encompasses liaison between GPs and Hospitals and the needs of patients. He is a knowledgeable and entertaining speaker and it promises to be an excellent evening. The meeting is open to everyone and will include a free buffet supper provided by members of Stretton Cancer Care.

Stretton Cancer Care was formed in 1994 to give help, care and information to people, their families and anyone who has been bereaved through cancer. We hold monthly meetings, usually with an outside speaker, at which members can support one another. We also give individual support through home and hospital visits. A diagnosis of cancer can be very frightening and can give rise to strong emotions. Our aim is to help people to cope with these feelings and to take an active part in their own healing.

Robin Jukes-Hughes

Sacred and Secular



A Summer Concert by the More Singers, conducted by Richard Silk, will be held in Clungunford Parish Church on Saturday 15th June at 7.30pm. Retiring collection in aid of a charity chosen by the Church.

Cup Success for Church Stretton Football Club

Church Stretton footballers can sit back, relax and enjoy the World Cup, safe in the knowledge that their club has had one of its most successful seasons ever. The club was already leading in the County League First Division, when it had a wonderful cup win in April. This gave rise to hopes of a possible Cup and League Double victory. These hopes were still alive when Focus went to press.

Hundreds of supporters who travelled to Shrewsbury Town's football ground at the Gay Meadow on April 8th were rewarded by seeing their side win the Shropshire Junior Cup for the first time in the club's ninety year history. Captain, Wayne Evans, held the cup aloft after a thrilling final in which Stretton beat Hopesgate 4-2.

Stretton went behind after only three minutes when Hopesgate scored from a free kick. However, within thirty minutes, Joe Leask and Mark Evans had scored two

goals each to give Stretton a commanding lead. The score was 4-1 at half time and although Hopesgate scored early and came back strongly in the second half, Stretton held on to win.

The prestigious Shropshire Junior Cup was established in 1886 and is open to adult amateur teams throughout the county. Church Stretton Football Club has reached the Final only once before, in 1967, and the current players were delighted that some of that earlier team turned up to support them.

Team manager, Chris Richards, told the Focus that he and assistant manager, Ken Hartley, appreciate the support the team has received from the town. Financial support from the shirt sponsors and other small businesses has helped towards meeting rental, laundry and entry fees. They would also like to thank the loyal band of spectators who turn up to watch and

cheer home games at Russell's Meadow, Lutwyche Road and even away games. They hope that the successes of this season will encourage even more people to come along and enjoy the matches. They point out that they are always on the lookout for more local talent to strengthen the squad.

This year's successes have sparked much interest in the club. If you have any information which would help towards an article on the club's history, Mike Morris (01694 722814) would be very pleased to hear from you.

Church Stretton
Football Club



The Season's Cup Winning Squad.

Back row (L to R): Chris Richards, Ken Hartley, Mark Evans, Kevin Price, Joe Leask, Trevor Jones, Phil Hill, James Evans, David Lewis, Steve Chislett.

Front row: Stuart Richards, Mark Robinson, James Bagby, Martin Gough, Wayne Evans, James Hoad, Scott Kind, Gavin Andrews. (Mascot, Ashley Wells). Photo: John Corfield

Parent Teachers Association Pulling for the School

Church Stretton School Parent Teachers Association are again '*pulling their weight*' to raise funds for the School. On **Saturday 29 June 2002** the Annual School Summer Fête - by popular demand - includes a repeat of - the now annual - **Tug-O-War Competition**. Additionally, for the younger members of the community the Fête will include a 7-a-side football competition. Funds this year are earmarked for environmental improvements around the School.

Teams for the Tug-O-War Competition are invited from all clubs, societies and members of the community. Junior, adult, male and female teams are invited. Teams of 6 members (with reserves if you wish) are

invited to contact **Alan Fox (01694) 723865 (Home) or 723867 (Business)** to register. Don't worry about being outclassed. Teams will be graded as necessary.

The 7-A-Side Football Competition is for under 12's (Years 6 and 7). The closing date for entry of football teams is 15 June 2002. Teams are invited to contact Kevin Gripton (01588) 660566.

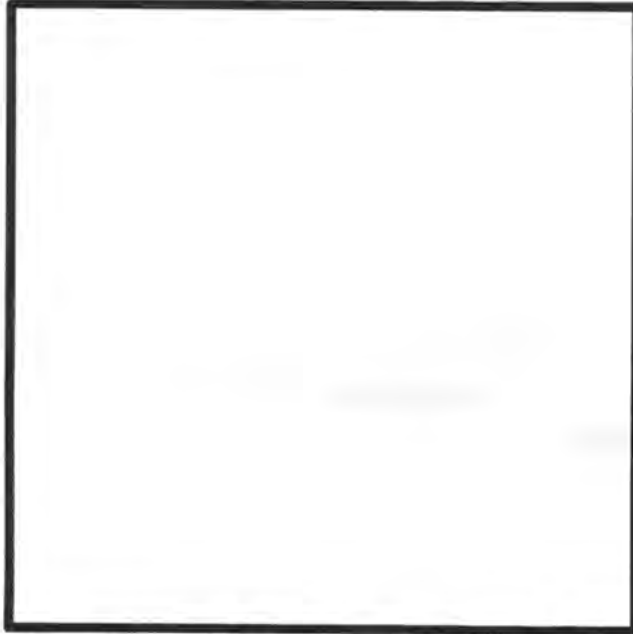
If you are not going to be in a team - come along in any case. Let's make this an enjoyable and successful community event. Come on '**PULL YOUR WEIGHT**' for this community school.

Alan D.Fox.



In the summer, what do you like to eat? I like fruit and salad - there are six fruits hidden in these sentences. The first one is underlined - can you find the other five? Leap please Annie, I'd like to see you jump. Would you like a spearmint sweet? Or angel cake? Pale monkeys don't like cake you know. Urban analogue watches don't work in the country either. Do you like singing - rap, elegies?

June Puzzle Page



Draw a picture of what you would like to be doing today.



Can you change one letter at a time and reach the word at the bottom? eg part-hole=part port pore more mole hole.



Which is the odd one out and why? There could be various answers, how many can your family think of?

pear orange lemon banana grape

Moriel Gidney

Eyes peeled for Ravens!

Ravens are reaching out, expanding all over the country wherever there are large trees for nesting in and rough ground for feeding. It is thought that the Shropshire population multiplied several times over in the 1990s. Vast increases in arable farming have made a return to much of their historical range unlikely, but here in the raven's western strongholds, its deep croak, once feared as an omen of doom, is now heard not just in remote uplands, but across the lowlands too.

The Shropshire Raven Study Group has been monitoring the change. Nearly 800 chicks have had colour rings fastened to their legs. Sightings of these birds provide information about the age at which they start breeding and how far they will move to set up a nest. The Group is appealing to people to ring up with reports of ravens and offers of help to locate nests.

Reports and offers of help to Leo Smith (01384 265504) email leo@tf125qh.freereserve.co.uk

(From Shropshire Wildlife magazine)

Crossword fourteen - cryptic - by Toucan

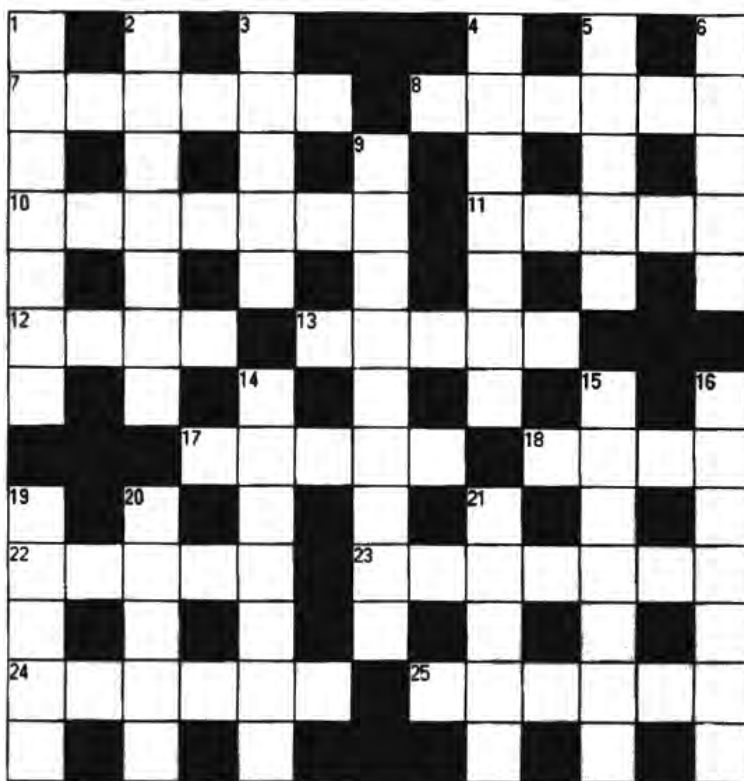
Across

(CLUES 8, 7 and 4 are topical)

7. Having the metallic quality of silence (6)
8. Club used by tennis players (6)
10. Defraud company and say it's all right (7)
11. Bury in the way of a painter (5)
12. Have a close look at the noble lord (4)
13. Own way to the asylum (5)
17. Dance of the liberated slave (5)
18. Put money on a letter ... (4)
22. ... often drawn in the sweep (5)
23. Age lent chic with restyling (7)
24. Rich fur in mere confusion (6)
25. Military parade - decorations to be worn (6)

Down

1. Encourage prizes for breakfast retainers (7)
2. Colonist from Planet R? (7)
3. Material that is dug up (5)
4. Celebrated line in the capital (7)
5. Mean to be almost attractive (5)
6. Some people take too much interest in this (5)
9. Places where one goes to lie abroad? (9)
14. Terse claim to own Ford - deep red (7)
15. Battle over the French Christmas show? (7)
16. Turned out I can serve as a warning (7)
19. Blare out of tune - can do better (5)
20. A butterfly like this, you see (5)
21. In 24 hours ericaceous compost starts to rot down (5)



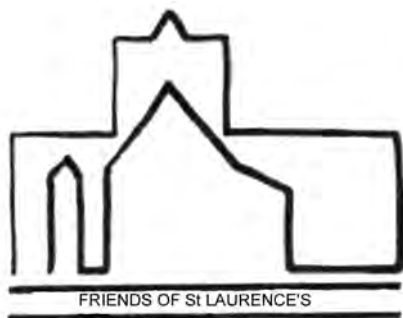
Solution on page 30

The Friends of St. Laurence's

The Friends will be holding a Coffee Morning on Saturday 6th July, 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the Parish Centre. Books, homemade cakes and plants will be on sale and there will be a tombola stall and a raffle.

Admission £1 includes coffee and scones.

To be successful we need contributions for all the stalls. Please support the Friends generously by your contributions and by coming on the day. For information contact Harry Harland, tel. 723779



WANTED

Any person who can sketch an occasional cartoon for Focus or provide a small line drawing to go with an article. Please get in touch with the Editor.

Save the Children Sponsored Walk

The Longmynd provided an ideal location for the North West Midlands area of Save the Children to hold a sponsored walk. On Sunday, May 5th the Church Stretton Branch acted as hosts and stewards to participants, not only from the Strettons but also from as far afield as Wellington, Ludlow, Oswestry and Ellesmere. The founder of this Charity, Eglantyne Jebb who died in 1926, would have been delighted to know that one of her relations turned out to support the same cause so many years later.

The walkers enjoyed fine sunny weather as they made a 12 mile circuitous route from the Stretton Hall Hotel. After passing Plush Hill, they turned along the newly surfaced Port Way before descending to Bridges for an essential pit-stop at the Horseshoe Inn. Everyone returned safely to the starting point happy to know that between them they should be able to collect over £2000 from their sponsors.

Save the Children would like to thank all who made this such a successful occasion by walking, stewarding or sponsoring

Church Stretton Branch, Save the Children.

What's New at the Library? Under 5's Storytime

The children's section of the Library has long been an exciting place for local children. Small chairs with easy to reach books, colourful decorations and display boards all help make the children feel welcome. Now on Friday afternoons, during term time, there is another great reason for young children to visit the Library. From 2:15 – 2:45, children under 5, with their parents/carers, can come and enjoy *Storytime*. Parents, and other individuals, have volunteered to serve on a rota and read stories to the children sitting on the special *Storytime* rug. It has already become a popular event!



Diana Parsons has captured everyone's attention. Photo: Jill Millard

Church Stretton Junior Badminton Club

**The Nation's favourite 'Racket' – Badminton
Percy and Alan serve up 80 years between them**

BADMINTON has increased in popularity in recent years and has become the nation's favourite racket sport. The success of badminton comes as no surprise to one of the County's most long-standing coaches, Alan Fox, who has been coaching Junior Badminton in Church Stretton for over 26 years. Neither is it a surprise to the Club's President, Percy Tarbuck, whose involvement in Badminton in Church Stretton began in 1948 and has spanned some 54 years.

Badminton has gone from strength to strength over the



Back Row, L to R: Bob Paine (Coach asst.), Tristan Goodwin, Lee Gibson, Jonathan Gidney, Ann Middleton (Coach asst.).
Middle Row: Thomas Parsons, William Watson, Harry Fell.
Front Row: Freya Shepherd, Lucy Everett, Rhona Campbell, Sarah Holmes.
Photo: Alan Fox

years, particularly in Church Stretton. The Club here was founded in the early 1920's. Mrs Weaver, who is joint vice-president, with her husband, has been playing since 1930, and has represented the County. After the war, the Club was reformed in 1948 and has been in the forefront within the County ever since that time. Even in those early days the Club entertained a younger group. By the 1970's the Club's commitment to coaching supported a Junior Section which boasted 30 members. That commitment has continued with initiatives in partnership with Shropshire Badminton Association; Church Stretton Secondary School; the Youth Service; and the Church Stretton Chamber of Trade.

Presently the Club still boasts one of the best supported Junior Sections in the County working to English Schools Badminton Association Awards; and a number of Youth members admitted as Student members in the Main Club and playing in a wider arena.

This season Church Stretton Badminton Club held the Finals of the End of Season Tournament and Presentation of Awards at Church Stretton School. Parents, friends and invited guests came to support the players, all of whom had worked hard in the English Schools Badminton Association award scheme and competition. The evening included some exciting badminton culminating in the finals of competitions run through the season.

The Club are looking to take on new players of all ages and ability. If you require any further information, please contact: Alan Fox, Badminton Association of England Coach, Knoll Cottage, Little Stretton, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6PL. Tel: 723865 (Home); 723867 (Work).

Alan Fox

Trade Justice Movement

With now locally made gourmet sandwiches in one pocket and a bottle of Stretton water in the other, I'm planning to trade places with my wife and take a West Coast Line train on Wednesday 19th June from Crewe to London Euston. Whilst I'm more than prepared to offer a free sandwich and water to anyone interested with a view to promoting the Strettons as a holiday destination, the primary purpose of my visit is to meet with Matthew Green, Member of Parliament for Ludlow.

I will not be alone, but will be joining the Trade Justice Movement's mass lobby of Parliament. It will be the first time that I have taken part in a mass lobby, because I have been somewhat sceptical of their value in the past and anyway was practically involved in aid programmes in Africa. Now living in the Strettons, I find Africa and its problems more remote and expressions of solidarity much harder, which is why I have decided to join the Trade Justice Movement's mass lobby. I will therefore hope to encourage Matthew Green to join other Members of Parliament already calling for a change in international trade rules, with a view to giving poor families, communities and countries the opportunity to lift themselves out of poverty.

The task should be made much easier by the fact that the UK Government has already agreed in principle to support fair trade rules. Unfortunately, it somehow fails to keep its word. The purpose of the lobby is therefore to seek to focus the hearts and minds of Members of Parliament and through them Government Ministers, on the issue of fair trade ahead of the G8 leaders and European Heads of Government meetings scheduled for the second half of June.

If you are already planning to attend the lobby, or are interested in adding your voice to the global chorus for Trade Justice, do let me know - we could perhaps travel together and even fair trade the odd gourmet sandwich!

Adrian Cullis
Secretary of the Strettons Global Justice Forum, tel: 771833

Arts Festival



By the time you read this, programmes will be available for you to enjoy, and to decide which of the events you wish to attend, the light-hearted opening with the Bakelite Boys, classical music with the Bochmann Quartet, the superb singing of Anthony Rolfe-Johnson, Carmen, and maybe a picnic, at Concord, Gabriel Woolf's return visit, the unknown story of Sherlock Holmes etc. To avoid these difficult choices, it's probably best to book for everything. All booking details are on the programme, or on our web-site www.strettonfestival.org.uk, or via Gerald Bolton on 01694 723807.

If you provide accommodation, and wish to send programmes to potential clients - many holidaymakers come for the Festival - please contact John Woolmer on 01694 751245 for supplies. Would any of our catering outlets be interested in providing special deals for Festivalgoers?

Other attractions. Tanner's are again sponsoring a free wine draw with 4 half cases of claret as prizes. We are running a minibus to Concord College for the song recital and the opera; bookings via Jenny Repath on 01694 731350.

Our web site is attracting interest, with an enquiry from Bristol for the Barbara Jefford and Geraldine McEwan evening. New technology will certainly help to attract visitors, and boost local economy.

Preparations for the Exhibition are fully in hand, for what promises to be another bumper year. Enquiries to David Mace, on 01694 722289. This is David's last year as organiser. He has built up a wonderful team, so we need a successor, not necessarily an artist. Can you help? If so, we would love to hear from you.

Thank you for your support. Any other enquiries to George Roby on 01694 722159.

Coppice Leasowes Nature Reserve

Open evening - 20th June 2002 at 7.30pm.

This meeting will introduce people to the reserve and show them its nature and wildlife. The evening will take the form of a guided tour with experts in trees, wildflowers, birds, mosses and lichen, and the management of the reserve on hand to talk about their chosen subjects. The meeting point will be the gate at the top end of the reserve at the junction of Helmeth Road and Watling Street North.

Coppice Leasowes is owned by the Church Stretton Town Council. It consists of two meadows - the

upper or eastern meadow is watered by two streams and includes an ancient woodland, known locally as Primrose Wood. The northern end of the meadow is left to grow wild. The lower, or western meadow is bordered on the west side by the Cound Brook. It is basically a water meadow, known for its yellow flag iris and interesting plants in or by the stream. Over 80 species of wildflowers, 40 species of birds and 44 species of mosses and lichens have been recorded in the reserve.

Attractive leaflets about the reserve are available free from the Town Council Office, the Library and the Tourist Information Centre.

EVENTS DIARY: what's on in June

EVERY WEEK

Thursdays	Disabilities and Benefits information and advice. At the Social Club, Essex Road	10.00 to 12.00
	Citizens Advice Bureau. At Mayfair Rooms, behind solicitor's, 44B Sandford Ave..	10.00 to 12.00
	Traidcraft fairly traded goods. At the Social Club, Essex Road	10.30 to 1.00
	Chess Club. At the Social Club, Essex Road	7.30
Thu & Fri	Good Neighbours' Bereavement and Loss Befriender. Social Club, Essex Road	10.00 to 12.00
Fridays	WI Market. At the Social Club, Essex Road	9.00 to 10.30

For Mayfair Community Centre events, dates and venues not listed here, please consult the office at 44B Sandford Avenue (behind the solicitor's, near pedestrian crossing) Tel. (01694) 722077

WEEK ONE

	The Queen's Golden Jubilee Celebrations. Monday and Tuesday are Public Holidays.	
Wed 3	Carers' Support Group. Every first Wednesday in the month. Contact: Jean Maddox on 722127. At the Health Centre, Easthope Road.	2.00 to 4.00
Fri 7	Prayers for Peace (suggestions by RCs). Drop in at Emmaus Chapel, St Laurence	10.00 to 4.00
Sat 8	Liberal Democrats. Talk by Liz Lynne, West Midlands MEP. Open meeting. Methodist Hall.	7.00
	Borromini Ensemble: "London Music C17" – Handel, Dieupart, Pepusch, Matters, Wm Croft - Tickets £5 (concessions £4) at Burway Books and door. At St James, Cardington.	7.30

WEEK TWO

Mon 10	Ladies' Monday Group. Speaker: Mrs Joyce Wells. United Reformed Vestry	2.30
Tue 11	All Stretton Fellowship. Mrs Joan Davies, "Thinking aloud". St Michael's Vestry.	2.30
	CS Women's Institute. Ms S Thursfield, "History you can wear" – historical costumes. Competition: a royal memento. Silvester Horne Institute	7.15
Wed 12	Women's Network. Kevin Lawrence, "Harvest Help". Methodist Hall	2.30
	Middle Marches Lions. Every 2 nd Wed at Travellers' Rest. Contacts 724337 and 722020	8.00
Thu 13	Traidcraft fairly traded goods at 36 Watling Street South.	10.30 to 12.30
Fri 14	Senior Citizens. Mr Derek Poundford, "Heard on the Bacon side". Silvester Horne Institute	2.30
Sat 15	United Nations Association "Afghan Education". Consultation/ Action Plan. CS School.	10.00 to 4.00

WEEK THREE

Sun 16	Royal National Lifeboat Institute. "The Stretton Sharks" team : whitewater rafting at Bala.	
Mon 17	Stretton Cancer Care. Dr Colin Bates, "The rôle of the GP in caring for cancer patients". At the Parish Centre	7.00
Tue 18	Countrywomen's Guild. Outing cancelled. Meeting as usual at the Parish Centre.	2.15
	Hope Bowdler MU. Prayers : followed by a garden meeting. At 24 Oak Road	2.30
	All Stretton WI. Christine Lloyd Knight, "Marches quality meats". Competition : an unusual piece of jewellery. All Stretton Village Hall.	7.30
Wed 19	Women's Network. Barbara Williams with slides of Oberammergau. Methodist Hall.	2.30
Fri 21	Stretton Arthritis Care. Every 3 rd Friday in the Social Club, Essex Road	11.00
	All Stretton Village Hall. AGM. A chance to see new kitchen. Wine and light buffet.	7.30
Sat 22	Walk for Mayfair. Stretton's Three Peaks and Town Brook Circuit. See posters for details. Entry forms from John Thomas, Burway Books and Mayfair Office 4B Sandford Ave.	

WEEK FOUR

Sun 23	All Stretton Centenary. St Michael's & All Angels Partnership Church. The Centenary Festival Evensong will be sung by the Ashbrook Singers.	6.30
Wed 26	Women's Network Summer Outing.	
Fri 28	Senior Citizens Club. Mr David Oliver, Headmaster. Silvester Horne Institute	2.30
Sun 30	"Stretton's in Bloom". Open gardens for charity in All Stretton and Church Stretton. Inner Wheel and Rotary.	2.00 to 6.00

Dates for July due by 12 noon on Friday 14th June to Focus Diary, 1 Central Ave. CS. SY6 6EE Tel. 724304

CHURCH SERVICES in the Strettons



ANGLICAN CHURCH (The United Parish of St Laurence's, Church Stretton, with St Michael's & All Angels, All Stretton, and All Saints, Little Stretton) Rector: The Rev. Jonathan Millard (Tel: 722585)

Sunday Services

Holy Communion (a quiet reflective service) 8.00 am.
 Morning Worship. A service suitable for everyone of all ages with crèche and Kidzone (for children 3 - 11)
 followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre.
 Holy Communion on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays..... 10.30 am.
 Evening Worship. (On 4th Sunday Holy Communion with special prayers for Healing)..... 6.00 pm.
 Pathfinders (Years 6 - 10) in Parish Centre 6.00 pm.

Weekday Activities. Many house groups and activities are held throughout the week. Contact the Parish Office for details.

Thursdays: Holy Communion 11.30 am.

All Saints, Little Stretton. A traditional Sunday Service is held each Sunday

Week 1. Evening Prayer 6.00 pm.
 Weeks 2, 4, and 5. Holy Communion 11.00 am.
 Week 3. Morning Prayer 11.00 am.

The Parish Office is in the Parish Centre, Church St. (Tel: 724224). Open Tuesday & Wednesday 10.00 - 12.30 pm.
 Thursday & Friday 9.30 - 4.30 pm
 Secretary: Nancy Cleaton. Email: parishoffice@onetel.net.uk



METHODIST CHURCH

Minister: Rev. Bernard C Nixon (Tel: 724923)

Sunday Services

Morning Service 10.30 am.
 Junior Church & Crèche 10.30 am.
 Evening Service 6.00 pm.

Weekday Activities

Mondays: Prayer Group (weekly) 6.45 - 7.15 pm.
 Mondays: Bible Study (as announced) 7.30 pm.
 Tuesdays: Wives and Friends (2nd week of the month) 8.00 pm.
 Wednesdays: Women's Network (weekly) 2.30 pm.

Holy Communion: one Sunday morning each month and two evenings each quarter (as announced)



RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)

Clerk: Jamie Wrench (Tel: 723923)

Sundays: Meeting for worship in the Sylvester Horne Committee Room. Children welcome. 10.30 am.
 For details of home discussion groups which meet at 7.30 pm. please telephone the Clerk.



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Priest: Rev'd. Fr. Patrick Shivnen (Tel: 722897)

St Milburga's, Church Stretton

Sunday Mass 9.15 am. Monday - Thursday Mass 10.00 am.
 Friday Mass 9.00 am.
 Saturday Mass 6.30 pm.

St Walburga's, Plowden.

Sunday Mass 10.45 am.



ST MICHAEL'S & ALL ANGELS, ALL STRETTON (Local Ecumenical Partnership with URC) Contact: 724224

Sunday Services

Week 1 Morning Prayer (ASB) 11.00 am.
 Week 2 Holy Communion (URC) 6.00 pm.
 Week 3 Family Service 11.00 am.
 Week 4 Holy Communion (BCP) 9.00 am,
 Week 5 Holy Communion (ASB) 11.00 am.



UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Minister : Rev. Norman Smith (Tel: 724903)

Sunday Services

Worship and Activity Group (On the 1st Sunday in month includes Holy Communion) 10.30 am.

Weekday Activities

Mondays (week 1) Ladies' Group 2.30 pm.
 Mondays (week 3) Church Meeting 7.30 pm.
 Wednesdays (week 1) Ladies' Link 8.00 pm.

Church Stretton Town Council

Extract From Minutes Of Town Council Meeting, 15th April 2002.

Question from the Public

- Planning - Comments from several residents of Yeld Bank regarding a building application that might be out of keeping with existing properties.
- Swimming – It was confirmed that there is a problem with the insurance for the lifeguards and until this is resolved they are not able to oversee public sessions. There will be a meeting with the School and the SSDC in order to try and establish a management structure. It was pointed out that unless the community speaks out for a leisure centre, it is virtually impossible to obtain funding.

Planning Matters

District Decisions – Approved

- Erection of extensions and alterations to Green Dragon Inn, Little Stretton.
- Culverting of a watercourse, Craven Arms Caravans, Marshbrook.
- Change of use of part shop to dwelling, 57 High Street, Church Stretton.
- Erection of extension and alterations to dwelling, Fair Oak, All Stretton.
- Erection of dwelling and garage, site adjacent to Highlands, Hazler Road, Church Stretton.
- Display of two illuminated advertisements, former Denehurst Hotel, Church Stretton.
- Erection of dormer window, Gunwalloe, Caradoc Drive, Church Stretton.
- Extension to retail shop, Longmynd Service Station, Crossways, Church Stretton.
- Erection of dwelling, site at Ludlow Road, World's End, Church Stretton.
- Erection of extensions to building, Continental Fires Ltd., Church Stretton.
- Construction of a pitched roof over existing flat roofed garage, 120 Watling Street, Church Stretton.

District Decisions – Refused

- Erection of 8 dwellings and garages and formation of estate roads, Four Winds, Watling Street North, Church Stretton.
- Felling of a Corsican Pine, 26

Stretton Farm Road, Church Stretton.

Town Council Recommendations – Approval

- Erection of extension and alteration to vehicular and pedestrian access, 13 Churchill Road, Church Stretton.
- Conversion of a Nursing Home to 6 additional residential units, Hillside Nursing Home, Church Stretton.
- Erection of extension, Springfield Cottage, The Row, All Stretton.

Recommendation – Refusal

- Erection of a dwelling, The Stables, Yeld Bank, Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton.

Tourist Leaflet

The Town Council will not seek a reprint of the current leaflet but the Health Check Group will be asked to look at ways of producing a new brochure which will be more in keeping with the way forward for this town.

Water Abstraction – Well Well Well.

The Environment Agency informed the Town Council that an application to vary the licence has been considered together with the results of detailed investigations. The EA has decided that by imposing strict conditions the licence can be safely granted for an increased authorised volume until March 2003. This will enable the Company an additional resource in the short term whilst they provide means for collecting environmental data to assess the impact (if any) of the abstraction at Ashbrook. If the Company does not supply the necessary monitoring apparatus by 31st March 2003, the EA may refuse any further application to increase the licensed quantity.

The little boy with his hand in the Cookie Jar is after these Canadian Cookies. They are easy to make and very nice to eat.



Canadian Cookies

- 4 oz margarine
- 6 oz plain flour
- 1½ cups of oats
- ¼ teaspoon bicarb.
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 2 oz white sugar
- 2 oz brown sugar
- ½ cup coconut
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- 1 egg

Cream margarine and sugars. add the egg and all the dry ingredients.

Roll into small balls and space out on a greased baking tray. Press each ball down with a damp fork. Bake 8 to 10 minutes at 200C, 400F or gas mark 6.

Thanks to my friend in Llandudno for this very nice recipe.

Her Ladyship

Mayfair Lottery Result

for APRIL

No:	161	£100
	114	£50
	228	£20
	209	£10

Green Waste Disposal

On the dates below, a supervised dustcart will be available for residents to dispose of garden waste and cardboard at the Church Stretton Easthope Road Car Park between 8am-11am. Saturdays -

June 22 nd	July 20 th	August 10 th
September 7 th	September 21 st	October 19 th

The material is composted, so we can accept normal garden waste and cardboard boxes, but not plastic, soil or rubble, etc.

Any queries 'phone 01584 813396/7/8

URC Voice

A trip on the 'London Eye' was a great experience - more of an ordeal for my wife who finds it hard to cope with heights. It did not help having to endure a thunderstorm just before we climbed aboard! Some found that daunting, but I must say it was quite spectacular. I was sorry I was not viewing it from the top of the Eye!

As we gracefully, and very slowly, ascended in our capsule, I could only guess at the life style of those around me. One quite large group posed for a photograph, suggesting they were an extended family. As the crowds below diminished in size we were left to gaze out onto a cloudy capital. The array of buildings old and new, all served to remind me of the huge numbers of people who occupy the area every day. Although some of course come to work in London, some actually live there, but many just come to see and hear. They are the tourists, 'doing' the city, cameras at the ready to capture the next object of interest, be it the Houses of Parliament, Nelson's Column, Buckingham Palace, one of the Cathedrals, or the passing traffic on the Thames, or whatever.

Tourism, I imagine, normally reaches its peak at this time of the year when an extraordinary number of individuals decide to go off to sample the delights, delicacies and dangers of new places. Sadly of course last year many farmers suffered as a result of the foot and mouth outbreak, and tourism took a dive in many rural areas. We have to admit that tourism is such a varied industry. Some people enjoy flying off to some remote corner of the globe, while others prefer to take a day trip to the coast or country. A number, for health, preference, or responsibility reasons, cannot move out of, or far from, home, but lots of Stretton folk will be off somewhere different during this time of the year. And no doubt lots of people will be coming here to walk the hills, and drink in the beauty of the scenery. Many will relax in our hotels and homes and others will look for space to park a caravan or pitch a tent.

Wherever we choose to go God will be there too! (Psalm 139) He, above all, recognises how beneficial a change and a rest can be, and would want us to revel in days, or weeks "off" from as many of our responsibilities as possible, but NOT in a rest from Him! He desires to enrich our earthly explorations, to refresh us in mind, body and spirit, and equip us for our continuing journey here on earth, preparing us for the life to come. Have a good Summer!

Jubilee

This month we have the opportunity to share in the celebrations of the Queen's Jubilee. Whatever our opinion of the monarchy as an institution, we cannot avoid saluting the outstanding demonstration of loyalty and dedication which Elizabeth II has so clearly shown throughout her reign. She has enthusiastically fulfilled the pledge she made at her coronation. She



admits she has lived through monumental changes in so many areas. The world is a very different place to the one she leapt to fame in fifty years ago.

She has sought to fulfil her very full diary of engagements as conscientiously as possible. She has it seems hardly ever been ill. She has brought inspiration, comfort, hope and encouragement to millions, not only in these islands, but in so many other countries too, while often coping with many sad and distressing events in her own family life. She has now publicly committed herself to serve the nation and the commonwealth into the future. We do not know how long that will be, but she deserves our thanks, and needs our prayers.

After our morning service on Sunday 2nd June, which will take the form of a "Songs of Praise", we plan to share a celebratory meal, to which all the congregation are invited.

Churches' Criminal Justice Forum

A friend of mine has just been employed by the newly formed Churches' Criminal Justice Forum. It aims to uphold Christian values in the field of criminal justice. It is an ecumenical body, which has the backing of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. My friend's primary responsibility is to foster ways of implementing the objectives of the forum. These include:- raising awareness of criminal justice concerns in local congregations: helping church people engage with issues in informed and practical ways: sharing information about local and national initiatives and approaching government to urge reforms, particularly those which may reduce social exclusion. Currently it is exploring ways in which family visiting can be improved in women's prisons. It is involved in pilot projects in places like Bristol and Gloucester, to develop the role of churches in the re-settlement of prisoners. It is producing a "What can I do?" pack to stimulate the practical involvement by Christians in a range of activities across the criminal justice field.. It is engaged in dialogue with Jews, Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus on criminal justice issues, particularly prison chaplaincy. Further news can be obtained from Stuart Dew Tel 020 7901 4878 or E-mail dew@cbcew.org.uk

Norman Smith



The committee members would like to thank the people of Church Stretton who once again supported our annual fund raising lunch at the Parish Centre in April. The event was a huge success. We are pleased to tell you that we reached our target, and some! Your generosity helped us to raise £1,089 which we will forward to Hope House, Children's Hospice. Thank you to all who helped.

Judy Willis, Hon Sec. Tel: 722702

Methodist Voice

Open Hands, Open Heart.



This was the theme chosen for the Circuit Network Day in April, when our ladies welcomed visitors from Ludlow, Tenbury Wells, Wyson, Hopton Bank, Aston Munslow, Bishop's Castle and St. John's Shrewsbury. The morning session was spent in any one of four workshops and it is interesting to note that when people had made their choice of activity, the numbers were equally divided. The guest speaker, Rev. Caroline Homer of Bishop's Castle, spent time with each group, listening and making constructive comments.

David Hotton led the music workshop and made the singing of new music both interesting and enjoyable. The creative Bible reading group was led by Rev. Deanne Snelling, based on the story of Zacchaeus. Perhaps the most energetic group was an introduction to liturgical dancing, led by Mrs. Cicely Winstanley. Finally, Mrs. Doris Cooper and Mrs. June Nixon came equipped with wire, plastic gloves, plaster and all things needed to enable the craft group to produce very recognisable models of their own open hands.

After a break for lunch, with time for informal conversation and a chance to get to know more people, Rev. Caroline Homer led our worship, which included contributions from all four workshops, and an enthusiastic talk by herself linking it all together. One outcome from the day was that a donation of £45 was sent to the District Network project, which is helping people in a remote village in Ghana to build themselves a church.

Are You An "On-line" Shopper?

If so, have you ever tried the "go-help" on-line shopping service (www.go-help.com)? The Methodist Church is now a registered beneficiary of this shopping service and the way it works is both simple and effective. Because of the large amount of business go-help can direct to their chosen retailers, they receive

a commission (effectively a discount) which can then be passed on to beneficiaries. Retailers do not charge higher prices to customers coming to them from this web-site, so shoppers are able to support their favourite charities at no cost to themselves. Over 200 quality retailers have joined the scheme and individuals are free to select which particular charity they wish to support with the commission generated by their on-line transactions. For example, you can nominate the Methodist Church Fund as your chosen beneficiary by entering "Methodist Church" in go-help's 'select your beneficiary' box. A list of all go-help's registered beneficiaries can be found on the go-help web-site, so, if you are an internet user, why not try it for yourself, even if just out of interest.

Cause For Celebration!

We are reminded that the official national Queen's Golden Jubilee service will be held at St. Paul's Cathedral on Tuesday, 4th June. Within our own church, we shall no doubt give thanks to God for our Queen's remarkable half-century of dedicated service to our country, during our morning service at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday, 2nd June, when we shall be led in worship by Rev. Bernard Nixon. On the evening of that same day, our 6 p.m. service will be conducted by Rev. Peter Curry, Chairman of the Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury District, so let us give this special day our fullest support.

As for next month, even more special pulpit treats are in store for us as, once again, we have our annual Festival of Preachers, so here is a reminder of what those treats are: Sunday, 7th July: Rev. Colin M. Brown, M.Sc., M.Phil., Ph.D., of Bridgnorth.

Sunday, 14th July: Mrs. Judy Jarvis, who is secretary for work with children for the Methodist Church nationally
Sunday, 21st July: Rev. Claire M. Heald, B.Ed., M.Th., of Chester.

Sunday, 28th July: Rev. Maurice H. Wright, B.A., of Bayston Hill.

To all our church members, friends, and any visitors to the area, we extend the warmest of invitations to join us for these services and help us to create a truly festival atmosphere.

Eric Stephenson

What do Quakers say?



Many people I encounter are curious about what Quakers are about. Some ask if it involves eating endless bowls of porridge oats? Wearing funny

hats? Having a strange handshake? Not having a sense of humour? Being pious and sombre? Since going to Quaker meetings, I have yet to encounter any of these phenomena. I have however met some wonderful attitudes and ideas on how to live life.

The general gist of the Quakers is the belief that: -
There is something sacred in all people

All people are equal before God
Religion is about the whole of life
One meets in stillness to discover a deeper sense of God's presence
True religion leads to respect for the earth and all life upon it
Each person is unique, precious, a child of God

Quakers meet regularly for Meetings for worship. These involve sitting and waiting in stillness and silence for God's love and direction. The sensation of these meetings is hard to explain, but it is really worth attending one if you have an opportunity. (Coffee and biscuits are usually served afterwards which helps calm your nerves after your first meeting)

S A C

Roman Catholic Voice

Some people complain of lack of concentration when praying. Yet, concentration may hinder prayer. Praying is to the mind what relaxation is to the body; a total surrender of the control we exercise on mind and body. When we pray, we close the sluice-gate of reason – which judges, schemes and worries – and we open the floodgate of the heart – which loves, trusts and hopes.

For Mother Teresa, “silence of mind, eyes and mouth”, is necessary for praying. We should stop thinking, looking and speaking for a while; we should let God’s spirit enter, dwell in us and speak to us. Jesus often left the house and the crowds to pray in a quiet and lonely place. In the prayer he taught us, we ask God to repossess his world, and to provide us with food and his friendship, i.e. forgiveness, strength, wisdom and protection.

In prayer, our trust should be boundless. God knows what is good for us and has the power to give it to us. Our petitions should be like the seed a gardener sows. He knows it will germinate and goes away and forgets about it. Our faith should be as complete as the trust we put in our parents when we were children. We never worried about the future or the necessities of life. We relied completely on their presence, power and love.

Prayer must be humble. A praying person cannot be proud because he knows that his achievements depend on conditions beyond his control; his natural talents, opportunities and favourable circumstances. Men of prayer are never proud of their successes, but thankful.

A prayer should not be vindictive. We should ask for the reform of offenders, not for their punishment. As God’s creation they are our brothers. As self-haters, they need our sympathy and esteem in order to change course. Besides, bitterness and fear can injure our health. We cannot hate or fear someone we pray for.

Prayer is not a luxury, but a necessity in an age when the media blacken the picture of our world and people in it with imaginary ‘evil men’, whom humans alone can punish and eliminate. Prayer washes away our resentments and fears in a tide of divine love.

God’s mind is not our mind; his ways are not our ways, but prayer can open our mind to God’s ways so that we see the world with his eyes. Our wisdom, happiness and peace of mind rest on our close relationship with God. Such a relationship is the aim and result of prayer.

Simone Crawley

Focus On Faith

Even the most casual of newspaper readers must be aware that across all Christian denominations attendance at church services has declined dramatically over the last two decades. Many church buildings have been modified and used for ‘worthwhile’ social and educational activities; others downgraded further into furniture store rooms and Bingo halls. Young men are apparently no longer eager to commit themselves to the priesthood or the ministry and especially in rural areas it is inevitable that in the near future many parishes will be without a leader.

Obviously the status and importance of the Church in thousands of people’s lives is hugely diminished. Yet a well authenticated piece of research found recently that just over 70% of a random sample asserted that they believed in an afterlife. At a time when even a child in primary school is taught to demand proof or evidence before accepting any piece of data, I find this popular belief in something which is clearly unprovable to be surprising.

Presumably there will be many and varied notions as to the nature of life after death. A walk around a Victorian graveyard suggests hopes of ‘peace’, ‘rest from labour’ and, above all, ‘reunion with loved ones’. Theologians, of course, would probably concentrate on a revelation of God himself, and a sublime intimacy with Him.

But what of the hundreds who do not feel the need for guidance from established religion, where do they get their belief in the afterlife? The secular world tries so hard to persuade us that we are immortal, buy this, eat that, refrain from the other and you can push death further and further back, especially if you don’t talk about it. But no matter how materialistic we are, how focused on success, achievement and today, we can on occasion be knocked sideways by a sudden and unsought feeling of our own smallness and vulnerability. This sometimes happens when we have a near miss – an accident that could so easily have happened, a significant person whom we almost lost.

Modern society, especially as portrayed in the media, is cynical. Humour is valued most when sharply, sometimes cruelly, satirical. Most rising politicians cultivate the ability to deliver an acerbic line which can annihilate an opponent’s belief. Sometimes even the churches are tempted to take the tough line, to be au fait with the ‘issues’; not to appear pussy cats. So do we deliberately avoid the topics that the man in the street might most like to hear about, the nature of God, the afterlife. In that case, perhaps Focus on Faith should have an exclamation mark!

Maureen Lee.



St. Laurence's Parish Church
invites you to our

Special Jubilee Service
10:30 am
Sunday 2 June, 2002

followed by a
Jubilee Picnic
in Rectory Fields
from 12:00 pm onwards.

Everyone is welcome!
Bring your own picnic
and join the fun.
(weather permitting)

Church Stretton Medical Practice

We can now offer you a quicker way to make an appointment or request a repeat prescription. You no longer have to dial the main switchboard and then have your call transferred.

Our new Direct Dial Numbers are:-
Appointments 722129
Prescriptions 725949

Non-touch tone phones can also use 01694 725947.

The telephone number for Emergencies and also for the Administration and General Enquiries is still 722127

Church Stretton Charities Day 27 April 2002

The Town Council took over the ownership of the Square from the District Council in the summer of 1999 and since then we have been encouraging the use of the Square.

We decided to offer the Square to charities, free of charge, for Saturday, 27th April. Ten charities joined together to make a most successful day, prompting the thought that this should now become an annual event.

Lesley McIntyre, Chair, Market Committee

Church Stretton & South Shropshire Festival Fringe 2002

In association with Salop Musica

The 16th Annual Community Arts Festival, **July 8 – 20**, will involve many of our trusted groups and individuals. Notable among the groups are Church Stretton School of Dance and Drama which has performed and demonstrated to high acclaim for many years. They will be at Church Stretton School July 13 – 14. The GD Folk Band have also been Festival Fringe regulars. They perform at the Green Dragon, Little Stretton, July 13 and the Kings Arms, Church Stretton, July 20. We look forward to the involvement of the Dorrington Players in a lighthearted soiree with musicians on July 12. Our regular individual performers include Jean Bulley, Marion Murdoch, Keith Downing and Andrew Chapman who will be joined by many others during the festival.

Young people are well catered for in concerts and workshops in schools. Skilled artistes and teachers will give support to these events. Retirement homes and the Day Centre in Church Stretton will be visited. The annual Concert at the Methodist Church on July 19 will be in aid of the Philip Cunningham Memorial Fund. Philip was one of the central figures of the Fringe and Salop Musica.

We hope to encourage many people of all ages, particularly the young, to participate in arts events during the festival. It is usual to involve nearly one thousand. However, if you do not wish to participate, perhaps you may like to support by attending as a member of the audience.

Programmes with full details will be available in shops and Libraries in June.

Glyn Davies (723195)

An Invitation from The National Trust

This summer, many of the visitors to Carding Mill Valley are certain to be drawn through the little wrought-iron gate to have a look inside the new National Trust Information Centre.

Regulars will remember that this room was once a gents' loo but no-one else would suspect the humble origin of this simple, rather elegant, building next to the Chalet Pavilion

The National Trust is keen to share this Information Centre with the local community in a bid to promote tourism and help the local economy.

Do you run a local business or a community organisation related to the Longmynd or tourism in the Stretton area? If you would like to publicise your activity by means of your own free leaflets in the Information Centre, please bring them to the Warden's office. We will display them for you but please check from time to time to see if they have run out – thank you.

You might run a small B&B or a large-scale leisure activity. You might wish to display community leaflets. The Centre offers you the opportunity to reach some of the 250,000 people who visit Carding Mill Valley each year.

The National Trust already has striking displays in the Centre, illustrating many aspects of the Longmynd. For example, did you know that if you stand on Pole Bank, the highest point on the Longmynd (1695 feet / 517m), you can see from Snowdonia to the Cotswolds and from

the Brecon Beacons, to Cheshire's Peckforton hills? It has to be a very clear day, of course!

There are also two white-boards carrying latest handwritten information. The "What's About" board dates various wildlife observations. You can find out when the redstarts arrived back from Africa or when the cuckoo was heard on High Park. Visitors are also encouraged to contribute to this by giving any wildlife reports to the Warden.

However, there is still space in the Centre for you!

The National Trust



Photo: Paul Miller

Bus and Train in the Marches

In Shropshire and Herefordshire railways do not reach the parts that other forms of transport do. We have a long way to go to achieve anything that could even remotely be described as integrated transport. However, in both Shrewsbury and Hereford the bus stations are only a short distance from the rail station. In the case of Shrewsbury, the two hourly Sunday services that radiate across the county are well known, as are our local weekend Shuttles. Sadly, owing to poor publicity, a good deal of delving into timetables is required to plan other trips combining rail and bus.

From Shrewsbury there are now better bus services to Oswestry, Ellesmere, Market Drayton and Bridgnorth; from Ludlow to Tenbury Wells, the Clun valley and Cleve; from Leominster to the black and white villages, Presteigne and Bromyard. Cheltenham and Tewkesbury are difficult to reach by train, but on Saturdays there is a conveniently timed bus from Hereford making possible a pleasant few hours in either town.

Contacts: Hereford 01432 260211, Salop 0870 6082608, Powys 01597 826643

Current timetables should be available at Tourist Information Centres. If you need help with planning itineraries our local 'official' bus contact, Philip Lane Clark, would be pleased to help and advise. (723294)



March gave us a real taste of Spring and although we had several wet spells they were mainly of showers and not long lasting. Mild and warm are the two words I used most days to describe the climate. The 8th, 9th

and 10th suffered from gales and showers and there was thick fog on the 15th and 23rd. Frosts were rare, just 8 days with a ground frost. The month ended on a high note with 8 days of warm and dry Spring weather.

April was a warm and dry month – not setting any new individual records, but collectively doing so. Looking back through my records I cannot find any other month of April which had a maximum temperature of 72F, an average temperature of 49F, 30 days over 50F, 20 days over 60F and 2 days over 70F – and such a low rainfall. There have been years in which April had higher average temperatures and lower rainfall, but never all together.

The average temperature for the month at 49.24F was the highest since 1997. Rainfall was only half what it was last year. The longest dry spell was 11 days from the 3rd to the 13th.

R.Smart

Words and names – 47 : Celebrations

It seems appropriate, now that the Queen's reign has reached its fiftieth year, to look at some words which relate to celebrations of one sort or another, starting with the word *Jubilee* itself.

At first sight it would appear to be related to *jubilant* and *jubilation*, which both come from the Latin *jubilare*, to rejoice, to make a joyful sound. Psalm 100, which begins with *Jubilate!* is set, with the *Te Deum*, to be sung at services of solemn rejoicing; and indeed the Latin word has influenced the development of the modern English *Jubilee* – but there is a much earlier history. In Hebrew *yobel* means 'ram', and hence the ram's-horn trumpet with which the year of jubilee was announced. As set out in Leviticus xxv, jubilee was to be kept every fifty years, and this was at first the standard interval between celebrations. Then in the later Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church instituted special years of jubilee, dedicated to pious works and the granting of indulgences; and the frequency of these reduced from one hundred years to twenty-five years, eventually being granted with no special interval.

In contemporary English the prefixes 'silver', 'golden' or 'diamond' in order to specify a length of time were in use early in the 19th century, though it was probably Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897 which gave them wider popularity, for example in marriages.

Most celebrations fall into the category of *feasts*, from the Latin *fešta* which also gave us *festival* and (via Spanish and French respectively) *fiesta* and *fête*. In religious terms a *feast* is the opposite of a *fast*, conferring rather than withdrawing permission to 'eat, drink and be merry'; and in this context Shrovetide (Quinquagesima) is significant. Shrove Tuesday, until the 16th century also known as *Fastingong*, in Britain evokes pancake

aces, and in my childhood whips and tops then came out of hibernation, never earlier; but in French *Mardi Gras* (Fat Tuesday) as celebrated in New Orleans and other exotic places is quite a different matter. This is all a last wild enjoyment of freedom before the solemn observance of Ash Wednesday and the restrictions of Lent, and so are the Italian *carnevale* and French *carnaval* which became the English *carnival*. The word comes from the Latin *carnem leuare*, though it underwent changes on the way, and means 'a putting away of meat' – that is, using up or storing away food before Lent.



until the 16th century *holiday* and *haliday* (with many variations) were both in use, each deriving from a slightly different spelling of the Old English *hāliðdæð* (and each leading to a different surname). This is, of course, a *holy day*; but even in the 13th century the word was being used for secular celebrations as well as those of the Church.

Gala comes from Italian via French, in the 17th century, but its origins are mysterious. At first it referred to dress ('to put on gala') and then to a general rejoicing ('days of gala'). The more common modern meaning of a special occasion first appeared towards the end of the 18th century, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* recognises both pronunciations: [gahla] and [gayla].

The roots of *revel* are much better attested, since it is related to *rebel* and comes from the Latin *rebellare*, to wage war again, to make a tumult. It entered English via Old French in the 14th century, and its connotations are distinctly unbridled and full of energy – though not perhaps so much so as the *bacchanal* with its emphasis on Bacchus and alcohol. *Carouse* belongs to the same family, and though it came to us from French it actually derives from the German 'gar aus', completely emptied – that is of a drinking vessel drained to the bottom. This word dates from the 16th century and the Queen 'carowses' (fatally) to Hamlet's success in his duel with Laertes.

More sedately, a *party* is a group of people gathered together for a purpose. From the Latin *pars, partem*, the words *part* and *party* were completely interchangeable from the 14th century onward, with the basic meaning of some sort of division or section. The idea of 'sides' to a discussion or a battle eventually led to the meaning of getting together for any sort of purpose, including enjoyment. *Socials* too, from the Latin *socius*, a friend, are respectable and seem to have started in the USA in the late 19th century. The essence of a *picnic* was at first not that it should take place in the open air but that each participant should provide a share of the food and drink; and this may be the source of the 'pick'. It appeared in references to other countries in the mid-18th century; but in England not until about 1800, when a picnic was a much grander occasion than it is now.

I have already seen mentioned in the context of this year's Jubilee the good old-fashioned *knees-up*. The imagery is vivid, and its beginnings need little research, at least for those who remember the last war. The song 'Knees-up Mother Brown' dates from 1939, and the text can be found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Colin Balmforth

Solution to Crossword: Across 7. Golden 8. Queens 10. Confirm 11. Inter 12. Peer 13. Haven 17. Valse 18. Beta 22. Broom 23. Elegant 24. Ermine 25. Tattoo **Down** 1. Eggcups 2. Planter 3. Denim 4. Jubilee 5. Petty 6. Usury 8. Embassies 14. Carmine 15. Lepanto 16. Caution 19. Abler 20. Comma 21. Decay

Walk for Mayfair

This is a wonderful opportunity to view our superb scenery, keep healthy and help to raise funds for Mayfair Community Centre.

The fundraising committee are offering a choice of two magnificent guided walks on **Saturday 22 June 2002:**

Strettons Three Peaks (Strenuous)

A challenging panoramic 8 mile walk over the summits of Lawley, Caradoc and Ragleth. This walk leaves Church Stretton at 8.45am and coaches have been arranged to transport walkers to the start of the walk.

Numbers are limited for this walk and booking is therefore essential to ensure a seat on the coach.

Follow the Townbrook Circuit (Moderate)

Walkers are invited to see Church Stretton from a different angle on this picturesque 2 – 3 mile walk which leaves Church Stretton at 11am.

Participants are asked for a minimum donation of £5.00 to cover costs and a ploughman's lunch will be provided for walkers on their return. For those who wish to help by raising further funds for Mayfair, **Sponsorship Forms are available with the Registration Forms.**

Registration Forms will be available from John Thomas, Burway Books, and Mayfair Offices at 44B Sandford Ave.

Sponsored by Boulton's Coaches

Enquiries 01694 722700.

Contacts: Phillip Skitt 722166, John Beamond 723696

Shropshire Ambulance First Emergency Responders

In 2001 Shropshire Ambulance Service set up a volunteer network called the **SAFER** scheme, to reduce response times to life threatening emergencies in rural areas. People from all over the county volunteered and groups were trained in first aid, oxygen therapy and the use of an AED (Automatic external defibrillator), and then provided with a mobile phone and one set of kit per group.

You may or may not know that a group is active in Church Stretton and the surroundings areas. At the moment there are three volunteers and between us we try to provide as much cover as we can. Since July last year we have been to over fifty emergency calls here in the Church Stretton area. Now we are established we aim to raise public awareness and support and recruit more volunteers to help us save lives. We would also like to raise funds to purchase our own defibrillator; at present we are sharing one with the Church Stretton branch of the Red Cross (of which we are all members). With on-going fund raising we will be able to buy more life saving equipment for use here in the community.

If you can help us with fundraising, or you would like to volunteer yourself as a first responder, you can contact us and we will be glad to answer your questions and provide you with relevant information. Or we can put you in touch with a representative of the Ambulance Service who would be glad to help.

Church Stretton Partnership: Shaping the future of the area

“Why are Bishop's Castle and Craven Arms getting funds for development of facilities, but Church Stretton is not?”

I have heard this question from a lot of people, the answer lies with all of us who are residents. Did you know that The Church Stretton Partnership is currently consulting with members of the public to get your views on what is good with the Church Stretton area, what is not good and what you would like to see done to improve facilities? To get funds we have to demonstrate that what we are asking for is what YOU the people who live here really want.

Funding requires that we show that the numbers of people consulted are overwhelmingly in support of the

Action Plan which will be produced. So, if you haven't filled in a questionnaire get one and fill it in NOW. Forms available from Wrights Estate Agents and the Town Council Office.

After this consultation we are forming Working Groups for which we shall need more volunteers. Analysis will be made of the answers and from these a draft Action Plan will be made and then presented to the communities of the area for their support and agreement.

It won't be easy – but it can be done.

Trevor J Davies for the Steering Group

Mayfair News

The Annual Flag Day for Mayfair Community Centre will be on the 8th June

The Quiz held in April raised £213. Thanks to everyone involved, especially our Quiz Master, Ken Willis.

New Appointment at Community Centre.

Sue Wood has been appointed as Volunteer recruitment worker with a responsibility to recruit people with a particular interest in working with young people. There will be a crèche available for volunteers with young children. If anyone is interested in the wide range of volunteering opportunities available at the Community Centre please contact Sue on 722077 or call in at 44b Sandford Avenue,

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

This is a letter about the Queen's Golden Jubilee or specifically, as I understand it, the absence of any celebration of this event in Church Stretton.

When we came here, over 5 years ago, it was because of the hills, yes, but also the feel of the town and all the events that there were – the Carnival, the shows at the Denehurst, the Fireworks display, the Christmas Carols, etc. etc. I don't think that I am a whinger – I try to do my part in the Town's activities – but I think we have lost some of the attractiveness of the area in that a certain spirit seems to have gone. We had a street party in Torquay in 1977 for the Silver Jubilee and one in Cardiff in 1981 for Charles and Diana's wedding. Surely in this year, with all the Queen has gone through, we could do something for the Golden Jubilee?

If smaller villages in the surrounding area can manage this then why can't a town the size of Church Stretton? Anyway, by the time this letter comes to be published, if it is, it will be too late to arrange anything. What a shame for all the children in Church Stretton who will have been deprived of an event that they could have remembered forever. I would be willing to help – Any ideas?

Chris Kolvin (722609)

[This letter may be too late for any ideas, but all we have heard about in Church Stretton is a service followed by a picnic in Rectory Field on Sunday, 2nd June. Editor]

Dear Editor,

How could God....? With reference to Eric Stephenson's article my thoughts are roughly as follows. Whilst "How could God let this happen" is an understandable reaction to a terrible tragedy – it does not bear scrutiny. Are we saying that our mortal lives should be free of all tragedies, all suffering etc. or that God should draw a line allowing only minor inconveniences? We have to remember that in this life we are mere mortals, born to experience life's ups and downs and finally to die.

There is of course another side to this coin. In times of tragedy and sadness when our resources are exhausted, our faith in God allows us to draw on a far greater resource. Whilst miracles are unlikely, support and comfort reaches us usually through the goodness of others.

This brings me to the second point – the goodness of others. This is a reflection of god's goodness and the nearer we follow Christ's teaching about tolerance and caring for others the better life becomes. Drifting away from this path obviously adds to the many troubles we see around us.

Personally after 80 odd years of ups and downs, I find the first concept relatively easy to accept. As a sinner I find the second point much more difficult to handle!

Tom Humphreys



Dear Editor

Some two months ago I came across a leaflet, one of many thousands produced by Ludlow Town Council, that advertised, in a monthly calendar format, the various commercial and cultural activities that are being held in their town each year. It is a simple, eye-catching and very effective way of letting locals, visitors and would-be visitors know of the many events that they can look forward to over the coming year in and around Ludlow.

I looked into the production of this leaflet and discovered how easy it would be to duplicate the idea for Church Stretton. It would involve very little expense (none if sponsors backed it), little time, effort or expertise – yet the benefits could, I feel, be considerable. I took this idea together with a brief letter and the results of my research, to the Town Council mainly because of a surprising lack of printed publicity in either of the two main tourist magazines – South Shropshire Where to Stay 2002 and Shropshire and Welsh Borders 2002. In neither publication is there any attempt, other than by individuals, to publicise or extol the many activities and commercial attractions of our town.

Perhaps it is the Council's desire to keep Church Stretton secret that has prevented them from advertising or publicising the many facilities, activities, shops, attractions and markets that help to make the town so interesting and attractive? I do congratulate Robin Jukes-Hughes on his excellent website and it does a sterling job of promoting Stretton, but, apart from this and the very good monthly Events diary in the Focus, there is hardly anything in print that I can discover that promotes the town at all effectively.

This letter, if published, may evoke reactions from your readers; it may even prompt the courtesy of a reply from the Council.

John G Woolmer (751245)

To all Focus Readers

After 48 years at the D.I.Y. shop I have recently retired from business.

I would like to thank all my customers, from the D.I.Y. shop, Picture Frame Shop and the Decorating business (which my father started in 1946) for all the loyalty they have shown and hope they will support the new owner, Mr. M. Huszak in the future.

I shall miss all the friends I have made in these years but hope to see you around the town. Once more, thanks.

Ray Tipton

Focus on Health: Exercise - Why it's Important

Regular exercise has been shown to be beneficial for good health. On average, people who exercise regularly benefit in the following ways:

Heart disease. Physical inactivity is a risk factor to the development of atheroma ('hardening or furring of the arteries') which can lead to angina, heart attacks and other heart problems. On average, people who exercise regularly are less likely to develop heart disease. Exercise is good for the heart muscle and encourages good circulation to the heart. People who exercise regularly tend to have a slower resting heart rate than those who don't exercise, the heart being more efficient and fitter in those who exercise.

In addition, regular exercise has beneficial effects on other risk factors for heart disease. Levels of blood pressure, stress and body weight all, on average, tend to be lower in people who regularly exercise, compared with those who don't. For some people with raised levels of blood pressure, a commitment to regular exercising is sometimes all that is required to lower the levels back to normal without the need for drug treatment.

Weight control. Exercise helps to bum off excess fat. Regular exercise combined with a sensible diet is helpful in maintaining a healthy body weight. Being overweight can have a detrimental affect on the body for many reasons. On average, overweight people have greater chances of developing heart disease, gall bladder disease, diabetes, joint problems, gout and psychological upsets relating to poor body image.

Stress. It is difficult to measure levels of stress and 'mood'. However, many people claim an increased sense of well-being when regularly exercising compared to when they are not doing so. There is some evidence that mild depression is helped by exercise and many people find their stress levels are considerably reduced by regularly exercising. In addition, if sleeping is a problem, regular exercising during the day (not near

to bed time) encourages a relaxed, healthy tiredness and poor sleep patterns often improve with regular exercise.

Muscle strength. Regular exercise, as well as improving fitness with the above benefits, also produces muscles which are stronger and more supple. This may be particularly beneficial to those people with back and neck problems when muscle strengthening exercises and general measures to keep fit will help prevent back, neck and muscular sprains.

Osteoporosis. Regular exercise has been shown to help prevent osteoporosis ('thinning of the bones'). The pulling and tugging on the bones by the muscles helps to stimulate bone producing cells and strengthens the bones.

How much exercise. Any exercise is better than none. Doing such things as walking or cycling, to work or the shops or to friends *etc.* instead of going by car or bus will help. Try walking up stairs as a habit instead of using the lift or getting off a bus a stop or so early to walk the rest of the way. A general attitude of walking more and at a quicker pace should become the norm. However, in addition, specific time should ideally be set aside for more vigorous exercise. For maximum benefits to health, as a minimum, 30 minutes or more of fairly vigorous exercise 2-3 times per week should be aimed for.

Always warm-up first with gentle bends and stretches and then gradually build-up to more vigorous exercise. As fitness improves, increasing the level of vigorous exercise sessions should be aimed for.

If you have a particular medical condition that concerns you about exercising, it is best to discuss this with a doctor before embarking on an exercise programme. However, there are very few reasons why exercise may be harmful. A common wrong belief is that exercise may be bad for the heart. On the contrary, for most people with heart disease, exercise is beneficial

What sort of exercise? There are numerous exercises that are popular. Walking, jogging, swimming, cycling, racquet sports, team sports, dancing, aerobics *etc.* Some people prefer to be on their own, others enjoy the company of team or class-type exercise. An ideal exercise programme will include exercises that include different types of activities to build-up the 3 components of fitness, namely stamina (the ability to keep going), strength and suppleness. Why not try things you haven't done before like joining a team or work-out group?

It is important to do things you enjoy. Many activities become more enjoyable the fitter you become, so don't become disheartened if the first try isn't too dynamic! Try and build things up gradually.

Perseverance and keeping it up. One of the biggest obstacles to starting an exercise programme is the uphill battle to become fit. If unfit, many people feel that the first few attempts at exercise are quite a struggle. Do not get disheartened as people often find that each time it becomes easier and before long the 'pain barrier' is passed. Regular exercise to many people then becomes enjoyable and a part of their day to day life.

The secret is then to keep it up - for life. Try and keep exercise high on the list of priorities throughout the week. If one kind of exercise becomes boring, try switching to other types to maintain the health benefits. Sometimes people set their goals too high, for example aiming for a marathon fun run. This may take too much time and occasionally enthusiasm may be lost and things may become a drudge. Try and be realistic about personal goals to keep exercise beneficial, but enjoyable, that can become an ongoing routine.


Exercise is not just for young 'sporty' types. It is never too late to start to gain the benefits, no matter how old or unfit. Gradually build up to fitness, but then keep it up regularly for life.

Church Stretton Medical Centre

Occasional Advertisements

Kings Arms advertisement: see foot of page 39

Peter Andrew Jones



PAINTINGS OF SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

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