

Towcester Town Crier

Issue 189

May 2021

Town Hall, Towcester

Cover image courtesy of Ben Bucklow
www.yakkin.co.uk

In this Issue:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3 A Word from the Mayor | 13 Old Towcester 39 | 24 Churches Together |
| 4 Towcester Evening W I | 15 Writers Group | 27 St Lawrence Society of Ringers |
| 5 Mayor's Citizens Awards | 16 Ability CIC Transport | 28 Three Towcester Doctors |
| 7 Remembering Gerald Peasland | 17 Towcester Studio Band | 31 Towcester Foodbank |
| 7 Best Kept Garden Entry Form | 17 Tove Quilters & stitchers | 33 Towcester Choral Society |
| 9 Towcester CE Primary School | 19 Fortitude Financial Advice | 35 South Northants Youth Engagement |
| 9 Towcester Town FC | 20 TowFood | 36 Towcester Rotary Update |
| 9 Heartbeats | 20 Climate Action West Northants | 36 Towcester U3A |
| 11 Towcester Archers | 21 Camera Club | 37 Towcester Tidy Up |
| 12 Local History Society | 23 Towcester Area Door2Door | 39 Roadie Ramble |

TOWCESTER

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A WORD FROM THE OUTGOING MAYOR



My time in office as Mayor of Towcester is all but over. A new Mayor will take my place on May 24th, in an event that, as I write, looks likely to be online, or at best involving only members of the Town Council.

If nothing else, I hope I can claim the past twelve months as a unique time to be Mayor – let us hope such a challenging, and for some a sad time, is never repeated.

That said, one thing the past year has demonstrated – and it's been very evident here in Towcester - is the generosity of so many people in helping others. Volunteers associated with the **Towcester Community Fridge**, as it was called when I visited in January, are but one example of what's been going on.

Helping others is the theme behind **'Men's Minds Matter'**, a group which aims to reach out to men who may have a 'lack of identity or purpose'. I found the determination of its founder in Towcester, Nick Wilson, uplifting, when I went along to one of his sessions back in August.

Music forms such an important element of many people's lives in the town. The Covid lockdown presented a major challenge, and early on, it was feared that the annual **Midsummer Music Festival** would not be able to go ahead. But doubt was soon replaced by an overwhelming desire that 'the show

must go on'. I pay tribute to the valiant efforts of the organisers and of course, all the performers, plus my colleague Lizzi who worked for hours on her computer to join it all digitally together.

The result was a splendid show, which I am delighted to report raised a large sum for my chosen Mayor's charity, **Macmillan Cancer Support**.

It was also great to be able to stage a **Christmas online show** which I hoped made up for the fact we couldn't enjoy the traditional celebrations in the usual way.

And more recently, there's been a chance to enjoy the varied performers who took part in the online **Towcester's Got Talent** show.

Normally as Mayor, I would expect to visit any number of local events, and organisations. Alas, this year has ruled out virtually all indoor gatherings. Outdoors however, I was able to judge **Towcester's Best Kept Garden** competition and see for myself the wonderful **Rotary eClub wildflower meadow** near Hazel Crescent.

The past year was also the **75th anniversary of VJ Day**. It was a

privilege to mark the moment by joining Mark Lambert of Towcester Studio Band when he sounded the Last Post at the top of Bury Mount.

So much of what has happened in the last year was recorded in photographs by people in the town and included in the **'lockdown calendar'**.

Throughout the year the Town Council has continued to ensure local services are provided, and the interests of people represented as best as possible. But none of this would have happened without the dedicated work of our Town Clerk, **Elizabeth Cox**. In such challenging times she has been tireless in her support. I pay tribute to her and thank her on behalf of the town.

Finally, I thank each of you, in particular, all who have supported my Mayor's charity. It's been a privilege to have been Mayor of the town where I have lived for many years, and which I know is a wonderful, friendly place.

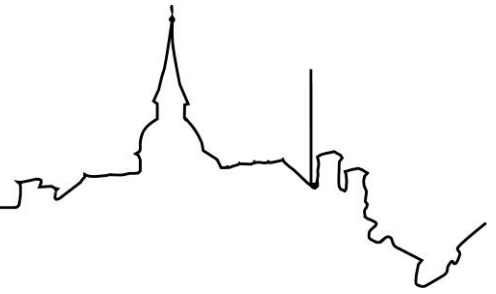


Richard
Cllr Richard Dallyn
Towcester Town Mayor
2020-2021



Towcester Town Crier is published by Towcester Town Council and is open to contributions from all organisations and individuals in the town. We operate strict deadlines for advertising / copy and submissions will not be accepted after these dates. Advertising and editorial copy should be sent to Lizzi Bucklow-Holt at the Town Council Offices, Town Hall (tel: 01327 350995; email: enquiries@towcester-tc.gov.uk). Articles appearing contain the views of the person submitting the item and are not necessarily the views of the Town Council. More details on the Council's website www.towcester-tc.gov.uk/towcester-town-crier.html

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TOWCESTER EVENING WI



As we move through 2021, we are hoping that the weather will be warm enough so that our members can meet outside in small groups of 6 again, once regulations allow for this. As well as organising meetings and events on Zoom, the WI Committee has been making plans to celebrate **50 years of Towcester Evening WI** later in the year and into 2022. Who knows whether it will be plan A, B or C at this stage though, but we have our fingers crossed!

As ever we are supporting the community where we can, and we made another delivery to the **growbaby** project in March. This time donations included numerous bags and boxes of nearly new children's clothes, toys, and equipment. We have also sent a parcel of premature and new-born baby knitted items to Birmingham Children's Hospital. Yet again, we would like to thank the generosity of Towcester residents who contributed to these charitable donations.

By the time you read this we will have enjoyed a chocolate demonstration at our April meeting and will have discussed this year's National WI resolution on **"A call to increase awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer,"** at our May meeting. At our June meeting we shall be learning how to recycle bags with Olesya Lane, and in July we shall be admiring a collection of Russian dolls.

If you would like to hear more about our WI and perhaps pop into a Zoom session, then please do not hesitate to contact us. There is no charge for a guest on Zoom.

Sue Hamilton, President

01327 350822 towcesterwi@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/TowcesterEveningWI1971

TOWCESTER EVENING WI GARDEN CLUB

This summer we have gone for gold, to mark 50 years since the TEWI was founded in 1971.

We have sourced and grown plants in all the various shades of yellow and hope they will be a bright and cheerful addition to all our other celebrations.

Now that working conditions are a little better, we can carry out some of our other planned projects such as the planting of trees and bluebells.

Also, the new planters for the Northern approach to the Town should be on their way soon.

Our Team Leader, Sue Hamilton, is the current WI President and as such, has formally thanked the Garden Club members for their work during the pandemic. We members would like to reciprocate by thanking Sue for her encouragement, motivation, and her beautiful photos and as ever, her hands on approach to the work in hand.

Our thanks also go to our generous sponsors who continue to support us.

Margaret Knowlton, on behalf of the TEWI Gardening Team





CITIZENS OF THE YEAR

Towcester Town Mayor honours eight outstanding citizens

Each year, it's the privilege of the Mayor of Towcester to officially recognise someone in the town who has given their own time to make a contribution that adds significantly to the quality of life of those they help.

These past twelve months have been unique. So many people have done so much to assist others. The community spirit that has come to the fore, here in Towcester, as elsewhere, is something to cherish and foster.

So, as Mayor, I've been left with the unenviable task of picking one person for the annual Citizens Award. Almost immediately I realised this was impossible. Each of the nominees has played their part in the community. So, uniquely, I have decided to award each of them a Citizens Award.



Darren Smith

Darren, who delivers the post, was nominated by Lorraine Shelby, who says Darren continued to work through the pandemic, collecting for the local food bank, showing "energy, support and dedication".

Julie Johnstone, who also nominated Darren says of him "nothing is too much trouble. He is well worthy of this award".

And Terry Hearty, a trustee of **Towcester Food Bank**, says Darren first came to his attention during the initial lockdown, "when on his day off instead of resting, he walked his round and collected food donations to help those who had been most impacted by the economic downturn." "Darren exemplifies the best in human spirit that we have seen from Towcester's residents."



Kay Miller

Terry also nominated Greens Norton resident and post deliverer Kay Miller for all she does collecting food. "She's a very special lady to devote her days off to walking her round again for others and has done an amazing job donating a huge quantity of food," said Terry.



Jemma Jones-Hayes

Hilary Marsden nominated Jemma who she says continued to run the Guide company through lockdown. There have been virtual camping and campfires, plus Jemma delivered activity packs to each girl. Hilary says Jemma "really goes the extra mile and gives so much of her time to enrich the lives of the girls in her guide unit."



Teresa Collings

Teresa was nominated by Maggie Barker, and also by Teresa's fiancé, Scott. Maggie says Teresa, who she's known for 20 years, "cares greatly for people, animals and the planet." From volunteering at the night shelter in Milton Keynes to being the inspiration behind the **Towcester Community Fridge**, Teresa "is always looking for more ways that help can be given to the local community".

Scott says she "stands out not just as my dearest soulmate, but also for her obstinate rejections in all their forms for the slightest recognition, attribution or reference to her personal involvement." Altruistic, unpretentious, and devotional are other words to describe Teresa, says Scott.



Pam Adams

Pam's name has been put forward by Pippa Deycon, who writes that "there are no days when Pam isn't doing shopping or collecting prescriptions for someone. She has organised a 'bread and egg' round for her neighbours, collects newspapers regularly and walks dogs for people who can't get out." Pam never makes one cake, pie or casserole, always three or four which she takes to people living alone. "She is truly making an outstanding contribution to so many people every day".



Carl McGregor

Carl has been nominated by Rotarian Steph Jones. In 2019 he launched **SMART Pickwick**, a meeting for those facing, or concerned about, issues with addiction, substance misuse, unhealthy compulsions, be it alcohol, eating disorders or mental health. During this pandemic year, Carl created 'Corona action for those in need', a project which delivered care packages to vulnerable families and individuals. He's also collaborated with the SOFEA Community Larder scheme. Steph describes Carl as "a good friend and a source of inspiration."



Sue Hamilton

Finally, Sue's name has been submitted by Margaret Knowlton. The two have known each other for 30 years since Margaret joined Towcester Evening WI.

Margaret wrote "When lockdown came, Sue set up a Zoom alternative plus a monthly newsletter to ensure the WI continued, and made regular phone calls to members and left little treats on their doorsteps."

Sue encouraged members to support the Connected Heart Project at Northampton General, the **growbaby** project, and Cynthia Spencer Hospice. In her WI Garden Club team leader role, she arranged for flowers to be delivered to Ridgway House. Margaret concludes: "Sue is always so enthusiastic and has such good ideas. We could not ask for a more committed Towcester citizen."



Lesley Driscoll

Lesley, a nurse at Brook Health Centre, has been nominated by Katie Marks, who says, on a personal level "she has saved me from myself time and time again through so many ups and downs of life", and she goes on "Lesley has always been there for me and if wasn't for her, I wouldn't be the person I am today." Katie also praises Lesley for all she does as a nurse.



Cornhill Squash Club

New members welcome

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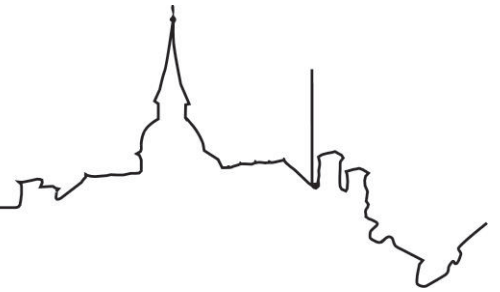
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TOWCESTER TOWN CRIER

**NEXT ISSUE
JULY 2021
DEADLINE
25TH MAY 2021**

www.towcester-tc.gov.uk
enquiries@towcester-tc.gov.uk

01327 350995



Gerald Peasland 1942 - 2021



Gerald "Digging for Victory" in 2006

Long-term allotment holder, Gerald Peasland, passed away in March. His funeral was held on Tuesday, 13th April at Towcester's St. Thomas More Catholic church.

A real large-as-life character, Gerald, aged 78, was 'plot aristocracy' in his way, as without him, it is unlikely that any of us would be on the site today.

For those who don't know, years back, the then owner of the site closed it down in anticipation of getting planning permission to

develop the land – a bid which failed because it was in the flood plain. But there was no automatic return for the dispossessed 'plotters', and it took a long and determined campaign, led largely by Gerald (who some say was at his best in an argument!) before the owners leased the land to Towcester Town Council for use as an allotment site.

And the rest, as they say, is history – with the ground returning to plot use in 2006.

Deepest sympathies to your family.

Trevor Johnson

My neighbour when I was growing up and my neighbour down the allotment. Always made me laugh and smile. Lovely man. RIP 'tubby' – absolute legend.

Mark 'Gibb' Ayre

Condolences to Gerald's family. I only knew him for a short while. He made me feel welcome on site and always spoke his mind. RIP Gerald.

Angela McGlone

Great bloke in many ways. Always up for a joke or a wind up. He rarely made comments about what was being grown, but occasionally came out with a snippet of very good advice on stuff I happened to be growing. He always struck me as a bloke you could trust. RIP Gerald. He was one of the good guys.

Jeff Egan

Sad news. No longer will I hear those bellowing noises from my bedroom window!

David Williams

RIP Gerald. Thanks for what you achieved . . . and all the banter!

Best Kept Garden Competition 2021

Entries are invited from green fingered residents of Towcester, Wood Burcote, and Caldecote, for the "Best Kept Garden Competition 2021". There are so many beautifully maintained private gardens in the town and taking part is very simple.

Entries will be judged by the Town Mayor at the end of July and a prize and certificates awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. The only criterion is the garden must be in public view.

If you wish to enter your garden, or that of a neighbour or friend, please complete the entry form below by Friday, 2nd July 2021. We are hoping for another bumper number of entries this year!

Who are you nominating? Myself Someone else

Garden Address: _____

Contact details of garden owner: _____
(If known and you are nominating someone else)

Your name: _____

Your contact details: _____

Please complete and return to the Town Council Office no later than Friday, 2nd July 2021. Online entries can be submitted at www.towcester-tc.gov.uk/best-kept-garden-competition-202





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Every Saturday

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Leisure Centre
Astro Pitch

IN
PARTNERSHIP
WITH



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to Register or for more information

 <https://www.facebook.com/TowcesterTownJuniorsFC>



The bakers, growers, and crafters of Towcester Country Market use their individual expertise to come together to give an exciting market experience for our customers.

All our products are made by the stall holders, are unique, and many are available nowhere else. Everything we sell is made in our own homes and gardens or, in the case of our free-range hens, in our field. It is all freshly produced and delicious. All our bakers have Food Hygiene Certification.

During the pandemic we have been trading, when not in total lockdown, from A5 Rangers Hall off Islington Road.

We welcome new producers to join us, we especially have an opening for savoury bakers. If you are interested, call in for a chat. We are open on Thursday mornings from 8.30 to 11.30 am.

snvb

Community Minibus Rides Again...

After a year of delivering food boxes to folk across Northamptonshire the snvb's Community Minibus will start taking real passengers again at the beginning of June!

To celebrate getting out and about again, we will be offering a 10% discount on any bookings made between now and the beginning of June. So, if your group is planning trips this summer, once restrictions are relaxed, please get in touch with us so we can provide a quote for you.

Email jeanette@snvb.org.uk or call 01327 358264

We hope to see you again soon!



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A VICIOUS CYCLE

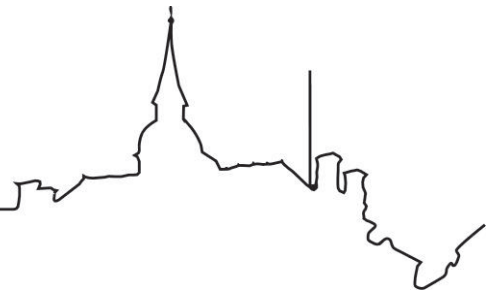


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EMAIL snatra43@gmail.com





HOPE

As we move out of the spring and into the summer, I decided to focus my article on 'hope'. The spring brought us signs of hope as we returned to school on the 8th March and the children walked under an arch of colour to say welcome back.

A photo from the WI reminded us of the bulb planting our children had joined in with back in Autumn 2019. The golden colour outside the Sawpit Centre gave us a bright message that sometimes growth and colour can come from that which is hidden.

And finally, as the 23rd March became a day of national reflection, the yellow ribbon became a symbol of thought and remembrance.

Towcester C of E Primary School are together again and very much hopeful for the summer term that we can at least begin to mix more and return to the activities that the school holds so dear in its vision for all children; a place of opportunity, experience, exploration, stronger together – learning, growing and being together.

Some say there is a pot of treasure at the end of the rainbow... and so as we start our summer, I know our treasure must be those simple wishes that will become our gold.

Mrs Jo Griffin, Head Teacher, Towcester C of E Primary School

Towcester Town Football Club finally get the Green Light

It has been a long time coming but at last, Towcester Town Football Club have secured six hectares of land for football pitches. The new sports complex, work on which should start early next year, will include several football pitches, clubhouse, and parking. An all-weather 4G pitch will follow.

Lisa Samiotis, Chair of TTFC, who has led the campaign for the club says:

"It has been a rollercoaster ride for the club but, after many years of making the case for sports fields, Towcester will finally get the facilities it needs."

Towcester Town Football Club is one of the largest clubs in the district with 30 teams yet has suffered because it's had to rely on inadequate facilities. Teams are often forced to play home games outside of Towcester, as their main pitches are on Towcester Recreation Ground, where there are no changing facilities.

This new edge of town facility will be for the whole community, not just the football club. The good news is it will not cost local taxpayers a penny. In addition to this announcement from TTFC, Towcester Town Council is also to have a sports pavilion / community centre, cricket pitch and more sports fields; all as part of the new housing developments in Towcester.



We are a friendly and informal group who (usually!) meet once a month in Towcester. The group aims to support anyone in the Towcester area who has a heart condition, their family members/carers, as well as parents of children and young people with a heart condition. We are aware that for those with underlying health conditions, the current pandemic can increase anxiety, including those with heart-related conditions. In addition to discussing your concerns with your GP or cardiac consultant, you can also access the **British Heart Foundation** newsletter at www.bhf.org.uk which is full of interesting and helpful information (including advice/support regarding COVID-19), and you can also access their 'Heart Matters' newsletter. Here at Towcester HeartBeats, we have continued to stay in touch with each other and have recently welcomed new members into our group. As the lockdown restrictions ease, we all remain hopeful that we will be able to meet 'properly' in the coming months. If you would like to have a chat about our group, or to join us, please contact me on the mobile number or email address below.

Annie Simpson, Chair

07554 150870 or mrschimchim57@gmail.com
facebook.com/groups/116822265801322



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Midsummer Music

*On a screen near you
Saturday 19th June 2021*

The Government 'Roadmap' for the end of lockdown predicts normality by mid-June. However, this is provisional. There is also no clear guidance about what restrictions on 'distancing' and live events will still be in place. Because of this uncertainty, **Midsummer Music 2021 will again be a virtual event**, available on the **Towcester Midsummer Music Festival** Facebook and YouTube channels.

Last year, because of the lockdown, our local artistes were asked whether they could provide a virtual contribution. 32 local musical acts took part and our festival reached over 23,000 people on Facebook (as far away as Australia) with the videos being viewed nearly 9,000 times.

We hope to match last year's success with our offering for Midsummer Music 2021. There will be performances from the very best of Towcester's own musical stars as well as from visiting artistes.

*This entertainment is designed for all the family,
So, add Saturday **19th June** to your diary,
tune in and have a wonderful time!*



Find us on Facebook & YouTube
Towcester Midsummer Music



Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship

We meet on Zoom every Sunday from 10.20am
for TVBF Online, please join us!

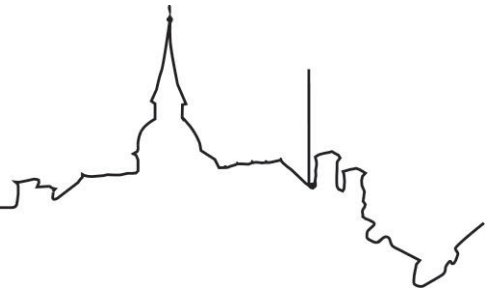
For the Zoom meeting details, or if you have
any questions at all, please email
secretary@tvbf.co.uk, we would love to hear
from you!

For more about our church, visit tvbf.co.uk,
where you can access our recorded sermons,
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would be happy to hear from anyone who has or knows anyone with this condition.

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or email info@pbcfoundation.org.uk and they will put you in touch with Margaret and Mary.



would love Towcester Archers to become a very social and active club that helps to grow the sport locally. Whether the aim is to compete in competitions, or to simply shoot a few arrows to relax after a busy week, archery as both a sport and a discipline can be as serious or as relaxed as you want it to be. There are several different bow styles which archery clubs are generally made up of: Olympic style Recurve, Recurve Barebow, Compound, and traditional styles such as Longbow and Flatbow.

2020 was of course a challenging year for all the local sports clubs and not the easiest of times to get a new club formed. But despite various hurdles, Towcester Archers have managed to get up and running. Back when the initial committee was first formed in late 2019, the hope was to get the club started at Towcestrians Sports Club in April 2020. We had a drop-in session at Tows in March for anyone interested in finding out more about the club and the sport, but obviously then everything had to stop shortly after that.

plans at Towcestrians were heavily delayed. Meaning that we needed to find an alternative temporary outdoor venue if we were to finally get the club started. We were delighted when Dadford Road Campsite near Silverstone Circuit offered us some space to use, and our very first club session came on Sunday 2nd August, with 12 initial members. With the help of our first beginners' course in September, membership grew to 20 by October, when we moved across to Towcester Centre for Leisure for the indoor season.

As soon as the guidelines allow, the club will start running beginners' courses and taster sessions once again. Anyone interested in taking up archery and joining a club, will need to complete a beginners' course first. Our beginners' courses generally consist of x4 1.5-hour sessions and are open to adults and juniors from the age of 8 years. There is a form on our website for anyone wanting to register their interest in doing a course:

<https://towcesterarchers.co.uk/beginners-courses/>

Once the restrictions were lifted in June, archery was one of the sports that could resume under certain social distancing guidelines. The lockdown period along with a very wet winter, had meant that the development

The club ran its first taster session in the main sports hall at TCL on Sunday 25th October, which proved popular. Another beginners' course was started in December, but of course the second national lockdown put a stop to everything again just before Christmas.

Dean Edwards, Chair



At the point when outdoor sports could resume from the end of March, the club is once again shooting at Dadford Road Campsite. The membership has grown to nearly 30, with a great mix of juniors, seniors, beginners, and experienced archers.

Archery is a very inclusive, diverse, and accessible sport, that can be enjoyed by the whole family. We

For more information about courses, or the club, please get in touch online:
www.towcesterarchers.co.uk
info@towcesterarchers.co.uk
Facebook or Instagram:
[@towcesterarchers](https://www.facebook.com/towcesterarchers)

TOWCESTER & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



As the grip of lockdown begins to ease, the Society is taking stock of all it has been doing in the past year and making plans for the future – definitely bearing in mind lessons learned. The switch to monthly meetings using Zoom has worked well, even increasing membership, but has still left several members unable to join for one reason or another.

At the recent annual meeting – this year in virtual style on Zoom – chairman Brian Giggins outlined the many activities that have been able to continue, including the working links with South Northants Council that we hope will continue now West Northamptonshire Unitary Council has taken over.

Brian told members: *“Our town is now in the vanguard of many changes that will now occur, through the pandemic, climate changes, changes to retailing and local government reform. By supporting the Society with your membership, you are helping maintain an independent voice, there to promote and champion the town’s heritage”.*

At present, the Society will concentrate on keeping all members fully informed as plans are made. It is likely we will have a mix of Zoom and face-to-face meetings once the latter become possible. Subject to restrictions, the committee hopes to arrange a picnic, a visit to a place of interest, and a walk, or all three, during the summer.

For information about the Society – and the use of Zoom – please contact either secretary, David Wilcock (01327 351782) or chairman, Brian Giggins (01327 352444) or visit our website www.mkheritage.org.uk/tdlhs/

MONTHLY TALKS AND HISTORY FROM A RANGE OF ANGLES

Coaching Inns of North Bucks & Northamptonshire with Julian Hunt

Wednesday 12th May

Julian makes a return visit this time to examine the coaching inns so important in their heyday some 200 years ago. He will examine the architectural features of the inns which were usually quite grand with obvious coach entrances. However, by the 1840s the railways had spelt the death knell for the coach trade.

“Corsets & Codpieces – a Study of Tudor Underwear” with Dr. Nic Fulcher

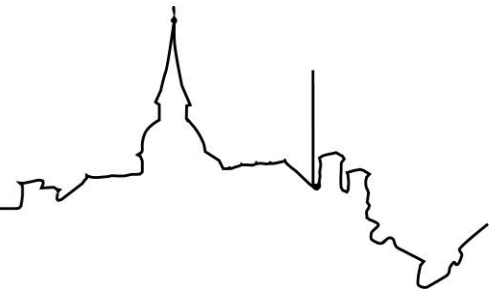
Wednesday 9th June

Nic, a costume historian, will take a light-hearted journey exploring the hidden world of Tudor underwear. In the 16th century the natural body shape of both men and women was altered to suit the elaborate fashions of the day. It was all-important in achieving the desire effect, but what was going on under all that silk, satin and lace?

James Wright returns = subject to be decided

Wednesday 14th July

Award winning archaeologist, James Wright FSA, has agreed to make a quick return after his talk on historic masonry, and the men who shaped it in mediaeval times, proved popular at the March meeting. James has an extensive programme of lectures and we are sure of another fascinating evening.



OLD TOWCESTER 39 : SAXON FIELDS (PART 2)

[Part one of this article in the March 2021 edition of the *Town Crier* looked at the prehistory, settlement, and agriculture of this site]



39a Ploughing in open fields circa 1800

Settlement and agriculture (continued).

It was probably in the reign of King Athelstan (924-939), that Towcester was made the centre of a new administrative area called the Towcester Hundred, which included some of the land formerly under control of the Danes. This may have been a time when there were extensive changes to the local landscape including the creation of nucleated villages and communal farming in open fields. From that time onwards until the mid-eighteenth century, farmers held strips of land spread throughout the parish.

Within Saxon Fields are the remains of these strips which are known as ridge and furrow and replicate the profile of a corrugated-iron roof. Cultivation of these strips was hard work. The farmers would use wooden ploughs drawn by horses or cattle to turn the soil ready for harrowing and seeding. It was the action of the plough turning the soil towards the middle of the strip that led to the creation of the ridges over a period of time (figure 39a).



39b Lidar image of Saxon Fields showing ridge & furrow. This was created by using plane mounted lasers that accurately calculated the height of the land which the plane passed over.

Weeding of the crops was carried out by hand, as was the reaping, which would involve many in the local community. On average, one year in four had deficient harvests which led to food shortages. Within the Saxon Fields are the ridge and furrow strips belonging to the parishes of Towcester and Easton Neston. The boundary between the two parishes followed the natural features of the winding meanders of the River Tove and the stream leading down from the Shires Estate. Both the river and the

stream flowing alongside and through Saxon fields have been straightened with parts of their earlier alignment still traceable through the banks and ditches visible in the grass, and through aerial photographs and lidar (figure 39b).

Enclosure, Easton Neston Park, and the Towcester to Cotton End Turnpike

The reason why the ridge and furrow has survived is because in the mid-18th century the open field system was considered inefficient, and the major landowners got together and applied for an act of Parliament to enclose the land. This resulted in the land being reallocated as parcels of land, our modern fields, around which the farmers' planted hedges of quickthorn which were excellent cover for hunting, especially as many fields were used for permanent grazing thus preserving the ridge and furrow. These changes were hard on those tenant farmers who held just a few strips of agricultural land, as the rights to pasture animals on the common fields were lost and farming for them became uneconomic. Many would have ended up as agricultural labourers.

Cutting through these new fields was a road off the Tiffield Road which led to Easton Neston House, Hulcote and Blisworth, the beginning of which followed the path next to the B&M store and the bank around the new workshops. These fields formed part of the parkland to Easton Neston House, which was first developed circa 1500. They were enlarged in the late 17th century and had a series of radiating avenues by 1750.

The full opening of the Towcester to Cotton End Turnpike in 1797 closed the road to Easton Neston and Hulcote and it was incorporated into the adjacent fields. In the same period, major alterations took place to Easton Neston Park, as the lodges and new access roads were built from the new turnpike road to the house. Also, part of the river course was altered to create 'The Broadwater,' a new artificial serpentine water feature, which added interest along the new drive to the house. By 1830 the river cutting through Saxon fields had been straightened and the former meanders incorporated into the meadows.

Acquisition by South Northamptonshire Council and the 917 Celebrations.

Saxon Fields was transferred to South Northamptonshire Council as public open space following the development of the adjacent Shires Estate by Persimmon Homes from 1997 onwards; the southern section being given paths by 2003 and the northern section by 2005. The maintenance of this

public open space is now undertaken by Towcester Town Council. In 2016, consent was given for a long stay car park in the north-east corner of the site, to ease the parking problems in the town centre for both the public and local authority staff, following the move of the council offices from Springfield to Moat Lane.

The following year, 2017, was the 1100th anniversary of Edward the Elder, King of Wessex, building of a burh (Saxon fort) within the ruined walls of Lactodorum. This burh was part of a campaign to remove the Danes occupying the east of England and marked the start of the present town of Towcester. A committee, under the banner of "Towcester 917", held a series of events to celebrate this anniversary, which included a Saxon Fair financially supported by the Towcester Town Council and SNC. This brought together many local organisations and groups as well as Saxon re-enactors to give displays on warfare and home life in 10th century Northamptonshire. The location chosen for this event was adjacent to the car park which led to this area of the water meadows officially being given the name "Saxon Fields" as a lasting reminder of the event and this important anniversary (figures 39c & 39d).



39c & 39d Saxon Fair 2017 © Tony Howard

Brian Giggins
Chair, Towcester & District Local History Society



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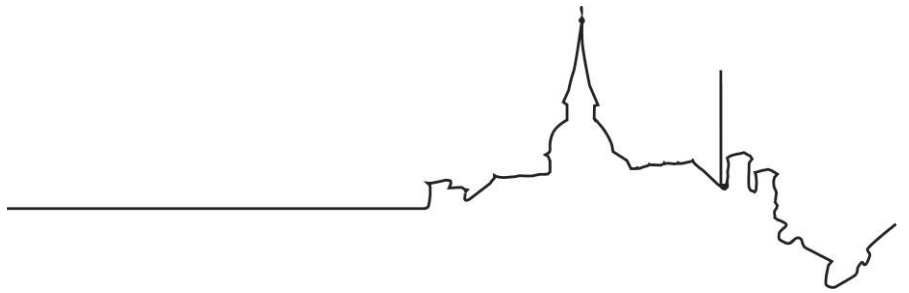
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Mobile / out of hours	07725811892	(Heather Rose)
	07525900894	(Alina Schofield)



Towcester Writers' Group

The Towcester Writers' Group meets at The Forum library from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month. While our 'normal' meetings are currently suspended, we have had successful virtual Zoom meetings instead. These are run at our conventional meeting times and we extend a warm welcome to everyone, whether you have experience or not. For more details, please contact Bridget Arregger by email bridget.arregger@gmail.com

Our aim is to explore ways of encouraging creativity, while making writing an enjoyable and life-enhancing pastime. Above all, we seek to be sociable and, where possible, have fun. There is no set structure for a meeting. A typical evening might include a short creative exercise, discussions of books that have inspired us and readings from our own work for supportive comment and encouragement. Occasionally, we may all be invited to bring along a piece on a theme set in advance. Writers (and would-be-writers) of poetry, prose and plays in all genres are equally welcome.

You can follow us online at: www.facebook.com/TowcesterWriters

APRIL ©

By Geoffrey Iley



It is a sunny morning in early April, soon after Easter. Two people stroll arm in arm near Bury Mount. They pause, looking across the mill stream to the Water Meadows. The larger of the two, a man, suddenly looks down at the ground as his shoulders start to shake. The other, a young woman, puts a comforting arm around him and holds him close. 'Daddy, we both know that today would have been Mum's birthday, but she wouldn't want you to be so sad.'

'How can I do anything else, my darling?' He chokes back the tears and wipes his eyes on the sleeve of his parka. She used to love to come here. It's cruel that the virus took her so soon after Christmas.'

April holds her father even closer. 'Daddy, I'm not going back to Manchester until you're through the worst of this, OK? Come on, let's walk and talk.'

They continue, sauntering long Moat Lane and into the Churchyard. There they find daffodils, crocuses and a profusion of wildflowers carpeting the areas where dappled sunlight tiptoes through the trees. Birds sing and scavenge for nesting materials. They sit on a bench, close to a thatched cottage beside the gated pathway leading to Watling Street.

She turns to her father. 'Now listen to me, Daddy. We're going to get through this together, you and me. I can work for the agency remotely – I've already cleared that with my boss – so I'll be here for as long as it takes.'

'April, sweetheart, I love having you here, so that would be wonderful. It's just that you deserve better than a wet blanket like me for company.'

You're talking total rubbish, Daddy. Spring is coming and with the lockdown rules being lifted gradually, things must get better. And then we can properly remember Mum.' She wipes away a tear. 'This was always her favourite time of year. A time of rebirth and revival, as she used to say. Anyway, it's my 21st birthday coming up and we need to plan some kind of a celebration. So, what about that?'

At last, his face manages the faintest shadow of a smile. 'Yes, a time of rebirth and a revival for both of us, I guess. So, you should have a proper birthday celebration. You must still have friends here from your schooldays. And you're right, your Mum, my darling Angela, really loved the Spring. She was overjoyed when you were born on 23rd of this month, which happens to be St George's Day – and Shakespeare's birthday too. You just had to be called April.'

They sit quietly for a moment, taking in the tranquillity, the scents, the sounds of the morning. After another hug they get to their feet, then leave the churchyard through the gated doorway. Arm in arm, father and daughter dawdle along the path leading to Watling Street.

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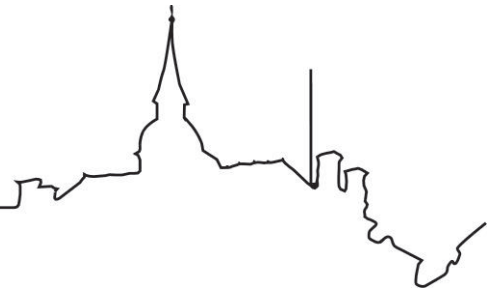
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TOWCESTER STUDIO BAND – keeping busy during Lockdown

It has certainly been a challenging twelve months for everyone, not least Towcester Studio Band who have been unable to rehearse together as a full Band since March 2020. However, like many other organisations we have embraced technology and recorded several “virtual” performances with individual players recording their parts at home and then submitting them to our technical maestro, Lyn Stoneman who knits them all together and then publishes them on both our website and YouTube channel. This has allowed us to support the Towcester community by recording pieces for Midsummer Music, Remembrance Sunday, and Christmas Services, amongst others.

Following our success last September when we won three prizes at an on-line contest run by the world-famous Cory Band from Wales, the Band have entered their latest on-line competition with entries from around the World on the theme of celebrating your local area. We have recorded four pieces with special significance to our area of Northamptonshire with performances and results due to be published over the weekend of 27th and 28th March. One of the pieces is “Candle in the Wind” which was originally recorded as a tribute to Princess Diana and her childhood home of Althorp but has now been dedicated to one of our own players, Dr. John Mudway, who sadly passed away from Covid in January. John was an extremely well known and popular member of the banding community and the Band will be supporting his wife Alison and daughter Hannah at this difficult time.

Another friend of the Band also sadly departed recently, The Very Reverend James Atwell. The Band was delighted to receive a small donation from his widow, Lorna to reflect the incredibly happy times he spent in Towcester and his association with the Band with whom all three of his children played.

On a happier note, even though we have been unable to rehearse at our Band hall there has been a lot of activity with the original asbestos roof being replaced (during the snows of this winter) and new ceiling and lighting installed. We will be replacing the old single pane windows with energy efficient double-glazed

units, all of which will mean that our Band hall, originally built in 1958, will be the envy of many brass bands with facilities to allow the Band to prosper and grow for another 100 years following its formation in 1910. The Band is extremely grateful to South Northants Council for their support in helping us to finance these improvements.

The Band is now looking forward to getting back in the newly refurbished Band room to rehearse as soon as possible. If there are any brass players out there who have recently moved to the area, please get in touch via email towcesterstudioband@gmail.com or our web site www.towcesterstudioband.co.uk as we would love to see you. We are also hoping to start a Development Band later in the year where we can offer free tuition and instruments to anyone wanting to learn to play – watch this space for future announcements or contact us to register your interest.

Finally, we look forward to playing again soon for all our supporters and have a provisional date of Sunday, 1st August at Abington Park Bandstand in Northampton, if Covid allows us all to enjoy a summer afternoon in the park!



Chris Stevens, Chairman, Towcester Studio Band



Tove Quilters and Stitchers (TQ&S) are a group of enthusiastic members interested in all kinds of stitching, knitting and quilting crafts. Since the first lockdown we have been continuing to meet up once a week on Zoom and we even managed some meetings in person during last summer, taking plenty of precautions.

We bring along our sewing or knitting projects to the meetings and sit and chat, gathering advice and information from each other and once a month we organise a workshop or a ‘show and tell’ session. We always have an annual challenge which members interpret in their own way and we have produced group quilts and wall-hangings in the past.

Recently, we made quilts for the Hospice ward at Danetre, using the fabrics that a member had passed on to us after she had spent her last few weeks there and we made baby quilts for the neo-natal ward at Milton Keynes Hospital. We also had fun with some Christmas sewing activities and some of our members have enjoyed on-line workshops run by Denman or the Quilters Guild.

If you would be interested in joining us, please just contact:

Petra Giffen petragiffen@gmail.com **01327 831388**

Jill Holden jillysh60@gmail.com **01604 86453**

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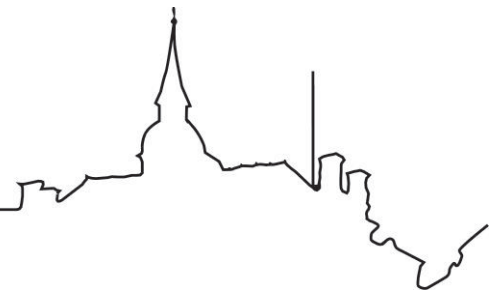
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Bias, heuristics, and the benefits of an open mind

The decisions we make in life use quickly accessible input drawn from experience, recent memory, and hearsay, otherwise we'd never get anything done. But they're not without danger – shortcuts, by definition, are incomplete and incomplete pictures are bad news when it comes to financial decisions.

Heuristics – why they're good...

These mental shortcuts – 'heuristics' allow us to make a judgement, reach a decision or solve a problem using as little time and effort as possible. There's nothing wrong with that in theory – if we had to map out the pros and cons of every choice we ever face, we'd grind to a halt.

Your day is full of decisions, even if you don't realise it. Without an efficient way of taking your reasoning from point A to point B there really wouldn't be enough hours in the day. In that sense heuristics provide templates that you can shape to the situation in hand.

They're not blind guesses. They're more accurately viewed as educated guesses, based on experience, available evidence and received wisdom.

... and why they're bad...

The problem is that the very purpose of heuristics, to bypass detail, to simplify information, means that they give us a skewed picture. That can lead to cognitive biases, locking us into habits and behaviours, a kind of mental shorthand, and that's where it gets tricky.

In the 1970s, psychologists Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman set out three types of heuristic – 'availability' 'representativeness' and 'affect'. The first is all about using the most readily available examples you can think of, to inform what you do next... in other words you make a decision on what springs to mind. It's easy to see how a run of negative headlines could make you overcautious, or how an expanding bubble might seem like a more reliable investment than it really is.

The 'representativeness' heuristic allows us to make a best guess about the character of a person or the nature of a situation based on precedent. For example, if you didn't go to a cocktail party

because you've been to a couple before and they were full of people talking about house prices and school catchment areas, well, maybe you were right, but you don't know for sure.

Then there's the 'affect' heuristic, which is perhaps the most alarming of all. This is a direct correlation between the decisions you make and the emotions you happen to be feeling when you make them. We all know that it can be a wise move to count to ten before hitting 'reply all' on that email, but people genuinely weigh the benefits and risks of decisions differently according to their mood.

Those three heuristic types show that taking mental shortcuts can lead to snap judgements, assumptions and decisions based on emotion.

Biased? Well, you would say that...

As humans we all display a wide range of behavioural biases.

From an evolutionary point of view, they help us to filter out the unnecessary detail and concentrate on what really matters. But in modern life, especially in finance where detail really matters, they can be unhelpful. Heuristics, those mental shortcuts, feed directly into biases, for example, it's easy to see how the 'availability' heuristic can drive what's known as 'familiarity bias', the likelihood of investing in names and regions that you know because you know them. It can also lead to confirmation bias, the tendency to place more trust in evidence that backs up your existing hunches than anything that contradicts them.

They hamper 'fluid intelligence' closing you off to new ways of thinking. The representation heuristic could easily see you ploughing the same old furrow forever. It may always have worked, it may continue to work, but you could be shutting yourself off from worlds of opportunity.

The power of ongoing engagement

Great financial planning starts with a frank, open conversation. We ask you many questions about what you want to get out of investing, we encourage you to ask us questions and we listen to what you tell us. You bring the vision, the goals

and the picture of the future as you want it to be, while we bring the expertise, the experience and the professional skills.

It's our role to help you turn your plans into reality, we know what we're doing, and you can trust us to do it. But as you progress, we'll meet for regular reviews and it's so important that they don't become an exercise in just keeping the wheel spinning.

Reviews are about understanding what's changed – in the markets, world, your own life and in your ambitions. It's a chance for you to give us new information that might be vitally important (even if you don't realise it) and an opportunity for us to suggest new ways of doing things. There's an oft-visited sentiment that the most expensive words in business are "We've always done it this way", but it's true of your financial planning too.

Sometimes you may feel our ideas, or your progress, run counter to established ways of thinking, but that's exactly when it's time to scan for bias, to eschew the short-cuts and take the long way round. A preconceived idea is only as good as the last time it worked – next time may very well be different.

Getting the future right

Remember, the decisions you make now will affect your future and that in itself is cause to weigh them carefully. But also remember that investing is a long-term pursuit – there's no need to make snap decisions or close off avenues of enquiry. We're not looking to get from A to B quickly, we're looking to do it safely and securely. Let's continue to engage, to listen, to ask questions of one another and explore newer, better ways of doing things. Let's approach each review in a spirit of openness, curiosity and collaboration.

What you tell us offers valuable insight to where you are now and how we'll get you to where you need to be. What we tell you in return will always be open, honest, and centred on your best interests, and we'll bring the one thing you can't bring to your own financial picture – true objectivity.

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Would you like to be involved in a community driven project? Then look no further....

During lockdown, our Community Larder network has distributed approximately 33,000 food boxes to South Northants households that have needed support due to isolation, health or for economic reasons. This has saved over 233 tonnes of food being sent to waste.

Now that the roadmap is underway for emerging from the pandemic, our vision is to continue to reduce food waste and make a positive impact on the environment. We also want to continue to support people in our communities with affordable food, available to all.

Our Larders, located in Towcester and Roade, offer membership to **EVERYONE**, and operate at least once per week from each location. Full details of the sessions can be found on our website www.towfood.org.uk

How do we differ from the Community Fridge and the Foodbank?

The **Towcester Community Fridge** will remain **FREE** to everyone, with short-dated food surplus being rescued from local supermarkets and businesses and distributed during regular drop-in sessions. The amount and type of food varies from day to day with each session operating until all the perishable food is distributed.

A **Foodbank** provides emergency food to people in crisis. Non-perishable, in-date food is donated by the public at a range of places, such as schools, churches, and businesses, as well as supermarket collection points. It is then sorted into emergency food parcels to be given to people in crisis, along with support and advice.

The Towcester Community Larder is a membership programme

that provides access to surplus groceries (store cupboard items and fruit and vegetables) at heavily subsidised rates. To secure a consistent supply, we subscribe to SOFEA, an organisation that works closely with FareShare to distribute surplus food from supermarkets and businesses. They are a non-profit organisation run by volunteers.

Membership is open to **EVERYONE**.

Please see www.towfood.org.uk/larder for details of how to sign up!



Goodbye SNAC, Hello CA-WN!



SNAC (South Northants Action on Climate) has been in existence for about 18 months and as a young organisation we are both growing and adapting to changes in the local government landscape.

Our original mission to "use people power to make South Northants a UK leader in carbon reduction, biodiversity and sustainable development" has been expanded to cover the area of the new West Northants Unitary Authority. Hence our new name – CA-WN (Climate Action - West Northamptonshire).

We are really pleased to have held three fortnightly online meetings so far in our new incarnation, and to have welcomed many new friends who share our objectives. To date, focus has

been on the upcoming local elections, and CA-WN will be asking all candidates to sign up to our Local Climate Action Pledge:

"If elected I pledge to work with local residents to rapidly develop and fully implement a council Climate Action Plan that cuts emissions over the next 10 years, with the climate and ecological emergency as a key consideration in all council actions."

We are also asking local organisations and businesses to '**Back the Pledge**' - it is so important for future councillors to know that the communities they represent recognise the Climate Emergency and rely on them to ensure the unitary authority takes effective action.

If you are a candidate and want to sign up to the pledge, or your group, business, church, school or other organisation would like to back the pledge, please contact us at secretary@ca-wn.org

Our future plans, as well as keeping up pressure on the council, include practical local actions, such as monitoring air quality, cutting food waste, rewilding and biodiversity, and recycling, reuse and repair projects. We know there are many local groups already doing good work in some of these areas and CA-WN is keen to support and promote these too – so if you belong to one or know of one, we'd love to hear from you.



Jane Wood



TOWCESTER CAMERA CLUB

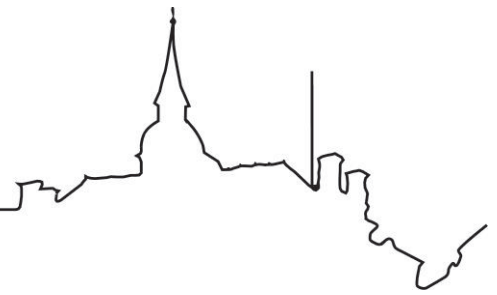


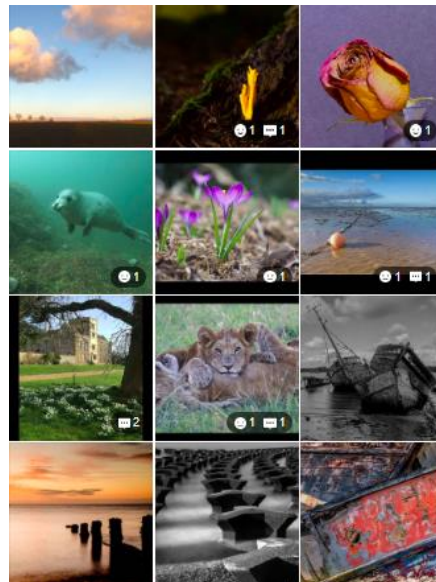
Photo credit: Maggie Burgess-Wood

The last two months have heralded two notable achievements. Firstly, our BAND member image sharing platform informed me that we had notched up 12 months of virtual sharing, encompassing 12 monthly challenges and a wide variety of additional themes reflecting members' own interests. Members have posted well over 1,300 images over those twelve months, which we have enjoyed commenting on, encouraging each other, or simply gaining inspiration from.

Secondly, our Club delivered an impressive debut performance in the GB Cup – a Photographic Alliance of Great Britain (PAGB) contest for club entries, finishing 52nd out of 114 in the Nature category. This pitted us against Clubs whose raison d'être is competition. Ours is not: our members do not compete against each other in a club context; we do not have internal club competitions or leagues, but we do have advanced members who are encouraged to test their work in competitive forums if they wish to. Both our Nature and Open category results give us great encouragement and we will use 2021 as our benchmark as we continue to look for improvement in the quality of each member's work.

We continue to follow Government advice and our meetings will remain on ZOOM until our new season starts in September. We hope that relaxations will allow us to go ahead with some practical club sessions in June/ July, however. Assuming we can meet in some form, we do intend to extend the Club schedule throughout the summer with additional guest speakers and photo walks alternating throughout July and August.

Additional speakers can be accessed by non-members on a "pay-per-view" basis. We hope to return to our home in Silverstone from early September but will retain on ZOOM our once a month "TCC Extra" sessions. These are now embedded, with a quarterly programme of "Camera Club Surgery", "Monthly Challenge Review" and "Competition/Portfolio Readiness" speaking to every level of photographer, and now added to the normal variety of external speakers, member presentations, practical and other sessions.



Our latest set of monthly challenge themes have been: "Winter", which was particularly popular, "Flash with Motion" and "Panoramas".

The club website details our upcoming programme, demonstrating a range of speakers and events to suit all levels. Indeed, our membership of 50 ranges from beginner to professional and everything between – the focus being on sharing and improvement for all - and challenge for those who want to be competitive.

The following external speaker talks, held on Zoom, are open to non-members on a pay-per-view basis by payment of a £5 fee via our website:

www.towcestercameraclub.co.uk/pages/external-speakers-and-public-events.php - or via contact page. A dedicated link will be sent to subscribers.



**"Passion for Pictures"
Wednesday 9th June – Chris Upton**

We have previously had the pleasure of hearing Chris present to our Club - and he went down very well indeed! "This presentation really does have something for everyone, with a broad selection of images from around the world and close to home. The lecture contains many examples of how I work to develop the image in the field or in post processing to achieve the desired result."

www.chrisuptonphotography.com

There will be further opportunities during July / August to join us in listening to inspiring speakers. Please check our website from time to time or follow us on Facebook. Our membership year started in April, with annual membership just £18 plus £3 for speaker sessions on ZOOM or £3 for meetings in person in a hall.

Occasional snapshots of our monthly challenge themes and upcoming events appear on the Club's Facebook page: [facebook.com/groups/717208911681719](https://www.facebook.com/groups/717208911681719)

We look forward to the point when we can safely resume our in-person meetings, although Zoom will remain the forum for our additional "surgery", "challenge" and "competition readiness" sessions each month.

www.towcestercameraclub.co.uk

Anne Gray, Chairperson

Towcester Camera Club is a friendly, inclusive club with a focus on collaboration and learning, not on internal competitions. It participates in just two external competitions each year, although members who individually enter external competitions are encouraged to use the club for peer review of potential competition entries. Membership ranges from beginner to professional. COVID-19 developments have necessitated Towcester Camera Club switching temporarily from bi-weekly physical meetings at St. Michael's Church Room in Silverstone to bi-weekly virtual meetings. The club will resume physical meetings only when advice suggests that it is safe to do so. The club is happy to answer enquiries via its website www.towcestercameraclub.co.uk/pages/contact.php or Facebook Group www.facebook.com/groups/717208911681719/.



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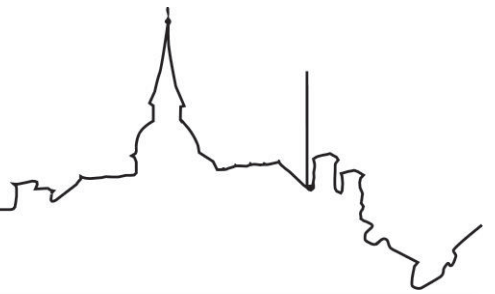


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As you read this I hope you are beginning to feel life is good again. It's taken many months for us to return to some sort of normality. But even now we have to acknowledge Covid-19 made 'life different.' Some days felt good and others made us feel strange.

We've learned to work differently; we've tried to tune out the stress; but sometimes life still felt like a mess. How we longed to meet with our families and hug our children and grandchildren. We had to find ways to turn negatives into good; and learn new skills that we thought would never be possible.

We have had to find ways to travel to less congested places; and meet our friends with covered faces. Some of you may be asking; how did we cope? Did you read more, watch the television more, sleep more or just take each day at a time?

As the past few months turned to spring, and new life in the garden has begun to spring, with nature giving us snowdrops, daffodils, and new shoots on our trees, something miraculous began to happen. The birds started to sing and make their nests. The mornings and evenings became lighter and the days were warmer. Each day seems suddenly to be a good day. Hopefully the months ahead will be filled with new and good opportunity. In spite of everything we have been through, I have been reminded nature can be wonderful and the best tonic and 'pick me up'.

I have been the Methodist Minister in Towcester, Silverstone and Brackley for the past eight years. I have loved living and working in this area. In August I will be moving to Melton Mowbray as I take up a new post as Superintendent Minister in that circuit. I have loved being a part of the Towcester community. Over time I've seen many changes in the town, in businesses and the new housing developments. I have met many lovely people and shared in working with the other churches and the community. It has been a privilege to have been a part of what makes Towcester good.

May we all continue to take each day as a gift, as things begin to change. Perhaps we can accept life as precious, and in the unforgettable words of Captain Sir Tom Moore, remember 'Tomorrow will be a Good Day'.

Revd Pat Olivent-Hayes
On behalf of Churches Together in Towcester



Changing Times

Today we are living through challenging and ever-changing times. Whether this be changes in our personal circumstances with employment or home life, moving in or out of lockdowns or simply trying to handle the daily change in advice and guidelines.

Although our world is ever changing the God of the Bible does not change. Malachi confirms this, **"I am the Lord, I change not"** (*Malachi 3 v 6*). The God of Noah, Abraham and Solomon is the same today as he was in their day.

As our environment continues to change, we can have peace with the God that never changes by trusting in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in the book of Romans **"we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (*Romans 5 v 1*)

People and environments change but **"Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"** (*Hebrews 13 v 8*)

In the gospel of John, the Bible reminds us that **"For God so loved the world he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"** (*John 3 v 16*)

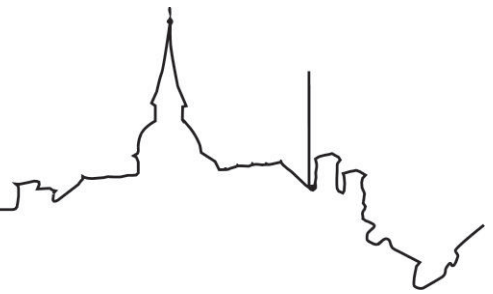
The Lord Jesus came from heaven and was born of a virgin in a place called Bethlehem and lived a perfect life and died on a cross to save YOU from your sin. **"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"** (*Romans 5 v 8*) but on the third day he arose from the dead and after being seen by many returned back to heaven.

The true Good News message of the Bible is the same today as it was preached by the early Christians and today you can be assured of your sins being forgiven, a guaranteed home in heaven by repenting of your sin and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. The price of your sin was paid in full through the shedding of His precious blood on the cross of Calvary so many years ago - **"the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"** (*1 John 1 v 7*)

We live in a difficult and ever-changing world, and it is easy to become afraid or despondent with life but TODAY you can have peace with the never changing God. Will you trust him today for salvation?

"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (*John 3 v 17*)

P Cartwright, Towcester



The Tove Valley Centre is Open!!

More than thirty years from when God first gave the vision for the Tove Valley Centre to a member of the then Towcester Baptist Church, our new home in Towcester has been handed over to us at Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship.

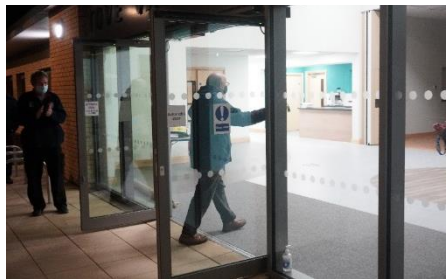


Official handover of keys on 23rd March 2021

It has been a long and sometimes difficult journey, and many said that it would never happen, but what a time for us to have the TVC! Amazingly, after all this time, it was built during the worst period of a pandemic between March 2020 and March 2021. The keys were handed over to us on 23rd March 2021, the anniversary of the first lockdown!

We have always planned to use the building to support our local community, which is especially important during these difficult times. So, we are delighted that at the time of writing we were busy planning the very first community event to take place at the TVC during the Easter School Holidays - a 'Breakfast Club' for children and young people 18 years old or younger. Due to COVID restrictions, this was necessarily a take-away service. Nevertheless, we were preparing craft plus more energetic activities for children and

young people to take home and get busy with each day, as well as a choice of a variety of breakfast items. For accompanying adults, we were preparing to offer tea or coffee and a pastry as well as some written information about local and online support services that they may find useful. We are grateful to 'Localgiving' for supporting us to raise funds for this initiative which will also be run during future school holidays this year. We look forward to welcoming families into the building as COVID restrictions allow.



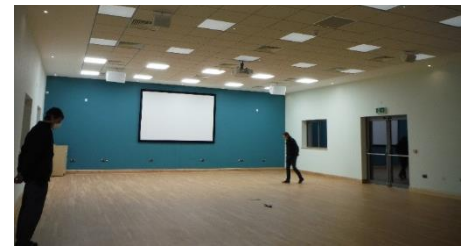
Ted Ashworth's 30-yr-old vision becomes reality

We are also pleased that so many groups and individuals have already made enquiries about using space within the Tove Valley Centre for their activities or family events. If you are interested in hiring rooms on a regular or one-off basis, please have a look at the booking

details for hiring the Tove Valley Centre on our website www.tvbf.co.uk/tvc

If you would like to know about availability prior to completing a hiring application form, please email via bookings@tovevalleycentre.co.uk

We have been holding our Sunday Services at 10.30am each Sunday morning on Zoom since the beginning of the pandemic and expect that we will continue with this even when we are able to meet at the TVC. At the time of writing, we were hoping to be able to hold our first service on Easter Sunday, 4th April, for a limited number of people. For information about our Sunday Services, particularly as COVID restrictions are lifted, please check out our website www.tvbf.co.uk or email comms@tvbf.co.uk For details of what we can offer children and young people, please email youth@tvbf.co.uk



The Hall - praying around the building

TOVE BENEFICE

Separating teabags

By the time you read this article we will hopefully be about to move to Step 3 of the government's reopening roadmap. I'm writing this in March; we have recently moved to Step 1 and are looking forward to Step 1b in the next week or so. I have recently been discussing with a friend whether life will ever 'return to normal'. We have all learnt to do something different in the past 12 months. Whether that be: shopping online, using zoom, going for more walks, spending more time with your household - I'm sure you can add your own thing. As we chatted my friend shared with me this story about what happened to her several years ago.

"I was out on a hack, when the horse I was riding lost its footing in some mud, fell onto its knees and nose, and sent me shooting off, to land badly on my right wrist. Six months, two operations, a surgical plate and a tendon transfer later, I was able to take off my cast and splints and return to normal.

Except that I wasn't. That first day of "freedom", my wrist was so stiff that I couldn't actually move it, and the grip in my right hand was so weak that I couldn't even separate two teabags. I stared at my hands in disbelief. It was a long process of rehabilitation and it was painful."

We went on to discuss how as we begin to think about coming out of lockdown; we may envisage ourselves returning to doing things exactly as we did them before- but the reality will probably be different.

We will probably find that we are in fact nervous about doing things we used to do unthinkingly. We may be made more nervous than we used to be in crowds, or if we hear someone coughing right next to us.

We may find things that we haven't done for a while, like trying on clothes in shops or singing in church feel really, really odd, and not at all comfortable. Or it may be that we feel ready to go straight back to doing everything, but that our friends and family members do not.

I'm sure we have already heard quite a few people expressing real anxiety about whether a return to "normality" will be safe. We have all become a little institutionalised, and we will all need time to heal and regain our strength- our emotional and psychological and spiritual strength. So, if you find that the idea of "unlocking" actually makes you feel apprehensive, be gentle with yourselves- don't rush it- and try not to rush anyone else. Take time to listen to your own feelings and to one another. Many people are coming out of this lockdown bereaved, impoverished and depressed. It's not all going to be magically "over" in June, it will be the start of a new journey.

The letter to the Colossians says: **"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."**

It may take a while, but we will get there. "One cup of tea" at a time.

Rev'd Lulu Pelly





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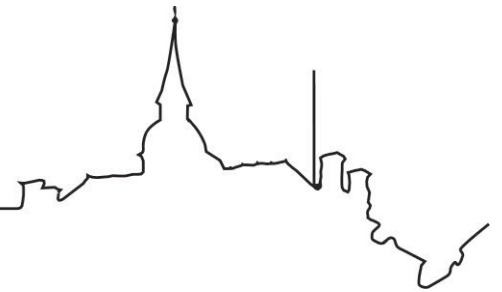
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Tel: 01327 322278

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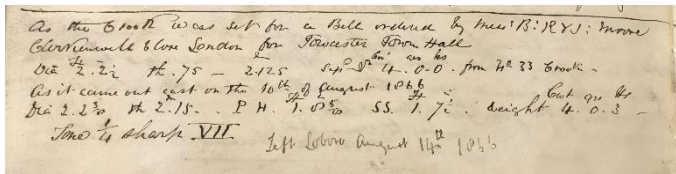


The Town Hall Clock Bell

On a recent trip to Taylor's Bellfoundry to research details of the bell cast for Abthorpe Free School, I came across details of the casting of the clock bell for Towcester Town Hall. Given that ownership of the Town Hall has recently passed from SNC to the Town Council, it might be of interest to find out a little more about one aspect of the building.

The foundation stone of the Town Hall was laid by the Earl of Pomfret on 8th September 1865 and it was completed in 1866. The clock was provided by Arthur Garrett of Towcester, but the hour bell came from John Taylor Bellfounders of Loughborough.

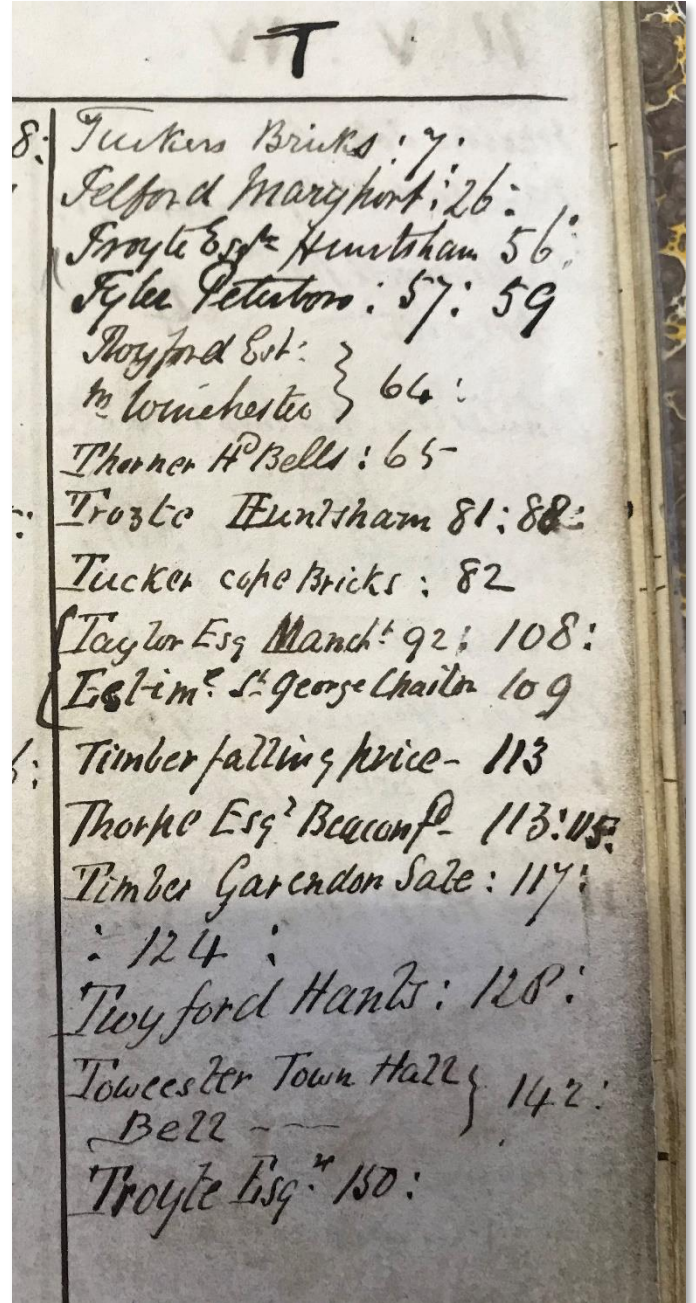
The record relating to this bell is found in the handwritten Day Book for 1866; the main details are as follows:



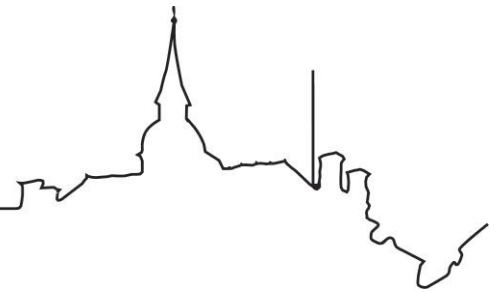
"As the crook was set for a bell ordered by Messrs B R & J Moore, Clerkenwell Close, London for Towcester Town Hall. Dia[meter] 2ft 2½in, Th[ickness] 0.75" – 2.125", size 4cwt 0qrs 0lbs from no.33 crook.

As it came out cast on the 10th of August 1866. Dia 2ft 2½in, Th 2.15 ... weight 4cwt 0qrs 3lbs. Tone ¼ sharp VII. Left L'boro August 14th, 1866."

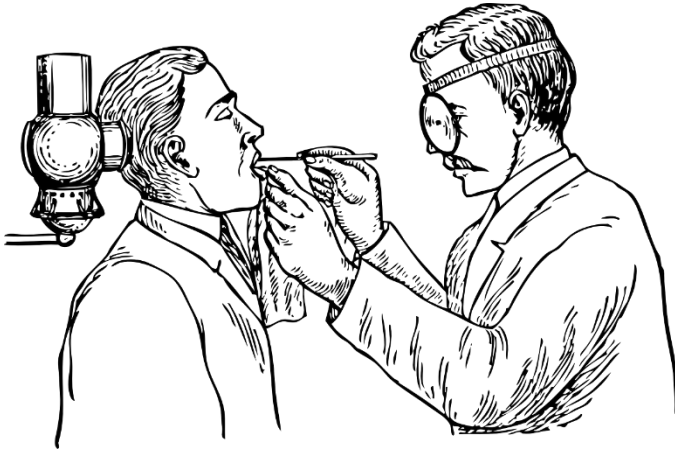
The crook is a metal form used to create the external and internal dimensions of the bell mould prior to casting. The diameter is the internal distance across the mouth or widest part of the bell. Bell weights are always given in terms of hundredweight (cwt), quarters (of a hundredweight), and pounds; twenty hundredweight make a ton in the Imperial weights system. The heaviest bell in the tower of St Lawrence church in Towcester is the tenor; for comparison with the Town Hall clock bell, it weighs 23cwt 1qr 16lbs, so almost 6 times the size. The reference to Tone relates to the main musical note produced by the bell; it is described as a ¼ sharp of VII – this means it is sharp of the note produced by tuning fork number 7.



The Town Hall clock bell left the bell foundry in Loughborough on 14th August 1866, the year the new building opened. The chime it produces is part of the soundscape of the town; sadly, it is often competing with the hour bell of St Lawrence's church, and not always at quite the same time! The debate over which is set to the correct time is best left to another time and place (preferably with a pint in hand to help the argument along).



THREE TOWCESTER DOCTORS – THREE INTERESTING LIVES by Dr. John Sunderland (Retired)



In 2019 Margaret Webb and I completed a book on medical history. Much of this was focussed through Towcester, which provided us with an example of what may well have been happening in the provision of health care in market towns up and down the country over the last two hundred and fifty years.

As has so often been the case with Towcester the town provided us with more of interest than we could have imagined. For example, there were instances of it being at the forefront of advances in sanitation, immunisation (a topic of much concern at present), and integrated care provision following the establishment of a National Health Service in our relatively recent past. It was fascinating to realise just how modern most of what we take for granted as medical and nursing care is. A century ago, most of the current treatment options were either undiscovered or rather primitive by modern standards. Go back a century further and little existed that we would recognise as “care” in an age defined by ‘bleeding’, ‘cupping’, ‘leeches’ and primitive surgery without anaesthesia. The country practitioner of that time would have been expected to have gained proficiency in all these methods. Fortunately for us they need only be regarded as interesting if somewhat gruesome history.

Another unexpected discovery was the number of practitioners associated with the small country town of Towcester over its recent history. Since 1732, some seventy, mainly apothecaries and surgeons, have practised in these parts. As the 20th century dawned these early exponents of the craft, who had generally received apprenticeships before presenting themselves for examination, were replaced by university trained men – and the occasional woman. Towcester was to boast three such ‘lady doctors’ in the interwar years. Of these seventy, I would like to select just three as offering something which makes them stand out. All enjoyed long association with the town. Drs. Robert Watkins and Guy Lewis remained here all their practising lifetime as G.P.s, and were to make significant contributions to health care in the town. Dr. William Cornwall’s life was more varied, being involved in two wars as an Army Medical Officer. He was to establish himself in Towcester before being recalled to the colours and return a hero. His story makes a stirring end to this narrative, so I will first concern myself with Dr. Watkins and Dr. Lewis.

Dr. Robert Webb Watkins was the son of Dr. Timothy Watkins who had joined Dr. Sabin’s practice in the town in 1796. The Watkins medical dynasty is currently in its seventh generation. Three of these have associations with Towcester, but Robert

was to become perhaps their most prominent member due to his involvement with the cholera outbreak here in 1854.

It was the same year as the Soho outbreak in London which led Dr. John Snow, a noted London physician of that time, to carry out ground-breaking research as to the cause of the infection. This was to establish public health medicine and propel the concept of sanitation into the forefront of mid - Victorian municipal planning. Snow showed cholera to be water born and not carried by the ‘miasma’, the stench of biological and industrial waste that pervaded Victorian cities. He traced the source of the outbreak to a drinking water pump in Broad Street, Soho. Disabling this removed the cholera. Four years later the ‘great stink of London’ filled the Thames with untreated sewage. ‘Honourable Members’ were forced from The House causing parliament to vote for huge funds for the construction of Bazalgette’s enormous metropolitan ring sewer with its attendant treatment plants, which is only now in process of being replaced.

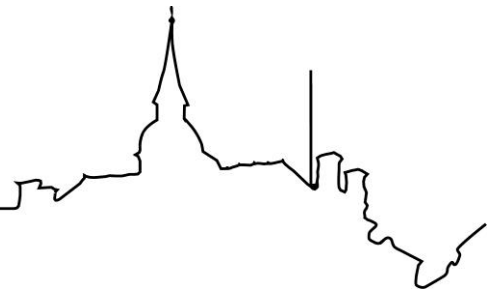
Meanwhile in Towcester, and less well reported, Dr. Watkins was coming to the same conclusions as John Snow. He was involved with the town’s outbreak that was also affecting the neighbouring village of Silverstone and noted it to be concentrated in the south of Towcester which was the poorer quarter with correspondingly inadequate drainage. The workhouse off the Brackley road boasted its own water supply via a pump. It escaped the outbreak completely, leading Dr. Watkins to agree with Dr. Snow that water seemed the likely source of transmission. In the age before the discovery of bacteria both men had postulated a chemical contamination as the cause for the illness.



Stock photo

But, unlike John Snow, Robert Watkins’ contribution to this moment of medical history has been largely overlooked. His advice on sanitary improvements in Towcester was embraced with all the enthusiasm typical of small-town politics. His ‘notes on cholera’ were published in the British Medical Journal of 21st October 1865, but drew little interest, and as late as the 1890’s he was still complaining that, in his opinion, only one third of the town enjoyed adequate sanitation. Progress in health care that involves the spending of public money has been typically erratic throughout most of history.

Dr. Watkins practised in Towcester between 1847 and 1884. A century on, the town witnessed the arrival of Dr. Guy Lewis, who was to spend the rest of his life here, working as a G.P. serving



the local area. In 1951, he was appointed trainee in Dr. Reid's Paulerspury practice, retiring as senior partner in 1987. The world of medicine, in which he had qualified, had undergone fundamental change in 1948, with the establishment of a National Health Service, which offered comprehensive medical care to all 'from cradle to grave'. It was free at the point of service and paid for out of general taxation. At a stroke, it relieved the population of the greatest worry in life. Sickness or incapacitation through injury and being deprived of work to support family must have terrified all but the wealthy. In the early years of the 20th century, the Lloyd George social provisions had sought to address such concerns. By 1942, at the height of World War II, they were to be augmented by the Beveridge reforms of health and education, preparing the nation for a brighter future after the war than it had experienced in the depressed interwar years.

This heralded a revolution in the way that health care was provided. Practically all doctors were contracted into the system which was to give them a steady income in return for being continuously available to provide appropriate care to their patients by day and night. Such arrangements were manageable in the post war days when expectations were limited and most people "didn't like to bother the doctor". But as medical care developed, due to new technologies and better drugs, demand on services grew apace. Country practitioners could only keep up by amalgamating into group practices which could share out of hours care and develop specialist clinics for managing chronic disease, supported by ancillary staff during office hours.

There was none of this in 1951 when Guy Lewis joined Dr. Reid. The two practices which served Towcester originated in the nearby villages of Paulerspury and Silverstone. Towcester people had to rely on 'lock-up' facilities for an hour of surgery before and after lunch. Dr. Lewis spent the rest of his day 'on his rounds' or chasing up district nurses and health visitors who were often out and about and uncontactable. Something better was needed. It was obvious that Towcester required a central point from which integrated care could be provided by both practices. So it was that Drs. Guy Lewis and Frank Newton, respective 'senior partners' came to lobby for the provision of what was to become Towcester Health Centre, the facility that greeted me when I started as 'the new doctor' in 1982. By then, it had expanded to embrace 'physios' and other 'therapists' along with an outreach gynaecology clinic. General practice had come of age. It must have been an exciting time to have been a young and dynamic country doctor, and, on his retirement, Guy was to reflect that he had 'seen the best of it'. His generation of practitioners were trusted to get on with their work unencumbered by excessive managerial oversight. Risks were involved with this approach but competent and committed G.P.s felt themselves valued for the long hours and interrupted nights they endured.

The last of our medical trilogy was a doctor whose practice in the town spanned most of the intervening years between Drs. Watkins and Lewis. Dr. William Cornwall was to settle, leave and eventually return to resume his practice here, which spanned the years 1904 to 1938. He had qualified in 1896 with a masters' degree in surgery from Aberdeen University and then spent some time in the Cape as a surgeon attached to the South African Field Force. Newly qualified, he had taken advantage of the ability to travel that his profession provided. Arriving back in England after the 2nd Boer War, he was discharged onto the Army Reserve list. Edwardian middle-class prosperity attracted

him to the quieter life of an English country town. In Towcester he was to establish his practice, and find a farmer's daughter to wed, in the decade before the Great War. This catastrophe saw him recalled to the colours. He survived front line service and his courage was to result in his gaining the M.C., a field decoration second only to the V.C. It was gazetted on 26th July 1918, which would suggest the action occurred during the final German offensive in the spring of that year.



The citation read: '*T./Capt. Wm. Francis Cornwall M.B. R.A.M.C. for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to Duty. When the enemy carried out a heavy Bombardment with large calibre shells and Gas he established, on his own initiative, a Dressing Station and continued to deal with Cases of various units for five hours, during which time shelling was intense. To evacuate the wounded, he organised stretcher parties of prisoners, no other means being at the time available.*'

After the war, Dr. Cornwall resumed his practice and family life in Towcester. His entry in the Medical Directory of 1930, eight years before he retired, lists him as Medical Officer for the Silverstone district of the Towcester Union, Medical Officer of the Tiffeld Reformatory, Medical Officer for the Post Office, Lecturer to St. John's Ambulance Association, medical referee of the War Pensions Committee, and numerous assurance companies. Before the certainties of the NHS doctors needed to rely on multiple income sources.

This article was taken from 'So There's Illness In The House' published as an e-book on Amazon Kindle and also available as an abridged hard copy called 'Towcester – An Interesting Medical History' published by Towcester Local History Society.



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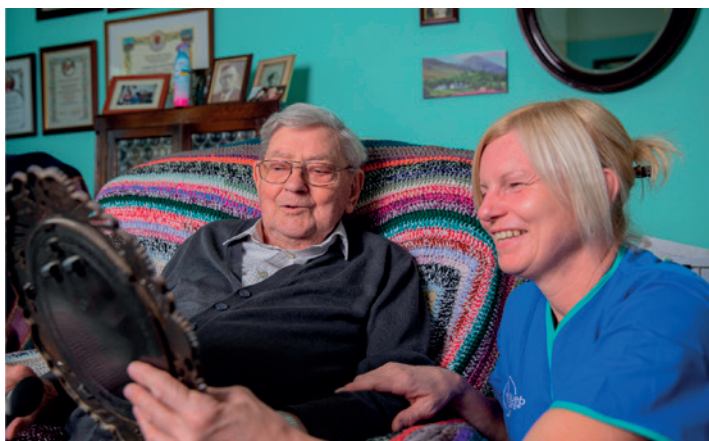


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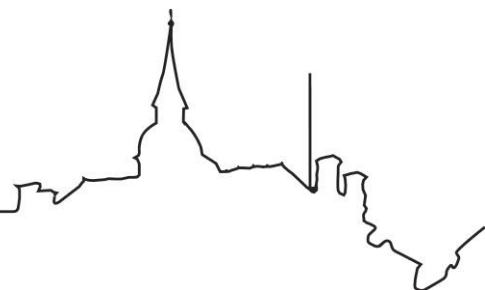
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Towcester Foodbank receives Rose of Northamptonshire Award



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WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN TOWCESTER FOODBANK AS A TRUSTEE?

Towcester Food Bank is looking for new trustees to join us to help end food poverty in our local community. We are particularly interested in speaking with local people who have relevant experience of change management, health and safety, finance skills or safeguarding. If you think you could help and would like to be considered, please e-mail Terry Hearty: terencehearty@btinternet.com



A message from the new Chair of Towcester Foodbank, Terry Hearty:

"First, I'd like to thank all the people of Towcester and its surrounding villages for the amazing support they've given us - particularly in the last year since the pandemic struck, when we have seen an upturn in demand and an increase in food poverty. That thanks goes out to all those who have donated funds to help us, have left food in our bins in Tesco and Waitrose and have even arranged for food

collections and delivered them to us at the Food Bank!

I also want to thank our fantastic volunteers who give so much of themselves and their time. They sort food, pack it into bags, and, at the moment, are also driving around Towcester and the surrounding villages to deliver our food direct to those who need it.

My second objective is to reach out to anyone who might need our help at this difficult time. To encourage them not to worry about coming forward and asking for help. You might know someone in this position, or you might find that you yourself are struggling to pay food bills.

And finally, a massive thank you for all those wonderful Easter eggs; we had literally hundreds from individuals and organisations including Northants and Hunts Freemasons, Holy Cross in Pattishall and Astcote Chapel. Thank you."



Northamptonshire County Council alongside the High Sheriff's office and Lord Lieutenancy launched the Rose of Northamptonshire Award Scheme as part of the Unsung Heroes initiative, to recognise people working tirelessly as part of the COVID-19 response.

Towcester Foodbank was nominated by the local community due to the inspirational work undertaken in the ever-changing landscape we found ourselves in, during this last year.

The team of volunteers have supported the most vulnerable members of the community by keeping them safe from food poverty. This only happened due to the dedication and flexibility of the team to adapt to change persistently. Firstly, needing to recruit 80% of our volunteers as the current ones were shielding; having to find and move premises at short notice; changing from a face-to-face to a delivery-only service - are just some examples of the extraordinary work that took place, literally overnight.

Receiving this recognition from the people of Northamptonshire is inspiring in itself, as not only is the Foodbank run by volunteers, but it is also supported by donations from the local community.

Contact us for help :

07724 832043

info@towcester.foodbank.org.uk

Facebook: @towcesterfoodbank



TALK MENTAL HEALTH

WORK WELL, BE WELL

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



Our aim is to Inspire, Educate and Empower individuals to better manage their own Mental Wellbeing. This in turn reduces the requirement for expensive interventions and support strategies, acting as an effective preventative measure, against loss of productivity, sickness days and poor mental health within the workplace generally.

TALKING THERAPIES



At the core of what we provide is our successful Men's Mental Health support groups. We have drawn on our experience and knowledge, to assist you in setting up your own in-house wellbeing support group, advising on policies and procedures and training Peer Support Facilitators, to oversee the running of your group.

without the right training from knowledgeable and experienced professionals, regardless the size of your investment, any mental wellbeing strategy will be ineffective. We provide a three tiered approach which includes the Mental Health First Aid course, along with bespoke workshops to meet your specific needs and requirements.

TRAINING



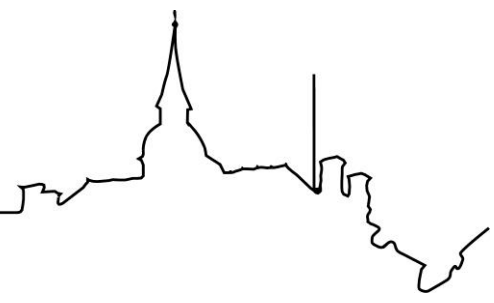
INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKING



sometimes it can take more than making people attend training, you need people to want to be engaged, to learn and participate. This is where Nick Wilson provides a variety of talks on his own truly inspirational journey, ensuring the right message is shared and there is value for all attendees.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US:

WWW.TALKMENTALHEALTH.ORG.UK 07434 006110 NICK@TALKMENTALHEALTH.ORG.UK

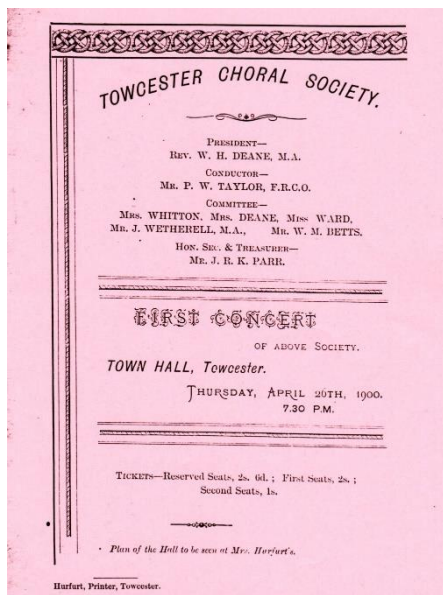


Don't Stop the Music: TCS 1900 -2021

It might be hard to believe, but Towcester Choral Society has been going for over 120 years!

Quite a lot has happened in the world in that time – not least 2 world wars and 2 global pandemics. The choir has had to adapt; disbanding during WW1 and resuming in 1930 as a ladies' choir (because of the shortage of men), then in 1944 becoming a mixed choir once more. As we all know during this pandemic the choir has continued via Zoom and our only 'concerts' have been video montages.

The first concert the Society gave was in the Town Hall on April 26th, 1900 with a visiting conductor Mr P W Taylor and a programme that included Gaul's cantata 'The Holy City'. There were around 60 singers, and reserved seats cost 2s 6d. Alfred R Gaul (1837 -1913) was an immensely popular English choral composer, and his works were a firm favourite with TCS. At the concert in December 1900 the choir were honoured to be conducted by the composer himself - possibly the modern-day equivalent of Sir Andrew Lloyd-Webber coming to conduct the choir!



Programme for the first concert

A note in the programme for these early concerts would state 'Carriages at 10 pm' and a special train would leave Towcester for Blisworth and Northampton at 10.30pm.

The founder of the Society was Mr John R K Parr, a schoolmaster who taught at the old National School at the rear of the Town Hall. Sadly, he died in 1915 of double pneumonia and it was then that the choir disbanded, reforming as the Towcester Ladies Choral

Society in 1930 under Mrs Gretchen Kelsall. Mr Parr's daughter Connie and later his grand- daughters Josephine Denny and Pam Turpin were all active members of TCS, continuing the family tradition until Pam left the choir circa 2013 after over 50 years of singing.

As a ladies' choir the Society won many awards at various Eisteddfods as well as giving concerts in aid of war charities and generally helping to keep spirits up during difficult years. The ladies were also quite keen to enjoy themselves when not singing – as the photo of them all dressed up at Valentine's Café, Northampton, in December 1932 shows!



Valentines Café 1932

In 1944 the men were welcomed back, and the name reverted to Towcester Choral Society with Mr Arthur Ward as conductor.

The size of the choir has fluctuated over the years, but it has never shied away from ambitious works – almost every year during the sixties they presented a concert version of a light opera, such as 'The Pirates of Penzance'. In the early days, the choir members had to erect their own portable staging in the Town Hall, and even imported 2 grand pianos for every concert. Nowadays the staging is hired - but there is still a lot of donkey work required from the singers! The rehearsal venue has also changed over time – including the original Church of England School in Richmond Road, the Methodist Church in Brackley Road, the A5 Rangers hall, and back full circle to the school now reinvented as the Sawpits Centre.

The choir has been fortunate in having dedicated patrons, conductors, soloists, singers, accompanists - and of course audiences! There is a pattern of a spring, summer and Christmas concert schedule in Towcester, and the choir has also performed in local village halls and the Derngate Theatre, as well as joining other choirs at singing workshops, and in 'come and sing' events at the Royal Albert Hall.

There is a tradition of long-serving members – the current record is held by Roy King who has been with us since 1970. We are fortunate too that our musical directors are happy to stay – our current MD, Helen Swift, has been in post since 2010 and her predecessor, Mary Rice, served for 23 years!



75th anniversary dinner, Pickwick Restaurant

We are always happy to welcome new members – Ruth Quilter joined us in January 2020, little realising that she would be spending so much time singing to herself during Zoom rehearsals over the following year! This was obviously not what she would have expected from 'joining a choir' but she has stuck with it, has enjoyed many aspects of it, and points out that she has 'got to know people better online than just attending rehearsals.'

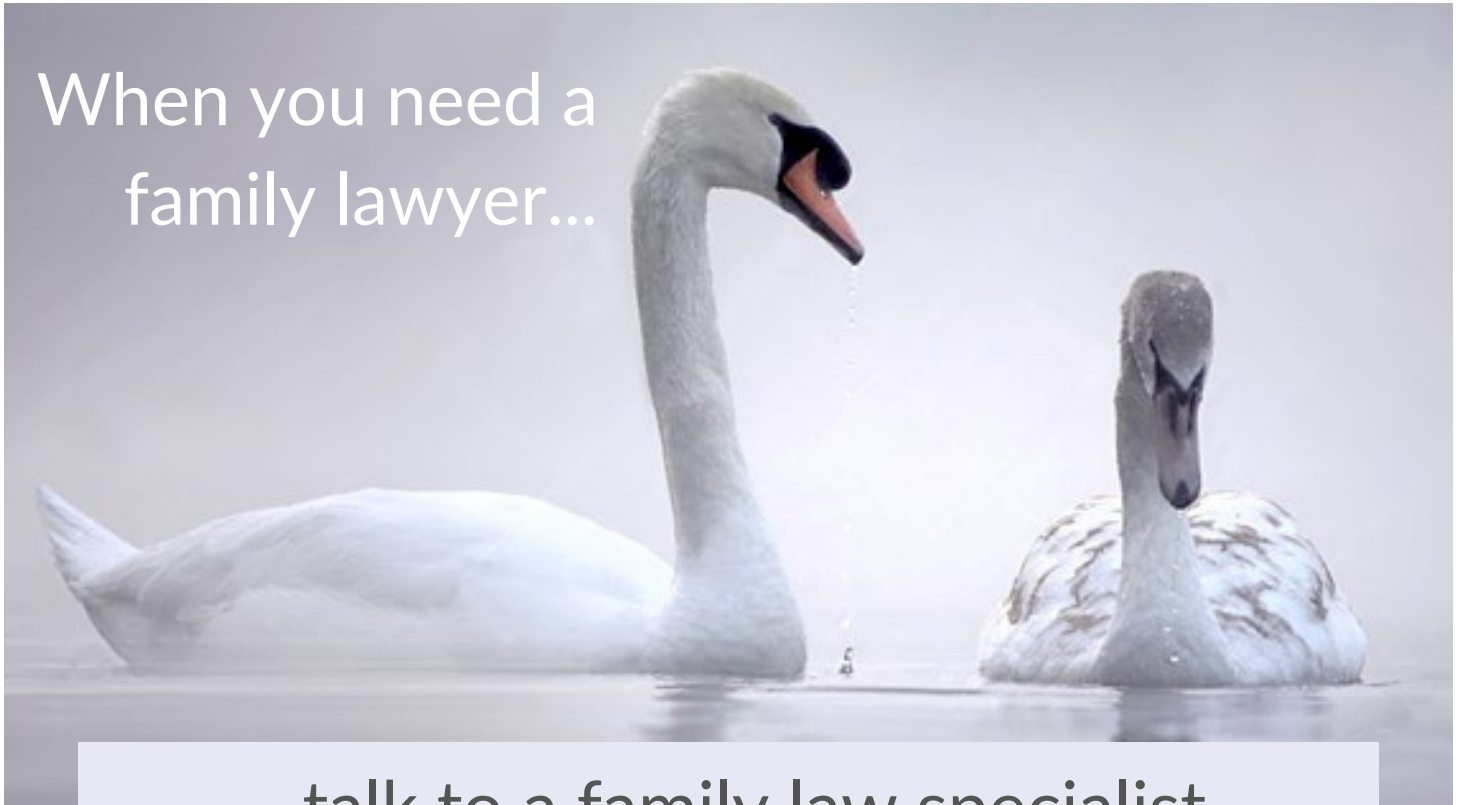
As the world slowly starts to open up, TCS will again rise to the challenge and adapt as necessary. We very much hope that by the time this article goes to press we will have a plan for resuming 'in person' rehearsals and tentative plans for a concert later this year. We are grateful that, due to the generosity of our members, and the technology available to us, we have managed to keep going through this current crisis and Towcester will be able to look forward to many more years of choral music.



Summer concert 2018 'Zimbe!'

For general enquiries about the society please contact our Secretary, Lisa Clinch
secretary@towcesterchoralsociety.org.uk

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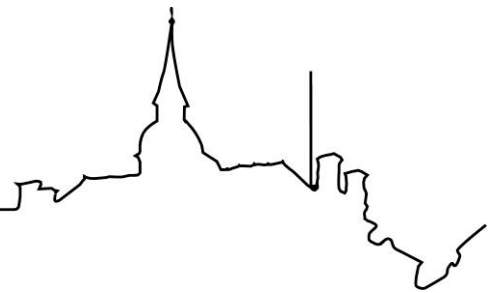
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South Northants
Youth Engagement



A HUGE STEP FORWARD FOR YOUTH WORK IN SOUTH NORTHANTS

South Northants Youth Engagement will be working hard to ensure that young people have got the support they need and a voice to say how they want their futures to be as we emerge from this pandemic which has had a huge impact on young people's mental health¹.

The charity sets out to improve the lives of young people in South Northants by providing recreational and leisure-time activities. Also, to provide support and activities which develop young people's skills, capacities, and capabilities.

This is a fantastic step forward for youth work in South Northants and they're pleased to welcome two new members of staff.

Jodie Chana, the new Youth Worker will be helping Towcester Youth Coffee House to launch their online youth club Loggers. Young people aged 11 – 14 years (school years 7-9) will be able to join every Thursday evening 7pm.

Loggers² is open to any young person living in South Northants. It will be a safe place for young people who live in some of the more remote parts of our district or anyone who struggles to get to a youth club to come together and have some fun.

Jodie said: *'I can't wait to get started and meet more young people from the area. I met a fantastic group of young people from Towcester at my interview and they were so switched on and inspiring.'*

Once restrictions are relaxed, Jodie will be helping TYCH to fulfil its potential by supporting them to run a youth club, a safe space for older teenagers to drop in and hang out at the refurbished Coffee House, now called The Barn, on Bransons Lane, Towcester.

Matt Foreman, Chair of TYCH said: *"I am very excited that Towcester Youth Coffee House is going to be working in partnership with SNYE; and we look forward to collaborating with Jodie and Penny. I believe that this is potentially a great time for young people in South Northants."*

Penny Embden is the new Youth Engagement Co-ordinator. Her role will be to identify new youth work opportunities and provide networking and promotional support to existing groups.

Penny has had a varied and busy career mainly using the arts to develop

opportunities for young people. She will be using all her skills to bring together organisations and individuals who want to help young people in South Northants to have the childhoods and futures they deserve.

Young people have been massively impacted by the pandemic, even though most are only likely to suffer mild symptoms from the virus. Their lives have been turned upside down and their education hugely disrupted. SNYE want to ensure that there are places where young people can safely engage in the social activities they have been missing.

Youth clubs and drop in spaces give young people a place to ask questions and explore topics that they can't discuss at home. Most importantly they are places to make friends and have fun, something we have all come to appreciate so much when we have been living with restrictions to our normal social habits.

These new posts are funded by West Northants Council, Brackley Town Council and Towcester Town Council. SNYE are very grateful for the funding and want to use it to build a stronger network of youth provision in our District.

Councillor Karen Cooper, West Northants Council's portfolio holder for Wellbeing said: *"The services provided by SNYE are more important than ever to support our young people, many of whom have been left isolated and unhappy as a result of the pandemic. SNC is pleased to help fund these vital roles that will help to build stronger communities in South Northants."*

Cllr Sue Sharps of Brackley Town Council said: *"I'm thrilled that we are able to announce two dedicated Youth Workers for Brackley, Towcester and the surrounding villages. Youth work transforms young people's lives through the expert support they provide in areas such as physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This is fantastic news for Brackley as the town*

grows parents and young people have professionals to whom they can turn. I'm very proud of the work done so far by SNYE for the youth of the County."

Cllr Martin Johns of Towcester Town Council said: *"Young people have been deprived of sufficient safe and supportive places to attend in their free time, long before coronavirus, so this new initiative is a significant step help to fill that gap and support young people's mental and physical health."*

South Northants Youth Engagement gained charitable status in January 2019 although active as a community group before this.

They are keen to work with other youth groups and help them provide a strong network of support.

If you would like to volunteer and get involved with the work of this exciting young charity, then please look on the website for opportunities.

www.youth-engagement.co.uk

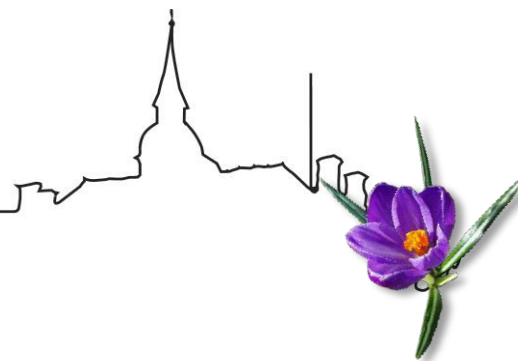
Iain Anderson
SNYE Chair of Trustees

admin@youth-engagement.co.uk



1. <https://digital.nhs.uk/news-and-events/news/survey-conducted-in-july-2020-shows-one-in-six-children-having-a-probable-mental-disorder>

2. Loggers is an online youth club run by Towcester Youth Coffee House, to register your interest, call or text 07593 585 216 or email enquiries@towcesteryouthcoffeehouse.org.uk



A Year of Reflection...



Rotarians installing the "End Polio Now" sign on Brackley Road for #PurpleforPolio

Over a year has passed since the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the first national lockdown and ceased Rotary life as Club members once knew it.

As restrictions continue to be relaxed, members have been discussing and preparing for the resuming of Rotary fundraising activities and programmes. Such events which have been provisionally confirmed, include the visit of the Cwmbach Male Voice Choir this coming autumn (celebrating 100 years of song), and the return of Last Night of the Proms in February 2022.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, as #PeopleofAction, Rotarians were still determined to make a difference wherever possible. A donation of £1000 was received by each hospital charity at MKUH and NGH, as Towcester residents use both sites to access healthcare services. Funds were used to purchase DAB radios for inpatients on the orthopaedic ward at MKUH.

Additionally, the Club has formed a new collaborative relationship with Towcester Community Food, whose primary goal is to reduce food waste. Supporting the environment has recently been approved as a new key focus area for Rotary International. Funds were used to purchase a new fridge-freezer and pay for four months of rent after the project relocated to

Towcester Town Football Supporters Club. Rotarian Lee Mumby also donated time and utilised his professional skills by spending several hours painting and decorating the new premises.

Meanwhile, May 2021 marks the 40th Anniversary of the founding of The Rotary Club of Towcester! Throughout the past four decades, the Club has accomplished so much, creating a legacy for both current and former members to be proud of. What memories do you have of Rotary in Towcester from previous years? I would be delighted to receive any anecdotes or stories from members of the general public. Please email me at stephjones@towcester-rotary.org.uk Many thanks in advance!

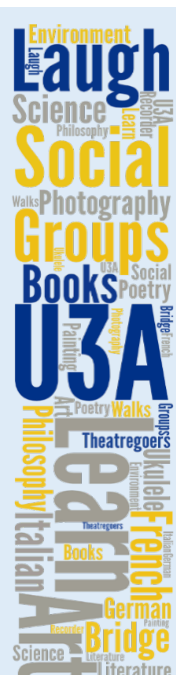
Rotarian Steph Jones

If you are interested in discovering more about Rotary and what projects the Club is involved with locally, nationally and internationally, please visit our website :

www.towcester-rotary.org.uk

or email secretary@towcester-rotary.org.uk or visit our social media platforms by searching for "Rotary Towcester".

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, meetings are being conducted online via Zoom.



What will I do when I retire?

As my retirement loomed, I started thinking "how am I going to fill my time" so like many, I 'googled' for a solution. Almost the first thing I found was a group of retired "petrolheads" meeting each month and on following it through, I found it was a Towcester u3a group.

"What is Towcester u3a?" I thought, "is it some pyramid selling organisation, a money-making scheme, something to be wary of?" Well, no, it turns out. It's a registered charity run by its members and affiliated to the National u3a.

u3a is fortunately an easier way of referring to "The University of the Third Age".

There is no minimum age for members, they just need not to be in full-time work.

So, armed with this knowledge, I paid my small annual membership fee to join Towcester u3a and then popped along to join the "Boys Toys group" - a jokey name but I was pleased to find there were lady members too.

Chatting to others, I found there were some 76 other interest groups ranging from Art Appreciation and Chess, to Ramblers, Painting, and Ukuleles, some of which I joined, now giving me plenty to do in my retirement.

In addition, in non-Covid times, there are monthly meetings with guest speakers, garden visits and coach trips. The u3a has the strap line "Learning Not Lonely" and is a great way to make new friends.

As soon as we are able, we will be holding new members meetings again but meanwhile, if you want to know more, visit our website. We look forward to hearing from you!

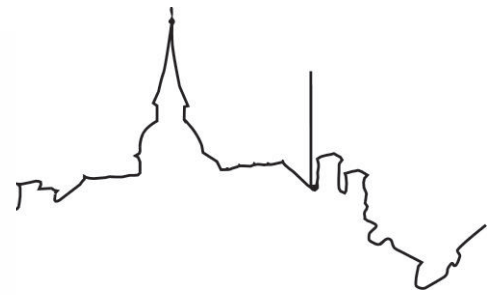
Ray Paice .

Towcester U3A is a registered charity number 1155428



Heroes Wanted.

Please give just two hours of your time to help clean up Towcester! 26th & 27th June 2021



The Rotary Club of Towcester has an Agreement with River Care who provide the litter picking equipment for us to use. The six-monthly Towcester Tidy Ups haven't been able to happen since Autumn 2019, so I thought I would give you a little history lesson and some information about how we can help in the meantime.

In a recent Sunday Times article about how litter is a blight on our country, Jeremy Paxman, who is a patron of Clean Up Britain said, "This is a beautiful country, and we treat it as if it was a rubbish dump. What is it with the British? It didn't used to be like this."

Well, I'm afraid Jeremy that it has been for quite some time, but it is getting worse.

- In the 1950s the National Federation of Women's Institutes passed a resolution to "Keep Britain Tidy".
- In the 1960s Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) became a registered charity.
- In the 1980s KBT introduced the Blue Flag award for British beaches.
- In the 1990s KBT launched the world's biggest school programme – ECO Schools – in England.

In the 2000s the first "Care" projects were launched, and the local River Care project is funded by Anglian Water (see above ref to River Care).

Yet despite all of this, and other initiatives, in 2015 a parliamentary select committee suggested that England was the most littered country in the western world and recent research suggests that Britain is getting grubbier.

About 30 million tonnes of litter is dropped every year according to KBT, with over £500,000,000 spent every year cleaning it up, PLUS all the fantastic work being done by volunteers around the country.

The amount of litter is estimated to have increased by 500% since the 1960s and reflects our increased fast food, single use product, society and also a very selfish element in our society.

In 2018 KBT did a national survey and found that the top 10 littered items were:

1. Smoking related items
2. Confectionery packs
3. Soft drink bottles and cans
4. Fast food related items
5. Alcoholic drink bottles and cans
6. Packaging, other than above
7. Snack packs
8. Vehicle parts and tyres
9. Discarded food and drink
10. Clothing

I suspect that PPE masks would feature highly if we did a survey now.

There are some forms of littering which people generally find more offensive than all the above: broken glass, with the obvious risk of injury to people and pets, and bagged dog fouling left on the verge or hung from a bush. For those who perpetrate the latter: "Guys, there are no such things as "dog s*** fairies" to take this away, please dispose of it in the proper bin".

It is estimated that 122 tonnes of cigarette-related litter is dropped every day, so in 2018 KBT launched Bin the Butt and did more research to raise awareness among smokers of the impact of their discarded cigarette butts on the environment.

The survey showed that 3.6 million smokers in the UK had dropped a cigarette butt down the drain in the previous month and almost 50% were unaware that any of those butts would end up in the ocean.

10% didn't even class a cigarette butt as litter. Almost 65% of smokers had no

idea that they contained plastic and 80% were horrified to learn that the toxins from cigarette butts can cause significant harm to marine life.

Cigarette filters include many chemical ingredients such as arsenic and lead as well as nicotine, all of which can leak into marine environments. Studies have shown that just one cigarette butt in a litre of water is highly toxic to fish.

30% wrongly assumed that cigarette butts were filtered out in water treatment works. Nearly 10% thought they just stayed in the drains and just over 10% thought they were biodegradable.

So, if you smoke, please put the butt in a litter bin and NOT down the drains.

KBT organises the **Great British Spring Clean**, usually in late-March/mid-April, but this is delayed again this year due to Covid restrictions. **Locally we are planning to do a Towcester Tidy Up over the weekend of 26/27th of June.**

Equipment has been used by a number of individuals and small groups over the past year or so with more planned for April/May.

If anyone wants to volunteer for the Tidy Up or borrow some equipment to clean up your own local environment, then please contact me.

Rotarian David Reed

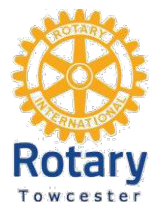
01327 352414 / 07970 597044
dreedsm@sky.com

Towcester Wildlife Trust group have purchased "Hedgehog Highway" signs. They are bright green and are roughly 5 inches by 3 inches and can be fixed to a fence above a suitable hole that hedgehogs can use to navigate from garden to garden.

By doing this it is hoped that care will be taken by residents to ensure that these vital links between green spaces will be kept clear.

Hedgehogs will be on the move now so if you want one for your garden or a few for neighbouring gardens then please get in touch with David Reed.

We are offering them free of charge and trust you to actually fit them accordingly rather than leaving them languishing in a drawer.





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CARING HOMES

ROADE RAMBLE

Distance:	5.2 miles
Surface:	Varied
Difficulty:	Moderate
Dog Friendly:	Small dogs
Stiles:	Yes
Approx time:	2h
Approx Steps:	11,200



Northamptonshire offers a surprising variety of landscapes from the rolling hills in the north, to the scenic vistas and amazing woodlands in the south. If you add the Grand Union Canal with its many towpaths and quaint little villages, that are secreted in history, it is no wonder that they call this county the “Hidden Cotswolds”.



Start at St Mary The Virgin Church, Church End, Roade, NN7 2NP.
 (Parking at the end of Butlins Lane).
what3words.com/kilowatt.smart.gems
 Download this walk, complete with turn-by-turn photos at:
<https://www.adventuregeek.co.uk/product/ag65/>

THE ROUTE



With the play park to your right, and the church to your left, take the footpath to the left. Follow the path that leads you into Church End. At the junction turn left. You will pass the Post Office and The Cock Pub. (although look out for the photo challenge before you reach the pub). Cross the road at the zebra crossing and follow the path. Continue on the path via the Methodist Church. Cross the road at the school, turn right and continue onwards (keeping the school to your left). Stay on the left side of the road, passing the War Memorial on your right. Continue forward. Follow the footpath signs which lead you through a new build area and on to open fields. Now the fun begins! The walk takes you over numerous fields. If you look closely you will see an alpaca farm in the distance to your right. You will reach a footpath crossroads with farm buildings in the distance to your left. Turn left and head towards the buildings. Say hello to the horses! Your next goal is the wind turbines. Turning left as you start the loop back to Roade, via Courteenhall Manor and church. See if you can spot the amazing sundial and the fabulous views of the manor. This area can be rather muddy if it has been raining. Hopping over a few stiles, and making your way through a fantastic wooded area before finding the next photo challenge which is a geocache hidden in a log! Follow the trees like before, turning left and heading back to Roade Church. Please support local businesses and stop for a cuppa or a pint in the town.

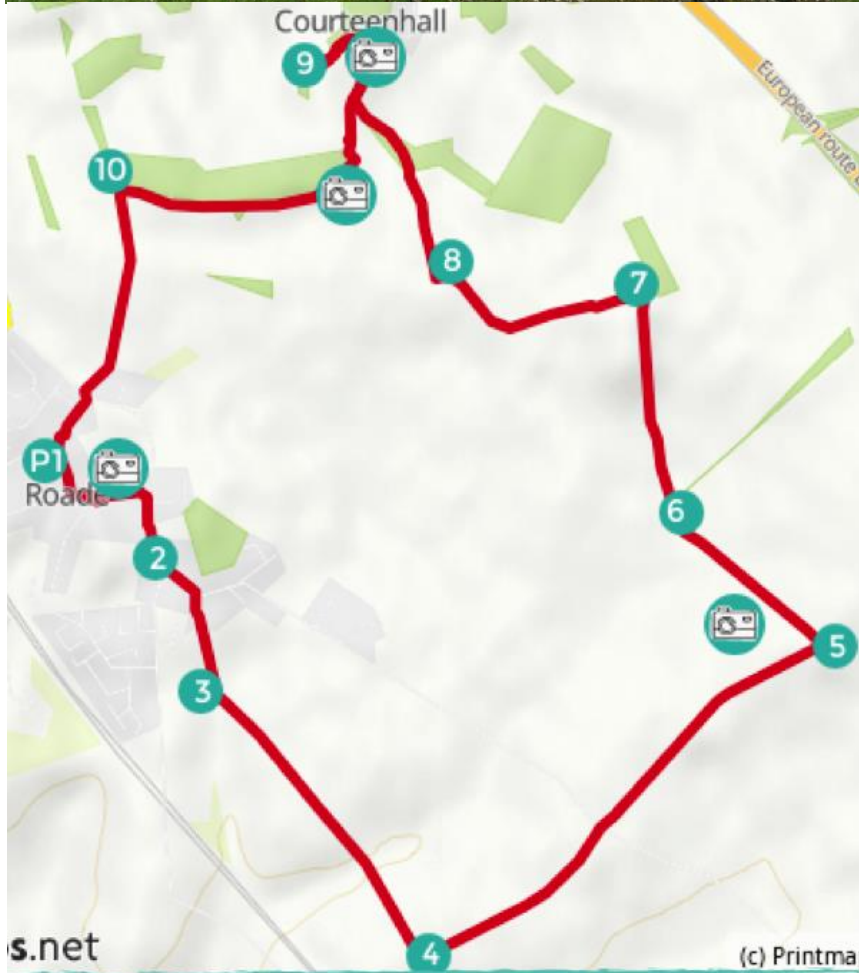


PHOTO CHALLENGE

For each Adventure Geek walk we challenge you to take a photo and upload to Facebook, Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag **#AGPhotoChallenge**

Your photo challenge is to find two geocaches and a sundial. Also, see if you can spot a beacon, lots of windmills, lovely brown sheep, and a fabulous view of Courteenhall House.

Check out our latest guided walks:
<https://adventuregeek.co.uk/events>

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