



# Shipston Forum

## Merry Christmas



December 2023

### Will our fire station be downgraded?



Shipston fire station may be downgraded from an on-call station to a 'surge' station under new proposals. The town's station currently has seven on-call firefighters – trained firefighters who have other jobs. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue's new 'Resourcing to Risk' proposals would mean that while an appliance would continue to be kept at the station, the on-call fire service would be replaced with a surge service, with teams 'available for recall in the event of significant incidents or periods of high demand.' The plans would affect six stations in the county and have been criticised by the FRSA, the firefighters' union. The public can have their say during a three-month public consultation due to begin in December.

See Town Council meeting report on page 3.

### Promising percussionist

Young local percussionist Alec Banner is continuing to develop his skills as he aims to study at one of the country's top conservatoires, recently playing with two top Welsh bands, Cory and Tredegar. Alec began his musical development with Shipston Junior Band before playing with both of Shipston's senior bands, showing great promise on both percussion and cornet. Currently he is a member of Shirley Championship Band, Youth Brass 2000, the country's leading youth band, and the prestigious National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. Alec is also helping the next generation by tutoring at Shipston Junior Bands.



Alec performing with Tredegar. Their conductor Ian Porthouse

### Help tell our Ellen Badger Hospital story

Shipston Museum's next exhibition will tell the story of the Ellen Badger – the hospital which has been an important and cherished part of our community for over 130 years. The exhibition will recognise and celebrate its past. The team is currently researching and designing the display for the next museum opening at Easter and would love to hear from anyone with memories, stories and pictures to share. Perhaps you worked there or it cared for your family?

Find out more on page 9.



### Youth Club bounces back

Shipston Youth Club is growing again. Numbers have risen so much – from 20 to over 40 – that Tuesday club nights at the Hub have been split into two age groups, each attending on alternate weeks. Chairman Rev Daniel Pulham was delighted to collect a £4,564 cheque from the Co-op and offers a huge thank you to all Co-op members who voted to support the club, providing young people in the town with somewhere to go, someone to talk to and something to do.



### Christmas comes to Shipston!

The Victorian evening, the Tree of Life, the Christmas church and carol services. It's all coming to Shipston as the town gears up for a season of festive cheer. Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas!



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### Mayor’s column

Hello Shipston,

Last month my wife and I attended the Whitnash Civic Service hosted by Councillor Simon Button (mayor) and Kate Button. Another well-organised civic event.

On Armistice Day at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in the High Street the Town Crier made a short public pronouncement. This was followed by a lone bugler sounding the last post followed by two minutes silence to commemorate the end of World War 1. It was a short but poignant event.

The day after that, we had another superb turnout for Remembrance Sunday. It was nice to see you all. I thought I would make an effort and wear not only my medals but my father’s and grandfather’s medals out of respect for them and this important occasion. I am a third-generation firefighter and wore their long service and good conduct medals (LSGC) as well as my own.

My grandfather joined the Royal Army Service Corps at the start of the First World War but was honourably medically discharged in 1919 due to losing most of his sight from mustard gas whilst in the trenches. He returned to work as a firefighter in the Auxiliary Fire Service during the Second World War, eventually joining the National Fire Service. After the war, he joined the Westmorland Fire Service and was presented with his LSGC medal in the 1950s.


My father just caught the end and aftermath of the Second World War, spending his time with the British Army in Palestine, in the lead-up to the creation of the State of Israel. He went on to join Wallasey Fire Service which in 1974 became Merseyside Fire Service and retired in the 1980s. If either of these two souls had been killed during these conflicts, then I would not be around to tell the story and to continue to remember them and their fallen comrade heroes.

On a lighter note, I hope everyone is looking forward to Christmas. There are many events coming along, but to highlight a couple, the Shipston on Stour Victorian Evening is on 1st December in the High Street and Shipston Lodge has its Christmas festival on 16th December. I hope to attend both.

I hope you all stay well and enjoy a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Cllr. Gerry Kelly,

**Mayor, Shipston Town Council**



## News from Shipston Town Council’s October meeting

### Tree survey

The timetable for the conclusion of the tree survey by Treetech has not yet been confirmed.

### Shipston in Bloom

Some volunteers have already come forward to carry on the work of Shipston in Bloom. A meeting with the Environment Working Group will be scheduled.

### Sewage and drainage

Some areas with failing drains have been pointed out to Severn Trent, which is also dealing with sewer problems at Glen Close.

### Remembrance Service

The Remembrance Day service in town was well attended. Council thanked all those involved and expressed pride in the event and especially the contributions from the High School students. It was noted that Shipston is one of the few towns where the Royal British Legion continues to carry out door-to-door collections.

### Website update

All policies on the Town Council website have now been reviewed and are up to date, including documents relating to the cemetery.

### Promoting the town

Cllr Howarth attended a Developing Places conference on how to promote local towns, as well as a meeting with Visit Shakespeare’s England, ensuring that events such as the Victorian Evening are now on its website. The HALP committee has developed a logo for the town which was passed by the Council (see below). Cllr H Kelly attended a conference on restoring nature in Warwickshire.

### Hub

A grant has been secured to carry out an energy assessment. The football club is seeking a lease to make a more permanent home at the Hub and develop fit-for-purpose facilities there including male and female changing rooms. Further surveys will be required.

### Local Plan

Stratford District Council has delayed the Local Plan by two years. Cllr Passingham was asked to investigate the situation over the five-year land supply.

### Tree nursery

Cllr Barker reported that Warwickshire County Council is developing a tree nursery where it is growing trees from scratch and planning to plant a tree for every resident.

### 30mph signs

It was reported that some drivers turning out into Shoulderway Lane by the allotments appear unaware of the 30mph speed limit. The need for a further sign was discussed.

### Blue Light update

Representatives of the Shipston fire station reported on a proposal to downgrade Shipston from an on-call station into a surge station, which would mean it would keep an appliance but have no on-call firefighters. Most incidents would be attended from Stratford, which the team estimates is a 16-minute minimum journey. The town currently has seven on-call firefighters and potentially nine if two more are able to complete their training. Their future is as yet unclear. Council will ask Andy Crump, portfolio holder for fire and community safety at Warwickshire County Council, and Warwickshire Chief fire officer Ben Brook, to attend the next town council meeting.

### Ellen Badger

No further information has been available.

### Shipston High School

The school has not been approved for getting an all-weather pitch.

### Flood Action Working Group

It was recommended that provision is made for an annual maintenance budget for the town’s 250 dams. Cllr Cooper had overseen temporary repairs to one dam which will need a more permanent structure in spring. Highways will be urged to ensure gulleys are emptied.

### Planning

Council approved permission for a cracked lintel to be replaced as part of the restoration at the old Red Lion building.

### Stratford-Shipston Tramway

The use of the old tramway route from Stratford-upon-Avon as an active transportation corridor now has the green light to proceed. Council supports the development of this route right to Shipston and recommended contributing £500 to its promotion.

### General purposes

The chapel survey has been carried out and more communication is needed with the Mayo Trust charity over the sensory garden.



New town logo

### Safe driving around town

Do you know your Highway Code when it comes to driving and pedestrians? Are you aware that a pedestrian who has started crossing a road that traffic wants to turn into has priority, and cars should give way? Be aware when driving around Shipston and its many junctions.

### Foul mess in the dark

Dog fouling is becoming more of a problem as the nights get darker. Just because you think you might not be spotted failing to pick up after your dog does not make it acceptable, says Councillor Paul Tesh. Dog waste is antisocial and a hazard. There is a large population of dogs in town – please do your bit to make sure they are welcome.

### Defibrillators

Stuart Eastbury, team coordinator for Shipston First Responders, sent this useful list of public access defibrillators and major bleed kits.



#### Defibrillators

- Low Furlong Care Home
- Sheldon Bosley Hub
- Townsend Hall
- Shipston Rugby Club
- The George Townhouse
- Shipston Town Council Office
- Shipston Sports Club
- Shipston Business Village
- Shipston Primary School
- Rainbow Fields (Restricted Access)
- Stour Court (Restricted Access)
- Scout Hut

#### Major Bleed Kits

- Low Furlong Care Home
- Shipston Rugby Club
- Shipston Town Council Office
- Shipston Sports Club
- Shipston Business Village

In the event of an emergency, the 999 call-handler can provide the details and code to your nearest public access defibrillator cabinet or bleed kit.

If you could host a defibrillator or bleed kit please contact: aed@shipstonfirstresponders.org



Festive Services

Christmas brings with it many wonderful opportunities to come together and celebrate. Here are some of the services being held in the beautiful churches in and around Shipston. Everyone is warmly welcomed.

St. Edmund’s Church

All ages are welcome at every service, and the ones marked\* are especially aimed with children in mind.

Sunday 10th December

4.00pm Christingle service \*

Sunday 17th December

6.00pm Town carol service with the Town Band and all your favourite carols.

Thursday 21st December

7.30pm The Longest Night

Christmas Eve

4.00pm Crib service \*

11.30pm Midnight mass

Christmas Day

10.00am Christmas service (with Communion)

New Years Eve

10.00am Morning worship (with Communion)

Catholic church services

Christmas Eve

9.15am Our Lady and St Michael, Shipston.

7.00pm Our Lady and St Michael, Shipston

11.30pm Midnight Mass at SS Peter and Paul, Lower Brailes ( Carols from 11.10pm )

Christmas Day

9.15am Our Lady and St Michael, Shipston.

Methodist Church

Christmas Eve Sunday 24th December 4pm Carol Service with candles.

Christmas Day 25th December 10.30am Family Service.

The church will be joining ecumenical partners for the St Edmund’s Carol Service on 17th December.

Baptist Church

Sunday 17th December 10.30am Service including an all-age Christmas nativity! All budding actors welcome!

Christmas Eve 4pm Shipston Primary School. Hour long family Christingles and carols followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Church of England services beyond Shipston

Church of the Ascension, Tidmington

12th December 7pm Candlelight carol service

All Saints’ Church, Honington

17th December Carol service 10am

24th December Eucharist service 6.30pm

St James the Great, Idlicote

15th December Carol service 6.30pm

24th December Christmas Eve service 9pm

Shipston Town Band welcomes new musical director

Shipston Town Band took an exciting step forward on 1st November as it held its first rehearsal with new musical director, Alex Bland. The occasion marks the beginning of a promising new era for the band, and everyone is eager to collaborate with Alex as they prepare for the upcoming Christmas Concert and embark on their journey to compete in 2024. The band sounded exceptional during the rehearsal, with an enthusiastic and rejuvenated atmosphere permeating the room. Alex Bland’s energy and fresh musical ideas proved to be contagious, infusing the ensemble with renewed vigour and creativity.

Shipston Town Band is enthusiastic about the musical adventures that lie ahead and invites the community to join them in celebrating the festive season at the Christmas Concert on Sunday 10th December at Shipston’s Townsend Hall (free entry). The future looks bright and harmonious under Alex’s capable leadership, as they prepare to take on the challenge of the contest piece at the beginning of 2024.

The Band is always happy to hear from any keen brass players or percussionists interested in joining them at this exciting time. [www.shipstonband.co.uk](http://www.shipstonband.co.uk) Tel: 07784 300943 Email:[info@shipstonband.co.uk](mailto:info@shipstonband.co.uk)



Chair Liz Smith and Paolo Pezzangora (Principal Cornet) welcome Shipston Town Band’s new Musical Director, Alex Bland (centre)



Shipston Town Band’s first rehearsal with new Musical Director, Alex Bland

WI meets First Responders

Shipston WI met in November for the Annual General Meeting as well as hearing from Ray Coyte about the work of Shipston First Responders.

The First Responders are funded by voluntary contributions and trained by the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Besides their initial training and certification, they must undergo an annual training course and re-certification. Shipston currently has five First Responders. Ray explained their vital role in the ambulance response system: all being well, it takes 24 minutes for an ambulance to get from Warwick to Shipston, but an ambulance could be tasked from anywhere in the area depending on availability, so an immediate local response is called for. First Responders can be on the scene immediately and carry out vital work, primarily keeping the patient alive, reassuring the patient, reassuring family and assisting the ambulance crew when they arrive. When one remembers that a heart stopped for four minutes can cause brain damage, six minutes means probable brain damage and 6+ minutes definite brain damage, the importance of an expert for those vital first minutes cannot be overstressed.

Shipston First Responders are considered to be first-rate. Ray answered the question – just what is in those enormous rucksacks First Responders carry? It’s a basic life support bag containing everything needed to keep a patient alive until expert help arrives and a trauma bag to deal with catastrophic events one of which Ray had been involved in earlier that evening. His bag also included a toy dinosaur to distract children!

At the AGM it was agreed that Bridget Smith will continue as President as will Angie Weaver as Treasurer, but Jane Hanks is stepping down from the Secretary’s role after many years. She was gratefully thanked and presented with a bouquet. The meeting welcomed Gill Smith as the new Secretary. The group currently stands at 32 members. Shipston WI will run a stall at the Victorian Evening on 1st December. It is hoped to run a Craft & Coffee event in 2024. The next meeting will be the Christmas party in the Catholic Church Hall on Wednesday, 6th December. Members are asked to bring something delicious to eat and any seasonal poems or readings they might like to perform.

WI voted to donate £200 to the First Responders and presented the cheque to Ray Coyte (see picture).



Rotary Tree of Life



Each December the Tree of Life stands proudly in the centre of Shipston, its white lights glowing symbols of love and hope in memory of loved ones who will not be with us to celebrate this special time of the year.

If you would like a friend or relative to be remembered in this way, you are invited to sponsor a light by making a donation, knowing that every name will be entered into the Book of Remembrance.

Every contribution will be donated to Rotary charities and good causes.

The illumination of the Rotary Tree of Life will take place at the opening of the Rotary Victorian Evening on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December.

Sponsor forms are available in local shops, banks, library, post office and other locations or from Rotarian Avryl Thompson Tel 01789 740047.

In Memory of: (Name).....

From: (Name).....

Your address.....

Please return to:  
Avryl Thompson  
Willow Bank  
Pillerton Priors  
Warwickshire CV35 0PS



Regular Events

Monday

Seated Exercise Class:  
10am Rainbow Fields and 11am Townsend Hall

IT Help!:  
10am-12pm Shipston Library (appointment only)

Shipston Duplicate Bridge Club:  
6:50pm for a 7pm start.  
The Church Room, Darlingscote Road,  
Contact Matthew Hunter: 01608 684499

Tuesday

Rhyme Time: 10.30am, Shipston Library

Dementia Café: Shipston Lodge, 10.30am-12pm

Community Hub: Shipston Methodist Church, 2-4pm

Lego Club: Shipston Library, 3.30pm

Strictly Fitsteps Fab: 10am, Townsend Hall

Age Concern Lunch Club: Stour Court 12pm. Contact Jill Case 01608 662226

Wednesday

Seated Tai Chi:  
9.30am, Townsend Hall. Free Admission

Standing Tai Chi:  
10.30am, Townsend Hall. Free Admission

Indoor Curling: 2pm, Townsend Hall

U3A weekly scrabble: 2-4pm at the George Townhouse. Free for all U3A members

Thursday

Shipston Community Warm Hub:  
Every Thursday 10am-12pm, The Scout Hut, New Street.

Story stomp: 10am, Shipston Library

Scrabble Club: 2pm-4pm, Shipston Library

Age Concern Lunch Club: Rainbow Fields 12pm. Contact Christine Grant 07939 595600

Community Social Prescriber drop in: 10am-12pm, Scout Hut, New Street

Friday

Pilates for Complete Beginners:  
9.30am Townsend Hall

Walks with a friendly group:  
10am Mill car park. Call Marleen 01608 663616

Shipston Stitchers:  
Every fortnight at The Church Room, Darlingscote Road.  
Contact Anita Spencer on 01993 832665

Board Games Social Afternoon:  
Fortnightly 1:30pm-4pm Rainbow Fields

Age Concern Lunch Club: Fortnightly, Rainbow Fields, 12pm. Contact Amanda Holden 01608 686268 Saturday

Shipston Knitting and Crochet Group - Friday afternoons in Mrs. Browns from 2-4.30pm

Saturday

Lego Club: Shipston Library. From 10am.

Shipston Food Bank:  
10:30am-12pm, St Edmund's Church, Shipston.  
No referral or voucher needed

What's On Calendar : December 2023

1st. Shipston Rotary and Lions Victorian Evening

2nd. Mrs Porter's Christmas Chamberpot Pourri: featuring Brailes Singers & many more. St Edmund's Church, 7pm. £10 on the door. Shipston Proms Fundraising Concert: see ad on page 16

2nd. Strictly Come Carolling 7.30pm, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford. All proceeds to Shipston Home Nursing and The Royal Orthopaedic Charity. Featuring actor Anton Lesser, soprano Mollie Smith and organist Adrian Moore www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk

3rd. Cantamus: A 'Big Sing' of Christmas carols for us all to join in with! 3pm, Townsend Hall £10 on the door. Shipston Proms Fundraising Concert: see ad on page 16

4th. Holiday at Home: 10am-3pm Townsend Hall. Booking essential. £10 including Christmas dinner and all crafts. Call Rosemary 01608 662584

5th. Shipston Flower Club presents 'A Wreath Making Workshop' by Elaine Stoner. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start at Shipston on Stour Primary School, Station Road, CV36 4BT. Cost to members £25; non-members £30 + visitor entry (£6). Price includes all materials and refreshments. BOOKING REQUIRED. Please email Sue Watts susanwatts50@yahoo.co.uk

5th. Shipston Library Reading Group: 2pm-3pm first Tuesday of each month

6th. Shipston Widows: Local lunch. 12pm. Contact: Barbara Bean 01608 663230

6th. Shipston on Stour WI: Christmas Party. Visitors most welcome. Catholic Church Hall, Darlingscote Road at 7pm. Contact Jane Hanks, Secretary on 01608 664519

8th. Shipston Home Nursing Christmas Craft Fair – 10.30am – 5pm, Brailes Village Hall. Visit www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk

9th. Cotswold Choir: see ad on page 16

9th. Shipston Tennis Club Christmas Bingo: see ad on page 7

9th. Stour Singers Christmas Concert: 7.30pm St Edmund's Church. Tickets £16 available at ticketsource.co.uk/stour-singers or on the door

10th. Shipston Town Band Christmas Concert: see ad on page 7

11th. Town Council Meeting: 7pm, New Clark House

13th. Shipston and District Gardening Club: Gardening with Wildlife in Mind – Lucy Hartley. 7.30pm at the Catholic Church Hall. Contact Tony Mitchell 01608 666933 or email a.mitchell434@btinternet.com

14th. Free Cost of Living Workshop:10am-12pm, Scout Hut, New Street - see ad on page 16

15th. Royal British Legion Social Evening: The Shipston on Stour Branch meet on the third Friday of each month for a social gathering. We meet in the White Bear Inn from 7.30 pm onwards. Do join us and share your stories with like-minded people. For further information contact Alex Black 07789 968733 or alblack32@hotmail.com.

16th. Norgren Bowls Club Christmas Prize Bingo: see ad on page 7

20th. Shipston Widows: Join us for a friendly and informal get-together. 10.30am - 12pm, The White Bear. For further information, contact Barbara Bean on 01608 663230

20th. Singing Down Memory Lane: 2pm Rainbow Fields, The Driftway. See ad on page 10

21st. Drop-In Clinic: for the over 65s. 10am-12pm, Scout Hut, New Street

Norgren Bowls Club

Christmas Prize Bingo



Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December

Townsend Hall

Shipston on Stour

Doors open 6 pm

eyes down 7.30 pm

Bar, Tea, Coffee & cakes.

Great Prizes, Great Raffle

all Welcome

SHIPSTON TOWN BAND PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Join us for an afternoon of festive music and carol singing for all the family.

Conductor: Alex Bland

TOWNSEND HALL SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER, 3 pm

ADMISSION FREE

WWW.SHIPSTONTOWNBAND.CO.UK

SHIPSTON TENNIS PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS BINGO

6	10	11	16	18
EYES DOWN 7:30pm	26	GREAT PRIZES	36	37
39	44	47	ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN WELCOME	55
57	64	75	81	88

Townsend Hall, Shipston-on-Stour

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH

PROFITS FOR SHIPSTON SPORTS CLUB LTD - TENNIS SECTION

SHIPSTON TENNIS

WWW.SHIPSTONTENNIS.CO.UK



Lions support Shipston Food Bank

Stour Valley Lions have given another substantial donation to support the work of Shipston Food Bank, this time especially to cover increased expenditure at Christmas.



Food Bank Treasurer, Ed Jackson, said ‘We are so grateful to the Lions for this very timely donation. We really value their ongoing support. This money will allow us to give our customers a Christmas treat and will also fund packed lunches through the Christmas holidays for their school-age children.’

There was a very positive response from the local community to the article about the Food Bank in the October issue of the Forum. The Food Bank is grateful to have received a number of new regular and one-off financial donations, and the volume of gifts of food has also increased. It has also managed to recruit the additional volunteer shoppers that they were seeking. The Food Bank sends its thanks to the population of Shipston and the surrounding villages.



Pictured at the Food Bank are Stour Valley Lions’ President, Duncan Cashmore, and member Jes Bains, with Food Bank volunteers Angie Weaver and Caroline Perkins

Music to remember

A moment of remembrance, organised by Mike Wells of the Shipston Branch of the British Legion, took place in Shipston High Street on Armistice Day. The crowds were silent and no traffic moved. The two-minute silence was punctuated by the last post and reveille played by cornet player Bob Pitts. The Town Band played on despite the weather on Remembrance Sunday, leading the parade to St Edmund’s Church where the names of the fallen were read out by prefects from Shipston High School. The band played for the hymns during the service, conducted by Micah Parsons, before leading the parade back to the High Street.



Playing the last post

Stamping out polio



Rotarian Bob Armstrong administering the purple dye to people who have been vaccinated and tubs full of purple crocuses in Shipston.

You might have noticed several people planting bulbs on Newbold village green recently. They were members of Shipston Rotary planting some 4,000 purple crocuses, the symbol of the continuing battle to finally eradicate the debilitating disease of polio. The bulbs will provide a carpet of colour in early spring and remind us of the work that has been and still needs to be done to eradicate polio from the world.

Polio is a disease that paralyses and kills children (many still remember the iron lungs used to assist victims to breathe) and Rotary has been working to eradicate it for more than 41 years. At the outset there were over 1,000 polio cases a day in 125 countries, paralysing and killing children.

Rotary has contributed more than \$2.1 billion and countless volunteer hours to protect nearly three billion children in 122 countries. Rotary’s advocacy efforts have also played a role in decisions by governments to contribute more than \$10 billion to the effort.

The project to vaccinate children began in the Philippines in 1979 and, since then, the number of cases across the world has reduced by 99.9 per cent. Today, polio remains endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan.



It is crucial to continue working to keep all countries polio-free. If eradication efforts stopped today, within 10 years polio could paralyse as many as 200,000 children each year. Indeed, to finish the job, over two billion doses of oral polio vaccine still have to be administered, to more than 400 million children in over 50 countries, each and every year. We must have zero cases of polio and zero positive environmental samples before the world can finally be certified polio free.

This year Africa has been declared polio-free by the World Health Organisation. In fact, nearly 19 million people who would otherwise have been paralysed are walking, and more than 1.5 million people are alive who would otherwise have died.

Donations to the Polio Appeal can be made by Bacs to: Bank Code:30-98-26; Acct: 53350268.; Ref: Name/Polio.

Just 50p can save the lives of three children.

Visit the website to find out more:



Cornmill Meadows

On a very sunny Sunday afternoon in November an enthusiastic group of Rainbows and Brownies walked to Cornmill Meadows from Willington, armed with twigs, hay, pinecones, leaves and lots of other natural materials, ready to start filling the bug hotel in Hill Meadow.

Further supplies were collected from the meadow together with a few knobbly stones and bark.

When the girls were satisfied with their work, they walked up Meadows Way, where a double rainbow appeared, and continued to the Scout Hut. There, a quiz sheet checking how observant the girls were was ready to be completed, and one of the dads had hot-dogs, drinks and cakes ready.

A big thank you to all the Rainbows, Brownies, leaders and helpers for assisting with yet another project at Cornmill Meadows.



Help tell our Ellen Badger Hospital story

The Ellen Badger Hospital has been an important and cherished part of our community for over 130 years. This is why it was chosen as the next exhibition for our Shipston Museum to tell its story by recognising and celebrating its past – a move welcomed by its League of Friends who have always taken such an interest in its past and future.

As Rebecca Ashley explains: ‘Undergoing such huge changes, its past life needs to be documented – it was always a landmark on entering the town.’ Rebecca and her mother Jo Ashley are on the team researching and designing the display for the Museum opening next Easter.

Stephen Hartley has also been digging deep into old Stratford Herald newspapers to find that the idea for a Shipston Cottage Hospital began in the 1890s when the local people collected money for it to be built– so it was truly a community effort. A later large endowment from Richard Badger was recognised by naming the hospital, opened in 1896, in loving memory of his wife Ellen.

Since then, many local people have entered and left the world there – and been treated for a variety of ailments. And we must not forget that in its early days there was no NHS, so its foundation saved many lives. The building itself has now gone but many artifacts have been preserved, for example the portraits and stone badgers which are being restored.

Curating an exhibition like this can be a challenge: among all the documentation and archives, what to choose for a display to tell the story? It’s a huge task. Asked how long the last Shipston Museum exhibition on public houses took to develop, Martin Russell pauses to work this out: ‘Most of the time in the basic research – a couple of months – then a few weeks on the photograph/display.’

So there is quite a task for the hospital exhibition team in the months ahead. And they are asking for your help. It is the people who knew and loved the Ellen Badger who can help tell its story in human terms. If you have any memories to share – tales or pictures, the team wants to hear from you: did you or relatives work there? Did the Badger care for you or family? One special occasion was when Diana Princess of Wales opened a new wing in 1982 – a while ago now, but there may be memories of that historic moment.









Shipston Music Society

For our October recital we were delighted to welcome Madeline Kirby who is a freelance harpist based in Worcestershire. She plays in concerts as a soloist and with orchestras and other ensembles. She is also a teacher and offers lessons on the harp, piano and classical singing. Madeline also enjoys playing for special occasions including weddings and corporate events. Born in the south-west, she started studying music at school, achieving three ABRSM Grade 8 distinctions for harp, piano and singing. She then went to Birmingham University to study Music and Modern Languages and played the harp in both orchestras. She was awarded an ABRSM Diploma and graduated with a 2:1. Since graduating she has remained in the Midlands and works throughout Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Leicestershire and further afield.

Madeline began her recital with Watching the Wheat, a traditional Welsh folk song followed by a set of three traditional Welsh Airs arr. by Samuel Milligan. Immediately one was captivated by Madeline’s ability to produce a performance with the melody always played with great attention to the phrasing etc. whilst adding with such ease, the accompaniment of scale passages, arpeggios, and chords, which are such a feature of harp music.

Then followed two pieces by Ailie Robertson, a multi-award-winning composer and harpist from Scotland. Firstly, The Boatman, a traditional Gaelic melody arranged by Ailie and then Haar, one of her own compositions. This piece had a haunting theme and a recurring rhythmic pattern rather like the tolling of a bell. It was very atmospheric.

Three Magical Pieces from Suite for Celtic Harp by Fabio Rizza came next. The River’s Dance with a lilting rhythmic melody above strummed chords was a delight, as was The Enchanted Mill, a dreamlike contrast. The Faun began gently, but with each variation becoming more powerful, it built to a strong climax.

The recital ended with three pieces by Alfredo Rolando Ortiz, an internationally acclaimed soloist of the Paraguayan harp and a composer, author, educator and recording artist. He was born in 1946. Once on the Mountain was very rhythmic with a strong South American influence. Waiting, in contrast, was more subdued but Milonga for Loving was again a reminder of the influence of the composer’s nationality.

After much enthusiastic applause Madeline spent a few minutes explaining a little about her magnificent instrument and the basics of playing it and was rewarded with yet more applause. It was an evening of rarely performed music brought to us by a most talented exponent of the genre.

Shipston Probus: a bizarre but true wartime tale

Hans and Monica Koch lived a comfortable life in Vienna in the 1930s. Hans, a wealthy Jewish businessman, sold Jaguar cars imported from Coventry. His wife Monica was a beautiful, cultured lady speaking five languages and a trained opera singer.

John McCartney fascinated members of Shipston Probus with this tale of endeavour, fortitude and good luck worthy of a Hollywood film, involving his own family and featuring Coventry and surrounding villages. John first came across Hans Koch when as a young man he worked for him in Austria,

liaising with the factory in Coventry.

Hans and Monica were becoming increasingly concerned at the anti-Jewish feeling in the 1930s and Hitler’s aggression across Europe. Hans knew Hitler was confiscating the wealth of Jewish people and hit upon a scheme to protect his money; he owned a small yacht on a local lake and often spent his leisure time maintaining it. Hence it did not cause suspicion when he spent hours apparently repairing the hull of his boat, but what neighbours did not see was the packet of high-quality diamonds now secreted in the hull. In March 1938 the Germans invaded Austria and in June Hans sank the boat offshore, paddled to the shore in a canoe and returned to Vienna.

Later that year Hans came home from work to find his wife had left, with a note telling him that life had become so difficult she was hoping to make it to relatives in the USA. Soon Hans also had to leave; a friend banged on his door saying they should leave urgently and had an aeroplane ready to make their escape. Hans grabbed a small bag of diamonds and escaped in a car to an airfield outside Vienna. But the Germans were in pursuit, shooting at them as they scrambled into the plane and took off. Flying southwest toward Italy it became apparent his friend piloting the plane was seriously injured and they were forced into an emergency landing. Hans dragged the pilot out of the plane, but he was dead. He was now alone in a remote mountain valley with no money and no passport, but he set out to walk down the valley, eventually coming to a town with an open-air swimming pool. Creeping unnoticed into the swimming pool he was able to steal money from the clothes of an unsuspecting swimmer. He continued his walk, stopping again to steal a bicycle, and three days later made it to Turin. His aim was to get to Coventry where he had money and contacts. But in Italy he had no money and no passport. In the railway station, he saw a goods waggon with a sign ‘return empty to Lyon, France’. Hans had a friend in Lyon, so, still with his stolen bike, hid in the waggon. In Lyon his friend arranged a train passage to Paris and there he was put on another train to Brittany where he was told to follow a lady in a red scarf. She took him to a small fishing boat. En route to England the boat met up mid-channel with others where goods were exchanged – clearly a smuggling network! Eventually he was put ashore in a remote part of Cornwall, still without a passport. Four days later he made it to the Coventry car distributors who employed John McCartney’s father. A director of the firm arranged for Hans to recover at a local hotel: the Glebe at Barford. After three weeks John’s father was told to pick up Hans and take him to the factory where, incredibly, he was reunited with his wife!

How had Monica arrived in Coventry? Another extraordinary story. She had travelled through eastern Europe eventually making it to Stockholm where she tried to get a passage to the USA. However, the boat broke down and was towed into Aberdeen. Without money, Monica pawned a pearl necklace sufficient for a train ticket as far as Birmingham, walking the remaining distance to Coventry.

Both were interned during the war, but afterwards Hans and Monica returned to a bomb- blasted Vienna, using the hidden cache of diamonds to rebuild and relaunch their business selling Jaguar cars!

John McCartney is an old friend of Probus, and we look forward to the book he is publishing with the full story of this remarkable real-life adventure!

A greener Shipston Proms?

With green issues at the forefront of our lives, the organisers of the Shipston Proms are mindful that other than music, waste is a common theme for festivals. In wanting to make Shipston Proms more eco-friendly, the easiest steps to take will be in tackling the debris from all the food and drink.

Clearly-labelled bins seem to be the way to go: some for recyclables and some for general waste. The organisers will be looking at ways to do this as simply as possible on the Last Night and need your help.

If you have any advice or expertise in green waste recycling, or if you would like to be on a team of litter-pickers, the Proms organisers would love to hear from you. In making the festival as sustainable as possible they would also like to look into offsetting carbon emissions, and have thought about planting trees. Again, any help and advice on this or any other ideas that could help make the Proms greener is welcome.

Please get in touch via the website shipstonproms.org or on Facebook.

A lot of people doing something relatively small to help the environment makes a big difference. Shipston Proms 24 will run from 21st June to 6th July.

Lions’ film and tea party

The Stour Valley Lions are hosting a free film and afternoon tea party for senior residents of Shipston and the surrounding area. ‘The dark early days of January can be long and lonely with little to look forward to, and we want to give our Senior residents an afternoon of fun and companionship,’ said Sue Bains, Treasurer of the Stour Valley Lions. ‘We felt that, along with the donation given to the Food Bank, a party for those who may be feeling the January blues, would be an excellent and appropriate use of some of the money we raised from the Food Festival.’

The event will be held at the Townsend Hall on Sunday 14th January from 2.30pm starting with a film and followed by an afternoon tea. Tickets can be collected in advance from Clarke’s Electrical and are free. If you know someone who would enjoy this event, please let them know and they can collect their ticket. Any questions, please email stourvalleylionsevents@mail.com or phone 07969868450 and leave a message and we’ll get back to you.

Astronomical Society news

The Stratford upon Avon Astronomical Society meet every 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 8pm (doors open at 7.30pm) at Alderminster Village Hall. Everyone is welcome, especially beginners and those wanting to learn more. Usually the first Tuesday is a Club Night and then on the third Tuesday there is a speaker, but in December the Club Night will be on 19th December, which will include a special Christmas quiz (fun only – no prizes) plus a look ahead to what is coming up in 2024, and then our speaker, on Tuesday 5th December is due to be Justin Bray from the University of Manchester, with a talk called Astronomy in the fast lane: cosmic rays and other sources of fast pulses. Please note that the speakers usually start quite promptly at 8pm.

Each month one of our members offer pointers to what to look



for in the sky during the coming weeks.

Betelgeuse



When asked what their favourite star is, for many astronomers the answer is Betelgeuse (sometimes pronounced Beetlejuice). In 1995 it became the first star (other than the sun) to have its surface imaged.

To find Betelgeuse, look for Orion’s Belt, 3 stars in a row to the south and east. Above them and to left will be a bright orangey-red star; that is Betelgeuse. It is a huge red giant (if it was our star it would extend to Jupiter’s orbit) and it is 20 times the mass of our Sun. It is in the last throws of its lifecycle and may explode into a supernova or collapse in the next 100,000 years. A few years ago, it dimmed drastically, and so everyone wondered if this was the moment, but then it brightened. It seems that it had blown a load of carbon off.

As it is so far away, it is actually possible that it may have gone supernova or collapsed already, but we would not know because the light has not yet reached us yet. The light takes roughly 540 years to reach us.

If it does go supernova, scientists will be in the front row seats for the event, with modern scientific equipment to observe one of the most powerful and explosive events in the universe, but don’t worry, Earth’s magnetic field should protect us. It could, however, be as bright as the full moon for around three months before fading. Then it will leave a black hole about the size of Northern Ireland.

Club Nights offer more information on what to look out for each month. If it is clear we do some observing just outside the Village Hall, so please join us. There is no charge initially to come along and find out more, but if you do want to become a member then the fee is just £15 a year and it’s free if you are in full-time education. For more details go to the website <http://www.astro.org.uk>. contact the Chairman John Waller [john.waller@astro.org.uk](mailto:john.waller@astro.org.uk) or on 07703 192188. Happy observing!

*The observation notes were written by Adrian Wakeham and Dave Benton.*

Stour Stitchers

Stour Stitchers is a friendly local sewing group of mixed ages and abilities. Bring along anything you have: a new project, something you’d like a little advice/help with or even a UFO (unfinished object) and enjoy a cuppa and chat while you sew!

The group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10am-1pm at The Hall, Stourton, CV36 5HG.



County Council

A day in the life of...yesterday could not have been more of an example of the variety in life as a councillor! I chaired Adult Social Care and Health OSC, picked up on education issues locally and in the evening went to a meeting with local farmers about the potential closure of our local abattoir.

I was able to thank my deputy for covering for me while I was out of circulation. We discussed all the evidence (mostly graphs!) we use for planning our services and looked at outcomes. The one I am most happy with is the time taken to provide care packages - which is amazingly swift compared to most counties. Good news for anyone who needs help to stay at home. We have good relationships with care providers, and it shows! If you need help accessing care – please contact me. One thing from the day’s training is the good idea of pooling direct payments to improve access (if you know, you know!).

Care is becoming more of an issue as we age and suffer higher acuity. We don’t think this will change, so thankfully we are all getting used to paying the ASC addition through our council tax.

I then drove back from Warwick (yay, a real meeting in person) to do some research and background work for some local families on provision of education. I’m always happy to help, please don’t hesitate to ask.

I then drove down a long, dark farm drive to meet about 40 farmers. The potential closure of a small, local abattoir will have a massive impact particularly on small farmers and on the supply of the local meat many of us treasure. Animals travelling 80+ miles is stressful for them and quite probably uneconomic. There are some good ideas floating around. Very excitingly I sat next to Kaleb and Jeremy Clarkson – sometimes there are perks rather than brickbats!

Get in touch if you need me! My phone is on its last legs from overuse so please persist. A new one is on the way.

Jo Barker

County Councillor for Shipston

07748 968712

jobarker@warwickshire.gov.uk

District Council

Stratford District Council is launching a Climate Change Fund of £100k. Community groups and the Town Council are eligible to apply for up to £10k. It is intended to fund projects that generate renewable energy, reduce waste or reduce carbon emissions from buildings, transport, or commercial and industrial processes. The fund will be open for applications soon.

Stratford District Council, together with Warwick District Council, are looking for stories from people and communities across both districts about how people are acting to make a difference regarding climate change. This could include big projects which involve an entire community, right down to small lifestyle changes which can inspire others to decrease their carbon footprint. Whatever it is, we want to hear about it. Stories can be submitted and are displayed on the website. There are already some great examples to read: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/environment/south-warwickshire-climate-champions.cfm>

I was shown around The Hub (Norgren Sports & Social Club that was) recently. There are an amazing number of clubs and groups that use the building including a nursery, youth club, bowls, football as well as the Chinese takeaway. They have received a grant for £25k to improve the changing room and other facilities for the football club so that they come up to the league standards. Not long ago the Town Council purchased the Hub to keep it going. However, the building needs repairs including insulating and decorating. We are working with the Town Council to apply for grants to help cover the cost. The Hub is an important community resource. It is essential to preserve it.

Dave Passingham

District Councillor, Shipston South

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**Vacancy**



**Vacancy**

Shipston Medical Centre



Thank you to all our patients who had their flu and covid vaccines at Shipston Medical Centre this season. Whilst it is logistically a tricky task to vaccinate so many people, we appreciate our patients having their vaccines with us, supporting their local general practice. If you have been invited to have vaccination and have yet to do so, there is still time! Please contact reception to book an appointment.

As a practice we regularly review feedback from patients and our Patient Participation Group help us with this. As a result of feedback we are looking to make improvements to our appointment system, which we hope will provide a more timely and responsive service to patients, and use the wide variety of skills and expertise we have within the practice team efficiently. We are therefore asking our patients to complete a short questionnaire to help us in shaping the new system see <https://forms.office.com/e/1EFkLFyiFb> or look at the news pages on our website. Paper copies will be available in the waiting room for those who do not have access to the internet.

The Patient Participation Group supports the practice by acting as a voice for patients, supporting communication between patients and the practice and by helping to shape

and develop services. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Carole Nossiter the Patient Participation Group chair on [shipstonppg@gmail.com](mailto:shipstonppg@gmail.com)



Useful Contacts

Community Links Transport	01789 264491
Shipston Library:	0300 5558171
- 24/7 renewal line	01926 499273
Highways customer services	01926 412515
Severn Trent Emergency Line:	0800 7834444
Shipston Volunteer Transport Scheme	01608 663122
Shipston Leisure Centre	01608 662354
Shipston Medical Centre	01608 661845
– Out of hours	111
Shipston Link (local transport)	01386 593446
Shipston Recycling Centre	01926 412593
Stratford District Council	01789 267575
Townsend Hall	07514 704057
Warwickshire County Council	01926 410410
UCHW Hospital	024 7696 4000
Warwick Hospital	01926 495321
<b>Local police (non emergency)</b>	<b>101</b>
Shipston Police Safer Neighbourhood Team:	01789 444670
shipston.snt@warwickshire.police.uk	
<b>Churches of Shipston:</b>	
Stour Valley Baptist	01608 664876
Our Lady & St Michael	01608 685259
St Edmund’s	01608 661210
Methodist Church	01295 257193

Shipston-on-Stour Town Council

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Olivia Hatch (Shipston North)

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Something exciting to share?

If you have a story that’s relevant to Shipston residents, please contact the editor, Laura Parker, on 07989 530069 or email: [forum@shipstononline.org](mailto:forum@shipstononline.org)

To request posts on the council’s Facebook page, contact [admin@shipstononline.org](mailto:admin@shipstononline.org)

Forum copy deadline:

Second Monday of the month

– but the sooner you can notify the editor of a potential story the better.

The Shipston Forum is produced monthly by the Town Council.

While every effort is made to ensure information is accurate, the Town Council and its contractors do not accept responsibility for material submitted by readers or third parties and does not endorse any organisation or event publicised. Contributions may be edited to fit available space.







## Don't miss out!

The Shipston Food Festival 2024 will be held on Sunday 8th September from 10am to 3pm in the centre of Shipston on Stour and is open NOW for applications for stall hire.

50% of stalls are already reserved by previous traders!

The online application can be found by following the link at [www.ShipstonFoodFestival.org](http://www.ShipstonFoodFestival.org) or by scanning the QR code above.



## Numbers are limited so apply NOW!

"Wow what an absolutely, fantastic day! We cannot believe our takings; it was fantastic to see the support from everyone!"  
(stall holder after 2023 Food Festival)

We reserve the right to refuse applications without explanation.

# The Cotswold Choir

## Christmas Concert

Join us for beautiful traditional and contemporary Christmas Music.  
Christmassy Cakes and Hot Drinks.  
Christmas Raffle.

At Shipston Methodist Church, CV36 4EN

£8 for over 16's  
£5 for concessions

Saturday 9th December 6.30 Doors, 7pm Start

# SHIPSTON PROMS

from Classical to Heavy Rock

## SHIPSTON PROMS CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING CONCERTS

### Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

**Mrs Porters Christmas Chamberpot Pourri**  
Featuring The Brailles Singers & many more to announce!  
St Edmunds Church, Shipston, 7pm - £10 on the door

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### Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

**CANTAMUS**  
Featuring a 'Big Sing' of Christmas carols for us all to join in with!  
Townsend Hall, Shipston, 3pm - £10 on the door

For more information follow us on Facebook or check out our website [shipstonproms.org](http://shipstonproms.org)

## STOUR SINGERS

### CHRISTMAS CONCERT

featuring music by

Ralph Vaughan Williams

and

W A Mozart

plus well-known carols for all

with

Thomas Humphreys *bass baritone*

and

The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Orchestra

Saturday, 9 December 2023 at 7.30pm  
St. Edmund's Church, Shipston on Stour

Tickets £16 (accompanied children free)  
available from [ticketsource.co.uk/stour-singers](http://ticketsource.co.uk/stour-singers)  
or on the door



[www.stoursingers.org.uk](http://www.stoursingers.org.uk)



Thomas Humphreys appears by arrangement with  
Ann Ferrier Artists - Concert Directory International