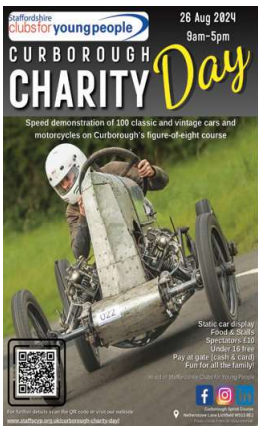


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## I can't remember a Gazette this packed for years

Welcome to your 'Summer' edition of the Gazette, I use the term loosely, as, like you, I'm still awaiting the jet stream that currently lurks above us, to shift north a bit. It'll come, have faith, and when it does we'll all be moaning about not being able to sleep due to the unbearable heat at night, a heat so raw, that the £30 fan you've just bought from Argos ain't going to cut it!

Ok, enough of the weather, what a packed edition we have for you!

### Inside you'll find.....

The once much loved Darlaston Inn has finally been raised to the ground, after many years of standing derelict, despite it being an absolute eyesore, it's still a shame to see such a historic building levelled, many thanks go to reader John Edwards, for cataloging its demolition for us.

Eccleshall Show returns on August 31st, and is bigger and better than ever, so make sure you get there. If you're a fan of Greek food, Hilderstone Village have a pop up Pub and Taverna visiting soon.

It was great to see over 30 community groups hold stalls at the recent, and very well attended, Eccleshall Community Showcase, it just goes to show that there is a group of interest for everyone, right here on our doorsteps.

There's some fantastic photo spreads in this month's magazine, with pics from Stone Festival 2024 events and Stones' Classic Car Show, from Martin Robinson, and Later spring flowers and blossom photos, from the local area, from Paul Morris.

After 35 years of loyal service, David Moreton, the General Manager at Oak

Tree Farm Rural Project, is hanging up his wellies, after initially agreeing to just spend a year there! From all of us here at the Gazette David, well done for everything you've achieved in your time at Oak Tree, *where have the years gone?*

If you're feeling brave? Eccleshall Community Cinema are holding an outdoor screening of The Rocky Horror Picture Show on 18th July, and invite you to come along and dress up, and sing!

*There will be some great photo opportunities that night I'm sure!*

Stone Scribblers writing group this month find 'Sakura', it's the Japanese word for "cherry blossom time" apparently. It comes from the 9th century, as a spiritual exercise, Japanese aristocrats would go to the mountains to view the cherry blossom, and recite poetry. *This sounds great to me, count me in!*

Did you leave Alleynes High School Stone in 1977? If so, there's a school reunion on July 20th, at the George and Dragon.

I'm just scraping at the surface here, there's tonnes of stories inside, in fact, I can't remember a Gazette this packed for years.

If you're off on your Summer holidays somewhere, have a great break, and take this edition of the Gazette with you, send us a selfie of you reading it, *wherever you are*, the best ones will appear in the September edition.

If you're not off anywhere, like me, then fingers crossed for the jet stream to shove off northerly!

Dan Mitchell 1/7/24



## HERITAGE

- Lotus Ltd shoe factory - a Stone landmark

By Chris Copp of Staffordshire Archives & Heritage

- The Story Of Stone's Other Brewery - Bents  
By Philip Leason MBE

September/October edition out on September 5th  
Editorial Copy Deadline - August 24th  
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# Later spring flowers and blossom

*Stone based rambler and photographer, Paul L.G. Morris, shares some photo's with us*

This year it seems to me that a lot of the spring flowers and blossom have appeared at around the same time rather than being more spaced apart like they usually are. Nevertheless, there has still been a magnificent showing as I hope to show with these photographs.

We were lucky that our visits to the small woodland at Downs Bank and the meadows at Stone Common Plot occurred at 'Peak Bluebells' and 'Peak Buttercups' giving some wonderful views and fascinating detail.

*From Paul L.G. Morris*  
[www.pmstudios.co.uk](http://www.pmstudios.co.uk)

**Top Right** - This a closer view of the bluebells at Downs Bank. I am sure they are the English Bluebell as they hang over whereas the Spanish Bluebell is more upright. In some cases it is difficult to tell as they hybridise with each other.



*This image shows swathes of the blue flowers along the side of one of the main paths*

*And this view shows Chestnut trees in blossom*



*There are some good paths at Downs Bank but others are more challenging. But, as you get to know the woodland with each visit, you can find some lovely paths to wander along such as this*



*I didn't get to the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Reserve of Hem Heath at the right time this year but a fellow photographer reported to me that the display there was just as impressive. A week later we visited Stone Common Plot. We were on our way to a reserve in Stoke but a road closure of the A34 made us turn back. Serendipity kicked in because the buttercups were in full bloom – not just small patches but whole meadows were just sheets of yellow:*



Perhaps I have led a sheltered existence but I have never seen such a display; my problem here is deciding what to show. This next one I like because it shows the contours of the ground and the hawthorn in blossom in the background.



Talking of Chestnut trees, have you ever looked closely at the blossom of one? They are absolutely beautiful. This is on one tree just by the path at Stone Common Plot.



As well as the meadows, in the hedgerows you will also find many flowering plants such as cow parsley where it is fighting for space amongst the nettles and everything else.



My wife is good at spotting things I would otherwise miss, but I can't explain how she spotted this ladybird hiding in the White dead-nettle (Lamium)



We also visited Shugborough the same week but the display of buttercups was not quite as good as Stone Common Plot but still quite impressive. But if you can catch it at the right time you may see this impressive display of blossom.



## Empowering Homeless Children Through Generosity

A £10K donation from local business Jeffries Property Buyers will help fuel the expansion of an activity club for vulnerable children, at The Gingerbread Centre.

The Gingerbread Centre provides vital support to families in need and is poised to extend its reach and impact thanks to a wonderful donation of £10,000.

Jeffries Property Buyers and Gladman Homes have generously raised the funding through a development project. This donation will bolster the Activity Club, a cornerstone program offering a safe haven and developmental opportunities for children grappling with the upheaval of homelessness and other challenging circumstances.

Ron Jeffries, Director of Jeffries Property Buyers, says "We are so pleased to be able to support such a worthy cause. The Gingerbread Activity Club provides an amazing service helping local families."

The Activity Club, available five days a week, year-round, caters to the unique needs of each child or young person within the Gingerbread community. Kalisha Savage, Activity Club Team Leader, underscores the vital role the Club plays in nurturing positive relationships and fostering resilience among its young participants.

"Families who come to The Gingerbread Centre often face a multitude of challenges, from domestic violence to poverty. For the children caught in these circumstances, the impact is profound," says Kalisha.

"Our Activity Club provides a sanctuary where they can express themselves, build confidence, and forge connections with peers and caregivers."

Craft sessions, baking classes, music and movement sessions, and outdoor excursions are just a sampling of the diverse activities offered by the Club.

Trevor Cottam, Chief Executive of The Gingerbread Centre, emphasizes the transformative power of these experiences.

"Our aim is to empower these children and young people to reclaim their sense of self-worth and agency."

Through engaging, enriching activities, we strive to instill a sense of hope and possibility, regardless of the challenges they may face."

Looking ahead, The Gingerbread Centre is committed to expanding its support beyond its immediate residents to encompass vulnerable children across the wider community. With an eye toward inclusivity and accessibility, the Activity Club aims to provide a nurturing environment where all children can thrive.

You can find out more at their website <https://gingerbreadcentre.co.uk>



## Eccleshall D-Day Anniversary Tea Party

Eccleshall Library, which is currently community managed by the Rotary Club Of Eccleshall Mercia, has a regular weekly library lounge group sessions on Thursday afternoons from 2pm to 4pm. - which offer free refreshments and a warm cosy place to meet others and chat. or to organise a quiz, bingo or other activities.

The library lounge sessions originally began by rotary members as a "warm space" area in the winter a few years ago, but then with the kind help of additional volunteers, including the Parish Council and grant funding by eccleshall Co-op, became a regular weekly lounge session throughout the year - which are open to all residents living in and around

Eccleshall - offering free refreshments and a warm cosy place to combat loneliness, meet others and chat. and regulars sometimes organize quizzes, bingo or other games.

As a special treat, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-day, the committee of the community lounge organized an afternoon tea party on 6th June in the parish rooms, which was very well attended by the lounge regulars and their friends. bunting and flags adorned the room, and many guests got into the spirit of the occasion with their 1940's outfits, enthusiastically singing war time songs of the period, led by christopher johnson and accompanied by a pianist, and enjoyed a splendid afternoon tea.