NORTON NATTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE STOCKTON PARISH



Cover photo by Joe Baugh (see page 3 for further stunning photographs)

In this issue

PARISH PUMP NEWS

MEMORY LANE

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

APLEY ESTATE NEWS

SPARTANS
Weather stops play at the playing field in Cheswardine Lane

Rob Woodcock Chairman of Spartan writes.....

Spartans are digging in for the winter period. Weather has stopped play on the playing fields but the club continues to get games where possible at its home at Oldbury Wells School. Last winter saw more than 400 games cancelled in grass roots footy across the county. Spartans are hoping for a kinder forecast this year.

Fingers Crossed.

Keep an eye on Spartans Facebook for up to date information. https://www.facebook.com/BridgnorthSpartansJFC/



THE PARISH PUMP

Parish Council 2024 November meeting:

The Parish Council held its bi-monthly meeting in November covering a number of topics. Investment in the Bowling Club was a major item for discussion at the start of the meeting, with representatives from the club updating the Parish Council members on their fundraising grant applications so far. The Parish Council agreed to look at a small grant contribution through an increase in the 25/26 precept to help with the fundraising provision for new lights at the site. This still leaves the long drive which is in need of refurbishment. **Anyone interested in sponsorship, fundraising and volunteering should contact the club directly to offer that help and support.**

Speeding on the A442 was again raised within the public session at the November meeting and particularly the difficulty in crossing the road due to the volume and amount of speeding traffic. A number of 'faults' on the road were also highlighted including the speed sign at the southern end of Norton which is not functioning properly. This and several other issues would be reported via 'fix my street' and the Parish Council agreed to put within their Place Plan for the area the need for a crossing on the A442 within the village core.

In terms of parish projects under development, the delivery of the 120 saplings for the continuation of the hedge extension at the play park from the Woodland Trust are expected. These will be planted again by the social prescribing group from Shropshire Councils Social Care Service. An additional grant application has also been submitted to Veolia through their Envirogrant for nesting boxes and wild meadow flowers to be located within the play park. The Parish Council have also agreed with Apley Estate to release part of a boundary parcel of land at the play park on lease to the parish Council for allotments gardens for use by Parishioners within the new properties in Village Road. Discussions have also tentatively started again with the Probation Services Community Payback Unit. The proposed discussions will focus on practical areas for improvement and enhancements within Stockton Church cemetery and the two verges leading to the Church and Stockton House from the A442. The first stage of this development will focus on an action plan for the above areas of potential works for discussion with partners initially.

The first meeting of a new Rights of Ways (ROW) working group has taken place and they are developing the project along the lines of 'walk it, report it and then repair it'. If any Parishioners are interested in getting involved with walking the rights of ways across the parish please contact the Clerk whose contact details are - phone/text 07792 300702 or email gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk.

In terms of planning applications, three have been received since the last report. They are the felling of an apple tree at Windmill Lane, a single storey extension at Bridgnorth Road and an extension of bedrooms at Stockton House. The Parish Council raised no objections to the above applications.

A number of improvements have also been carried out to the play park on Windmill Lane. Parishioners are also very welcome to attend the remaining Parish Council meetings for this Municipal Year, 7.30pm at Norton Village Hall and raise any concerns directly. The dates are the 8th January (precept setting), 5th March and 7th May (including the Annual Parishioners meeting) 2025.

SAMCO

We are Bramble Developments, a team of builders based in the beautiful Shropshire countryside with a passion for renovation and interior design.

We specialise in converting barns and other historical buildings full of history into beautiful modern day living spaces.

CREATING LUXURY PROPERTIES
BRAMBLE
DEVELOPMENTS

For more information please contact Dan Griffiths on 07815 056608 or visit www.brambledevelopments.co.uk

LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

Stunning photographs taken by local couple Marie and Joe Baugh

Photographs by:
Joe Baugh



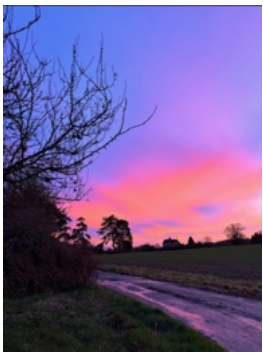






Photographs by:
Marie Baugh









NEWS FROM APLEY ESTATE OFFICE

From Graeme Manton

After a relatively easy harvest this year, planting next year's crop has proved to be a real challenge for our team as they've been battling excessive rainfall in the key period month of October. We have just about managed to get the crops sown but further downpours over the last few days have left the ground cold and waterlogged. Over the summer we welcomed a new person to the farm team – Daniel Bussey and his family have moved to Apley from a previous position in the South East but they are originally from Worcestershire.

At the Farm Shop we had a successful and very well attended fireworks display on 1st November and we've just had our Christmas Fair which was also affected by rainfall – Storm Bert apparently – overall it was a successful and well attended event. Father Christmas will be at Apley Farm Shop from 13th December, you can book a slot to meet him online via the Apley website.

In the Village, we've had Samco working on improvements to the sewage system, which we hope hasn't caused too much disruption. This work will be ongoing for a couple more months, at which point upgrades of all of the main village sewage system will have been completed.

After a very long build period we have completed the four new low carbon properties in Village Road and these are now all occupied. The houses are very thermally efficient and so will have very low running costs. The renewable technologies include Air Source Heat Pumps for heating, Mechanical Heat & Ventilation Recovery Units to ensure constant fresh air even when the windows are closed, Solar Thermal to preheat the hot water, Solar Photo Voltaic to generate electricity & Battery Storage to store electricity generated during the day for use at night.

In the new year works will start on converting the Old Smithy in Village Road into a three bedroom property. We are expecting the work will take 6-8 months.

Best wishes for Christmas & the New Year to all.

RAES RECIPE

This version of the classic pudding is unusual because it contains no flour or breadcrumbs.

Mrs Hill's Christmas Pudding



INGREDIENTS

12oz / 340g raisins
12oz / 340g sultanas
12oz / 340g shredded suet (beef or vegetarian)
6oz / 170g currants
6oz / 170g chopped crystallized peel
3-4 oz / 84-112g flaked almonds, toasted
Grated rind of 1 lemon
About ½ teaspoon grated nutmeg
6 large eggs, beaten
¼ pint / 140ml brandy
7 fl oz / 200ml milk
6 oz / 170g brown sugar (optional)

METHOD

Mix all the ingredients together well, before spooning it into a buttered 3 pint / 1.7 litre pudding basin. Put a pleated disc of parchment paper over the top of the mixture before fitting a lid or a covering of aluminium foil.

Steam the pudding in simmering water for 5-6 hours, remembering to top up the water level on a regular basis (up to halfway up the side of the pudding basin).

Keep in a cool place until you want to reheat it (for 1 ½ - 2 hours, if steaming) to serve. Turn out onto a warm serving plate.

If you want to serve a 'flaming' pud, place some brandy, whiskey or rum into a saucepan – ignite it, and pour over the pudding (this is easier than trying to light it once poured).

NORTON VILLAGE HALL
AVAILABLE FOR HIRE
£12.50 PER HOUR
CONTACT PAULA FOR DETAILS
01952 730664
EST. 1908

This pudding can be very nicely accompanied by...

Mrs Parnham's Brandy Butter Ice-cream

(Prepared in 10 minutes before freezing for about 8 hours, this recipe serves 8 people)

INGREDIENTS

1pint / 600ml double cream
5 tablespoons brandy
1 tin / 397g condensed milk
2 teaspoons natural vanilla extract
1oz / 25g butter, melted

METHOD

Whip the cream until it is softly peaking.

Fold in the vanilla extract, brandy, melted butter and the condensed milk and mix thoroughly to combine.

Turn the mixture into a container and freeze for about 8 hours.

MEMORY LANE
BY GRAHAM JONES

In an earlier article I think I described how Norton folk survived the winter of 1947. School children were the luckiest. The school had a coke-fed boiler and rows of radiators. I described how the fish pond was turned into an ice rink, with ice thick enough to support a team of shire horses.

Passing through Norton recently, I stopped briefly to stroll down Memory Lane. I stopped in front of The Thatch, our old dwelling. The pond was hardly visible. However, perhaps I am right in thinking that there are plans afoot to dredge it and turn the area into a wildlife sanctuary. This would be marvellous.



"Why can't these creatures stay still?"

The pond was dredged in the 1940s. A machine was used that I suspect was built by tradesmen in the estate yard. Piles of silt were dumped between the pond and the road. This was slowly carted away and nature took over.

Reeds and pond weed returned and the willow grew more splendid. The moorhens nested in shrubs on the far bank. Swans appeared briefly but did not stay – take-off and landing was difficult. Below the surface newts and stickle-backs multiplied. Leeches made their home in the pipe that brought fresh water from the brook in the field on the other side of the road.

We were encouraged to bring tadpoles to school to study their development. They rarely reached maturity, they were fed on ink-powder by lads who knew that tadpoles grew rapidly into frogs. Scores died on the road near the fish pond, run over by tractors and carts or trampled by horses or naughty boys.

The best place to examine tadpoles, frogs, minnows, or sticklebacks was an area fenced-off and kept clear of pond weed. This may have been used as a sheep-dip but this was also a place where a few local men in dark uniforms would start up their pump and test the hosepipes.

Nailed to a post in the pond was a simple metal plate, [NFS]. Members of the National Fire Service were volunteer firemen, recruited during the war. Fortunately in Norton they were never called into action. They practised regularly. Village lads enjoyed dodging the jets of pond water sprayed over the lane.

The exercise was taken more seriously in Bridgnorth. Southwell's carpet factory was taken over during the war by Rootes Group to produce parts for aircraft engines. The factory was painted in camouflage colours.


NORTON MEMORIES

NORTON NATTER

CAST YOUR MIND BACK NEAR OR FAR

Have you got any memories of the Parish? If you have, we'd love you to share them with our Norton Natter readers

YOU COULD EITHER:

- Write and send in an article yourself

or

- Contact us, we'll pop around to listen to your stories over a cuppa and write them up for you. Once you're happy with the results we can include them in the Natter.

Norton Produce Show 1988

FARM WORKERS

Please let Jackie or Graham know if you're interested in getting involved.

Ten years after The War, carpenters, plumbers and fitters formed a fire service team that still practised once a month. This sort of activity will pass into history.

As now, winter will pass. We look forward to Spring and perhaps in Summer the fishpond will return to the natural haven it once was.



HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY UPDATES

PhD research gathering field-scale conservation agriculture insight

Crucial insights into conservation agriculture are being gathered by a PhD student who hopes his research can help make the system an economic success for farmers.

The Conservation Agriculture Systems Experiment draws on data from two different farming systems – one conventional, and one using conservation farming techniques.

The farmer-led trial forms part of the PhD research of Harper Adams student Joe Collins, who devised the long-term, field-scale experiment.

Joe's design has run for three years already on Whitegates Estate, near Whitchurch in Shropshire.



The site is a 24 metre, multi-strip blocked design whose strips vary between conservation agriculture and conventional crop production.

Each system is then independently managed by agronomists who make all their crop management decisions based on regular field observations. This means that the agronomy, crop management and crop rotations are different between the two systems year on year.

Across the experiment, both agronomists are competing to have the most profitable system, and therefore, all decisions are made with this in mind – and all are already industry practice.

The conventional system is managed by Alistair Sibbett from BCW Agriculture and the conservation system in managed by Paul Cawood from Soil First Farming.

Joe's PhD work involves not only designing the system, but also managing the trial and collecting data on crop yield, soil, greenhouse gas emissions, and system economics.

As the project is both large-scale and one which has been run over several years, Joe hopes it can demonstrate how conservation agriculture can work on-farm. Helping provide economic data to advise farmers thinking about conservation agriculture properly during their transition period to the technique.

The size of the project – and the competition between its agronomists on the same site, is a change to some previous trials – which typically focus on a single aspect of conservation versus conventional farming.

However, when a farmer transitions to conservation agriculture, they will often change several variables, such as crop rotation, agronomy, and farm machinery at the same time. This means that assessing agricultural systems using traditional scientific methods can result in one, or potentially both, systems being managed in a sub-optimal way – as it does not allow for the number of different changes farmers may make in-field.

Joe hopes his research will demonstrate how conservation agriculture in the UK can reduce agronomic expenditure for farmers - whilst remaining profitable. Showing the complex system interactions farmers will face on their own farms, and providing useful data to help those who are transitioning to Conservation Agriculture techniques.

The ongoing project has now secured new sponsorship from BASE-UK, which Joe has welcomed.

He said: "The new sponsorship of the experiment guarantees the project's continuation, allowing for the expansion of the existing dataset.

"This growing body of knowledge provides valuable support to farmers, helping guide and advise them through the transition to conservation agriculture."

Speaking about his wider PhD journey, which has taken him both across the UK and across the globe Joe added: "My time at Harper has been excellent. I am lucky to have been working with a great supervisory team of Simon Jeffery, Ed Harris, and Karl Behrendt, who have all been a great source of advice, motivation, and engaging discussions throughout the four years.

"The university's strong connections with the agricultural industry made it an ideal environment for my research, providing access to experts who offered valuable advice on various aspects of my project. In addition to my primary research, I had the opportunity to contribute to several other projects, including the PotatoLITE project and the Earth Rover Program, where I now work part-time while completing my PhD.

"I have also enjoyed working alongside the farmers and agronomists involved in my project - coming from a farming background before my PhD, this is important to me."

NORTON NATTER WORDSEARCH - 1841 FIELD NAMES OF STOCKTON PARISH

15 field names featured in this old map have been hidden in the grid below, can you find them? (answers to field names on back page)



H	K	O	X	S	T	R	I	N	G	E	R	S	F	I	E	L	D	Z	S	Y	C	M	N
B	V	C	E	Z	P	L	D	S	J	L	P	C	E	E	O	N	I	S	A	E	G	A	K
K	O	T	K	S	A	M	Z	A	J	D	C	R	K	S	J	U	V	F	W	F	M	E	I
R	H	I	G	M	J	X	B	O	C	D	Q	U	W	C	V	O	S	M	P	F	C	G	V
E	V	D	Y	P	S	J	P	W	J	Z	L	P	P	I	E	Y	Q	Q	I	O	J	L	U
Q	Z	G	I	Y	D	T	Z	S	Q	S	V	A	O	J	Q	L	P	N	T	U	I	V	A
Y	G	K	A	A	R	R	X	U	B	Q	I	G	D	Q	Z	E	P	E	L	K	J	I	Q
X	V	N	V	K	A	Q	T	X	B	W	W	C	G	V	N	G	P	H	E	I	D	V	P
I	Q	W	B	Q	Y	G	Z	D	I	O	L	T	O	E	E	I	I	L	A	L	T	U	O
A	P	T	J	K	S	J	S	B	J	D	G	G	C	X	E	D	D	L	S	L	M	N	W
E	C	E	I	P	R	E	H	C	T	U	B	T	I	C	X	R	L	F	O	A	Y	Q	Y
O	B	K	D	E	E	S	I	T	K	L	F	F	E	U	F	A	E	K	W	L	Z	B	O
A	O	B	D	R	W	D	D	Q	Y	O	U	T	M	A	G	Y	I	P	S	L	M	T	U
W	O	Z	L	R	O	I	T	N	R	R	U	Z	R	V	P	S	F	C	E	N	W	N	V
C	H	J	A	A	L	W	T	C	A	G	R	C	M	U	H	H	N	G	Z	I	R	V	V
P	U	Y	R	Y	B	B	S	R	Y	L	H	E	X	E	J	G	O	W	M	T	K	U	V
F	O	R	U	Y	G	E	U	H	F	I	D	W	L	E	O	U	T	F	A	F	D	V	R
H	E	V	M	E	V	I	N	K	S	J	B	R	K	M	L	O	T	R	C	I	K	M	T
Q	H	J	N	L	R	O	B	I	U	A	I	S	A	A	E	G	E	G	A	R	R	C	F
O	D	R	A	X	E	O	T	D	M	A	D	E	A	Y	U	A	D	Q	L	C	P	Y	X
U	Z	C	Q	K	K	E	M	A	D	L	M	S	B	M	F	N	D	Q	T	R	Z	D	Q
R	V	Y	O	W	R	N	A	T	Q	M	V	Z	I	G	L	L	Q	O	M	A	V	P	N
Q	G	I	A	Q	N	M	D	D	O	V	S	N	O	C	M	T	A	P	W	F	W	F	W
H	A	I	Y	W	R	D	P	J	U	B	S	H	W	N	K	E	D	H	F	Z	O	S	W

CHURCH NEWS

St Chad's Stockton - Christmas Update

Best wishes to everyone for the Christmas Season!

The Church of England's theme for Advent and Christmas 2024, **Follow the Star: Calm and Bright,** draws on the world-famous carol, Silent Night:

"Silent Night! Holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright…"

The Six Parishes Advent and Christmas Services are as follows, everyone is welcome and we would love to see you!

1st Dec 9.30am Badger Communion, Revd Justin Bailey
8th Dec 11.00am Sutton Maddock Communion
15th Dec 9.30am Beckbury Communion, Revd Janet Holmes
15th December 4pm Sutton Maddock 9 Lessons and Carols
22nd Dec 11.00am Kemberton Celebration of Carols, Revd Janet Holmes
22nd Dec 4.00pm Badger Crib Service, Revd Matthew Lefroy
24th Dec 7.00pm Ryton Christmas Eve Communion, Revd Matthew Lefroy

The Joint Council for the Six Parishes met in mid-October. A lot of work has gone into writing a profile for the Six Parishes. This involved representatives from each PCC writing about their own churches and including any relevant information about their surrounding areas.

A small working party from the Joint Council then collated all of these ideas into one overall profile for prospective candidates to read before deciding whether to apply for a role as rector. It is hoped that a new rector will be able to bring new ideas and work closely with schools and communities to bring people together.

The profile has been submitted to the Bishop for consideration. Bishop Sarah will attend the next meeting of the Joint Council and the post for a new rector will be advertised following this.



St Chad's Stockton Roof

I am very please to report that the Nave roof of the church was renewed in September/ October. Severnside Roofing specialists relaid the tiles on the Nave roof, including two bat entrances. They also renewed the lead gutters which run behind the parapets and had been the source of much of the water ingress over the years. The lead on the south transept has been replaced with a modern rubber roofing as this had been leaking for many years.

The work was funded from church funds saved up from very kind donations over the past ten years, grants from the 'Listed Places of Worship Fund' and Laslett's Charities and some recent very generous donations from parishioners. Many thanks to everyone in the community who has contributed over the years and recently to enabling this work which should mean that the church building remains viable and safe for many more years.

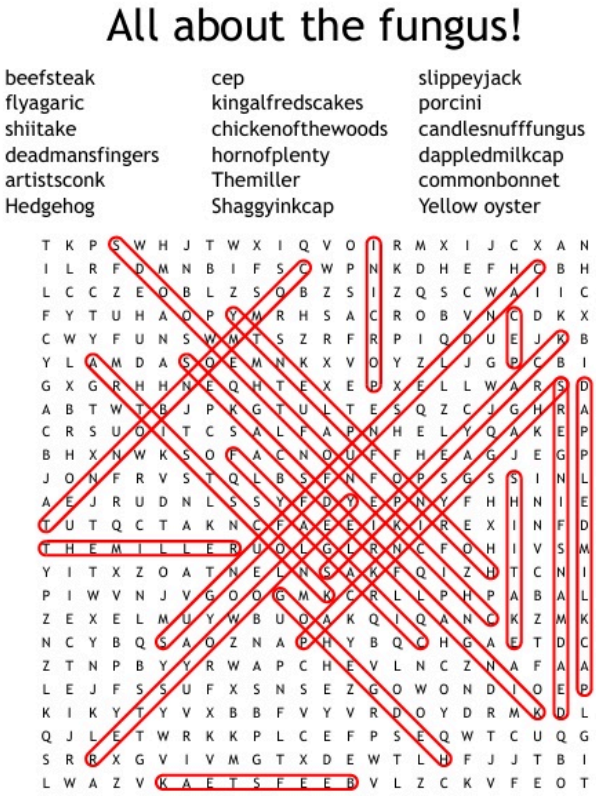


Once we have had the five yearly surveyor's report we will prioritise further work needed to keep the church building well maintained.

Field names hidden in the wordsearch are:
Half yard lands, Detton field, Stringers field, Botmore, Blowers yard, Pleck, Calves croft, Kill all, Far criftin, Far chisiter, Cote piece, Goughs yard, Butcher piece, Tyrrel meadow, Sawpit leasow



Answers from Autumn Wordsearch



EDITORIAL TEAM

Jackie Bennett - Social & Digital Media
Graham Bould - Parish Clerk, Content & Advertising
Louise Pollock - Editor & Executive Assistant to the Estate Director, Apley Estate
John Pigg - Distribution

This newsletter is produced by community volunteers and Stockton Parish Council with printing, formatting and publishing kindly provided by Apley Estate. Any views expressed within this publication are not necessarily the views of Stockton Parish Council or Apley Estate.

If you'd like to advertise your business in the Norton Natter, please get in touch.
Send your events, news, photographs and contributions for future editions to Jackie Bennett at jackie.a.bennett@hotmail.com or the Parish Clerk, Graham Bould at gbouldparish@yahoo.co.uk by 29th January 2025.
Follow our Parish Facebook page www.facebook.com/nortoncommunitygroup.

We'd love to hear what you think of the Norton Natter and we welcome ideas and suggestions to improve the content and add news and updates to the newsletter and Facebook pages.