

Village Views

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF ACTON BURNELL, PITCHFORD, FRODESLEY, RUCKLEY AND LANGLEY

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2024 Christmas edition of Village Views. The editorial team and our volunteer delivery gang would like to wish all our readers a very merry Christmas and a healthy and happy 2025.

As always, we have done our best to bring you all the information you need to know – whether that is health advice from the local GP surgery, news on the next Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night, or where to track down Father Christmas this December – but we can't do it without your help. If you know of an event which needs promoting, a charity which needs support or just have news you'd like to share, please contact us at any time on villageviews@hotmail.com.

*Chris Harrison, Karen Fisher, John Glover,
Rachel Johnson and Lois Johnson*



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Have you seen STEVE?

This autumn has offered an amazing opportunity to see the Aurora Borealis (also known as the Northern Lights) from the comfort of our own homes. More usually a feature of the night skies in Scandinavia and the far north, one of the largest solar flares in seven years coupled with solar winds have sent charged particles towards the Earth, creating the light show we've been spotting in the skies over Shropshire.

The spectacle has been made even more impressive by the appearance of Steve – or to give it its full name, Strong Thermal Emission Velocity Enhancement – which creates the impression of a ribbon of light in the night sky. This is in contrast to the more usual Aurora, which shows up as an oval shape.

Unlike the Aurora, Steve is unpredictable and only sticks around for a short while, so well done if you caught a glimpse or snatched a photo of this unusual phenomenon.

The night skies in our part of the world seem to have been unusually busy this autumn. In addition to Steve and the Northern Lights, we've been treated to displays by the Draconid meteors and the 'A3' comet, also known as the Tsuchinshan-Atlas comet, which astronomers described as the 'comet of the century'!



Photo courtesy of Rachel Harrison

HARVEST MOON

This stunning photo of the harvest moon was taken by Hayden Chan Yik Hei, a student at Concord College. Hayden knits together separate small images to create an intensely detailed and accurate final picture. As you can see, there is a small section missing (just to reassure everyone, this is not the result of aliens taking a bite out of the moon!), but we look forward to seeing more images as he develops and perfects his technique.

Hayden explains, "It was the first time I ever used a "mosaic" to do astrophotography. I took small sections of the moon and stitched them together, which made it a higher resolution image. You can really see at details of the moon,

like the craters and mountains. It was taken a day after the Harvest moon, which coincidentally was also the Mid-Autumn festival in China."





SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN...

If you have a young person in your family who is keen to say hello to the man with the white beard and the red coat before Christmas Day, you can meet him at the following spots.

Cressage Village Hall 16th November (10.00am to 3.00pm)

Dobbies' Garden Centre 28th November to 24th December (£12.99 per child).
Book via www.dobbies.com/events

Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, 30th November to 23rd December (£10.00 per child and £5.00 for accompanying adults).
Booking via www.shropshiremuseums.org.uk/event/meet-father-christmas-in-his-traditional-museum-workshop/

Shropshire Discovery Centre, 14th December (£10.00 per child). Pre-booking essential via www.shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk/whats-on/christmas-crafts-and-santa-s-grotto



CHRISTMAS WREATH WORKSHOPS 2024

THURS	28TH NOV	19.00 - 21.00
FRI	29TH NOV	10.00 - 12.00
FRI	29TH NOV	14.30 - 16.30
SAT	30TH NOV	10.00 - 12.00
SAT	30TH NOV	14.30 - 16.30

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Sun 1 Dec, 4pm
Severn Hospice, Bicton Heath



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Please join us for **Lights of Love** – a time to remember loved ones missed at Christmas

To dedicate a light: pick up a leaflet, visit severnhospice.org.uk/lights or call 01743 236565

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What's on

3rd November

Apple Day at Ryton Village Hall. Bring along your surplus apples for pressing, join in the pumpkin decorating, or just treat yourself to a hotdog. Open from 11.00am to 3.30pm (last apple pressing at 2.30pm).

7th November

Bingo Bonanza at Longnor School. Eyes down at 7.00pm. All proceeds to provide resources and equipment for Little Owls Preschool.

8th November

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall with the added attraction of pizza, freshly cooked in a mobile wood-fired pizza oven. Come along for a slice and a pint. Doors open at 7.30pm.

9th November

Prove that mud, marsh and water are no barriers by taking part in Mad Jack's 5 at Attingham Park. This is a 5 mile race hosted by the National Trust in conjunction with Shrewsbury Athletic Club. The route takes in pasture, woodland and marsh, and finishes with a dash through Mad Jack's pond at the end of the race. Booking essential (entry £16.00). Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park/events for more information and to reserve a place.

15th November

Wine Tasting evening at Pitchford Village Hall at 7.30pm. Find out how to spot the best wines at a reasonable price, and enjoy tasting a range of specially selected wines. Tickets £20 to include wine and nibbles. More details on the Acton Burnell Community Facebook page and the Village Hall page, and on page 7 of this magazine.

16th November

Christmas Fair at Cressage Village Hall. Open from 10.00am to 3.00pm. Stalls, Santa and a prize raffle. Hot jacket potatoes, pork baps, mulled wine, mince pies, and cake on sale.

30th November to 1st January

Explore Attingham's Georgian Mansion in all its Christmas glory. The theme this year is myths and legends. Pre-booking essential (ticket sales open on 14th November) by going to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park/christmas-at-attingham. No additional charge for National Trust members.

1st December

Condover Hall opens its doors to welcome visitors to its Christmas Fair from 10.30am to 3.30pm. Admission £3.00 to include 1 raffle entry (children free).

6th to 8th December

Christmas Market at Love Plants, Salop Leisure. Open from 10.00am to 7.00pm on Friday and Saturday, and until 4.00pm on Sunday. Over 30 stalls selling gifts and crafts, and a selection of Christmas trees.

7th December

The annual Christmas Fayre takes place as usual at Much Wenlock, with the whole centre of the town taking on a Christmas vibe. Stalls galore, a wide selection of refreshments, entertainment and an art exhibition to keep everyone busy! Please note that there is no parking in the town centre, but park and ride is available from William Brookes School and from Grange Fencing, Coates Quarry on the Stretton Road.

7th December

Breakfast Butties and a pop-up farm shop at Pitchford Village Hall. There will also be the chance to work up an appetite by joining in with the Pitchford Village Hall circular winter walk.

7th December

Festive Buffet and Quiz at Severn Hospice, Bicton. £12.00 per person, to include delicious buffet and compere led quiz. Teams of up to 6 people. To book, email

refreshevents@severnospice.org.uk.

7th, 14th and 21st December

Experience Attingham at dusk and wander through an enchanted landscape of fairylights and outdoor Christmas trees. No admission fee for National Trust members, but pre-booking essential. Book via

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park/christmas-at-attingham

13th December

Get in the Christmas spirit with friends and neighbours by coming along to Pitchford Village Hall for Pub Night. Festive mince pies and turkey baps available for only £3.00, as well as the usual beer, wine and soft drinks.

14th December

Fair in the Square in Shrewsbury. Over 45 stallholders will be offering locally made crafts, artwork, food and gifts throughout the day.

14th & 15th December

Christmas Fayre at Severn Hospice, Bicton Heath. Seasonal stalls featuring local producers and traders offering food and crafts. Festive drinks and live music to complete the mood! Open from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Free entry.

15th December

Frost Fayre at Longnor School, open to the whole community. See Longnor School Facebook page for more details nearer the date.

10th January

Banish the post-Christmas blues by coming along to Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night, where there will be chilli con carne to warm everyone up, as well as the usual choice of drinks. Everyone welcome!



Lucy Hockenhull of Teasel and Bloom

**CHRISTMAS
MOSS WREATH MAKING
WORKSHOP**

Pitchford Village Hall
Saturday 30 November at 10am
**£60 a person
(everything included)**
Contact: **Tracy Johnson** on
07974952645
All proceeds to Lingen Davies



**Apple Day
at
Ryton Village Hall**

APPLE PRESSING ~ REFRESHMENTS
HOTDOGS ~ PUMPKIN DECORATING

SUN 3RD NOV
**11am - 3:30pm
(last press at 2:30pm)**

bring apples & bottles if you have them, but not essential- there's plenty to go round!

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<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/coundanddistricttennisclub>

or use our Cound and District Tennis Club Homepage QR Code



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FUTURE CLUB EVENTS

ANNUAL CLUB QUIZ – Saturday November 16th, Cound Guildhall

7.15pm for 7.30pm start, £15/head

Please pre-order of fish, chicken or veg by Tuesday November 12th. Orders to be sent to jillblackmore@doctors.org.uk. Teams of up to 6 people.

POACHING AND WILDLIFE CRIME

West Mercia Police is working with local council and farmers to tackle the issue of poaching and other wildlife crimes. In addition to causing unnecessary suffering to birds and animals, these crimes can have a significant impact on rural communities and agricultural crops.

Wildlife crime includes a wide range of activities, including poaching, egg theft and collection, illegal fishing, badger baiting, hare coursing, attacks on birds of prey and hunting with dogs. In the UK, poaching is responsible for the illegal killing of around 50,000 deer each year.

Poaching offences include trespassing on land in search or pursuit of game (including rabbits) or deer, and using dogs to hunt foxes, hare or deer. They also include taking or destroying fish from private waterways, and being on private land with a gun, net, snare or lamp with the plan of taking game without the land-owner's permission.

Anyone found poaching or hunting with dogs is risking having their vehicle, dogs and poaching equipment seized, and there can be a fine of up to £5,000.

West Mercia Police advise anyone who thinks they may have witnessed a wildlife or poaching offence (or seen evidence that one has taken place) to do the following:

- don't disturb the scene
- don't touch or remove dead animals or birds (in the case of some protected species, if you take possession of the dead animal you could be committing an offence)
- record as many details as you can; date, time, location, details of anyone involved
- if possible, take photos or video of the scene
- write down any registration numbers of any vehicles involved
- don't put yourself at risk and don't approach anyone
- call 101 and ask to be put in touch with the local police, unless you feel yourself to be in danger, in which case call 999.

If you find an injured bird or animal that may have been the victim of a wildlife crime, you can also call Cuan House Wildlife Rescue on **01952 728070** to ask for advice and immediate help.

NEWS FROM MUCH WENLOCK AND CRESSAGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

THINK PHARMACY FIRST

During winter GP Surgeries usually experience increased patient demand. This has many causes, including cold weather and peaks of common virus's which can also affect the staff team.

Patients are encouraged to 'think pharmacy first' this winter for fast advice and treatment for a range of common conditions such as: aches and pains, allergies, colds and flu, ear and eye complaints, gastrointestinal care, head lice, shingles (for those over 18), sinusitis (for over 12 year olds), sore throat (for over 5 years old), skin problems, uncomplicated urinary tract infections (for women aged 16 to 64 years) and thrush.

COMING SOON...

During November the Practice will be having a new telephone system installed. We hope that there will be as little disruption as possible to the services and the day to day running of the Practice whilst we migrate over to the new system.

Review of the current appointment system is underway; further details will be provided in the next few months on the Practice website.

A BIG THANK YOU

Thank you to the Patient Voice volunteers who gave up their Saturdays to help with the Flu Clinics held at William Brookes in October. Your help and support during the clinics are most appreciated – thank you.

CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

MP Stuart Anderson will be holding constituency surgeries at Cleobury Mortimer on 15th November, Ludlow on 29th November and Cross Houses on 13th December. Future surgeries will also be held in Bridgnorth and Dorrington. If you have an issue you would like to raise with Stuart and would welcome the chance to attend a surgery, please go to www.stuartanderson.org.uk/contact and follow the link to 'Local Surgeries'.



FREE HELP TO GET ONLINE FOR SHROPSHIRE RESIDENTS

Do you feel a little lost using technology? Need help using the internet? Do you feel nervous about using a computer or frustrated about being left behind as everything seems to be online these days?

Getting to grips with the internet means you can keep in touch with friends and family, get up-to-date information and see the latest news, have shopping delivered to your door and better manage your health and finances.

Shropshire Council is supporting residents to learn to use technology safely through The Digital Skills Programme. The service has 25 digital hubs across the area for people who need help to use their laptops, mobile phones or tablets. Learning slowly, taking small steps and having the time to practice are keys to success.

The programme is delivered by experienced, friendly digital volunteers based within Shropshire Libraries and local community organisations. Free data and devices are available for those in greatest need.

"I felt left behind and knew I needed to do something to bring myself up to date," said Peter, who has benefitted from the programme. "My digital volunteer was so knowledgeable and patient. His kindness helped me to realise that I knew a lot more than I thought I did. Getting out of the house each week to learn something new

gave me a boost and I thoroughly enjoyed my sessions."

For more information visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/computer-skills-for-all email Susie.Hancock@shropshire.gov.uk telephone **01743 253958**.

Shropshire Council funded free digital support is available at:

NORTH

Qube, Oswestry; Oswestry Library; BizEd Projects, Whitchurch; 4 All Foundation, Market Drayton and Cockshutt; Market Drayton Library; G.O.A.L. Wem; Wem Library.

CENTRAL

Barnabas Community Projects, Shrewsbury; The Roy Fletcher Centre, Shrewsbury; Shrewsbury Library;

Library at the Lantern, Harlescott, Shrewsbury; Bayston Hill Library; Pontesbury Library.

SOUTH

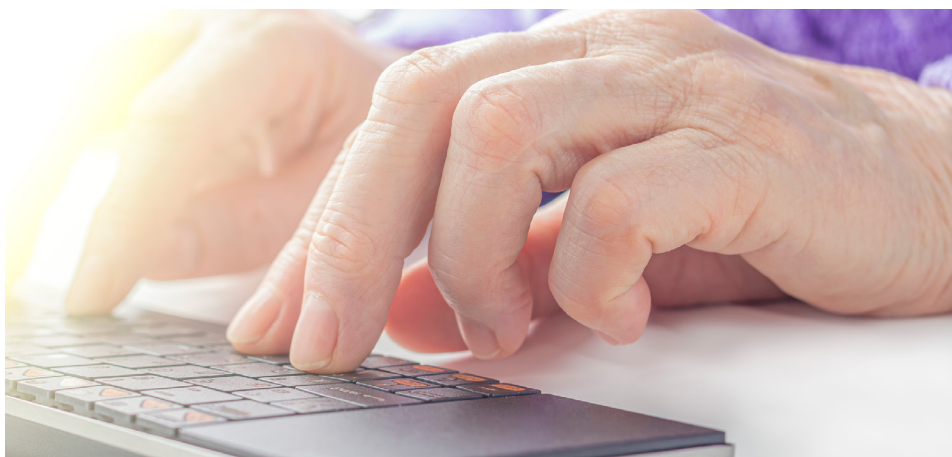
Mayfair Community Centre, Church Stretton; Enterprise House, Bishops Castle; Craven Arms Library; Ludlow Library; Bridgnorth Library; Broseley Library; Much Wenlock Library; Shifnal Library.

SPECIALIST DIGITAL SUPPORT

Enable: for people receiving support into employment and/or training

Taking Part: for people with learning difficulties

Sight Loss Shropshire: for people with visual impairment.



NEWS FROM CONDOVER BENEFICE

Finally the advertisement to recruit a new Rector to lead our local churches has gone live. When the post was advertised in the spring, as a half-time position, there were no applicants. It has now been advertised as a full-time position, with the additional responsibility of being Hereford Diocese's first deanery Rural Church Missioner (RCM). The RCM role is designed to support parish incumbents and laity to develop clear missional plans for the future of every church community and building in the deanery.

The deadline for applications is 30th October, with interviews taking place in late November. If all goes to plan, we will have a new Rector next spring, hopefully in time for the busy Easter period. Until then we continue

to be grateful for the support of retired and visiting clergy, who's support has enabled us to maintain our regular pattern of services and a full range of Christmas services; which will be as follows:

SUNDAY 22ND DECEMBER

10.30am: Frodesley, Crib and Carol Service

3.00pm: Acton Burnell, Carol Service

3.00pm: Pitchford, Carol Service

6.30pm: Condoval, Carol Service

MONDAY 23RD DECEMBER

6.30pm: Ryton, Crib and Carol Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

6.00pm: Condoval, Crib Service

11.15pm: Condoval, Midnight Holy Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY

9.00am: Frodesley, Holy Communion

9.00am: Ryton, Holy Communion

10.30am: Acton Burnell, Holy Communion

10.30am: Pitchford, Holy Communion

SUNDAY 29TH DECEMBER

10.00am: Condoval, Benefice Songs (Carols) of Praise

We will also be incorporating Acts of Remembrance during our services on Sun 10th November at Acton Burnell and Condoval.

*With warmest wishes as we approach the Festive Season,
Jeremy (Reader - Condoval Benefice)*

WINE TASTING EVENING AT PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall is hosting a wine tasting evening on Friday 15th November this year, at 7.30pm.

As in March, the event will be run by local wine expert Jeremy Cowen of the Wine Assessors Club of Shrewsbury. Apart from simply having a thoroughly enjoyable evening, the event is designed to give you an insight into appreciating what a good wine should be like and how to taste and assess this. Aspects such as what to look for in terms of colour, nose and palate will be integral to the evening. We will also learn about the different grape varieties, what to look for when buying wine from whatever source you go to and where the best value wines can be found as well as how to pair wine with food.

While all of that may sound a little complex, what this really boils down to is how to spot good tasting wines, how to enjoy them and where to get the best deals! Specifically, these will not be 'high end' wines, but affordable

wines from local supermarkets such as, and including, Aldi and Lidl.

There will be 6 wines to taste, a bubbly wine, two whites (chardonnay and sauvignon blanc) and three reds (cabernet sauvignon and a shiraz or blends containing them). To accompany these, there will be various nibbles. This time, there will be an emphasis on wines for Christmas.

Jeremy is an expert in wine having been affiliated with the wine trade in South Africa for just under 50 years. He has also run his own cookery school and sits on various wine tasting panels for Wine Style Magazine and various supermarkets, so clearly he knows what he is talking about and is very entertaining, as witnessed by our previous event which went down extremely well with our punters!. We hope you will come along to support the hall, gain some extra knowledge which will help you to enjoy your tipples more and most of all, have a really pleasant evening!

The cost of the event will be £20 which includes all your wine and nibbles. If you want to attend, could you to email me at jbglover@outlook.com

to confirm your attendance and how many tickets you would like, and then to pay by BACS. Details are:

Account Name: Pitchford Village Hall
Account No: 76831213
Sort Code: 51-61-06

Alternatively, you can pay by cash at the November Pub Night on Friday 8th November, or by putting your £20pp in an envelope with your name into my letterbox at No. 2, The Paddocks in Pitchford, opposite the Village Hall. In this case, would you also confirm by email!

We have a maximum of 40 places so if you are interested, it might be an idea to reserve your tickets sooner rather than later! Further updates will appear on the ABC facebook pages along with those of the Village Hall.

John Glover



- Have you been diagnosed with arthritis, or care for someone with arthritis? To find out more about how to manage the condition, come to our **Arthritis Awareness** event.
- Do you or someone you care for feel at risk of falling? Then why not attend our **Let's Talk Falls** session.

Arthritis Awareness

Monday 28 October, 10am – 12.30pm
Pitchford Village Hall, Condover, Shrewsbury, SY5 7DW

Let's Talk Falls

Wednesday 13th November, 10am – 12.30pm
Pitchford Village Hall, Condover, Shrewsbury, SY5 7DW

To book your **FREE** place, call **01743 360641** or
Email enquiries@community-resource.org.uk



Community Resource is an operating name of the Community Council of Shropshire. A Company Limited by Guarantee 4652487 and a Registered Charity 1096779

Arthritis Awareness

An informative presentation about osteoarthritis with a focus on self-management and pain relief techniques

A recorded Q&A session on osteoarthritis with Dr Anne O'Brien, Keele University

A free gentle exercise taster session with information on local and online physical activity opportunities

Information on resources which provide arthritis and pain management support

Let's Talk Falls

A talk and film presentation on how to reduce your risk of falling and develop a personal Falls Plan for your home.

A demonstration of how to get up safely if you do fall.

A booklet of chair-based exercises for each participant and a demonstration of how to do them.

A free gentle exercise taster session with information on local and online physical activity opportunities.



About us

Community Resource is a charity that is committed to making life better for people and communities facing challenges in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. A donation towards the work of our charity would be greatly appreciated.

www.community-resource.org.uk
01743 360641
enquiries@community-resource.org.uk



NEWS FROM PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

BREAKFAST BUTTIES

September's 'breakfast butties' event was a steady affair. A regular supply of hungry mouths to feed kept us busy all morning. The now staple variations of locally produced bacon, sausage and eggs along with complimentary brews seems to be the accepted way and we thank all those who came along to part with their hard-earned cash to buy our well-priced meals! Sadly, the weather, along with the absence of a few of our regulars, meant that the local walkies didn't take place, but are looking forward to the one on Saturday 7th December. Here, in addition to the usual fine fayre, we will have a couple of local businesses selling their edible produce, including a stall from the Little Farm Shop in Leebotwood and a selection of first-rate Highland Beef fed from the slopes of the Lawley courtesy of Blackhurst Farm. We really hope you come along and support us as well as these local ventures!

WINE TASTING

The next Wine Tasting event has now been changed to Friday 15th November and follows on from the success of the inaugural wine tasting event last March. er at the Hall. This will be a 'themed' event with Christmas wines up for tasting. Entry will be by tickets bought prior to the event and these can be from now until Saturday 9th November. These are priced at £20 per head and will include 6 wines with accompanying nibbles designed to enhance the flavours of the wines on offer. For details, see the separate article in this newsletter.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SESSIONS:

The Wellbeing and Care Team in Shrewsbury are putting on a couple of sessions to give advice and coping strategies for people in our area who may be worried about falls in the home or who may be suffering from arthritis. The first session involves coping with arthritis. This will involve:

1. An informative presentation about osteoarthritis with a focus on self-management and pain relief techniques
2. A recorded Q&A session on osteoarthritis with Dr Anne O'Brien, Keele University

3. Information on local and online physical activity opportunities
4. Information on resources which provide arthritis and pain management support

This session will take place on Monday 28th October from 10am until 12.30pm. A further two sessions will then be offered to interested parties and the cost is free to all. Further details will appear on the ABC Facebook page and the PVH Facebook pages nearer the time.

The second of these deals with how to cope with possible falls in the home and strategies to deal with a fall should it happen. Specifically, the session will involve:

1. A short informative film
2. An interactive demonstration to include how to get up safely from the floor after a fall
3. A Falls Plan – a talk and planning to ensure your home is safe
4. Calling for help
5. Gentle Exercises – with our trained and qualified instructor, you will be guided in gentle exercise for 30 minutes

This session will take place on Wednesday 13th November from 10.00am until 12.30pm (please note this is a change of date from that previously published).

SHROPSHIRE VILLAGE HALL QUIZ LEAGUE

The Hall played host to the latest round of this season's Shropshire Village Hall Quiz League. Nine teams from across the county took part with our own team of John and Jo Long with Keith and Jill Faulkner coming third and who are now currently lying second in Division 2 of the league. Well done to them!

PUB NIGHTS:

Pub nights are held on the second Friday of each month and all are welcome! In November (8th), we have freshly cooked pizzas available, courtesy of Fenech Pizza. This is a Shropshire based company specialising in proper wood fired ovens made in the Neapolitan style with classic Italian ingredients.

In December, we will be providing a festive mince pie and a turkey bap bundle for the princely sum of £3.00. In addition to the usual drinks menu, mulled wine will also be on offer.

In January, Nikki Screen from Golding will be making chilli-con-carne for you all to enjoy. All of these events are something which we hope you will look forward to, enjoy and support, as winter starts to pop its head over the horizon! Many thanks also to Rachel Johnson who, along with Jamie and Steaky, put on a BBQ at the September bash, following their crepes event earlier in the year. They were both very popular and does mean they are fast getting a reputation for good food. With all profits going to the Hall, we are extremely grateful to them for their enthusiasm and effort!!

Rachel is very keen to continue to support the Community into the future in this way, but she has also suggested that if anyone else wishes to put on an event like this, then please do contact us at the Village Hall. According to Rachel, it is good fun, good for the soul and good for your stomachs!!

Yet another couple dates for the diary then, courtesy of the PVH Management Committee and Rachel!!

HIRING OF THE HALL

The Village Hall is your facility and is available for hire and at extremely competitive rates. Currently, prices start from:

Children's parties: £30
Meetings: £20
Other bookings: £40 and £60 for events over 6 hours

Should you wish to hire the hall for your own use, then again, please contact Mike Price.

Mike Price

(Chairman PVH Management Committee)

email: price622@btinternet.com
mobile: 07740 067955

Chris Jones

(Secretary)

email: csjay@btinternet.com
mobile: 07538 744807

Jeanette Reaney

(Tote Organiser)

email: jeanettereaney@hotmail.com
mobile: 07971 780963

John Glover (PVH Committee)

NOOKS AND CORNERS OF SHROPSHIRE

125 years ago the Birmingham artist, Henry Thornhill Timmins, published a book with the above title detailing what he called the “prolonged sketching rambles” he had made through Shropshire over the previous decade.

Then in his 30s, he walked prodigious distances each day and made notes (often using astonishingly florid and sometimes quite archaic language) with accompanying sketches of many parts of the county, including within our own parish.

Some of his comments are reproduced below and you may compare then and now. Inevitably, much has changed, but some things are eerily familiar!

PITCHFORD

Having started the day in Shrewsbury, Timmins arrived from Condober via “Cantlop Cross” and walked down to Pitchford Hall from the South Lodge via “a winding pathway, overarched by beech trees and ancestral oaks, (which) meanders through the park, and leads us down to a low stone bridge.” The path seems to have fallen into disuse, but the stone bridge is still there and affords a fine view of the Hall.

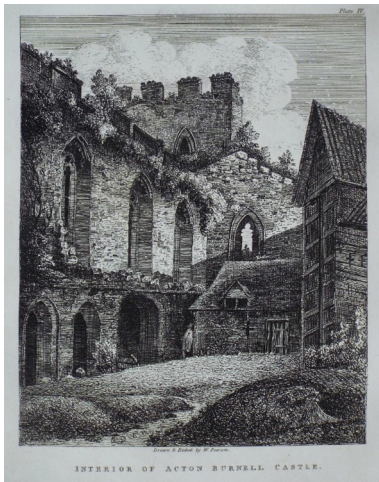
He was able to “examine the interesting features of the interior” including the “secret closet, or hidie-hole (sic), ingeniously disguised by a sliding panel”, “the so-called House in the Tree” and “the ancient Pitch Well”, which he describes as being “probably unique of its kind”. All these features and many more are of course still available to view on one of the two hour pre-booked tours that local volunteers regularly lead round the Hall and its grounds.

He then moved on to the village, which he notes had a “quiet, weedgrown street, where the martins are nesting under the lee of the old stone-tiled roofs, Yonder gable-end with its rough yellow plasterwork, venetian shutters, and mantle of purple wisteria, greets the eye with a pleasant scheme of colour, calling up visions of far-away Italy.” You can make your own decision as to whether things have altered in Pitchford over the years!



Pitchford Hall around the time of the Tudors, although by the time Henry Timmins walked over the bridge to visit the Hall, it had been relocated to the old ford by the pitch well some 15 years before.

ACTON BURNELL



Timmins then moves on via the old Roman road and bridge, until he sees “the homely houseroofs” of Acton Burnell, which he considered to be a “pretty, rustic spot...its comely thatched cottages half submerged amidst old-fashioned country flowers”. He laments the lack of an inn (don’t we all) but, having passed “the cosy looking rectory” notes that the church is “a lovely structure replete with interest to the lover of old-world scenes ..though of modest dimensions... perfect in every detail”.

He notes that, “there are numerous objects worthy of note” in the church, details many of them (all of which are still visible today), but pays particular attention to, “a small square window low down on the north wall, supposed to be a leper’s, or anchorite’s, window”, but questions whether, “may not this have been what was known as a ‘dead light’, a little window whence a light was shown into the graveyard to scare away the ghosts!”

Timmins goes on to visit and comment on both the Castle and the gable ends of the Norman barn where, “for the first time in history, Lords and Commons sat in council, under the presidency of King Edward I, and proceeded to enact the... Statute of Acton Burnell...

in the year of grace 1283.” However, unlike in Pitchford, although he mentions it in passing, he doesn’t seem to have imposed himself on the occupants of Acton Burnell Hall. Perhaps they saw him coming and hid behind the curtains!

LANGLEY

Having trundled up to Kenley, presumably via Evenwood and Bull Hill, he turns back downhill, “and yonder is Langley Chapel, standing ruinous and deserted in the midst of a weed grown meadow, its weatherstained walls and broken roof presenting such a lamentable spectacle of neglect...having been used as a cattle stall or sheep pen.” So some things do change for the better after all, thanks to English Heritage and modern farmers with their advanced techniques!



Langley Gatehouse as it must have appeared to Timmins on the left and on the right since its restoration in the 1990’s.

Similarly, Timmins laments the state of the former gatehouse of the demolished Langley Hall, which he describes as a, "fine old structure...fallen sadly into disrepair". Again the building has since been saved by the intervention of the Landmark Trust, which rents it out for holiday lets. Finally, he notes that the gatehouse, "formed the approach to the original mansion; and part of the embattled wall that surrounded the demesne does duty nowadays as a cartshed." It still does over a century later.

FRODESLEY & CAUSEWAY WOOD

Having already covered over 12 miles that day and completed several rather impressive sketches of the main sights (all of which are reproduced in the book), Timmins records that, "we (he always uses the 'royal' pronoun!) now shoulder our knapsacks, and push briskly onwards again...between low, wooded hills in the direction of the south." He mentions, as asides, Frodesley Lodge, "a singular looking pile", and Frodesley village, "where Sir Herbert Edwardes, the hero of Multan (a long siege in 1848/49 during the Anglo-Sikh War), first saw the light, his father being rector of Frodesley at the time". He is also slightly caustic about Frodesley church, which he notes, "was rebuilt in 1809, and is a fair sample of the dismal 'style' then in vogue".

Timmins now notes that, "Upon overhauling the Ordnance sheet, the name 'Devil's Causeway' whets one's curiosity" and soon reaches "a little round arched stone bridge, showing unmistakable signs of antiquity" approached by "a veritable causeway... being roughly paved with large, thick, roughly squared flagstones, partly hidden beneath grass and weeds". Despite the passing of over a century there is still evidence of this ancient causeway in the hamlet of Causewaywood at the bottom of the steep road up to Chatwall.

Timmins relates that, "Tradition has it that this causeway marks the track of an old, old road, that in prehistoric times ran across country from the Watling Street, near Acton Burnell, to the Roman encampment at Nurdy Bank, on the shoulder of Brown Clee Hill."

He adds that, "Anent the origin of the bridge itself, an old countrywoman good-naturedly comes to our aid, and solves the riddle by explaining, "It was the Devil that builded un up in one night, and when cock-crow come er dropped they strewns down in a hurry out of's apen, and flew away to his own place." " One wonders if she managed to keep a straight face!

Timmins then heads off to Chatwall, Plaish, Cardington and on to Church Stretton to spend the night, a total distance of close to 20 miles.

If you are interested, the book, 'Nooks and Corners of Shropshire' (ISBN 0 9518589 2 0) is still available through online book stores or in local second hand bookshops for under £10.

John Long

NEWS FROM LONGNOR SCHOOL

We have had an excellent start of term here at Longnor School. All our children arrived back to school after the summer break excited and eager to learn. We welcomed a wonderful new Reception class and lots of new nursery children into our Little Owls classroom. Staff and children have been quick to establish new committees and clubs, and the children are now running their own gymnastics club, composing club, Lego masters club and doodle club to name but a few!

The children participated in our Harvest Festival in September, and we had many generous donations of food items which have been passed on to Church Stretton food bank. The parents very much enjoyed listening to the children's harvest poems, songs and prayers, especially the annual favourite song 'Conkers'.

Also this term, Kestrels, Merlins and Eagles classes have taken part in cross

country races in Carding Mill Valley, competing alongside many other local primary schools. The children had a wonderful time racing against each other and getting rather wet and muddy in the process. A group of Year 6 children also competed in the Wrekin College Maths challenge, spending an afternoon solving some very tricky maths problems and enjoying the generous hospitality. We are grateful to all the local schools who host these events which help enrich our children's education.

This term we are looking forward to some more special events including Bingo Bonanza on 7th November to raise funds for Little Owls, our Halloween Disco, the Frost Fayre on 15th December to which the whole community is invited and our school Christmas plays. It's going to be another action-packed term here at Longnor School.

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MESSAGE FROM **COUNCILLOR DAN MORRIS** SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOR BURNELL

Shropshire's gritting teams were out and about across the county in the first weekend of October, as they carried out their annual dry run ahead of winter. Shropshire Council, and its highways contractor Kier, has 25 gritters plus 4 reserve vehicles – along with nine footway ploughs, and nine snow blowers – ready to treat 25 gritting routes totalling 2353km (1462 miles).

Over the summer, work was carried out to ensure that vehicles and drivers are ready when ice and snow arrive. The gritters have been serviced and maintained, and over 22,000 tonnes of rock salt are now in stock across the council's three highways depots.

The October dry run is an essential part of this work, carried out to make sure the drivers re-familiarise themselves with the routes, gritters and any alterations, as well as making sure there are no problems with the fleet. Shropshire

Council's fleet also includes a number of mini gritters, with crews on standby to treat high-risk areas including town centre roads, pavements and car parks. Shropshire Council also maintains 850 local salt bins during the winter, with people able to use salt from their local salt bins to treat pavements and roads.

A great amount of work and planning goes into keeping residents safe during the winter and the Council highways teams are prepared for when the worst of the weather hits. Every year, when the wintry weather arrives, the Shropshire Council gritters and their drivers help to keep the county's roads safe and accessible during spells of ice and snow, and also help to keep Shropshire moving in even the worst of the weather. The nature of the work means they are often working late at night, early in the morning, on weekends, and sometimes on bank holidays – we may not see them, but they'll be out there when needed.

The gritters are owned by Shropshire Council and located at the council's highways depots in Shrewsbury, Craven Arms and Whittington. In addition, many contractors and farmers have snow-clearing equipment and the council's divisional officers deploy this supplementary equipment following heavy snowfall in rural areas. For more information on Shropshire's gritting routes and grit bins please see the following webpage

www.shropshire.gov.uk/roads-and-highways/highways-maintenance/winter-maintenance/where-we-grit/

If you have any other questions on any matters you think I can help on, please do get in touch by email

dan.morris@shropshire.gov.uk,
on X **@dan4burnell** or by phone on
07902 408400.

Dan Morris

Shropshire Council Member for Burnell. Cabinet Member for Highways & Infrastructure.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Council met on 6th August and 10th September. Papers and draft minutes are available at **www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings**.

The August meeting was an extraordinary meeting called to address a planning application for a new dwelling adjacent to Frodesley Hall Farm Barns. Local residents were well represented. The Council lodged an objection due to lack of sufficient detail in the application.

A number of Council projects were completed through the summer. The bus shelter at Frodesley was replaced – Adrian Evans completing a grand job using local oak boards. Hopefully this will last for 50 years or more like the previous one. The stone half walls at the Pitchford bus stop were rebuilt by Staves and village gateway signs were installed at all four villages.

Unfortunately, we are still waiting for Shropshire Council to progress the new 30mph speed limit, mirror, etc. for Frodesley along with additional 30mph roundels for Pitchford and Acton Burnell and removal of the old yellow signs at Acton Burnell.

We are also still awaiting responses from Severn Trent relating to sewage issues at Acton Burnell and Pitchford. The unsafe tree in the copse at the entrance to Acton Burnell Castle has been felled and the regular entrance was reopened in September.

Following further discussions with Atlas Tower Group, the Council agreed to support a proposal to install a mobile phone tower in the area to improve mobile coverage. An application will be submitted shortly for this to be erected at Frodesley Hall Farm. The tower should carry equipment for all service providers

and will give much improved coverage for Frodesley, Acton Burnell and Pitchford – crucial given plans to terminate traditional landline support in future. The topography poses problems for Ruckley and Langley but they should also see an improved signal.

The Council continues to consider options to keep local footpaths from becoming overgrown; possibly through organising volunteer groups or contracting. It is hoped to have some plans in place for 2025.

Everyone is urged to continue to report issues with potholes and eroded verges via the 'Fix my Street' website.

The next Parish Council Meeting is set for Tuesday 19th November 2024 at Pitchford Village Hall to start at 19:30.



Letter from Westminster

Dear Reader,

Ahead of writing to you, I have announced my decision to return to the backbenches after the conclusion of the leadership contest. It has been a great privilege to have served three Prime Ministers and a Leader of the Opposition in the Whip's Office since 2022. I am looking forward to the opportunity that returning to the backbenches affords me to dedicate more time to South Shropshire.

As Autumn descends and inclement weather returns, recent flash flooding has greatly affected villages such as All Stretton, where I have seen its impact first-hand. Following my visit, I have called on the government to drive down flood risk from every angle and raised awareness of flood alerts and the help available should residents be affected.

I have greatly appreciated meeting those who attended advice surgeries I have held across the constituency. My team and I have been following up on requests, as well as many others I have received via email, phone, and letter. In the coming months, my surgeries will be touring other parts of South Shropshire. Head to my website or get in touch to find out when I'm in your area.

I am delighted that after engaging with Openreach and EE, we were able to get a phone mast fixed in Stanton Long, which covers a lot of Much Wenlock and had been out of service for several months. I am raising the issue of mobile phone signal and broadband connectivity in partnership with the local council to seek investment from the Government.

Since the General Election, youth unemployment has sadly increased in South Shropshire. I want to see this worrying trend affecting rural communities like ours changed for the better. So, I used the Department for Work and Pensions Question Time in Parliament to hold Ministers to account on this. While I welcome the government's intention to deliver a plan to address this topic, I want to see a clear focus included on rural communities.

It has been great to meet with people and support the many communities in South Shropshire. I enjoyed my visit to Dorrington Village Hall for the Macmillan Coffee Morning, as well as joining the Friends of Stanmore Country Park for the unveiling of a hand-crafted listening seat and enjoying the local delights on display at the Ludlow Food Festival. I have appreciated meeting with local mayors and councillors to get an insight into the challenges faced in their areas.

Households across Shropshire will be feeling the impact of increased energy costs this winter, especially following the removal of winter fuel payments from those not in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit. I am glad my campaign to extend the Household Support Fund has resulted in an extra £2 million for struggling households across Shropshire. It will empower the Council to continue supporting those in need with the cost of everyday essentials like energy. I would also encourage anyone who may be eligible to apply for Pension Credit so they can receive support this winter.

Stuart Anderson MP



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