

# Culcheth Life

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Issue: 192  
March 2019

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*Printed by TwentyFourSeven*

# Editor's Comment



THE editor's piece last month sparked some controversy on social media following the phrase "use it or lose it" in relation to the battle to save the Raven Inn from demolition.

While I didn't actually write last month's editorial due to being away on leave, I have no issue with the comments written on my behalf.

But I do take issue with being referred to as an "Idiot." Firing off insults on facebook without being fully aware of the facts is not exactly the way for so called adults to behave.

Our editorial opinion was just a general question as so many pubs have sadly closed over the years due to lack of use.

Having read many comments concerning the campaign to save the pub, it is clear there are some differing opinions on why The Raven closed - and everyone is entitled to have one. But there is absolutely no need to resort to using insulting and offensive language. Just think of the example you are setting.

We have continued to cover the story as fairly as possible with the resources at our disposal and our live video footage of the demonstration outside the premises has attracted nearly 28,000 viewings - so I think we have done more than our fair share regarding raising awareness about the campaign to save this historic building.

At time of writing developers

Osborne & Co had written a letter stating they accepted the views of the majority of objections and were now proposing to change the layout and include the Raven in the amended layout.

They say this will be done at considerable cost due to the poor state of the building, but again stress the building is not viable as a public house.

It is not clear at this stage how much of the actual pub building will be retained but hopefully the character and appearance of the building can be retained.

Although this will not please those who want to see it remain as a public house, if the existing building can be kept in its entirety it is certainly a step in the right direction and better than it being bulldozed and lost from the street

scene forever.

Meanwhile we will continue to follow the story with interest and hope for a successful outcome, which will preserve the history of the building.

Good luck to those who want to take ownership of the building and retain it as a community pub. We will continue to report on your campaign as best we can.

**Deadline for the April issue of Culcheth Life is March 19**



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# Raven Inn set to be saved from bulldozers

THE historic 16th century Raven Inn pub at Glazebury looks set to have been saved from the bulldozers.

Warrington based property developers Osborne and Co have written to campaigners who have set up a fighting fund to save the pub, saying they have "accepted the views of the majority of objections" and now plan to "change the layout and include the Raven into the amended layout."

## Visual impact

Chairman Michael Osborne wrote: "We should be able (at great cost as the property is structurally very poor) to leave the visual impact of the building unchanged which should protect it forever.

"Obviously this will not satisfy those who wish it to remain as a pub but we are informed that the pub is not viable.

"The brewery themselves disposed of it some years ago (they rarely sell a successful unit) and two businesses have failed since. There is simply too much competition in close proximity.

"We hope this satisfies the majority of local people and would be pleased if you feel able to offer some support to our revised

scheme."

Meanwhile more than 450 objections were made to the controversial plan to demolish the 16th century inn and build 10 houses on the site.

Following on from a large scale protest outside the premises around 30 supporters of the Save the Raven campaign gathered at the pub for another demonstration

They then walked along Warrington Road into Culcheth village, pausing briefly on the village green before moving on to the Partridge Lakes café on Glazier's Lane for tea and a snack.

## Determined

Campaign spokeswoman Carole Watson said: "It was lovely to meet and chat with fellow supporters who are all determined to save the historic Raven Inn."

The group's next fundraising event is on Friday, March 1 when there will be a 70s/80s disco at Culcheth Sports Club (The Daten) with a raffle and games.

There will be a £5 entry fee and all money will be in aid of the Save the Raven fighting fund.



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# Pack Horse is "pub of the season"



CULCHETH'S Pack Horse Inn has been named as "Pub of the Season" by CAMRA – the Campaign for Real Ale.

The award is in recognition of the pub's fine cask ales and it was celebrated at a special evening at the pub with a free buffet and cask ales offered at £2.60 a pint.

The same team – Colin, Carol, Ken and Monica – has run the Pack Horse for 15 years and are famous for their constantly changing cask ales and home made Sunday lunches.

Cask ales are rotated every few days and new brewers are being introduced all the time.

On Mondays, cask ales are £2.60 a pint and there are special offers all through the week .

Tuesday: buy two large glasses

of house wine and get the rest of the bottle free; Wednesday: buy any gin and double up for £1; Thursday: quiz night, starting at 9.15pm with free refreshments; Friday: domino night – also with free refreshments.

The Pack Horse is right next door to Newchurch Parish Church, which makes it ideal for funeral and Christening buffets, retirements, children's and birthday parties, etc.

There is a function room upstairs which is perfect for small weddings and intimate dinners. It has a small stage for those who wish to dance afterwards.

Next event at the Park Horse is on Saturday, March 23 when there will be a celebration of St Patrick's Night when there will be live Irish music from The Vibes.

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A typical Elan homes, similar to those at Culcheth Green

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The exclusive development of just 15 properties is taking shape on Warrington Road.

Four and five-bedroom homes are available to reserve "off plan" by appointment only, with a show

home coming soon to showcase the spacious designs and superb specification.

Elan's Marie Morris said: "One of the key advantages of buying a new build home is that no one else has lived there, so you won't inherit someone else's décor and design choices. At Elan we are committed to creating homes you'll love inside

out. We offer a superb specification as standard, with many fixtures and fittings other homebuilders class as upgrades included within the purchase price.

"For example, the largest properties at Culcheth Green feature Symphony kitchens with integrated Smeg appliances including five-ring hob, oven, microwave and dishwasher, while

bathrooms are by Ideal Standard or Sottini. As a general rule, if the roof hasn't been fitted yet there will be time to make your choices, creating a home as individual as you."

Current prices at Culcheth Green are from £369,995 for a four-bedroom detached Brandon.

Discover more via [www.elan-homes.co.uk/culcheth-green](http://www.elan-homes.co.uk/culcheth-green).

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## Church to run seven week course during Lent

CULCHETH Methodist Church is to run a seven-week course called "Exploring Spiritual Practices" during Lent.

It will be held twice a week, at 10.15am - 11.45am on Wednesdays from March 6 to April 17 and at 10.15am - 11.15am on Saturdays from March 9 to April 20.

Church steward Amy Driver said: "We will be sharing our experiences and discussing practices such as prayer and fellowship, over a brew. Everyone is welcome - no prior experience or membership necessary.

"You are welcome to come and share as much or as little as is comfortable for you, for as many weeks as you wish."

More details are available from [culchethmethodist@gmail.com](mailto:culchethmethodist@gmail.com) or [amyedriver@gmail.com](mailto:amyedriver@gmail.com) by calling 01925 766550 or speaking to someone at the church.

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**Nursery places are available for September 2019**

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**Open Morning: Saturday 15th June - 10 to 11.30am**

We would love to see you come along to our Open Mornings.

Contact school to arrange your visit and ask any questions.

Apply for a Nursery place and arrange a personal tour.



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Glazebury CE Primary School,  
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**Glazebury CE Primary School and Nursery**





# celebrates success in al Awards - again!

It is the second consecutive year that the family owned and run business has been presented with the prestigious title by the Garden Centre Association (GCA) – which comprises over 190 members – and the 6th time in total that the Centre has held the award.

said: "What a fantastic way to start the year! We have a great team of colleagues who work extremely hard in all areas of the business and this award is dedicated to them as a thank you for all their input."

### Important

### Attractions

Bents, which includes attractions such as its Fresh Approach Restaurant, Mediterranean style Tapas Bar, Pet Café, Indoor Beach and Jurassic Cove Adventure Golf Course, has also been acknowledged as a GCA Garden Centre of Excellence, one of only ten in the country.

Like all member centres, Bents received a surprise spot visit by GCA inspectors and recorded the top score in the country, which not only saw them awarded Best Destination Garden Centre in the UK but also the national titles for Best Indoor Lifestyle Retailer and the Barton Grange Trophy for Creativity and Innovation.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden & Home

The award is extremely important within the garden centre industry; centres don't pay to enter or put themselves forward and members are visited by inspectors with no prior knowledge of the exact date to ensure standards remain high at all times. The audit process includes a detailed inspection of all CGA member centres, including all departments and people and then presents each centre with an annual breakdown of findings.

Matthew said: "The annual audit focusses on quality standards throughout the centre, not only of products and departments, but also people and service. We work hard to ensure standards improve year on year; an approach which has been rewarded by this latest accolade."

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## The Gardening Guide



“ Now is a good time to split your herbaceous perennials (cottage garden plants). ”

Simon Box,  
Plant Area Specialist

- Now is the ideal time to mulch to retain moisture; suppress weeds and improve the appearance of your beds. Remove perennial weeds first!
- Early spring is an ideal time to plant herbaceous perennials e.g. Geraniums and Oriental Poppies
- If tender bulbs produce new shoots quickly, protect them with fleece or mulch until the weather improves
- Weeding should start in earnest! Weeding now will save you so much time later on in the year

Bents Garden & Home, Warrington Road, Glazebury, Cheshire WA3 5NT.  
01942 266300. Check online for seasonal opening times.

For the latest events and online shopping visit [bents.co.uk](http://bents.co.uk)



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For the latest events and online shopping visit [bents.co.uk](http://bents.co.uk)





# Georgia inspired to launch Sustainable Living business

YOUNG mum Georgia Roberts has organised the areas first sustainable living event at Croft Memorial Hall on Saturday April 13.

Georgia from Golborne recently started a new business called Sustainable Living, selling a variety of products that help others live a more eco-friendly and sustainable life.

She explained: "My big thing is that each of my products has to tick one of my four Sustainable checks!"

These are:

- 1) Plastic Free
- 2) Made With Recycled Plastic
- 3) Produced Ethically
- 4) Reduces Future Plastic Purchases

Georgia added: "From shopping bags made with recycled plastic bottles to bamboo kitchen roll to Fairtrade chocolate, I'm trying to supply a good range of sustainable products.

She was inspired to launch her Sustainable Living business 15 months ago after having her first child.

"When I came to wean him I did some research into the potential health implications plastic could have to the human body and the definite implications plastic brings to the earth.

"This research made me certain I didn't want him to be eating from plastic. So I set out to find us a plastic-free alternative to the plastic plates and bowls I found in Asda down the road.

"My search led me to expensive options which weren't particularly affordable but as it was important to me I swallowed the cost and bought a set anyway.

"This got me thinking that unless I had been passionately against plastic, I would have likely gone for the cheaper, plastic option.

"So I started to look at the option of buying in bamboo dinner sets and selling them at a more reasonable price so that other new mums didn't have the same conscious over cost dilemma.

"After 8 months I now stock 40 different products with a view to stocking a lot more as soon as possible. There's something for all the family at Sustainable Living!"

She is now looking for like-minded brands or businesses to get in touch and reserve a stall. For more information visit [www.sustainableliving.co.uk](http://www.sustainableliving.co.uk)



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# “Mindfulness” group launches in Culcheth

A NEW “Mindfulness” group has launched in Culcheth – offering an opportunity to enjoy an evening exploring mindfulness meditations and gentle movement for relaxation and wellbeing.

The first meeting took place at the end of February in the Community Room at Culcheth Community Campus (The High School) in Warrington Road.

More details are from Cath at email: cathhawkins@yahoo.co.uk

### What is Mindfulness?

According to Professor Mark Williams, former director of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, mindfulness means knowing directly what is going on inside and outside ourselves, moment by moment.

He says: “It’s easy to stop noticing the world around us. It’s also easy to lose touch with the way our bodies are feeling and to end up living ‘in our heads’ – caught up in our thoughts without stopping to notice how those thoughts are driving our emotions and behaviour.

“An important part of mindfulness is reconnecting with our bodies and the sensations they experience. This means waking up to the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of the present moment.

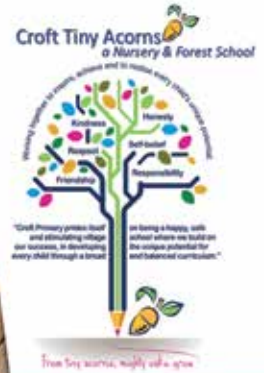
“Another important part of mindfulness is an awareness of our thoughts and feelings as they happen moment to moment.

“It’s about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives.”

## Temporary speed limit

A TEMPORARY 30mph speed limit is to be introduced on Holcroft Lane, Culcheth for a distance of about 1km from its junction with Hey Shoot Lane in a southerly direction.

The restriction, which would be in place from March 18 for up to 52 weeks, is to allow for safe entry and exit to a temporary depot associated with the M62 smart motorway programme.



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Here is a taster of our menu

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SWEET CHILI KING PRINCE, POTATO, PUM & SUGAR SNAP & REDUCE, 6.5	
HOT SMOKED SALMON OMEGA, 7	
BEETROOT, BUT CHERRY, APPLE, WATERCRESS, BLUE PESTO, 6.5	
BANAN CAKEBREAD, ROASTED CHERRY, 7	
SWEET ROAST BUTTERNUT SAGE, PUMPKIN, POTATO, PARSNIP, BEETS, 6	
PORKCAY, KIDNEY BEAN, LENTIL, 6.5	
*****	
ROAST BILSON OR BULL, 16.5	
ROAST LAMB, 16.5	
ROAST CHICKEN BREAST, 16.5	
ROAST HALL, 16.5	
HABIBUT, CHERRY SAUCE, NEW POTATOES, 16	
All served with Vegetables & Roast Potatoes OR Roasted Buttery Potatoes with Parsnips & Cheddar	
WILD MUSHROOM ROOSTO (S), HERBES DE (T), WATERCRESS, 16	
*****	
ASSI, MAC AND CHEESE BOX, 8	
*****	
ROASTED PUMPKIN, BREAD AND CRISP APPLE CRUMBLE, 10.5	
ORANGE VANILLA ICE CREAM, 10.5	
SALTED PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIE, CHOCOLATE CRUMBLE, 5	



We are now taking reservations for  
**Mothering Sunday**

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# Rotary Club raises £14,000 for good causes

ROTARY Club members at Culcheth are celebrating after a successful year in which they raised nearly £14,000 for local, national and international good causes and charities.

The Rotary Club of Newton and District Jubilee now meets regularly at Culcheth Sports Club (The Daten).

Attendance at Culcheth Community Day, Croft and Winwick carnivals, repeating the annual Culcheth Beer Festival and the popular Halle Concert, concluding with Father Christmas travelling with his Reindeer Float, enabled them to raise the money.

The club continues to work closely with local high schools via the Rotary Youth Speaks competition, the Excitement of Science talks given at Liverpool University, and the presentation of academic and non-academic prizes.

Primary schools have received funding assistance for play area and nursery equipment and the provision of "A Dictionary 4 Life" for pupils moving from junior to senior school education.

The club supported 23 other local causes and charities, particularly scouts, guides, cadets and organizations working with people with learning and other disabilities. Funding was provided for elderly persons parties at

Winwick and Glazebury and are organised at Christmas by Daten FC and Village Catering.

The Daten Players also received a donation.

Sponsoring the final Culcheth Horticultural Society Show, two of our members were invited to present trophies to the winners of numerous categories of exceptional floral, and vegetable displays.

Club spokesman Bernard Groom said: "It is sad that we are losing this longstanding society for lack of volunteer support."

But not all Rotary activities involved hard work. Members also went on outings – including one to the Cheshire Police Museum at Warrington, where they had a chance to dress up in police uniforms of yesterday.



The club will celebrate its charter anniversary in March.

Anyone interested in joining Rotary in Culcheth can dine with

them at Culcheth Sports Club on Tuesday evenings (7pm for 7.30pm). Call Bernard Groom 01925 733893.

## Candidates selected

THE Conservatives have named their candidates for next year's Warrington Borough Council elections in Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft – and pledged to fight to defend green spaces.

They are parish councillor Val Allen and local businesswoman Wendy Maisey.

Cllr Allen who is the former Parliamentary candidate for Warrington North and parish councillor for Culcheth, Glazebury and Croft, says proposals included in the borough council's local plan to build 500 more homes locally would be dreadful.

"The current volume of HGV's on Warrington Road through Culcheth and Glazebury, and through the village of Croft, makes it unsafe for our children to walk to school, we don't have the infrastructure to cope with this level of building".

Wendy Maisey, who runs a successful locally based IT business believes the council's plans aren't wanted by local residents and don't meet the needs of people looking to get onto the housing ladder.

She said: "We need to direct developers towards urban areas, make full use of derelict brownfield land and build homes nearer to employment sites, not in the middle of the countryside."

The pair are fully behind residents who are objecting to plans to demolish the 16th Century Raven Inn and replace it with 10 new homes.

Cllr Allen says the village is becoming nothing more than a housing estate.

"This historic building adds character and interest to the street scene. If we're not careful we'll lose

all of the places which create jobs and provide valuable services to the community".

Speaking ahead of Culcheth Greenbelt Action Day, the two candidates have launched a campaign to deliver a clear message to Warrington Council that they want to protect green space.

Deputy chairman of Warrington Conservatives Andy Carter said: "Both candidates understand the issues that matter locally. We've seen Warrington's councillors grow increasingly out of touch with the views of the people they are supposed to represent. Wendy and Val are great examples of the sort of people who get things done, successful business women and mums, hardworking and genuinely caring for an area where they've brought up their families."

"These are our first candidates to be selected for the 2020 elections and we really want to hear from other people interested in representing their communities, who want to stand as candidates and deliver the change needed for Warrington".

Anyone interested in standing as a councillor can contact the Conservatives on 01925 231267 or email [admin@onewarrington.org.uk](mailto:admin@onewarrington.org.uk)

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Wendy Maisey (left) and Val Allen.



# Planning well underway for Community Day



PLANNING is well under way for the annual Community Day on Culcheth Village Green on Bank Holiday Monday (May 6) which will once again be sponsored by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

It will be the first one since the Parish Council and Warrington Borough Council got together to fund a major project to have the green properly drained last summer.

Members of their parish council are now looking forward to seeing the Green fulfilling its real potential.

Community Day is the special day when charities, churches and youth organisations from across the local communities come together to raise money for their causes.

As well as the many charity stalls, some terrific entertainment has been organised for all the family.

There will be a Caribbean flavour to this year's Community Day, with a fabulous steel band to get everyone in the mood. There will also be a karate display and two dog shows.

The ever-popular Circus Whiz returns, along with a children's



entertainer, who will be appearing at intervals during the afternoon. There will also be a fairground, a pet show, Classic Cars, and organised children's games and competitions.

In addition, Radio Warrington will be at the event all day, providing music, chat and information. Nearer the time a flyer with the full programme will

be published on the Parish Website at <https://culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk>

This is an event which has something for everyone and is a great way to support your local charities and organisations, so come along to the Green on Bank Holiday Monday from 12 noon till 4 pm, visit the stalls and have a great time.



*Pictures from last year's event*

## Decision deferred on house plan

PLANNING chiefs have put off a decision on a plan to build a detached house in Hurst Mill Lane, Glazebury.

The scheme, which involves land currently occupied by a cluster of three garages, would entail demolition of the garages and construction of a four bedroomed detached house.

Objections have been received from three neighbours and from Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

As a result, the borough council's development management committee decided to visit the site before making a decision.

Neighbours objections related to asbestos which could exist within the garages, problems caused by Japanese Knotweed on the site, highway safety, a lack of adequate parking, flooding, tree preservation orders and the possibility of damage being caused to Hurst Mill Lane – an unadopted road.

The parish council is concerned about the wider impact on dwellings and land to the south and on existing watercourses, ecology, Japanese knotweed and parking issues.



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# Eagles entertain Dutch touring side

CULCHETH Eagles open age team entertained a Dutch touring side, Unicorns x13, which consisted of players from all over Holland.

The game started very fast but, unfortunately, the Unicorns lost a player through serious injury.

A large crowd saw Eagles take a 12-0 lead at half-time

The second half was eventful and physical, with yellow and red cards as tries were exchanged.

Eagles ran out easy winners by 42-14, but the game did not disappoint and the Unicorns' coach said it had been a great experience for his team, as the level of Rugby League in Holland was not of the standard as the NCL.

The Unicorns look forward to welcoming Eagles back for a return fixture.

Eagles point scorers: Tries: G.Wilde 2, J.Maxted 2, J.Woolley, J.Wilde, C.Hewitt, D.Appleby.

Goals: J.Wilde 4, D.Appleby.

Man of the match H. Wilde.

Unicorns point scorers: Tries: Taco De Boer, D.Schrom.

Goals: Uri Bremen, P-Uri Bremen.

Unicorns coaches are on the look out for more England friendlies and are also looking for teams to enter their 9's competition that takes place every April. Any team wanting to do either contact Craig at Eagles on 07825 347659.

On the same day, Eagles' newly formed girls team took to the field against a strong Ashton Bears.

It was a game that had everything and both coaches were pleased with their team's performances. Eagles lost 40-26 but their coach was pleased despite the result and is looking forward to the new season. Any girl wanting to join a very exciting new adventure should get in touch with Martin on 07791 064898.

At the start of the day Eagles u8's welcomed Leigh Miners and two teams from Latchford Giants in a Round Robin competition. The young boys and girls played their hearts out – particularly at the end when the Dutch team arrived and were among the spectators.



## Walking Netball at Lowton



MEMBERS of Lowton WI were introduced to Walking Netball at their monthly meeting.

The session was led by Anna Leyland, a coach from Wigan Back to Sport and started with a demonstration by the Wigan Wigglers Walking Netball team.

Then it was the turn of Lowton members to have a go and many took part – with plenty of giggling going on. It is hoped many will join the team on a regular basis.

Lowton WI meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7.15pm at Lowton Social Club on Newton Road Lowton. Details: Lin Hayes on 01942 207764.

## Poppy plays for her country - again

POPPY Lawson, a Year 11 pupil at Birchwood High School, was selected to play Under-16 soccer for her country – for the second year in succession.

She played in the England squad in the UEFA Development Tournament at Loughborough University between February 15 and 21.

The team played three games against France, Italy and Spain, alongside training and a full education package to compensate for education missed during the academic year.

Poppy said: "I was delighted and excited to be called up, as I loved the experience last year."



## Walking Football Charity day

CULCHETH Walking Football Club is to hold a charity tournament in aid of Prostate Cancer – and is looking for volunteers and sponsors.

Up for grabs on Saturday, March 23, will be the Culcheth Cup and teams from Warrington, Bolton, Wigan and St Helens will be taking part.

The tournament will start at Culcheth High School at 11am.

All players will be over fifty years of age and all games will be of 15 minutes duration. The event will be on a league basis with winners moving on to semi-finals and finals.

Volunteers are required to oversee games and help with logistics.

Club manager Denis Sutherland said: "Any sponsors or donations would be most grateful – and please come along and support a worthy cause."

Anyone wanting to help should email Yannis0131@yahoo.com



# Fascinating – but not like “Silent Witness

It was not like “Silent Witness” but work at the Chorley laboratory of Cellmark Forensic Services proved to be a fascinating topic at the monthly meeting of Glazebury WI.

Guest speaker Barbara Earnes, a forensic scientist employed at the laboratory told of her early interest in forensic science which had led to her obtaining a degree and a position at Chorley where a staff of about 90 people work.

They investigate and evaluate evidence for possible use in court proceedings.

Barbara made it clear her work was nothing like “Silent Witness” where the TV heroine rushed through the evidence area with flying lab coat and flowing hair. To prove this point, she produced her protective clothing and “volunteered” member Joan Stott to don the garb – much to the amusement of other members.

Her talk certainly captivated members.

The meeting was presided over by Barbara Worthington, who thanked Sheila Thompson for a daffodil arrangements which was then presented to Jenny Collier, to mark her Golden Wedding anniversary.

There was an apology for the cancellation of a coffee morning which should have taken place on February 23 but has had to be postponed to a date to be arranged because of unforeseen circumstances.

The meeting ended with the customary cuppa and chat.

Speaker at the next meeting will be Geoff Scargill, who will talk on “Peace and War, 1939.”

## Stables plan approved despite opposition

PLANNING chiefs have given the go-ahead for two stables and a store room on Green Belt land at Culcheth despite opposition from neighbours and Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.

The scheme at Lions Den, Holcroft Lane, Culcheth was approved by the borough council’s development management committee after members heard it had been reduced from three stables in the original application and that the buildings would be of a temporary nature.

In addition, stables were not considered inappropriate in the Green Belt.

The committee was told the development would share its access with the adjacent property – a residence and two buildings used as a cattery.

The parish council objected on the grounds the scheme would harm the openness of the Green Belt and the character of the countryside and because of concern the development would set a precedent.

Neighbours opposed the application on Green Belt grounds, the potential for the property to be converted into a dwelling, road safety concerns, access issues and a history of multiple inappropriate applications on the site.

Planning officers recommended the scheme be approved because the proposed stables would be appropriate for their intended use.

They did not believe the openness of the Green Belt would be harmed

## ‘Love Actually!’

CROFT WI’s February guest speaker Derek Poulson began the evening by going down on one knee and serenading one lucky lady with the song ‘Love is the Sweetest Thing’ as he kept members and guests laughing with his talk on the history of romance.

Valentine’s Day comes from Roman times. In AD200 the Roman empire needed more soldiers and so Claudius banned marriage and decreed all single men had to fight.

An underground Christian priest named Valentine married couples in secret to save the young men from being sent off to battle.

Many of our wedding traditions originate from ancient times. In ancient Greece guests threw confetti consisting of small fruit and nuts to wish fertility on the happy couple and we wear a ring on our wedding ring finger because the Romans believed a nerve ran from that finger straight to the heart. Decorating the wedding chariot, eating sacred cake and carrying the bride over the threshold all come from the Romans.

Marriages had always been arranged, the bride was regarded as property and came with a dowry paid by her father but in medieval times the age of romance began when the romantic story of Lancelot and Guinevere was published.

It was read by ladies at the court who then demanded to be wooed and this gave rise to courtly love or courtship as we know it. The romantic plays and poetry of Shakespeare and Ben Johnson illustrate how Tudor men did their courting.

In the 1700s a young lady at a ball may not have had a mobile phone or access to social media but she could signal her romantic intentions by clever use of her fan.

Members made their own paper fan at the meeting and were soon told that we were saying ‘I’m free’, ‘I like you’ or ‘I’m not interested’ by the way they were wafting them!

The next meeting is on Wednesday, March 20 at 7.30 pm at Croft Memorial Hall. Speaker is Judith Popley ‘My Life at Granada TV’. Visitors are welcome.

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