

Culcheth Life

Magazine

ISSUE 199 | OCTOBER 2019

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**Campaigners bid
for Raven Inn**

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Editor's Comment



DOES the Government's announcement of a review of the HS2 railway line mean that Culcheth might not have to suffer the massive disruption of a major rail link slicing through the village?

Too early to say, we suspect. But hope springs eternal and local campaigners certainly seem to think there is a chance that the Golborne Link – the section that threatens Culcheth and other areas – might never be built.

We hope they are right because the line would have a massive

impact on the village.

HS2 itself might be a good thing for the economy of the North West. But whether it needs the Golborne Link is extremely questionable.

The original intention was that the link would avoid congestion at Crewe, provide a depot at Golborne and a link to the West Coast Main Line.

But then the experts – as experts so often do – apparently changed their minds and decided an HS2 station and depot at Crewe would be acceptable.

The most recent indecision is largely based on worries about the spiralling cost of the project.

Scrapping the Golborne Link would save a hefty chunk of money so it seems an obvious solution to the problem.

So let's get it scrapped.

**Deadline
for the
November
issue of
Culcheth Life is
October 15**

One stop shop for health

A ONE-Stop shop for health and well-being is to be held at Croft Community Centre, in Smithy Lane, on Tuesday October 15.

The event is being organised by Neighbourhoods in Warrington – a branch of the borough council – between 10.30am and 2.30pm.

It will offer advice on a wide range of health, well-being and safety issues.

Among those present will be Trading Standards, the Fire Service, Warrington Disability Partnership and Cheshire Police.

Refreshments will be available.



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"Mystery at Greenfingers" is Culcheth Players' next show

"MYSTERY at Greenfingers" by J. B. Priestley is to be the next play to be staged by Culcheth Players at Culcheth Sports Club (The Daten) on Thursday October 17 to Saturday October 19 at 7.30pm.

In the closed Greenfingers Palace Hotel members of the staff are enduring a violent snowstorm.

They include the new social hostess, two maids, the assistant manager, the slick bartender and the

chef who is secretly married to the housekeeper.

Into this group comes Robert Crowther, the rather stupid hotel company detective sent to investigate something secret. As the snowstorm

intensifies, a Miss Tracey appears and has a passenger brought in from her car.

That night a shot is heard and Miss Tracey's passenger disappears from her room even though the doors and windows are locked from the inside.

There is an inquisition by Crowther, but it is Miss Tracey and the new hostess who solve everything.

Tickets are £7 and are available now. They can be purchased in person from the club, or through

the website culchethplayers.co.uk Alternatively, phone reservations can be made on 07943 517710 or pay cash on the door on the night of a performance.

Culcheth Players have been around for more than 60 years and perform two plays a year plus a pantomime. They are always looking for new members, either in acting or backstage roles. Rehearsal night is on a Monday in the main hall at Culcheth Sports Club (The Daten) at 7.30 pm.



A scene from one of last year's Culcheth Players' productions.

Apartment block plan

PLANS for an apartment block providing 39 assisted living homes have been submitted for a former garden centre site in Church Lane, Culcheth.

The scheme has been drawn up by ASA Homes and will shortly be considered by borough council planning chiefs.

The site has been lying idle for some years and has been the subject of numerous complaints about fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour, etc.

The applicants claim the development would improve the street scene and would be a positive addition to the local community.



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Historic Raven Inn on the market for offers in excess of £400k

CAMPAIGNERS battling to save the historic Raven Inn at Glazebury say they will not be "drawn into a bidding war" after hearing it was now on the market for offers in excess of £400k.

During a 'Save the Raven' public meeting at Culcheth High School, campaigners, who have successfully had it Listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), said the six month moratorium on the sale of the Raven had been triggered, by the owners, on July 25.

The Raven is now up for sale, for offers in excess of £400K.

The meeting heard The Help Save the Raven group has had the pub surveyed and valued and made an offer, for the full current market value. That offer had been rejected, with the agent stating there had been a

higher offer.

A spokesperson for the steering group said they were 'relaxed' about this situation and that they had left their offer 'on the table' and would not be "drawn into a bidding war."

"We have been advised not to disclose the valuation we have received on the Raven, so as not to prejudice our negotiating position or to provide a free valuation to any prospective competitor.

"We reiterated what we have consistently said, that we will vehemently oppose any future plans to demolish or seek change of use for

the Raven."

Earlier this year the local community raised nearly 500 objections to a planning application to demolish the Raven and build ten houses on the site.

The spokesperson added: "We discussed the plans that have been formulated to make the Raven a community pub. The plans are inspired by what our community voted for, via the questionnaires. People want the Raven to be a traditional pub, but to be much more than that. A community pub which is also a community hub."

Their proposals would include a Food hub: including pop-up restaurants to provide 'first time' opportunities for aspiring local chefs, home cooked food and traditional pub grub.

A Community Hub: including repair café and after-school club. Examine feasibility of shop, including post office facilities.

A Health and Wellbeing Hub: including Sports Clubs, Arts and Crafts exhibitions, mental health drop-in.

A Social Hub: including family and dog friendly environment, mother and tots group, 'Meet up Mondays' for OAPs, social meetings for all ages and abilities. Examine the possibility of a coffee shop.

The spokesperson added: "The four 'hubs' have been formed in order to deliver the most popular services

everybody has told us they want, via the questionnaires. Community pubs currently enjoy a 100% success rate. Firstly they provide what the community wants. Secondly, they can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"If the community buy shares in it they will use it; if they don't it won't happen anyway!

"In conclusion - We continue to work to prepare for a possible purchase, without committing to unnecessary expenditure. We continue, as always, to oppose any future applications for demolition or change of use."

In attendance at the meeting was an effigy of Colonel Blood, who has been adopted as a mascot by the group. It is believed the pub was built by Holcroft family in 1562 providing direct links with Colonel Thomas Blood, and King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn via the Holcroft family.

As manorial lords existing as far back as the 13th century, they achieved notoriety through the marriage of their daughter Maria to Colonel Thomas Blood, an Irish adventurer. A turbulent life of political intrigue was marked by a failed attempt to steal the Crown Jewels, when Thomas was imprisoned in the White Tower before trial. Surprisingly he was pardoned and eventually became a favourite of King Charles II, dying at his Westminster home in 1680.



Campaigners with Colonel Blood.



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Excellent GCSE results at Culcheth High School

STUDENTS and staff at Culcheth high School are celebrating after some excellent GCSE results.

Headteacher Mr Hunt welcomed students eagerly anticipating their 2019 GCSE results.

He said: "It was a vibrant and exciting morning at Culcheth High School as students, parents and staff celebrate some excellent GCSE Results.

"On behalf of the staff and governors of Culcheth High School, I would like to congratulate our Year 11 students on their excellent GCSE exam results. There have also been some fantastic individual performances, which reflect the hard work of the students in their GCSE studies. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the students for their efforts and wish them all the very best in their next steps.

"We are delighted with and very proud of our students' achievements. 76% of students

achieved a 'Basics Standard Pass', which is Grade 4 and above, in GCSE English and Mathematics. 52% of students achieved a 'Basics Strong Pass', which is Grade 5 and above, in GCSE English and Mathematics specifications. We have seen many excellent results across all of the GCSE subjects. Given the changes to education, assessment and examinations in these specifications, over the last few years, it makes this year's results very pleasing.

"We would especially like to congratulate a number of our students for their individual academic success and some outstanding personal progress. These include Caitlin Armstrong, Ethan Bent, Sarah Blundell, Faith Bridge, Charlotte Cooper, James Davies, Ella Driver, Alicia

Gibbons, Danniella Glenn, Taylor Greenough, Will Horton, Ella Hughes, Will Jones, Milly Marsden, Finlay Patterson, Joel Dennison, Lily

Hope, Morgan McLoughlin, Ruby Sahota, Mark Westwood, Harry Wood, Ruby Young and Sophie Young."



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76% of students achieved a standard pass grade 4-9 in GCSE English and Mathematics
53% of students achieved a strong pass grade 5-9 in GCSE English and Mathematics
29% of all GCSE grades were grades 7-9

Birchwood College celebrate outstanding results

Birchwood College is again celebrating outstanding Year 13 exam results.

Of the BTEC Applied Learning entries, 73 per cent were either a Distinction star grade or a Distinction grade with an overall pass rate of 100 per cent.

The A-level pass rate, A*-E, was equally as impressive at 99 per cent for all A-level courses. Moira Bryan, headteacher of Birchwood High School said: "Congratulations to all our students on these amazing results which is a testament to their hard work and commitment. We are so proud of them all."

Some fantastic BTEC Applied Learning successes from Birchwood College include:

- * 100 per cent Double Distinction star in Music
- * 100 per cent Distinction star in Acting,
- * 100 per cent Distinction star in Applied Science
- * 100 per cent Distinction star in ICT
- * 100 per cent Distinction Star or Distinction in Health and Social Care Diploma
- * 100 per cent Distinction Start or Distinction in Sports Studies Subsidiary Diploma and Diploma.
- * Bethan Swann, received A-level grades of A in Geography and B in Biology and Chemistry. She will now be going on to study Medicine and surgery at Lancaster University.
- * Ed Parry received three outstanding grades of

Distinction* in Level 3 BTEC Music and Acting. He is going to study Musical Theatre Performance at The Hammond, the North-West leading provider of performing arts education.

- * Riley Dean received the highest grades of D*D*D* in his Level 3 BTEC Sport and Business qualifications, in the same week that he made his professional Rugby League debut for the

Warrington Wolves in the Super League!

- * Oliver Radley is heading to an exciting Zoology with Animal Behaviour degree course at Bangor University following some excellent results.

- * Having achieved an amazing A, B and C grade in A Level Psychology, Law and Biology, Daisy Yemm is heading to the University of Liverpool to study Law.

Chris Burrows, Head of Birchwood

College, said; "We are absolutely delighted that these excellent results reflect the hard work of the young people at Birchwood College. With the support of our specialist subject teachers, small class sizes and our personalised learning programmes, students at Birchwood College have again achieved highly."

"We are also pleased that these results cement our position as one of the top performing colleges in the North West for BTEC Applied Learning"



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**Our sports programme continues
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**100% Birchwood College
Acting students gained
Distinction ***



**"The smaller class sizes give me the opportunity
to develop my skill more in lessons."**



**"Birchwood College has improved my confidence
and offered me great opportunities to develop."**





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Top honour for Pro

A TALENTED production artist has been made a member of the National Youth Theatre – the world's leading youth arts charity.

Rae Atkin, who studied Production Arts and Performing Arts at Priestley College, completed a three-week course with the NYT over summer and can now apply for jobs within the organisation.

The former Culcheth High pupil said studying BTEC Production Arts at Priestley had shone a light on a new future.

"I always thought I wanted to perform, but then I came here and got the opportunity to look after the lighting for a production of Sister Act," said Rae.

"I fell in love with it, more than I thought was possible. I had an epiphany and realised this is what I

wanted to do."

Once she had made the decision that her career lay behind the scenes, she started looking at what to do after completing her BTECs.

Rae spotted an advert for auditions at the National Youth Theatre, but they were just a few days away so she applied without high hopes.

However, the 17-year-old got her big break when she was offered a latecomers' spot and was invited to London to prove her talent in person.

After taking part in a three-hour workshop, one-to-one interview and showing off her portfolio of work

Police to move in with fire service

PLANS to move Risley Police Station into nearby Birchwood Fire Station, originally announced in April, have finally been approved.

They will mean that police officers and PCSOs currently based at Risley will move into the fire station in Ordance Avenue.

But they will also mean that the five-day a week help desk at Risley will be closed and its work transferred to the borough's central police station in Arpley Street, which has a help desk open seven days a week. Police say the Risley help desk has the lowest level of demand of any help desk in Cheshire, with only two people calling in for every 100 at Warrington.

Police and crime commissioner David Keane said the move would mean an increased police presence for local residents in a more accessible location.

It would also provide improved working conditions for police officers and PCSOs and better facilities for them to meet members of the public.

The move is expected to save Cheshire Police almost £500,000 over the next 10 years.

Birchwood Fire Station is set to undergo a major refurbishment in the near future.



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20th Nov at 2pm and 6pm
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Production Artist Rae

from Priestley, Rae was offered a membership.

"I am very proud of myself," she said. "I think I was one of only 100 people to be given a place on the summer course – and that includes all the actors as well."

NYT has been inspiring young people and audiences alike in the importance of live theatre for more than 60 years.

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During her summer course Rae

went over the basics of production arts, with a specialism in lighting, as well as learning more about the youth theatre's approach and methods.

Those who have taken the course are now perfectly placed to apply for roles within National Youth Theatre productions.

"Rae's talent behind the scenes is easy for everyone to see," said Priestley's Production Arts Tutor Mark Edington.

"She thoroughly deserves this prestigious opportunity and I am sure she will make the most of everything that comes her way as a result of it."



The Gardening Guide



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Simon Bax,
Plant Area Specialist

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HS2 review offers new hope for campaigners

THE Government's recently announced review of the HS2 rail line offers new hope to the Culcheth area – which would be devastated by the high speed railway.

If it leads to the line being scrapped altogether it would obviously remove the blight which hangs over the village.

But even if it turns out to be merely a cost-cutting exercise, Culcheth could still be spared as the controversial Golborne Link – the section that would cut through the village – would be an obvious section to be scrapped.

Local campaigners have greeted the review with cautious optimism.

Cllr Frank Allen, chairman of CADRAG – the Culcheth and District Rail Action Group – said: "If this a proper review it will show up the fact that the Golborne Link is not necessary and not cost effective."

"The Prime Minister keeps saying he is not in favour of HS2 at all, so we must have some hope. But even if HS2 survives, the Golborne Link must surely be an obvious economy that could be made."

Cllr Allen said CADRAG were making enquiries to see if it was possible to have some input to the review.

"At present there is no letter box with HS2 review on it," he said.

Parish councillor Keith Bland agreed: "As far as I am concerned, if they are going to carry out a review it can only be a good thing."

"It may be that HS2 as a whole

is too far down the line to be scrapped – although it would not be the first time a major scheme has been halted despite vast sums of money having been spent on it.

"But getting rid of the Golborne Link, which is not necessary, would be an obvious economy."

Cllr Jacqui Johnson – a member of the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England – said: "It will certainly be better to have a review than to not have a review."

"It offers some hope that we will not have a rail line running through Culcheth."

The Golborne link was originally intended to avoid congestion at Crewe, provide a depot at Golborne and a link to the West Coast Main Line for trains to Scotland.

But in 2014 plans were announced for an HS2 station and a depot at Crewe, along with a direct connection to the West Coast Main Line.

Campaigners say this removes the need for the Golborne Link.

If the Link remains in the overall plan, a wide area including High Legh, Agden, Broomeedge, Lymm East, Heatley, Warburton, Dunham, Partington, Rixton-with-Glazebrook, Culcheth and Lowton would be affected.



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First music and picnic in Birchwood Forest Park hailed great success

Report and pictures by Michael Berry



THE first music and picnic event organised by Friends of Birchwood Forest Park has been hailed a great success.

Many families came out of their homes to enjoy live music from the Birchwood Community Brass Band, conducted by Lynne Cordingley and singing by Lisa Ann Connor.

Lynne said: "I started playing with Birchwood Brass Band about 10 years ago after studying Band Musicianship at college and then moved to Warrington before joining the band.

"I came back to the band, after a break, to be the conductor from February of this year."

While people were enjoying the brass band, the friends of the park sold barbecue food and refreshments at the cafe.

Lynne added: "We had a good audience and it was fun to entertain and to see them enjoy it."

There was a variety of music being played by the band including film themes from Monsters Inc. and Finding Nemo.

After a short break, Lisa Ann Connor took to the stage to sing a wide variety of songs from the past which started off with Walking on Sunshine, which was perfectly timed with the sun coming out from behind the early afternoon clouds.

"I fell in to singing after enjoying musicals and studying in Widnes at a performing arts school which is no longer there.

"I do a bit of everything with songs from the 1960s to the 1980s, Motown, soul and modern songs with a vintage style."

Lisa performed songs by ABBA, Tiffany and a faster paced version of My Heart Will Go On by Celine Dion.

The sun continued to shine throughout the rest of the afternoon and people thoroughly enjoyed the August summer bank holiday weekend.

For more information on the Birchwood Community Band, who are always looking for new members, visit www.birchwoodband.co.uk





CULCHETH & GLAZEBURY

P A R I S H C O U N C I L

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Web: culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk

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PARISH NEWS

Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council Christmas Market 2019

**Saturday, November 30th
11.00 am to 5.00 pm**

Christmas Lights Switch on at approximately 4.00 pm

In addition to the Market there will be the Church Fayres at the Parish Hall on Common Lane and at the Methodist Church on Ellesmere Road. On Jackson Avenue there will be Children's Crafts and the Police Museum in the Scout Centre, and an Art Exhibition in the Culcheth Centre. This year there will be events on Church Lane as well.

Culcheth Library will be open with the Children's exhibition of art and writing plus the Friends of the Library will update you on the progress so far. Santa will be in his Grotto at the Methodist Church but will come to the Parish Gazebo on Common Lane to help our Parish Chairman switch on the Christmas Lights.

HS2

An independently led government review of HS2 will use all existing evidence on the project and consider its benefits and impacts, affordability and efficiency, deliverability, and scope and phasing, including its relationship with Northern Powerhouse Rail.

The old garden centre site on Church Lane

The landscaping plan has been approved and so the plan for 10 houses is in place. However since then another application has come in for a block of 39 assisted living accommodation apartments plus staff and guest accommodation.

Trees

The Parish Council is in discussion with the Borough Council regarding the planting of 5 "Feature" trees on Culcheth Green and two replacement trees on Culcheth Hall Drive.

Publication of Information

The Parish Council has adopted a publication of information scheme. Details of who we are, what we do and how the public can access information is published on the main notice boards, Common Lane, Culcheth and Culcheth Library and on our website:

www.culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk



Walking Football team set to return to Bolton Arena

CULCHETH Walking Football team are set to return to Bolton Arena at the end of this month following two recent successful visits.

The Culcheth team have been twice to Bolton Arena in recent weeks. On August 17th two of the teams played against Bolton opposition which ended in equal terms.

Then on Sunday 1st September they were invited to send the team to help with the training of new referees for the walking

football tournaments. The potential refs course was supervised and assessed by the Manchester F. A.

The Culcheth team played five games, each one overseen by a trainee referee who was being assessed on the course.

Culcheth play well against Bolton opposition, winning two games, losing two and drawing

one. Each game was of ten to fifteen minutes and all played in a friendly competitive spirit.

Their next tournament is scheduled for September 29th

again at Bolton Arena.

Culcheth WF team train every Tuesday at Culcheth High School 7pm to 8pm. All over fifties welcome.



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WI members learn about "Paul's little knick-knacks"

SPEAKER at the monthly meeting of Newchurch WI was Paul Stockton and he gave members a fascinating view of the world of the amateur collector.

The objects on display, "Paul's Little Knick-Knacks" according to his wife, covered two long table-tops. There were items from the home, farming, plumbing, joinery and other aspects of life in the past.

Paul has found all these things at car boot sales, antique shops, junk shops and sometimes just by chance. Newchurch members had to guess what the stranger objects were and nobody guessed the purpose of little leather caps for cow's horns!

A hairbrush for moustaches was another puzzle. A cannon ball from the Civil War was easier to identify, as was a workhouse pay token from 1813.

Irene Bromilow thanked Paul warmly for the entertaining display of his discoveries and he judged Newchurch's September competition

– A Tiny Ornament.

He chose Ann Wharton as winner, followed by Eileen Griffiths and Liane Clarke. Tea was served by Margaret Wilkinson and Freda Wilcock and then there was a flower quiz to close the evening.

Earlier there had been president Eileen Griffith's greetings for five "birthday girls" and thanks to Barbara Alldred for bringing a beautiful pot of white hydrangeas for the top table.

Eileen had very much enjoyed the recent BBC programme on "Jerusalem" and hoped other members had seen it as well.

She passed on a request from the local Poppy Appeal organisers for help with collecting in late October and early November.

How to plan for death

A SPECIAL event offering advice on how to plan for death is to be held at Glazebury Methodist Church on Saturday November 16 – "Dying Matters" Awareness Day.

Dying Matters is a coalition of individuals and organisations, including the Methodist Church and the Church of England, which aims to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life.

This is achieved in part by encouraging people to talk about their wishes towards the end of their lives, including where they want to die and their funeral plans with friends, family and loved ones.

The Rev Jan Harney, vicar of Glazebury, said: "It goes against every instinct to start planning for our death - in fact, only one in three of us has talked to anyone about how or where we'd like to die. But every adult, of whatever age, needs to look ahead and ask, 'What if?'"

"We simply hope to raise awareness, to help allay any fears. Our event will feature several groups and organisations that provide death and funeral related services, coming together to share their knowledge, experience and expertise with members of the public."

The event will take place between 10am and 3pm and will be open to members of the church and others to drop in to receive advice on caring for someone close, planning for the future, or simply finding out what the options are or how to plan for death.

Farm housing plan given the go-ahead



A PLAN to create 19 new homes at a farm at Winwick has been approved – despite objections from 60 people.

The development at Delph Farm, in Delph Lane was also opposed by Winwick Parish Council and borough councillors Cathy Mitchell and Terry O'Neill.

But planning officers recommended approval – and Warrington Borough Council's development management agreed with them.

Seventeen of the proposed homes will be converted from existing barns.

But a number of more modern barns will be demolished and replaced with two new houses.

Landscaping, parking provision and a footpath are also included in the proposals.

Six of the proposed homes are described as "affordable."

Buildings of historic value on the site will be retained.

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