

Culcheth *Life*

Magazine

ISSUE 223 | MARCH 2022
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**Celebrating 85 years
of Bents**

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monthly by Orbit News Ltd.*

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Printed by TwentyFourSeven

Editor's Comment



IT is good to see that councillors and campaigners in the Culcheth and Croft areas have formed a joint group to carry on fighting the controversial HS2 high-speed railway.

Let's make no mistake, if the Golborne Link goes ahead, it will have a devastating impact on the local area.

While changes in the original plan may have saved Taylor Business Park, the proposed route still ploughs through other local businesses and homes.

I've heard that the Golborne Link will eventually be removed - but until we see an official announcement it is vitally important to keep up the good fight.

Borough councillors and parish councillors from Culcheth and Glazebury and from Croft have now joined with CADRAG - the Culcheth and District Rail Action Group.

Local MP Charlotte Nichols is also opposed to the Golborne Link, as is Andy Carter in the South of the Borough. In fact, it is Mr Carter who has said he is confident the link will be removed.

But we have seen broken promises from Governments in the past, so nothing is certain until it is officially announced.

Personally, I have never been a big fan of any of the HS2 proposals as it appears to give lots of pain for little gain - although I understand it does provide a huge boost to the construction industry.

But I am not a regular train user although, from my limited use,

travelling to London is already accessible in around two hours, which seems pretty adequate to me.

I'd rather see our countryside protected than be able to travel to London faster. Business people have survived two years of a pandemic with remote meetings, so why not continue.

Also, the rail services have been less than reliable due to driver shortages during the pandemic and challenging weather conditions. As our climate continues to change are trains going to become even less reliable? Surely trains travelling at a faster speed will encounter problems in stormy conditions.

Let's hope the local lobby group can have some impact and deliver a

victory for common sense.

Meanwhile, I would like to congratulate Bents Garden & Home on their 85th-anniversary celebrations.

As a fellow family business, we now have three generations involved, it is always good to see another family business doing well.

Bents have been long time supporters of Culcheth Life and it has been a pleasure to watch them flourish and survive during unprecedented times.

**Deadline for the April
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“Have-a-go” councillor dragged along road by moped thief

A PARISH councillor was dragged along the road behind a moped when he tackled two would-be bike-thieves at Culcheth.

The 57-year-old would not let go of the machine which was eventually forced to stop and then grappled with one of the culprits until other passersby came to his aid and helped overpower one of the pair.

They then held him until police arrived and arrested him.

Cllr Neil Johnson – a member of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council since May – said: “I didn’t think about being brave or anything. It’s just something I did.

“I certainly didn’t think of it being part of the duties of a parish councillor.”

The incident happened at about 1.30pm, outside The Men’s Room barbershop in Culcheth.

The two alleged offenders had apparently arrived on their own moped and the second youth made off on this machine while the struggle was taking place.

Cllr Johnson said: “I saw these two lads standing near a moped and thought nothing of it at first. Then I heard someone shout: “Hey get off my bike” and realised what was happening.

“I dashed over and grabbed the lad on the moped. But he accelerated away and I was dragged along the road. He was forced to stop because there was a

car in front of him.

“But there was no way I was letting go.

“They had their own moped and the other lad made off on that, leaving his mate behind. Some other residents helped me control the lad who was still struggling. But he was only a teenager I think – he didn’t stand a chance.”

Cllr Johnson said he had no previous experience of unarmed combat but liked to keep himself fit with jogging and weight-training. He suffered a grazed ankle and some bruises in the incident.

“I’ve never done anything like this before, although I did help a lady who fell in the street the other day.”

A police spokesperson said: “Police were called to reports of an attempted theft on Common Lane, Culcheth.

“Officers attended the scene and found that members of the public had detained a man in relation to the attempted theft of a scooter.

“The 18-year-old, from Bolton, was subsequently arrested by officers on suspicion of attempted theft. He has since been released under investigation pending further enquiries.”



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Anger over business park demolition plan which could put bats at risk

ANY bats roosting in the former Noggin pub at Risley would have to be safeguarded before any demolition works took place as part of controversial plans to redevelop the nearby Trident Business Park.

More than 90 local residents have objected to proposals put forward by applicant St Modwen Developments to Warrington Borough Council for planning permission involving the demolition of existing buildings and to replace them with two large warehouses.

The 3.37-hectare site is located north of Daten Avenue and west of Trident Way and currently comprises a variety of "dated employment buildings", the former Noggin pub and areas of car parking and landscaping.

St. Modwen's planning application involves the demolition of existing premises and redevelopment of the site to provide buildings for employment use, access and car parking, landscaping, and associated works. Two new large warehouses would be clad in silver, metallic or grey metal.

A report from ecologist David Dutton reveals a bat roost has been located in one of the buildings to be demolished – the derelict Noggin pub. Other ecological issues include nesting birds and proximity to Manchester Mosses and Risley Moss. He says the development is located within 2km of the Manchester Mosses SAC.

Mr Dutton says a license will be required for the demolition of the former pub but given the low number of bats recorded he believes Natural England will issue

a license...

More than 90 objections have been received from local residents, including one, an environmental consultant with over 20 years of experience in construction and engineering, who said they had a number of serious concerns including the protection of bats. All bat species and their roosts are legally protected, by both domestic and international legislation.

He believes Natural England may not issue a licence.

Another resident from Cross Lane South objected because the proposed warehouses would tower above existing houses, blocking out natural light.

Noise from lorries and forklift trucks would keep residents awake.

Another resident added: "Why are such warehouses even being considered opposite residential properties when Risley and the Birchwood area is full of empty units away from the houses?"

He added that units on the Trident site had remained unoccupied for long periods.

A Cross Lane South resident added: "Besides the atrocious monster of a warehouse twice the height of surrounding houses, the impact of traffic on Warrington Road and Daten Road will create more misery. It takes me an average of five to ten minutes to turn right from Cross Lane South in the morning, I can only imagine

how long it going to take to should this be built."

An existing tenant said: "I have nothing against the application as such but must ask the council to offer help to all the many small businesses who are currently operating from the buildings to be demolished. Some may have to give up their business and if not struggle to find new premises in the area. We have been here 25 years and having looked around there

are very few small industrial units around."

The applicants say their aim is to create sustainable, well-designed buildings, which are good places to work. The yards would be securely contained and shielded with fencing and offer secure car parking away from HGV Vehicles. Car parks would be overlooked by the office area and separate entrances for cars and HGVs would be established where appropriate.



Safer Streets campaign to tackle violence against women and girls

A Safer Streets campaign has been launched in Warrington by Police and Crime Commissioner John Dwyer, helping to tackle violence against women and girls.

The campaign has been launched on the basis that everybody has the right to go about their daily routine without fear or prejudice.

Since the tragic murders of Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa in London, the debate around how the police and other services should tackle crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls such as stalking, harassment, sexual violence and domestic abuse has featured prominently in the national conversation.

A documentary filmed here in Cheshire, 'Stalkers', hosted by Stacey Dooley, highlighted the dangers faced by women and girls and the work ongoing in Cheshire Constabulary's Harm Reduction Unit (HRU) to protect them. The HRU helps victims to recover through practical support and Special Victims' Advocates.

Mr Dwyer heard first-hand about how the concerns raised across the country were no different here in Cheshire. In his Police and Crime Plan he outlined his commitment to tackling violence against women and girls through continuing to fund the HRU and providing more

more community-based support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence through Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) schemes.

Since taking office, the Commissioner has applied to the Home Office for extra funding to help tackle violence and intimidation against women and girls in Cheshire.

In November 2021, the Commissioner was successful in securing £550,000 for the Warrington Safer Streets project, which sees a number of initiatives being rolled out to help make residents and visitors to the borough feel safe.

Enhanced CCTV and street lighting will be added to the town centre, complementing neighbouring streets which have already been given the same enhancement. There will also be a 'safe taxi' scheme and an awareness and learning package for taxi drivers and other guardians to promote active bystander intervention – encouraging people to challenge inappropriate behaviour when they see it.

Pupils across Warrington will also be educated on how to spot and challenge unacceptable behaviour towards women and girls, and additional training and support will be provided to police officers to

enable them to identify perpetrators at an early stage.

Mr Dwyer said: "Tackling violence and intimidation against women and girls requires a collaborative approach and the Safer Streets funding supplied by the Home Office has helped the police, council and other partners tackle the issue on both sides of the coin.

It's vital that we work to protect women and girls from harmful behaviour, but that cannot happen without resolute action to prevent that behaviour from happening in the first place. We need to educate people that the perpetrator is always responsible for their own behaviour, with no exceptions.

"Using some of the initiatives mentioned above shows how well all the agencies involved have worked together to help tackle and prevent violence against women and girls."

The Safer Streets project in Warrington links in with work being undertaken elsewhere in the county. This includes the £300,000 investment the Commissioner secured as part of the Home Office's Safety of Women at Night (SWaN) fund.

This fund enabled Cheshire Constabulary to invest in technology providing a real time video call link between the call handlers in the Force Control Centre and victims of crime. This technology aims to reduce the

fear of sexual offending, improve the confidence that women and girls have in the police and justice system and make Cheshire's night-time economy safer for everyone.

Mr Dwyer concluded: "This technology demonstrates our commitment to making Cheshire as safe as possible. I want to see how it helps us protect women and girls and expand its use to other types of crime, if appropriate.

"It enables call handlers to send a secure link, direct to your phone, allowing them to view the incident instantly and give the caller quick reassurance.

"In the case of sexual assaults, if a victim calls the police immediately after an incident, the call handler can start recording a first account from the victim, enabling evidence collection at a very early stage, and may help to identify an offender if they are still in the area.

"There needs to be a concerted effort from all agencies involved to help improve the feeling of safety for everyone on our streets. As you can see, work is being undertaken but we can't rest on our laurels. I am committed to doing all I can to help and support victims, hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and educate the next generation on acceptable behaviour."

“ I SHOULD FEEL SAFE TRAVELLING HOME..”

Let's look out for each other
and put a stop to physical
and sexual violence.

We all deserve to
feel safe. **#SaferStreets**



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WARRINGTON

Celebrating 85 years of Bents Garden & Home as the family-owned and run business marks its 85th anniversary by welcoming a new arrival, with the popular kitchenware and home brand, Lakeland set to join the wider Bents family.

It is set to be a year of celebration at locally-based Bents Garden & Home as the family-owned and run business marks its 85th anniversary by welcoming a new arrival, with the popular kitchenware and home brand, Lakeland set to join the wider Bents family.

It is 85 years since Alfred and Margaret Bent started to sell roses from the front garden of their small terrace house, marking the start of what would be a very special journey.

Over the past 85 years and whilst never forgetting its gardening heritage, Bents has worked hard to

create somewhere that is no longer just focused on the garden but also encompasses home, lifestyle and leisure. The arrival of fellow family business Lakeland further enhances Bents' appeal as a complete day-out destination centre.

Matthew Bent, Bents Garden & Home Managing Director,

said: "As a family business we've never been ones to rest on our laurels. We've always followed our passions and taken chances, and we are committed to quality, outstanding customer service and innovation, all of which are in line with Lakeland's own philosophies and approach to their own family business.

"With their unrivalled collection of creative kitchenware and practical, time and effort saving ideas for the home we believe that they are going to fit perfectly into our family business, and we are all looking forward to welcoming them in store."

Emma Kay, Head of Property at Lakeland added: "We are delighted to be opening a new Lakeland store at Bents Garden & Home. It is a fantastic centre for our customers to visit, and is run on the same strong family values that are so important to us. Lakeland customers enjoy exploring our innovative, high-quality kitchen and homeware products, which we believe will complement the existing offering at Bents really well. We know that we have many loyal customers in this area who will welcome the opening of our new store and we are looking forward to announcing our opening date and welcoming into store later this year."

Over the past 85 years Bents has undergone a number of key

milestones many of which were introduced by Matthew's parents, Ron and Wendy Bent and went on to establish a number of key trends within the garden centre industry.

2017 saw the launch of the UK's first Open Skies Glass House, an all-weather destination where customers can shop for plants come rain or shine and more recent years have seen the opening of a £10m extension, housing a number of new home and leisure departments, including an extensive Food Hall and Pet Place with its own Pet Cafe. The arrival of Lakeland is another fantastic addition to the family and the latest step on the wider Bents' journey.

Established in 1937 Bents is now in its third generation, with four of Alfred and Margaret's grandchildren involved in the business: Matthew Bent, Managing Director; Rachel Bent Head of Visual Merchandising; Helen Bent, Head of Marketing and Katherine Bent, Head of HR. Under the guidance of three generations of the Bent family it is now a £25m turnover operation, employing over 400 colleagues.

Now, with a number of different dining destinations, outdoor play area, landscaped lake, Jurassic Cove Adventure Golf Course and on-site nursery, where it grows and nurtures over 60% of its plants, Bents is a very different entity

Charlotte Nichols MP
Warrington North

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to when it began life 85 years ago, but says Matthew: "despite growing in size we've worked hard to keep the great family feeling and

ambiance we have established a reputation for; something I think my grandparents would be very proud of if they could see us now."



The Gardening Guide



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

Simon Bax,
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

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Residents' protest over letters to "non-existent addresses"

A GROUP of Culcheth residents have lodged an official complaint with Warrington Borough Council, claiming planning consent was given for a "garage" overlooking their homes without them being consulted.

They also claim it was misleading to describe the building in the grounds of Norley Lodge as a "garage" because of its size.

The objectors, all from Ribchester Gardens, are Colin and Carol Platt, David and Alexine Balfe, Andrew and Lou Beanland, Mark and Katherine Hindley and Steve and Sam Russell.

They claim they have been appealing against the planning consent since last December.

Mr Platt said: "We have maintained all along that we have never received plans regarding this structure. We have been told, repeatedly by the council, that plans were sent out – and apparently they were.

"Unfortunately they were sent to residents in Shaw Street to house numbers that do not even exist.

"This building – a 'garage' – is taking light from our properties and soon, when velux windows are installed, will impinge on privacy.

"Obviously the residents of Ribchester Gardens would have very strongly objected to this building, had they had the chance.

"We have been very badly misled by Warrington Borough Council by, firstly, calling it a garage and, secondly, by sending out the plans to

addresses that are non-existent."

Mr Platt added that when he first raised the issue with the council, they were told: "Take it up with Royal Mail." He did – and was told it was likely the council's letters had been sent to numbers 1-5 Shaw Street – which did not exist – instead of 1-5 Ribchester Gardens.

A council spokesperson said: "A complaint has been received regarding the notification of local residents associated with a planning application at Norley Lodge. We provided a first response to a complaint made on behalf of multiple households in the area and, at the complainants' request, this has been escalated to a full investigation of the matters raised. We are currently preparing a further response which will shortly be forwarded to them."



Campaigners to carry on fighting HS2

COUNCILLORS and campaigners in the Culcheth area have formed a joint group to carry on fighting the HS2 high speed railway

Borough councillors and parish councillors from Culcheth and Glazebury and from Croft have joined with CADRAG – the Culcheth and District Rail Action Group.

They want to link up with other councillors and campaign groups along the line of the proposed Golborne Link – the section of the HS2 that would slice through the Culcheth and Croft areas

Frank Allen, chairman of CADRAG, said: "The HS2 Hybrid Bill for the section north of Crewe was published recently and we were very disappointed to see it still included the Golborne Link as set out in 2020.

"We have formed a joint group to campaign against the Golborne Link and seek its removal from the Bill as early as possible. If necessary we will formally petition the House of Commons, asking them to remove the Golborne Link.

"We are keen to join up with other local councillors and community groups along the Golborne Link to

present a combined front. We are also seeking support from our local MPs, who we believe are opposed to the Golborne Link.

"The Golborne Link will be hugely expensive. It will be very damaging to local communities, to jobs and the economy, and to the environment. It will deliver very few benefits and is very poor value for money.

"There is a good alternative to the Golborne Link. The existing West Coast Main Line north of Crewe can be upgraded as an alternative and this will deliver much greater benefits. It will cost no more and could well cost less and cause less disruption to local communities.

"We encourage local residents to contact their local MP and express their concern about the Golborne Link."

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MD Bill Bradley said: "We all know that driving shouldn't just be a privilege for people without disabilities, it should be accessible for all and with the BAS driving school packages, there really has never been an easier time to make this the case!"

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Utter dismay at 'behind closed doors' decision not to contest motorway service station plan

A councillor has described a feeling of "utter dismay," after members of Warrington council's planning committee voted behind closed doors, not to defend their decision to reject plans for a controversial motorway service station on the M62 near Birchwood.

At the recent planning meeting at the Town Hall members of Warrington Borough Council's planning committee voted not to continue to defend the appeal relating to motorway services on greenbelt land North of Junction 11 on the M62.

Cllr. Wendy Maisey, Culcheth Glazebury and Croft spoke at the meeting and again reiterated her



concerns about the inappropriate development on green belt in her ward. She pleaded with the Committee to support and fight the upcoming appeal in terms of resource, personnel and also requested that the advice to Warrington Borough Council from their Q.C. was made public.

The plan for a 100-bed hotel, fuel filling station, electric charging station and facilities building are included in the proposals put forward by Extra MSA which was rejected by members of the planning committee, against officer advice.

The applicant has subsequently appealed against the council's decision and a major public inquiry is set to take place in March – expected to last nine days. Moto Hospitality objected to the original application and will be one of the main parties at the inquiry.

After the meeting, Cllr Maisey said "The decision taken by the DMC was devastating news for the ward I represent. I'm also very uneasy about some of the proceedings on the night and that as an elected Council member I was asked to leave the room for the Part two part of the meeting.

"I challenged this at the time to



no avail and when the 45 minute Part two meeting was over I was invited back in.

Describing a feeling of "utter dismay" Cllr. Maisey added: "The lack of transparency and openness on such a huge development has left me feeling very angry. It's a double whammy on top of the fact that inevitably we will have a motorway service station forced upon us in my ward."

The five opposition Councillors in Part one of the meeting spoke strongly in favour of defending their decision made in June for the service station not to be approved.

However, when the decision was announced afterwards, the committee of 12 councillors, voted not to defend the upcoming appeal.

The committee heard that the National Highways, formerly

known as Highways England, had now indicated that it supports the new service area proposals.

Warrington's officers stood by the advice they gave the committee back in June – that the scheme should be approved. They said they could not defend the appeal because they would be forced to admit that their honest opinion is that the service area should be allowed.

In June 2021, Warrington Borough Council's development management committee resolved to refuse planning consent for the scheme, north of Junction 11. This was on the grounds it would represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Cllr. Maisey said at the time that the decision was 'a victory for common sense'.

Volunteers raising funds for community owl sculpture

TO celebrate all those who have given their time freely to a local community project, Rixton-with-Glazebrook volunteers have chosen to raise funds to have a tree sculpture carved in front of the recently transformed village hall.

Local chainsaw sculptor, Mike Burgess, has been commissioned to undertake the skillful task of sculpting two owls, a wise old owl and a baby owl and a provisional date of March/April 2022 has been booked.

Jill Eaves, volunteer and organiser said: "The wise old owl will represent all who have been associated with the hall since its initial building in 1972, almost

50 years ago. As a community building so many kind people have helped to manage and maintain the hall for all to enjoy and should be remembered. The baby owl will be a wonderful representation of the next generation to come, who will be using and looking after the hall in the future."

To help with costs, a Go Fund Me page has been set up and you can help make your mark by simply donating to this Go Fund Me page as a contribution to the £650 cost of the tree sculpture.

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Don't let your health go up in smoke

Smoking has some of the most harmful impacts on health and wellbeing – and people choose to inflict this harm by taking up smoking. People can choose not to smoke – it is hard to achieve but it can provide immediate and long term benefits. For National No Smoking Day on 9 March 2023 we outline seven ways your health will improve when you stop smoking.

Quit smoking to live longer

Half of all long-term smokers die early from smoking-related diseases, including heart disease, lung cancer and chronic bronchitis.

Men who quit smoking by the age of 30 add 10 years to their life. People who kick the habit at 60 add 3 years to their life.

In other words, it's never too late to benefit from stopping. Being smoke-free not only adds years to your life, but also greatly improves your chances of a disease-free, mobile, happier old age.

Stopping smoking lets you breathe more easily

People breathe more easily and cough less when they give up smoking because their lung capacity improves by up to 10% within 9 months.

In later years, having maximum lung capacity can mean the difference between having an active, healthy old age and wheezing when you go for a walk or climb the stairs.

Ditch the cigarettes and feel less stressed

The withdrawal from nicotine between cigarettes can heighten feelings of stress.

As the stress of withdrawal feels the same as other stresses, it's easy to confuse normal stress with nicotine withdrawal, so it can seem like smoking is reducing other stresses.

But this is not the case. In fact, scientific studies show people's stress levels are lower after they stop smoking.

If you find that you're prone to stress, replacing smoking with a

healthier, better way of dealing with stress can give you some real benefits.

Stopping smoking gives you more energy

Within 2 to 12 weeks of stopping smoking, your blood circulation improves. This makes all physical activity, including walking and running, much easier.

You'll also give a boost to your immune system, making it easier to fight off colds and flu. The increase in oxygen in the body can also reduce tiredness and the likelihood of headaches.

Stop smoking for younger-looking skin

Stopping smoking has been found to slow facial ageing and delay the appearance of wrinkles.

The skin of a non-smoker gets more nutrients, including oxygen, and stopping smoking can reverse the sallow, lined complexion smokers often have.

Ex-smokers are also less likely than smokers to get gum disease and prematurely lose their teeth.

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals

NHS Foundation Trust

A smoke-free home protects your loved ones

By stopping smoking, you'll be protecting the health of your non-smoking friends and family, too.

Breathing in secondhand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and stroke.

In children, it doubles the risk of getting chest illnesses, including pneumonia, ear infections, wheezing and asthma.

They also have 3 times the risk of getting lung cancer in later life compared with children who live with non-smokers.

If you want to achieve these benefits by stopping smoking your GP can refer you to an NHS stop smoking adviser, or you can phone your local stop smoking service to make an appointment with an adviser. The Smokefree National Helpline is 0300 123 1044.

Quit Smoking Start Saving

Join the thousands of people who are quitting smoking.



Download the free NHS Quit Smoking app to get started.



Better Health
Let's do this



WI members look forward to "Picnic in the Park"

CULCHETH and Newchurch WI are hoping their members will get involved in the "Picnic in the Park" to be held on June 5 as part of local celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

The event will be held on Culcheth Village Green and local families will be invited to join members of the Parish Council.

WI members are also looking forward to Community Day, on Bank Holiday Monday, May 2 when they hope to have a stall.

The WI's Spring Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday, March 30.

The February meeting was held at Newchurch Parish Hall, when President Eileen Griffiths welcomed members and chose Joan Hunt and June Jolly to be the afternoon's tea hostesses. Cards for the February and March "Birthday Girls" were given out and Helen Slattery brought a bouquet of spring flowers for the top table.

Tea was then served by Joan and June.

The expected speaker failed to appear but speakers' Secretary Helen Slattery saved the day. She gave a fascinating talk about her great grandfather William Sheasby and her grandfather Henry Sheasby who both had long careers in the police service.

William became Chief Constable of the Macclesfield Police in his late twenties and his son Henry followed him in 1907 after serving in Crewe.

Both father and son had problems with improving training and also conditions in police stations. William made the cells more secure after a woman prisoner escaped. Drunken fights were a constant problem, as today. Both made modern improvements where possible and certainly worked hard for Macclesfield.

Phyllis Longson was delighted to give the vote of thanks as she is a retired police officer with family ties in Macclesfield.

The afternoon's competition winners were Aileen Paterson, followed by Jean Riley.

March speaker will be John Hooley - and his subject "Old and New Macclesfield, a Taste of Treacle Town".

The competition is "Something Silk."

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