

# Culcheth Life

Magazine

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FREE EVERY MONTH

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First look inside  
see page 8



## Historic Raven Inn saved

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WA4 1AT*Culcheth Life is published monthly by Orbit News Ltd.**The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and nothing may be reprinted or reproduced without prior permission of the publishers.**The publishers are not liable for any statement made or opinion expressed by third parties in this publication.**Printed by TwentyFourSeven*

# Editor's Comment



## A huge congratulations to every single person involved in the campaign to save the Raven Inn at Glazebury.

An absolutely fantastic achievement for all those involved – especially the “White Knights” who funded the purchase.

Looking at the interior photographs it looks like a lot of hard work lies ahead to get the community pub up and running – but I have every confidence in the

team and the local community to ensure this exciting venture gets off the ground.

We have certainly come a long way since the early days of the campaign, when our suggestion of “using it or losing it” was met with some calls for me being strung up from a local lamp post!

While a lot of water has since gone under the bridge – the message will remain the same once the doors open again – use it or lose it – I will certainly be looking forward to my first pint on the premises – hopefully in the not too distant future.

## Croft to celebrate Queen's Platinum Jubilee

CROFT Parish Council, along with local organisations and residents, is putting together plans to take part in the nationwide celebrations for the Queen's 70 years on the throne.

Events across the country will start on Thursday June 2 with the lighting of more than 1,000 beacons, one of which will be at Southworth Hall Lane Farm in Croft, all to be lit at 21:45.

This will be followed up with a picnic in the park, weather permitting on Croft Playing Fields on Sunday June 5 from 12.30 until 4pm. Everyone is invited to bring their own tables and chairs or rugs/blankets and food and drinks. The picnic will include entertainment and fun for all.

The parish council is asking everyone to get involved by highlighting the village with bunting

and flag displays. Planning for the weekend will continue right up to June 2 and all ideas and offers of help are welcome. Please register your interest through Croft Parish Council's website.

The council would particularly

like to hear from people born in 1952. Contact [croftparishcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:croftparishcouncil@gmail.com)

Closer to the celebration weekend more information will be available through social media and on parish council noticeboards.

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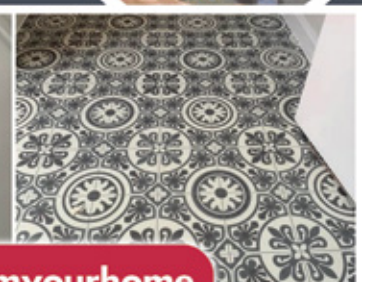
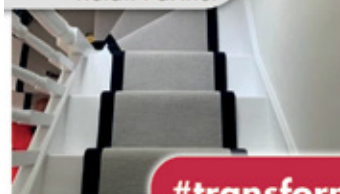
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# Campaigners save historic Raven Inn from demolition

**THE hard work starts now as the Friends of the Raven Inn (formerly, Help Save the Raven), gathered outside the iconic pub to mark saving it from the risk of demolition.**

The historic Raven Inn was purchased, at auction for £278,000, on the 31st of March. It will reopen as a community pub, but there will be some work required first.

Spokesperson Peter Sturman, who is confident the community pub venture will be a success, said: "In a way, we come full circle today."

"I remember a cold day, with snow on the ground, over three years ago. We all stood outside the Raven, in a peaceful yet very determined demonstration against plans to demolish the Raven and replace it with a few nondescript houses. That determination has grown and grown over the last three years."

"We have seen off two planning applications, had the Raven listed as an Asset of Community Value, held public meetings, made a number of offers to purchase the Raven, conducted a survey to see what our community wants from the Raven and finally been successful in purchasing the Raven."

Now the building has been saved the Friends of the Raven Inn team is turning their minds toward clearing, cleaning and refurbishing the historic building – starting with the ground floor pub.

The two main requirements for the new owners are labour and funds.

Peter Sturman added: "There has already been a fantastic response

from the community. We have a comprehensive system for recruiting and organising our workforce."

"We have been considering funding streams since 2019. One avenue many community pubs go down is to raise capital by selling shares in the enterprise. We are seriously exploring that option. We are taking advice from others who have been down a similar route."

"We will also be guided by the Plunkett Foundation, who has been advising and assisting us since the early days. One immediate advantage of raising capital via shares is that it allows people to invest in the venture and be involved, in that way."

"We are also exploring avenues such as Crowd Funding and Kick Starter. Likewise, we are also looking at the Community Ownership Fund, which is part of the government's levelling up programme."

"It is important that we choose the right funding streams for our purpose. We are also well aware that going for too many, at once, could engulf us in a bureaucratic nightmare."

"As soon as we have our intended funding streams properly and correctly set up, we will launch them and invite people to participate."

"Watch this space!"

See page 8 to get the first look inside the Raven now that campaigners have taken possession.



First look inside, see page 8



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# Crowds flock back to Community Day after absence of two years

**AFTER an absence of two years due to the pandemic crowds flocked to the Culcheth Community Day event on Bank Holiday Monday, organised by Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council.**

Despite grey skies, the rain held off as Parish Council Chairman Cllr. Ben Allred performed the official opening of the event which is aimed to provide a much-needed boost to charities and local organisations hit hard by the pandemic.

Entertainment included a performance by the Batido Rio Samba Band along with several performances by Children's Entertainer Ian "Zippy" Lees, along with the Extreme Mountain Bike Show.

Throughout the day there were

various community stalls, classic cars, motorbikes and a tractor show as the community event made a welcome return.

Various community stalls included Friends of Culcheth Library and Friends of the Raven Inn at Glazebury, who successfully ran a campaign to save their community pub.

Plans are now in the pipeline for the return of Culcheth and Glazebury community market later in the year in the countdown to Christmas.

Pictures: John Hopkins & Matt Dempsey



Parish Council Chairman Cllr. Ben Allred



Debbie Leach from Birchwood Lions with Her Majesty



Batido Rio Samba Band



Entertainer Ian Zippy Lees.



Alan Fern from Wild Wings Birds of Prey with "Boo" a South American Spectacle Owl



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# Could former Culcheth resident become prime minister?

**ANDY Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester and a former Culcheth resident, appears not to have ruled out the possibility of challenging for leadership of the Labour Party.**

During a live interview with GB News, the former Leigh MP and one-time Shadow Home Secretary refused to rule out the possibility of him returning to Westminster.

But he insisted he still has a job to finish in the North West.

Mr Burnham spent much of his youth in the Culcheth area and was a pupil at St Aelred's Catholic High School, Newton-le-Willows.

During the broadcast, he was asked by interviewer Eamonn Holmes if he would be returning to national politics in Westminster. He refused to rule it out and replied: "No time soon."

He also left a door open in reply to a suggestion that he is the natural candidate to replace Labour Party leader Keir Starmer.

But he also admitted that he found it difficult at times to function effectively in Westminster when he was part of the Labour front-bench.

He added: "My heart is here and always has been. I love the North West of England, I love Manchester but I've got affinities to Liverpool as well."

"I just always felt a bit of a fish out of water at times in Westminster,

it wasn't my natural habitat."

He said he had a tough job to do in Manchester – and was staying put in Manchester to serve a full second term as mayor. But he would be open to suggestions when that ends in May 2024.

"I'm really genuinely passionate about what we're doing here. The North of England I think has got the best opportunity we'll ever have to change, to get the transport that we need."

"This sounds like a politician's answer, but it actually happens to be true, I love what I'm doing here, I consider it a complete privilege to do this, serving a full second term."

"Obviously, I might consider my options after that, but I actually feel much happier in this job than I ever did when I was in Westminster and the reason why is that you can be yourself."

Mr Burnham suggested he valued the independence his current role afforded him: "Sometimes in politics in Westminster, you have to behave a certain way, to say certain things, to vote in a certain way."



## WI celebrates its 76th birthday

GLAZEBROOK W.I. celebrated its 76th 'birthday "party", at the newly refurbished village hall, in Hollins Green. The occasion opened with the singing of "Jerusalem" and president Doreen Thomason, welcomed a large number of members.

In the absence of the secretary, Pat Carol read the minutes. This included; Cheshire Show-stewards needed, the AGM in Liverpool, and a new venue for their 'Mossland Group' meetings, now to be Glazebury Methodist Church. Business, continued, with correspondence informing members that Selina Prescott, would become the new chair, of the Cheshire Federation.

Members then enjoyed a most delicious tea, with home-made chocolate cakes, strawberry cream cakes, and Bakewell tarts - all made by the president!

A "Royal" quiz followed, consisting of 33 photos of Royals over the years. After this old Glazebury WI archive photographs were brought out, including many of much loved members no longer here, visits, craft shows, concerts, etc.

Members enjoyed sharing many happy memories.

## Fundraiser was a great night out and raised £1,165

A MUSICAL evening and hot pot supper raised £1,165 for Culcheth Village Library Renovation – and enabled local people to have a good night out as well.

The Step into Spring with Soundtrack event at Culcheth Village Club was attended by about 120 local people.

Janet Evans, of the Friends of Culcheth Library, said: "The Soundtrack band, led by Gwen Caddick, was brilliant and the players were very generous with their time and support in aid of the library."


"Wayne and Warren Bibby at The British Legion were also extremely generous in letting us have the room and the hot pot supper for a very reasonable price - it was their way of contributing to the renovation fund. Thank you to everyone."

"We raised £1,165 from event tickets, raffle tickets, and donations."



"It was a lot of hard work but well worth it."



"The library will soon become the 'Jewel in the Crown' of Culcheth, and by definition, of Warrington Borough Council."






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# Rallying cry for help to support historic St Oswald's Church

**A rallying cry for support has been made to help ensure the future of the historic St Oswald's Church at Winwick, with the earliest parts of the current building dating back to the 13th century.**

Used as a base for Oliver Cromwell's troops during the civil war, it also witnessed the marriage of Titanic Captain Edward Smith.

Local resident Stuart Mann, who runs the Winwick and Hermitage Green Facebook page said: "Years of slowly declining congregations, millions of pounds worth of restoration work and the pandemic have put the church finances in a very delicate state and unfortunately if something isn't done soon, it would not be an understatement to say the central focal point of our beautiful village may be under threat."

"You may or may not be a regular churchgoer, but I hope you would

agree Winwick and Hermitage Green without a working church just wouldn't be the same.

"Maybe you or someone you know was christened, married or confirmed in the church? Maybe you sang 'Little Donkey' or 'Once in Royal David's City' as a child at a carol concert? Maybe you've enjoyed the beautiful Light up Winwick Christmas tree that shines brightly each year for all to see."

"Maybe you pass the church border and smile at the amazing work the local volunteers have done to bring some colour to the place we live and love?"

"If you, like me feel blessed to

have such a wonderful church at the heart of our community then please be aware of its troubles and wherever possible put your thinking cap on as to what we can do to help it. For instance, the church ALWAYS welcomes volunteers for upkeep and maintenance. Maybe you're a tradesman who could spare some time to help out with the odd job now and again?"

A church at Winwick is recorded in the Domesday Book and the earliest parts of the present church are the bases of the north arcade which date from the early 13th century, and the walls of the Legh Chapel and the organ chamber which are dated 1330.

The west tower was built in 1358 and the walls and north arcade of the nave (except for the Legh Chapel and the organ chamber)

date from 1580.

There was much damage to the church in 1648 when Oliver Cromwell stationed his troops there after the Battle of Red Bank. The south porch was added in 1720, and the south arcade of the nave was rebuilt in 1836 reusing earlier stones. The chancel, sanctuary and vestry were rebuilt by Pugin in 1847-49 for the 13th Earl of Derby. The spire was rebuilt and the church was restored in 1869 by the Lancaster partnership of Paley and Austin. On Thursday 13 January 1887, Titanic Captain Edward Smith married Sarah Eleanor Pennington in the church.

Anyone interested in supporting or would like to know more please use the following link <http://www.stoswaldwinwick.church/contact.html>



## Charlotte Nichols MP Warrington North

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# Bents raise over £44.5k for Solving Kids Cancer charity



Pictured top (l to r): Joanna Huddart from Manchester Mind, Matthew Bent, Cassie and Stewart Leaver with Dougie and Gail Jackson, CEO of Solving Kids Cancer.

## AS Bents Garden & Home welcomes Manchester Mind as its new charity of the year, it can also announce raising £44.5k for last year's charity Solving Kids Cancer.

Customers and colleagues have once again shown enormous generosity in helping Bents raise this incredible amount for its 2021 Charity of the Year, money which will help this fantastic children's charity in its fight for a future where no child dies of neuroblastoma or suffers from its treatments.

The charity has been one very close to the hearts of everyone at Bents, following the loss of the company's Financial Director's great-niece, 6-year-old Jossie Leaver who bravely battled with neuroblastoma. Jossie's parents' Stewart and Cassie Leaver and younger brother Dougie were joined by Gail Jackson CEO of Solving Kids Cancer to accept the fundraising total.

Said Gail: "We are honoured to have been chosen by Bents as their Charity of the Year. It has been our absolute pleasure working together over the past year, the Butterfly Ball being a highlight, it was the most magical evening."

"To receive £44.6k from Bents is incredible, this amount of money will make such a huge difference to Solving Kids' Cancer UK and allow us to support children diagnosed with the devastating cancer neuroblastoma and invest in clinical research. Bents support and enthusiasm for fundraising activities has been magnificent. Thank you so much to everyone at Bents and

Stewart and Cassie Leaver."

This year's handover took place before the annual Bents' Bunny Hop, returning after a two-year absence due to lockdowns, and the team from Solving Kids Cancer was also joined for the occasion by representatives from Manchester Mind; Bents 2022 Charity of the Year.

Manchester Mind has been supporting better mental health for all in Manchester for over 30 years and this year will be supported by Bents with all fundraising to be donated to help on a local basis.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents Garden & Home said: "We are absolutely delighted to have raised so much for Solving Kids Cancer and I would like to say a big thank you to all our customers and colleagues who have helped throughout the year to make the campaign such a success."

"We are now looking forward to working with Manchester Mind, another fantastic cause which we hope to not only raise funds for, but also awareness of the fantastic work they do to support mental health."

Representatives from both charities were joined by Bents' sponsored Leigh Centurions Rugby Player, Tom Nisbett, in the countdown to the Bunny Hop, an event which kickstarted the 2022 fundraising campaign.

## The Gardening Guide



Plant out warm weather crops such as tomatoes, squashes, cucumbers and peppers.

Simon Bax,  
Plant Area Specialist

- Start applying summer lawn foods now - remember to water them in well
- Help the environment by composting as much of your garden waste as possible
- Evergreen hedges can be given their first trim of the season - if the clippings are not too woody, they can be mixed in to the compost heap
- Remove flowers that have finished to ensure a continuity of bloom - this stops the plant wasting energy in producing seeds that are unwanted

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# First look inside historic Raven Inn as sale completes

**CAMPAIGNERS** who successfully bought the historic Raven Inn at Glazebury have now taken possession of their community pub and seen firsthand the task at hand to restore it to its former glory.

Friends of the Raven Inn spokesperson Peter Sturman said: "There is a lot of work to be done. As can be seen from the internal photographs.

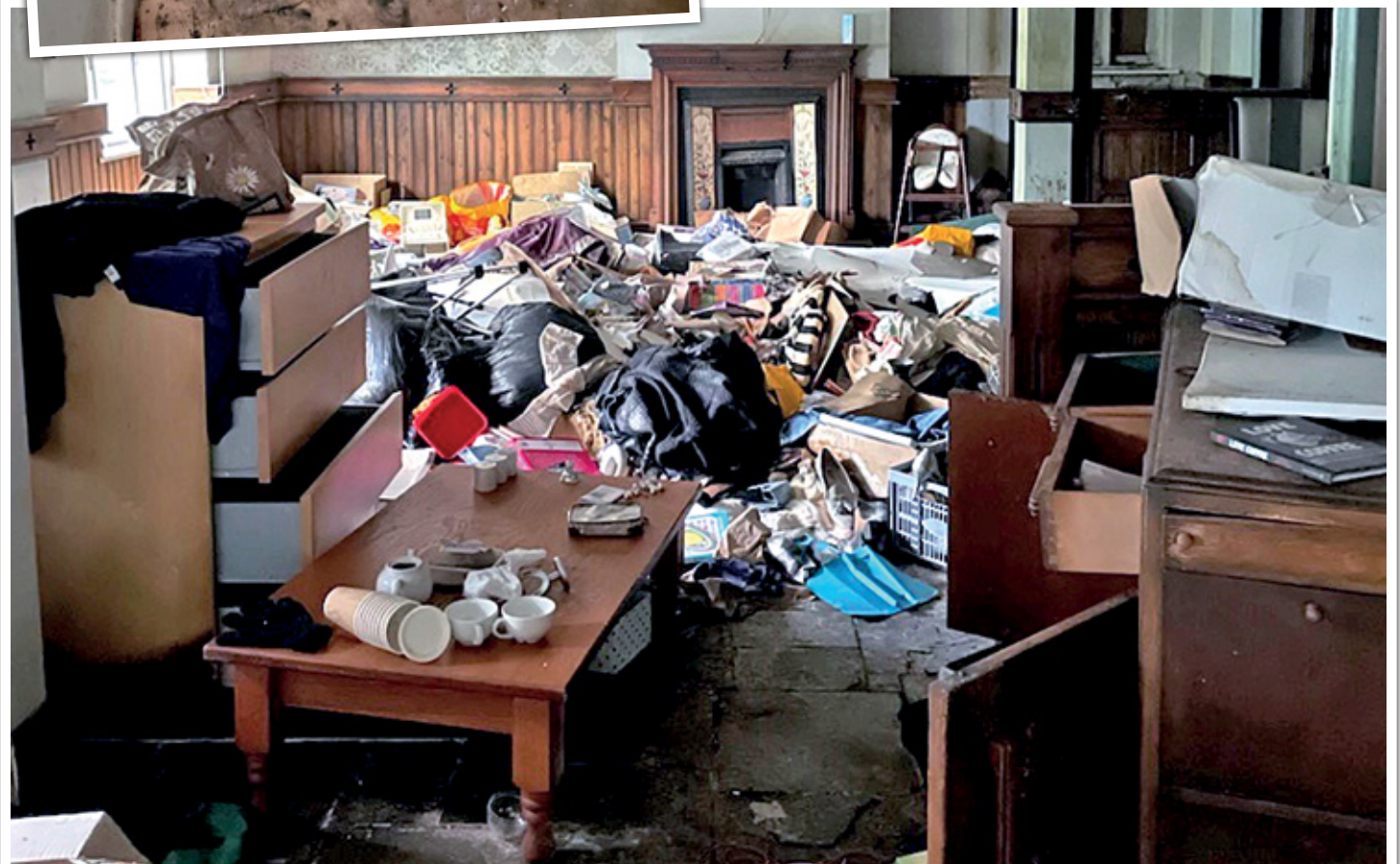
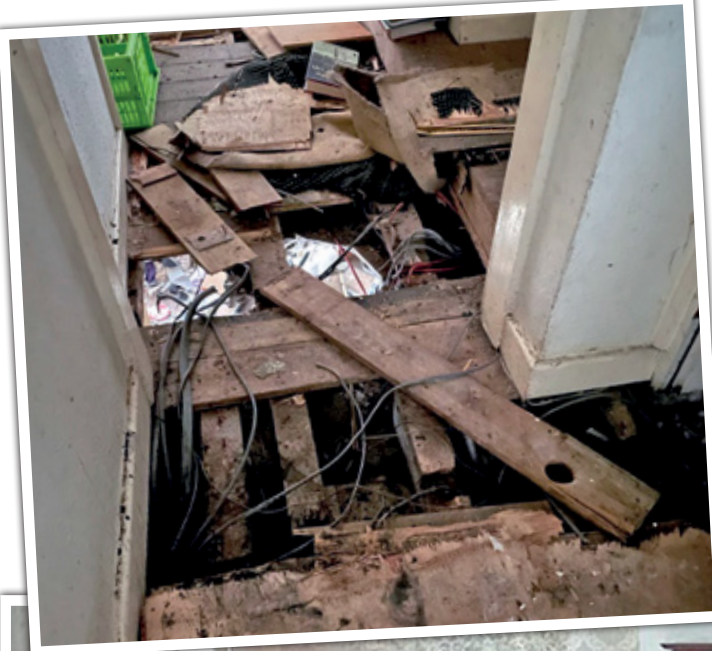
"With the completion comes a turning of the page. We must look to the future, wish the former owners well and move on.

"We are aware that at least one person gained entry over the last few months. It is likely that everything was rummaged through,

hence the state of things inside.

"Fortunately, we have an army of volunteers to help clear things up. We start that work as soon as we are sure it is safe to do so."

After a two-year campaign to save the premises The Raven Inn was purchased by a community consortium, at auction for £278,000, on the 31st of March. It will reopen as a community pub, but there will be a lot of work required first!





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# Scene is set for "Day of Reckoning" with Culcheth Players



## A COMMITTEE meets on a winter's night to arrange the summer village fete as the scene is set by Culcheth Players.

As protocol gives way to bickering and gossip, the personalities of those present emerge – and the scene is set for "Day of Reckoning" – the next play to be staged by Culcheth Players in Newchurch Parish Hall

Culcheth Players spokesperson Julia Nellis, said: "We chose the play as it seemed an appropriate one to perform in the Queen's Jubilee Year. There will be

communities up and down the country putting committees together to arrange jubilee events. So for all these people, and for anybody who has ever served on a committee, this one's for you.

"I'm sure you will recognise some of the characters involved in this comedy/drama.

"Rehearsals are well under way. As the players develop their characters, rehearsals swing from

hilarity to moments of tension and high drama as the cast get to grips with the script."

The play will be performed over two weekends, May 13-14 and May 20-21 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £7.50 and can be purchased

online through [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk) (booking fee applies) or on the telephone on 0333 666 3366 at local call rate. (Booking fee applies, plus telephone transaction fee.

## Warrington Wolves pay tribute to lifetime fan Joan Wells



WARRINGTON Wolves have paid tribute to well-known lifetime fan and loyal club raffle ticket seller Joan Wells from Culcheth, who has sadly died aged 87.

Joan had been involved with the Club for over 50 years and began selling raffle tickets at home matches during the Wilderspool day, bringing more than £250,000 into the club.

A huge Rugby League fan, Joan continued to collect for the Club's Try Time, summer and Christmas raffles as well as the Wire Lifeline lottery, selling tickets to supporters around the ground on game days, with her sharp sense of humour and lively personality making her loved by all.

She could often be found knitting in the official club store too where

she would often knit cardigans and hats for premature babies which would be donated to the neo-natal unit at Warrington Hospital.

A collection will therefore be made in the club store at the game against Huddersfield Giants in her memory, with proceeds raised being split between the Neo-Natal unit at Warrington Hospital and the Warrington Wolves Charitable Foundation.

She had a special relationship also with box holders Direct Taxis who would provide her lift home at the end of each match free of charge.

Joan leaves behind four children, seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren. Our thoughts go out to all of her loved ones at this difficult time.

## Roman relics – WI members learn about local finds

THE monthly meeting of Culcheth and Newchurch WI began with a talk by Dominga Devitt on "The Wirral Brooch".

Dominga began with slides of the brooch, made of copper alloy and dating from about 100 AD. It was found about 1999 and there are over 100 others very similar and some have fine enamel on the front.

Doctor Robert Philpott, an expert on the Roman occupation of the North West, is sure these brooches were made for civilians, not for soldiers.

Their job was to fasten clothes, although the pins have rusted.

Dominga showed maps of the Roman roads and settlements of the second century AD and Meols, Chester, Wilderspool and Wigan were very important. Members enjoyed the beautiful slides of metal and pottery shown by Dominga's husband and president Eileen Griffiths thanked the two visitors before the tea break.

After tea, served by Margaret Barron and Ann Hambledon the business meeting began with "Jerusalem". The president thanked Margaret Hill for the table bouquet and Barbara Hartley, an April Birthday Girl, won the flowers. The Spring coffee morning had made an excellent profit. Another piece of good news was that the Institute can now begin its meetings at 2pm. Future events are the Garden party on July 20 and the Christmas Party on December 6. One changed date was the Advanced Motoring day with Croft WI, now on May 14 at Croft Memorial Hall. A quiz on Movie Titles and the competition results and raffle brought the afternoon to a close.

The competition winners for an unusual brooch) were 1. Margaret Barron; 2. Marion Simpson; 3. Phyllis Longson; 4. Ann Wharton. There was a big display of brooches.



# Planners give go-ahead for house in garden

**PLANNING** chiefs have given the go-ahead to proposals to build a four bedroom detached house in Broseley Lane.

The development involves land adjacent to a large Edwardian house, The Gables, which was formerly part of its garden. The development includes a detached garage.

Similar proposals were approved in 2020 but were not proceeded with.

Warrington Borough Council planners say the proposed

dwelling would be in keeping with neighbouring properties and the character of the area.

It would not have a significantly overbearing impact on neighbouring properties or gardens and the long-term viability of protected trees on the site can be assured. Off-street parking proposals complied with borough council standards.



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