

Culcheth Life

Magazine

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Page 10



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Editor's Comment



WITH our 25th anniversary year underway for online news and more than two decades of Culcheth Life, lots of work has been going on behind the scenes to ensure we can continue to provide the best free community news service going well into the future online and in print.

Thousands of pounds have been invested in ensuring our online news service and website is bang up to date, so we can continue to provide the only totally free independent daily news service for Warrington and the surrounding area.

With the vast majority of people gathering their news online now, it is more important than ever that we continue to provide a reliable, trustworthy news source.

We also continue to recognise the importance of print for those who don't have access to online or prefer to see their news in hard print, which has a much longer lasting impact.

Items posted on social media disappear in the blink of an eye and can also easily be taken out of context leading to misinformation and scaremongering.

Things have certainly changed a lot since we launched in April 1999 – in the last century as the first independent daily online newspaper in the UK!

Our initial website was built in raw HTML code by my father David, learning from a book! I'm delighted to say he is still involved with the business to this day after 70 years as a journalist!

We are proud to have been the first independent daily online newspaper

in the UK and look forward to the year ahead with renewed optimism.

It's certainly never been an easy ride working in the media, dealing with various recessions, the COVID pandemic and now the cost-of-living crisis. Over the past 25 years we have met and sadly lost many great characters in the town.

We now look forward to the next 25 years with optimism and if I can manage to put in the same shift as my father, I might still be around to celebrate our Golden anniversary, although I dread to think what challenges lie ahead in our troubled world. So, let's stay positive and focus on what we can influence here

in Warrington and as always, we love hearing your goods news stories as well as taking up issues and concerns on your behalf.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us in some way over the years - far too many to mention – but you know who you are!

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention Keith & Sue Bland who recently announced their retirement from local politics. They have both served the local community with distinction and every local Cllr. whatever their political colours should aspire to be like them - community first! It has been an absolute honour to work with them both covering local community issues for more than four decades!

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CAMRA award for the Raven Inn

THE Raven Inn has been highly commended by CAMRA in this year's Pub Saving Award.

This award recognises people who have come together to save a pub from closure, over the last 12 months, that would have otherwise been demolished or converted.

Ray Head, Pubs Officer, North

Cheshire CAMRA commented: "Well deserved recognition after a long and challenging campaign when the community's commitment to save the pub shone through. They should be very proud of their

amazing efforts and of what they have achieved"

Andy Edwards, Chair North Cheshire CAMRA commented: "Thanks to the team for the welcome we received on the branch visit, the history and challenges overcome were fascinating to hear about".

Raven Inn spokesperson Peter Sturman commented: "We have discovered, over time, how many different facets there are to not only saving but reopening a pub. Not just any pub. Our Raven Inn Community pub.

Being a community pub we have so many innovative ideas

contributing to what our pub should be about. Serving real ales has always been a given. CAMRA have provided incredible support and encouragement along with practical advice and help."

"We are blown away by this award. It really is a recognition of our fantastic community. Literally thousands of people over the last five years have all come together to save the Raven.

Just look at where we are now. This fantastic award is for every single person who has made this possible"



Husband and wife councillors to retire after 80 years service!



HUSBAND and wife councillors with more than 80 years public service between them are stepping down in May.

Keith Bland, currently chairman of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, and his wife, Sue, a long-serving member of the council, have decided to retire.

The couple have both been members of Warrington Borough Council and Keith has also served as a county councillor and is also a member of Croft Parish Council.

He said: "We have enjoyed our years as councillors, whether as borough, county or parish councillors and we have always put the village first. That has been our main interest.

"But we have decided the time

has come for us to stand down."

Keith has been awarded the MBE for services to the community in Cheshire and Warrington, and, almost uniquely has been made an Honorary Alderman twice!

He was granted the honour by Warrington Borough Council to mark 15 years membership and also by the old Cheshire County Council where he served for 13 years.

He has been chairman of the parish councils at Culcheth and Croft on numerous occasions.

Sue has twice served as chairman of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council and has been organiser of the popular Culcheth Community Day – one of the main events of the year in the village.

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Up to 12 weeks of road closures on main route between Croft and Culcheth

UP to 12 weeks of road works are scheduled on the main route between Croft and Culcheth, starting at the end of January.

The works along Mustard Lane, from its junction with Lady Lane and along Wigshaw Lane, will be carried out in three phases while Electricity North West install a new electrical cable.

Warrington Borough Council has made a prohibition of driving temporary order under Section 14 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect will be to introduce a prohibition of driving as follows: Mustard Lane from its junction with Lady Lane to its junction with Wigshaw Lane; Wigshaw Lane from its junction with Mustard Lane to its junction with Common Lane.

The Order will be effective from

29th January 2024 for 12 weeks, as and when signed on site. The works will be carried out in phases, with only one phase being implemented at any one time: Phase 1: Mustard Lane from Lady Lane to Wigshaw Lane and Wigshaw Lane from Mustard Lane to Glaziers Lane; Phase 2: Wigshaw Lane from Glaziers Lane to Pendle Gardens; Phase 3: Wigshaw Lane from Pendle Gardens to Common Lane. Access will be under the control of the relevant Contractor for the duration of the works.

The alternative route will be as follows: Phase 1 via Lady Lane, Cross Lane, Warrington Road,

Glaziers Lane and vice versa; Phase 2 via Glaziers Lane, Warrington Road, Common Lane and vice versa; Phase 3 via Glaziers Lane, Warrington Road, Common Lane

and vice versa. The closure is required to allow Electricity North West to install a new electrical cable.



Rail campaigners keep close watch on HS2 revival reports

COUNCILLORS and rail campaigners in Culcheth are keeping a close watch on developments following reports that the controversial HS2 high speed railway line could be revived in the North.

Few details are currently available – but new plans for a privately-funded alternative to HS2's now-scrapped Birmingham to Manchester section are believed to be ready to be presented to the transport secretary Mark Harper.

It is believed that West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, are to put proposals for reviving the rail line between Birmingham and Manchester to Mr Harper.

The plan could involve a dedicated line between the two cities.

But it is thought to be "highly unlikely" to be exactly the same as the HS2 scheme.

In October, the Prime Minister announced the parts of high speed

rail line linking the West Midlands to Manchester, and to the East Midlands, would be cancelled.

HS2 trains are currently expected to continue north to Manchester on existing conventional tracks.

Previously the proposed HS2 Golborne Spur would have cut through the Culcheth and Lymm areas with devastating environmental impacts.

Then the Golborne Spur was axed from the scheme, much to the relief of local campaigners. HS2 north of Birmingham was later scrapped completely.

But now talk of reviving the project, using private funding, has underlined the need for local councillors and campaigners to stay on guard.

CADRAG chairman Frank Allen said: "We are keeping a close watch on the situation although it appears at the moment that any new line would be unlikely to be coming near us."

"Certainly it has been stated that any new proposal would be highly unlikely to be a carbon copy of HS2."

Cllr Keith Bland, chairman of Culcheth and Glazebury Parish Council, said: "This is a worrying development but we know very little about it at present. It is something for us to keep an eye on."

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said options being considered were "maybe a dedicated line, maybe upgrades to the existing line". The aim would be to relieve the "very very congested" West Coast Mainline, improving connectivity and reliability.

But he said it would be unlikely to be exactly the same as HS2 as the project was so over budget.

The proposals were only in their early stages, he added. But research into alternative rail improvements was being done with the prime minister's approval.

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Self-build homes plan for "green" site



A PLAN for six self-build and custom-built houses on land at Culcheth has been submitted to Warrington Borough Council.

The scheme – submitted by Mr and Mrs Paul Gafney – involves a one-acre site south of Holcroft Lane.

Story Homes have submitted an application for permission to build 186 homes on an adjoining wider area of land off Warrington Road.

A report to be considered by planning chiefs states that the land has been in the applicants' ownership for more than 25 years.

The proposals are for four self-build houses for family members and two additional custom-built houses for people wishing to build their own houses.

The report states the scheme has been designed to meet the specific housing requirements of family members as well as the borough council's requirement to provide sites for self-build houses.

Currently largely rough grassland, with a number of trees, the site has been allocated for release from the Green Belt as part of the borough Local Plan.



CULCHETH & GLAZEBURY

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

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PARISH NEWS

Planning Concerns

The Parish Council is consulted on planning applications. If you have an opinion on an application, please let the clerk or councillors know as soon as possible within the 21-day consultation period.

You will need photo ID to vote in elections in England

You'll need to show photo ID when voting in person in UK elections, including general, council and parish elections. To find out what photo ID is accepted at polling stations, please look at the following link How to vote: Photo ID you'll need - GOV. UK (www.gov.uk) or us the QR code opposite.



Community Day 2024

Culcheth and Glazebury Community Day is set for Monday 6th May 2024 on the Village Green. This year the Parish Council would like to invite a few local groups to put on short displays in the arena to publicise their activities to residents. If you are interested in attracting new members on Community Day, please contact Cllr Sue Bland on 01925766641.

Local Bus Services

Dial-a-Ride provide a door-to-door accessible minibus transport service in Warrington for people aged 5+ with registered disabilities/mobility difficulties. To find out more about the services offered follow this link Warrington Dial-a-Ride | My Life Warrington or use the QR code opposite.

To find out more information about Warrington's own bus services follow the link www.warringtonsbuses.co.uk/ or use the QR code opposite.



Next Parish Council Meeting Tuesday 13th February at 7:30pm in Glazebury Methodist Church

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



New exhibition celebrates legendary rock and pop designer Andie Airfix

LEGENDARY graphic designer Andie Airfix who grew up in Culcheth and worked with some of the biggest names in rock and pop is to have his incredible career highlights exhibited in his hometown.

The Andie Airfix Exhibition will launch at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery on Saturday, 3 February.

Andie Airfix grew up in Culcheth and collaborated with the likes of Paul McCartney, Metallica, Def Leppard, Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin over four decades before his death in 2018.

He was revered in the music industry for his iconic album covers and other treasured memorabilia such as tour programmes and posters.

Now Andie's extraordinary but little known story and a retrospective of his work is coming to Warrington thanks to his brother, Tony McGuire, who is upholding his legacy.

Andie's interest in music artwork began as a teenager when he used to create his own alternative front covers for his dad James's classical LPs when the family lived in Culcheth Hall Drive.

But after travelling around the world and a brief stint as a teacher, he actually fell into the music industry by accident after working at Country Cousins nightclub and gallery.

The owner, a well-connected and intuitive entrepreneur called Christopher Hunter, took an instant liking to Andie's paintings from his time in India and gave him a job as an exhibitor and then venue designer.

After that, Andie was hired to revamp London's renowned Blitz Club and it was at these venues he started to meet influential people from the record industry.

His first big opportunity came when new wave band the Thompson Twins told him they weren't happy with the artwork for an upcoming record. Andie stepped in and gave the trio a new image for what would become their breakthrough record, Quick Step and Side Kick.

Word quickly spread about Andie's talents and by 1983 he'd created a fresh image for Def Leppard with a striking, incendiary, convention-breaking cover for

their diamond-certified album, Pyromania. He also worked with the band on their huge 1987 follow-up, Hysteria, which went on to sell more than 20 million copies. Tony, Andie's brother, said: "Andie had this unique ability where he could talk to a musician, they could tell them what their thoughts were for a record cover or tour programme and then he could match that in print."

"That's why he wanted to get really involved with the artists, as well as the management companies because he had this incredible ability to represent the ideas that were in their heads."

Andie's career then began to really pick up pace in the early 90s. Within the first half of the decade, he'd teamed up with Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney and Guns N' Roses on artwork for their tour programmes and began a long partnership with Metallica by designing their Binge and Purge live album box set.

Tony added: "We were constantly amazed at these things that kept turning up in Andie's life and Andie was as surprised as we were that he was getting a massive amount of work and respect from all these superstars. He always said: 'I'm really privileged to be able to do this.'"

Other later highlights included Live Aid and Live 8 DVDs while Andie's projects on the likes of Concert for Diana and Disney Symphonic Fantasy showed he could turn his hand to other types of concert work.

But Andie's favourite collaborations were with Led Zeppelin on the cover for their untitled live DVD and with Paul McCartney when he was entrusted with designing a boxset for a collection of music videos, live performances and rare footage from the icon's solo career and Wings days.

Paul sent Andie a personal note to thank him for his work and the Beatles legend even mentioned Andie by name when he was interviewed by Billboard Magazine



— praising him for his innovative artwork and the effectiveness of the 'eye' motif on the striking cover of The McCartney Years.

Tony said: "I thought what an accolade for a star like Paul McCartney to not only know the name of his graphic designer but to mention him in a magazine. Somehow there was this instant click of recognition and mutual respect between Paul and Andie. Andie had this ability of not being starstruck by people."

"He'd talk to musicians as if he'd known them a long time. It was his personality and the way he was which opened doors for him as much as his talent for design."

Andie's long friendship with Metallica's Lars Ulrich was proof of this. On a professional level, Andie enjoyed creating album covers for the band such as Garage Inc and S&M but he would also hang out with them all over the world.

Highlights included following Metallica to Berlin for VIP treatment at their renowned S&M show with a full orchestra at Velodrom in 1999, and then in 2014 he was side of stage when the band headlined Glastonbury.

When Andie's mum, Mabel, died, Lars even paid for him to be flown to San Francisco first class to take his mind off things.

Tony added: "Lars often described Andie as family. He was not just someone who did the graphic design for the band. They really got to be good mates. They were almost like brothers and when

they were together they were a crazy pair."

Now Tony is looking forward to raising awareness of Andie's work in the area he grew up in.

Andie was pretty modest about his achievements and brushes with fame but Tony thinks the time is right to introduce his work to new audiences such as young designers who can look back at an era when album covers were meticulously hand-drawn.

Tony said: "There were challenging times and it could be stressful because there were always deadlines. But he told me it was a pleasure to work for these people."

"He said: 'I would never have thought in my wildest dreams I'd be in the same room as people like Paul McCartney, Robert Plant and Jimmy Page but here I am working with them and going down to the pub with them'."

"But Andie didn't want any of the accolades that were thrown at him. He just said: 'No, I'm the album cover designer. That's enough for me.'"

The Andie Airfix Exhibition is free to view at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery and runs between 3 February and 31 March.

Listings information
Exhibition title: The Andie Airfix Exhibition

Dates: 3 Feb to 31 Mar

Admission: Free

Location: Warrington Museum & Art Gallery, Museum Street, Warrington, WA1 1JB

wmag.culturewarrington.org

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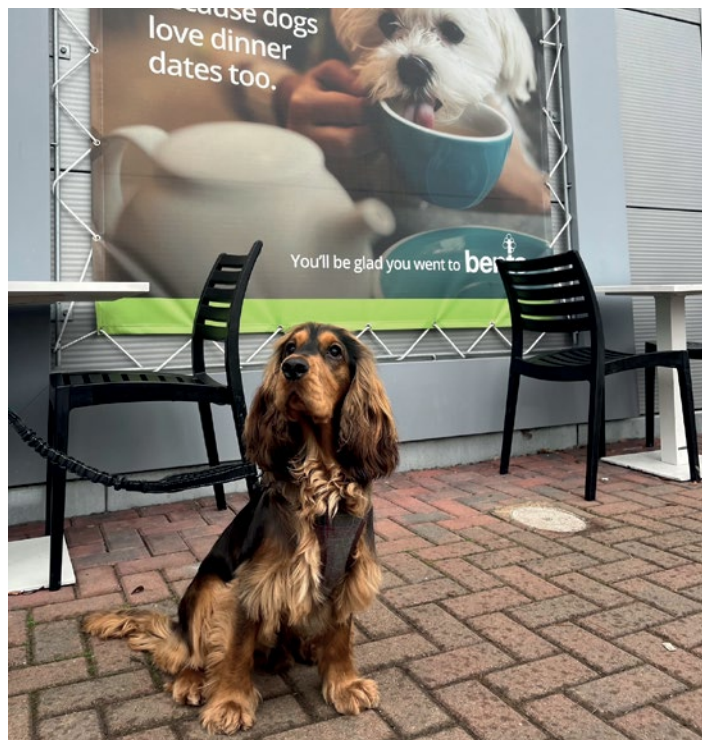


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Pup-centric events take centre stage at Bents



BENTS Garden & Home is calling all dog lovers with a series of pup-centric events, which will appeal to dogs of all shapes and sizes as well as their humans who enjoy spending time with their beloved pets.

The furry, friendly events begin with Bents' Hair of the Dog Scavenger Hunt, a scent driven adventure through Windy Bank Woods located to the rear of the Centre, which will run from Monday 29th January through to Sunday 3rd March.

Pups will take the lead, following planted scents to guide their humans on an adventure which will take 1.5 – 2 hours to complete. Approximately 5k in length the trail will feature 12 clues hidden strategically along the route with a secret password on completion for a special Pick n Mix doggy treat bag.

And for younger detectives and less scent-driven explorers there's plenty to enjoy with Bents' Windy Bank Nature Trail, which follows a similar route through the woods.

Another date for the diary is

February 11th, when pet lovers can book into Bents' Pop Up Paw-trait Event, a photoshoot experience just in time for Valentines Day. With a selection of props and accessories, owners can enjoy having their paw-trait taken with their beloved pet, with photos emailed and ready to share. Details of how to book a session can be found online at bents.co.uk

Concluding the springtime diary of pup-centric events is Bark Fest, which returns on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd March and will once again feature a host of pet friendly activities and events. Pet focused shopping will also be on the agenda with a specially themed artisan market. Further details of Bark Fest activities will be announced soon so keep a look out at bents.co.uk

The Gardening Guide



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Simon Box,
Plant Area Specialist

- Start providing nest boxes in anticipation of the new season
- This is an ideal time to plant bulbs
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- Sterilise pots and seed trays before using this year to stop the spread of fungal disease
- Houseplants will benefit from the first feed of the season now

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Aladdin, what a show - oh yes it..nearly wasn't!

CULCHETH Players recently enjoyed a successful run of six near sell out performances of their pantomime Aladdin.

This was despite, on the second weekend, one of the cast being taken ill requiring hospitalisation. Another cast member had to drop out two weeks earlier through illness and had been replaced, but the new late stage setback created an even bigger problem. Two of the cast had to take different roles in order for the show to go ahead.

The actor switched to playing Widow Twankey, in particular, had by far the most challenging role, requiring him to refer to a script. Despite that, the audience loved the show and embraced his character.

On the opening weekend, Culcheth Players were honoured to have the Mayor of Warrington Cllr. Steve Wright as their guest.

He thoroughly enjoyed the pantomime and later happily posed for photographs and chatted to the cast and members of the audience.

He stressed to everybody present how important it was to keep local theatre alive and how groups like Culcheth Players were so important in the community, bringing people together.

The show also featured a performance by ABC Autism Rocks

who are part of a community group who Culcheth Players partner with. They are a group of young people who can be found showcasing their talents at the Village Club on Tuesday nights.

The chorus in the show was provided by young girls from the Rosemary Powell School of Dance. They delighted the audiences with their routines. The girls, some of them very young, had all been rehearsing their dances each Saturday from November and had worked very hard.

The Culcheth Fairy made several cameo appearances on stage, receiving a rapturous welcome from the audiences. At the after show party, to thank him for being a guest and for being the butt of onstage jokes, Culcheth Players presented him with a cheque for

£150 for his charity Whizz-Kidz. He was keen to point out that he enjoyed taking part in the panto and saw it as his way of giving something back to the community who support his charitable fund raising, and he did not seek anything in return for his time, but he was very grateful to receive the donation for Whizz-Kidz.

Finally, Culcheth Players would like to thank everybody who came to see the panto and hopes to see them again for the performances of their next play to be staged in May.

Anybody interested in joining them, either on stage or behind, can come along to a rehearsal night on Monday or Wednesday at Newchurch Parish Hall (next to Sainsbury's) in Culcheth or phone 07943 517710 for further information.



Rosemary Powell and her 11 strong chorus



Cast member Alun Lewis, Mayor of Warrington Cllr. Steve Wright, Chairman Graeme Walker

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Student flying high after winning national challenge

A FORMER Birchwood High School pupil has won a national challenge by building an app that would make life easier for RAF pilots.

Freddie Robinson was encouraged to enter the competition by a tutor at Priestley College, Warrington, where he now studies Computer Science.

He received £1,000 for winning, but admits he is more excited about the second part of the prize - a private simulator flying lesson with Squadron Leader Pete Kennedy.

"It was a wonderful opportunity college has afforded me and I am really looking forward to the simulation," said Freddie, who hopes to one day become a pilot himself.

The challenge was set by Inversity - a company started by two veterans to train tomorrow's technologists.

They choose real-world problems for learners to tackle, the most recent one 'From Computer to Cockpit - how can software change how Air Forces operate?' was set by Sqn Ldr Kennedy, a decorated RAF pilot who was born in Warrington.

Freddie's entry saw him build a mobile app, which would help RAF pilots divert course if they needed a new landing location.

He also had to film a pitch for the app in which he demonstrated the software with the help of a flight simulator, which can be viewed

here www.inversity.co/freddie

"We hope this accelerates Freddie's journey into a great career and that many more Priestley students benefit from the

scheme too," said Dr James Kuht, co-founder of Inversity.

Representatives from British-based technology company Faculty AI were also on the judging panel and were so impressed with the Priestley student that they offered him work experience at their

London HQ.

Priestley tutor Laura Phillips, who encouraged Freddie to take part, said: "It has been such a proud moment to see Freddie rewarded for what was an incredible entry in the challenge."



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Renowned pianist Leon McCawley set to help musical charity celebrate 500th free concert

BROUGHT up in Croft and a former pupil at St Lewis' Primary School, "One of today's most impeccably musical pianists" Professor Leon McCawley, is set to help a Warrington musical charity celebrate its 500th concert.

Leon McCawley, who still has family in the area, and now a Professor of Piano at the Royal College of Music and one of the Patrons of WACIDOM, will be playing their 500th Free Concert in Warrington, on Friday 8th March 2024 at 1:00pm - 1:45pm at Holy Trinity Church, Marketgate, Warrington.

Tickets are available from Sharon Cannell, Chairman WACIDOM via cannellsa@outlook.com

Leon has been a long-standing supporter of WACIDOM, one of their two patrons (along with Sir Stephen Hough)

He has supported the Warrington Competition for Young Musicians that they ran until 2018, by acting as an adjudicator and sitting in the judging panel. He also played a fundraising concert for at Arley Hall in 2011.

The society is very grateful to Leon for making time in his very busy schedule to play at their 500th Concert and celebrate this achievement!

WACIDOM, a charitable Music Society, has been running free lunchtime concerts in Warrington Town Centre for over 20 years.

It's run entirely by volunteers and is self-funded, by voluntary

audience donations.

They been given great support by Rev. Shirley Cowan and the volunteer Team at Holy Trinity Church.

Based at Holy Trinity Church during that time, with a brief spell in Bold St Methodist Church, they run around 27 concerts per year.

They focus mainly on Classical/Chamber Music offering young classical musicians an opportunity to hone their performance and presentation skills, in front of a warm and appreciative audience. Their aim is to promote the enjoyment of classical music in Warrington.

Leon is described as "One of today's most impeccably musical pianists." International Piano, January/February 2021

He attended Chetham's and the Royal Northern College of Music - then to USA Curtis Institute, Philadelphia.

He is now Professor of Piano at RCM London and internationally recognised concert pianist and released a new CD this January.

<https://somm-recordings.com/recording/natural-connection-piano-music-inspired-by-the-natural-world/>



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WI members were in party mood

MEMBERS of Croft WI were in party mood at their January meeting.

A social evening had been organised by the committee, which included a jigsaw race and a curling competition.

For the jigsaw race each team of around six people had one and a half hours to complete a 500 piece jigsaw chosen blindly from a bag. The jigsaws were kindly loaned by the newly refurbished Culcheth Library and "jigsaw experts" from the library came along to give assistance.

The curling competition used "stones" running on ball bearings that could be sent to a floor target by either crouching and using the hands, or using a special "pusher" that allowed less fit members to remain upright while playing. A number of teams of two played against each other and this game proved extremely popular and was the cause of much hilarity during the evening. Prizes were awarded to the winners of both competitions.

Over the year at every meeting of Croft WI a competition is held relating to the subject matter of the evening and points are awarded to the members who participate. The winners for 2023 were:-

- 1st - Louise Geekie winning £20
- 2nd - Lesley Lloyd winning £15

3rd - Joint winners Janet Hughes and Jill Hllam winning £5 each

The regular evening competition for the January meeting was won by:- 1st - Lesley Lloyd; 2nd - Anne Sharpe; 3rd - Jill Hllam

The usual delicious home-made cakes were served with tea and coffee throughout the evening.

President Gill Coon thanked members for attending on a freezing cold night and all members agreed it had been well worth it.

Diary Dates: Bridge Club - second Wednesday of month 2pm
32 Cornmill Court, Croft

Scrabble Group - first Wednesday of month 7pm The Plough, Croft

Singing for Fun - first Wednesday of month 2pm Christ Church Hall

Bowls and Chat - For info contact Vicki Gaskell 01925 764129

Walking Netball - Every Thursday 5.15pm to 6.15pm Croft Memorial Hall

Darts - Every Tuesday 7.30pm contact Jill Hllam 07850 185949

Readers Group - Last Tuesday of month 10am Christ Church Hall.

Luncheon Club - fourth Wednesday of month 12.30pm The Horseshoe In Croft

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Litter Pickers make a great start to the New Year

THE Culcheth Litter Picking Group has got off to a great start in 2024 as they continue to work tirelessly to support the local community by volunteering to enhance public spaces.

Parish Councillor Neil Johnson said: "Our group has been working for several years to clean up public places in Culcheth & Glazebury so that residents can use them for

recreational activities.

"The Parish Council supports this group and we meet on a Saturday morning to improve our community. If any residents would like to improve their fitness, meet new people and create a nicer environment locally, then contact me using my email neiljohnson@culchethandglazebury-pc.org.uk and join our litter picking group."



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