

# Culcheth Life Magazine

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ISSUE 247 | MARCH 2024

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**Amazing, unique and joyful**

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# Editor's Comment

**AFTER Esther Ghey's comments that online safety laws should be tougher following on from the first anniversary of her daughter's horrific murder in Culcheth Linear Park I would suggest We ALL (especially parents and school teachers) need to play our role in this.**

I am broad-minded and have seen lots in my life but some of the stuff I see on social media, especially twitter and tiktok is horrendous.

We can't rely on Government to protect the minds of children and young people, although more needs to be done to get social media giants on board with policing what they allow to be produced online.

Those of us with responsibility for young people and their minds must make sure suitable restrictions are in place.

The only reason anyone under 16 needs a mobile phone is to stay in touch with home and learn new technologies and be creative. They don't need open access to the internet which can be done safely at home for learning purposes. Bullying is also rife in WhatsApp groups which can be as equally toxic. Monitor what your child is going through from their "friends!"

I certainly think there is a big argument for schools to clampdown on mobile phone usage in the classroom, as not only does it give access to online bullying during class time, but it also enables youngsters to cheat!

Mobile phones in lockers on

arrival and picked up at end of the school day.

Meanwhile, it was recently announced that we are officially in recession! Really? I'm no economist but known this for ages! We feel it in the media first! Don't make the mistake of cutting your marketing and advertising budgets! Now is the time to promote your business more than ever! Experience has shown me those that stop will struggle to survive! Remain positive and keep investing in your business. This is the mildest recession for 50 years so time to bounce back!

As we celebrate 25 years of Warrington Worldwide and free



community news, including more than 20 years in Culcheth, we haven't cut back - far from it - we have invested in making our products better!

When we launched our product the country was in recession and there have been a few since - But we are still here to tell the tale!

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



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# Celebrations at the Raven with highly commended recognition from CAMRA

THE patrons at the Raven Inn at Glazebury have had cause to celebrate after being highly commended by The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

CAMRA have highly commended the Friends of the Raven for saving the pub.

Representatives of North Cheshire CAMRA made the presentation, while enjoying some of the real ales on offer, in recognition of the work done by the Friends of the Raven Inn for helping save the pub from demolition.

Warrington North MP, Charlotte Nichols joined in the celebrations.

The commendation recognises the struggle to first save the Raven from demolition, then restore and refurbish the pub. A campaign dating back to January 2019.

The Raven opened its doors in August last year, so has now been trading for over six months.

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"

Raven spokesperson Peter Sturman commented: "To be highly commended by CAMRA means so much.

"This award recognises the thousands of people who have come together to campaign to save the building, to secure it for future generations, to give up their time helping to renovate the pub, to buy shares in the enterprise and to patronise our community pub.

"So many people have, between them, given so much.

"We must pay particular recognition to Warrington Worldwide.

"Gary Skentelbery and all at Warrington Worldwide have the played a hugely important role in keeping our campaign to the fore.

Particularly during those Covid lockdown periods when things went very quiet.

"In addition to the obvious support, work and sacrifice, I have been incredibly impressed by the positivity of everyone involved.

"There have been some dark and difficult times. No matter what has been thrown at us, there has

always been a positive 'can do' attitude.

"People have just not been prepared to accept the prospect of the Raven being lost.

"We have a very special community. They now have the very special community pub they deserve."



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# Brianna Ghey's mother tells vigil teenager was 'amazing, unique and joyful'

**BRIANNA GHEY'S** mother has told a vigil marking the first anniversary of the murdered Birchwood teenager in Warrington that she was "amazing, unique and joyful".

People gathered at Golden Square Shopping Centre in Warrington to pay tribute to Brianna.

The vigil marked one year since the 16-year-old was murdered by teenagers Scarlett Jenkinson and Eddie Ratcliffe at Culcheth Linear Park.

During their sentencing, the judge said the "exceptionally brutal" murder had elements of both sadism on the part of Jenkinson and transphobic hate on the part of Ratcliffe.

Addressing the crowd at the vigil, Brianna's mother Esther Ghey said: "Brianna was an amazing, unique and joyful teenager."

"I will be forever thankful that I was lucky enough to spend 16 years with her."

"She taught me so much and gave me so much happiness and love."

"If there's one piece of advice that I can give to any parent, it would be to hold your children tight, and never stop telling them that you love them."

"I want to thank you all for coming here today to pay respect to Brianna."

"I hope that wherever she is now that she can feel the love that we've

created by joining together today."

Brianna's headteacher Emma Mills told those gathered at the vigil to honour her memory by being "true to yourself".

"Brianna knew who she was," she said.

"And she was determined to be true to that."

"This determination spirit is something that I always admired about Brianna, and it's a deserving legacy for us to remember her by."

She said that the pressure to conform is "so intense" for teenagers.

"Societal pressure to conform is very real, for all of us," she said.

"But the level of pressure as a teenager amongst your peers can be so intense."

"Brianna knew who she was, and she didn't bow to the pressures around her. Please remember that about her."

"Be true to yourself, be yourself, and not a version of yourself that you think others want you to be."

It comes after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak refused to apologise to Brianna's father and said it is "sad and wrong" to link his transgender joke at Prime Minister's Questions to her case.

Brianna's father, Peter Spooner,

said Mr Sunak should say sorry for the "degrading" and "dehumanising" remark made in the Commons.

Mr Sunak had accused Sir Keir Starmer of having difficulty in "defining a woman" during an attack on Labour Party U-turns.

Esther Ghey was visiting Parliament when Mr Sunak aimed the jibe at Sir Keir.

His comment prompted fierce criticism from across the political spectrum, with Sir Keir telling Mr Sunak: "Of all the weeks to say that, when Brianna's mother is in this chamber. Shame."

But later on the Prime Minister claimed it was "the worst of politics" to link his comments to Brianna's case.



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# Stallholders wanted for Culcheth Community Day

**CULCHETH Community Day will take place on the Village Green on Bank Holiday Monday, May 6 from 12 noon until 4pm.**

Organisers say it will provide a Great family day out, while providing fund raising opportunities for registered charitable organisations.

Activities include Childrens rides,childrens entertainer, displays, pet show and tractor/motor bikes on display.

For reasons beyond the control of organisers there will not be any classic cars.

One of the organisers Cllr Sue

Bland said: "What we need now is stalls. So if you are a registered charity and you would like to fund raise, why not register to put a stall on the green?

"It's free. You just need to be registered as a charity and have public liability cover...closing date 29.4.24

For details or to make a booking call Sue Bland 01925 766641 to register your stall.



*Pictures from last year's event*



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# Investigation underway following alleged breach of planning

## AN investigation is underway following an alleged breach of planning control at the controversial Trident Business Park development at Risley, Warrington.

Work is underway on a large HGV distribution Centre at the Trident Business Park development off Warrington Road, which includes the demolition of residential dwellings and the former Noggin pub.

Local residents, who were left stunned after Warrington planners approved controversial proposals for the large HGV distribution centre near their homes are now alleging a breach of planning controls, put in place to try and help minimise disruption.

Members of Warrington Borough Council's Development Management Committee voted 7-2 to follow officers' advice and approve the controversial planning application on 22nd June 2023 with 35 conditions.

Construction began at the Trident Business Park development on 29th January 2024. The residents received a letter from the prime contractor Caddick Construction advising that they were a member of the "considerate construction scheme" and advising residents that the site manager would be available throughout to address any of our issues.

Condition 14 stated there shall be no direct pedestrian or vehicular access between the site and A574 Warrington Road. Reason: To limit the number of access points to the highway in the interests of road safety.

Condition 16: The access spur off

A574 should be permanently closed and appropriately reinstated as a highway verge prior to occupation and shall not be used for construction traffic. Reason: To limit the number of access points to the highway in the interests of road safety.

Residents say that during the Trident Business Park DMC meeting last June, the principal planning officer sold the above conditions to the committee members, repeating several times "This is a belt and braces" condition to ensure NO access to or from Warrington Road from the Noggin for the purposes of road safety.

They now say that on 31st January 2024 – Day 3 both conditions were broken. For the past 5 years, the Noggin pub has had temporary fencing in place, on 31st January this was partially removed to allow large construction vehicles onto the Noggin car park, 3 workers were holding up the traffic in both directions on Warrington Road (A574) whilst large construction vehicles entered the site via the access specifically prohibited in the conditions.

Then on 2nd February – Day 5 a very large forklift truck left the site from the Noggin onto Warrington Road (A574) carrying extra wide fence panels, the width of which crossed the central white lines. The forklift was videoed leaving the Noggin and travelling along Warrington Road towards the Spar

roundabout where it turned left onto Daten Avenue to use the principal and approved access point for the site, once again breaching conditions 14 & 16. A number of oncoming vehicles had to move out of the way of this forklift, taking to the social media pages of the Culcheth and Birchwood community pages.

Three residents left voicemails for the Caddick Construction site manager who opted to return none of them. "So much for a considerate constructor," said one resident.

The resident added: "We lodged a breach notification with Planning Enforcement, to date we have had no response.

"We contacted the Considerate Construction Scheme and reported their member Caddick Construction, residents received and acknowledgement but have had no further contact.

"The matter was reported to a member of Birchwood Town Council, who chose to immediately defend the Council by using a play on words, stating that the demolition is NOT construction and suggesting we log an enforcement breach.

"This use of semantics left the residents no choice than to seek legal advice on the decision notice and in particular conditions 14 & 16. The legal advice given was clear the conditions apply to the application in its entirety unless it states otherwise, this would be a quick and very straightforward challenge.

"Despite the positive legal advice, the residents were left out of pocket and doing WBC's job for them. It is an absolute disgrace that this council

is so quick to absolve themselves of all accountability and responsibility. They are happy to discharge their responsibilities to anyone, even the very ratepayers they are supposed to represent and who pay their wages.

"The advice received was as follows:

Planning conditions are attached to specific planning applications and apply only to that planning application. In this instance, planning application 2021/40696 was approved for Demolition of existing dwellings at 689 and 689a Warrington Road and the former Noggin public house and redevelopment of site to provide buildings for employment use (use classes E(g)(iii) / B8), access and car parking, landscaping, and associated works.

"Therefore, all conditions apply to the application in its entirety unless a condition specifically states otherwise.

"Condition 14: There shall be no direct pedestrian or vehicular access between the site and A574 Warrington Road. Reason: To limit the number of access points to the highway in the interests of road safety.

"If this condition was intended to apply only during construction and excluding demolition it should have been clearly included in the wording of the condition, which it is not. This would be an extremely straightforward legal challenge. The video (below) provided is damning and clearly shows an example of where road safety is put at risk,

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Promoted by Charlotte Nichols at Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, Jubilee Way, Orford, Warrington, WA2 8HE.

Croft WI were still in a party mood at the 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

**Croft WI were still in a party mood at the January meeting.**

that could be sent to a floor target be either crouching and using the hands, or using a special "pusher" that allowed less fit ladies to remain upright whilst playing.

A number of teams of 2 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:-

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# control at Trident Business Park

the very incident that the condition is intended to prevent. In the first instance this is an enforcement issue not a police issue as risk to road safety is the 'symptom' and the breach of condition 'the cause'.

"Condition 16 The access spur off A574 should be permanently closed and appropriately reinstated as a highway verge prior to occupation, permanent closure is a future event.

"The condition adds and shall not be used for construction traffic. The wording does not exclude the demolition phase of the project which it should if that was the intention of the condition.

"In conclusion, neither condition stipulates the exclusion of the demolition phase of the project. The responsibility lies within Councils to ensure the wording of conditions are watertight and cannot be misinterpreted, where they are not, councils should expect appropriate legal challenges."

A Warrington Borough Council spokesperson said: "Planning



## Y mood at January meeting

1st - Louise Geekie winning £20  
2nd - Lesley Lloyd winning £15  
3rd - Joint winners Janet Hughes and Jill Hillam winning £5 each

The regular evening competition for the January meeting was won by:-

1st - Lesley Lloyd  
2nd - Anne Sharpe  
3rd - Jill Hillam

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

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

Diary Dates      Bridge Club -

permission was granted in June 2023 for a development at Trident Business Park, including the demolition of residential dwellings and The Noggin public house on Warrington Road.

"We have received reports from nearby residents with concerns relating to construction vehicles using Warrington Road, and we are undertaking an investigation to determine if there has been a breach of planning control in relation to these new works."

A spokesperson for Caddick Construction Group commented: "Our impact on the local community is very important to us, and we take every precaution and due diligence to reduce the impact our neighbours may feel as we deliver the build of two industrial facilities at Trident Business Park. With work now progressing on-site, we appreciate that there may be a small level of disruption for our neighbours, but we are working hard to minimise this impact and mitigate any concerns surrounding access."

## 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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# Drink drive suspect arrested after car collides into restaurant

**A drink-drive suspect was arrested after a car collided with a restaurant building at Culcheth.**

At 21:52 on Friday February 9, one crew from Birchwood was called out to reports of a vehicle colliding into a commercial building on Warrington Road, Culcheth.

Crews were called to a road traffic collision involving one car impacting the Rokka Grill & Bar. Firefighters worked with other agencies to make the area safe and ensure everyone was accounted for.

They used a gas reader to monitor the area for any leaks following the impact – there were zero readings. A strict cordon was put in place by emergency services until a structural engineer could attend.

Police later confirmed that a drink-drive suspect had failed a breath test at the scene and had been arrested.

A Cheshire Police spokesperson said: "There were no reports of any injuries, but the driver of the car was taken to hospital as a precautionary measure.

"The 31-year-old from Warrington was also arrested on suspicion of drink driving. He has since been released pending further enquiries."

Meanwhile, the restaurant has reopened for business posting on social media: "Our restaurant was involved with a collision from a car driving

extremely fast around the bend on Warrington Rd. We are very, very lucky that no one within the restaurant or outside was injured, all a bit shook up but thankfully unharmed.

"We would firstly like to say thank you for the out pour of support that we have already received from the community with kind messages and asking if we need any help, it's really appreciated.

"We've been able to secure the windows that have been shattered with wooden boarding and we have given the restaurant a thorough clean throughout the early hours of the morning to make the property safe. We have also had an emergency surveillance team come out and check the structure of the building that was impacted and all is structurally stable and we have been given the go ahead to continue with business. Apart from the eye sore we will be OPEN and providing our service as normal!! We are working as fast as we can on getting fixtures replaced but until then our doors are open and the welcome and service will be exactly the same!!

"Thank you again for your understanding and continued support it means so much".



## Ukrainian Family Hub collaborates in moving exhibition

PEOPLE from the Ukrainian Family Hub based at The Daten, Culcheth, played a leading role in putting together a moving exhibition at Warrington Museum and Art Gallery.

"Journey of Resilience and Hope" marked the two-year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Artwork, photos and real life case studies were used to celebrate Ukraine's unyielding spirit in the face of adversity.

The two-week exhibition, a collaboration between the Ukrainian Family Hub and Culture Warrington, was held in the Wren Gallery, which was painted like a Ukrainian flag.

It featured 24 heart-breaking pictures showing a once beautiful Ukraine reduced to the rubble that now remains.

Leanne Borshik, events and Information co-ordinator for the Ukrainian Family Hub, said: "There are some very powerful pictures and all of them have come from our Ukrainian community. These are their pictures, once seen and never forgotten.

"There are also some personal stories from our community, which

again are very powerful and show how strong and determined Ukrainians are.

"We realised it was a good opportunity to remind the world that the war continues. While it's just a news story for us on TV, this is their lives, homes, families and they struggle every day."

Kateryna Kudina, from Dnipro, shared her story for the exhibition.

She fled Ukraine with her mother and two young daughters, leaving behind her husband who remains in Ukraine fighting the war. She currently lives in Warrington with her sponsor.

Kateryna said: "The Ukrainian community is currently feeling a mixture of despair and hope. With the ongoing turmoil in our homeland and the constant distressing news, we feel as though any hope for a brighter future is dwindling.

"However, being approached by representatives from various communities, journalists and now Warrington Museum with offers of support and solidarity serves as a reminder that we are not alone in our struggles and that there are people and organisations willing

to stand by us until our victory. This sense of unity and support gives us renewed hope and determination to continue our fight for justice and peace.

Roger Jeffery, producer for Warrington Museum, added: "The personal testimonies shared by members of our Ukrainian community in this exhibition are

incredibly moving.

"Through both words and images, they vividly depict the harsh realities of Russia's illegal war and its devastating impact on the everyday existence of Ukrainians. Culture Warrington unequivocally stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine in their courageous struggle to safeguard their independence."

## THIS IS UKRAINE



# Culcheth Tennis Club surpasses Crowdfunding goal for court rejuvenation

**CULCHETH Tennis Club has announced the overwhelming success of their recent crowdfunding campaign in a bid to rejuvenate their courts and enhance facilities.**

The club set a target of £15,000, which has been triumphantly surpassed, with a grand total of over £16,000 raised.

A spokesperson for the club expressed immense gratitude towards the community and local sponsors, including John Carrigan

(Head Coach), J&K Ross, Hilton Carpets & Flooring, The Raj, and Crompton Opticians, whose generous contributions made this achievement possible.

With the funds secured, Culcheth Tennis Club is wasting no time in addressing pressing issues such as

court flooding. Moreover, plans are underway to upgrade their lighting system to eco-friendly LED alternatives, aligning with their commitment to sustainability.

In a bid to foster inclusivity, the club is set to introduce a new coaching programme catering for both juniors and adults, beginners and experienced players, commencing in March. Details regarding these initiatives can be found on the club's website. Some examples of the sessions being offered are cardio tennis, walking tennis and a 'Fun Friday' session for Junior players followed by family tennis for all!

Exciting developments are also on the horizon as the club prepares

to unveil a new access gate, allowing non-members to enjoy the facilities by hiring courts. Booking details will soon be accessible via the club's website, offering broader access to the community.

The club spokesperson has extended a warm invitation to all to visit the club and witness first-hand the transformative impact of the community's support. With refurbished facilities and a renewed sense of vibrancy, Culcheth Tennis Club eagerly awaits new members to join their community.

As the club continues to evolve and grow, fuelled by the support of its members and the local community, the future looks brighter than ever for Culcheth Tennis Club.

## Glazebrook WI hear about "Funny money"

THE February meeting of Glazebrook WI was opened by the president Maureen Banner.

After Jerusalem, she welcomed the speaker Stuart Walsh. The title was 'Funny Money'. He said the talk had several titles,

'Pebbles to Plastic', and he would 'switch about', talking to members. He showed members his 'safe' plastic covers, for his credit cards, saying many used 'phones' for payment now.

He went on to speak of many topics. Greece and their money problems.

The lack of banks and what counted as money. Trading, barter, pebbles, nuts, Gold, bonds etc. Money laundering today, affecting

finances, inflation, and difficulties with daily life.

He was himself a financial advisor, then a teacher.

He advised members to check our financial documents regularly.

After Tea and biscuits, members went on to the business part of the meeting, discussing the forthcoming 'Resolutions' for the AGM.

Correspondence included The Cheshire Show, with an 'Olympic theme' this year, social, and craft groups, and the next Mossland group meeting, with a talk on 'dialects', in April. Local events were also mentioned.

The meeting finished with the National Anthem.



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# Garden Centre Association declares Bents as best in uk

Following a rigorous annual inspection which covers 230 different quality checks, Bents Garden & Home has been announced as Best Destination Garden Centre in the UK 2024. It is the second year in a run, and 8th in total, that the Garden Centre Association (GCA) has awarded Bents with this prestigious title.

The annual GCA Awards are presented following an extensive quality audit which is carried out without warning at all 204 member centres. Scores from the audit are collated to reveal regional winners, all of whom are revisited and re-audited, resulting in this fantastic national achievement for the team at Bents.

The annual audit is a requirement of all members of the GCA and is based purely on quality standards throughout the centre, not only of products and departments, but also

people and service.

Matthew Bent, Managing Director at Bents said: "We have a great team here at Bents, many of whom have been with us for over 20 years with some over 40, and all of whom work extremely hard to ensure standards remain high throughout the Centre.

"Retail in general is experiencing challenging times but we do our very best to look after our colleagues and it is thanks to them that we can achieve these standards which are so loved by our customers. This award is dedicated to our team and is a great

way to say thank you for their hard work and continued dedication."

Bents has also been recognised as a GCA Garden Centre of Excellence, one of only 10 in the country.

The annual inspection and audit process was one of the first initiatives to be introduced when the GCA was established more than 50 years ago. Every member is required to

meet the highest retail standards and participate in the annual inspection to ensure these standards are maintained and improved. The results of the annual inspection are revealed every year, covering several different categories and culminating in the overall winners for Best Destination Garden Centre and Best Garden Centre.



## Lively start for the New Year for Lowton WI

Lowton WI ladies had a very lively start to the New Year with a visit from Thelwall Morris Men, who gave a short talk on the history of Morris dancing followed by a demonstration before some audience participation.

Needless to say it was a crash course which caused a lot of laughter.

Next month members will have a talk from Andrew Lloyd, the title being chocolate...hmm that could

be interesting especially for the chocoholics amongst members.

If there are any ladies out there looking for a new interest, why not get in touch to arrange a visit to Lowton WI. Please phone Val Barrow on 07419 335330 for details.

Lowton WI meet on the first Thursday of the month at 7.15pm in Lowton Social Club on Newton Road.



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# Sundial WI return after snow and ice to hear about Underground Coal Mining Canals

**VICE President Doreen Procter welcomed Sundial members and 6 visitors by wishing them a Happy New Year at the February meeting – the January meeting had been cancelled because of the snow and ice!**

The meeting at the Parish Hall on 20th February was different in other ways.

The expected speaker, Gordon Bartley, was recovering from surgery and Alan Davies (January's speaker) took his place.

Alan's topic was "The Duke of Bridgewater's Underground Coal Mining Canals".

He had slides showing the Duke and his engineering helpers, James Brindley and John Gilbert and many sketches and diagrams of the works that turned Worsley and surrounding areas into a huge centre of coal production from the 1760s on.

The 52 mile area had canals on 4 different levels with hundreds of shafts. Local landowners had to be won over or else avoided.

Women and girls pulled underground trucks until the 1840s and Alan showed early photos of female workers, including Mrs Betty Brooks who lived to be 101.

The barge crews had to move in very tight spaces, "walking the roofs" in many cases.

Some barges were given to schools after the NCB sealed the tunnels. Sadly some shafts have caused fumes and sink holes in some areas because they were badly sealed.

Doreen thanked Alan and he went on to judge the February competition. He chose Jean Riley and Chris Wilkinson as winners. The competition was "A Picture or Model of a Plane" - the choice made to suit Gordon Bartley's talk on Concorde.

Before tea Gill Berry explained the 4 resolutions to be voted on at the National AGM in June. Only 1 resolution will be put forward. Doreen greeted the 2 March "birthday girls" and Helen Slattery was given the February flowers.

The Lunch Club will meet at Rokka on 28th February. The speaker on March 12 will be Diana Brook and her talk is "On the road with Ken Dodd".

The competition is A Tickling Stick. After the raffle Doreen closed the meeting and once more wished everyone good health in 2024.

## Talented trio win speaking competition



A TEAM of three talented Year 10 students from Culcheth High School won the district heat of the Youth Speaks competition and will now compete in the District Final on March 11.

Organised by the Rotary Club, the competition shows that in an age when communication is increasingly carried out online, the younger generation is still producing inspiring speakers.

The Culcheth team consisted of Hazel Pouncey (chairperson), Darcey Gripton (main speaker) and Isabelle Corns (vote of thanks).

They chose to explore whether we are becoming an anti-social society and aimed to inspire others to take part in more extra-curricular activities to promote connection,

communication and improved mental health. They shared their own experiences to support their argument.

A school spokesperson said: "The students were articulate and mature and they had spent hours preparing and rehearsing their speeches in their own time.

"The event is always a fantastic experience and an opportunity to build confidence and develop valuable public speaking skills. Not only do the students enjoy the evening, it's also a real treat for the adults involved to sit back and learn something new from young people in the local area.

"The competition was particularly tough this year but Culcheth's team were deserving winners."

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