The sun shone and the crowds gathered in Towcester, over the weekend of 16th – 18th June, to enjoy the fantastic variety of musical talent on offer at the 2017 Midsummer Music Festival.
A Word from the Mayor...

As a Towcester resident of more than thirteen years, and the owner of three businesses in the town, I was delighted and honoured to be elected as this year’s Town Mayor. A year that continues to see much development in the town, and a year that will see the town celebrate its 1100th anniversary of the founding of ‘modern’ Towcester. In addition to the Mayor’s fundraising events, I’m looking forward to sharing in the celebrations with Cllr Martin Johns and The Towcester & District Local History Society. The Walking Carnival on 17th June was a great success, with the Saxon Fair on 23rd July and other planned events still to come.

At my inauguration ceremony held in the Town Hall in May, I was pleased to welcome both family and friends from both near and far. At the event, which was attended by almost 100 people, I announced my three chosen charities for the coming year.

1. **Towcester Mencap Gateway Club**
   Run by volunteers this group provides a leisure club for adults with learning disabilities offering fun, friendship and activities. I have had the pleasure of teaching dance classes to this group for the last 8 years.

2. **Towcester Neighbourhood Watch**
   Run by volunteers, Nick King and his committee work closely with the local police to keep Towcester a very safe place to live.

3. **The Alzheimer’s Society**
   My husband Tony and I have been long standing supporters of this charity for more than 10 years after we lost Tony’s mum to this terrible disease.

As we go to press we have just hosted our first fundraising event at the Saracens Head. On Saturday, 10th June over 70 people enjoyed the sights and sounds of ABBA followed by the highlight of the night, Alvin Printwhistle as the Ultimate Elvis Tribute show. In addition to ticket sales, a raffle and auction contributed to a fundraising total of £4,100.

We have a number of other fun fundraising events in the planning for this year and we will be advertising these in The Town Crier so please keep a look out. Four to highlight at this stage are:-

**Monday, 28th August** – I will be doing a parachute jump at Hinton-In-The-Hedges in aid of my Mayors charities.

**Thursday, 21st September** – The Town Mayor’s Charity Golf Day. Golfers are wanted, in teams or singles, to join this annual event. For further information, please telephone Charlie Stanger on 07801 859585.

**Spring 2018** – As a Latin and Ballroom Dance Teacher I will be hosting a charity Tea Dance in the Towcester Town Hall.

My end of year charity ball will be held locally on **Saturday, 28th April 2018**. Further details of this glitzy event will be released in due course. I am hoping for a grand end of year celebration that will add further funds to our fundraising total.

"We make a living by what we get. But we make a life by what we give" Winston Churchill

_Cllr Sharon McMurray_
TOWCESTER
Church of England Primary School
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Please call us on 01327 350332 or email bursar@towcep.northants-ecl.gov.uk
www.towcesterprimary.northants.sch.uk

2014 RATED ‘GOOD’ BY

Ofsted
Towcester Choral Society performing in St. Lawrence Church, Towcester Rock Schools’ band ‘Sugar Rush’ performing at the Mill Brewery, Dr Busker performing in the Brave Old Oak and the Lincoln Noel Trio performing in Towcester Conservative Club.

There may be no Glastonbury in 2018 but next year’s Midsomer Music is assured!

All photographs courtesy of Mr Nick Holder
Fundraising for the Tove Valley Centre

Saturday, 23rd September: Barn Dance with music by ‘Apricot Pie’
Thank you to everyone who came to our 60’s/70’s music evening with Fynnius Fogg in June. We hope that you enjoyed your evening. Our next fundraising event will be a Barn Dance with music by ‘Apricot Pie’ on Saturday, 23rd September from 7:30pm at Towcestrians RFC. Tickets are available from Coleman’s stationers or via the website below at a cost of £10.00. A licensed bar will be available and desserts can be purchased on the night. There will also be an auction of a range of items.

Future Events
Later in the year we will be hosting another Quiz Evening with quizmaster Hilary Aslett. This will be held in the Pickwick Room at the Saracens Head in Towcester on Friday, 3rd November at 7pm. Do keep an eye on the events page of the Tove Valley Centre website www.tovevalleycentre.co.uk and local press for further details.

About the Tove Valley Centre
The Tove Valley Centre will be a place of worship for the Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship as well as a modern community facility available for use by local groups in Towcester and the wider district. It will be located on the Northampton Road in Towcester adjacent to the Shires housing estate and SNC car park. For more details about the Centre please visit www.tovevalleycentre.co.uk.

Tove Valley Baptist Fellowship is excited about running this year’s holiday club after the success of the club last year. If you're in years 3-7 inclusive, why not join us for some team games, craft, drama, cooking, and music and to find out a bit about the bible and Christian faith. And parents - it’s only £25 for the three days and half price for siblings. There are some free places available for those that might not be able to afford it and a free lunch will be provided for all children. One mum said 'My kids have enjoyed, and in fact, insisted upon going to the holiday club for a few years now. It's so well run and I always feel very happy leaving my girls there for the day.'

To book a space, please contact Laura Patterson on TVBFcommunity@hotmail.com or 01327 209722 by 30th July to secure your place.
**News from the Town Council...**

**Election of Town Mayor & Deputy Mayor**
The Annual Meeting of the Town Council, held on Monday, 8th May, saw Cllr Sharon McMurray elected as Town Mayor for the forthcoming year. Sharon’s Consort will be her husband, Tony, and I’m sure you will join the Town Council in wishing them both well for their Term of Office.

Also at this meeting, Cllr Peter Conquest was elected Deputy Mayor of Towcester and his wife, Mrs Jonna Conquest, Deputy Mayoress.

**The Sawpits Centre**
Since the official opening of The Sawpits Centre (formerly Towcester Library) in May, I’m pleased to report that the Town Council’s application for a Premises Licence has been approved and the centre is available for hire. Please visit the Town Council website or telephone the office for further information on hire charges and availability. The refurbished building now comprises a large open plan hall; large self-contained hall; meeting room; kitchen facilities and Ladies, Gents, Disabled WCs with baby changing facilities. If you are looking for a venue for a one-off or regular event, and would like to arrange to view the premises, please telephone 01327 350995 or email town council@towcester-tc.gov.uk.

**Towcester Recreation Ground - Lower Bridge**
As reported in the last issue of the Town Crier, the Town Council is continuing to progress its plans to replace the lower bridge which runs between the Recreation Ground and Waitrose, and the schedule of works has now been issued for tenders. It was hoped it would be possible for the bridge to remain open until the work commences; however, a further urgent repair was required last week. Consequently, the Town Council’s Recreation & Leisure Committee has come to the decision that the bridge must close as soon as possible, pending its replacement. At the time of going to press, discussions were taking place with the Council’s Surveyor to agree the safest and most effective way to close the bridge. This will no doubt cause disruption and inconvenience to those who use the bridge on a regular basis so the Town Council would like to apologise to all those affected.

**Town Hall Vacant Office**
The Town Hall currently has one vacant office on the 2nd floor. This is a small office which would ideally suit a workforce of 2 – 3 people. If you think you may be interested, please telephone the Town Council offices to arrange a viewing and to find out further information.
Towcester Produce Show

The Towcester Produce Show presents its 2017 event. The show celebrates the vegetables, flowers, home produce and arts and crafts of the people of Towcester and surrounding villages which fall into the NN12 postcode area. There are many classes including those for the enthusiastic gardeners and hobbyists and those that are just a bit of fun. We also have an ever increasing section for children with special prizes and medals.

Each year the number of entrants and visitors has increased and we hope this year will be no exception. Refreshments are for sale in the hall on the afternoon including tea, coffee and home-made cakes and cookies. We have a dedicated and very experienced panel of judges and we are very pleased to have the new Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Peter Conquest, presenting the trophies to our lucky winners.

So come and have a fun family time and enjoy the community spirit at the Produce Show. Why not enter some exhibits yourself? Simply bring them along on the morning of the Show, there is no need to pre-book and the show’s committee looks forward to giving you a very warm welcome.

Jason Fleming
Chairman, Towcester Allotment & Gardeners Association

The 2017 Towcester Produce Show will be held on Bank Holiday Monday 28th August, once again at the Town Hall. Doors open to entrants between 9:00am and 11:00am to allow time to arrange their exhibits, and will be reopened at 1:00pm once judging has been completed. Presentations to the lucky winners will be made at 3:30pm.

For further information please visit our website where you will find a full list of categories, helpful hints and tips and entry forms: www.towcestershow.org.uk

TOWCESTER EVENING WI

Towcester Evening WI invites you to join them for any remaining meeting in 2017:

- 6th July: Wool and Spinning a Yarn
- 7th September: Party Decoration Ideas
- 5th October: Annual Meeting and Supper
- 2nd November: History of Stowe Landscape Gardens
- 7th December: Members Evening Surprise!

You can contact us at towcesterwi@gmail.com or telephone Barbara 01327 352266 / Jennie 01327 350968
Rotary Young Writer Competition – local heat winners

On Friday April 21st, the Rotary Club of Towcester was delighted to present four young students with prizes following their entries into the Rotary Young Writer competition 2017.

The theme this year was “reflections” and the students had to submit an original piece of work of not more than 500 words. Our Judges this year were published Author Geoff Iley and Rtn. David Reed. A number of criteria were used in judging the winners including creativity, accuracy (grammar!), and appeal.

The judges were extremely impressed with the submissions – 13 in total from students at Nicholas Hawksmoor School and Towcester Primary School. There were very few points dividing the first from the third place winners and both judges expressed their belief that all of these students would go far in their studies!

So – the winner was Grace Goram of Nicholas Hawksmoor School – and she received a set of 6 books of the Dork Diaries. Second place went to Leo Mullins from Towcester Primary school who received a set of 5 books of the World of Norm. There were actually two third prizes given – as it was impossible to choose between them – so both Hannah Goram of Nicholas Hawksmoor School and Lillie Golding of Towcester Primary School received a book each written by David Walliams.

Rtn. David Reed said: “The Rotary Club of Towcester would like to thank Towcester Library for so generously donating all of the prizes, as well as providing us with space to present the prizes on Friday and displaying all entries in the library for members of the public to read. In addition, of course, our thanks go to Geoff Iley for his invaluable advice to these young writers and his time in judging. You can see the entries this week in the Library. Grace’s piece has since been forwarded to the District competition and we wish her much success”.

The Club looks forward to all new entrants for 2018 competition – so watch out in the local press later in the year. For details of our other Rotary Youth Competitions please contact: secretary@towcester-rotary.org.uk or visit our web site: www.towcester-rotary.org.uk
Towcester Mill Brewery crowned the winner!

It's been a busy time at Towcester Mill Brewery recently as it was crowned winner of CAMRA Northants Town Pub and overall Pub of the Year Award – two highly prestigious awards presented by the Northamptonshire Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

John Evans, director of Towcester Mill Brewery, said winning these awards just goes to show how far they've come in the three years since the tap room opened, “As directors of the brewery, Ray, David and I are all delighted with what we've achieved and how much our brewery and tap room are enjoyed here in Towcester. Our members and customers are amazing and have supported us all the way and we most certainly wouldn't have done this without them. The concept of having our brewery in an old mill and making the most of a grade II listed building for our tap room has really worked and we just want to make sure we continue to go from strength to strength – and of course continue to make the best real ale that has become so popular!”

Ian MacAulay, Chairman of the Northamptonshire branch of CAMRA, who presented the awards, said, “As a branch we are very proud of the great success of the Brewery Tap. In a very short time it has become the go to place for ale lovers in and around Towcester. This award will mean that the Mill will be brought to the attention of a much wider audience and I am confident that all who visit will be thoroughly impressed.”

The CAMRA Pub of the Year competition is run with the simple aim of finding the best pubs in the country. Pubs are selected by CAMRA volunteers and judged on their atmosphere, decor, welcome and service, value for money, customer mix and most importantly quality of beer. All nominated pubs in the various categories of the competition are independently assessed by a panel of CAMRA volunteers throughout the year. The county winners then go on to regional and finally, national awards.

This summer at The Mill

It's all go here at Towcester Mill Brewery this summer with plenty for all to enjoy! On Thursday 13th July, we have our live comedy night, headlining Mike Gunn who appeared on Michael McIntyre's Comedy Road Show and supported Lee Mack's theatre tour last year. And, at the end of July, we launch the first of three Crayfish Festivals, where we link up with Crayfish Capers and trap crayfish from the Mill Race. A great fun afternoon!

Bookings for any ticketed events can be found on www.ticketsource.co.uk/towcester-mill-brewery and more info on all events can be found on Facebook. Come and see us soon!

Dates for your diary...

13th July - Comedy Night
29th July - Vauxhall Male Voice Choir and Songbirds
30th July - Crayfish Festival with paella
1st August - Quiz Night
19th August - Crayfish Festival with pizza
5th September - Quiz Night
28th September - Comedy Night
3rd October - Quiz Night
7th October - Crayfish Festival end of season
Towcester Wildlife Trust Local Group

All meetings will be at Towcester Mill (unless stated otherwise) and will start at 7.30pm. Donations of £2 will be gratefully received, but there is free entry to under 16’s.

Monday, 17th July 2017 - Guided Walk - Tove Wetland Pocket Park, Towcester

Members of the group will give some background details as to how the site has been developed and how wildlife has thrived in recent years through sympathetic management and specific action. This event is free of charge. Please contact David Reed for information regarding the meeting place.

Please note that there will be no August meeting. When meetings resume in September, the start time will be 7pm at Towcester Mill.

Watermeadows Management Group

Representatives from SNC/Cherwell Vale came to speak with us in May and, although some further deliberations are needed, the general approach to future management of the site will be that the North Field (behind the Forum and Towcester Mill) will allow more public access and usage and the South Field (nearest to the Racecourse) will be managed and developed to encourage more wildlife. A meeting of the Management Group is to be held soon to discuss the detailed management plan.

New Equipment for youth groups

We have pond dipping and bug sweeping equipment and lots of ID charts for schools and youth groups to use. The equipment is available for use now and donations by participating groups will be welcomed, to cover general wear and tear.

If you are interested in any of the above, or would like to know any other details about our local group then get in touch with David Reed on 01327 352414 or dreedsfm@sky.com

Towcester Writers Group...

We are a small, friendly group of aspiring writers. Our abilities are very mixed and we offer a warm welcome to newcomers. You can find us on Facebook at: https://www.facebook.com/TowcesterWriters. Our informal meetings are held in Towcester Library at the Forum on the third Wednesday of every Month from 7.30 to 9.30. We look forward to meeting you; please come and join us. Here’s a piece by one of our members:

The Ocean by Geoffrey Iley

I have always loved swimming. It's my life really — for me and my sisters too. We girls agree that rivers are all very well if you like that sort of thing, but give us salt water every time. There's really nothing quite like the tingling sensation you get from swimming in the sea or, better still, the ocean. The sea can be a bit more friendly, if that's the right word, but it can sneak up on you sometimes. There was this morning one September and I was only a few yards offshore then whoosh! Before I knew it I was over a mile from where I'd started. I have to admit that the sea can be sociable too — all those happy surfers — to say nothing of the nudists!

On the other hand the sheer elemental power of the ocean, its imperious indifference to any other force of nature, imposes awe and reverence on every living creature. It's not surprising that, for the ancient Greeks Poseidon — and Neptune for the Romans — were among their most powerful gods. Over the years many other peoples have had the same desire to worship the ocean. Very often I feel that same way too. But more often I feel drawn to it like a lover. I am seduced by its smooth caress on those balmy summer days. Those are the magical times when the lightest breeze barely stirs the surface, when the swell gently rocks swimmers like me — just like the way a mother soothes her baby. Yes, that's when the ocean is at its most captivating. I can never get enough of days like those.

Actually, from the female viewpoint there is only one serious drawback to spending time in the ocean, or the sea, come to that; they both really mess up your appearance. After swimming I seem to spend absolutely ages using a comb to untangle my hair. That's one of the major problems when you're a mermaid. Another one, of course, is where to keep that comb.
St. Lawrence Church, Towcester

The church is open for you every day from 9-5:30pm at least. It is a lovely place to find peace and many people make use of it. Do join them. But please be aware, we have unfortunately suffered from very occasional anti-social behaviour, attempted thefts and damage to the building. If you see anyone acting suspiciously please do telephone the church office / vicarage on 01327 350459. Thank you for your help in keeping our treasures available to all and ready for the next generation.

With our very best wishes,
Reverend Ben and all at church

Normally top secret ...Open weekend on Saturday 9th September at St Mary’s Church, Easton Neston NN12 7HS. The church will be open during this day with teas and cake available. On Sunday 10th September, there is a treasure hunt at 3pm and then a sung evensong at 6pm which is preceded by an open rehearsal for any budding singers (a sketchy knowledge of sight reading will help). Please come and visit this amazing place, which is on your door-step and love it. Usually, it is only open for worship of God on the first Saturday of each month at 6pm.

Harvest time
After the long drought of winter the rain came. We pray for a blessed harvest, and for our care of the land. Harvest Festival is a good time to come together, give thanks, sing and pray. Join us on Sunday, 1st October at St. Lawrence Church for 9:30am, or Saturday 7th October at 6pm in Easton Neston.

Towcester 917
Our festivities in the Saxon Village on Sunday, 23rd July will remind us of our heritage. There will be a prayer tent offering the chance of people to pray with you - for yourself or anyone you wish to pray for. There will also be activities to show the richness of Christianity 1100 years ago and the things we can learn from their particular understandings of God in creation and of Jesus. Amid the battle re-enactments we will be reminded of brave people who worked as peace-makers and united warring tribes, and shared the light of love and hope. There will be Public Worship in Saxon Christian style from 9:30 - 10am, before the rest of the Saxon village proceedings.. All are welcome, come and enjoy the influences of the vibrant faith at large in our land then, and living on now.

Getting married in the next year?
We offer you a fun but thoughtful day to think about all aspects of married life and check out what your partner really thinks on lots of nitty gritty issues. Whether getting married here in Towcester, in church or wherever, you are most welcome on Saturday, 28th October from 10am – 3:30pm. There will be a hot feast and choice of puddings at lunch time. Book in early to avoid disappointment...there’s a £10 per couple booking fee to include all that and a book on which the course is based. Please be assured you will not have to talk about your views or feeling to anyone other than your partner! Please telephone the Chantry House on 01327 350459.

St. Lawrence Church Flower Festival

Come along to the St. Lawrence Church Flower Festival, on Friday 11th, Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th August!

The theme this year is ‘Towcester 917 – a passage through time’. There will be cream teas in the Chantry from 2 – 4.30pm, and on Saturday there will be a barbecue and tombola on the vicarage front lawn between 11am and 2pm.
The Towcester 917 Walking Carnival parade took to the streets of Towcester on Saturday, 17th June, the first of two main events this summer celebrating 1,100 years of the town’s history.

And what a day it was! Sweltering in the heat, the colourful procession was led by a giant red dragon – an image chosen to represent the Anglo Saxons led by Edward the Elder – followed by Towcester Studio Band who provided the best carnival atmosphere for all who followed it. Both primary schools followed behind, with Nicholas Hawksmoor taking the role of the Vikings with their long boat and Towcester Primary acting as the Saxons complete with shields! There were the Suffragettes, courtesy of Towcester WI, the Cubs and Scouts with fantastic dragon heads, wings and tails, the Brownies and Guides, Towcester Town Football Club and Towcester majorettes towards the back. There were hundreds in the parade alone as well as hundreds of people, young and old, who turned out to line the streets and cheer them on, much to the delight of all those taking part.

Sue made this comment on Facebook, “The little market town in which I live celebrates its 1,100th year this year. So lovely to go and watch a parade to celebrate: school children with their school-made boats and Viking shields and locals turning out in the sun. It’s the place where I raised my babies and live with my husband. Well done Towcester, what a cracking bit of history!”
Huge thanks go to Festive Road, a community arts organisation who worked with the schools to help create their displays, as well as our generous sponsors - South Northamptonshire Council, Towcester Town Council, NCC, South Northants Homes and Jackie Oliver Estate Agents – without whom these 917 events would not have been possible!

Thanks too to Towcester Camera Club for the amazing photograph...for more info visit www.towcestercameraclub.co.uk or find them on Facebook, and to Paul Howard – www.paulhoward.co.uk.

Photographs courtesy of Paul Howard
Towcester Town Football Club Tournament a Success!

Over 100 teams from across Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes gathered at the Recreation Ground on 10th and 11th of June for Towcester Town FC’s annual football tournament.

The action-packed event saw six-a-side teams compete across 10 age groups from Under 7s through to Under 16-18s for the traditional Cup and Plate trophies. Non-competitive sessions also took place for younger players age five and six from TTFC’s Mini Kickers and other clubs.

Lisa Samiotis, Chair of TTFC, said: “I’d like to place on record my thanks to the team of volunteers who work so tirelessly to make the event such a great success every year and, of course, to all the teams that travelled to Towcester to take part. The team spirit, skills and attitude demonstrated by the young players was outstanding and the feedback we have received from coaches and players has been excellent.”

The annual tournament is TTFC’s biggest fundraising event and all proceeds are fed back into the Club’s provision of grassroots football.

TTFC is solely run by volunteers and welcomes support. Any local business that would like to learn more about TTFC, as it strives to improve and develop further, should contact towcestertownfcchair@mail.com to discuss the sponsorship options available.

Towcester Town Football Club
Do you want to play football?
Come and give MiniKickers a try!

Towcester Town Football Club’s MiniKickers is open to all children aged between 4 and 6 years old. Sessions take place on the all-weather pitch at Towcester Centre for Leisure on Saturday mornings from 9am-10am. A contribution of just £1 is requested per session to help cover costs.

MiniKickers is taught by qualified coaches and is an excellent way to introduce children to football whilst having fun. Children who are interested will have the opportunity to progress into TTFC’s Under 7s teams.

For more information contact Samantha Hurrell at: towcestertownfc@secretary.net or call 01327 353284
Towcester Neighbourhood Watch

Don’t miss out!

Towcester Neighbourhood Watch is restructuring its database network across the town to improve the distribution and speed of local police and crime prevention messages to residents.

All you need to do is register on the website
www.northamptonshireneighbourhoodwatch.co.uk

Enter your postcode and apply to join the Towcester NHW scheme.

You then receive:
- **Warnings of the latest crime and scams in our area**
- **Police messages on local incidents**
- **Crime prevention advice to protect your family and belongings**

And don’t forget, phone:
- **999** for a crime in progress or where life is in danger.
- **101** for non-urgent enquiries: to report a crime that has happened or a concern or suspicion.

We look forward to you registering on the website to join the network for a safer Towcester. Email towcesterhw@gmail.com

*Towcester is a safe place so let’s keep it that way!*
**Towcester 917 Saxon Fair – Sunday, 23rd July**

On Sunday 23rd July, a themed Saxon Fair will take place on the open area of water meadows between The Shires housing estate and the River Tove, off Northampton Road. There is plenty of free car parking close to the event area and there will be public toilets on site. **The whole event is free of charge.**

The Saxon Fair will have a range of attractions including: children’s workshops and activities, storytelling and music, cooking, archery etc. There will be a Saxon encampment with crafts such as weaving, coinage, leather working and weapon making on display. During both the morning and the afternoon there will be exciting battles / skirmishes between Vikings and Saxons who will re-enact the first Battle of Towcester in 917.

The Saxon Fair includes food and drink stalls, entertainment including a flying display of Birds of Prey, as well as other static displays of interest to all age groups. Cotswold Archaeology (who have conducted a great deal of archaeology in Towcester in recent years) will have a display of finds, and activities for children including a mini-dig.

If as an individual, or your local organisation would like to be involved in this event please do get in touch. Volunteers are also needed for help on the day.

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**Programme for the Day**

- 10.00 am  Saxon Fair and Saxon encampment opens to the public
- 11.30 am  First combat re-enactment takes place between Vikings and Saxons
- 1.00 pm  Story telling in camp
- 2.00 pm  Spear wrestling, axe holding and other demonstrations
- 2.30 pm  Birds of Prey display in main arena
- 3.00 pm  Story telling in camp
- 4.00 pm  Final battle / skirmish (lasting 30 mins)
- 5.00 pm  Saxon Fair closes to the public

Towcester Mill Brewery has also brewed a new beer especially for the Towcester 917 events. Saxon Shield is a 4.7% ABV dark copper ale which will be available on draught in time for the Saxon Fair. The brewery will be giving talks at the Fair discussing the key ingredients that have gone into making the latest Towcester Mill real ale and how it got its name.

And it doesn’t stop after the Saxon Fair as there are more events taking place during the next few months! There will be an evening walk around Towcester’s old pubs and inns on Wednesday 2nd August, a flower festival at St Lawrence’s church on Friday 11th August with a theme of ‘Towcester Through the Ages’ and a Towcester Heritage Day on Saturday 18th November. Various heritage organisations will be putting on displays and answering questions from the public about the local history, old buildings, archaeology and family history associated with Towcester. There will also be a new piece of music for Towcester Studio Band specifically commissioned for the anniversary which will be performed at a concert in the autumn.

Check out our Facebook page ‘Towcester 917’ for the latest info on the Saxon Fair, with further timings and details of the programme so you don’t miss out!

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*Towcester 917 is being generously supported by:*

South Northamptonshire Council, Towcester Town Council, South Northants Homes, Councillor Chris Lofts
‘Empowerment Fund’, Jackie Oliver & Co, and Redrow Homes
OLD TOWCESTER – The Town Hall Cellar

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to see the cellars of the Town Hall for the first time. They lie beneath the offices and artist’s studio that are on right hand side of the entrance abutting the very narrow section of Watling Street. When the Town Hall was opened in March 1866 it was not a building for a Town Council (we did not have one then) but was built as a multipurpose building that could be used for public meetings and trade hall for selling agricultural produce (a Corn Exchange). It also incorporated a shop occupied by Samuel Tite, a chemist and druggist. Mr Tite’s shop lay to the right of the entrance and had living accommodation behind it which undoubtedly included the cellar rooms as the floor tiles and blocked fireplace indicate that this was at one time used as domestic accommodation.

What came as a surprise was that the first three cellar rooms had been reinforced by the insertion of metal stanchions and steel beams supporting a layer of corrugated-iron pressed hard against the ceilings. On one of the metal beams was the upside down inscription “[?] ENGINEERING UNIT, TOWCESTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL, BASEMENT STRENGTHENING, TOWN HALL, TOWCESTER”. If they had put a date on the beams I expect that it would have been 1939 or 1940, the start of WW2 as these additions to the cellar rooms were undoubtedly inserted to create an air raid shelter for the Rural District Council staff who occupied the building at that period. This theory is given further support by the large square holes cut through the basement walls to interconnect them and also the presence of a very narrow emergency exit stair that leads up to Watling Street.

Whether or not this basement air raid shelter was ever used by the staff is difficult to say. I have no knowledge of bombs being dropped on Towcester but it is possible that the sirens were sounded if German bombers passed in close proximity to the town. This is one of the few monuments to WW2 that survives in the town and could be quite an unusual survival. I have not previously seen anything like this and cannot find photographs of similar reinforcement on the internet.

Whilst looking up the early newspaper reports on the Town Hall for this article I discovered that the £120 cost of the illuminated clock overlooking the Market Square was raised by the ladies of the town and neighbourhood in 1865 to promote public welfare and recreation.

Brian Giggins
Aspire Arts Academy...welcomes two new members of staff to the team..

Aspire Arts Academy, the dynamic and innovative stage school based in Towcester, has welcomed two new members of staff as it continues to expand the range of classes it offers.

Professional actor and teacher James Driver joins as Drama Teacher. James trained at the prestigious Mountview School of Theatre Arts and has enjoyed performing in a diverse array of plays and musicals including Jesus Christ Superstar, West Side Story, The King and I and Kismet. He is bringing his wealth of experience to Aspire Arts Academy and will lead junior classes for children in Years 1-6 and senior classes for Years 7-13, as well as an adult drama group.

“We offer a friendly, fun and exciting atmosphere that encourages confidence, self-esteem and self-expression, as well as developing acting capabilities and experience through drama-based games, script work, improvisation and voice control,” James commented.

Also new to the team is Commercial Dance Teacher, Mark Goff. Commercial dance is seen in music videos, live shows, commercials and movies and incorporates many styles including hip-hop, locking, popping, breakdancing, krumping and even ballet and ballroom!

Mark has worked with the X Factor, Nickelodeon and Footloose, to name but a few, and has choreographed shows at the London Palladium, Royal Albert Hall and countless other theatres across the UK. He will be running classes for children from Nursery age through to Year 13 and is also leading the first adult commercial dance class to be held in Towcester!

Kat Stephens, Director of Aspire Arts Academy, said: “These are exciting times for us and we are so pleased to be able to offer classes with these fabulous teachers in addition to ballet with Miss Lianne, African Drumming with Keba Diedhiou and singing with myself. We encourage all pupils to aspire to be the very best they can possibly be and are dedicated to developing the self-confidence and self-esteem of every person we have the privilege to teach.”

For further information on Aspire Arts Academy please visit; www.aspireartsacademy.uk

Towcester Royal British Legion

There is a new “Drop In” service for any ex Service person or a dependant to discuss any appropriate matter. This service is run by HQ and the County organisations and the Towcester session started in April and will run monthly from now on: the first Wednesday of each month from 9.30– 11.30am in The Library, at The Forum. We will have our usual stand at the Blakesley Show on Saturday 5th of August.

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the Conservative Club at 7.30pm, and all are welcome. You do not have to have served in the Armed Services to become a member of the RBL. Some of the services provided by the RBL can only be offered to ex or current serving personnel or their dependants, but that stipulation does not apply to anyone interested in becoming a member. So why not pop along to our next meeting and see for yourself? You’ll be made very welcome.

David Reed
Membership Secretary & Poppy Appeal Organiser
dreedsfm@sky.com / 07970 597044 / 01327 352414
Just Ask: Prayer

Jesus talked about children asking their parents for things. Although in Bible times, there were no supermarket sweetie shelves at the checkout, just at your kids’ eye level, children were the same in those days as they are today. “Mum – can I have...? Dad, can’t I just...?”
We have all heard, seen or done it.

Jesus said:

"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, would give him a snake instead? You know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Do you have a friend or family member who is a really good present buyer? They are the ones who always seem to know exactly what you want for your birthday or exactly what you need for Christmas. In our family, my brother is the one! You have to know someone really well in order to give a good present. God is a loving Father who really knows how to give good gifts. He made us and knows us completely. Jesus says that He knows what we need even before we ask it. He knows that we need food, clothes and a home. We don’t have to go on about these. Many words don’t make better prayers.

Jesus starts his prayers with “Our Father.” Jesus knew God as completely as God knows us. He had such a good relationship with God that He knew if He asked Him for something, God would answer. Jesus wants us to have the same relationship. He says:

"Ask, and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find
Knock and the Door will be opened.”    LUKE 11, V.9

At the Saxon Fair on Sunday 23rd July the churches will be running a prayer tent where you will be most welcome to ask for prayers for others and yourself. Live dangerously and come along and ask. You will be most welcome.

Helen CM Castle

ART STUDIOS OPEN DOORS IN SOUTH NORTHANTS IN OCTOBER

South Northamptonshire Arts annual Art Trail will this year be held from Saturday 7th – Sunday 15th October. Here is an opportunity to watch as work is made before your eyes. What would you like to see? – oil or water colour painting, sculpture or perhaps stained glass, embroidery, wood turning, jewellery…..so much choice!

As well as regular exhibitors you will meet many new artists who have joined us this year, with around 50 artists and designer- makers exhibiting their work at studios and other venues across South Northamptonshire, there is something to appeal to everyone.

Painters will be painting and makers will be busy creating all manner of beautiful crafts in a myriad of mediums, in addition to paintings there will be artists showing textiles, ceramics, jewellery, illustrations and glass. Many artists organise workshops throughout the year, so what better time to sign up for that craft you have always wanted to learn or buy a voucher as a special gift for a creative friend.

Work on show will of course be for sale - a chance to buy direct from the artist - perhaps that unique gift for the person who has everything. All this makes for a delightful and fascinating day out!
The brochure listing the artists and with a map indicating the venues will be available at The Forum, libraries, galleries, shops and restaurants across the county in September or can be downloaded then from our website.

We look forward to seeing you!

You can contact the SNA on their website at: www.arts-sn.org.uk
Or email: southnorthamptonshirearts@gmail.com

The Art Trail is funded by South Northants Council.
This summer, Towcester's attention is focused on the period 1100 years ago when the town began the development that created a thriving market town that continues to grow apace. A series of special events will look back to the year 917AD and in particular to an epic battle in that year.

Saxon defenders successfully drove off the force of Norse immigrants who had settled in the East of the county. King Edward the Elder made the town a burgh and, in a way, it became a stepping stone as the English nation gradually evolved over the next few years.

The Society has already been part of the programme with a series of history walks led by Brian Giggins and a writing competition for local schools with entries now judged, winners chosen and the prize presentation due at Towcester Library before the summer term ends.

The subject given to the children should have given plenty of scope for imagination. It was: "Sound the alarm! The Danes are attacking!"

When the Town combines for the Saxon Fair on the Watermeadows on 23rd July, the Society will be there with a fascinating exhibition, and then will make their usual contribution to the St. Lawrence Flower Festival (10th - 12th August) with an exhibition and flower display. The theme, much in line with the 917 celebration, is “Towcester - a passage through time”.

**A PROGRAMME PACKED WITH FUN AND HISTORY**

**Wednesday, 12th July**
**Oooh Matron! A History of the Carry On Films**
Steve Dimmer
This talk is the special treat for members and their guests at the Society's mid-summer party, to go along with the usual raffle, drinks and buffet. Steve will look at the rise of the well-loved series plus the lives of its stars. Clips of classic moments will add to the fun.

**Wednesday, 13th September**
**Another Icarus**
Roy Smart
Roy is a former Royal Navy pilot, air display director and aviation consultant. He will tell us the story of Percy Pilcher, whose historic and brave quest for flight ended tragically in a quiet corner of Northamptonshire in 1899.

**Wednesday, 11th October**
**Milestones**
Helen Crabtree
Helen makes a welcome return to Towcester, this time to talk about Northamptonshire milestones which were once so important to travellers until the development of faster motorised transport and satellite navigation.

**Wednesday, 8th November**
**Northampton in photographs**
Richard Deacon
Richard uses his collection of photographs to demonstrate the dramatic changes in our County Town during the 1970s.

Monthly meetings are held at the Riverside Resource Centre In Islington Road, Towcester, at 7:30pm. The entrance fee for non-members remains at £2. For further information please telephone David Wilcock on 01327 351782 or John Morris on 01327 350297.
The Rotary Club of Towcester donates to Towcester Tigers Softball Team

The Rotary Club of Towcester was delighted to welcome Jos Thompson and Coleen Reynolds of Towcester Tiger Softball Team to one of its recent meetings.

The Club had decided that some of the funds that had been raised in 2017 should be donated to the Tigers – who were looking for monies to buy new nets for their players. The Towcester Tigers Softball Team currently practices at the Towcester Rugby Club on a Wednesday (4.30 – 6.00 pm for 11-15 year olds and 6.30 – 8.00 pm for 16 plus). Softball is a cross between baseball and rounders and can be played by any age. The Tigers are currently looking for new members to play – so if you fancy having a go – you can contact them through their Facebook page – Towcester Tigers Softball.

One of the Rotary Club of Towcester’s objectives in raising money through the various events that it runs, is to be able to put money back into the community to help in any way that encourages individuals better themselves or try and excel in a given discipline. Donating to the Tigers it was felt met that objective.

Says current President Trevor Brown, “Our Club has had a great year – we’ve had lots of fun doing our various fund-raising events, as well as our social events, and we are very pleased to have been able to help so many people in the local community in the past twelve months. We wouldn’t be able to do any of this without the willingness of our Rotarians to put energy and effort into these events – all of which of course is done on a voluntary basis. We are always really pleased when we get new members as they help to bring a new dynamic to the Club and fresh ideas. All of which make for a happy, fun, caring but effective Rotary Club.

Anyone who would like to find out more about us is welcome to pop along on a Thursday evening at the Saracen’s Head – have a meal with us and a chat and find out what a nice bunch of people we are! For further details – please contact our Secretary via email on secretary@towcester-rotary.org.uk or visit our website www.towcester-rotary.org.uk

Towcester Methodist Church – Forthcoming Events

Harvest Festival – Sunday, 24th September at 10:30am.

Harvest Buffet Supper – Monday, 25th September at 7pm, to be followed by auction of produce. Tickets are to be priced at £6 per adult and £4.50 per child. To purchase tickets, please telephone Mr & Mrs Moore on 01327 351629.

Christmas Fair – Saturday, 11th November at 10:30am. There will be various stalls and a raffle. Admission is free of charge.

Gift Service – Sunday, 3rd December at 10:30am. Please bring gifts for children which will be taken to the Salvation Army for distribution.

Carol Service – Sunday, 17th December at 10:30am.
FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN THE TOWN HALL

Every Friday

AUGUST
Saturday 5th
BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY
28th August
SEPTEMBER
Saturday 2nd
Saturday 23rd
Saturday 30th
OCTOBER
Saturday 7th
Saturday 28th

Antiques 2 Go Indoor Market
A Slice of Craft – Sale of Handmade Crafts
TOWCESTER PRODUCE SHOW...
further information on can be found on page 11
A Slice of Craft – Sale of Handmade Crafts
Nearly New Sale
The Gift Bazaar
A Slice of Craft – Sale of Handmade Crafts
The Gift Bazaar

Watling Friends Presents...

ERIC KNOWLES

"What’s it Worth — The Bigger Picture"
Antiques Valuer and TV Broadcaster

Date: Monday 23rd October 2017
Venue: Towcester Town Hall
Time: 7.30pm, doors open at 7pm
Tickets: £6 to include tea or coffee and cake

For information & tickets please contact:
Eileen Reid on 01327 323180 or
Pat Trede on 01933 557348

FORTHCOMING EVENTS ON THE RECREATION GROUND

JULY
13th – 16th
John Scarrott’s Funfair

AUGUST
14th – 16th
John Lawson’s Circus

Towcester Town Crier is published by Towcester Town Council and is open to contributions from all organisations and individuals in the town. The last date for advertising is 24th August and for copy 31st August 2017. We are now operating a strict deadline for advertising / copy and materials will not be accepted after these dates.

Copy should be sent to Elizabeth Cox at the Town Council Office (tel: 01327 350995; email: towncouncil@towcester-tc.gov.uk). For advertising, please contact Jim Lynch (tel: 01327 350899). Articles appearing contain the views of the person submitting the item and are not necessarily the views of the Town Council. The Town Council’s website address is www.towcester-tc.gov.uk.

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