

Barston News Sheet

December 2024

Issue 103

Don't Forget: The grand Barston Christmas lights will be illuminated on Saturday 7th December at 5:30pm.

Come along, join the festive cheer and share some mulled wine and mince pies with your neighbours!



Parish Council

Hello Everyone,

Winter is upon us and Christmas is just around the corner! Here's a roundup of the latest news and updates from around the village:

Bridge Restrictions in Barston

Recent changes to the weight restrictions on the bridge have been a challenge, particularly for our local farmers. The limit has shifted from 6 tonnes per axle to a total of 3 tonnes, creating significant issues. We're working closely with SMBC to secure special dispensation for specific agricultural vehicles with low ground pressure. So, if you spot farmers crossing the restricted bridge, rest assured they have permission to do so.

Night Flights at Birmingham Airport

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who shared their views on the airport's application for more night flights. It's vital for our voices to be heard, and the Parish Council has formally submitted an objection. While we all understand the proximity of the airport, the majority of residents are opposed to an increase in night-time disruptions. Your continued support is much appreciated.

Reducing Village Speed Limits

We're continuing discussions with SMBC to lower speed limits in parts of the village. The aim is to reduce some 40mph zones to 30mph, improving safety for all. A big thank you to Guy Atkinson for leading this initiative, progress is well underway and we hope to see changes implemented next year.

Christmas Events

▪ **Village Tree Light Switch-On:** Join us at 5:30pm on Thursday, 7th December, for some festive cheer with mulled wine and mince pies as we light up the village tree.

▪ **Christmas Lights Competition:** Show off your holiday spirit! Judging will take place over the same weekend as the tree light switch-on. A festive hamper awaits the winner!

Next Parish Council Meeting

Monday, 8th January at 8:00pm in the Institute. Everyone is welcome to attend and share their thoughts.

Wishing you all a warm and joyful start to the festive season!

Jeremy Emmett (Chairman)

Editor's Note

Season's Greetings Barston!! In this festive Issue we have a number of ideas for things to see and do to during these short days and cold nights. In addition to the ones highlighted by Jez above:

Why not join the Christmas Carol Sing-Along in aid of **Cancer Research UK** at St. Alphege Church on the 14th December? (details inside).

How about a Boxing Day walk following the route very kindly put together by **Laura and Alice** in the flyer insert? (By the way, if you would like an electronic copy of Laura and Alice's Walk or would like to see us publish more suggestions for walking routes around Barston, just let me know).

With all that done, why not cosy up to the fire and read about *Inspirational Villagers* from days gone by, courtesy of the article by **Mavis Cook**, or start to get to *Know Your Neighbours* like the team at **The Malt Shovel**. Merry Christmas Everyone!

Tony Burton

The Barston News Sheet is paid for by the Parish Council and printed by Midland Business Equipment, Knowle.

Winter Fuel Worries?

In July, the government announced that Winter Fuel Payments would only be given to those in receipt of Pension Credit or other means-tested benefits.

If you are a Barston Parishioner and concerned about being pushed into fuel poverty this Winter, or know somebody who might be, you can contact the **AgeUK Advice Line** on **0800 678 1602** or check eligibility for help through the **Household Support Fund** by visiting the Solihull Council website: <https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/help-energy-costs-continues-through-household-support-fund>

Airport News

The meeting of the Solihull Council Planning Committee to consider the Night Flying Policy for the next 3 years, originally scheduled for 4th December, has been moved to 8th January.

Under PL/2024/10917/M106 on the Planning section of the SMBC website, there are all the relevant documents, including the planner's summary recommendations and comments for Committee consideration. There are also some additional comments from the Airport trying to justify their position and answer a few of the many objections.

Personally I must thank Jez Emmett for all he did to mobilize parishioners, and sort the access to the Planners website issues, they do not make it easy!

David Elliott

Memorial Institute

It is pleasing to note that The Village Hall (AKA The Memorial Institute) is being used more frequently. If you are planning a party or social event over the Christmas period or if you know of anyone who has need for regular meetings, there are a number of weekly and monthly opportunities.

For details and availability, please contact Caroline Hadley (01675 442061).

The AGM of the Institute will be held on Wednesday 12th February 2025, in the Hall.

Christmas Carol Sing-Along

In aid of **Cancer Research UK** the choirs are giving a concert of Christmas music with Carols for audience participation on the 14th December in St Alphege Church at 7.00pm. Admission is £12.00 for adults and £5.00 for children (under 5's free) and includes a glass of wine and a mince pie.

Come and have a foretaste of Christmas while supporting this wonderful charity.

Tickets available from **John Emmett** by email (jxemmett@gmail.com).

Know Your Neighbours

For the first of a new series of articles profiling local businesses, I met with staff and proprietors of **The Malt Shovel** on Barston Lane:

For many people (myself and the current owners included), a visit to **The Malt Shovel** is the first introduction they will have to Barston village and the broader community. This awarding-winning "destination" gastropub attracts customers and visitors to Barston from all over the West Midlands and beyond.

The current owners of **The Malt Shovel**, Heidi and Eric, met when they were working in London, but always had strong ties to the Midlands. Whenever they were visiting the region, they would be sure to spend some of their leisure time in **The Malt Shovel** socialising and enjoying good food and drink in its beautiful, warm and welcoming surroundings.

Heidi and Eric are serial entrepreneurs and have been in business together now for over 35 years. When **The Malt Shovel** came up for sale from 'Punch Taverns' in March 2009 they leapt at the opportunity to purchase it!

Originally part of the Bobby Browns group, **The Malt Shovel** ultimately became independent and wholly owned by Heidi and Eric in 2018, but managed and overseen by Restaurant Managers Dani and Jan and Head Chef Nick. With this strong team, the business has gone from strength to strength, culminating in them winning first the **regional** and then the **national**, "**Gastro Pub of the Year 2023**" award granted by Food Awards England.

"This would not have been possible without the support of all their loyal customers and the dedication of the whole of The Malt Shovel team", said Heidi

"Our moto is 'Great Food, Great Service'".

The Malt Shovel delivers both of these in spades, as I can readily testify from personal experience, being a regular customer myself.

"We put equal emphasis on both of these key elements of our business, using fresh, cooked to order and locally sourced ingredients in our dishes where ever possible. We also know very well that the customer experience is key and we rely heavily on our staff to help us deliver that", said Jan.

Anyone from Barston who has visited **The Malt Shovel** will probably know exactly what Jan means. Long standing members of staff such as Franco, Dobrina, Ben, Maggie and Ken (as well as Dani, Jan and Nick), go out of their way to look after their guests, make sure they have a good time and know many of the regular customers by their first names. They operate a seasonal menu, refreshing the à la carte every three months and offering daily specials and set menus for parties and buffets.

The Malt Shovel certainly seems to be doing something right, with over 4,000 reviews and the highest rating on *Dish Cult* in the Solihull area at 4.81/5.0 and typically ranking at the 4.5/5.0 mark on websites such as *TripAdvisor*, *OpenTable* and *Yelp*. Bookings are full to capacity for Christmas Day and Boxing Day 2024 and already filling up fast for Christmas 2025! **The Malt Shovel** is also through to the finals of the **Gastro Pub of the Year 2024** and we wish them all the best with that.

How lucky are we in Barston to have a pub like **The Malt Shovel** right here on our doorsteps!!



To find out more, visit **The Malt Shovel** website at www.themaltshovelatbarston.com

Barston Association

Thank you to all that contributed to and supported the Barston Ball this year. It was a very special evening which raised just shy of £2,200 which all goes towards our Charitable Fund.

As usual, we will be awarding cheques to our chosen recipients at our AGM in February. If you wish to nominate a charity or worthy cause close to your heart, please get in touch as soon as possible. You can email me on pete.sumner@btinternet.com or call me on 07870 483505. **Pete Sumner**.

Barston & Hampton W.I.

Our meeting in October was a talk by the Rev. Kathy Lloyd Roberts. Kathy gave us a fascinating talk about her journey to becoming Master of St Mary the Virgin, Temple Balsall.

As a child taking her Communion classes, she had asked the Vicar if she could become a vicar too. He told her that women were not ordained in the Church of England, and so she put the idea out of her head.

Years later, the fates conspired and she became Curate at St Mary's, although she had had no previous affiliation with the Church at Temple Balsall.

When the Master was offered a position with the Queen at Windsor, Kathy applied for the Master's job, not thinking she would be accepted.

To her surprise she was invited by Lord Aylesford, one of the Feoffees of the Lady Katherine Leveson Trust, to take on the position.

She accepted, and did a most marvellous job for many years, looking after the Church, school and Alms Houses.

I speak from personal experience, as although we have a Barston address we are in the Parish of St Mary's, and the farm paid a tithe to the Church up until 1950.

Kathy married our eldest daughter, visited my mother when she was dying, conducted her funeral service, and baptised four of our granddaughters, all in the beautiful and ancient St Mary's church.

An incredible story, told by an amazing lady.

Barston and Hampton WI normally meet in the Memorial Institute at 2.15pm on the second Wednesday of the month. All ladies are welcome.

For details, please contact:

Tracy Pearson 07977 430733,
Annmarie Elliott 0167544 2177 or
Debbie Kirkham 01676 532233

Debbie Kirkham

Inspirational Villagers

One family that made Barston their home in a **very big way** were the Prentices. Five generations of the Prentice family lived in Barston covering a period of nearly 200 years. Mavis Cook is a direct descendant of the Prentice family. She no longer lives in Barston, but remembers the village with deep fondness and still reads every Issue of the Barston News Sheet. Here is some of her story in her own words...

"The first Prentice to live in Barston was William Prentice who came from Snitterfield in 1811 and married Lydia Hall. They had 10 children and as each generation afterwards produced lots of children and continued to live and work in Barston so the family grew.

"My Grandfather William Mark Prentice was born in 1882 and was the 5th child of 16 children born to William and Ellen Prentice. They lived in a cottage to the back of Oak Lane. The attached photograph shows their cottage with my Great Grandmother standing at the door.



"Five brothers from this family, along with 2 Prentice cousins, fought in the First World War and their

names are on the board in the Memorial Institute and on the Plaque in the church. St Swithin's saw many Prentice marriages, baptisms and funerals - several Prentice graves are in the churchyard.

"The second photograph is of Barston School. The children are holding up a board with '**Barston School 1911, Group 1**' written on it. Of course the school no longer exists and is now a family house. I was told that many years ago half of the children in the school had the surname Prentice! They were a very prolific family as I said!



"The last member of the family to live in Barston was Cyril Prentice who lived in Brook Cottage and died in 2005. Cyril was my mother's cousin and we used to visit Cyril and Joan in their lovely cottage and well-kept garden."

Mavis Cook

Barston U3A

Our regular Programme of lectures and presentations take place at Barston Memorial Institute at 02:30pm on the second Tuesday of each Month, the aim being to provide interesting talks on as wider variety of subjects as possible. We are a small friendly group of approx. 50 members and would welcome anyone who would like to join us.

Our next talks are:

11th Dec *Christmas Lunch*

12th Jan *A Nostalgic Trip Down the High Street*, Nigel Metcalfe

11th Feb *Would I lie to You, Again!*, John Lloyd

Recent talks and visits

In October a visit was arranged to Bodenham Arboretum where the owner showed us round a section of the site and explained how the arboretum came about, this was followed by a light lunch.

At our October meeting Susan Leach gave an interesting talk on the Suffragette movement.

In November Pamela Devine gave a talk on the Medieval Wall Paintings in the Guild Chapel in Stratford-upon-Avon.

A visit to Maxstoke Castle was well attended. The tour lasted about 1¾hrs and was conducted by a member of the Fetherston-Dilke family, who live in

the Castle, followed by Tea and home-made cakes.

An outing to Birmingham Art Gallery took place to view the Exhibition on The Radical Victorians.

Groups

The Book Reading, Table Tennis, Stem, Mah-jong and rambling groups have met on a regular basis.

If any of the above interests you or if you would like to have more information about any aspect of

Barston U3A Contact **Keith Fraser** 01564 777262

David Read

St. Swithin's News

We are now in the season of **Advent** which means "coming". It heralds the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is celebrated in many ways – with Advent wreaths, Advent candles, Advent calendars and so on. At St Swithin's, it is a time of preparation for Christmas. We hope you enjoy our Christmas card which you all should have received now. It comes with every good wish and God's blessing on you all.

Our services change very slightly this month. On December 15th there will not be a morning service as later on it will be our Carol Service. As last year, you are invited to come to the Bull's Head at about 5.45 and then walk over to the church with your candle for about 6.15. Or come straight to the church for 6.15 to just enjoy the readings and carols. There will be mulled wine and mince pies afterwards.

On Christmas Day, there will be a family communion service at 9.30 to which everyone is invited.

Also on Sunday 15th, between 2 and 3 o'clock, some Christmas OWLS will take up residence in the churchyard – dotted around, they are hoping to be found and taken home to decorate your Christmas tree! There will be a self-led trail around the churchyard following Barston the Owl's Nativity journey. *Join us from 2 – 3 pm*. Hot chocolate and cookies will be available in St Swithin's House too. Do come and be one of the first to try the trail!

From the registers:

Baptisms: 3rd August – Daisy Emma Jones; 1st September – Isabelle Olivia.

Funerals: 24th October – Rose Cookes – the church was packed to say farewell. Rose fought motor neurone disease with amazing courage. We continue to remember Robert and the family. 22nd November – Audrey Hurdley, who lived in Barston for many years with her husband Barry. Our condolences go to her daughter Denise and all the family.

Hobby House and Tea Club: Dates 10:00-12:00, then 2:00-4:00 – on the 3rd and 17th December, then the 7th and 21st January.

Big Breakfasts: 7th December and 4th January – 8.30 to 11 am - £8 for all you can eat! Do come!.

Mary Daymond