

#####

SANDBACH NEWS 2022

Written / Pictures by Stewart Green for Newspaper's / articles

#####

LATEST PICTURES

For Article see end of the file.

#####

#####

January 2022

APPEAL FOR NAMES OF THE FALLEN

On the 16 April 2022 the War Memorial in the Market Square, Sandbach celebrates 100 years since it was unveiled at 3pm in 1922 by Lt Col. John Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the Black Watch, the son of Colonel and Mrs Kennedy of Brookside, Arclid. It was erected by Messrs Haigh and Son of Chester at a cost of £900. It had not been the original proposed site for the memorial as it had been suggested that it be positioned on the Common. A War Memorial Committee was set up to raise funds for its building and at a meeting in March 1920 the Sandbach committee with Hon. Secretary Mr A E Stringer reported that the total amount collected for its erection stood at £485 / 11s / 6d. Mr E Butler said he had only met one person in the High Street in favour of the position being on the Commons, Mr Dickinson said that "There are some just the opposite." It was suggested by the Chairman that the parents and relatives of the fallen soldiers be consulted as to the most suitable site and Mr Wright pointed out that they had held a town's meeting and a paper had been sent to each house on the subject. In the end it was decided that the Market Square would be a more appropriate place and work started to erect the monument.

With 73 names from the Great War and 37 from World War 2 on the memorial it has been felt locally that in celebration of the 100th Anniversary it would be fitting to add names missed from the two World Wars and to include the names of service men and women who have died in conflicts since 1945. To this end we are looking for names to be put forward for inclusion on a plaque or stone within the boundary of the site. If anyone wishes to propose a member of the forces they can contact me by E Mail at stewart1162@btinternet.com or through the letters page of the Chronicle. Details needed are the name, rank and number of the person, circumstances of their death and date as well as their connection to the town of Sandbach.

#####

20 February 2022

FIRE AT BOWLING GREEN PAVILION

At 2.43pm on Sunday the 20 February 2022 the fire brigade were called out to a small fire on the veranda area of the George Bowling Green pavilion in Sandbach Park. Mindless vandals had taken books from the book library inside the telephone kiosk at the entrance to the park and set them alight. Luckily the fire brigade were able to put the fire out quickly using portable extinguishers, although it was not the crew from Sandbach who attended as they were occupied at a medical incident on Congleton Road some two hundred yards from their station and were unable to respond so crews from Middlewich and Crewe were quickly on the scene.

Dating back to about 1991 when the George Bowling Green was sold off to make way for a new shopping area the Council moved the club facilities to the park as part of a land deal and was renamed the Sandbach Park Bowling Club with a purpose built club house.

Local police are checking the parks CCTV to see if they could find the culprits. Anyone with information should contact Cheshire Police on 101.

#####

#19L THE FALLEN NOT ON A SANDBACH MEMORIAL

#####

There are 10 names I have considered from a full list of soldiers and airmen who have not been included on the Sandbach War Memorial. Having researched every name on that list to check eligibility for inclusion I have reduced the list to the following. Other names have been dropped as they no longer live in the Town Area or were residents in Sandbach Heath, Wheelock, Ettley Heath and Elworth where their names could be added. If anyone has knowledge of the following that excludes them from the list or has a name they would like to add then please message me below.

If we can find out who owns the War Memorial Site we hope to add these names to the wall surrounding the monument on its anniversary next month or failing that in November.

William Edward Bailey #

NUMBER Private 8929 of the 24th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers
(Formally the Welch Regiment)
DIED / AGE – Died of his wounds received on the 5 November 1918 aged 28 (.b. 1890).
BURIED Premont British Cemetery, Aisne in France.
FAMILY The son of Henry and Fanny Bailey of 47 Swan Street, Congleton.
William resided in Sandbach.
BORN 1890
Joined the British Army as a Private with the Welsh Regiment Number 42252.
Regiment changed to the 24th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers as Private 48828
Died of his wounds received on the 5 November 1918 aged 28.

1911 CENSUS Age = 20 in 1911
House Owner at 36 Welles Street, Sandbach
William Morris (Aged 69 from Bilstone, Staffs) Roadman Urban District Council
Sara Ann Morris (Age 59 from Tupton, Derbyshire)
Above MARRIED in 1875
Had three children 2 still alive and 1 died by 1911.
Frederick John Price (Age 27 from Bridgnorth, Salop) Confectioner
William Edward Bailey (Lodger from Congleton, Cheshire
A Baker aged 20)

William Frederick Filler #

NUMBER Private 32 London Regiment 19th Battalion
DIED / AGE – Died of his wounds 15 Sept 1916 aged 25
BURIED Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, France
FAMILY Son of the late Mr and Mrs W Filler.
Husband of Maud Elizabeth Greenhalgh (Formerly Filler)
of 40 High Street, Sandbach
In 1914 the shop at 40 High Street was owned by Joseph and Annie Johnson (Confectioner)
(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

(John) Thomas Jackson (On St Mary's Roll of Honour)

NUMBER Private 291790 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment.
Joined as Private 489
DIED / AGE – 7 Oct 1917 in Flanders, France aged 25 (.b. 1892)
BURIED Godweaersvelde British Cemetery, France
FAMILY Husband of Kate Jackson of 17 Chapel Street, Sandbach (1917)
Enlisted in Staylybridge
1891 CENSUS (The Commons, Sandbach)
Thomas Jackson (Aged 27)
Eliza Jackson (Aged 23)
Margaret E Jackson (Aged 1)
Hannah Jackson (Aged 1) Died before 1901
Thomas Jackson (.b. 1892 Aged 1 Month)
Mary Money (Aged 58 Lodger)
1901 CENSUS (Bath Terrace, Sandbach)
Thomas Jackson (Aged 39)
Eliza Jackson (Aged 35)
Margaret E Jackson (Aged 11)
Thomas Jackson (.b. 1892 Aged 9)
James Jackson (Aged 8)
Eliza Jackson (Aged 3)
George Jackson (Aged 4 Months)
1911 CENSUS (10 Church Street, Sandbach)
Jasiah Carles (Aged 28 Window cleaner)
Annie Carles (Aged 25)

John William Gandy (Aged 5 possible son of Annie from a previous marriage)
Mary Elizabeth Carles (Aged 4)
John Thomas Jackson (.b. 1891 Age 20 in Sandbach Lodger / Tradesman / Hawker)
Kate Jackson (.b. 1892 Aged 19 Wife of John Thomas Jackson)
(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

Joseph Leech

NUMBER Private 10108 of the 10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment becoming a Lance Corporal.
DIED / AGE – Died on the 21 July 1917 aged 26 (.b. 1891).
BURIED Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
FAMILY The son of George Leech of 2 Ellen Street, Mottram Road, Godley.
Joseph was married with two children and lived in Union Street, Sandbach.

1901 CENSUS

George Leech (.b. 1865 in India Aged 36)
Charlotte Carratt Leech (Aged 37 in Sheffield)
George Leech (Aged 14 in Manchester)
Mary Lane Leech (.b. 1889 Aged 12 in Manchester)
Joseph Leech (.b. 1891-2 Aged 9 in Hyde, Cheshire)
William Leech (Aged 6 in Hyde, Cheshire)

1911 CENSUS (3 Railway View, Hyde, Cheshire)

James Kirk (.b. 1870 Aged 41 in Port Shingley, Cheshire. A Fire Beater)
Selina Kirk (Aged 37)
Fanny Kirk (Aged 8)
Albert Kirk (Aged 3)
Louise Kirk (Aged 1)
Joseph Leech (.b. 1891-2 Aged 19 in Hyde, Cheshire a Calico Weaver and a
Nephew of James Kirk)
William Leech (Aged 16 in Hyde, Cheshire) Nephew of James Kirk

Joseph possibly came to Sandbach to work in the Mill between 1911 and 1916.

JOHN LEECH (only Leech resident in Union Street in 1911 a possible relative)

1911 CENSUS (50 Union Street, Sandbach)

Thomas Shelley (aged 47)

Mary Leech (.b. 1866 Aged 45)

John Leech (.b. 1893 Aged 18 in Malpus, Cheshire a cobbler)

Jas Leech (.b. 1904 Aged 7)

Leonard Leech (Aged 5)

(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

Frank Robinson

NUMBER Royal Engineers
DIED / AGE – January 1917 (.b. 1891)
BURIED Unkn

FAMILY Lived at 26 Bradwall Street, Sandbach.

Aged 24 years 7 Months when enlisted 11 December 1915 and was
approved on the 2 June 1916 at Chatham (No 67096) .

1891 CENSUS (27 Paddock Road, Eccleston, Cheshire)

John Thomas Robinson (.b. 1854 Aged 37 in Macclesfield a Police Constable)
Judith Robinson (.b. 1853 Aged 38 in Macclesfield)
Berth Robinson (.b. 1876 Aged 15 in Macclesfield)
John W Robinson (.b. 1877 Aged 14 in Macclesfield)
Edmund Robinson (.b. 1897 Aged 12 in Macclesfield)
Catherine Robinson (Later Catherine Flockton)
(.b. 1881 Aged 30 in Sandbach / Brimstage, Cheshire)
Rebecca Robinson (.b. 1884 Aged 17 in Sandbach / Altringham, Cheshire)
May Robinson (.b. 1887 Aged 14 in Sandbach / Altrincham / Altringham, Cheshire)
Maria Robinson (.b. 1889 Aged 12 in Eccleston, Lancashire a Confectioner)

1901 CENSUS (26 Bradwall Street, Sandbach)
John Thomas Robinson (.b. 1854 Aged 47 in Macclesfield a Police Constable)
Judith Robinson (.b. 1853 Aged 48 in Macclesfield)
Berth Robinson (.b. 1876 Aged 25 in Macclesfield)
Catherine Robinson (Later Catherine Flockton)
(.b. 1881 Aged 30 in Sandbach / Brimstage, Cheshire)
Rebecca Robinson (.b. 1884 Aged 17 in Sandbach / Altringham, Cheshire)
May Robinson (.b. 1887 Aged 14 in Sandbach / Altringham / Altringham, Cheshire)
Maria Robinson (.b. 1889 Aged 12 in Eccleston, Lancashire a Confectioner)
Frank Robinson (.b. 1892 Aged 9 in Eccleston, Lancashire a Moulder)
Gladys Robinson (.b. 1894 Aged 7 in Sandbach)

1911 CENSUS (26 Bradwall Street, Sandbach)
John Thomas Robinson (.b. 1854 Aged 57 in Macclesfield a Police Pensioner)
Judith Robinson (.b. 1853 Aged 58 in Macclesfield)
Maria Robinson (.b. 1889 Aged 22 in Eccleston, Lancashire a Confectioner)
Frank Robinson (.b. 1892 Aged 19 in Eccleston, Lancashire a Moulder at Foden's Ltd)
Gladys Robinson (.b. 1894 Aged 17 in Sandbach)
Catherine Flockton (Catherine Robinson) (.b. 1881 Aged 30 in Sandbach /
Brimstage, Cheshire) A Widowed Dress Maker.
May Flockton (.b. 1911 Aged 5 Months)
(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

John Michael Tunney (**WW2**)

CHECK

NUMBER Private S/14133651 Royal Army Service Corps
CHECK (Poss union st) DIED / AGE – 29 December 1946 (Details of death unknown)
BURIED Sandbach Cemetery
FAMILY
(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

Douglas Roy Whitehead (**WW2**)

NUMBER Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve H.M.S. Formidable Avenger 1 Pilot
Telegraphist / Sub Lieutenant (Fleet Air Arm) 848 Squadron
DIED / AGE – 17 Apr 1945 aged 22 (.b. 1923).
Shot down by flack into the sea off Hirara during an attack on
Miyako Airfield during Operation Iceburg 1,
the Obs survived and were rescued.
BURIED Commemorated on the Lee-on-Solent Memorial
FAMILY Son of Douglas and Minnie Whitehead of Sandbach
Place of Residence Sandbach (1945)
(Douglas and Minnie Rowlands married July 1918 in Nantwich)
(NOT IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

Jose Woolley #

NUMBER Private 12248 of the 19th Battalion Manchester Regiment.
DIED / AGE – Killed in action on the 12 February 1916 aged 21 (.b. 1895)
BURIED Carnoy Military Cemetery, Somme, France
Or Weaste Cemetery, Salford, Greater Manchester (Possibly Mentioned)
FAMILY The son of the late James Woolley of 110 Evans Street, St Wolverhampton.
Originally from Manchester.
A resident of Sandbach
1901 CENSUS (50 Eccles New Road, Salford)
James Woolley (.b. 1859 Aged 42 in Dormington, Shropshire a Gardener)
Emily Woolley (.b. 1861 aged 40 in Alsagers Bank, Staffordshire) WIFE
(possibly died before 1911)
William Woolley (.b 1886 aged 15 in Alsagers Bank, Staffordshire)
James Woolley (.b. 1888 aged 13 in Oak Bank, Shropshire)
Percy Woolley (.b. 1891 aged 10 in Newcastle Under Lyme)
Edith Woolley (.b. 1893 aged 8 in Butterton, Staffordshire)
Jose Woolley (.b. Jan 1895 Aged 6 in Butterton, Newcastle Staffs)

Mary Eliza Woolley (.b. 1898 aged 3 in Butterson, Staffordshire)

1911 CENSUS (39 Grange St, Pendleton, Salford)

James Woolley (.b. 1859 Aged 52 in Dormington, Shropshire a Gardener)

James died before 1916 at his home in 110 Evans Street, Wolverhampton.

Sarah Tomasena Woolley (.b. 1870 Aged 41 in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire) WIFE
(Married in 1907)

Jose Woolley (.b. Jan 1895 Aged 16 in Butterson, Newcastle Staffs an Ironmongers Clerk)

Mary Eliza Woolley (.b. 1898 aged 13 in Butterson, Staffordshire)

Annette Woolley (.b. 1910 Aged 1 in Pendleton, Salford)

1916 DEATH POST

Jose Woolley (.b. Jan 1895 in Butterson, Newcastle Staffs) Residence Sandbach.

(A- Mrs Woolley lived at 30 Bradwall Road IN THE PHONE BOOK 1914)

(A- Mr Thomas Wooley lived at 40 Congleton Road 1910)

Wilfred John Wright #

NUMBER Private 33342 East Yorkshire Regiment 1st 4th Battalion formerly
25144 Manchester Regiment.

Attached to the 171st Tunnelling Coy. Royal Engineers.

DIED / AGE – Killed in action 28 December 1917 age 36 (.b. 1881).

BURIED Oxford Road Cemetery, Ieper in West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

FAMILY Born in Denton, Greater Manchester the Son of Frederick Wright.

Husband of Eliza Wright of 46 Congleton Road, Sandbach.

MARRIED

23 Dec 1911 to Eliza Higgins (.b. 1871) at Denton Christ Church, Lancashire

#####

12 March 2022

POPPY AWARDS 2022

Each year since 1970 the Sandbach Branch of the Royal British Legion has acknowledged the years of service by members of the public who have helped to sell poppies in November with an awards night at the Masonic Hall. Due to Covid the event was not held last year but in the 100th year of the Legion the organisers felt it was time to hold the event again and on the 12 March 2022 members of the Legion, poppy sellers and supporters gathered for an evening of entertainment and good food along with the handing out of awards for long service. Five awards were handed out on the night to Alexandra Newton for 5 years, Caroline Roughley for 10 Years, Valetta Cranmer for 15 Years, Jill Brown and May Lewis for 20 years of poppy selling. Ten other members of the public were also honoured with a mention and an award to be sent out to them for their continued support over the years, these were Pat Boxer for 5 Years, Ivan Birchall and Catherine Birchall, Mrs B M Blaney, Dennis Bell, and Peter Read for 15 Years, Philip Schijndel, Pauline Sedgley, Dennis Robinson and Grant Dinsdale for 20 Years of poppy selling.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by the South Cheshire Concert Band and food by Beech Tree Catering who as usual put on a great spread of food for the guests to enjoy.

(Picture Back = David Machin Standard Bearer, May Lewis, Alexandra Newton, Caroline Roughley, Marjorie Newton (Chairperson), Seated = Jill Brown and Valetta Cranmer (R))

#####

SANDBACH WAR MEMORIAL REDEDICATION

#####

On Saturday the 16th of April 2022 at 3pm there will be a Service of Rededication at the Sandbach War Memorial in the Market Square which will follow the original event programme from exactly one hundred years ago in 1922 when Lt Col. John Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the Black Watch officially unveiled the Memorial following the hymn “O God, our help in ages past.”, the lesson was then read by the Rev. S.W. Brown, with prayers by the Rev W.J. Plaskett and an address by Edward Holland the Chairman of the Memorial Committee. The unveiling was followed by the dedication made by the Rev. J. H. Armitstead, the Last Post, the hymn “Praise him for his grace and favour”, Reveille and then Mr Edward Holland officially handed over the Memorial to Mr Ruscoe J.P. the Chairman of the Sandbach Urban District Council who would take on the responsibility of looking after its upkeep.

The service ended with the hymn “Let Saints on earth in concert sing” which will be replaced by “I vow to thee my country” at the rededication.

Most towns and villages in England have a memorial to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Great War and the later World War 2. Crewe had an impressive sculpture produced by Whitehead and Sons Craftsmen in Marble (Established in 1821) and unveiled prior to 1917. In 1924 a new bronze sculpture of Britannia by Walter Gilbert was unveiled in the town centre after it had been cast at the foundry of H.H. Martin and Company. Today the memorial resides opposite the Town Hall after it was moved by the Council to make space in the square. It is now situated in an impressive square which also includes a giant poppy.

Congleton has its own memorial in Lawton Street which was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Brigadier General W Bromley Davenport on the 11 November 1923 and included only 236 names from the Great War after the Town Burgesses decreed that that would be the final number. A further 107 names were included after the Second World War and on the 19 September 2021, a newly renovated memorial funded by the Congleton Partnership and Congleton Town Council, was unveiled at a dedication event with new Portland Stone panels that hold the names of those not included on the original memorial being added to bring it up to date.

Despite extensive research there has been no information about who owns the War Memorial in Sandbach in 2022 making it difficult for organisers to add an extra eight names that were missed off the original list from both World Wars and have been discovered from research by Marjorie Newton and Frank Rogers in their book "The men who marched away" and by using the internet to find the names of more soldiers who were killed while in service and had a link to Sandbach.

It is thought that Cheshire East are responsible for the memorial because the 1922 ceremony handed over the memorial to the Sandbach Urban District Council which was taken over in 1974 by Congleton Borough Council who were then taken over in 2009 when Cheshire East and West were formed out of the old Cheshire County Council and all their assets were transferred to the new Cheshire East County Council until individual Borough Councils were established. However contacting the council they have so far not been able to tell me which department is in charge of the memorial.

Permission will have to be granted by the Planning department for any alterations to the site including the adding of names onto a plaque within the walls of the memorial as the area is listed and any changes to the grade 2 listed site has to be approved by the Planning and conservation departments. As soon as the owners can be discovered they will be able to apply for the extra names to be added.

Over twenty new names have been discovered with a Sandbach connection and these have now been reduced to eight following guidelines of the boundaries between each of the Sandbach memorials in Elworth, Sandbach Heath and Wheelock.

The following names will be added as soon as possible to the memorial.

From the First World War, William Edward Bailey a local baker age 28 who lived at 36 Welles Street, William Frederick Filler aged 25 the husband of Maud Elizabeth Filler of 40 High Street, Frank Robinson aged 26 from 26 Bradwall Street, Sandbach, Jose Woolley aged 21 possibly from 30 Bradwall Road, Wilfred John Wright aged 36 of 46 Congleton Rd,

From the Second World War, John Michael Tunney who is buried in Sandbach Cemetery, Douglas Roy Whitehead aged 22 of the RAF who was shot down by flack into the sea off Hirara the son of Douglas and Minnie Whitehead of Sandbach and husband of Minnie Rowlands.

A temporary list of these service personnel will be added at the event on the 16th April at 3pm.

#####

William Edward Bailey

NUMBER Private 8929 of the 24th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers (Formally the Welch Regiment)

DIED / AGE – Died of his wounds received on the 5 November 1918 aged 28 (.b. 1890).

BURIED Premont British Cemetery, Aisne in France.

FAMILY Born in 1890 the son of Henry and Fanny Bailey of 47 Swan Street, Congleton.

William was a local baker and resided in Sandbach at 36 Welles Street in the 1911 census as a lodger with Mr and Mrs Morris.

William Frederick Filler

NUMBER Private 32 London Regiment 19th Battalion

DIED / AGE – Died of his wounds 15 Sept 1916 aged 25

BURIED Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, France

FAMILY Son of the late Mr and Mrs W Filler.

William was the husband of Maud Elizabeth Filler (Formerly Greenhalgh) of the flat above 40 High Street, Sandbach. Below was a confectioners shop owned by Joseph and Annie Johnson.

Joseph Leech

NUMBER Private 10108 of the 10th Battalion Cheshire Regiment becoming a Lance Corporal.

DIED / AGE – Died on the 21 July 1917 aged 26 (.b. 1891).

BURIED Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

FAMILY The son of George and Charlotte Carratt Leech of 2 Ellen Street, Mottram Road, Godley.

Joseph was married with two children and lived in Union Street, Sandbach.

In 1911 Joseph was a Calico Weaver and the nephew of James Kirk and his wife Selina Kirk who he was staying with at 3 Railway View, Hyde, Cheshire.

His death notice in 1917 said he was living at the time in Union Street and had come to the town possibly between 1911 and 1916 to work in one of the local mills. One possible location could have been at 50 Union Street which was owned by Thomas and Mary Leech who could have been relatives and were in the phone book at the time.

Frank Robinson

NUMBER Royal Engineers

DIED / AGE – January 1917 (.b. 1891)

BURIED Unkn

FAMILY Lived at 26 Bradwall Street, Sandbach.

Frank was aged 24 years 7 Months when he enlisted 11 December 1915 and was approved for active service on the 2 June 1916 at Chatham (No 67096) .

Born in 1892 his parents were John Thomas and Judith Robinson from Macclesfield in Cheshire with his father being a Police Constable in the town during the 1891 census when they were living at 27 Paddock Road, Eccleston, Cheshire near Chester. Sister Berha and brothers John W and Edmund Robinson were born in Macclesfield while Catherine, Rebecca and May were born in Sandbach between 1881 and 1887. Maria and Frank were born in Eccleston in Lancashire (or possibly Cheshire as Paddock Rd is to the south of Chester) with sister Gladys being born in 1894 in Sandbach which is where the family were in the 1901 census at 26 Bradwall Street and by 1911 John had retired as a Police officer and was still living at that address with Frank who was now a Moulder at Foden's Ltd.

Jose Woolley

NUMBER Private 12248 of the 19th Battalion Manchester Regiment.

DIED / AGE – Killed in action on the 12 February 1916 aged 21 (.b. January 1895 in Butterton, Newcastle Staffs)

BURIED Carnoy Military Cemetery, Somme, France and is mentioned on the family grave at the Weaste Cemetery, Salford, Greater Manchester.

FAMILY The son of the late James Woolley of 110 Evans Street, St Wolverhampton who was originally from Manchester.

Not much is known about the life of Jose in Sandbach as his death notice only lists him as a resident at the time of death.

Born in Butterton, Newcastle Staffs to James and Emily Wooley they lived in 1901 at 50 Eccles New Road, Salford with brothers and sisters William, James, Percy, Edith and Mary.

By 1911 they had moved to 39 Grange St, Pendleton, Salford and his new step mother Sarah Tomasena Woolley who James had married in 1907 and in 1910 had a daughter called Annette.

The only Woolley listed in 1914 was a Mrs Woolley at 30 Bradwall Road.

Wilfred John Wright

NUMBER Private 33342 East Yorkshire Regiment 1st 4th Battalion formerly 25144 Manchester Regiment.

Attached to the 171st Tunnelling Coy. Royal Engineers.

DIED / AGE – Killed in action 28 December 1917 age 36 (.b. 1881).

BURIED Oxford Road Cemetery, Ieper in West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

FAMILY Born in Denton, Greater Manchester the Son of Frederick Wright.

Wilfred was the husband of Eliza Wright (nee Higgins) of 46 Congleton Road, Sandbach who he married on the 23 December 1911 at Denton Christ Church, Lancashire

John Michael Tunney (**WW2**)

NUMBER Private S/14133651 Royal Army Service Corps

DIED / AGE – 29 December 1946 (Details of death unknown)

BURIED Sandbach Cemetery

Douglas Roy Whitehead (WW2)

NUMBER Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve H.M.S. Formidable Avenger 1 Pilot Telegraphist / Sub Lieutenant (Fleet Air Arm) 848 Squadron.

DIED / AGE – 17 Apr 1945 aged 22 (b. 1923). Shot down by flack into the sea off Hirara during an attack on Miyako Airfield during Operation Iceburg 1, the Obs survived and were rescued.

BURIED Commemorated on the Lee-on-Solent Memorial

FAMILY Son of Douglas and Minnie Whitehead of Sandbach. In 1945 Douglas's place of residence was Sandbach. In July 1918 Douglas married Minnie Rowlands in Nantwich.

#####

16 April 2022

REDEDICATION OF SANDBACH WAR MEMORIAL ON ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

On the 16 April 2022 the War Memorial in Sandbach celebrated its 100th Anniversary to the minute with a rededication service at 3pm led by the Rev. Bee Boyde and Marjorie Newton the Chairperson of the Royal British Legion (Sandbach Branch). Musical accompaniment was splendidly supplied by Rob Glastonbury (Accordion) and Alexandra Newton (Flute) for the hymns and a wreath was laid at the end of the service to commemorate the Falklands War (1982). The last post was played by Sandbach School pupil Callum Rayner on a lovely sunny day with a large crowd attending the rededication on Market Square.

The Rev. Bee Boyde opened the service with a short message about the event leading into the first hymn 'O God, our help in ages past' followed by a passage from Revelations XX1 1-6 "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth," which followed the service as closely as possible from 100 years ago.

Prayers were said "For all who suffer as a result of conflict and ask that God may give us peace. For the service men and women who have died in the violence of war, each one remembered and known to God. May God give peace."

Marjorie Newton then made gave the address and unveiling parts of the original event with the first part of a history of the service and erection of the Memorial. "It was 100 years ago after three years of fundraising when Chairman Councillor E Holland and Secretary of the Sandbach War Memorial Committee, Mr A.E. Stringer, finally came to the point in time when the memorial could be unveiled to the many contributors to its construction by Haigh and Son of Chester at a cost of £900. It was originally planned to have been erected on Scotch Common but plans were changed and it was built on the site of the original Town Hall here in Market Square."

"The Sandbach War Memorial was unveiled on Sunday the 16 April 1922 at 3pm by Lt Col. John Kennedy, C.M.G., D.S.O., of the Black Watch who was the son of Colonel and Mrs Kennedy of Brookside, Arclid. Today we dedicate the service to those remembered on the War Memorial and to eight new names not included in 1922 and after 1945." At which point Marjorie read out the names of the additional eight servicemen which are now on a temporary list to the right hand side of the memorial, with plans to make a permanent display to their memory at a later time.

The Rev. B Boyde then rededicated the war memorial. "We now rededicate this War Memorial to the members of the Armed Forces who laid down their lives for the freedom we enjoy today, especially those who are carved into the sides of the monument and who lived in the town of Sandbach during the First and Second World Wars."

Callum Rayner then played the last post followed by a short pause for reflection and then the hymn, "Praise my soul the King of heaven".

At this point in the original service in 1922 there was a handing over ceremony. In 2022, Marjorie Newton takes up the story of the dedication. "Having raised the money for the War Memorial by the local committee, the custodianship of the site was handed over to the Sandbach Urban District Council. When the SUDC was taken over by Congleton Borough Council it became their responsibility. When Cheshire East and West were formed the ownership should have passed to them but it seems to have been lost in paperwork and to date the ownership of the War Memorial is not known. However Cheshire East do tend to the flowers and make repairs and clean the Memorial keeping it in pristine condition for the annual Remembrance Day."

In a change to the original service when the hymn "Let saints on earth in concert sing" was sung it was felt more appropriate to sing "I vow to thee, my country" followed a final prayer and blessing.

Marjorie Newton of the Royal British Legion (Sandbach Branch) laid a wreath to commemorate the Falklands war in 1982 and the sacrifice made by the servicemen and women at the time. For the community of Sandbach thankfully no one from the town was killed in the conflict.

The event ended with a thank you for those attending which was described by many as a very enjoyable service and a fitting event for the town of Sandbach to commemorate those names from 100 years ago when the people of the town wished to pay tribute to their fallen in 1914 to 1919 as well as the additional names added after WW2.

23- 24 April 2022

SANDBACH TRANSPORT FESTIVAL RETURNS AFTER TWO YEAR COVID BREAK

Started in 1990 as a Daffodil Sunday parade the Sandbach Transport Festival as it is now known celebrates its 32nd year but having missed two years for Covid 19 and two years in 2001 for a Foot and Mouth outbreak and 2005 when there was a shortage of volunteers this year's 28th Sandbach Transport Festival started with a low key presentation to the two organisers of the event who have decided to call it a day and have retired from the organisation. Graham and Elsie Alcock have been a part of the Transport Festival since its early days with Graham taking over as Chairman in 2007 the same year that the Sandbach Art Club held their first exhibition at the Masonic Hall in conjunction with the Transport Festival weekend. The contribution to Sandbach by Graham and Elsie Alcock was acknowledged by the Mayor of Sandbach in his speech before handing them a certificate of thanks as they announced they had stood down from the organising committee. "Both have been key members of our community with Elsie being Mayor twice and Graham organising the annual Christmas lights for the town as well as being a most important part of the organisation and longevity of the Transport Festival". Indeed it was under their management that the festival became a two day event as well as inviting various celebrities to the town from Claire Sweeney to boxer Big Joe Egan as well as a Foden's Band concert on the Friday to start the festival weekend and large events showing off the emergency services and stunt riders on the Saturday as well as a Festival Queen.

In 2014, Graham and the committee introduced a Classic car show on the Saturday to replace the spectacular demonstration and a Music festival was held on the Market Square. In 2022 the music may have changed from brass bands and folk singers to copy groups and blues but the atmosphere was the same as it was but maybe a little bit colder as the sun shone on the visitors who on the Saturday had to put on two jumpers or a coat to listen to the sounds of 'Rocket State', 'Disappearing', Mark Gollings, Ben Gorb, Automatic Annie and headline act The Coldplayer a Coldplay solo tribute that impressed the audience as he went through their popular catalogue while playing guitar and using a fake upright piano made up of an electric keyboard and a shell put together by his 80 year old father that certainly fooled the audience until he took it apart and put it into the back of his estate car.

The whole event between the 24th and 25th April 2022 can be hailed a success as the organisers got to grip with the complexities of a two day event while retaining some of the traditional features. Both days included the spitfire on show along with airmen and a person dressed as Winston Churchill who in 1945 had made a speech yards from where the spitfire was parked. Sandbach Fire station also held their annual open days on the Saturday and Sunday but disappointingly there were not a lot of old appliances on show with a Royal Ordnance, Aldermaston 1955 Dennis Elite F2 Registration number LBL596, hidden behind a hedge at the Ambulance Station on Saturday and a private Land Rover Series 3 1978 WRM554S owned by Alan Lea for the last five years in the livery of Scott Ltd (Barrow in Furness), which had been previously used by British Steel and was now parked on the main common on the Saturday. Due to the lack of appliances the Scott Land Rover was awarded the best emergency vehicle award not only due to the lack of opposition but also on merit as it was a very impressive sight among the cars.

Sandbach PCSO's were on hand to answer questions and hand out questionnaires and bells to attach to bags to warn of pickpockets and they also has an old Hillman Imp police car on show for both days.

The local Jaguar club showed off their range of machines from the E Type to a modern version with remote control boot etc. and local enthusiasts brought their pride and joys to the event with some regular contributors and some first timers like Mr and Mrs Linda Higgins from Sandbach who brought their orange Mini to the show.

A small collection of old motor cycles were on display including a 125 Bultaco, lap record holding bike at Crystal Palace owned now by an ex TT winning rider Mr John Weldon (Aged 82).

Peter Nicol from West Yorkshire brought his Triumph SD to the town to try and track down a previous owner. It had been purchased in 1923 by Robert Stubbs of Garden City, Sandbach, possibly from Wakefields Cycle shop in the High Street where Flowers on the Cobbles now stands. Robert kept the bike until 1950 when it was sold to Howard Hackney of Abbey Road, Sandbach the half brother of Frederick Hackney the owner of a Sandbach based Haulage company on Congleton Road. In 1955, Jack Barton of Sandbach Heath purchased the bike until 1965 when he died and it was passed onto his son Arthur who kept it until 2012 when it was sold to a dealer and this is where Peter Nicol acquired the bike, which he has now restored to its pristine condition. Hoping to show Jack his bike again it was not to be as after the Sandbach Mayoress posted the story on social media news came through from his daughter that he had passed away.

Day two of the Sandbach Transport Festival and the arrival of the lorries, many of which were modern ones owned by Sandbach or South Cheshire companies with a nice mixture of ERF and Foden vintage vehicles also on show including the Foden Coppenhall Bus which is a regular feature of the festival.

Just before 1pm the Roberts Bakery band set up outside the Military Arms public house, which in the 1930's was run by Herbert Harrison an Ex Foden's Band player. Playing a number of new popular tunes the band entertained the crowd who were gathering in large numbers for the start of the procession. This year instead of the procession being a leaving parade of vehicles it was moved back to a more traditional time of 1pm to do a circuit of the town past the Town Hall, Market Square, the Old Hall and St Mary's Church before turning left onto Old Mill Road and back via Congleton Road to Scotch Common. This proved popular with visitors rushing from one side of the town to the other to catch the returning vehicles minus the Roberts Bakery band who had led the procession through the first part and stopped off at the Old Hall to return to the Military Arms for a second concert of classic brass music ending with the Lincolnshire Poacher. With a small funfair in the park, market stalls inside the Market Hall over the weekend and DJs on the Market Square on the Sunday afternoon there was something for everyone at the Sandbach Transport Festival.

23- 25 April 2022

SANDBACH ART CLUB EXHIBITION

Formed in 1991 the Sandbach Art Club has put on an annual exhibition of work by its members at the Masonic Hall. Since 2007 they have held an exhibition over the Sandbach Transport Festival Weekend this year between the 23rd and 25 April 2022.

About 136 painting or drawings were on display for the public to buy at prices ranging from £5 up to £120 depending on the quality of the work and the size.

At the Masonic Hall there were drinks and cake available for visitors to enjoy as they looked and discussed the work on display.

Meeting on a Friday Morning at the Masonic Hall on Scotch Common the group is encouraged to improve their work with demonstrations by professional artists as well as workshops and trips to galleries to get inspiration for different techniques that may suit their style.

The standard of work on display gets better every season and although there was a full display on show for the whole weekend the organisers sold about 45 pieces of art work, replacing them with new works to fill the gap over the three days with the same quality of product worthy of hanging on the wall of any home locally or further afield.

The artists work can also be seen at the monthly Sandbach Concert Series at St Mary's Church.

29 Apr 2022

FIREWALKING IN SANDBACH FOR CHARITY

They do say never play with fire and there are no exceptions but it can be a useful tool to help raise much needed funds for charities. On Friday the 29 April 2022, Scott Bell and the UK Fire Walking Organisation came to the Sandbach Rugby Club for a Fundraising evening in aid of the AMMF Charity which raises money to help fund research into Cholangiocarcinoma (Liver Cancer) for which the only cure is surgery, assuming it is found in time. As it is hard to diagnose, many people are faced with a terminal diagnosis which luckily for local charity organiser Andrea Sheardown of Sandbach as she was diagnosed early enough with the cancer in October 2015 to have the procedure to help cure her. Andrea has since become a champion to help raise funds for this worthy cause along with her family and arranged the Fire Walk Event at the Rugby club.

Scott Bell gave a motivational speech for an hour to the one hundred or more people who took up the challenge of walking on hot coals, coals that can have a temperature of between 500 and 600 degrees centigrade. The idea is not to run over the coals but to go at a steady pace so that the heat cannot linger on the feet and cause it to burn but also it is advisable for the person not to go at a slow pace as this can also cause the heat to burn the feet. He also recommended that you wipe your feet afterwards to get any of the coal dust out of your toes that again with prolonged exposure can cause burning.

At this point in the article it is best to say "Fire Walking" should only be attempted under strict supervision by professionals and although they arrange many corporate and charity events around the country, all precautions are put in place for the safety of those taking part.

While Scott was setting out the precautions to those taking part his assistant Diane was getting the fire pit ready for the walk. Scott founded the company about 20 years ago after seeing an American Fire walker and decided to find out more by going to Sweden. On his return he was encouraged to start hosting events and soon the business took off with family members Diane a qualified Trampolining and gymnastics coach and children's education and development specialist plus Chloe a fire walking instructor and international model, who was not at the event on Friday. Scott also holds two Guinness Book of Records titles for the longest fire walk at 250ft in 2007 and 328ft in 2008.

Among those talking part were the Mayor and Mayoress of Sandbach, Cllr Geraint Price-Jones and consort Christina Price-Jones who along with the others gained a certificate to prove they had completed the Fire Walk.

75 year old Beryl Jones also took part in the walk having survived Cholangiocarcinoma longer than Andrea Sherdown and was her inspirational motivator to help beat this cancer.

All 100 or more participants walked the fire pit with no injuries and many having a second go enjoyed the experience. One lady at the talk beforehand seemed to be having second thoughts and asked many questions of the expert but was one of the first in the queue to take part and seemed to enjoy relish the experience.

The event raised a large sum of money for the charity and is only one of a number of events Andrea and her team of volunteers put together over the year and attend including the recent transport festival and a rock and pop festival at the rugby club later in the year.

ELWORTH WAR MEMORIAL
#####

After the successful rededication of the Sandbach War Memorial the residents of Elworth felt they had missed out as their memorial to their brave members of the armed forces during both world wars was now 102 years since it had its own dedication in 1920. On the 15th May 2022 a rededication service took place at the Memorial at 3pm, 102 years after its official opening. The ceremony should have been held in 2020 as the monument was finished in 1920 but that date was while the country was in lockdown and so a rededication was unable to be held on its anniversary.

At the end of the First World War, Elworth had celebrated Armistice Day with a Patriotic Dance organised by the girl employers of the works at the local Co-operative Hall on Friday the 22 November 1918 and according to the local papers “was a most enjoyable event with music provided by Mr C Salmon.” Profits from the event went into a fund for disabled soldiers and sailors.

By the following year, 1919, fundraising for a memorial in the village had started with reports of an event at the Elworth Recreation Club who were holding their third annual open bowling tournament with profits from the event going his year to the Elworth War Memorial Fund. The previous year they had handed over the sum of £76/0s/10d to the Abbey Field V.A.D. Hospital in Sandbach which during WW1 had helped many recovering service men and was by then still continuing to do this worthy work. Other fund raising events included a Serpentine Carnival and Dance at the Co-operative Hall in Elworth.

The proposed cost of the War Memorial was £500 and by this time in 1919 the Committee had still to find £150 for the project.

By the 23 April 1920, the erection of the Elworth War Memorial was almost complete and the local papers reported that a better site could not have been chosen overlooking the railway station on London Road.

Plans were put in place and on the 16 May 1920 the memorial was unveiled with Foden’s Band and local dignitaries and clergy in attendance.

The monument was constructed of Portland stone and stands about 17 feet high including the obelisk on the corner of Marsh Green and London Road facing the railway an important link in the Great War with horse, equipment made in the local Foden Works and personnel being moved by the rail network.

Mr F Kirkham hon. secretary, with the chairman of the Elworth War Memorial Committee and Mr C. F. Poole, had worked most assiduously for the cause.

The day started with a service at the local Parish Church conducted by the Revs. A Farrer, R Percival and W Plaskett. The organ was played by Mr Albert Ford who was a furniture manufacturer in Hope Street and the father of Cath Jones who later went on to run the local record shop on Congleton Road. The hymns included “O rest in the Lord” and the congregation sang several more appropriate hymns. The lessons were read by the Rev A. Farrar and the Rev. R Percival.

The Rev. T. Lunt then took the service and his text from “You are my friends if ye do whatever I command you.”

The band of Messrs Foden’s Ltd., played the hymn “Abide with Me” and the Dead March in “Soul” before leading a procession to the memorial with ex service men, under Sergeant Major W Corwood, choir, clergy, church officials, the Memorial Committee, relatives of the fallen and the general public. The hymn “Fight the good fight” was sung, after which the Rev. T. Lunt gave an address. He said: “We stand at this present moment face to face with one thought – death. We have been using words to-day with which we are familiar, but we forget one thing, that the use of these words, Jesus Christ and Heaven is of no importance whatever unless reality is behind it all. And you know what that means! – We must first recognise ourselves to be what we are, and then seek that change of heart which God is ever ready and willing to give each one of us, and that is love itself. We have our thoughts, and our thoughts may be in harmony with the will of God, but what has passed through should induce us to think more, and carry out our determinations. As citizens we should be more united, bound heart and soul with each other, and if we know not what to do individually, let us meet together, and consider, and ask ourselves what is required to be done, and study and discover means by which we can make

some effort to reform the past. Will you try, will you endeavour, will you make sacrifice and follow in the footsteps of our Divine Lord and Master? ...

Mr C. F. Poole, the chairman of the Memorial Committee, said he felt honoured in being called upon to perform the unveiling ceremony and said that the war memorial in years to come would prove to be to the generations, not only a war memorial, but a symbol of peace.

The Last Post was sounded by two cornet players of Foden's Band, and the relatives and friends placed wreaths at the foot of the monument with Mr Arthur Simcox depositing a handsome wreath on behalf of the Sandbach Comrades of the Great War (The predecessor of the Royal British Legion).

The Rev. W Plaskett gave an address. He said it was true they stood before death that day, but bearing in mind the closing lines of the last hymn, they stood also before eternal life. Those lives whose memories they were commemorating that day were not dead; they were still living. He appreciated the kind thought that led to his being asked to take part in the unveiling ceremony perhaps it was because he, himself, had been touched by the war in having lost a son on the 30th July, 1916, in the first "push" on the Somme. He had made the supreme sacrifice, gave his life for his God and his country.

The following year the Armistice Day consisted of a united service held in the church with the vicar assisted by the Rev. R. Percival, superintendent minister of the United Methodist Church. The "Last Post" was sounded by Messrs. Thorpe and Shepley, of Messrs. Foden's Band and Poppies were placed on the lectern and pulpit by Mrs Ware.

By 1926 the War Memorial was included in the service of remembrance and on the 14 November and a large body of men from the Sandbach British Legion, Elworth Scouts and Foden's Band were formed to march in procession from the Scouts Hall in School Lane with the Scouts band playing in the procession to the memorial. At the memorial Foden's Band played the hymns and a wreath of poppies was placed on its base by Mr A Cooper, on behalf of ex-Servicemen, and the scouts wreath was placed there by Cub Gannon with Mr Edward Jenkins, one of the oldest members of Foden's Band laying their wreath. Buglers then sounded the "Last Post" and "Reveille." After an interval of silence the people proceeded to the church, where the names of the fallen were read out.

By 1931 the last post was played by four members of the scouts, Masters A Shaw, H Cradleton, W Bennett, and A Platt.

On Remembrance Sunday in 1932, Harry Mortimer, trumpeter with the Halle Orchestra and ex Principal Cornet player with Foden's Band returned to the village to play the Last Post and Reveille.

The 9 November 1935 Remembrance Sunday had a record crowd turning out to join members of Foden's Band, The Elworth Branch of the British Legion and the Women's Branch of the Elworth British Legion in the ceremony with Mr Fred Mortimer conducting Foden's Band who played tunes including, "Colonel Bogey".

Foden Band buglers Mr D Moores and Mr J Bennett played at the 1936 ceremony with the British Legion wreath being laid by Mr W Cragg R.N.R and Mrs Kirkham laid one on behalf of the Women's Branch with Colonel Finlow in charge of the procession.

On the 8 May 1937 the land to the back of the War Memorial was opened as the Elworth Memorial Park by Major T.C. Toler with a well equipped children's recreation ground and beautiful gardens making this corner of Elworth a fitting place of tribute to the fallen. The ground had been donated by Alderman and Mrs F. J. Poole of Boothville, Elworth with the children's playground being financed by Mr and Mrs J. A. Palmer of Stranraer, Sandbach.

In the build up to and during the Second World War, Foden's Band played or were represented at the Remembrance Day event each November including again in 1942 when Harry Mortimer sounded the Last Post and Reveille with Colonel F.J. Finlow and Captain J.E. Foden read the lessons.

With the war in its fifth year in 1943, Foden's Band were on other duties and locally a Home Guard had been formed with units in Holmes Chapel. A report at the time showed the deployment of the local companies to different services. "On Armistice Day No 1 Platoon of "S" Company will parade at Elworth while Numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 Platoons will parade at the Drill Hall (Holmes Chapel) at 9.45am and 2pm. Dress Battle dress, forage cap and gaiters."

In 1945 Mr Basil Stokes from Foden's Band (2nd Baritone/ Eb Bass 11 Mar 1926 to 10 June 1940) played the last post.

In 1964 the condition of the War Memorial was raised as it was in a very poor state and a surveyor was appointed by the Sandbach Urban District Council to get estimates for its repair.

By 1965 the Remembrance Day service had Foden's Band in attendance again.

By the 1980's and 90's more emphasis was being put into the Sandbach Town Centre parade and service and the collapse of the Elworth British Legion in 1989 lost the main driving force behind the 11 November commemorations and the Remembrance Day service by this time had almost been forgotten in the local papers. The local churches still support an event each year to remember its fallen at 11am.

On the 1 June 2018, Foden's Band and the Sandbach Branch of the Royal British Legion held a brief ceremony to commemorate the death 100 year ago of the band's principal cornet player Edwin Firth who had been killed

during WW1 and is named on the memorial. The ceremony at 1.30pm at the Elworth War Memorial had members of the Firth family in attendance and Allan Littlemore laid the wreath on behalf of Foden's Band with the Mayor of Cheshire East, Mayor of Sandbach, the Royal British Legion and a film crew from the BBC's Northwest Tonight in attendance. At 2.30pm proceedings moved to the Sandbach War Memorial where Martyn Firth (Grandson of Edwin) laid a wreath and tributes were paid to other soldiers who had died in 1918 from both Sandbach Town and Elworth.

On Sunday the 15th May 2022, a Rededication service took place at the Memorial at 3pm, 102 years after its official opening. Organised by Nicola Cook the event drew a large crowd of residents from Elworth and some from Sandbach who had an interest in the event both historically and on a personal level including at least two families whose relatives are named on the memorial. Members of Foden's Band attended to play the hymns while the Rev. Jeremy Tresise and the Rev Anthony Rigby took it in turns to conduct the ceremony.

The opening hymn was "Abide with me" which had been the first piece of music at the ceremony in 1920. The next item in the programme was the reading of the names of the fallen that appear on the War Memorial with information about each of them taken from the book 'The men who marched away' by the late Frank Rogers and current Chair of the Sandbach British Legion Marjorie Newton who started the readings of the first eight names followed by Nicola Cook, PCSO Sue Holt, Anne and Howard Copenhall.

Marjory Newton and Deputy Mayor of Sandbach Kathryn Flavell then laid wreaths on behalf of the Royal British Legion and Sandbach Town Council.

Mark Cook then recited the Exhortation before Matthew Rigby joined Foden Band member Mark Wilkinson to play the last post just as two members of Foden's Band had done in 1920.

After the two minutes silence the band played the hymn "Eternal Father (For those in peril on the sea)" followed by the Rev Anthony Rigby pledging a commitment to peace as they had done 102 years previous not realising that in 1939 to 1946 a Second World War would take more men from Elworth and whose names are also on the memorial. "Let us pledge ourselves today to live as good neighbours, to honour the past, to care for all who are in need, and to live at peace among ourselves and with all people."

There followed the hymn "I vow to thee my Country", a blessing and finally to end the service the National Anthem.

When the Rev Plasket in 1920 said the words "When the memorial crumbled and perished their names would be forever fixed through eternity, and nothing could erase them." Little did he think that 102 years later they would still be remembered and the Memorial would still have a pride of place in Elworth.

The names on the Elworth War Memorial from 1914- 18 are as follows: - Harry Barker, Percy Barker, Harry Bowyer, Arthur Edward Consterdine, James Twemlow Cooper, Richard Thomas Cragg, John Elsby, Edwin Firth, Patrick Gannon, Leslie Reginald Probyn Hindson, Thomas Whitfield Houghton, Harry Kesteven, Harold Kirkham, John Thomas Lewis, Samuel Bertram Leese, Victor Mulliner, Ellis Rowarth, John Shaw, William Venables, Joseph Wakefield and William Haddock.

3 to 5 June 2022

PLATINUM CELEBRATIONS IN SANDBACH AND HOLMES CHAPEL

Outside Congleton many of the Towns and villages of the area have celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with displays around the streets and also in the shops with many going above and beyond to create a spectacular display with Holmes Chapel winning hands down as the local knitters made bunting, wraps around poles and street furniture and the highlight has to be the life-size knitted Queen and her Corgi in the grounds of the church which was made by 34 ladies of the Holmes Chapel Community Yard Bombers with each making 6 inch squares for the dress. On Thursday the 2 June 2022, Mike Street from the Parish Council and the local Fire Brigade lit one of 3,500 Jubilee Beacons that was positioned on top of St Luke's Church and has now been moved next to the knitted Queen in the church yard.

Sandbach on the other hand seemed to have done nothing to celebrate the anniversary leaving it to its outlying villages to take on the mantle with Sandbach Heath holding a spectacular event on the Friday in the park organised by St John's Church, St John's Primary School (Headmaster Rob Whittle) and the Sandbach Neighbourhood Forum. Anthea Buxton of the Forum told me that it had originally been a ticketed event but thanks to donations by Arclid Transport, Bathgate Silica Sand and about 24 contributors including £120 from Cheshire East and £200 from Sandbach Town Council the event became a free celebration which was enjoyed by hundreds from the area and beyond. Music was supplied by the Cheshire Pop Choir and The Repeaters with the local school holding a competition to do a portrait of the Queen and also to design a crown for Her Majesty. The raffle included clothing provided by two members of Coronation Street and a flight over Cheshire. The park also had the addition of a Jubilee, "Bird Cherry Tree" planted by Alan Warburton who gave the dedication and prayer before planting it in a prominent position and the day ended with a short but spectacular firework display. On Saturday the 4 June 2022, Sandbach Rugby Club organised an event which attracted large crowds from 3pm into the evening with a Pig Roast organised by Andy Milner and face painting bringing together the community.

On the evening of Saturday residents in Bradwall Road, Sandbach who had met in Dubai reunited as members of the Royal Family (Masked) with even Prince Philip making a return visit to join the celebrations. As winds and sunshine had dominated the early part of the bank holiday weekend it was the rain and cold that put a dampener on the Sunday but with gazeboes in abundance the street parties came out in Elworth starting at the Elworth Methodist Community Centre an event that Graham Whitehouse one of the organisers had hurriedly put together after it became apparent that the planned party in Elworth Park was a washout and the venue had to be changed to an indoor event. Wonderful boxes of sandwiches and cakes were put together by volunteers and a visit by the newly elected Sandbach Mayor Kathryn Flavell made it a special occasion to celebrate 70 years of HM on the throne. With rain pouring down the sandwiches, Union flag cakes and goodies appeared all over Elworth with street parties in Abbey Road, Elworth Road and The Avenue among the many celebrations taking place. Sandbach Mayor Kathryn Flavell was even persuaded to play the National Anthem on the flute for residents of Elworth Road before going to the Avenue to meet their Queen and another wonderful spread and display to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth 2nd.

17 to 19 June 2022

MIDDLEWICH 30TH FOLK AND BOAT FESTIVAL

It certainly was a FAB weekend in Middlewich for the return of the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival between the 17th and 19th June 2022. There was an abundance of praise for the organisers of the official 30th year of the festival with many naming Lizzie Rosenfield-Boyle who has returned as the main organiser of the bands and festival which has seen a return of the atmosphere to the festival that it has been lacking under the sole control of the Middlewich Town Council in recent years. Run jointly this year by volunteers and the council the whole event entertained thousands not only on the main concert stage but the numerous public houses in the town with so many acts it was difficult to see half of them over the weekend and if you stayed for more than two songs you had no chance of experiencing the wealth of talent that had been booked for the event from headline acts The Waterboys, Cast, The Oysterband, The Boo Radleys plus alien musicians and singers in Henge who closed the festival's main stage on the Sunday in an electronic experience no one will forget. Support acts also excelled over the weekend with Simon and Oscar from "Ocean Colour Scene", Kat Mc Cullock at the Wharf and ex Northwich resident Chris Tavener who sang his own humorous songs including a "thank you" to Harry Styles the Holmes Chapel singer.

It was also nice to see old favourites back in the town with Stanley Accrington, Salty Dog Band, Hayley Strangelove and of course the Middlewich Paddies who started the festival on the 15th to the 17 June 1990 thirty two years ago. Due to Covid loosing the festival for two years and foot and mouth in 2001 there have now been 30 festivals with the organisers promising this years to be the best yet. Maybe not the best festival over the years as it had more diverse styles of music rather than folk music in prominence of those early years, but the old atmosphere and feeling had returned and more people enjoyed the entertainment at the various venues with surprises from bands from Norway, Russia and the surprise fun band of the event was a bunch of musicians called the Rajasthan Brass Band who brought an infectious dance music to the White Bear and Kinderton venues which had many dancing that countries style of dance.

When the Middlewich Town Council took over in 2011 the event started to lose its appeal as many venues dropped out of the event but with many of the old team returning as well as the venues the festival celebrated its anniversary in style and everyone who should have been there was in attendance with many reminiscing about the old days during the Middlewich Paddies set on the Sunday including Dave Roberts who tried to interview the band about the formation of the festival in 1990. Patron of the festival BBC Radio 2 and 6 music presenter Mark Radcliffe also made a surprising appearance as the drummer for 'Fine Lines' the support act for the Oysterband.

27 Main Stage and Folk Stage acts and over 47 fringe acts with stalls, narrow boats, a floating market and Morris dancers in the Bull Ring this is hopefully the return of the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival with everybody I spoke to having enjoyed the weekend in 2022.

25 June 2022

SANDBACH ROCK AND POP FESTIVAL

Following on from the successful Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival the week before and an alternative to Glastonbury the Sandbach Rock 'n' Pop Festival at the Sandbach Rugby Club on Bradwall Road brought a quality mixture of local talent and copy artists to the town with some we had seen before and some new acts to entertain over 800 ticket holders on the 25 June 2022.

The day started with a change of artist as the copy group Little Mix were unable to attend due to covid among its members so we were treated to Billy Eilish (Melissa Tributes) a worthy replacement. Local band Sun Rosa formed while at Newcastle College were next on stage in their first "gig" outside of the college playing various songs including a cover of a Foo Fighters hit. Meanwhile on the acoustic stage inside the Rugby Club Callum entertained those in the bar area.

Next on the main stage was Sandbach band 'Boredadventures Band' who performed original and cover songs and were made up of Ethan Rogers, Leo Jones, Connor Timmis and Harry Longworth. The acoustic stage were also treated to a local resident but Manchester born musician Jon Stevens who has lived in the town for the last eleven years and sang songs by George Ezra and the popular Foo Fighters.

A deluge of rain was timed perfectly between the main stage acts as the Ed Sherran (Cliff Jenkinson) tribute prepared for his appearance which was greeted by the return of the sunshine. During his set one of the songs was Galway Girl which has the words "She played the fiddle in an Irish band", so just before the song Ed plucked a lady from the audience to take up a battered fiddle to play the part of the musician as she mimed to the music and moved among the crows enjoying her time in the spotlight.

Ben Sproston played the acoustic stage while the Moondogz were on the main stage followed by the Cold Player (Seth Reuben) who had been at the Sandbach Transport Festival earlier in the year and apart from the final headline act was the most popular performer of the event with many of the crowd crowding the area in front of the stage to join in the songs and take part in the dance moves encouraged by the performer.

Returning band "Tumbling Dice", a Rolling Stones tribute gave us a good copy of the original bands performance followed by 'Gambler' and then my favourite local band of the night Oska who performed song from Fleetwood Mack's, 'The Chain' to Texas, 'Black Eyed Boy' and although it was a disjointed set the performance by the singers and musicians was worth watching.

The penultimate act of the day was the Kings of Leon Tribute (Kings of Leigon) and the show ended with the ABBA tribute UK Bjorn who were not on stage long enough as the crowd begged for more after the allocated hour passed very quickly. The band made up of Kerri Robinson, Jeremy Jones, Steve Robinson and Catherine De Sousa ran through the popular hits of the chart toppers ending with 'Waterloo' and the encore 'Thank You for the Music'.

Organised by Andy Milner and Simon Gregson this popular event has become part of the yearly calendar in Sandbach and helps to raise funds for local charities.

26 June 2022

MAYOR'S CIVIC TEA PARTY

On Sunday the 26 June 2022, newly elected Mayor of Sandbach Kathryn Flavell opted to forgo the Civic Parade of the past to hold a Civic Tea Party to give something back to the people who work in the town and to thank various volunteer groups as well as supporting local businesses by ordering the Quiche from Gibson's Greengrocer's and Deli, Sandwiches from Minshull's Country Kitchen and cakes from Lois's Little Cake and Chocolate Company who also handed out sweets at the end of the meal. All those invited complimented the quality of food provided especially the pastry in the quiche and the cake selection highlighting the high standard of products available from the small businesses in the town.

The Mayor invited market traders, various shop owners and volunteers from Cheshire Arts for Health, Sandbach Animal Rescue, Friends of Elworth Park, the British Legion (Sandbach Branch), the Sandbach Choral Society and others to the intimate event.

The afternoon event started with music provided by the United Co-op Wind Bands (Crewe) who after a break for tea and sandwiches returned to perform a second set of numbers with music from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat to a medley of Irish music including Lord of the Dance.

With various councillors in attendance it was a good opportunity to network and discuss opportunities and well as enjoying the afternoon's event at the Town Hall.

Mayor, Kathryn Flavell hoped this was the start of a regular event in the council calendar.

1 July 2022

NEW RAPID RESPONSE UNIT AT SANDBACH

Since 1958 in the third of four fire stations there has been a second unit in operation in the town. The first of these was a Dodge Flat Backed Wagon and Pump followed in 1961 by a Land Rover and then later a Series 2 Redwing (AMB587B)

In 1981 a Land Rover Stage One V8 L4T (DMB902X) Series III was the second vehicle and was built by local company Jennings who also did the bodywork for ERF Trucks. When it was no longer needed by the main on call station it was repainted and was used by cadets from 2002 after the Land Rover Fleet were taken "Off the Run". It continued in this role until the 11 February 2009 when Cheshire Fire and Rescue decided to sell of its remaining fleet and it was purchased after long negotiations by Craig Howell (Cadet Leader in Sandbach) and is seen at the Transport Festival most years.

With changing roles the second appliance was replaced by a new concept the Rapid Response Unit a faster vehicle that could attend a car crash quickly to be the fire on scene as rapidly as possible and was deployed by the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to location along the M6 where it was in most need.

Sandbach has had its Rapid Response Unit since 2007 along with Holmes Chapel to assist on the M6 and on the many road incidents that need a quick response or a small crew to deal with an accident.

In 2010 the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service decided to standardise its range of Rapid Response Units to the Scania 18T Chassis Cab so there was not a variety of vehicle that needed to be repaired but one unit making it easier to keep spares. Before this date there had been a number of different chassis bases in the fleet including the Range Rover based in Sandbach and Holmes Chapel.

In 2015, Northwich acquired a Skoda Yeti 4x4 followed in 2016 by units in Winsford, Middlewich, Malpas, Tarporly, Poynton and also at Holmes Chapel. These are used as a Targeted Response Unit and are sent to small incidents and unlike the RRU is a larger vehicle with more specialist equipment on board.

In 2020 Thirteen RRU's were ordered to go into "Primary On-Call" stations with the Toyota Hilux and Mercedes Sprinter models. The Toyota model includes room for a driver, Officer in charge and a medic (in the back) and these personnel are to go out with the vehicle which also carries stabilisation blocks to stabilise a vehicle, Coverings for sharp edges, electronic saws and combi-tool (Jaws of Life) a device that will allow the operator to spread the metal part of a vehicle to allow access or extract a casualty from an incident. The vehicle also contains a trauma bag with a bleeds bag (Added to the kit after Afghanistan), oxygen and monitor equipment plus a Defibrillator (to restart a heart) as well as three fire extinguishers of various types, Water, Foam and CO2.

In June 2021 the Toyota Hilux units were sent to their stations after being tested with the first going on show to the public at the Middlewich Folk and Boat Festival open day at the Middlewich fire station.

On the 1 July 2022 other Toyota appliances became operational at Sandbach, Holmes Chapel, Alsager, Audlem, Frodsham, Knutsford, Malpus, Stockton Heath and Tarporley. Cheshire Fire and Rescue also took possession of a Mercedes Sprinter which was sent to Bollington to take on the role of the Animal Rescue Unit and at the same time Nantwich was issued with a new Midi Appliance. The new appliances has cost the authority £440,000 which may sound a lot but with the original fleet getting old and in need of repairs more often this is a sound investment for the future.

Unions had raised health and safety issues with the new vehicles and in a statement on the Cheshire Fire Brigade website it now states that the "RRU will NEVER be sent as a first vehicle to a fire incident. At least one fire engine, with full fire fighting equipment and four fire-fighters, will always be deployed first. An RRU might then be used to transport additional fire-fighters and equipment to a fire incident, if required." The RRU will however improve the capability of the service to respond to road traffic collisions and non fire incidents as it can be the first on the scene ready to assess the situation and call for back up appliances while at the same time waiting for the stations own main appliance to assist once the RRU personnel had secured the scene.

Talking to fire officers about the new vehicles they tell me that the new Toyota is not as fast as the Range Rover but it does carry more fire-fighters and it also allows the vehicle to operate without keys being left in the vehicle to stop the possibility of theft while keeping the blue lights flashing and the latest onboard computer and communications systems to keep working.

On the 30 June 2022 the Range Rover from Sandbach was returned to the workshop to be decommissioned and start its next chapter in life with the Toyota being installed with the crew test driving it before it came into full operation hopefully for another 16 years like its predecessor.

At an incident on the corner of Congleton Road and Old Mill Road Sandbach on the 1 July involving a pedestrian being knocked over by a lorry next to the petrol station a young fire-fighter (Lady) was one of the first on the scene to administer first aid. This will be one of the types of incident the new Rapid Response Vehicles could be involved with in the future. Talking to a senior fire-fighter at the scene about the new RRU's it seems they will be a welcome asset to the fleet, continuing a historic tradition into the future.

#####

2 July 2022

PARTY IN THE PARK ENJOYED BY MANY BUT SOME MISSED THE BOAT

After a break due to the Covid shutdowns the Sandbach 'Party in the Park' returned to a capacity crowd of 500 people, the maximum allowed in the park for the event. However many were disappointed as tickets for the event ran out at about 6.45pm with many being turned away, a first for this event at such an early time in the evening. Those who had booked tickets on-line or managed to get in early enjoyed a wonderful concert by the Sandbach School Big Band opening with "Let me entertain you" followed by a trip through the 1960's and 70's catalogue via Stevie Wonder's "Living for the City", Michael Jackson's "Beat It", The Beatles "Day Tripper" and "Mr Blue Sky" from the Electric Light Orchestra among the classic songs. The first part of the evening's concert ended with Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline", a special audience participation song. It was as usual for the Big Band the end of an era as many of its members were making their final appearance in this concert as they were going on to University, College or work after the Summer break up at the school.

After a short break to change music stands and equipment from Sandbach School to Foden's Band the red tunics appeared on stage to start where Sandbach School had left off with a Neil Diamond hit, this time from the movie

“The Jazz Singer” and the song “America”. Foden’s Band’s trip was through the Musicals both obvious with a selection from “Mack and Mabel” and a lovely solo by Melanie Wyle on Flugel Horn from Jesus Christ Superstar, “I don’t know how to love him”, to the not so obvious version of California Dreaming in a beautiful arrangement from the film San Andreas adapted for the singer Sia and arranged for brass band by Taylor. The evening ended as usual with the “Last Night of the Proms” selection with firework accompaniment as the sun set slowly on this summer evening.

Commenting on the event the Chief Officer of Sandbach Town Council, Ceri Lloyd said “It was delighted to provide its ‘Party in the Park’ event in this its tenth year and after a two year absence due to COVID. Clearly the event has been missed by the community who turned up in their hundreds to enjoy the good weather and fabulous entertainment. We were inundated with party goers from the gates opening at 5pm and sold out tickets quickly after the start of the event, so we were saddened to have to turn away a few disappointed customers, at this point to adhere to capacity guidelines. We would like to say a huge thank you to all those who contributed and played their part in making this brilliant event so enjoyable and successful – a great example of what we can achieve when the community comes together”.

The first ‘Party in the Park’ was on the 5 June 2012 to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, in this her Platinum Jubilee year it is nice to know this has become a traditional part of Sandbach life and like the Queen long may it continue.

#####

2 July 2022

A CAPACITY OF 500 PEOPLE ENJOYED THE 2022 PARTY IN THE PARK

After a break due to the Covid shutdowns the Sandbach ‘Party in the Park’ returned to a capacity crowd of 500 people who enjoyed a wonderful concert by the Sandbach School Big Band opening with the Robbie Williams song “Let me entertain you” followed by a trip through the 1960’s and 70’s catalogue via Stevie Wonder’s “Living for the City”, Michael Jackson’s “Beat It”, The Beatles “Day Tripper” and “Mr Blue Sky” from the Electric Light Orchestra among the classic songs being performed. The first part of the concert ended with the classic Neil Diamond song “Sweet Caroline” which has now become a special audience participation song after it was voted the official Queen’s Platinum Jubilee song by BBC Radio 2 listeners and was sung by Rod Stewart at a special concert outside Buckingham Palace as well as being sung by the England Football squad after qualifying for the Euro 2020 finals having beaten Denmark 2-1 in the Semi-final on the 7 July 2021.

After the break to change from the Sandbach School Big Band to Foden’s Band with their red tunics appearing on stage to continue where Sandbach School had ended the first part of the concert with a Neil Diamond hit, this time from the movie “The Jazz Singer” and the song “America”. Foden’s Band’s trip was entitled “Musical Theatre Classics” and moved through the obvious with a selection from “Mack and Mabel” and a lovely solo by Melanie Wyle on Flugel Horn from Jesus Christ Superstar, “I don’t know how to love him”, to the not so obvious version of California Dreaming in a beautiful arrangement from the film San Andreas adapted for the singer Sia and arranged for brass band by Taylor.

The evening ended as usual with the “Last Night of the Proms” selection with firework accompaniment as the sun set slowly on this summer evening.

Commenting on the event the Mayor of Sandbach Town Council, Kathryn Flavell said “It was delighted to provide its ‘Party in the Park’ event in this its tenth year and after a two year absence due to COVID. Clearly the event has been missed by the community who turned up in their hundreds to enjoy the good weather and fabulous entertainment. We were inundated with party goers from the gates opening at 5pm and sold out tickets quickly after the start of the event, so we were saddened to have to turn away a few disappointed customers, at this point to adhere to capacity guidelines. We would like to say a huge thank you to all those who contributed and played their part in making this brilliant event so enjoyable and successful – a great example of what we can achieve when the community comes together”.

The first ‘Party in the Park’ was on the 5 June 2012 to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, in this her Platinum Jubilee year it is nice to know this has become a traditional part of Sandbach life and like the Queen long may the concerts continue.

SANDBACH SCHOOL BIG BAND

1. Let me Entertain you (Robbie Williams Song)
2. Unknown
3. Welcome to the Jungle (Guns ‘n Roses Song)
4. Living for the City (Stevie Wonder Song)
5. Beat It (Michael Jackson Song)
6. Mr Blue Sky (ELO Song)
7. Day Tripper (Beatles Song)
8. Bye Bye Baby
9. Footloose (Kenny Loggins Song)

10. Sweet Caroline (Neil Diamond Song)

FODEN'S BAND

1. America (Neil Diamond arr Philip Sparke)
2. Mack and Mabel (Bernard Herman arr Wilkinson)
3. Nessun Dorma (Puccini arr Howard Snell)
Solo Cornet Mark Wilkinson
4. Let's Face the Music and Dance (Irving Berlin arr Goff Richards)
5. Love Changes Everything (Andrew Lloyd Webber arr Bulla)
6. California Dreaming (John Phillips and Michelle Phillips arr Adam D.J. Taylor) (Version sung by Sia on record)
7. I Don't know how to love him (Andrew Lloyd Webber arr Walker)
Solo Flugel Melanie Whyte
8. The World's Greatest Storyteller (arranged by Philip Harper)
(Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Pure Imagination, When I Grow Up)

INTERVAL

1. In the Stone (Allee Wills, Maurice White and David Foster arr John Barber) (Earth Wind and Fire song)
 2. Someone Like You (Frank Wildhorn and Leslie Bricusse from Jekyll and Hyde Published 4 Mar 2000 arr John Barber)
Trombone Solo John Barber
 3. Don't Rain on my Parade (Jule Styne arr Taylor)
 4. Someone to Watch Over Me (George Gershwin arr Fernie)
 5. You'll Never Walk Alone (Rodgers and Hammerstein arr Howard Snell)
- LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS
6. Fantasia on British Sea Songs (Henry Wood)
 7. Jerusalem (Hubert Parry)
 8. Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 (Edward Elgar)

#####

3 September 2022

SANDBACH PRIDE

The Sandbach Pride Event on the 3 September 2022 did exactly what it set out to do, to be inclusive for everybody, young, old, middle-aged, male, female, transgender, gay, bisexual, all types of colour of skin and anyone else I have missed out. All were welcome to the first event of its kind in the town as it joined Congleton, Crewe, Chester (Started on 5 October 2013 and now takes place in August) and other Cheshire towns with its own "Pride Event".

Sandbach Town Hall was lit up in the LGBT Colours while numerous shops in the town put on displays in support of the event and LGBT Flags were flown on the top of St Mary's Church and the Fire Station. Congleton's first "Pride" event was in 2019 the same year that an event was moved from Tatton Hall near Knutsford to Queen's Park in Crewe for the first time. The Crewe event was arranged by a small number of volunteer staff at Cheshire East and Crewe Town Councils and attracted about 5000 visitors to the event in the Park. While Covid put a stop to the event in 2020 and on the 19 June 2021 the organisers decided to hold a Virtual Pride Event online with their "Pride in the Park", returning to the town on the 22 October 2022 at the town's Market Hall.

"Pride Events" started after the Stonewall uprising on the 28 June 1969 when the New York City Police raided the Stonewall Inn Gay Club in Greenwich Village, which was run at the time by the Mafia. This event which was interpreted as an attack on a certain lifestyle turned into a violent standoff between Police and the Gay community that led to protests for the right to live openly regarding their sexual orientation across America and the world. On the 28 June 1970 the first 'Gay Pride Marches' took place in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco organised by the Gay Liberation Front an offshoot of the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis groups. On the 13 October 1970 the first Gay Liberation Front in the UK was formed in the basement classroom at the London School of Economics leading to the first British Gay Pride March in November 1970 with 150 Men walking through Highbury Fields in North London and the first official Gay Pride Rally on the 1 July 1972 which attracted 2,000 people. Now called "Pride in London" it attracts over 1.5 million visitors.

Sandbach didn't quite make the million visitors but it did attract the most people I have seen for this type of event in the park only being topped by the Foden's Band "Party in the Park".

By the start of 2021 the LGBTQ community in Sandbach had joined together and a Facebook page was started on the 27 February 2021 to promote events within the town with 'Sandbach Pride' coming out of a meeting

following a walk as part of the Sandbach Walking Festival in June and July of 2021. The organisers then arranging a Pride Flash Mob and Picnic in the Park on the 26 June 2021 and now hold a monthly Pride Brunch. By the 18 July 2021 a meeting at the Military Arms had been called to set up a Pride event in the town. On the 12 August 2021, Sandbach Pride was formed with a constitution and committee consisting of Lucy Oliver (Creative Director / Organiser of the Entertainment), Graham Whitehouse (Treasurer), Joe Lavin (Social Media / Marketing), Mark Adderley (Operational Support / Photographer) and Laura Crane (Council Representative on Cheshire East and Sandbach Town Councils / Volunteer Co-ordinator).

With an organisation in place it was time to start arranging the Sandbach Pride Event for the 3 September 2022. The day started with a short service by Churches Together in the Market Square at 10.30am with the Rev. David Ottley conducting the proceedings that included readings by Jayne Manfredi and Mark Adderley calling for acceptance and justice for all who stand up for equality and for those who hide their real selves and suffer abuse, a sentiment which was echoed at the end of the day with the Reflective Vigil in the park.

At 11am the event moved to Sandbach Park which was set up by organisers, some of whom had been there since 6am showing a real commitment to what was a wonderful day of entertainment, fun and a great sense of acceptance of everyone however they dressed or looked from the flamboyant presenters on stage to the man in a shirt and tie, all were treated equally to a fun day at the event.

The Sandbach Mayor Kathryn Flavell opened the event with an appropriate speech about breaking down the barriers to inclusivity by all from children to adults and was pleased that Sandbach had now joined Crewe and Congleton with this pride event which she hoped would continue for many years.

The organisers then handed out awards for contributions to LGBTQ in Sandbach including making 'Honorary Rainbow Queens for the day' a title given to the Sandbach High School students who have called for the banning of school uniforms in a sexual context. A 'Legend' award went to Peter and Michael who were openly gay and at events like this dressed in multicoloured outfits. Another award went to Chris and DJ Wynne Adlington, Wynne is a Sandbach resident who used to DJ at the 141 club in Stoke on Trent in the 70's and 80's and who lives as a lesbian couple and provided much of the music for the event between the acts.

Hosts and star attractions came in the form of Drag Queens, Fonda D (Fonda Dixx the Dancing Barbie Princess of Congleton) and Stella Black both from Congleton. They first worked together at the Halloween Bamboogy Pride Session on the 31 October 2021 in the club on Congleton High Street. Fonda D made her Congleton Pride debut this year while Stella Black returned to Congleton's event this year on his / her own and singing along with Heather Marie as Cher in a finale event in the town. Seeing them on stage you wouldn't have thought they hadn't been a double act for years with songs a "Drag Race" making members of the public dress up in drag costumes and the duo joining in with various acts over the day from the Rock Choir, Local singer John Stevens (Songs from the Rag N Bone Man etc.), Frantic Fridays (Sandbach Jazz Rock Band), Singing Sensation, Sandbach Stompers (Line Dancers), Vale Royal Musical Theatre from Northwich, Street Dance Academy and Bored Adventures (Local Band).

Fonda and Stella joined the Vale Royal Musical Theatre as they performed Over the Rainbow from the Wizard of Oz and the Time Warp from the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

If the entertainment wasn't what you wanted then there was plenty to see and do from learning to spin plates with Peter Duncan and his Circus skills. This is part of his everyday job as he is an Artist in residence at various local schools and also runs the Sandbach U3A Circus Skills group which meets at the Rugby Club on a Monday afternoon. You could also find out about various local organisations from the Friends of Sandbach Park (included selling painted stones of ladybirds etc.) to the Sandbach Guides who on the 22 January 2022 celebrated 100 years in the town having been formed in 1922 (The Guide movement was started on the 31 May 1910 in the UK). The Sandbach Animal Rescue, Mentell (Men's Group talking about various problems), Rotary Club, Sandbach Art Room, Sweet Stall, Ice creams, Cakes, Homemade crafts including Sandbach Pride Badges and key rings alongside drinks from the usual van in the park which had to get more supplies as they ran out at least twice during the day with this being the busiest period they have seen over the years on their pitch. Alsager Pride who held their first event a Flash Mob and Parade on the 9 October 2021 also had a stall to promote their upcoming events.

Sandbach Fire Station brought in its multicoloured rainbow fire appliance (MAN DK08AHU) in support of the event a successor to the Cheshire Fire Services Pink Community Fire engine (Mercedes-Benz K633KMB) which was at the first Chester Pride event on the 5 October 2013 with the appliance being first covered in a pink film to take part in the 2009 Manchester Gay Pride Parade to promote diversity within the service and recovered for 2011 to not only promote the LGBT but also to support Cancer awareness. There has always been a discussion about the cost of this exhibit but it attracts a lot of interest with its multicoloured look and sound system on board that the attending Fire-fighters and Sandbach Cadets and cadet leaders are able to promote the overall service and the diversity of recruitment for new full time and retained Fire-fighters which is a worthwhile expense to keep the community safe and recruit new personnel.

The Ambulance Service LGBT Team was also in attendance with Daniel Smith (Head of Service in Greater Manchester), Claire Robertson (Sandbach Paramedic), Sarah Timms (Sandbach Resident and Paramedic in

Manchester) and Adam Williams (Paramedic and Chair of the LGBT in North West Ambulance). Their Ambulance unlike the fire appliance was borrowed from Northwich as it was under repair and had magnetic stickers surrounding the body to promote its diversity. Adam told me that about ten years ago the service was made up primarily of men on the front line and now women have taken on that role with numerous double female crews' on call including those based in Sandbach showing a shift to a more inclusive recruitment. Not to be left out the Sandbach PCSO's and promotion team from Police Headquarters handed out advice and anti theft material along with DNA marking kits to deter thieves.

At 1pm there was a short parade round the park led by the Sandbach United FC, Ladies Football Team as it snaked round the top end of the grassed area ending by the stage.

At the end of the day the organiser brought out a multicoloured set of ribbons for everyone to grab onto as they read a poem and held a Reflective vigil before playing the final song True Colours by Cyndi Lauper.

There was something for everyone with a whole day's worth of activities for all and the Pride was certainly put into Sandbach with this event.

#####

11 September 2022

KING CHARLES III PROCLAMATION'S IN SANDBACH

On the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II she was succeeded by her son Prince Charles. Protocol for making him the official successor to the throne starts with the Accession Council gathering at St James's Palace to formally proclaim the accession of the successor to the throne under the Act of Settlement 1701. Once this has been done it then confirms the name of the new monarch as they can if they wish, change their official name from their birth name to a new name they wish to be known as. This proclamation is then signed by the attendant Privy Councillors who attended the Accession Council alongside the witnesses and the new King. The Garter King of Arms one of the Heralds of the College of Arms then reads the proclamation from the balcony of St James's Palace followed a short time later by the Lord Mayor of the City of London repeating its text. In past times the speech was sent by a number of messengers to the far corners of the United Kingdom and abroad with Lord Lieutenants and Mayors formally reading out the proclamation at specially convened events or at a special place in the City, Town or Village.

On Sunday the 11 September 2022, Cheshire East held its proclamation event to announce the succession of Prince Charles to King Charles 3rd at Westfields the Headquarters of the Council at 3pm. The announcement and service was introduced by the Vice Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Joelle Warren MBE, DL and the Mayor of Cheshire East, Councillor David Marren read the proclamation with the Venerable Ian Bishop the Archdeacon of Macclesfield conducting a short service of remembrance for Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II and for the new King. In attendance were numerous Councillors, Mayors of the County and Dr Kieran Mullen the MP for Crewe and Nantwich.

The Vice Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Joelle Warren spoke on behalf of the Queen's or now Kings representative in the area the Lord Lieutenant. "We remember with affection and gratitude the lifetime of service given by our longest serving monarch, but the basis on which our monarchy is built has insured that through the centuries that the crown has passed through the line of accession. Today's ceremony marks the formal proclamation to the people of Cheshire of the beginning of our new King's reign". The Mayor of Cheshire East David Marren was then introduced to read the accession proclamation. "Yesterday the Accession Council met at St James's Palace to proclaim our new sovereign. The flags which have flown at half mast since the Queen's death were raised briefly to their full height to mark the start of His Majesty's reign. The Accession Council also made an order requiring High Sheriffs to cause the proclamation to be read in the areas of their jurisdiction. That task was undertaken by the High Sheriff of Cheshire at a ceremony at Chester earlier this afternoon (11 September) and I (Mayor of Cheshire East) was charged with reading the proclamation in Cheshire East thereafter. The proclamation of the new sovereign is a very old tradition which can be traced back over many centuries. The ceremony does NOT create a new King it is simply an announcement of the accession which took place immediately on the death of the reigning monarch. Today is one of those first occasions when local communities have an opportunity to come together and reflect on this moment in our nation's history when the reign of our longest serving monarch came to an end and our new sovereign succeeded." The Cheshire East Mayor then read out the proclamation to the gathered crowd ending with "God save the King". David Marren then asked Mayoral representatives gathered in the car park at the back of Westfields to be encouraged to read the proclamation in their own communities. He then introduced the Archdeacon of Macclesfield the Venerable Ian Bishop to lead a short service to commemorate the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to pray for King Charles III. The service ended with the first verse of the National Anthem "God Save the King".

Speaking to Dr Kieran Mullen the MP for Crewe and Nantwich at the event he spoke about the past few days since the death of Her Majesty and the recalling of Parliament to remember the Queen. Although he himself had never met Queen Elizabeth he did tell of a Hospital Porter who at the age of 19 had met the Queen when she opened Leighton Hospital and how she had taken an interest in the people she had met. He had like so many has

seen Her Majesty at a distance. In the MP's particular case it was during the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament in 2021 her 67th and final appearance for the state event. Dr Mullen had the advantage of being very tall and so he could see over the heads of other MP's and those in the House of Lords Chamber. He had only seen her the once as Prince Charles took her place in 2022 to make the Queen's Speech on behalf of his mother who was unable to attend. Her Majesty had been due to come to visit the Bentley works in Crewe in early 2020 but the COVID pandemic put a stop to that visit. Asked about the next few weeks' events Dr Mullen said he will be seeing King Charles the next day (12 September) when he attends both houses of Parliament. Kieran will also be in attendance when Her Majesty is brought to Westminster where she will be lying in State with MP's and the public will be passing by her coffin in the Palace of Westminster in Westminster Hall where she will be there for four days before the funeral. Another ceremony he will have to take part in will be the swearing of allegiance to the new King which all members of parliament will now have to do over the next few weeks. Sam Corcoran the Leader of Cheshire East Council told us that there was a book of condolences at Westfields, Crewe Municipal Building and Macclesfield Town Hall as well as an online book.

An hour later at 4pm the proclamation was read out by Sandbach Town Mayor Kathryn Flavell. The event on the Market Square was accompanied by a Brass Band put together by Laura Crane at short notice with band members from Foden's Youth Band, Acceler8 Band (Formally Crewe ATC and Co-operative Funeralcare), the Lions Youth Band and other local musicians who played hymns before the proclamation and the new National Anthem at the end of the reading with a run through with music only so the audience could prepare themselves for the new words to 'God Save the King'. As the event played out with Kathryn Flavell standing on the steps of the Saxon Crosses a sea of mobile phones recorded the event. The Mayor started by giving the history of the proclamation as it was downloaded from London to the regions and then the Boroughs so it could be imparted to the whole country and the new subjects of the King. The proclamation was then read as it was in London the previous day followed by the National Anthem and the sound of the church bells of St Mary's ringing out to welcome the new King. As a sign of respect for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the bells had been muffled (Silenced) but these were removed for the end of the reading, again as a sign of respect this time for the new King before being replaced again during the rest of the period of mourning.

When asked about the ceremony Sandbach Town Mayor, Kathryn Flavell was unsure as to who was traditionally supposed to have read out the proclamation as the arrangements had been made at short notice but most towns in the country had its leader making the announcement from Town Mayors to Leaders of the Council. The Town Council was only informed about the event the previous day and after frantic phone calls to make arrangements it was then more about getting the word out to the general public via social media and word of mouth. Kathryn was "Absolutely amazed at the turn out, it has been absolutely fantastic, we had a great crowd, fantastic band and the bells it has been amazing". "To come here and stand by these historic crosses and to look out on a sea of people who are just residents of Sandbach it was absolutely amazing to see that they have all come out for this, I am really proud to be Mayor of Sandbach, today".

When asked about the Coronation Kathryn Flavell said that Sandbach Town Council will certainly be doing a big event. The Town Council are already talking about it. "There are pictures of an event held in the Market Square in 1953 so it would be great to have another huge occasion, of course the town is much bigger now they would have to be careful as the whole town could not fit in the Market Square but the Council will certainly be thinking about what arrangements are to be planned well ahead of the event". For the Coronation the Mayor thinks that the Sandbach Town Council will go all out for the event.

#####

29 October 2022

BREAKFAST CLUB FOR VETERANS IN SANDBACH

Saturday the 29 October 2022 was a busy day for the Sandbach Branch of the Royal British Legion with the launch of the Poppy Appeal in the afternoon, the start of sales in the supermarket and motorway service station but the day started with a joint venture between the RBL and Cheshire East with the launch of a Breakfast Club for Veterans at the Military Arms on Congleton Road.

At a reduced cost of £3 for a small breakfast or £5 for a larger plate subsidised by Cheshire East Council it is part of series of clubs set up by Richard Stephenson-Evans the Volunteer Support Officer at the Council in Crewe, Alsager, Nantwich and Macclesfield. The aim of the club is for ex service personnel to get together with others to meet on a regular basis and to network with groups and organisations that will be invited to give a short talk each month about benefits and groups that can help ex-service personnel with information about fast tracking in the NHS to helping with re-homing and various benefits they are entitled to as ex soldiers, airmen and sailors. Richard started the talks off by explaining what was available via Cheshire East and the aims of the club with future talks by the DWP (Department of Work and Pensions) and the NHS.

The next breakfast clubs will be held in Sandbach on the 26 November and the 17 December 2022 starting at 9am. If any ex service personnel would like to attend please contact the Military Arms in advance to let them

know how many to cater for. The inaugural club was expected to attract a few people but in the end 47 people attended making this a good start for this venture by Cheshire East and the Royal British Legion.

#####

29 October 2022

MOTOR BIKE LAUNCH OF THE POPPPY APPEAL

At 2.45pm on Saturday the 29 October 2022 Sandbach was invaded by about 25 bikers with their purpose to launch the 2022 Poppy Appeal in the town with style at the War Memorial.

Also in attendance at the launch were the Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire Alexis Redmond and her husband the TV producer Phil Redmond (Grange Hill, Brookside, Hollyoakes), the Deputy Mayor of Cheshire East Rod Fletcher, Sandbach Mayor Kathryn Flavell and Marjorie Newton of the British Legion, who all laid wreaths during a short service conducted by the Rev. Jeff Cuttel. Members of the public joined representatives from the Sandbach British Legion branch, Cheshire Regiment Association and Sandbach ATC to witness the launch of the 2022 Poppy appeal. Poppies are available in many of the shops in the town and at manned stations in Waitrose and the M6 Service stations from now until the 12 November.

Since 2019 this event by the Bikers Branch of the Royal British Legion has become part of the Sandbach tradition leading up to the Remembrance Day commemorations at the War Memorial on the 11th and 13th November at 11am. A number of people turned out to see the bikers arrive in the High Street and later depart after being generously supplied with drinks and cake by Daniel at Godfrey Williams and Son.

Earlier in the day the bikers branch had visited Port Sunlight, Holton near Runcorn, Northwich, Middlewich arriving in Sandbach at 2.45pm before heading off to Crewe and an overnight stay in Gresford near Wrexham followed by launches in Wrexham, Llangollen, Flint, Abergavenny and ending in Llanddulas.

Each year the British Legion helps current and ex-service men and women as well as their families through direct help and funding to over 2,500 families in difficulty by providing specialist centres to help with injuries and via advice help lines to support those leaving the forces as well as ex service personnel in need from the day they join the service to the day they die.

#####

11 November 2022

ARMISTICE DAY IN SANDBACH

As the town of Sandbach remembers the fallen from its community with 120 names on the War Memorial and a further 9 names on a wooden plaque discovered in recent years, a ghostly soldier from the First World War looked over the event on the Market Square from the steps looking towards the Saxon Crosses. This is one of two sculptures made by members of St Mary's Church with the second soldier inside the church having been moved from the grave of one of the ex service men who had lost their life in conflict.

On Armistice Day the 11 November 2022, a large crowd gathered at the War Memorial to pay their respects with the short service by the Rev Bee Boyd, the last post and two minutes silence at 11am. Organised by the Sandbach Branch of the Royal British Legion this was until recently attended by a token compliment of members of the public with the main Remembrance Sunday being the big demonstration of respect to all service personnel both past and present. Due to social media the 11 November event has over the years grown from about 10 people to well over 100 in number with a drop during the COVID pandemic period, rising again in 2022 to the largest crowd the organisers have seen in many years.

Unfortunately the Poppy appeal in 2022 will probably generate less money in Sandbach than usual as less shoppers have change in their pockets these days preferring to pay by card in the local shops and supermarkets, but overall nationally the sales of poppies look as though they could be increasing with the Royal British Legion producing a large variety of metal pin badges of various designs from Army Regiments to the Royal Air Force, Navy, Police, Fire Brigade, Football teams and other versions all being purchased on-line rather than the traditional paper and plastic versions sold in shops. On display at the War Memorial in Sandbach were also a large number of knitted poppies with the pattern being published in the St Mary's Challenge magazine in October to encourage parishioners to make them for a display in the church over the November period.

If the increased turnout on the Friday continues then the Sunday Remembrance will see Sandbach packed from Westfields to St Mary's Church.

#####

12 November 2022

REMEMBRANCE FESTIVAL AT CRICKET CLUB

On a cold day in November the first Remembrance Festival in the town of Sandbach took place at the Cricket Club in Ettley Heath on the 12 November 2022. With Bagpipe player Andy Ware of the Black Watch Association Pipe Band and local pupils from Sandbach School, "Frantic Friday" playing modern hits to a small audience the event unfortunately got off to a slow start to this fundraiser for the Royal British Legion with only a few members of the public turning up. At the start of the event organisers Andrew Ralph (Ex Welsh Guards) and Mike Chambers (ex Cheshire Regiment and First Mercian) joined runners on an 11K trip round the town ending back at the cricket club for a service of remembrance at 11am with the organisers and local children

telling the story of the poppy and the usual remembrance readings that will be heard again on the Sunday parade in Elworth, Wheelock and Sandbach.

With temporary tattoos, bouncy castles, a barbell curl competition (Lifting a weight for a period of time) and a golf game the event continued into the afternoon and evening. Entertainment for the afternoon started with Sandbach singer Aimee Chesters (Who as a day job runs Aimee Rebecca Aesthetics a cosmetics shop) who impressed the audience as she sang various ballads followed by the bands The Corrilas (Formed in June 2007) and Marc and Kiki and the Noughtie Boyz who ended the day's festivities.

#####

11 November 2022

FODEN PLINTH INSTALLED AT SMALL CAR PARK

With Sandbach Town Council in discussions about the future of the area behind the Town Hall a new instillation has appeared on the boundary by the junction of the Common Road and Congleton Road. In December 2020 local Brass Band, Foden's successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery for the funding of various projects including the designing of an information plinth to further the bands community links. The plinth was put together by Andrew Tebbs a freelance artist, sculptor and archivist from Nottingham who has helped the Black Dyke Band put together its archive of historic material including one of their original band hats and old recordings. With pictures provided from the Foden Band archive showing the band from 1904, 1910, 1930, 1953, 1971, 1983 at Buckingham Palace, 2012 and 2018 the board also includes a brief description of the bands history from its formation in 1900 and a QR code to direct you to the band's History Website. The plinth will stay in its current position when the Council starts its re purposing of the area after discussions with the band and councillors as to its instillation. Mark Wilkinson the Band Manager and principal cornet player wanted to thank the Council for their help with this project and positioning.

Many locals have welcomed this tribute to the band who have given so much to the promotion of the town and have also called for more structures like this to mark the contribution made by people and to the historic history of the town in buildings and past industries.

#####

13 November 2022

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY IN SANDBACH

For the first time since I have covered the Remembrance Day in Sandbach the whole of the Market Square was packed with citizens of the town paying their respect to the fallen and serving members of the armed forces. Walking from home at 10am I followed the crowd towards the town and as I travelled towards the start of the procession at Westfields in Middlewich Road at 10.45am I found myself again walking against the tide of people on their way to the War Memorial. From the amount of people heading towards the Town Hall and Market Square I anticipated there would be a large crowd that would greet the procession on its arrival for the Remembrance Service led by the Roberts Bakery Band and I was not disappointed.

The usual space surrounding the War Memorial was filled with onlookers, blocking the exit from the square with just enough space for the Lions Youth Band under their temporary conductor for the event Ian Raisbeck, to play hymns before the service and for the procession to form in the square on arrival. Ian took over as conductor in October 2022 from Nigel Birch who is taking a break from the band due to illness.

The procession this year was better organised by Miles Devlin who in 2020 took over from the late Reg Dunning as Event Director, but due to the 2020 November shutdown and the cancellation of that year's parade he was unable to put into action the usual organisation of the groups taking part. 2021 was his first year in the job and the daunting task didn't quite work out as well as the 53 of experience Reg had done since 1966. This year a plan was put in place using notes from Reg and working with others involved in previous years to make the procession run smoothly. On the dot of 10.35am the roads were closed and the procession started with the Roberts Bakery Band leading the 22 organisations from Westfields down Middlewich Road and then High Town and High Street to the War Memorial. Among those taking part in the procession were the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire, Mr Tony Garnett and local MP Fiona Bruce.

The Rev. Bee Boyd conducted the service with Royal British Legion (Sandbach) President Tom Price Jones reading the "Ode to the Fallen" and "Kohima Epitaph" either side of the Last Post, Two Minutes Silence and Revile played by a cornet player from the Roberts Bakery Band.

Following on from the silence the local organisations representatives laid wreaths on the steps of the War Memorial starting with two members of the Sandbach School Combined Services followed by D.L.L. Tony Garnett, Fiona Bruce MP, Cllr Geraint Price-Jones (Cheshire East), Richard Hovey (Deputy Mayor of Sandbach Town Council), Tom Price Jones (Sandbach British Legion), with representatives of the Cheshire Regiment Association, Youth Groups, The Police, Fire Brigade, Round Table, Probus, Inner Wheel, U3A, Masons and other associations.

Parade Commander (Wing Commander Glyn Robinson RAF A2 Flying Instructor (VR) Retired.) then ordered the parade to move off to St Mary's Church for a service again conducted by the Rev. Bee Boyd with the crowd parting by the exit to let the procession pass through.

The service included the hymns “Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided”, “Oh God, I’ll help in ages past”, “Lord of all hopefulness” and “I vow to thee, my Country” with an address from Royal British Legion (Sandbach) President Tom Price Jones who spoke of the need to raise funds for the poppy appeal and the hard work the Legion undertakes along with a special mention for Marjorie Newton who organises the poppy collection in the town.

The Rev Bee Boyd in her address mentioned that in one of the London Boroughs she had lived there were now street signs that included the names of those who had died in that area in recent conflicts a reminder to the residents of the sacrifice made today by the armed forces as well as the Great War and World War Two. Since 1945 there has only been 26 days without any conflict between nations and over the last 3,400 years only 268 days of peace.

Readings from The Deputy Lord Lieutenant Tony Garnett, Marjorie Newton and a prayer read by Margaret Parry formed the rest of the service which ended with the laying of a wreath by Marjorie Newton (Chairman of the Sandbach British Legion) at the back of the church.

As the congregation left the church many paused to take pictures of the World War 1 soldier made out of chicken wire standing by the font and surrounded by poppies knitted by locals. The soldier was made by an anonymous member of the church who wanted to stay unknown just like the name of the soldier that the two installations depict in the church and on the War Memorial, a sort of Sandbach ‘Banksy’. Whoever they are they should be proud of their work as they have generated a lot of interest in the town and a fitting tribute to all service personnel at this time of Remembrance.

26 November 2022

SANDBACH LIGHTS SWITCH ON

As Christmas approaches the seasons events start to appear with a ‘Tree of Lights’ at Sandbach Cemetery on the 1st of December, a Christmas Market on the 2 December at the Market Square, small car park and Town Hall, a Christmas trail on the 3 December around the town in the morning and a concert by Singing Sensation at St Peter’s Church Hall in the evening, with the Elworth Flower Clubs “Christmas Display” at the Town Hall on the 6 December, Carols on the Cobbles on the 8th December in the evening with music provided by Foden’s Band who also hold their own Christmas Concert on the 11th December followed on the 17th December by the band playing the soundtrack to “The Snowman” at Sandbach School. The Sandbach Choral Society perform their “Christmas Concert” at Sandbach Town Hall on the 15th of December with many other events in the town from breakfast with Santa, a 3 day art exhibition and various Christmas Fairs happening in the town and surrounding areas.

The whole Christmas Experience started on the 26 November 2022 when Sandbach switched on its lights on the Market Square with the usual countdown to the Sandbach Mayor, Kathryn Flavell pulling the high tech switch to illuminate the town accompanied by Santa Claus.

The event started at just after 3pm with local band “Frantic Friday” playing pop songs with a Jazz feeling followed by a second set of Christmas tunes up until the 5pm culmination of the switch on hosted by Silk 106.9 radio. After the switch on the presenter then introduced members of Foden’s Band who played a number of Christmas tunes for 30 minutes while the enormous crowd of people dispersed or had a go on the fairground rides provided by Joe White from Arclid.

After the Covid years, Sandbach residents seem to want to attend more events and like the Remembrance Day and a large group of them attended the “Switch on” filling the Market Square to capacity even on a cold wintery evening. This could be the start of a bumper Christmas for the town as the Council has more events planned for the season as well as Church events and services.

Lights have as usual been placed around the Market Square, down the main streets, on the Town Hall and the traditional Santa in his sleigh has once again appeared on the community garden opposite the fire station with his reindeer ready to propel him on his journey on Christmas Eve. There is also the annual appearance of PC Frosty at the Police Station who stands guard outside the main door and has become a community favourite.

There is talk that his PCSO partner may be moving on next year which may mean PC Frosty will have to get a new officer to look after him at Christmas.

2 December 2022

CHRISTMAS MARKET AND LATE NIGHT SHOPPING

Following on from the large turnout for the Remembrance Day and Light Switch on the people of Sandbach and the surrounding area turned out in their thousands to enjoy the annual Christmas Market and late night shopping with stall holders saying that this year was the best they have had at this event and it was certainly very popular with the public with food vendors having queues from them opening to the end of the evening at 8pm with everything from burgers to cakes and everything in between. A wide variety of Christmas gifts were on display from baubles to Christmas beads and even a Sandbach Gin bottled with the Saxon Crosses on the label. Kids toys were also available with the growing popularity of wooden toys for youngsters taking my generation back

to their childhood many were bring sold around the event along with more adult decorations carved in plywood to give it a great striped look for the mice and bowels found in the indoor market where you could also find those antique gifts that were available in my youth from the old editions of the Blue Peter Annual to Dr Who toys and badges galore, knitted items and of course that essential Christmas jumper.

This was not just a good event it was a great Sandbach event with local produce, stall holders and charity fundraisers for the Sandbach Animal Rescue with their tombola, Girl Guides and Brownies roasting chestnuts and the Scouts brick a brack stall selling items including decorations for the Christmas tree.

Tears for Fears original drummer Manny Elias and his wife Deborah had their usual stall on the end of the run by the Black Bear selling their Bongos Chilli's and Pickles, which for the first time since they have been coming to the Christmas market, sold out just before the end of the evening. This was a regular conversation I had with many stall holders who sold more than they have done in the past with some having to replenish stock over the evening.

Music for the evening on the small car park and by the War Memorial was provided by Elworth Hall Primary School, Elworth C of E School, Offley Road Primary, Singing Sensation, Brereton Hand-bell Ringers, Smallwood School, Wind Band, Young Voices, Nantwich Voices and The Rock Choir.

The evening also involved the presentation of two annual awards, the 'Best dressed Christmas stall holder' which went to Angela Hingston of 'Angies Vintage Emporium' in the Market Hall. The Best Christmas Shop Window display went to Jo Lins Fashions in the High Street for the first time since the cup was introduced to the town in 1972. Over the years the shop has consistently produced a good Christmas themed window which has only just lost out to other shops in the town making this a worthy winner. Special mention must also go to the artist or artists who have drawn Christmas pictures across the town in various windows making the shop displays look very different this year.

Special mention must also go to the Town Council staff and Councillors who put on the event and made it a success after the last few years of the pandemic and cancelled events with many of the stall holders returning for another successful year.

#####

8 AND 10 December 2022

CAROLS IN SANDBACH AND ELWORTH

Tis the season to sing Carols and there were ample opportunities to do so in Sandbach as two new events were launched on the 8th and 10th December 2022. The first on the Thursday was a 'Carols on the Cobbles' event with members of Foden's Band playing a selection of carols for about forty minutes on the Market Square next to the Christmas Tree on a cold winters evening introduced by the Mayor of Sandbach Kathryn Flavell. The second event was at Elworth Park on Saturday the 10 December involving the Cooperative Community Wind Band that included the Mayor this time playing in the band while a crowd of residents came along with torches to a very dark area to sing carols arranged by the Friends of Elworth Park who had also arranged for drinks and mince pies at the Elworth Methodist Church Hall after the 30 minute community sing-a-long which ended with Jingle Bells. Both events were well attended but had disadvantages with the one on the Market Square suffering from the cold while the Elworth event was up against the build up to the England V France game in the world cup. Both events had the advantage of great players backing the carols and a good turnout by residents of both areas of the community starting the Christmas season in style.

Churches Together in Sandbach will also be holding a Carol sing-a-long on Thursday the 22 December at 6pm on the Market Square, Sandbach.

#####

END

#####