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Issue 153
May 2010
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Honour for Sue

LOCA police community support officer Sue Lester and her colleague Granville Nixon were praised at a recent awards ceremony in Buxton.

They were commended for their work in developing a scheme that brings together rural communities and helps reduce crime. After seeing an increase in trailer and 4x4 vehicle thefts within the Wirksworth and Darley Dale areas, they developed a farm and rural community watch scheme based on the principles of the neighbourhood watch scheme. They obtained the support of the National Farmers' Union, which has provided eye-catching signs to go on display around the area and local farmers. People living in rural hamlets, helping them to get to know their police teams and encouraging them to report suspicious activity.

At the ceremony Chief Supt Lewis said: "Sue Lester and Granville Nixon have worked really hard to secure the support of partner agencies, which in turn has helped farmers and other people living in rural areas."

Markets secure

THE next Farmers' Market will be held on Saturday 6 June.

The future of Wirksworth Farmers' Markets is now secure as Midlands Farmers Markets have taken on their running for the long term. This is pleasing news for NOW who set up the markets with a grant from Local Foods and have proved that not only are they viable, but have become the second biggest farmers' markets in Derbyshire Dales. NOW and the organisers will continue to promote all local shopping as well as the monthly markets in the town.

In addition, it is hoped to retain and develop regular music and other events to add something extra to the Saturday mornings. NOW would like to hear from local groups interested in holding fund-raising coffee mornings in the Memorial Hall. Contact Shirley Mann on 01629 822375 for more information.

Wee yorkie back on track

CF WAS there at the first run of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway's steam locomotive Wee Yorkie, Ferrybridge No 3, at Wirksworth sidings. Wee Yorkie will be officially unveiled for operation at the steam gala on the weekend of 31 July-1 August – but CF was given a special preview.

First, 17 year old Matt from Belper loaded coal into the holds and fired the boiler. It took six hours to bring the boiler up to working steam pressure before the exciting moment when the first of the trainee drivers opened the valves and let off the brake. The re-built and newly painted Wee Yorkie then took its first journey along the lines from the sidings to Wirksworth station.



Carnival strikes a musical note

"ALL the hard work and preparation will be worth it if people enjoy a fun-filled weekend," Chris Booth (carnival chairman) told CF as he outlined the events planned for the weekend of 22-24 May.

The crowning of the carnival queen will again take place in the Memorial Gardens on Saturday 23 May at 2pm. Jessica Bevan-Beirne is this year's carnival queen and she will be supported by her sister, Elizabeth Bevan-Beirne (personality junior queen), Chelsea Higton (junior queen), Jodie Marsh (princess) and Evie Hunter (rosebud).

During the weekend there will be the traditional craft fair in the Memorial Hall, stalls and entertainers on the Market Place and around the town. Something new will be a competition called "Nail in the Bale": buy a nail for £1, push it into the hay bale and if you hit the right spot there's a cash prize of £75!

For many people the highlight of the weekend is the parade on Monday. Last year it was given a Wild West theme, and this year it's Musical Mania. Chris hopes there will be floats featuring shows such as Grease, High School Musical or the Wizard of Oz and people dressed up as singers such as Elvis, Madonna and Michael Jackson, but it isn't compulsory. "Most of all, we want lots of people and floats in the parade, whatever their fancy dress," he says. The committee is again offering

cash prizes (£100 for 1st place, £60 for 2nd, and £40 for 3rd) for the most impressive float. There are also prizes to be won for fancy dress.

Judging takes place on the Ravenstor industrial estate at 12 noon before the parade sets off an hour later. The route starts down Cromford Road, goes along North End, passes the Red Lion and the Market Place and finishes at King's Field Recreation Ground.

On the field there will be plenty of offer for all ages. The marching bands – Melton Mowbray Toy Soldiers, Beeston Highlanders and Long Eaton Militaires – will compete in the arena. The Bonsall Red Barrows will astonish with their intricate formation manoeuvres (they say!); Flame, a belly-dancing troupe from Starkholmes, will not only wiggle their own torsos but invite others to join them. There will be a dancing dog who has entertained at Crufts, stalls to provide food and drink, kiddies' rides and much more.

Monday ends with a gig at the Leisure Centre featuring the sensational Wam Bam Band with another popular local band, Left-hand drive. The doors open at 6.30 for a 7.30 start.

Tickets cost £6 and can be bought at Ken's Topshop, Country Kitchen and the Factory shop.

Chris and the committee still need more helpers, particularly stewards for the parade, so phone Chris Booth on 07849 000653 if you can lend a hand in any way at this carnival or next year's. Chris gave a serious warning that unless he and the committee get more help, this year's carnival may well be the last. It would be sad if 2010 was the year of the final one.

So CF hopes the people of Wirksworth enjoy themselves and give generously, but also think hard about joining the carnival committee to help make sure this important community event continues.

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Where to see When the sun shines the wells it's all worthwhile

THIS year's well dressings celebrations will start with a blessing ceremony at 10.45am on Saturday 29 May at St Mary's Church. All the well dressings will then be visited in turn by the clergy and choir.

This year 10 groups are preparing a dressing, including for the first time one by the freemasons at the entrance to Gatehouse Drive on The Causeway.

If you would like to see how a well dressing is made, you are welcome to visit the Methodists in their church hall on Wood Street, every day from Monday 24 May between 10am-5pm to demonstrate and share their skills. The 10 well-dressings will be sited in seven different parts of the town:

- 1. St. Mary's Church** – behind the shops on the east side of the main road. • St. Mary's Well Dressing Group
 - 2. St. Mary's Churchyard** – behind the shops on the east side of the main road. • Christian Aid
 - 3. Market Place** – near the zebra crossing, on the west side of the main road. • Community Well
 - 4. Gate house** – at the other end of the Causeway from Lloyds bank. • The Masons
 - 5. The Cruck Beam** – on the east side of the main road. • Junior School. • Pre-school Playgroup
 - 5. Waltham House** – on the main road, opposite the Memorial Gardens • Rotary Club
 - 6. The Memorial Gardens** – on the east side of the main road. • Anthony Gell School • Infant School
 - 7. The Methodist Church Yard** – behind the Methodist Church in Wood Street, off the east side of the main road. • Methodist Church
- Last year the well dressing groups raised £1,623 for their charities. They hope you will visit all of them – and be generous!

Scarecrow cup

SCARECROWS will be back in town for their own Scarecrow Festival from 28 May-6 June. It's hoped it will be the best yet and to make it even more exciting one creation will win the brand-new Scarecrow Cup, donated by the carnival committee. There will also be certificates for the top three scarecrows.

To win the trophy you must register at Marsdens gift shop and have your scarecrow up in time for the judging on Friday 28 May.

If you need straw, call at Marsdens or phone 01629 820191 (ask for Sally-anne) for details.



Methodist Church well dressing 2009

SUE Watts has designed the Methodist well dressing for 18 years.

She explained to CF how the process of creating a well dressing starts: "Church members come up with an idea, usually with both biblical and topical significance, and I produce a design." This year, for example, it's hoped the well dressing will combine current ecological concern about endangered species with Noah's attempt to save animals by building his Ark.

Sue has always been interested in art – she took the foundation year at Derby College of Art – but was nervous when she accepted responsibility for designing the Methodist well, particularly as her predecessor, Keith Robinson, had done the job for the previous 38 years.

There have been changes since Keith's departure. The style of the dressing, under Sue's influence, has

evolved: it was admired for being meticulous but is now more fluid without such precise outlines. Certain plants – moss, lichen – and wild flowers are no longer used. Sue's husband, Robert, has remade the frame to make it more manageable and stable.

The designer of the Methodist well is Sue but it is created by a large team of clay potters, petallers and frame erectors led by Rosemary Dale.

Anyone can join in so if you want to try petalling or find out about how a well is dressed, contact Rosemary on 01629 824169.

Sue smiles when she tells me what makes all the effort worthwhile: "There's a glorious moment at about seven in the morning when the sun shines on the dressing and we see it complete for the first time". *BF*

Floral splash

DURING the well dressings on Saturday 29, Sunday 30 and Monday 21 May, St Mary's Church will be decorated with flowers – and a well dressing. The theme will be "A floral splash of colour".

The church will be open from 10am-5pm daily and home-made soup, cakes, tea and coffee will be served from 11.30am-4.30pm.

Come along to enjoy the flowers, the food – and the beautiful church.

Top marks for quiz

A RECORD maximum 34 teams took part in this year's twelfth community quiz and there was a three-way tie at the top. Sharing the top prize and the gleaming silver (but small) trophy were Glee Club's Oh no it isn't, Tip Top Twinners and the Wam Bam Band. The Glee Club will hold the Grand Challenge Community Quiz trophy for four months until it is passed on in turn to the other two first prize winners.

It was a close competition not just at the very top this year. Four teams were only a point behind the top trio: the previous trophy holders, Festival Follies, Lime Kiln, Stoney Woodlarkers and Civic Society Activists. 20 points separated the leading 23 teams. There were different winners for each of the seven rounds.

Ken's Crusaders were popular winners of the prize for the separate competition to recognise the 48 photos of local places ingeniously disguised by Phil Richards.

The Glee Club has taken part in

Alan runs flexible firm



Alan Tassell

WHEN CF visited Finesse, director Alan Tassell, who is married with two daughters and lives in Wirksworth, he explained he had set up Finesse as a result of his father being a salesman who had sold one of the first double-glazed windows back in the 1970s.

Alan himself had taken an engineering course at Derby College and had joined Rolls Royce when their representatives came recruiting at the college in 1971, the year of the crash and resurrection of that company.

On completion of his four year apprenticeship Alan moved to the tool room and later to the main works. He didn't like the shift work, which made any social life difficult and spent the next six years at KGF, a small engineering company in Matlock, which as Alan said "had lathes, milling machines and the like and would do anything and make anything".

At that stage Alan and his father made the decision to set up their own company and in 1982 Finesse was born, with Alan responsible for the manufacture of the units, while his father did the marketing, manning a stall at Buxton market on Tuesdays and Saturdays for about 15 years.

Frames were made from strip aluminium sections with the glazing units bought in and fitted in their workshop. From the outset they took on the complete job, discussing the customers' needs, producing the designs, applying for any planning permission and carrying out any building work.

Father retired at the age of 76 years and will be celebrating his 90th birthday this year.

The company initially had two vans and four employees, but the business gradually built up so that now 10

people are involved, including Alan's sister-in-law, Pam Watts, who runs the office.

Technology has moved on, both for frames and glazing, with the use of low emissivity (Low-E) glass and inert gases such as argon in the gap between the two sheets of glass, while pvc-u (plastic) has become the favoured framing material.

These changes have made it uneconomic for Finesse to continue to manufacture its own units and they are now made by others to Finesse's designs and measurements.

The company will build anything from a small porch to a large extension and will take on awkward work the national companies would not touch. Alan showed me photographs of a conservatory, which he said "didn't have a square corner anywhere", and which took hours of discussion and planning to arrive at a design which tied in practically and aesthetically with the house.

Alan pointed out that Finesse do other work such as repairing and fitting locks and cited examples where he had provided and fitted small components which had saved the customer having to replace a whole door or window.

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Set back for Church Walk

WIRKSWORTH Civic Society recently received a major setback in its plans to improve the area around St Mary's Church when the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) rejected its application for funding.

It would have been a major project: its scope included repairing and restoring the railings and plinth, repairing gullies and drains, replacing the tarmac with authentic paving, creating a performance and display space on the Community Square and building storage for the wheelie bins.

Schools were to be involved; the College of the Peak would have demonstrated traditional heritage skills; the University of Derby an audio trail; interpretation boards and leaflets produced.

The HLF commended the Civic Society's proposals, especially for its stress on activities, education and skills, but felt that Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council were not sufficiently committed to the project.

In spite of this disappointment, the society is still determined to improve Church Walk. Derbyshire Dales District Council have agreed to meet its officers to start the process of examining what future maintenance is feasible for the railings and plinth, for which they are responsible.

Derbyshire County Council have been approached to start discussions on work on the surface and drains in the area. Their response states that this would require approval as a Named Scheme from capital budgets

It will not be included in the 2010/11 programme but will remain on the list of outstanding schemes for future consideration.

Dramatic plans for Bethan

BETH Nash took the lead role of Florence Nightingale in the Derby Live Youth Theatre's thoughtful production *The Lady of the Lamp*, staged to packed audiences at Derby Theatre at Easter.

CF met Bethan at the Peli Deli and she explained her passion for theatre: "I love being on stage in front of an audience".

She also enjoys being part of a team, just as she did at sport. She was a student at Anthony Gell School for seven years and was in a team of girls who won both county and national trophies at basketball. Encouraged by Rosie Thompson (when she was at Cromford Junior School) and Roy Pearce (when she played kwik cricket) she enjoyed cricket and played for the successful Wirksworth ladies' team and as a member of the Derbyshire County Girls teams. She also represented Matlock Baileans and Derbyshire in hockey.

Now she has put her sport on hold for the theatre – "I haven't the time to do both" – and her decision was reinforced when she was selected for the National Youth Theatre summer school two years ago and by the encouragement of Pete Meakin, director of Derby Live Youth Theatre and senior lecturer with Derby University Theatre Arts, and her parents.

Beth already has offers of univer-



Bethan Nash

sity places at Warwick and Exeter but she told CF "I'm putting them on hold for a year and – although I know it's highly competitive – I'm going to do my best to get a place at drama school". She has already short-listed RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art), LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) and Bristol Old Vic theatre school.

In the meantime, Beth is studying part-time at Manchester and Birmingham to be a teacher of yoga.

As I finished my latte and she took the last sip of her smoothie, Bethan enthused about living in Wirksworth: "I love it here ... everyone speaks to you ... people are so friendly ... I always find plenty to do." *BF*

Rodney brushes up well

RODNEY, the pet smooth-haired dachshund owned by Rebecca Renshaw of Rise End, Middleton beat 87 other dachshunds to win Best of Breed at Crufts and went on to compete in the main ring with all the other hound winners. His registered name for competitions is Sontag Sir Cumference of Kireton

Rodney is three years old and was given to Rebecca by Mrs Edna Cooper of Northumberland, who is top breeder in the country. He was trained to win a Good Citizen award by Helen Nelson at her class in Wirksworth and for the show ring by Wirksworth area dog training club, which runs classes for showing and obedience at Cromford community centre.

Rodney is named after the Only Fools And Horses character, as he lives in a house called Trotters with a man called Derek, Rebecca's husband. Also in residence are their 10 year old twins, Joe and Kate and another smooth-haired dachshund, Betsy.

Rodney is a country dog who likes running free, stealing carrots from



Rebecca's horses and at the moment is helping her to rear four cade lambs. He has to be smartened up for the show ring, as he is usually covered in mud.

He has fans all around the world and has sired a litter of six puppies in Canberra, Australia.

Rodney qualified for Crufts at his first show at the age of six months and has won consistently since then, including champion at The Hound Show on the Stafford County Showground in August 2009. However, success at Crufts is by far his proudest moment and a tremendous achievement. *MGR*

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Plans for Transition

WIRKSWORTH'S plans to become a Transition Town are taking off with plans for a third community meeting at the Red Lion on 7 June at 7.30pm.

The idea behind the Transition Town movement is that sustainability is put at the top of the community's agenda so that Wirksworth is more able to cope with energy crises, fuel increases, food shortages and economic disasters in the future.

Recent problems with air flights due to the Icelandic volcano, bank collapses and shortages of food from abroad gave a new impetus to the movement and Wirksworth is aiming to develop a strategy for the future that will help it to survive and even thrive in the future.

The main aim of the movement is to raise awareness of sustainable living and encourage residents to share skills to achieve it.

Green themes being investigated include creating community gardens, selling locally-produced and seasonal food, using car share schemes and lobbying for more renewable energy schemes.

Challenges residents face in rural areas are also being looked at – such as problems with public transport and the lack of suitable sites to create allotments.

Resident Glennie Kindred, who is helping to lead the drive to become a transition town, said: "It is a community-led initiative, with people sharing and making use of the great wealth of skills and knowledge we collectively have. The Transition Initiative involves people of all ages, with everyone having their unique part to play in creating positive, community-led change."

She added: "This is a really exciting development for the town. It is not about a group of people leading it but the whole community coming up with ideas. It is all about using what is already on our doorsteps. There is a lot on offer in Wirksworth and it is important to find out what everyone has and does and how we can share skills."

For further information contact Kevin Mann on 01629 822375.

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Rickshaw changes lives

THE Churches Together link with Durgapur in India continues to bear fruit. Latest reports from some of the rural areas there talk of the significant impact that the Rickshaw Project is having on the lives of many poorer people living in underdeveloped areas.

In February, Mr Ajit Mahato received a rickshaw from the Diocese of Durgapur. He lives in one of the slum areas of the City of Durgapur. He supports a wife and two sons, both of whom study at the Diocesan Child Development Centre, which has been part funded by St Mary's here in Wirksworth. Ajit and his family live in a mud house with a tiled roof. They have no electricity and no running water. He used to work as a mason, but had to quit due to a severe medical problem. The diocese came to his aid by renting him a rickshaw van from the project. Now he is able to earn a living transporting goods and people around the area.

I am grateful to Mike Ratcliffe, who during his mayoral year made the project his charity. £600 has been raised and will be sent to further the work of the Rickshaw Project in other parts of the Diocese of Durgapur.

Further details of the project and Mr Mahato's story are available in all Wirksworth's churches. *David Truby (Wirksworth Team Rector)*

• If you, or anyone else you know left an item of clothing to be repaired or altered by the late Betty Hallows please contact Heather Neaum on 01629 822850.

Gardens open

MANY gardens and courtyards in Wirksworth will be open on the afternoons of Saturday and Sunday 19–20 June from 12 noon–5pm.

Wirksworth has many buildings of historical and architectural interest and hidden amongst these are dozens of attractive outdoor spaces, intriguing gardens and courtyards. On one weekend each year, a number of residents open their gardens and courtyards to both locals and visitors. There will be a garden trail to guide you through streets and lanes, around the puzzle gardens, and along alleyways, revealing delightful views across the valley.

Hidden in the gardens there will be a wide range of music playing, and you will discover many artefacts and sculptures of interest. You will be able to buy plants, garden pots and home-produced refreshments and cakes.

The weekend, supported by Wirksworth Town Council and the Wirksworth Festival, will raise funds for two charities – Waltham House Care Centre and Study Guatemala. Entry to the gardens is by programme £3.50 per person, children free.

For more information, see www.wirksworthgardens.co.uk

Clean up

THE second annual town clean-up took place on Saturday 10 April. Community groups and individual residents, armed with their black bags, litter pickers and protective bibs, collected much of the unsightly debris that had accumulated around the town during the winter.

The town mayor, Councillor Mike Ratcliffe, was pleased with the community effort and the turn out of volunteers but disappointed by the amount of litter carelessly discarded around the town.

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For a pig farm ...

Dear CF

WE are concerned to see that the proposal for a pig farm in Barnsley Lane, Ildridgehay has become the subject of a strong campaign from antagonists that have no understanding of the kind of farming involved. Unfortunately, a substantial amount of misleading information has been bandied about in order to undermine the application.

The principle of establishing new agricultural enterprises is encouraged by government in order to promote a healthy rural economy and sustainable communities.

We have had many pre-application discussions with the local planning authority and we believe that the proposal is fully in accordance with government advice and local development plan policies.

The Highways Authority, the Environment Agency and the Environmental Health Officer have raised no objections. Proper procedures will be put in place to ensure that there will be no damage to the environment, and that no residential properties will be affected by any of the activity associated with the enterprise.

The site for the buildings has been carefully chosen to ensure that there will be no unacceptable impact either on the site itself or the surrounding area. The buildings will be screened by the landform, by new tree and hedge planting, and by the retention and management of existing trees and hedgerows. There will consequently be no significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

We are promoting non-intensive pig growing that meets higher standards than set out under RSPCA welfare criteria, and which will help to minimise imports from countries that continue with unacceptable practices in animal husbandry.

*C. G. Thorp, MRTPI
Director, Chris Thorp Planning Ltd*

... and against

Dear CF,

I WISH to share my concern with your readers over a proposed pig farm to be built, if planning permission is granted, in the upper Ecclesbourne Valley.

An absentee landowner is proposing to erect industrial sized buildings in a Special Landscape Area near Ildridgehay for the new Waitrose supermarket in Ashbourne so that it can offer "locally sourced" food.

Piglets of four weeks old are to be shipped in from East Anglia in 44 tonne articulated lorries over 60ft long, raised until they reach "slaughter weight, shipped back to East Anglia for slaughter, neatly packaged in plastic boxes and then distributed throughout the Waitrose chain. They call this "locally sourced".

No mention is made in the planning application of the inaccessibility of the site, the fragility of the railway bridge,

Where did the knife-grinder live?

CF's READERS were able to help John Bradley – a collector of old Derbyshire photographs – by identifying a blacksmith's workshop (now demolished) on St John's Street from a picture published in CF 152.

Now CF is publishing another photo of an occupational scene obtained by John at the same auction. This one is of a knife grinder and it seems likely – as it was with the one of the smithy – that this was also taken in Wirksworth in about 1857.

If indeed it was taken in Wirksworth, can anyone identify the house? If so, where is it or was it?

Please contact CF (address on the front page) or phone 01629 822745 if you have suggestions or know the answer.

The photograph is the copyright of John Bradley



Town diary

MORE local groups are now using the town diary on the community website. It's useful because it prevents events from clashing by ensuring they don't take place on the same date and it informs local people and visitors of what's happening in the town.

There have been attempts in the past by the town clerk, the library and CF to keep such a diary but all have been largely unsuccessful. Organisers of events have failed to consult the diary before setting a date; it has proved difficult to find a simple way of publicising events in the diary.

Now Wirksworth.net provides a straightforward solution. Anyone can log on to www.wirksworth.net and at the top of the first page will be found an "Events" button. Clicking this will lead to an invitation to organisers "to submit an event". On the same page is a calendar: click on any date and find what's happening in the town on that day.

It's a simple and effective way of keeping a town diary. CF urges all local groups to use it.

the lack of land ownership for enlarging Barnsley Lane, the dangerous junction with the B5023, the lack of sufficient land to distribute the muck.

There is no mains water on the site and there is no electricity. The pollution of the Ecclesbourne Valley will be horrendous and domestic water supplies, which are from local boreholes, will be compromised.

This scheme is ill-conceived. It does nothing for the local economy, is environmentally harmful and provides no local employment.

The applicants don't tell the whole story, only the bits they want you to know. This is battery farming however they dress it up.

*S H Keeling
Alton Cottage, Ildridgehay*
CF understands that the closing date for objections was 26 March and there were 80 objections to the application and none in favour of it. A decision should be made in early June.

CF contributors please

DO you want to contribute to Community Fayre?

The CF team needs more members.

Community Fayre comes out four times a year and it's a team effort. Some of the team write, others persuade others to write, one or two edit the stories and decide on the layout of each issue, about 20 help distribute the paper, others contact the 50 or so advertisers without whose support CF would not survive.

Each issue has a separate co-ordinator, who leads the team, organises collection of the articles through a short series of meetings –

planning, copy and page layout – before liaising with the printer to achieve the final published copy.

The management team meets before and after each issue is produced and the editorial team meets more frequently to plan and set the pages.

To join the CF team, you should have enough spare time to be able to contribute effectively and preferably have access to a computer with email and Word. It's a fair degree of effort, but there's the reward of knowing you're helping to inform and record the goings on in the Wirksworth surrounds – and seeing your writing published.

Please phone Barry Foster on 01629 822745 if you'd like to know more, or think you could help in any way.

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Bonsall	Lorry park	10.00-10.45	12 Jun, 10 Jul, 14 Aug
Bradbourne	Monument	10.00-10.45	29 May, 24 Jul, 14 Aug
Brassington	Greenway	7.45-8.05	3 Jul, 21 Aug
	Top Field End	8.10-8.30	
	Bus shelter	8.35-8.55	
	West Bank	9.00-9.20	
Carsington	opp. Church	9.45-10.45	22 May, 17 Jul
Cromford	Market Place	9.15-9.45	12 Jun, 10 Jul, 14 Aug
Hognaston	Old Chapel	7.45-8.15	22 May, 17 Jul
	Mills Croft	8.15-8.55	
	Red Lion	8.55-9.35	
Hopton	Post Box	9.45-10.45	29 May, 24 Jul
Kirk Ireton	Village Hall	7.45-8.30	29 May, 24 Jul
	Village Pump	8.40-9.30	
Kniveton	Public House	7.45-8.15	29 May, 24 Jul, 14 Aug
	Chapel Lane	8.20-9.00	
	Council Houses	9.05-9.45	
Middleton	Rise End	9.35-10.00	3 Jul, 21 Aug
	Nelson	10.05-10.45	
Wirksworth	Wood Street	7.45-10.45	22 May, 12,26 Jun, 10,24,31 Jul, 14,28 Aug

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Site of that smithy

JOHN Bradley acquired at auction a photograph of a blacksmith's workshop dated about 1857 and he thought it might be in Wirksworth. The photo brought an immediate response from readers:

Phil Richards was certain the smithy was on St Johns Street opposite Waltham House: he recognised the end wall of the house next to Stone's the builders merchants.

Simon Nightingale also thought he knew where it was and persuaded his daughter Ellie to join him on a "sleuthing" expedition to confirm his opinion and "count the bricks". Like Phil, they are both certain the property adjacent to the smithy on the photo still exists next to the alley that leads to Stone's builders' yard.

Kit Salt and her family live at 41 St Johns Street, the three storey house at the side of the photo and were excited to see their home featured in CF 152.

If this is true, CF supposes that the blacksmith's shop in the photo was knocked down to make way for the cinema (now occupied by Stones) which was built in the early 1930s. This might have happened at the same time that Nether House, a grand Georgian House with large gardens that extended as far as the Hannages, was demolished so the cinema could be built.

Others, like John Spencer, believe the smithy was on Warmbrook. Pat Hatchett from Bolehill spent her childhood in Canterbury Terrace and remembers a blacksmith – Mr Percy Thompson – still working in the early 1940s from his smithy on Warmbrook above the Cockpit, shoeing horses for local farmers and carriers. Philip Wood also remembers being told of a blacksmith – Cobbie Bartlett – working at the Cockpit.

CF has sent details to John Bradley who owns the copyright of the photo.

Andrew Lawton
DipCFHP, DipBMec, MPSPract

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