

Nene Valley

news

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NEWSPAPER FOR EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Your Voice Matters

North Northamptonshire Council has launched a consultation on its existing dog control Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), following feedback received during the initial phase of consultation.

The second consultation focuses on proposed new restrictions and amendments to specific locations only.

Proposals include:

- Additional dogs-on-leads requirements at Barnwell Country Park
- Additional controls at Sywell Country Park.
- Dogs to be kept on leads within designated country park car parks.
- New dog exclusion zones within identified Wildlife Refuge Areas and Educational Wild Zones.
- A proposal to designate the enclosed recreation and play area at Pytchley Recreation Ground as a dog exclusion zone.

The feedback received during this consultation will be considered before any decision is made on changes to the Dog Control PSPO for North Northamptonshire.

The consultation is now live and will run until 14th September 2026 and can be accessed via the council's consultation hub.

Mayor of Raunds visits charity supporting local people affected by cancer

Recently, the Mayor and Mayoress of Raunds, Cllr Bill Cross and Marilyn Cross, visited Maggie's Northampton at Northampton General Hospital to learn more about the support the charity provides to people affected by cancer and their families.

The Mayor and Mayoress met Jenni, a Centre Fundraiser, and were given a behind-the-scenes tour of the centre, learning more about how the charity and its volunteers operate and support people visiting the centre throughout the day.

Although based at Northampton General Hospital, Maggie's provides support to people affected by cancer across Northamptonshire, including residents of Raunds and the surrounding area. The service is completely free and does not require an appointment.

Maggie's offers a welcoming space where people affected by cancer can access advice and support from trained

cancer support specialists, psychologists and benefits advisers, alongside dedicated support groups, wellbeing activities and peer support. Friends and family members can also access support.

Jenni Parker, Centre Fundraiser for Maggie's Northampton, said: "Maggie's is a national charity that offers support to people with cancer and their loved ones from centres across the UK. In October, the Maggie's Northampton centre opened, and from our beautifully designed building on the edge of Northampton General Hospital it provides a warm and welcoming space for anyone affected by cancer. Alongside this, we offer support from

cancer support specialists, advice around benefits and employment while living with cancer, wellbeing activities, and peer support.

"Our centre is open five days a week, appointments are not necessary, and anyone who needs support is welcome to drop in during our opening hours. Many patients visit us between treatment sessions, as they find our environment more relaxing and comfortable than the amenities available within the hospital."

Mayor of Raunds, Cllr Bill Cross, said: "The Mayoress and I were delighted to be invited to Maggie's and to learn more about the valuable support it provides to people affected by cancer and their loved ones.



Although the centre is based in Northampton, the support is available to people from across the county. We were particularly pleased to have the opportunity to see firsthand how the team and volunteers support those who need it most and to learn more about the services available to local families.

"We both left astounded by the amount of work Maggie's and its volunteers undertake and the difference they make to people at what can be an incredibly difficult time. We hope that this visit also helps to raise awareness among residents of Raunds about the support that is available to them."

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NEW BALLS PLEASE! TENNIS BOOST AS COUNCIL NETS NEW OPERATOR

Budding tennis stars, who may one day lift the Wimbledon trophy, will be celebrating with the announcement that North Northamptonshire is to benefit from improved access to tennis, coaching opportunities, and better facilities.

North Northamptonshire Council has announced that, following a competitive tender process, Advantage Sports Group CIC has been awarded a 15-year contract to operate tennis services at Burton Latimer, North Park and Ise Valley.

The exciting partnership will provide free community tennis opportunities, expanded coaching programmes, and a modern online booking system,

as well as stronger links with local schools and clubs. It will also help generate income that will be reinvested into maintaining and improving tennis courts across the area.

The phased programme will begin at Burton Latimer, with North Park and Ise Valley joining the programme following future refurbishment works.

CLr Brian Benneyworth, North Northamptonshire Council's Executive Member for Housing,

Public Health and Leisure, said: "This is fantastic news for tennis players and residents across North Northamptonshire. This partnership will help secure the long-term future of our park tennis courts while making it easier than ever for people to get involved in the sport. The focus is very much on benefitting the local community, whether that is through affordable court access, opportunities for children and families to learn

new skills, dedicated sessions for people with additional needs, or improved pathways into coaching and volunteering."

Simon Gallo, Director at Advantage Sports Group, said: "Advantage Sports Group CIC is delighted to have been appointed by North Northamptonshire Council to manage and develop the tennis provision at Burton Latimer, North Park and Ise Valley. This is an incredibly exciting opportunity to breathe new life into these important community facilities and create a welcoming, affordable and inclusive tennis programme for residents of all ages and abilities.

"With more than 30 years of experience in tennis coaching, programme delivery and facility management, our team is passionate about increasing participation through coaching,



school partnerships, community sessions, open days and clear pathways into local clubs. We are excited to begin working alongside the Council, the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association) and local communities to improve the courts, create new coaching and employment opportunities, and build a sustainable future for tennis across North Northamptonshire."

Advantage Sports Group CIC brings more than 30 years of experience in tennis coaching, programme delivery and club management. Their plans include affordable pay-and-play

tennis, coaching for all ages and abilities, school engagement programmes, community open days, SEND tennis sessions, cardio tennis activities and opportunities for local people to become coaches and volunteers.

The appointment comes after an extensive review of the council's tennis provision, which identified the need for investment and a sustainable long-term operating model to secure the future of public tennis courts.

Further updates on court improvements and opportunities will be shared in due course.

GENEALOGY JOTTINGS

WORDS BY
JAN PEARSON

"It says what?" Transcribers are only human and humans make mistakes. Some handwriting can be extremely challenging to read – to say the least! In fact, my old boss used to bring me things that he had written and could no longer read because of his appalling handwriting. He knew that I was used to reading strange documents!

Mary Ann Miller, aged 28 in 1861, has her occupation transcribed by one website as Tempstress. I rather think that this is an error as her two daughters aged 9 and 7 also have that as their occupation. Looking at the original, I think that Sempstress (the old word for Seamstress) is a far safer conclusion. If you have access to the census and would like to take a peek, the reference is: RG9, Piece 60, folio 40, page 26. They have also transcribed her surname as Diller instead of Miller. Handwriting can be taxing at times but please don't give up. Ask someone else to have a look as well.

The 1841 census record is not the easiest to read either. Written by the enumerators who often

just recorded what they had heard – or what they thought had been recorded – in many cases they just used pencil rather than pen. Faded writing to add into the equation as well! If you are looking at these images on the computer, then enlarging the document might help. Or, if you have image enhancing software, making a positive image into a negative can also produce results. White on black instead of black/grey on white.

Abbreviations were also widely used. 'Do' was used in many cases instead of 'ditto', meaning the same as the word above. I have lost count of the times that I have seen 'Do' transcribed as a surname.... Then we have Jno instead of John, Th.s instead of Thomas, Jas instead of James, to name just a few. Don't forget, 'Dau' can also be used instead of 'Daughter'.

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Trying to move before Christmas? **Start here**

Moving into a new home before Christmas is a goal for many buyers and sellers, but achieving it requires early preparation and realistic expectations.

Property transactions involve several parties, including conveyancers, estate agents, mortgage lenders and, where applicable, others within the chain. Good communication throughout the process is essential to help identify and resolve potential issues as quickly as possible.

One of the best ways to keep a transaction on track is to instruct your conveyancer early. Buyers should ensure mortgage arrangements are underway and be prepared to provide evidence of funds for compliance checks. Sellers can help by completing property paperwork promptly, allowing their conveyancer to prepare and issue the contract pack without delay.

Once an offer is accepted,

the legal process involves reviewing title documents, conducting searches, raising enquiries and satisfying any lender requirements. These stages can take time, and unexpected issues can arise.

If your transaction is part of a chain, progress will also

depend on the readiness of others involved. Delays do not necessarily mean something has gone wrong; often they are simply part of ensuring everything is completed correctly.

If moving before Christmas is important to you, make this clear from the outset. Starting early, staying organised and working closely with your conveyancer can significantly improve your chances of being settled into your new home in time for the festive season.



Housebuilder invests in early learning with donation to local charity

Sywell and Overstone Pre-School has received a £1,500 donation from David Wilson Homes, helping further its mission to provide accessible, high-quality early education for children in the local community and surrounding areas.

The pre-school operates during term times, offering a variety of hours to suit the ever-changing needs of families. Its aim is to build children's confidence and independence, offer stimulating and creative opportunities, and support their social and emotional development.

This donation will support the pre-school's kitchen refurbishment project, helping to fund equipment and resources that make cooking and baking activities more accessible and inclusive for children.

Nicola Egleton, Pre-School Manager at Sywell and Overstone Pre-School, said: "We were delighted to hear

the news that we would be receiving this donation from David Wilson Homes.

"Fundraising plays a vital role in what we do. Our management committee, made up of a small group of parents, continually plan and organise fundraising events throughout the year. This donation will not only support their efforts but also provide essential resources to help us support children throughout their formative years.

"We would like to say thank you very much to David Wilson Homes for this generous donation. This support is very much appreciated, and the children are looking forward to getting involved with some exciting cooking and baking activities."

David Wilson Homes' donation was made as part of The Barratt Redrow

Foundation, which is designed to support national and local charities, large and small, across the UK to leave a legacy in the communities in which the housebuilder operates.

The Barratt Redrow Foundation is celebrating its fifth anniversary in 2026. Since its launch, it has committed £20 million to charities and good causes, supported over 2,000 different charities, and is estimated to have directly impacted 100,000 young people each year.

Ben Kalus, Managing Director at David Wilson Homes South Midlands, said: "We are proud to support such an important part of the local community. It is incredibly rewarding to contribute to a local charity that creates a positive and nurturing environment for young children to grow and learn."

To find out more about the charity, visit the website at Sywell and Overstone Pre-School. For more information about developments in the area, visit the website at David Wilson Homes in Northamptonshire.

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Fri 18	Staffordshire Lunch & Cruise
Sat 19	Bletchley Park
Sat 19	Milton Keynes Shopping
Sun 20	Hunstanton
Sun 20	Sheringham 1940's Festival
Thu 24	Cotswolds Tour - Stowe & Broadway
Fri 25	Skipton OR Skipton Cruise Cream Tea
Sun 27	Malvern Autumn Show

OCTOBER

Fri 2	Gloucester
Fri 2	Gloucester Cathedral
Sun 4	Skegness
Tue 6	Cambridge
Sat 10	Bridgnorth & SVRW with Cream Tea
Sat 10	Knitting & Stitching Show
Thu 15	Watercress Line & Winchester
Sat 24	Blackpool Illuminations
Mon 26	Shrewsbury Cruise & Shrewsbury
Wed 28	Black Country Museum
Wed 28	Dudley Zoo
Thu 29	Colchester OR Colchester Zoo
Fri 30	London Free Time or Museums
Fri 30	Shard & Free Time
Sat 31	Longleat Safari Park

NOVEMBER

Sat 7	Birmingham Christmas Market
Fri 13	Chatsworth at Christmas
Sat 14	Nottingham Winter Wonderland
Sun 15	Blenheim Palace at Christmas
Sun 15	Skegness with Fish & Chips
Wed 18	Kew Gardens at Christmas
Thu 19	Bicester Shopping Village
Fri 20	Ely Cathedral Christmas Fair
Sat 21	Chester Christmas Market
Sat 21	Thursford Christmas Spectacular
Sun 22	Royal Leamington Spa Christmas Market
Wed 25	Oakham & Gates Garden Centre
Thu 26	Bury St Edmunds at Christmas
Fri 27	Thursford Christmas Spectacular
Sat 28	Bath Christmas Market
Sat 28	Melton Mowbray Christmas Market
Sun 29	Stratford Upon Avon Christmas Market
Sun 29	Chatsworth at Christmas

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30 NOVEMBER-4 DECEMBER - VALKENBURG CHRISTMAS MARKETS - £699PP

The hotel is Schaepekens van St Fyt, Valkenburg. Half Board including excursions. Uniquely situated on the borders of three countries - Holland, Germany and Belgium, Valkenburg is not only the perfect destination for a fabulous festive break. Valkenburg sits up amongst the South Limburg Hills. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, Valkenburg's spectacular limestone caves are transformed into glittering festive grottoes. Add to this a myriad of shops festooned with sparkling fairy lights and you have the perfect destination for a seasonal shopping spree.

11-15 DECEMBER - A TASTE OF CHRISTMAS - £549PP

Clifton Park Hotel, St Anne's on Sea, Lytham St Anne's. Half Board including excursions. St Anne's on Sea gives the gentle feel of a bygone age and is slowly being supplemented with an exciting range of new shops and restaurants, providing a welcome contrast to its neighbour, Blackpool. St Anne's is a haven of tranquillity with four championship golf courses on the doorstep. Accommodation includes a swimming pool and Jacuzzi. Holiday includes a full entertainment programme.

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Spotlight on > EDUCATION



> MOULTON COLLEGE STUDENTS TRANSFORM WORKPLACE FACILITIES IN INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP WITH WILSONART® BUSHBOARD

Construction students from Moulton College have put

their skills into action and made a lasting impact on a local business, thanks to a hands-on refurbishment project that brought classroom learning to life.

The plumbing and carpentry students from the

College's Higham Ferrers campus were given the opportunity to work alongside industry professionals, helping to transform staff welfare areas at Wilsonart® Bushboard's Wellingborough site.

The project forms part of a growing partnership between Moulton College and the global engineered surfaces manufacturer, creating valuable opportunities for students to gain practical experience in a real working environment.

Helen Beeby, Work Placement and Experience Officer at Moulton College, explains: "Nothing can replicate the experience of working on a live project in a professional environment. Through our partnership with Wilsonart® Bushboard, students have been able to put their skills to the test, experience the realities of the workplace and see firsthand the impact of their work. Opportunities like this are invaluable in preparing students for successful careers

in the construction industry."

Working to professional standards and adhering to site safety requirements, the students joined forces as part of a multi-trade team to deliver a range of improvements to employee facilities. Their commitment, enthusiasm and high-quality workmanship quickly earned praise from the Wilsonart® Bushboard team.

Carl Eardley, Maintenance Manager - UK at Wilsonart® Engineered Surfaces, says: "Working with Moulton College has been an extremely positive experience for Wilsonart. The students demonstrated professionalism and a willingness to learn throughout the refurbishment project. The quality of their workmanship exceeded our expectations, and it was rewarding to provide them with a real manufacturing environment where they could apply the skills developed during their studies."

Carl adds: "This partnership has delivered tangible improvements to our facilities while giving students valuable

industry experience that will support their future careers. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Moulton College and supporting the development of the next generation of skilled tradespeople."

Following the successful project, the partnership is set to develop further, with more hands-on opportunities being explored at the Wellingborough site. This includes potential enhancements to the site grounds, and improvements to the canteen area, utilising the skills of bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry and electrical installation students from the College.

Helen says: "We are delighted to work with Wilsonart® Bushboard. The programme has delivered significant benefits for our students, who have gained valuable workplace experience, developed evidence towards their qualifications and had the opportunity to make their mark with an important local

employer. It has also helped hone their communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills."

Work experience in real-world settings is a key part of Moulton College's further education curriculum, giving students opportunities to build confidence and develop workplace skills. Moulton also welcomes active input from local employers to help shape course content via its Industry Skills Boards and hosts local businesses willing to deliver career talks.

As part of its commitment to strengthening links between education and industry, Moulton College is keen to hear from local employers who can offer both work experience and T Level industry placements, in particular in construction. These partnerships give students essential exposure to professional working environments while helping employers connect with and support the next generation of skilled workers.

"Partnerships like this are



PHOTOGRAPHY: MOULTON COLLEGE

Construction students from Moulton College have put their skills into action and made a lasting impact on a local business, thanks to a hands-on refurbishment project that brought classroom learning to life

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essential because they help bridge the gap between education and employment and help ensure what we deliver at Moulton College is keeping pace with industry expectations," says Helen. "Experiences like these also give employers an important opportunity to engage with emerging talent and play an active role in developing the skilled workforce their industries will need in the future."

If you are interested in finding out more about how your business can work with Moulton College, please visit www.moulton.ac.uk

> TARDIS PROJECT IS OUT OF THIS WORLD FOR MOULTON COLLEGE STUDENTS

Two Moulton College construction students have brought a piece of Doctor Who history to life by building a full-scale replica of the iconic 1983 TARDIS console room.

Carpentry and joinery students Graham Bawden and Josh Smith worked alongside their lecturer and former BBC set builder Simon Nash to complete the ambitious project, which took two years to build.

The creation, the brainchild of lifelong Doctor Who fan and former BBC Director Brendan Sheppard, takes pride of place in the garden of Brendan's Lincolnshire home, where it will form the centrepiece of an interactive visitor experience for fellow fans.

Students Graham and Josh, who until recently both studied carpentry and joinery at the Northamptonshire-based college's Higham Ferrers campus, worked with lecturer Simon on the two-year installation.

Simon explains: "I worked previously with Brendan to create the exterior of the famous TARDIS police box, so when he approached me to work on the console room, I knew it would make a terrific extracurricular project for interested Moulton College students."

"Josh, Graham and I used the plans from the original console design and set about creating a replica from scratch."

Graham, who has recently set up his own carpentry business, GB Carpentry, adds: "When Simon approached us to get involved, we couldn't wait to get started. It has been an ambitious project and

one we worked slowly on to ensure every aspect was in line with the original.

"I worked on the double doors, which were particularly challenging, but panel by panel, column by column, we got there, and I am so proud of it."

Fellow student Josh explains: "One of the first things we started on was the walls and the base of the console. I am particularly proud of the circles on the wall panels, which we had to cut to the exact size and then work out how to mount them. To ensure it was an exact replica, everything had to be right, down to the millimetre. I am so pleased with it, and it is a great thing to have on my CV."

In addition to honing their carpentry and joinery skills, the project helped Josh and Graham develop their teamwork, problem-solving and project management skills. Simon, who has documented the build on the project's very own YouTube site and Instagram page, concludes: "It was a huge project and one I couldn't have delivered without Josh and Graham. Their work has been amazing, and we are all so delighted with the result."

The console room is now up and running as an immersive visitor experience, with electronics and interactive features added by Darryl Harrison, while actor Peter Davison, who played the fifth Doctor Who, has recorded a special audio episode. For more information, visit <https://brendansheppard.wordpress.com>

> GET CREATIVE ALL YEAR ROUND AT BOSWORTH'S WORKSHOPS

Throughout the year, Bosworth's runs a varied programme of workshops across both our Burton

Latimer and Elton Walled Garden sites — part of our "Creativity in Full Bloom" series. From seasonal flower arranging to gardening skills and crafts, there's always something new on the calendar, whatever the season and whatever your interest.

Right now, we're gearing up for our Autumn Pumpkin Flower Arrangement Workshop, running at Elton on Tuesday 22nd September and Burton Latimer on Wednesday 23rd September. Guided by our florist Jo, you'll create a beautiful autumn centrepiece using seasonal flowers, textured foliage and a pumpkin vessel — perfect for the home or the table. All materials are included, along with tea, coffee, cake, and free onsite parking.

But workshops like this are about more than just the finished arrangement. They're a brilliant way to learn new skills in a relaxed, hands-on setting, with no experience necessary — our instructors guide everyone at their own pace, so complete beginners and seasoned green-thumbs alike leave with something to be proud of. Just as importantly, they're a lovely way to meet people.

Our workshops bring together like-minded folk from the local community for a couple of sociable hours of making, chatting and learning together — the kind of gentle, creative get-together that's increasingly hard to find.

Whether you're after a new hobby, a fun outing with a friend, or simply an excuse for cake and conversation, keep an eye on our workshop calendar throughout the year. There's always something blooming at Bosworth's.

Full details and tickets: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/bosworthsworkshops>

CHRISTMAS COMES HOME TO BOSWORTH'S



There's a particular kind of magic that settles over Bosworth's once the fairy lights go up and the first frost catches the greenhouse roof — and it's here. Christmas has arrived at Burton Latimer, and this year it's brought a little something new.

The Magical Sleigh Ride VR returns with an all-new adventure for 2026. If you soared through the snowy skies with us last year, this is your invitation to strap in again — the route has changed, and so has the view. Alongside it, the old favourites remain exactly as treasured as ever. Santa's Grotto welcomes

families back for another year of wide-eyed wonder, while our Quiet Santa sessions offer the same warmth in a calmer, gentler setting for those who prefer it. And this year, the magic extends to the whole family — Santa Paws means your dog needn't be left waiting in the car.

Throughout the centre, our Christmas displays have been reimagined with entirely new themes, each more enchanting than the last. For those wanting to make a day of it, our sister centre at Elton Walled Garden is once again hosting Breakfast with Santa — a beautifully festive start to the morning. Our real

trees will be available from the end of November, filling the centre with the scent of the festive season, and the Singing Reindeer have returned to raise their voices — and funds — for Cransley Hospice once again.

Don't forget if you are looking for that perfect present, we have something for everyone in our giftware departments too

With demand for our grotto, sleigh ride and breakfast sessions building quickly, early booking is strongly recommended to avoid disappointment. Reserve your place today, and let Christmas at Bosworth's begin.

Christmas

Magical Sleigh Ride VR - New adventure for 2026. Santa's Grotto, Santa Paws and Quiet Santa. Booking open online now!

Real Christmas Trees from the end of November.

Festive Workshops & Coach Trips

Festive Displays open from mid October

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Bosworth's Garden Centre

bosworthsgc.co.uk

110 Finedon Road, Burton Latimer, Northants NN15 5QA



FINDING THE RIGHT FIT, RIGHT HERE IN RUSHDEN



At DB Shoes, we have always believed shoes are about much more than what you put on your feet. They are about getting out of the house, seeing friends, attending family occasions and feeling comfortable enough to enjoy everyday life. For many people, shoe shopping is simple. For others, swollen feet, bunions, hammer toes, arthritis, diabetes, orthotics or simply needing more room can make it painful, frustrating and isolating.

That is why our specialist Fitting Centre in Irchester Road, Rushden, means so much to us. It is not a rushed shoe shop experience. By appointment, our friendly team take time to listen, measure and help find footwear designed for wider, deeper and more difficult-to-fit feet. Sometimes the difference is instant: a smile, a sigh of relief, or someone standing a little

taller because, at last, their shoes feel right.

We were recently delighted to welcome Rosemary Mason MVO as an ambassador for our Fitting Centre. Rosemary, honoured for her long-standing service as former Nosegay Maker for the Royal Maundy Services, first came to us when she needed shoes to accommodate swelling and other fitting challenges. Her experience touched us because it echoed what we hear so often: finding the right footwear can be emotional, especially after years of discomfort.

Our shoes are designed for people who need more than standard footwear can offer. Extra width, extra depth, removable insoles, adjustable straps, stretch materials and deeper toe boxes can make all the difference — whether that means walking to the shops, enjoying a day out or simply

putting on shoes without discomfort.

As a family business rooted in Rushden's shoemaking heritage, this work is personal. We are proud to have spent over a century in footwear and the last 26 years focusing on wider and deeper fitting shoes. We want to prove that comfort and style can go together, and that no one should feel limited because their feet do not fit standard shoes.

We are also thrilled that DB Shoes has been shortlisted in the Retail Gazette Retail Excellence Awards 2026 for HR Excellence, with our Director David Denton named a finalist for a Lifetime Contribution Award. National recognition is wonderful, but the real reward is closer to home: helping someone leave our Fitting Centre feeling reassured, comfortable and more confident.

If you, a family member or someone you care for struggles to find comfortable footwear, please do not feel you have to manage alone. Appointments at the DB Wider Fit Shoes Fitting Centre can be booked by calling 01933 311077. We measure, we advise, we fit — and most importantly, we care.

The Shoe Fitting Centre
DB Wider Fit Shoes

Open: Mon to Fri, 10am-4:30pm
www.widerfitshoes.co.uk

Like Rosemary, discover comfortable, supportive and stylish wider fit shoes.

Appointments required — call 01933 311077 to book at DB Wider Fit Shoes, Irchester Road, Rushden NN10 9XF.



MAYOR OF RAUNDS PRESENTS CHEQUE TO LOCAL FIRST RESPONDERS

The Mayor of Raunds, Councillor Bill Cross, was delighted to present a £500 cheque to East Northants First Responders recently, on behalf of Raunds Town Council.

The grant was awarded to fund the purchase of a training defibrillator, which will be used to develop the skills of the charity's volunteer responders and support defibrillator awareness and training within the local community.

East Northants First Responders are local volunteers trained by East Midlands Ambulance Service to attend emergency 999 calls, often arriving before an ambulance. In a serious medical emergency, the actions taken in the first few minutes can be critical. By supporting the purchase of



this equipment, the Town Council's grant will help the First Responders continue to develop and share potentially life-saving skills.

Mayor of Raunds, Cllr Bill Cross, said: "The First Responders provide an invaluable service to our community, often being among the first to arrive when someone is experiencing a medical emergency. This grant will enable them to purchase a

training defibrillator, helping volunteers and others to build the confidence needed to respond effectively in an emergency.

"We hope that this equipment will have a lasting benefit for our residents by supporting the development of potentially life-saving skills. I am very pleased that the Town Council has been able to support the fantastic work the First Responders carry out."

Local community groups and organisations undertaking projects or activities that benefit the people of Raunds can apply for grant funding from Raunds Town Council. Further information about the Council's grant scheme and how to apply is available from the Council's website www.raunds-tc.gov.uk/documents/1284494

Play Area improvements at Ferry Meadows thanks to FCC Communities Foundation

Over the last five years, Nene Park Trust has been able to make huge improvements to the three play areas at Ferry Meadows thanks to generous funding from FCC Communities Foundation.

As a not-for-profit grant-making organisation in the UK, FCC Communities Foundation awards funding to community, conservation, and heritage projects through the Landfill Communities Fund. Nene Park Trust has benefitted from this generous funding across the three play areas at Ferry Meadows.

In 2021, Fox Play, the adventurous play area for all ages, was installed near Lakeside, giving young visitors to Ferry Meadows a wide range of new play equipment to explore including zip lines, a tunnel, accessible swings, slides, a climbing tower and water features, all of which have remained hugely popular. FCC Communities Foundation was a major funder of this new play area.

Early in 2026, Badger Play benefitted from the most recent funding from FCC Communities Foundation. The play area was remodelled and updated and the funding enabled Nene Park Trust to completely replace the main climbing structure and add additional accessible features.

Finally, in May this year, a new basket swing was added to Otter Play for younger children, completing the three play areas which have been improved through this funding.

As a charity, it is support from local businesses and organisations like FCC that enables Nene Park Trust to offer the wide range of leisure and activity facilities to visitors of all ages. The play areas get a huge amount of use and provide so much enjoyment to children and their carers from Peterborough and further afield.

Penny Horne, FCC Communities Foundation Grant Manager, said: "It's fantastic to see Badger Play open and welcoming visitors and also the new swing in Otter Play. Ferry Meadows is one of the region's most popular destinations, attracting thousands of people each year to enjoy its lakes, woodlands, meadows and family-friendly activities. We're proud to have helped bring these play areas to life and create something that will enhance the experience for everyone who visits."



Parson Latham's – community living in the heart of Oundle

Parson Nicholas Latham founded The Oundle Hospital on 15th May 1611, where he drew up a constitution with orders and statutes to enable efficient governance of the hospitals. Today, the name "hospital" is replaced with the word almshouse.

There are specific criteria for resident eligibility; single ladies who have lived in the Parish of Oundle for five or more years and are able to live fully independently. In 1611, a 'hospital' was a place of refuge for the poor, disabled or elderly, unlike today where we associate this word with medical provision.

At one end of the hospital site, The Blue Coat School was housed, originally set up for 'thirty Poor men's sons chosen out of the town of Oundle', which is no longer in operation today. However, Parson Latham's Charity manages an Educational Foundation awarding grants towards the costs of further education.

Set in the very heart of Oundle, a two-minute walk



to Waitrose and the town centre, the almshouse location is perfect for accessing all of Oundle. The almshouses have been extensively modernised in recent years and include eight flats within the original building and six self-contained bungalows. The accommodation surrounds a beautiful garden, with a formal knot garden in one of the courtyards. Ladies live in a friendly and relaxed community together and are overseen

by two wardens living in the property. Each flat contains a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and open plan living room. As beneficiaries of the charity, accommodation costs are kept as low as possible. There are communal rooms which are used for gatherings and meetings. The charity is run by a board of 10 local Trustees and the Clerk. The Chairman of the Charity is Paul Goldsmith, who has been actively involved with the charity for over 30 years.

Anyone considering making an application to live in the almshouse, please contact the clerk at clerk.lathams@outlook.com to book a visit. Application forms and more details can be found on the website www.parsonlathamscharity.org.uk

Artist brings her own stories to vivid life for youngsters

Both artists and authors by virtue of their professions must have a creative nature, artists with a brush and authors with a pen. However I wonder how many artists have a book in them, and authors a hidden talent for art? In my dotage, I have attempted to promote the work of local authors and have met a children's author who, it transpires, is a very talented artist. Claire Pascall combines her talent for writing with a flair for illustrating her books.

As with all the authors that I meet, I am interested to know what originally inspired them to write. In conversation with Claire she told me that quite unknowingly her father encouraged her first attempts when she was in her early twenties. He had suggested a story telling the adventures of a young boy with his dog and horse. In Claire's book the little boy became an unusual character called Piddling Snodgrass and his companion an aardvark with their trusty steed a pig. So Piddling Snodgrass And His Quest For Mayor went to print.

Prior to this she had written the popular Meet Clarke, which she originally penned for her great niece who at the time was afraid of the dark. Clarke too is afraid of the dark but by the end of the story he has overcome his fear. Claire published the book to reassure children like her niece. She has illustrated her books to appeal to young children and says that she has many more stories and characters written and



created each waiting for their turn to come alive in print. Having always been an artist at heart both illustrating her books and creating paintings in acrylic and mixed media she feels that it is a privilege to be able to exhibit her work in such venues as Boughton House, Lamport Hall (as part of the NROS Arts festival central exhibition in September) and The Bell pub in Little Addington, where she changes her selection of paintings monthly – all of these not far from her little studio in Ringstead.

Claire's books are available on Amazon in both paperback and Kindle format and she very much welcomes feedback from her young readers.

Words: Richard Wilding

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Brush Meets Pen **showcase**

The Nene Valley News has, over the last few months, showcased the work of several local authors, bringing to the attention of its readers writers whose work might otherwise remain unheralded.

Thomas Richard Brown, Mike Muncaster, Glyn James, Hazel Wright, Claire Pascall and Mary Matthews (who writes as Georgia Rose) have appeared along with a brief account of their books and their motivation for writing. In late October these and three new successful authors – Lorna Marlow, Andy Gibney and Louise Cavell – will appear at an “Artists and Authors Together” Fair in Chichele College in Higham Ferrers. They will be joined by local artists Michaela Cordes, Angela Hooton, Beata Ulikowska, Anna Yardley, and Andy and Elle Wallace. The event, aptly entitled Brush Meets Pen, will provide the opportunity for visitors to talk with the exhibitors and to buy their paintings or books. The Fair will run over two days: 31st October and 1st November, from 10am to 4pm. The Saturday opening will coincide

BRUSH MEETS PEN

A mix of local artists and authors showcasing their work

Saturday 31 October & Sunday 1 November 10am - 4pm

Chichele College Higham Ferrers

Our artists Our authors

Authors: Michaela Cordes, Georgia Rose, Thomas Richard Brown, Anna Yardley, Beata Ulikowska, Angela Hooton, Lorna Marlow, Mike Muncaster, Glyn James, Claire Pascall, Andy Wallace.

Artists: Andy Wallace, Elle Wallace.

with the Higham Ferrers Farmers' Market and visitors to the market will have only a short walk to the College. Entry is free and parking is easy. Refreshments will be available from an unusual provider

during the Fair opening times. Nene Valley News readers will be very welcome and we hope for an enthusiastic turnout of local art lovers and keen readers.

Words: Richard Wilding

FALLS PREVENTION CLASSES

I'm Niki and I run Silver Strength. I provide Falls Prevention classes and chair-based exercise classes for the elderly and less abled. Did you know around 47,000 people aged 65+ in Northamptonshire are estimated to be at risk of falling each year?

In the year before September 2025, 2,541 people aged 65+ in Northamptonshire were admitted to hospital following a fall. That's roughly 49 people every week. Falls aren't simply an inevitable part of ageing. Northamptonshire councils specifically highlight strength and balance exercise as one of the ways people can reduce their risk.

Northamptonshire has a county-wide Get Up & Go programme, based around strength and

balance exercises, which is what I teach, and with others like me we have helped around 1,000 people so far each week – but we need to help more.

It isn't boring! I make my classes as fun as possible. This summer we did a summer of sport programme, which included our version of horse racing, football, tennis, and various games.

We meet for coffee, we raise money for charity. Back in June I did the cancer research 5k Race4life on behalf of our classes and we raised an amazing £735.

Back in February, we raised £300 for Macmillan Cancer Support. These people are amazing. All of the groups I have come together as one family and raise money for others. The classes not only work for the falls prevention. They work for the mental health of our elderly. My class members are a family. These classes can be a lifeline and prevent loneliness at a time when it is needed the most. They build strength but also confidence.



Looking for a fun, friendly and safe way to stay active?

I run specialist Chair-based exercise classes to music and falls prevention classes designed especially for older adults and those living with conditions such as dementia and Parkinson's.

What makes my classes different?

- Fully qualified in chair based exercises
- Specialist trained with Love to move supporting people with dementia and Parkinson's
- First aid trained
- Falls prevention qualified
- I also work closely with local health teams including Northamptonshire Falls Teams
- Northamptonshire Spring Team
- Northamptonshire Sport

Call Niki on 07872694717



Nene Valley News - **EVENTS**

> SATURDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER, 10AM TO 6PM

Ride, Stride & Drive fundraising event in aid of historic churches - Many church buildings open countywide and beyond. 07943 307873.

> SUNDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER, 10.15AM

Whitefriars Church Table Church - Informal church with food at Whitefriars Primary School, Boughton Drive, Rushden NN10 0HX - all welcome.

> SUNDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2.15 FOR 2.30PM

Whitefriars Church countryside walk - Meet at the grassed area opposite the Newton Bromswold turn on the road from Avenue Road to Chelveston for a three-mile walk to Newton Spinney (woodland) and back. 07943 307873.

> SUNDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER, 9.40AM

Higham Ferrers Footpath Group - Saffron Road car park for car sharing. Contact Ann on 07469 186731. 6-mile walk from Chester House, Irchester Country Park to the River Nene.

> MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER, 8PM

Nene Valley Valley Astronomical Society

- A presentation by Mike Frost: Erwin Finlay-Freundlich, a historical figure in astronomy. Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road Chelveston NN9 6AT. Admission £6 including tea/coffee and biscuits. For more information please see www.neneastro.org.uk, or call Kevin on 07731890594. Mike is always a very entertaining and informative speaker.

> SUNDAY 4TH OCTOBER, 2.30PM

Celebrating 150 since the Restoration of Warmington Church - Church of St Mary the Blessed Virgin, Warmington PE8 6TE, £10. Tel 07701052043. Talk in church by Kathryn Baird followed by tea and cake in village hall.

> SATURDAY 10TH OCTOBER, 10AM

Cake Sale, Raffle and Tombola - Woodford Community and Sports Complex, free. Contact 07717696153. Cake Sale, Raffle and Tombola for Twinkling Stars Appeal for KGH and Baby Awareness Week.

In Support Of Baby Loss Awareness Week and KGH Twinkling Stars Appeal Charity Number - 1115702

Cake SALE

Woodford Community And Sports Club, Highfield, Woodford, Kettering NN14 4HD

Tombola Raffle

Saturday October 10th 2026 From 10:00am

WHAT'S ON AT:

COWPER & NEWTON

For further details visit www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk

> WEDNESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER, 2PM-4PM

Practical Gardening Club - Join the Practical Gardening Club! Session 12: Apple Day – social event to look back through the year of the club. £3 per session with your annual pass (or £5 without a pass).

> THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER, 11AM-3.30PM

Heritage Open Day and Refreshments in the Courtyard - Free entry to the Museums and Gardens, with 'Refreshments in the Courtyard' until 3pm. Delicious homemade cakes, a choice of tea, coffee, speciality tea or juice and a relaxing stroll around the beautiful 18th-century, tranquil gardens - All for only £6.

WHAT'S ON AT:

NENE VALLEY RAILWAY

For further details visit www.nvr.org.uk

> SUNDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

Nene Valley Afternoon Tea - Combine the nostalgia of steam with the elegance of a traditional Afternoon Tea. Settle into the Continental Carriages, as seen in ITV's Murder on the Orient Express and enjoy a leisurely journey through the Nene Valley.

> SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

Thomas and the Travelling Post Office

- A unique day out where you can ride on Thomas's Mail Train, meet Postie Pete and his cat Ginger, and witness a live mailbag exchange. just like in the golden age of postal railways.

> SATURDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER

Night Mail Flying Codman - Enjoy an early evening of classic railway travel, traditional British fish & chips and a fascinating glimpse into how Britain's overnight postal network once operated. Pre-booking required.

> SATURDAY 26TH & SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER

Thomas Branch Line Weekend - Join Thomas for a delightful journey along his countryside branch line to Yarwell, passing through the famous Wansford Tunnel. With plenty to see and do across the railway, it's the perfect family day out.

> CHRISTMAS 2026

Christmas at the Railway: Santa Specials

- Step into a world of wonder this festive season with the magical Christmas experience at the Nene Valley Railway, where timeless traditions, family memories, and a sprinkle of Christmas magic come together. Thomas takes you on a special journey along his Christmas Branch Line from Wansford to Yarwell and back.

To submit your event please contact us via our website www.nenevalleynews.co.uk or call 01522 692542.

NEW FOOTBALL GOALS INSTALLED AT HEMMINGWELL SKATE PARK

North Northamptonshire Council, alongside partner organisations, have installed new permanent football goal posts near the skate park on the Hemmingwell Estate, creating a dedicated pitch that is free for local residents to enjoy.

This exciting initiative is being delivered through a partnership between the HemmingWellBeing Programme, Greatwell Homes (who funded the project), North Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Sport, Premier League Kicks, and the Northamptonshire Football Association, all working together to improve opportunities for young people and the wider community.

It is hoped that the new facilities will provide a safe and welcoming space for children, young people, families and friends to come together, play football, stay active and strengthen community connections.

The new goals form part of the wider HemmingWellBeing Programme, a hyper-local initiative that has seen partners working collaboratively for more than two years to improve opportunities and outcomes for residents across the Hemmingwell area. The programme involves teams from across North Northamptonshire Council and is supported through funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, North Northamptonshire Council and other partner organisations.

The football pitch is the first of a number of projects and initiatives planned over the coming four years, all aimed at enhancing community wellbeing, encouraging participation in physical activity and creating positive opportunities for

local people.

Cllr Ken Harrington, North Northamptonshire Council's Executive Member for Assets, Waste and Environmental Services, said: "We're delighted to see this investment being made in the Hemmingwell community and pleased to support the installation of these new football goal posts on our land. Providing accessible, high-quality spaces where residents can come together, be active and enjoy sport is an important part of creating thriving communities."

Connie G Penn, Strategic Lead for the HemmingWellBeing Programme added: "It is a delight to see how what began as a simple request to Jo Savage, CEO of Greatwell Homes, for support to provide a free football facility for the community has now been fully realised. This has only been possible because every organisation involved came together – not just to deliver the facility itself, but to work in genuine partnership to explore programmes that will help the community make maximum use of it."

The new goals will help encourage informal play, promote healthy lifestyles and inspire the next generation of local footballers, while providing a lasting community asset for the Hemmingwell Estate.

Further information about the installation and future HemmingWellBeing Programme initiatives will be shared in due course. Residents are encouraged to look out for updates and join in celebrating this exciting addition to the local community.

Your Health: Cholesterol, statins and dolphins

What do cholesterol, statins and dolphins have in common?

Until last week, I'd have said very little.

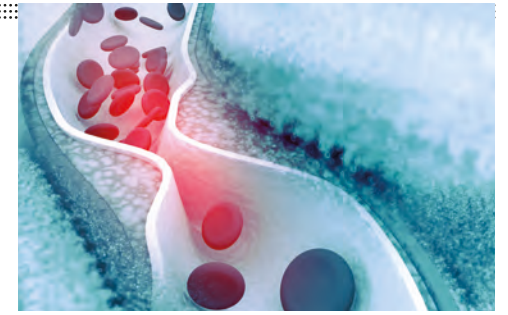
Then our TV studio in Higham Ferrers filled up with a best-selling medical author, local osteopaths and physiotherapists, a nutritional therapist and a handful of Ashgrove patients who now know considerably more about cholesterol than they ever intended to.

Our guest was Dr Malcolm Kendrick, GP and author of *The Great Cholesterol Con*. More than 600 osteopaths and chiropractors across the UK and Europe watched the live interview, as well as the live audience in the studio.

Malcolm Kendrick has spent decades questioning the idea that cardiovascular disease can be understood by looking at cholesterol alone. His particular interest is what actually happens inside our arteries: how the artery wall becomes damaged, how the body repairs that damage and the part blood clotting may play in the process.

His conclusions about cholesterol and statins don't always agree with conventional medical thinking. But whether or not you agree with him, he makes you think.

That's one reason we bring people like Malcolm into the studio. Healthcare changes, evidence evolves and we want practitioners (including those at Ashgrove) to keep learning,



questioning and discussing it.

Our nutritional therapist Anna Mather was particularly interested because she works with people concerned about their cholesterol, diabetes and pre-diabetes. Her conversation with Malcolm continued over dinner afterwards. Which is where the dolphins came in.

Somehow, a conversation about cholesterol became an animated discussion about salt, kidneys and how dolphins manage their salt levels despite spending their entire lives swimming in the stuff.

Malcolm, it turns out, has looked into this in considerable detail. I'm not entirely sure anyone else at the table had – have you?!

If you're concerned about your cholesterol or blood sugar, Anna offers a free discovery call to talk through your situation. And if you enjoy having your assumptions challenged, look up Malcolm Kendrick. There isn't a book about dolphins yet, but the ones about cholesterol are a good read.

Claire Short is a Registered Osteopath, and runs The Ashgrove Clinic in Higham Ferrers.

FIRST-DAY NERVES AREN'T JUST FOR CHILDREN

September is the month of new beginnings.

Children start new schools, teenagers disappear off to university and plenty of grown-ups walk into new jobs wondering whether everyone else knows something they don't.

Apparently everyone else is completely confident.

They're not.

Nerves are a normal response to something unfamiliar. Your mind doesn't know quite what's going to happen, so it helpfully starts imagining possibilities. Unfortunately, it has a tendency to favour What if I make a fool of myself? over What if I have a really good day?

So give it something better to work with.

Start with the boringly practical stuff. Sort out your clothes, paperwork and journey the night before. Being nervous is considerably easier when you're not also

running ten minutes late and wondering where you put your keys.

Then rehearse the day you actually want. Spend a couple of minutes imagining yourself arriving calmly, talking to people and dealing perfectly well with whatever happens. We're very good at mentally rehearsing disasters. There's no reason we can't rehearse success instead.

And try asking yourself: "Am I nervous, or am I excited?"

The physical sensations can be surprisingly similar. A racing heart and butterflies don't necessarily mean something is wrong. They may simply mean something matters to you.

Parents can use the same principle. If you're worried about a child starting school or university, notice whether you're repeatedly imagining everything that might go

wrong. Your anxiety doesn't predict how they'll cope.

As a hypnotherapist, I spend a lot of time helping people change unhelpful patterns of thinking. Sometimes the first step is simply noticing which story your mind keeps rehearsing.

After all, today's terrifying first day has a funny habit of becoming next month's perfectly ordinary Tuesday.



Christian Baker is a hypnotherapist at The Ashgrove Clinic in Higham Ferrers.

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GETTING ORGANISED IS ABOUT MORE THAN TIDY CUPBOARDS

September is National Organising Week, and while getting organised might bring to mind tidy cupboards and neatly labelled storage boxes, in reality it can make a much bigger difference to everyday life.

As a professional organiser, I've helped someone tackle more than two years of unopened post, helped another person organise piles of paperwork when important information couldn't be found, and supported people

dealing with everything left at home after moving into residential care.

They may sound like very different situations, but they all demonstrate why being able to find important information and keep on top of things matters.

Start small

Getting organised doesn't have to mean turning the whole house upside down. Choose one drawer, one shelf or one folder of paperwork. Five or ten minutes is enough to make a start.

Begin with the obvious things — rubbish, recycling, donations or anything that belongs somewhere else. You'll create space quickly and the more difficult decisions become easier.

Don't forget the paperwork

Paperwork is something I encounter again and again, but the problem isn't always the same.

One client hadn't opened their post for more than two years. Rather than tackle everything at once, we started opening it, sorting it into manageable groups and working through it a little at a time.

Another had plenty of paperwork, but important information wasn't always easy to find. While helping them apply for their State Pension, they were asked whether they'd ever been married. Their marriage had ended in the

early 1980s and they'd long since put it behind them. They couldn't remember exactly when the divorce had been finalised, and we hadn't come across any paperwork about it while organising their files.

Getting organised isn't simply about throwing things away. It's also about knowing what needs to be kept and being able to find it when you need it.

When circumstances change

When somebody moves into residential care, it's often what happens afterwards that catches people by surprise. There may still be possessions and paperwork at home, post to redirect, services to deal with, a garden to maintain and eventually a property to prepare for sale. Lots of relatively small jobs can quickly become a substantial task.

Experiences like these have helped shape The Home Manual, which I'm currently developing to keep important information about your home, paperwork and digital life together in one place. It is due to launch later this year.

National Organising Week runs from 14th–20th September. Rather than deciding to organise your entire house, pick one small thing you've been meaning to sort out — and start there.

Liz Cox is a professional organiser and founder of The Home Sorter, working across north Northamptonshire and the surrounding area.



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Higham Ferrers Mayor joins celebrations marking 150 years of local cricket

The Mayor of Higham Ferrers was honoured to attend celebrations at Rushden & Higham Town Cricket Club as the club marked an impressive 150 years in existence.

Despite the rain in the final week of August, the club's anniversary celebrations went ahead in true British fashion. On Thursday 27th August, Councillor Chris O'Rourke, Mayor of Higham Ferrers, joined the Mayor of Rushden, Councillor Janet Pincock, to meet members of the Rushden & Higham team and wish them well ahead of their match against the iconic Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).

The wet weather may have dampened the pitch, but it did little to dampen spirits. The morning included an engaging talk from Carl Warner, Imperial War Museum Curator and Honorary Club Historian, who shared stories from the club's long history.

Following lunch, provided by The Carriage House, Higham Ferrers, the match got underway with free admission for spectators. The anniversary celebrations also included a raffle and a display of historical club memorabilia, charting the club's history since 1876. Among the items on display were old committee meeting minute books, which revealed that chasing player's match fees and their annual subscriptions is a perennial problem!

The rain-affected fixture was shortened to 20 overs per side, with bowlers limited to a maximum of four overs each. There was some excellent cricket from both teams, with strong performances with both bat and ball.

Club Secretary, Benjamin Hodges, highlighted the performances of Rushden & Higham's overseas professional, Chana Ruwanisiri, who scored 55 runs from just 23 balls. However, the man of the match was Matthew Wildman, who scored 23 runs and took two wickets. At the close of play, MCC emerged victorious, beating Rushden & Higham Town Cricket Club by 15 runs.

The Mayor was delighted to join players, club members and the local community in celebrating this significant milestone in the club's history. Councillor O'Rourke said: "It was lovely to meet and chat to so many there and enjoy a lovely lunch."

The 150th anniversary celebrations provided a fitting opportunity to reflect on the club's long-standing place within the local community and the generations of players, volunteers and supporters who have helped make Rushden & Higham Town Cricket Club what it is today.



MERCHANT NAVY DAY

King George V bestowed the title 'Merchant Navy' on British commercial shipping fleets following their service in World War I. Merchant Navy Day is observed annually on 3rd September. It honours the vital role of the Merchant Navy in global trade and national security to this day.

Together with townsfolk, the Mayor of Rushden, Rushden Town Councillors, and the Rushden Branches of the Royal Naval Association and Royal British Legion, the day commemorated the selfless service and bravery of merchant mariners, who have been crucial in transporting essential goods, including food, fuel, and raw materials, across the world's oceans. The date was chosen to mark the sinking of the SS Athenia, the first British merchant ship lost during World War II, highlighting the perilous conditions faced by these civilian sailors. Merchant Navy Day is an opportunity to recognise the sacrifices made



From left to right: Paul Mills - Standard Bearer RNA Rushden Branch, Julie Knowles - Bugler, David Hawker - President RBL Rushden Branch and Councillor Janet Pincock - Mayor of Rushden

by these unsung heroes, who often work in challenging environments and face the dangers of piracy, severe weather, and geopolitical tensions.

To commemorate the day, a brief service was held at Rushden War Memorial, led by RBL Branch President David Hawker, himself a former Merchant Navy Officer and a Royal Navy Reservist. The Red Ensign was hoisted and the Last Post and Reveille

beautifully performed by Julie Knowles using her own bugle.

These activities of commemoration and remembrance aim to foster a deeper appreciation of the maritime industry and the essential services provided by merchant mariners. By acknowledging their dedication and resilience, Merchant Navy Day helps ensure that the invaluable contributions of these seafarers are never forgotten.

Steam returns to the Nene Valley Railway following lifting of summer steam ban

The Nene Valley Railway is delighted to announce the return of steam-hauled passenger services after the steam ban, which has heavily affected operations throughout the summer, was lifted.



Steam returned to the railway with Danish Tank Engine No. 656 'Doc' hauling passenger services on Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th September.

The return marked a welcome moment for the heritage railway following weeks in which exceptionally dry conditions and the associated fire risk prevented the operation of steam locomotives.

The conditions this summer have been particularly challenging. Even the railway's famous Thomas was sidelined for a period. Thomas can normally continue operating during steam bans because much of his short branch line journey between Wansford and Yarwell runs through the railway's tunnel, significantly reducing the risk of lineside fires. This summer, however, conditions became severe enough for the railway to take the unusual decision to suspend his steam operation too.

Throughout the restrictions, the Nene Valley Railway maintained passenger services using its diesel locomotives, railcars and other available traction. The railway's diesel crews in particular picked up a significant amount of additional work, helping to keep services running and allowing visitors to continue enjoying the railway despite the restrictions.

A spokesperson for the Nene Valley Railway said: "It is difficult to put into words just how pleased we are to be able to say that steam is back at the Nene Valley Railway.

"This has been an exceptionally challenging

summer. There are occasions when we have to restrict steam operation because of dry conditions, but this year even Thomas had to be sidelined for a while, which demonstrates just how seriously we had to take the fire risk.

"Throughout it all, our staff and volunteers have worked incredibly hard to keep the railway running. Our diesel crews in particular have stepped up and taken on a considerable amount of additional work, and we owe them a huge thank you. We'd also like to thank our visitors for sticking with us and continuing to support the railway while steam wasn't available.

"Safety must always come first, but steam is an incredibly important part of what we do. Hearing a steam locomotive working along the Nene Valley again this weekend is going to be a very welcome sound."

On Saturday 5th September, No. 656 'Doc' hauled passenger services as part of the railway's Freedom Travel day, offering unlimited hop-on, hop-off travel along the line.

The celebrations continued on Sunday 6th September with the return of the railway's popular Senior Steam Day, following the success of the first event earlier this year.

Designed especially for visitors aged 66 and over, Senior Steam Day offers up to 15% off travel, alongside a programme celebrating the sights, sounds

and atmosphere of the railway.

Visitors planning a trip to the railway can check the Nene Valley Railway's locomotive schedule, which provides details of the locomotives currently planned to operate passenger services on forthcoming dates. As with all heritage railway operations, locomotive allocations remain subject to availability and operational requirements.

The return of steam comes as the Nene Valley Railway heads into a busy final few months of 2026, with a packed programme of family events still to come.

On Sunday 25th October, Shrek will make a special visit to Wansford Station, giving families the chance to meet everyone's favourite ogre alongside a day of heritage train travel.

The following weekend brings even more family fun for Halloween, with Thomas's Halloween Branch Line Weekend offering train rides with Thomas alongside trick-or-treat fun, while the Wizards Express will bring a little magic to the railway over the Halloween weekend.

The railway will then move into its traditional festive season, with its popular Santa Specials and Thomas Specials returning in the run-up to Christmas.

With steam back on the railway and a busy programme of events ahead, the Nene Valley Railway is looking forward to welcoming visitors throughout the autumn and festive season.

Nene Valley Railway Locomotive Schedule:
www.nvr.org.uk/article.php/9/loco-roster

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GET WILD ABOUT CAMBRIDGESHIRE AT FERRY MEADOWS THIS WEEKEND!

Celebrate nature, wildlife and the great outdoors at Ferry Meadows on Sunday 13th September with Wild About Cambridgeshire, a fantastic free festival for all ages.

Bringing together a wide range of local wildlife and environmental organisations, including the Nene Park Trust ranger team, the festival offers a chance to discover the incredible work taking place across the county and find out how you can get involved.

There will be plenty to see and do throughout the day, from hands-on activities and interactive workshops to fascinating live displays and demonstrations. Visitors can also enjoy a great selection of community, craft and food and drink stalls, making it the perfect day out for the whole family.

Festival highlights include the Animal Edge petting zoo, featuring pony grooming and a cuddle corner, a birds of prey encounter and expert talk, live chainsaw carving demonstrations, the Fossils Galore portable museum, nature-inspired poetry workshops with Helen Cross, RAW Theatre's Whispering Tree performance and a relaxing outdoor yoga session.

At the Nene Park Trust stand, families can take part in the Where's the Carrot? activity, enter the Name the Bear and Find the Kingfisher competitions, and join Rangers Trish and Jamie on guided wildlife trails, with fantastic Jellycat prizes up for grabs. Visitors can also pick up plants, seeds and books for a small donation and take part in a tombola to win exciting prizes.

Another festival highlight is Wild Wagons, a community art project celebrating creativity and

nature. Local groups and organisations have transformed simple wagons into imaginative wildlife-inspired displays, which will be showcased throughout the event. Visitors will be invited to vote for their favourite, with prizes awarded to the top designs.

The festival will also feature an exclusive free screening of The People's Emergency Briefing at 12.30pm in The Sett Classroom, an inspiring documentary exploring the urgent challenges facing nature and our changing climate.

Nene Park Trust's Commercial Events Manager, Teresa Fairchild, said: "We're really excited to be hosting this event and to offer a fantastic free day out for our community. It's a great opportunity to showcase just how important our green spaces are, while bringing together charities, organisations and local groups that share our passion for nature, wildlife and the environment. We hope the event will inspire people of all ages to discover something new, get involved, and make the most of everything our wonderful green spaces have to offer."

Join in at Coney Meadow, Ferry Meadows, from 11am to 4pm on Sunday 13th September. Entry is free, with usual parking charges applying. Follow Nene Park Trust on social media for the latest event updates.

Wild About Cambridgeshire is hosted by Nene Park Trust in partnership with Wild About Huntingdon.

For more information visit www.nenepark.org.uk/wild-about-camb

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HOUSEBUILDER BECOMES PROUD SPONSOR OF LOCAL FOOTBALL CLUB

SYL Whites U13s is set to start the new season with strong support from leading housebuilder and proud sponsor Barratt Homes for the second year running.

The team, based near Barratt Homes' Harlestone Grange development, have been playing together since 2025, with matches typically taking place nearly every Saturday morning in the Milton Keynes League.

The club is committed to creating a safe and supportive environment where every player can thrive. Its goal is to ensure that football is not only about developing skills but also about enjoying the game and building lasting friendships.

Ed Robinson, Head Coach at SYL Whites U13s, said: "A huge thank you to Barratt Homes for the incredible support and sponsorship of SYL Whites U13s over the past two seasons. This generosity has made such a huge difference to

our team, and we genuinely cannot thank them enough.

"Last season was an unforgettable one for the children, as they went on to win the league and the cup, completing an amazing double. We are incredibly proud of what they achieved, and it has been fantastic to see them represent the team in the fantastic Barratt Homes sponsored kit.

"The children look incredible every time they turn up, whether it's for training, match days or tournaments. Having everyone kitted out so smartly gives the team a real sense of pride and togetherness.

"Thank you, Barratt Homes, for believing in SYL Whites U13s and supporting our team over



the past two seasons. Here's to another fantastic season going forward."

Simon Francis, Managing Director at Barratt Homes Northampton, said: "At Barratt Homes, we're committed to giving back to the communities we help shape, and this sponsorship reflects that commitment.

"Seeing these young players step onto the pitch in their new kit is a proud moment for us and we're absolutely delighted to have played a part in making this happen."

Harlestone Grange is a growing community ideal for families, offering a selection of nearby

schools and nurseries, scenic countryside walks at Harlestone Firs Forest, and access to nine sports pitches providing something for everyone to enjoy.

Located just outside Northampton, the development offers convenience with easy access to local amenities and major transport links, including the A43, A45, and M1.

For more information, call the Barratt Homes sales team on 033 3355 8481 or visit Barratt Homes in Northamptonshire.



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