

January - August 2024
Issue 14



O^{the} **DD**fellows SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & *about*

Mid-Staffs District Branch



The Wolseley Centre - Lake



Travel and Trips



Walks



Talks



Social



Food with Friends



Coffee Morning



Games



Pancakes Delight – Tuesday 13 February

Welcome to issue 14 of our newsletter – Out and About

Message to our members from Janet

Welcome to issue 14 of our combined newsletter and events diary. We are always happy to receive items for inclusion, so if you have a special birthday, anniversary, recipe, poem or anything that you feel our members may find interesting, please pass it to either myself or Christine.

Can I please emphasise that our social events are open to all members. If you have yet to attend one of our get-togethers, please consider this and maybe make it one of your New Years' resolutions.

On a personal note, following a heart attack earlier this year I have decided to retire at the end of March 2024. This has been a very difficult and sad decision for me as the Oddfellows is a wonderful organisation and I feel very privileged to have been the District Secretary here for the past 11 years. We are hoping to recruit a replacement in the New Year and if you know anyone who may be interested, please contact me for further details.

With my very best wishes, Janet

Contact Details

Address:

Oddfellows Hall
Greengate Street
Stafford
ST16 2HP

Telephone: 01785 258269

Branch Secretary: Janet Lewis

Email

janet.lewis@oddfellows.co.uk

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

Please note that Janet's email and phone number will not be operational after 31 March 2024.

Assistant District Secretary/

Newsletter Editor:

Christine Elliott

Email:

christine.elliott@oddfellows.co.uk

Tuesday, Wednesday and part of Thursday.

Facebook:

The Oddfellows – Mid Staffs District

Message from Christine

It is sad news that Janet will be retiring at the end of March this year, Janet & I have worked in the office together for many years, she will be missed very much by the members of the Mid-Staffs District along with other Districts and especially myself. We would like to wish Janet all the best for a happy retirement. I'm sure Janet will be attending many of the social events so I think we will be seeing her quite a lot!

Looking after Staffordshire's wildlife for over 50 years

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is your local wildlife charity. Established in 1969 they are dedicated to protecting the county's wildlife and wild places.

The Trust's main offices are at the Wolseley Centre in Wolseley Bridge, near Rugeley, which is also a popular visitor centre. They have another visitor centre in Stoke-on-Trent, the Westport Lake Visitor Centre. They were the first Wildlife Trust to launch a charity shop in their mission to raise funds for Staffordshire's Wildlife.

Their work would not be possible without people's support. The Visitor Centre underwent a revamp in 2019 with many improvements and features being added such as a new look gift shop, the Kingfisher café overlooking Swan Lake and a learning hub dedicated to educational activities.

The Kingfisher Café uses locally sourced ingredients and offers freshly made home cooked foods. There are 26 acres of beautiful grounds to explore, which are full of interesting features and wildlife-friendly display gardens. A network of accessible footpaths weave around the grounds - ideal for pushchairs, wheelchairs and little feet! Take a picnic beside their three lakes or search for colourful dragonflies and the



bright blue flash of kingfishers as you stroll alongside the river.

Walk along the boardwalk and enjoy views over tranquil pools, across the River Trent and beyond. Look for the many natural sculptures and willow creations around the grounds in the leafy undergrowth, and there are plenty of benches if you want to sit and enjoy the tranquillity. Stop off in the sensory garden, packed with plants that stimulate your sense of smell, taste, touch, sight and sound, or pick-up ideas for attracting wildlife to your plot in the wildlife garden.

We have visited the Wolseley Centre a couple of times as one of our social events and we can highly recommend a visit to this very tranquil and beautiful gem in our area.

Join the conversation @OddfellowsUK

Share your news, start a conversation or simply stay up-to-date!

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OddfellowsUK

Regular Event

Coffee Mornings at the Oddfellows Hall



10.30am - 11.30am



Coffee/Tea £1



Coffee mornings for members, friends and anyone interested in joining the Oddfellows. At these coffee mornings we can let you know more about Oddfellows over a nice cup of tea and biscuits. It is a relaxed atmosphere and very informal, everyone welcome. The coffee morning on the 20 March will also involve Easter egg decorating. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Janet or Christine on 01785 258269.

Dates for your diaries

Wednesday 10 January
Tuesday 30 January
Wednesday 21 February
Thursday 29 February
Tuesday 12 March
Wednesday 20 March
Tuesday 9 April
Tuesday 30 April
Wednesday 15 May
Thursday 30 May
Wednesday 12 June
Thursday 27 June

Wednesday 10 July
Tuesday 30 July
Wednesday 7 August



Members enjoying a cuppa at our coffee mornings

REFER A FRIEND

Share the love and make someone smile

To refer someone you know and make their day, either fill in the Refer a Friend form available from your Branch Secretary, or call Membership on 0800 028 1810, or visit our Members' Area at www.oddfellows.co.uk



*Terms and conditions apply to the Refer a Friend offer. It cannot be used in conjunction with any other member offer. For full terms and conditions and for details of the rewards visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers.

Ref 1644

February 2024 April

TUES
13

Pancakes Delight

L 1pm

£ Members £4
Guests £5



Please come and join us on Shrove Tuesday for some delicious pancakes with scrumptious fillings and a couple of games to finish off the afternoon while those delicious pancakes go down. Book by Wednesday 7 February. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Janet or Christine on 01785 258269.



March

TUES
26

Annual Summomed Meeting

L 11am

£ Free



This is a business meeting for members only. This will give an insight into how the District is run and is an opportunity to ask any questions. There will be a complimentary lunch provided afterwards. Book by Wednesday 20 March. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Janet or Christine on 01785 258269.



TUES
23

St Georges Day Celebration

L 1pm

£ Members £4
Guests £5



Come and join us in your red and white outfits to celebrate St George's Day. We will have a buffet lunch and a quiz to finish off the afternoon. The best dressed may get a prize, who will it be, that will be up to your vote! Book by Tuesday 16 April. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Christine on 01785 258269.

May

WED
22

Lunch Out in Stafford Town

L 12.30pm

£ As per menu



A visit to one of Stafford's oldest pubs for a lovely lunch. Very reasonable prices and excellent food. Cost as per menu choice. Book by Wednesday 15 May. The Bird in Hand, 1 Victoria Square, Stafford ST16 2AQ. Contact Christine on 01785 258269.



June

THURS
20

A Visit to the Owl Experience in Haughton



10.30am



Free



We will meet at 10.30am in the café for some light refreshments before making our way over to the Owl Experience to see these beautiful birds. All the residents are donated as unwanted pets or have been rescued from negligence or cruelty. They also rely on donations to run this. The Owl Sanctuary, Jolt Lane, Haughton ST18 9JG. Contact Christine on 01785 258269.



July

WED
03

Bric-A-Brac Sale and Coffee Morning



10am



Free



Come and search for a bargain at our new and pre-loved item sale. Coffee or tea and biscuits (just £1) will be served if you want to rest after shopping. Oddfellows Hall, Greengate Street, Stafford ST16 2HP. Contact Christine on 01785 258269.



SUN
21

Foxfield Steam Trip and Afternoon Tea



TBC



Members £10
Guests £15



Another chance to take a step back in time on these beautiful steam trains. You will be able to sit back and enjoy the beautiful scenery while having your afternoon tea - what a treat! Time in the afternoon to be confirmed. Numbers are limited so please book early by Tuesday 4 June. Foxfield Railway Station, Caverswall Road, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-on-Trent ST11 9BG. Contact Christine on 01785 258269.



Past Events

***The last social event in issue 12 was a trip on the steam train with afternoon tea which, due to having to get issue 13 to print before the date of the actual social event, meant we could not provide a report at the time, please see below of how it went.**

Foxfield Steam Train Trip - Sunday 30 July



60 passengers boarded the steam train at Foxfield Steam Railway Station in readiness for our journey from Blythe Bridge to Dillhorne Park. The locomotive, Hawarden, was actually built in Stafford in 1940 and did a grand job of transporting us on the excursion. The stop where the locomotive turned round, was featured in the series 'Cranford' and some of the volunteers from Foxfield were featured as extras on the period drama. A very welcome delicious Afternoon Tea was provided with lots of tea and coffee. Feedback has been extremely positive and we will be hosting the trip again on Sunday 21 July (see page 6 for more information).





Springslade Lodge – Visit to Cannock Chase Wednesday 16 August

18 members joined us for visit to Springslade Lodge for a very enjoyable lunch on Wednesday 16 August. On a beautifully sunny day we had a lovely meal, after which some went on to have a walk on Cannock Chase whilst others visited the Cannock Chase War Cemetery (see photo below), both are definitely worth a visit. No-one was fortunate enough to see the famous Cannock Chase deer, but everyone commented on how much they had enjoyed the event.



Friendship Month – Afternoon Tea at The Oddfellows Hall Wednesday 6 September

Our Friendship Month event on Wednesday 6 September was enjoyed by 25 members and friends. It consisted of a scrumptious afternoon tea, a tombola, a 'Know your Committee' baby photo competition and a friendship quiz. We also had the presentation of our fundraising cheque to three representatives from the Midlands Air Ambulance. Hannah, Linda and Bill joined us for the afternoon and Tony Lewis presented a cheque to them for £2,500 from his year as Chairman. Hannah then gave us an update of the work carried out by MAA and the costs involved for each call out. The figures are staggering and that



is why we continue to support this amazing charity who receive no Government funding. £74 was raised during the afternoon which will be added to our current Chairman's charity. There was friendship in abundance – this is what the Oddfellows is all about.



Fish and Chips Lunch Thursday 5 October

What a fantastic meal we had today. Freshly cooked fish, lovely chips and mushy peas. Thanks to John and his team at Jojo's fish and chip shop. There was a quiz based on chocolate bars and also a game of Irish bingo. The consensus was that we should have another similar event with the same yummy fish and chips, very soon.



Midland Group Conference Annual Meeting - Saturday 14 October

The Oddfellows Hall hosted the above meeting which includes many of the Districts in the Midlands area and beyond. There were approximately 50 people present and Mid Staffs District provided lunch and refreshments during the day. The photo shows the new President being installed. Thank you to the Committee members who helped out on the day.



Christmas Fair Saturday 18 November

Once again our Christmas fair was a great success although not quite as busy as usual, However we still raised an amazing £448 with your help for the Midlands Air Ambulance who also joined us with a stall of their



Continued on the next page...

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own, raising some extra funds themselves. The bacon rolls were again a big hit with our visitors as was the tombola, a favourite with all. We would like to thank all those who donated items for the tombola and Christmas stall and those who helped on the day, we couldn't do it without you.

Festive Fun - Thursday 14 December

Our Festive Fun, the last social of the year full of good cheer and plenty of fun.

20 member and guests enjoyed the Christmas buffet and had a go on the tombola. We also had a Christmas anagram game and a Christmas sing song to finish off the afternoon.

We would like to wish all our members and friends a very happy Christmas & New Year.





Newcastle and Stoke Social Branch



All members are invited to join us for our lunchtime get-togethers in the Stoke on Trent and Newcastle under Lyme area. We meet approximately once each month for a meal at a local

pub. For further information please contact Janet at the Oddfellows Hall. (The photo above was taken at our Christmas meal at the Victoria, May Bank, Newcastle under Lyme).

Sheringham Life Boat Shout from Tuesday 1 August 2023

The service provided at Sheringham is via a volunteer crew, of members who have to report for duty on receiving the notice to launch. In this case the launch was achieved in the remarkable time of six minutes following being called out by Humber Coastguard. Which is even more remarkable when noting that most of the land and sea crew, who serve at the station have other occupations in and around Sheringham. The 10 member crew (as you can see from the report) have a number of duties and work as a team to provide this important services.



This is why the executive Committee of the East Anglian Group Conference take such pride in being given the responsibility to manage the Support fund on behalf of the Oddfellows, which has purchased three Life Boats, to have been launched at the Sheringham Station. The first Oddfellows Life Boat launched was named The Manchester Unity of Oddfellows and was named by Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent on 15 June 1962. The second launch also named The Manchester Unity of Oddfellows took place on 7 August

1994 and was named by the then Grand Master (Chairman of the Society) Brother JW Goulding. The third launch was named The Oddfellows and was named by then Secretary of the Group Conference Sister A Adamson wife of the then Grand Master (Chairman of the Society) Brother K Adamson on 15 September 2007. The next launch is scheduled in around four years and will be called The Oddfellows and it will include the words 'Making Friends, Helping People'. With current inflation rates it is expected that the next launch will cost around £340,000. This leaves us with around £90,000 to raise.

The Mid-Staffs District were very happy to help and to donate £100 to this worthy cause.

Fundraising Update

As most of you know we raise funds all year round for our Chairman's charity which is currently the Midlands Air Ambulance, we are so grateful for all your help, support and for your donations. It is a pleasure to announce we have raised £2,213.40 so far this year. Thank you so much.

Extending a Helping Hand

Improving the quality of people's lives through friendship, care and charitable support means a lot to us. It always has done.

These details can be found on the Oddfellows website, a very interesting read of what else the Oddfellows is about.

From our CEO jumping out of a plane at 15,000 feet for Parkinson's UK to a Young Oddfellow completing a gruelling 100-mile bike ride in aid of a Cambodian orphanage – our members are bonded by a shared desire to help others. In 2022 alone, our branches raised over £180,000

for good causes, not including additional financial help shown to other causes such as the RNLI, our HA Andrews Memorial Fund and Orphan Gift Fund.

We support the work of many local and national charities, as well as give a helping hand to individuals or groups needing assistance. Over £180,000 raised for good causes by our branches in 2022. £1,214,000 to vital UK medical research through the society's HA Andrews memorial fund since 1971. £600,000 raised for the RNLI to support their life-saving work. Jane Nelson, Oddfellows CEO £7,600 raised for Australian bushfire recovery.

Anagrams

Can you work them out? Answers on the back page

British City Nicknames

1. London-by-the-sea
2. City of perspiring dreams
3. City of a thousand trades, and also the pen shop of the world
4. Cottonpolis
5. Wool City
6. Granite City
7. The Queen of the Midlands
8. The city of six towns
9. Chocolate city
10. Capital of the Highlands

British Cities and Large Towns

1. Giant month
2. Bare need
3. Rotten tokens
4. Huge rot probe
5. Bred magic
6. Plant, hover, mow
7. Never sins
8. The unu broom
9. Ha! Nudeness too
10. Glum bored dish

HA Andrews Memorial Fund

Giving Back

The Fund was created in 1971 to honour a remarkable Society Secretary. Since then, the Oddfellows'



major charitable fund has donated £1,214,000 to good causes. And it's all thanks to the generosity of individuals and Branches.

Today, the HA Andrews Memorial Fund provides financial support over a two or three year period to a UK project or organisation involved in, or conducting, medical research. Our current beneficiary is the University of Southampton Centre for Cancer Immunology.

Life-saving support to RNLI

Giving Back

Our support of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute goes way back,



with the first boat being donated in 1868. Fast-forward to today, and our more recent donations for projects at the RNLI's Sheringham Station totals almost £600,000.

We're proud to have boats named after us. They've saved numerous lives and, we hope, will save many more. Our relationship with our country's coastline heroes is special and has our continued backing. Learn more about our current RNLI fundraising campaign.

Our Orphan Gift Fund

Giving Back

Since day one, the Oddfellows has looked after its young members and members' children who have experienced the loss of one or both parents. Our Orphan Gift Fund was formally created to provide financial support to help them to learn and achieve.

We're currently helping around 60 children and young people by funding the cost of items such as school uniforms, travel cards, books, musical instruments and school trips, as well as providing regular financial support.

Sponsoring Oddfellows

Brass

Giving Back



Since 1981, we've been the proud sponsor of a talented brass band, Oddfellows Brass. As the official band of the Society, they travel the country to perform at events and entertain our members and the general public along the way.

The passion for what they do is infectious. Their performances are toe-tapping. And they're well worth a listen. Find out more about our musical partnership and if they've a performance planned near you soon.

Embrace new experiences and perspectives

The turn of the year is naturally a time when we look at our lives, reflect on the last 12 months, and consider any changes that may be needed for the next.



Inevitably, our thoughts will turn to the support and encouragement we have received from those closest to us, but what about those friends we haven't yet met?

Stay curious, keep learning

Staying open to meeting new people presents opportunities you might not have considered. They could open new doors and perspectives that might be uplifting and motivational, which can then be really beneficial to us.

It's one of the many things I really love about being part of our Society – having the chance to cross paths with so many interesting people, from all corners of the country, and indeed the world! It's invigorating and helps keep a spring in my step!



It is fantastic that we have welcomed so many new members to our Society in 2023. If you are one of the new members, welcome, and I hope that you are enjoying getting to know other members at your Branch.

If you're a seasoned Oddfellow, and you see a new face at one of your Branch's social events, please make sure you say hello and pull out the chair next to you. Yes, it's about extending our trademark warm welcome, but it's also about what it can do for you. They just might introduce you to your new favourite thing.

Strength in numbers

Bringing people together who care about the welfare of others is the bedrock of the Oddfellows. And, as a mutual organisation, it's one of our strengths. We know that by working as a supportive collective, we can achieve so much more than we could alone.

So make sure you add 'stay open to new friendships' to your list of resolutions for 2024. It really is a wonderful way to stay curious about life and remain open to all its joyful possibilities.

On behalf of the Society, my fellow Directors, all the staff at Unity Office and my family, I would like to wish each of you and your loved ones a happy and healthy 2024.

Yours always in friendship,

Jane Nelson, CEO, the Oddfellows

Time to plan your next getaway?

Oddfellows Travel has announced its holidays for 2024, and there are six cracking trips on offer.

Something for everyone

We want to make sure that you travel in confidence and in great company, that's why all our Oddfellows Travel group holidays are hosted by an Oddfellows member and we only use experienced partners we trust.

Eastbourne, Brighton and Hastings

Join us as we head to the south coast with Alfa Travel.

10-14 April 2024 (4 nights)

Staying at the Queens Hotel, Eastbourne. £295 per person based on 2 people sharing a twin room. £355 per person for sole use of a Cosy Double room. Half board. Includes coach pick up and drop off from certain locations, or a self-arrival option.*



Maritime Cities and the Baltics Cruise

Come sail with us as we explore maritime cities and cultural delights of the Baltics.

27 June-11 July 2024 (14 nights)

From £1,949 per person. Full board. Departing from Dover on Fred. Olsen's Borealis.*

Oddfellows Summer Holiday to Warwickshire

Come and holiday among friends and relax in this rural retreat.

1-5 July 2024 (4 nights)

Warner Hotels, Studley Castle in Warwickshire. Half board from £376 per person, based on 2 people sharing a double or twin room.*





Discovering Normandy and the Channel Islands Cruise

Make the most of your Bank Holiday weekend and sail with us on this cruise to the Isles of Scilly, the Channel Isles and Normandy, France.

23-28 August 2024 (5 nights)

From £799 per person. Full board.
Departing from Southampton on Fred. Olsen's Borealis.*

Yorkshire Dales Discovery Tour

Join us on this HF Holidays active getaway to the Yorkshire Dales.

11-14 October 2024 (3 nights)

Newfield Hall, near Malham. Full board.
£454 for a Classic single room. £454 per person, based on 2 people sharing a Classic twin or double room.*



Mystery Cruise

Sail on this exciting mystery cruise with us and enjoy the thrill of destinations unknown.

12-23 November 2024 (11 nights)

From £1,209 per person. Full board.
Departing from Southampton, arriving back in Portsmouth on Fred. Olsen's Borealis.*

**For full details, including how to book, go to
www.oddfellows.co.uk/travel**

*Oddfellows Travel holidays are arranged through third party providers, please reference their terms and conditions before booking. Find out more at www.oddfellows.co.uk/travel



the
ODDFELLOWS
SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

travel@oddfellows.co.uk
www.oddfellows.co.uk/travel

The 'Generous Generation'



Unity Mutual is the Oddfellows' financial services brand. Earlier this year, it undertook a piece of research which involved customers who are over 50 – and the findings were nothing short of eye-opening.

Unity Mutual has since dubbed this demographic the 'Generous Generation', after discovering that 30 per cent spend between £50 and £100 per month to help their adult children out. Others within this age group spend even more, with some giving up retirement plans to help their offspring, both financially and with childcare.

Rewarding generosity

To shine a light on such generosity, Unity Mutual launched the 'Generous Generation Awards', with £500 among the prizes.

Julie Oakley, nominated by daughter, Sam, was the deserving winner. She's raised tens-of-thousands-of-pounds for charity via The Project Dragonfly CIC, supporting kids and young adults with mental health challenges.



Julie Oakley and her daughter, Sam.

More on Unity Mutual

You can read Julie's story and find out what she thought of her big win by heading to www.unitymutual.co.uk/awards

As part of the 'Generous Generation' campaign, Unity Mutual is helping the over 50s to live up to its kind-hearted moniker. It's Over 50s Life Insurance* allows anyone between the ages of 50 and 80 to leave a fixed lump sum to their loved ones – learn more at www.unitymutual.co.uk/over50s

**Terms and conditions apply.*

Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?



None of us know what is around the corner...

Local Care and Welfare Support

To request contact from a Welfare Visitor and for local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact the Branch on **01785 258269**.

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk



Run by Citizens Advice for Oddfellows members, you can access free, confidential, independent advice on welfare benefits, money and debt issues, consumer problems, housing, fuel bills, employment issues and many other issues.

*The Oddfellows cannot provide legal advice and accepts no liability whatsoever for advice provided by Citizens Advice, which is an independent advice agency. If you have any queries about the advice you have received or wish to make a complaint then you should contact Citizens Advice directly. Citizens Advice operate a formal complaints process.

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday to Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Friday, 9.30am - 4pm

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

Run by the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Department, you can access information and guidance on issues such as accessing health and care services, supported housing, support for carers, and planning for later life. The helpline will try and identify any Oddfellows benefits or services in the community which may be of help to you.

**Visit our website page at www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care
for care and welfare information**

At a glance

January 2024

Wed 10 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Tues 30 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

February

Tues 13 Pancakes Delight 1pm

Wed 21 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Thurs 29 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

March

Tues 12 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Wed 20 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Tues 26 Annual Summoned Meeting 11am

April

Tues 9 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Tues 23 St Georges Day Celebration 1pm

Tues 30 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

May

Wed 15 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

May

Wed 22 Lunch Out in Stafford Town 12.30pm

Thurs 30 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

June

Wed 12 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Thurs 20 A Visit to the Owl Experience in Haughton 10.30am

Thurs 27 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

July

Wed 3 Bric-A-Brac Sale and Coffee Morning 10am

Wed 10 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Sun 21 Foxfield Steam Trip and Afternoon Tea TBC

Tues 30 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

August

Wed 7 Coffee Mornings 10.30am

Anagrams Answers

British City Nicknames

1. Brighton
2. Cambridge
3. Birmingham
4. Manchester
5. Bradford
6. Aberdeen
7. Nottingham
8. Stoke-On-Trent
9. York
10. Inverness

British Cities and Large Towns

1. Nottingham
2. Aberdeen
3. Stoke-on-Trent
4. Peterborough
5. Cambridge
6. Wolverhampton
7. Inverness
8. Bournemouth
9. Southend-on-Sea
10. Middlesbrough