

LONGTON SPIRIT

Printed On The Occasion of Longton Festival of Pastimes 27/11/09

He who is tired of Longton is tired of life

Hello and welcome to this special edition paper to coincide with the Longton Festival of Pastimes 2009. Inside you can find information about the range of clubs, associations, groups, teams and organisations in and around Longton, nearly all of them organised by the people themselves.

We have tried to illustrate the wealth of independent spare-time activity by providing a map of Longton and the surrounding area to which you can add any clubs, hobbies or activities you know of. A page is provided to jot down your favourites as well as any additional pastimes or groups you may have learnt of at the Festival of Pastimes event.

Additionally we have a piece of writing by Andy Abbott who has spent the last few months finding out about hobbies and pastimes in the area who shares some reflections on the conversations and experiences he has had.

We hope you will agree that together this insight into the world of people-led activity in Longton paints a picture of a dynamic, generous, open and fun-loving community. The people of Longton have long been known for their friendliness and warmth, and the area as the place to visit for recreation and entertainment. In fact, a quote from 1777 unearthed by local writer and social historian Alan Myatt reads 'he who is tired of Longton is tired of life'.



Vladimir and Miro enjoy a spot of tennis at Florence Tennis and Bowls Club

A quick peek under Longton's surface reveals plenty to suggest that the lifeblood of the town is running strong, kept pumping by the energies and activity of the people. It is therefore easy to understand Alan Myatt's desire for Longton to be recognised as 'the beating heart of the potteries' - an accolade we feel is well deserved, not least through the actions of local hobbyists!



Queens Park Longton

Events and Fundraisers, Skatepark, Health Walks, Bowling, Tennis Courts, Basketball, Kids Play Area, Lakes, Friendly Wildlife and more!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL PARK! USE IT!

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LONGTON



LIGHTWOOD RD BOWLING CLUB

We are a Crown Green bowling club with 30 – 40 members. Our season is March – September and we have two teams, a Saturday and a Thursday league. Spectators as well as new members are welcome, men and women. Just make sure you wear flat shoes, not boots, and bring your own bowls, although we may have a spare set if you want to try out! Users also look after the green and site for which we have fundraisers.

01782 330980 – John Ayres

● **Dad's Stay and Play** at Westfield Children's centre, Tues 4.30 - 6pm. Julie on 01782 237822

● **SPARTAK FOLEY'S FOOTBALL CLUB** various teams including mini-football, practice at Queens Park. Call Dave 07722 359591 for details

● **BLYTHE BRIDGE AND FORSBROOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY** All meetings are held in the Methodist Hall, Uttoxeter Road, Blythe Bridge, commencing at 7-30pm. New members welcome.



QUEENSBERRY Uth CENTRE AND THE ZONE, LONGTON

Stoke-on-Trent Youth Services aims to provide educational and development opportunities, experience and support for young people during their transition from childhood to adulthood. We have so much to offer every young person (and some of it run by young people) in the City; it makes sense to get involved!

We support activities in Longton from sports and entertainment, arts and crafts and Duke of Edinburgh's Award, to music projects and after school clubs. Its all free, and it's all for you so get in touch.

www.uth.stoke.gov.uk or call Queensberry Centre on 01782 235661

NORTH STAFFS ACCORDION CLUB

Our club was formed in 1985 with the aim of promoting the accordion as an instrument in the North Staffordshire and South Cheshire areas. It is based in the Holditch Miners Club, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire, where members hold a 'clubnite' on the third Tuesday of every month. There are currently about seventy members. Whether you are a player or an enthusiast, if you feel like coming along you are most welcome.

01782 823668

THE NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

We are a small group of about 15-25 members who share an interest in all aspects of astronomy. The meetings usually consist of general informal chat and slideshows of members astrophotography. New members of any ability are always welcome. Annual Membership £15 junior, retired senior citizens £7.50.

21st Hartshill Scout Group HQ, Mount Pleasant, Newcastle-under-lyme, first Tuesday of every month Sep – Jun (inc), Doors at 7pm.

01782723372

LONGTON PASTIMES REPORT

A Visitor Writes

For the past few months I have been fortunate enough to have spent my time researching hobbies, pastimes and spare-time activity in Longton. I think you can tell a lot about a place by the way people decide to organise their time away from work, school and the other necessities of life. Industry comes and goes but people organising their own fun often endures and is, as such, a true indicator of the character of a place.

My journey began in Longton Market, bustling and vibrant every time I visited; its notice boards crammed with flyers, posters and notices about local activity. From here I would walk around Longton and the surrounding area, dropping in to shops, community centres, clubs and parks where I was always met with a friendly smile and granted an unhurried conversation about local people's hobbies and the groups and associations that exist. Through flyers and posters about my research a number of keen hobbyists contacted me of their own accord with some fascinating stories.

My lasting impression from dipping my toe into the recreational life of Longton is of a particularly animated community, determined to find ways to provide fun for themselves and their area even when faced by significant challenges. Longtonians, further more, are always keen to let more people join in - to share the enjoyment they get from their hobby or club with others.

So, what are the motivations and desires for the people of Longton to spend their spare-time in such productive and often selfless ways? Why do people like their hobbies with such a passion? Reasons I came across in Longton range from the want 'to have a bit of harmless fun' as Alan of Meir Model Club explained to me. Another Alan (Alcock) is driven by pure curiosity to test the limits of the machinery he uses in his profession as an embroiderer by creating detailed and intricate scenes of the Potteries, which he does 'in the front room on an evening while my wife watches TV'.

Learning new skills and knowledge is an ambition common to many of the Longtonian hobbyists I talked to, from John Ayres' banjo and guitar playing, to members of Willfield Camera Club and Liz Podmore's art classes. Self-improvement plays an element, particularly in Frank Corbett's Karate classes which focus on spiritual well-being, but also a desire to share skills and learn from each other, making learning a social, rather than individual, pursuit.

Of course, many of the clubs and societies activities exist as a background for people to meet, chat and make new friends, as with the Knitters and Knatterers at Spellestial on the Strand. Talking and finding out about people is what Alan Myatt enjoys most about his documenting of the social history of Longton which result in illustrated books about the area.



Bowlers make use of the Aylesbury Green at Longton Queens Park for an informal game.

Some groups combine the sociability inherent to their pastimes with transformative goals. The City Voices creative writers group aim to get more people involved in writing and poetry by showing that anyone can do it! Similarly a number of clubs and pastimes donate their produce or proceeds to charity, like the Longton Knitters group, and are involved in the upkeep of local amenities like Lightwood Bowling Club and Queens Park Partnership. Steve Malam of the latter volunteers to organise events and activities 'to keep our local park a safe and enjoyable place for everyone to enjoy.'

This sense of pride in Longton and ownership of the area by the people is revealed in the history of some of the clubs and associations. In most cases, by choice or circumstance, they have been run independently by their users, for love not money. Hobbyists also tend to have a passionate commitment to the area, as with Joyce Buckley Parker whose weekly Tea Dances provide entertainment for all ages whilst simultaneously keeping the Town Hall in use and highlighting it as an invaluable resource that the people of Longton can be proud of.

Looking back over my conversations I am overwhelmed by the sheer amount and quality of activity in such an unassuming place as Longton. In this impressive range of seemingly disparate activities a common thread runs throughout; a desire to create something for themselves and the community, and a real engagement by the people that make the place. The challenge seems to be to keep these activities sustained by the involvement of young people, and no doubt new groups and pastimes are popping up all the time. Perhaps with a bit of added visibility and recognition for already existing activity Longton can be perceived from the outside for what it is under the surface – a hub of vitality and a great place to live and play.

Andy Abbott

● **KUNG FU CLASSES** Longton methodist Hall
Weds 6pm - 7.30pm. RING BOB ON 01782 255711

● **Boxercise** at Impact Boxing combines
boxing and exercise in great fun, stress busting
activity to suit everyone who wants to enjoy
boxing training without getting hit 07950 911182

● **Staffordshire Paranormal Group** We
have been actively investigating locations since
2004. The group has a good mix of members
and beliefs ranging from the sceptical to believer
and in between. www.staffsparanormal.org.uk



STUDIO ONE POLE FIT CLASSES

Exercise and dance class incorporating the use of a pole. It improves flexibility, muscle tone and general fitness. Furthermore, from previous reports from attendees it has increased self-esteem and boosted confidence. Pole Fit offers a range of classes, parties or one to one instruction.

Studio-Fit, 51 A/B Market Street, Longton
**Faye Chatterley for any enquiries on
classes or venues**
Telephone: +44 (0)7966022540



LONGTON KNITTERS

The Longton Knitters knit a variety of items for ourselves and for charities including Feed the Children and Samaritans Purse. Bring along your knitting needles and wool, it's a great way to meet new people and make new friends. We can supply patterns for you. We have over 15 members, men and women over 50 years of age. £1 per session with free tea and biscuit.

Longton Community Church, Caroline St.
Mondays (except bank holidays) 2- 4pm.
Jenny Bell on 01782 200729

KNITTERS AND KNATTERERS KLUB

A needle and thread club: Cross-stitch, knitting, darning, crochet, tapestry, rag-rugging and knitting. £1 a session free tea and biscuits – once a month we have a cream cake! New emerging stitch group for all ages, current members from 15 years of age and up.

Mondays 11am-1pm and 5-7pm at Spellestial,
The Strand, Longton.
Mandy Hughes on 07511 209236



CITY VOICES CREATIVE WRITERS

In existence for 5+ years, growing from a drop-in at Hanley library to a group including published and self-published authors of writing from poetry to sketches. We do outreach work; actively getting people involved in writing, as well as performing at folk and literary festivals. All ages welcome, we have over 20 members city wide.

Hanley Library, fortnightly Saturdays 12 – 2.30pm
Alan Barnett 01782 858748

LONGTON PASTIMES MAP

A SELECTION OF HOBBY GROUPS, CLUBS, PLACES AND ORGANISATIONS IN AND AROUND LONGTON

1. Meir Model Club
2. City Voices Creative Writers Group
3. Willfield Camera Club
4. Longton Town Hall Tea Dance
5. Longton Knitters
6. Floral Workshops
7. Yamamichi Dojo
8. Lighthwood Crystals Dance Troupe
9. Kung fu Classes
10. Spartak Foley's Football Club
11. Knitters and Knatters Klub
12. Westfield Children's Centre
13. Polite BMXers
14. Longton (Queens) Park
15. Queens Park Partnership
16. Lads and Dads Football
17. Queensberry Youth Centre
18. Room in the Roof Writers Group
19. Longton Library Reading Club
20. Lightwood Rd Bowling Club
21. The North Staffordshire Astronomical Society
22. The Potteries Folk Club
23. North Staffs Accordion Club
24. Blythe Bridge and Forsbrook Historical Society
25. Liz Podmore Art Classes

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 INFORMATION AND
 DETAILS ABOUT MANY
 OF THESE CLUBS AND
 ASSOCIATIONS CAN BE
 FOUND OVERLEAF.





WILLFIELD CAMERA CLUB

We are a camera club for people of all experience: a welcoming environment for beginners. We have dark-room facilities and knowledge of photoshop for digital photography. At present we have between 15 and 20 members of all ages sexes and backgrounds. Our focus is on learning from each other but we also have occasional displays of our work.

Willfield Community Centre Thursdays 7 - 9.
Dave Cooper 07780 850999

LIGHTWOOD CRYSTALS DANCE TROUPE

Running for 8 years with over 35 members, the youngest just reaching her second birthday! Crystal Dance troupe specialize in a form of dance that might be best described as 'like cheerleading but without the cheering'. There are three teams, the tiny team for up to 12 years of age, a middle team for up to 16 year olds and a senior team for anyone who can still do it! We take part in various festivals and competitions in the local area.

Tuesdays 6.30pm and Thurs 7-9pm at Lightwood Church Hall, Lightwood rd. £2 a week subs.
Tracey Cork on 01782 303683

FLORAL WORKSHOPS

Flower arranging with whatever is in season. Courses run for a month around 4 times a year. We have room for up to 12 and have men and women from 17 years of age upwards. Workshops take place at Parsley and Sage, Trentham Rd, Longton.

Prices and exact days vary depending on season (£47 to £50 for whole course), please contact Candice for details.

Candice on 01782 332000

LONGTON TOWN HALL TEA DANCE

Strictly Ballroom Dancing with live musical accompaniment, active since 1992. Anyone is welcome to come along in formal dress – ladies in best dresses, men in suits and ties. We have approximately 60 attendees per dance, tea is 25p with free biscuits and any profits made are donated to Donna-Louise Hospice. Keep the Town Hall alive by joining us for a dance!

Mondays 1:30pm – 3:30pm at Longton Town Hall £3 entry, everyone welcome, just drop by.
Joyce Buckley Parker on 01782 322067

ROOM IN THE ROOF WRITERS

We are a writing group. We write about anything and everything from stories, poems, articles, songs and biographies. If it can be written down then we write it. We have some published writers, both mainstream and self published but we don't live in ivory towers. We offer creative criticism to all work brought to the group to help improve our writing. We are made up of mainly adults 20+ years but there is no limit on age.

Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Burslem on Thursday evenings 7pm-9pm
Elisia Mole yegods232@yahoo.co.uk



YAMAMICHI DOJO

Traditional Disciplined J.K.A Shotokan Karate. Kendo, Bokken and Iaito are augments to the Karate once the student has reached an advanced state. Children and Youth up to 16 years old is £3, over 16 is £4 per class. Classes are for 1hr 15 min. No equipment is needed to start, just T-shirt and track pants. Later on the student can obtain a Gi (uniform).

SS Mary and Chad Church Hall, Anchor Road, Longton
Frank Corbett mobile 07837345923



FENTON AND DISTRICT ANGLING CLUB

Established in 1906 with 1500 members. Membership and a rod license will provide you with access to local canal, rivers and lakes where you can find fish any angler would hope for including carp, pike, trout and greyling. We also run free courses for young people helping to spread the peaceful and non-aggressive nature of the sport and helping train top flight match anglers.

We meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month at Fenton Sports and Social Club at 7.30pm. Subs for the year are currently £12 juvs, £24 OAP and £34 Adults. Join in any tackle shop!

Clifford Yates on 01782 396913

MEIR MODEL CLUB

We are a model-making club in existence for 20 plus years, making figures, tanks planes and the odd boat. We have over 30 members and are also involved in showing at various shows around the country. Our membership covers the local area and some people come from as far away as Market Drayton.

Meir Community Centre,
Wednesdays, 7 – 10pm.

Alan Ewart on 01782 388892

FLORENCE TENNIS AND BOWLING CLUB

We are a club with quality facilities for tennis and bowling (both indoor and outdoor). We host social events and fundraisers like tea, coffee and cake mornings, and league competitions.

We offer a range of annual membership options from £0 to £120, with a 50% discount for OAPs.

Cemetery Avenue, Dresden, ST3 4EB
01782 319440

THE POTTERIES FOLK CLUB

The Potteries Folk Club traces its origins back to 1962. As the longest established folk club in the area, it has been organizing folk song, music and dance events in North Staffordshire for forty plus years. Admission charges range from £5 - £10 depending on membership and concessionary status.

The club now meets at The Foxfield Railway, Caverswall Road, Blythe Bridge on the 2nd Friday of each month, 8.00 for 8.30pm.

Jason Hill 01782 813401



QUEENS PARK PARTNERSHIP

Queens Park Partnership is a voluntary organization in existence for 18-months that aims to celebrate and sustain our beautiful local park. We help organize events and activities that will bring new people to the park and let them see what a valuable resource it is to the area. We fundraise to help improve facilities and help keep Longton Park a safe and attractive place for everyone.

For details about how you can get involved contact Steve Malam
07799 540928

● **BMXing** - we meet to make use Skate Park and ramps in Longton Park and take part in competitions as part of the festival. Queens Park, Trentham Rd.

● **Children's Story Time** – Parent and child reading club at Longton Library Monday morning 11 – 11.30am.

● **Slimming World** - Slimming can be healthy and fun and needn't be a chore if you do it with friends. Come along to one of our weekly meetings and find out. Gloria 017828492810

● **Lads and Dads Football** - informal kickabout on Wednesday evening in Queens Park.