# A Vizzit to "Stur the Cauldron" 2025



*Our roving reporter Ravin Bill (who claims decent from Rabin Hill) was at last year's Stur the Cauldron:*

Well now, if ee'd a-told I last spring that half o' Sturminster Newton would be a-gathered round a giant cauldron, dressed up like wizards, dragons, pirates, an' a few things that looked as if they'd escaped from the recycle bin, I'd ha' said ee'd been at the cider too early in the day.

But there I were, down by the festival, amongst a crowd thick as blackberries in August, for last year's **Stur the Cauldron**.

The town were buzzin' like a wasps' nest what somebody had poked wi' a stick. Every corner had summat goin' on. There were music, laughter, strange noises, an' one chap beatin' a drum so enthusiastic that I thought he were tryin' to wake King Alfred.

"Morning, Ravin," says my neighbour.

"Be it?" says I. "I've not had time to look."

The streets were alive wi' colour. Children were runnin' about wi' painted faces, lookin' so fierce their own grannies couldn't identify 'em. One little lad dressed as a dragon tripped over his tail an' breathed fire only in his imagination, which be fortunate for the insurance premiums.

By the cauldron itself stood a gathering o' folk starin' solemn-like into the steam.

"What be in there?" I asked.

"Community spirit," says one.

"An' a bit o' dry ice," says another.

I reckoned the second answer were probably more accurate.

There were stalls galore. Cakes, crafts, puzzles, books, curiosities an' mysterious objects what nobody appeared able to explain. At one stall I picked up a wooden thing shaped like a duck.

"What be that then?" says I.

"A handcrafted decorative interpretation of sustainability," says the seller.




"A duck, then."

He nodded.

The entertainment rolled on all afternoon.

**The Great Bug Fest**

Mind, one o' the biggest attractions were the **Bug Fest**, where all manner o' creepy-crawlies were celebrated as if they'd won Best in Show at the County Fair.

Now, I bain't naturally against insects. They got their place in the world. Most of 'em be in gardens, fields, hedges, an' preferably not in my sandwich. But at Bug Fest they were stars o' the show.

There were giant model beetles, decorative bugs, bug trails, bug facts, an' enough information about pollinators to make a beekeeper burst wi' pride. Youngsters dashed about searchin' for insects wi' the enthusiasm normally reserved for Easter eggs or dropped ten-pound notes.

One little maid came rushin' up holdin' a magnifyin' glass.

"I've found one!"

"What be it?" says I.

"A woodlouse."

I looked.

"It do seem to be," says I.

There it sat, entirely unaware that it had become a celebrity.

Nearby, a learned soul were explainin' how bugs keep the countryside alive.

"Without insects," he says, "our whole ecosystem would collapse."

I nodded wisely.

"An' without insects," says I, "summer evenings would be a lot less itchy."

He didn't seem quite so impressed by my scientific contribution.

Still, Bug Fest were a proper success. The youngsters learned summat useful, the grown-ups pretended they already knew it all, an' even the bugs themselves appeared to be enjoying the attention. If there be such a thing as a happy beetle, I reckon there were several wanderin' about that day with a considerable sense of achievement.

By the time I left, I'd learned more about dragonflies, bees, beetles, butterflies and things wi' too many legs than I ever expected. Whether I'll remember any of it next year remains to be seen. But if Bug Fest teaches us one thing, 'tis that even the smallest creatures can make a mighty stir... though preferably not in the pantry.

As evening crept in, the festival took on a different sort o' magic. Lights twinkled. Music drifted across the town. Folk what had never met before were chattin' away like lifelong friends. For a few hours, matters such as bills, potholes an' whether the bin collection had happened seemed less important.



Then came the grand finale.

The crowd gathered round, eyes fixed on the cauldron. There were excitement, anticipation, an' one nervous gentleman who looked as if he feared somebody might ask him to make a speech.

Flames danced, cheers rose, an' the whole place glowed. For a moment Sturminster Newton looked less like a market town an' more like the centre of a grand adventure.

I headed home with tired feet, an empty wallet thanks to cakes I absolutely did not need, an' a head full o' memories.

"Well," asked the missus, "what were it like?"

I hung up me coat, sat down, an' thought carefully.

"It were a bit daft, a bit magical, a bit noisy, a bit bonkers..."

She waited.

"...an' absolutely Sturminster Newton."

An' I couldn't think of higher praise than that.

