

Kempsey Times



A free monthly newspaper for Kempsey, Norton, Severn Stoke and surrounding villages

Issue 18

September 2025

FREE



St. James Church, Norton

Lots of things were happening in the world this August. A most significant event was the meeting between the Presidents of America and Russia. Then a meeting of the Ukrainian and European leaders with the US President. They are talking to each other and hopefully, they will find a solution to this horrific war. We include this month an article by a Ukrainian who escaped and gives an eyewitness account of this dreadful situation.

The Middle East is another tragedy and, again, one hopes a solution can be found soon and innocent people can get on with their lives in peace.

Closer to home, we have received more reports regarding the massive building projects (SWDP). Parish Councils have been holding meetings to

explain how the project will affect these individual areas. We have included some of these reports and a summary of the development plans. There are 700,000 properties already empty in the UK (260,000 of them have been for over six months). No doubt this matter is in hand, but one wonders what level of priority it is receiving to help rectify the homeless situation. August has been a great month for sport and now, we move into September with the new

football season and also the Women's World Rugby and the World Athletic Championships; we have great hopes of success in both. Evenings are beginning to draw in; Autumn is on its way.

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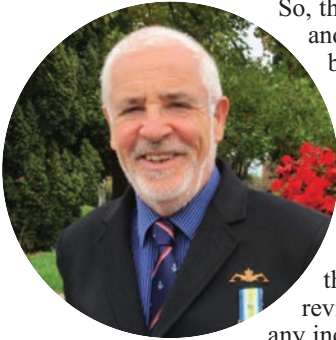


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County and District Report

Councillor Martin Allen



So, that's it, festival season has flown, and Upton returns to its normal rural beat. For those who don't live locally, you may not realise the upheaval and disruption these events can cause to the residents. In the main, folk accept that it's part of living in the best town in the country. I am hopeful that the organisers of these events will continue to review how they operate to reduce any inconvenience caused.

Bells in the Belfry



Paul Mills, David Cashmore, Jon Holland, Freya Mills, Tina Smith, Councillor Martin Allen and Julie Brookes

Earlier in the year, I was approached for funding to ensure that church bell ringing could continue in St Mary's, Kempsey. The local bell ringers are delighted that they can now replace the special ropes that are used to ring the magnificent eight bells that sit at the top of the church's tower. The Sally is the woollen, thicker part of the rope, typically brightly coloured to ensure it can be easily seen during the fast movement of the ropes. Initially, there were just six bells at Kempsey church, which date back to 1686, with a further two being added in 2012. Many members of the local community have learnt the skill of bell

ringing at Kempsey, and some ringers have ventured further afield and have rung all over the country – as well as in Canada and Australia. The bells are regularly rung before Sunday Services, and Thursday night is practice night. In addition, the bells ring out for weddings and funerals, and are also rung half-muffled on Armistice Sunday. Did you know that St Mary's is the only left-handed ring in the county? Pre-booked visitors are welcome.

If you would like to book a visit or find out more about bell ringing in Kempsey, please contact Mike Harrison mkharrison1@hotmail.co.uk

Fifty Years of Service to Upton

This year saw the fifty-year celebration of Upton Community Care. This Upton based charity was formed in 1975 as a good neighbour scheme to assist the elderly and housebound. The ambulance strike of 1989/90 created an urgent need for transportation to get people to medical appointments. Currently, it helps over 300

locals who cannot drive and face the challenge of getting to the local surgery or a hospital appointment in Worcester or further afield. The criteria for using the service are that elderly residents must be registered with the local surgery and have no other means of getting to their appointment.



Photo credit: Ian Aspey. Names in photo from left to right: Upton's Mayor Jeremy Owenson, Upton Community Care Jan Bastick, Ann Addison, and Wayne Boden, County Councillor Martin Allen, and Town Councillor Andrea Morgan

Today, there are five office staff and twenty-seven drivers who give their valuable time for free to help those in need. I was invited to attend the summer party, which was being held to thank the volunteers, and to celebrate fifty years of service to the community. This brilliant charity has really made a difference to our locals; I am so grateful to those kind souls who give so freely helping others. Being old or disabled brings many worries and knowing that the stress of getting to the opticians or to the doctors has been taken away must be a great

relief. The charity is calling for members of the community to come and help make a difference; the present Treasurer will be resigning in a year, and there is always a need for more drivers and office staff.

As drivers use their own car to ferry folk around, the charity gives them £0.45p per mile to cover expenses.

To find out more about volunteering, please contact Upton Community Care on 01684 593633 or email: uccoffice@uptoncommunitycare.co.uk

The Grove, Kempsey: Update from Highways

I am fully aware that the poor residents of The Grove in Kempsey are rightly angry at the lack of action in the completion of their roads. I share their anger, and I have been chasing the County Council for action. Please see below the latest communication I have received from WCC, but please be aware it is the Planning Authority, MHDC, who can act for breach of planning consent. Simply put, when planning permission was given by MHDC, the developer agreed to certain conditions, such as what work Severn Trent or the Environment Agency expected, and also what WCC needed to be done before they would take over the roads. The latest update I have from WCC is:

"We are a long, long way away from adoption of The Grove.

The site does not yet have a section agreement in place, as originally it was to be kept private, but after construction the developer now wants the site to be adopted. There are large retaining walls that have yet to be approved (the developer has only recently paid for the walls to be checked), and when, finally, we can get the section agreement in place, it would be a three-year maintenance period due to non-inspected works."

I would urge anyone affected by this issue to make a formal complaint to MHDC. I will continue to keep doing what I can; however, I and the county council have no legal powers to force the issue. I truly wish we did!

And finally ...

The year seems to be flying past. A little like the bats that have returned for their nightly dance of Swan Lake meets Shake, Rattle and Roll. It's a fascinating dance, just over my poor veg plot where the cabbage

butterfly has devastated not only the cabbages, but also my brussels. I fear shop bought sprouts this Christmas. The shame of it! As ever, I'm here if you need me.

Martin Allen

A few words from... Dame Harriett Baldwin MP

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP took time to thank the extensive volunteer network which offers help, guidance and assistance to local people in the heart of Pershore.

She visited the Pershore Wellbeing Hub on the high street to talk to volunteers and learn about the important assistance they offer to people of all ages. Volunteers advise people about

how to access support, offer technology support and provide signposts to services that people may need to access, from healthcare to financial worries. Dame Harriett said: "It is so heartening to see the high numbers of local people who are willing to volunteer their time to staff a high street advice centre for people. Often, the biggest obstacle to getting help

is the fear of asking, and the hard-working volunteers are on hand to lend an ear and some sage advice for local people. Pershore is full of big-hearted residents who give their time to help others. This is clearly a highly valued resource."

Right: Dame Harriett Baldwin MP with trustees and volunteers at Pershore's Wellbeing Hub



Embracing legacy, not lethargy!

The Neighbourhood Development plan (NDP)

In last May's edition, an article on the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) encouraged communities to keep up to date with the plan and not simply accept it as a fait accompli. Keeping in touch with councilors, friends, family and neighbours was recommended to ensure the future of our community is not dominated by a remote authority. The same could be said for the NDP (the Neighbourhood Development Plan). A recent informal meeting of Wadborough residents at their local pub (The Mason's Arms) marked a significant, positive improvement to the current uncertainty that prevails regarding the current NDP.

Over forty people attended this meeting, where parish councilor, Mark Grisdale, explained the current state of the up-and-coming NDP review. He explained the need for the parish council to be kept informed of residents' opinions, preferences and objections. There is provision for

public consultation and input every two or three years on NDPs. The next one due is in late September.

So how is the NDP different from the SWDP?

The SWDP is a 40 year development devised by Malvern, Worcester and Wychavon District Councils to establish new residential, commercial and industrial development. As the plan is eventually implemented, the role of NDPs will serve to influence and hopefully protect local interests.

The SWDP is controlled and answerable to the regional authorities. The NDP focuses on just your local parish. A NDP is not a rigid policy set in stone and seemingly impossible to change; it is reviewed every two or three years. Our first NDP was set up in 2016, one of the first in the country. It actually preceded the current SWDP by two years but confusion regarding their distinct roles still exists. Unfortunately, there exists a common feeling that it is best to ignore these plans because they only affect the

distant future or the opinions of the general public are ignored anyway! Whilst some folk may be dismissive of these policies and reviews, and ignore the plans and consultations in the hope that the whole topic will fade away, this is not helpful. They will not be thanked by the generations to follow if they are seen to ignore it and seem not to care. Such lethargy will probably encourage misinformation, conspiracy theories, mistrust, resentment and frustration within the community.

Mark's main message was that local people can influence the developments via the review organised in the NDPs. Okay, people may not always get what they want, but compromises and adjustments to initial ideas are possible. It is always best to speak up in the planning and proposal stage of development, rather than when building starts or is completed. What we want to preserve, develop and improve needs to be heard by the parish council, loud and clear!

In response to this, several

residents explained that their lack of awareness and knowledge was due to poor communication.

Many residents are not familiar with Email, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. This has prompted a self-help group to offer to coach those 'non tech savvy folk' to bridge that gap. Local notice boards, Parish Newsletters and the Pershore Times also have roles to play. *A good place to start is on the Drakes Broughton Village Hall website:*

www.dbvillagehall.com or

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Wadborough is clearly embracing an anti-lethargic approach and trying to establish a well-informed community where its future has been shaped by its involvement in decision-making, rather than a remote authority.

As this informal meeting closed, several people expressed gratitude to the Councilors and also to the proprietors of the Masons Arms, who provided the venue for the meeting.

No! ... to lethargy in Wadborough!

A local pub for local people!

The Royal Oak in Kinnersley welcomes regulars, newcomers, families, and dogs – but doom and gloom stop at the door. Since taking over in April 2021, Mark has revamped the Oak and now works with Olivia to run an establishment with a positive atmosphere and the local community at its heart.

Running a pub today is tough, Mark admitted, but so are many things for many people. You can't wait for the current situation to change, but you can change direction. Over the last year and a half, Mark and Olivia have focused on renovating and advertising their four B&B rooms, and have moved from strength to strength. The Oak is also a proud supporter of all things

local or family-owned, offering fourteen drinks on tap, including Hobsons, Wye Valley and Butty Bach (and for low prices too, £4 a pint for most ales); the meat and free range eggs are locally sourced, and the walls display the works of local artists, such as Nick Burd and James Tait, as well as celebrating Kinnersley's connections to horseracing and the British champion national hunt trainer, Fred Rimel.

"If you don't support local, you lose it," said Mark. "This is a local pub for local people. Our regulars matter to us. They've always supported us through the hard times, and we support them by offering good prices and an optimistic atmosphere." The Royal Oak continues to



grow. Mark and Olivia are now advertising for a chef to join their team.

For more information, visit:

www.theroyaloakkinnersley.co.uk

From the Parish Council



Solar Power Boost for Speed Sign

In a small but meaningful step towards a greener Kempsey, the speed sign along the Main Road has recently been upgraded with a solar panel. This eco-friendly addition ensures the sign remains powered sustainably, reducing reliance on traditional energy sources. A thank you goes to our Lengthsman team, Simon and Tim, who collected and installed the unit to get us fully operational. As always, their hands-on work behind the scenes helps keep our village running smoothly and looking its best.

Volunteers Keeping Kempsey Beautiful

Following last month's pledge for volunteering in Kempsey, we now shine a light on the incredible individuals who help make our village such a wonderful place to live.

Kempsey is fortunate to have a small but strong community of volunteers who quietly dedicate their time and energy to keeping our surroundings welcoming and well cared for. Among them is our dedicated Parish Path Warden, Lesley, who not only monitors the public rights of way across the Parish but has also curated a selection of suggested walks for residents and visitors to enjoy. These routes showcase the natural beauty of Kempsey and can be found on the Kempsey Parish Council website. Another unsung hero is Susan, who lovingly tends to the planters along the Main Road. From watering to replanting, Susan ensures these vibrant displays are always looking their best, adding a splash of colour and cheer.

To all our volunteers - whether you're picking up litter, helping at local events, or simply lending a hand to a neighbour - thank you. Every small act matters. Your efforts do not go unnoticed, and they make our village a truly special place.

Planning report

The lull, or phoney war, that appeared to exist on the planning front may be hotting up. We reported in the last edition that the Inspectors conducting the Examination into the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review had concluded that there would not be a 5-Year Housing Land Supply when (if) the plan was adopted. That would have potentially serious consequences which might allow ad hoc housing

proposals on non-allocated land, such as that at Napleton Lane, Kempsey. However, as also pointed out, the South Worcestershire Councils have made a robust response, supported by landowners and potential developers, that development in the committed South Worcester Urban Extension, excluded by the Inspectors, will be coming forward shortly. Detailed applications are expected by the end of August. The Inspectors have agreed to look into whether, on that basis, development there would fulfil the criteria for inclusion in the 5-Year calculation. This, with other matters, will be investigated in an online (TEAMS) session scheduled for Thursday 4th September 2025, before publication. Let's hope the councils' response is persuasive.

In the meantime, the Napleton Lance application for 99 dwellings outside the village boundary (M/25/00323/OUT) has come alive again. WCC Highways had asked in February for the application to be deferred pending further information, particularly over the intended access via Plovers Rise and Bannut Hill and the proposal that all construction traffic would use Napleton Lane, single track and without footways. Information has now been submitted by the developer, attempting to justify both matters. This includes the suggestion that construction HGVs would wait

in a layby on Main Road or on a wider section of Napleton Lane before being called 'by communication' to the site! Really?

There appears to be pressure to approve longstanding applications for houses in the Urban Extension, despite significant issues over access and drainage and poor quality design, as advised by consultees and the Parish Council. We, perhaps more than most, fully understand the need to bring housing forward to contribute to the 5-Year Housing Land Supply to help turn away the many pressures on the fields around the village. But these developments would be forever and if we and MHDC planners cannot create safe, attractive and good living environments for current and future generations, what is the point? Expedient decisions are not good decisions.

A New Clothes Bank

We're super pleased to announce that a clothes bank is now available for use at the Sports Pavilion at Plovers Rise, in proud collaboration with Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity. Your donations of gently used clothes can make a real difference, and all proceeds go directly to support the incredible work at Birmingham Children's Hospital.

What to donate:

Clean, wearable clothes of all sizes, pairs of shoes, belts and accessories, handbags and unused cosmetics.

Location:

The side of the Sports Pavillion next to the car parking spaces at Plovers Rise, WR5 3SA. Please give what you can. Together, we can make a big impact!

Have Your Say on EV Charging in Kempsey

Worcestershire County Council is inviting residents to help shape the future of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure across the county, including here in Kempsey. As part of their Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy, the Council has launched an interactive map where residents can suggest locations for new EV charge points. This initiative is especially important for those without access to off-street parking, ensuring that everyone can benefit from the transition to cleaner transport. By dropping a pin and adding a comment, you can highlight areas where chargers are most needed. This consultation supports wider environmental goals and reflects Kempsey's commitment to sustainability.

To take part, visit the *Electric Vehicle Charging* section on the *Worcestershire County Council* website.

For more information regarding the activities of the Parish Council, please refer to our website

www.kempseyhub.co.uk

For all enquiries, please contact Sharon Dunn, Parish Council Clerk and Financial Officer on

01905 828183

or by email at

kempseyparishcouncil@gmail.com



Music Society

The Music Society meets fortnightly on Thursday afternoons in a comfortable lounge at The Firs on Old Road North from 2:00pm – 4:00pm. We listen to a variety of music, presented by members, or the occasional visiting presenter. We would welcome anyone new who would like to come and join us. Do come and give us a try. We would like to increase our numbers, so new faces are very welcome. We have a social break in the middle of the afternoon, for tea or coffee and biscuits.



We are a friendly group and mostly very local to Kempsey. Our meetings will take place at The Firs on Old Road North from 2:00pm – 4:00pm on:

Thursday 11th & 25th
September and 9th October

For further details please contact: Anne on 07931 636309

District Councillors September 2025 Report

The Ketch Roundabout and A4440 (Southern Link Road)

More accidents over the last two months, but what more can I say about this road from Whittington, through St Peters Roundabout, the Ketch Roundabout and even past the Powick Roundabout? In both directions, please, please slow down! With extra diversion traffic due to the closure of Taylors Lane, and in part the A38, there is more traffic, resulting in more accidents. Just take care. I had a meeting with Martin Allen and the County Councillor, Karl Perks, about the speeding accidents along this road, requesting safety improvements.

New Community Centre and Sports building in Pixham Ferry Lane

The planning application ref number M/25/00408/FUL, submitted by Kempsey Parish Council for this building (including car parking, access, "trim trail", Senior and Junior Football pitches, as well as the skate park and a pump track) has stalled, but both John Michael and myself are working with the Parish Council to assist in various requested documentation from the County Council.

Waste Collections

It looks like you will all need an extra space for at least one more bin in the future, plus the food waste bin from next April.

Severn Stoke Bank

The vehicle Activation sign for vehicles coming down the bank towards Severn Stoke showing a "bend" and the words "Slow Down", which is activated when vehicles are approaching, is being looked at. The "Verge-Masters" have been repaired/replaced, but some of the greenery will need cutting back as the sun cannot get to the solar panel above the sign to light it up.

Updates on

Planning within Kempsey

No news yet on any of the planning applications within Kempsey, but those between Broomhall Lane and the Southern Link are progressing, and I am having meetings with the developers – see SWDPR below.

Development Plan for the three Councils - SWDPR

When I wrote two months ago, I stated that the enquiry would have finished at the end of May. There was one problem with a large development near Tewkesbury and there will be one extra day which will be online only (probably in September) to decide this development before the SWDPR finishes.

Unfortunately, the Inspectors have disputed the evidence that housing will be built on the area between Broomhall Lane and the A4440. Well it has started here, and the large site for another 2000 plus

homes is being sold to "Vistry Group", which includes Bovis Homes, Linden Homes, and Countryside Homes and aims to deliver 1000 houses during the first five years.

(See letter dated 11th July to Planning Inspectors.)

Pre-Application discussions have already taken place.

Plant bought from the Church Fete

The black Sun Flower came from Kempsey Church Fete this year and I will be saving the seeds, hoping for some more.

What glorious weather for the summer but like others, we are desperate for some rain but not too much please, but just enough for the farmers and gardeners!

Midlands Air Ambulance

It was interesting to see old friends at the open day at Strensham Services on Sunday 17th August, and hopefully their new Air-base will be completed soon.

I started fundraising for the original helicopter (Air 5) in 1989 when I was at The Farmers Arms on Kempsey Common, which was two years before it was operational. From an aspiration, to three helicopters with airbases and many fundraising charity shops and still no government money to run it all – only donations and volunteers.



General problems within the ward
Both John Michael and myself have continued to deal with all sorts of questions to try to resolve residents' problems – our details are attached.

Contacts:

John Michael –
01905 317930
john.michael@malvernhillsc.net

David Harrison -
01905 828107
david.harrison@malvernhillsc.net

David Harrison

Local business powers up sensory garden at Kempsey Primary School

AJ Taylor Electrical Contractors Ltd has been giving back to the community this summer by providing free electrical works to support an exciting new project at Kempsey Primary School. The company, based locally in Malvern, generously offered its expertise and labour at no cost to the school, ensuring all necessary electrical installations were completed to support the development of a brand-new sensory garden. The project, delivered in partnership with the Friends of Kempsey Primary School (PTFA) and designed by Instant Scenery, is set to provide a calm and stimulating space where children can learn, play, and relax in a safe and engaging environment. The sensory garden will feature a range of interactive elements designed to support pupils' wellbeing and enhance learning

through outdoor experiences.

The electrical works carried out by AJ Taylor Ltd will enable the water reservoir and other sensory features to be incorporated, ensuring the space can be enjoyed by children all year round.

A spokesperson, Ashley Brown of AJ Taylor Electrical Contractors Ltd said: "As a local business, we are always keen to support our community wherever we can. The sensory garden at Kempsey Primary School is a wonderful project that will benefit pupils for years to come, and we're proud to have been able to contribute our skills to make it possible."

The school and PTFA expressed their gratitude to both AJ Taylor Ltd for their generosity and commitment. The sensory garden is expected to be ready for children to enjoy in the new school year.



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Moats

Tim Hickson



A motte and bailey castle

Generally, when we think of moats, we think of castles. However, when I looked at an Ordnance Survey map of Worcestershire (Landranger Map 150), I found about twenty sites marked 'moat' and yet there were nowhere near that number of castles here. So, why was this? Before the Norman Invasion, in 1066, there were no castles in Britain. There were fortified encampments like those on Bredon Hill and the Malverns, but castles, built as fortified homes for powerful individuals, were a European invention. To consolidate their invasion, the Normans built large mounds of earth (or, rather, got the natives to do so!) and erected a circular palisade of wooden stakes on top. Inside this, was a building called the 'keep' in which lived the lord and his family. The mound was called a 'motte'. Below this, an area of land (the 'bailey') was surrounded by another wooden palisade, outside of which was a deep ditch. Inside the bailey, there were stables, workshops, a chapel, accommodation for the garrison

and a kitchen. Sometimes the motte was within the bailey and sometimes it was alongside, so that if attackers broke into the bailey, they still had to deal with the defences of the motte. Later, when time and money allowed, the wooden defences were replaced by stone. (Not only could wood be set on fire but, inevitably, it rots.) Usually, the outer deep ditch was dry. Attackers, normally under fire from bowmen, had to get into the ditch and then climb the inner side before trying to scale the wall. Eventually, they tried mining under the ditch to come up inside the bailey's wall. Consequently, if they could, the defenders would fill the ditch with water which made mining impossible as well as adding to the defences. Another advantage of moats was that they could absorb the excrement from the latrines built into these outer walls. If they were big enough they might also be stocked with fish for food! When I was in India, as well as having the good fortune to visit the fabulous building that Shah



The Taj Mahal

Jahan had made for the tomb of his wife, the Taj Mahal, I went to see the Red Fort. Here, when under attack, the deep ditches were filled with hungry wild animals such as tigers. Not only was this a sign of prestige but often easier to get than huge amounts of water. In Britain, castles usually had ready access to water and for some, the resulting moats became spectacular lakes as at Bodiam Castle, Sussex. Strensham Castle, now the site of Moat Farm, had a double moat. This is shown on the Ordnance Survey's Pathfinder sheet SO 84/94. When castles became unneeded and disused, their stone would often be reused for other structures. Strensham's stones were used for farm buildings, while stones from Elmley Castle were used for Pershore bridge. However, none of this explains the twenty odd sites I found on my Ordnance Survey map. These, almost certainly, are from the early 1300s. In the late 1200s, there was a long period of fine weather, crops

were good and food was plentiful. Then, at the start of the C14th, the climate changed and wet weather predominated, crops failed and people starved. One consequence was that gangs of desperate men roamed the country stealing from those who were better off. As a result, if you could afford it, you made sure your outside windows were high off the ground and, if possible, you put a moat around your house. This also had the benefit that you could stock it with fish. Thus, you would have another source of food to make a change from the pigeons from your pigeon loft. Go and have a look at some of these places marked 'moat'. For instance, slightly further north than my map shows is Baddesley Clinton, a National Trust property and an example of a moated manor house. As an afterthought, I notice, around the countryside, the increasing number of properties that have added imposing gates. Who are those supposed to keep out?



The moat of the Red Fort



Bodiam Castle, Sussex

Escape from Mariupol, Ukraine

Denys Bielov



Pre-war Mariupol



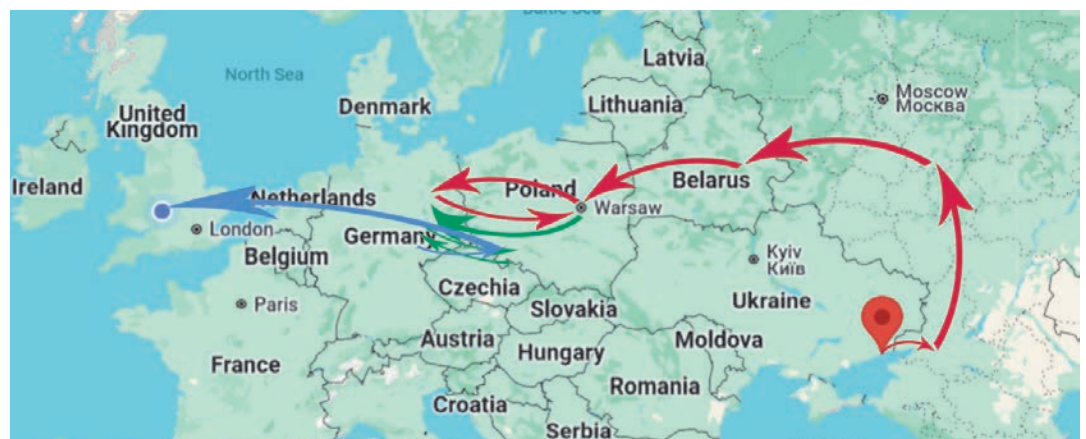
Smoke rises over the Azovstal Steel Plant

My home is the city of Mariupol in eastern Ukraine. I love that city and country, and one day I hope to return to help with reconstruction using my skills as an architect. What has happened to Mariupol is harrowing and that story needs to be told. In February 2022, a Russian plane dropped bombs on Sartana, a peaceful Greek village near Mariupol. There were no military bases or Ukrainian Armed Forces there, just a quiet village with peaceful people. I don't understand why Russia would do that. Just a brutal act of cruelty? Willingness to kill even civilians in cold blood to intimidate others? Mariupol air defense forces managed to shoot down a plane during another raid. The pilot ejected. When the police came to arrest the pilot, he shot himself on the spot. Everything was still working in Mariupol at the time. It was possible to follow the news on local television or the Internet. After these terrible events, few people believed that, two months later, the same thing would happen to Mariupol. The city was surrounded by Russian troops from the land, ships from the sea, and bombers from the sky, and soon our air defenses were destroyed by a massive bombardment. We had no planes to defend ourselves. On 2nd March, Russian planes destroyed the main city power substations; there was no electricity or water supply, because water is pumped by electric pumps. On 7th March, the gas pipeline was cut, and the entire city was left without gas and heating. There were frosts down to -9°C at night. People were sleeping in jackets and fur coats in basements and bomb shelters, warming themselves by wood stoves as best they could. Those who were more fortunate and had their houses intact lived in their

homes, but it was very cold. For two months, the occupiers bombed Mariupol with everything they could: artillery, incendiary shells, multiple launch rocket systems, aircraft bombs, and artillery from ships. The shelling lasted for several hours every day, sometimes all day and all night. It was as if they received a command from their bosses: 'The Ukrainian Armed Forces are somewhere in that area. The artillery must cover everything within a three-kilometer radius!' At the same time, they did not allow any humanitarian missions to enter the city. Sometimes they shot those who tried to leave. The defenders of Mariupol held a circular defense for almost three months until 20th May, gradually losing district after district in fierce fighting and losing their people. Our neighbourhood was captured later than the city centre and many people rushed to us. Around mid-March, I saw people in a car going to the city centre to rescue their relatives. They returned with broken glass on their wheels, torn by shrapnel, and shrapnel littering the roads where they had just been. Everyone's attention was drawn to the noise of metal wheel discs on the

asphalt. This sight was terrifying and horrifying. More and more fires were breaking out in our village. Every day, several houses were on fire somewhere. The fires would spread from a burning house to a neighbouring area, where there were many pine trees in gardens and that area also burned to the ground with the houses. Often, there was no air to breathe outside. There was no one to extinguish the fires or rescue people, because the fire station and the State Emergency Service had been destroyed by bombing. People tried with all their might to save each other. But without heavy rescue equipment, it was impossible. I heard stories of people from one residential building trying to pull people out of the rubble of a house that had been hit by a missile. But it was simply not possible to lift the concrete rubble from which cries for help were heard turning to moans and then stopped. It is hard to imagine the terrible suffering of these people and the horror felt by people outside. They could only watch and hear. The impression was that the Russian hierarchy had ordered the destruction of Mariupol, along with all the people, so that they could occupy

the city, even if it was left in ruins. By 20th May, there really wasn't much left of the city. Until the very end, there was hope that help would arrive. But it never came. It was still possible to leave Mariupol until mid-March. Many abandoned their homes to save themselves and their families. They took only essential things with them. The occupiers did not always shoot refugees but searched them meticulously: personal belongings, documents, 'phone and social media chats, and interrogated many with passion. They forced people to undress, checking for tattoos. They took what they liked. Those who did not have time to leave for the free part of Ukraine or Europe in February went to the nearest occupied villages and towns near Mariupol, such as Berdiansk, Mangush, Melekino, Nikolske, Bilosarayska Kosa, Portovske - these settlements had surrendered without a fight. The infrastructure worked there, and it was possible to live there for some time. There is so much more to tell, and I will gradually do that including my escape from Mariupol and arrival in Worcester. I am so grateful for the welcome I have received.



Mariupol: over two thousand miles away from Worcester; currently under Russian control

Farming

Mike Page

You will perhaps remember that I said in last month's report that I remained optimistic. At that time (early July), I was hopeful that the drought might come to an end with occasional, prolonged spells of rain throughout much of the remainder of July, that might just be sufficient to re-invigorate the ripening grain crops and allow also the semi-dormant grass fields to spring into some new green growth. Those hopes came to nothing, and even now, some way into August, drought conditions continue. It might be argued that it could be even worse. Indeed, it has been: all farmers of my generation will recall the drought of 1976, and that year we were even hauling recently baled hay out of its harvest field and taking some of it not into the farmyard for storage in the barn and use the following winter, but directly to cattle grazing the fields more or less 'next door' as they were rapidly running out of grazing with zero grass regrowth. Not quite so much urgency with sheep, as the way they graze, they can shear off whatever grass or other vegetation is growing right down as short as if someone had gone over the entire field with a Gillette razor. Not their manner

of grazing if given a choice, but what they can do if circumstance requires. But we are just a few days into August, and with harvest more or less completed around here and in most other drought-affected areas around the country (at a time in early August when, in most years, we would be at little more than the 'recently started' phase). Yields of grain would seem to be, from local reports I have heard, a little bit better than had been predicted, but well down on those that have come to be expected with modern varieties and growing methods. The NFU is warning that, as this year's harvest is going to be well short of that expected, and the UK does not, even in an average or good season produce enough basic foodstuffs to feed its own population; home produced foodstuffs amount to something like 60% of consumption (60% as measured by 'value'). Much of the imported foodstuffs are items like oriental fruits, vegetables, etc. (relatively high value items), so home production of basic foodstuffs is likely to be much closer to 100% of requirement if measured as consumption, but still not all the way there. And nearly all of us



Field harvested for haylage nearly a month ago. Due to a continuing lack of rain, there has been almost no grass re-growth since.'

like a banana every once in a while. Part of the reasoning behind the NFU's stance is that the recent hardening of the Government's attitude towards taxation of farming will lead to financial pressure on those within the industry and a reduction in investment in home-grown food production. This will make the UK more vulnerable to pressures from other nations exporting foodstuffs and prepared to use food supply as a means of applying diplomatic pressure. The sort of move that Mr Putin might well have in mind. As far as trying to guide the

Government's thinking, so far the NFU, CLA and other organisations have not been all that successful, but they remain hopeful. And so do I and others, as we set about the business of preparing the land for next year's crops, or baling up such grass and straw as we can to feed cattle and sheep over the coming winter, ready to go out and graze for themselves next year. The mood of optimism, as I have said before, remains: it is an essential element of being a farmer; we may moan a lot, but in the end, we keep going!

RBL Branch news

Pershore and District Branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) commemorate the 80th Anniversary of VJ Day.

On the morning of Friday 15th August, the RBL joined members of the community including Deputy Lord Lieutenant Sir Nicholas Coleridge CBE and his wife, the Mayor of Pershore, Councillor Julie Hemming, the Leader of Wychavon District Council and Councillors, for the raising of the special commemorative flag to mark VJ Day.

Later, at Pershore Abbey, members of the RBL, the Mayor and the Curate, Reverend Jayne Parker joined the nation in prayers and the two minutes silence at 12:00. Simon Dudfield, Vice Chair of the RBL, read the Act of Remembrance and Kohima Epitaph, and Lt Col Susan Payne TD laid the wreath for VJ Day on the War Memorial. On Sunday 17th August, VJ Day was commemorated as part of the Morning Service at Pershore Abbey, led by Rev Jayne Parker with RBL members present.



The Branch will be recruiting at their gazebo in Abbey Park on Bank Holiday Monday at the Plum Fayre. There will be a raffle/tombola. Come and join us.

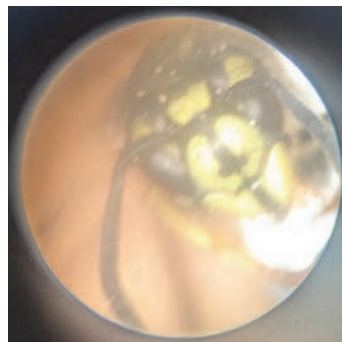
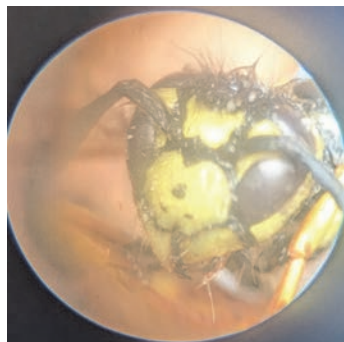
The Breakfast Club continues on the first Saturday of the month at the White Horse hotel, opposite the Abbey.

Any questions or information on joining, please contact Gerald Gregory, Chairman, on 07802 897088



Bees versus Wasps: Part Two

Martyn Cracknell



The german wasp (left) has three dark dots on its face.
The common wasp (right) has an anchor on its face.

BWARS (Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society) describes four species of *Dolichovespula* as short life cycle species, and three species of *Vespula* as long life cycle species, so the sudden onset of sugar-searching behaviour in July would suggest that a short season species might have reached phase four already. I set up some traps baited with jam, water and vinegar (the acidity repels bees) and collected a jar full of wasps in just an hour or so. I then sorted them out according to species. The differences are quite subtle and include facial patterns, body size and other anatomical features requiring a microscope or a good hand lens. I may have made a few mistakes, but the vast majority were of just one species: *Vespula germanica*.

This is a long life cycle species which would not be expected to trouble hives before August, and the individuals seemed smaller than I would have expected for this time of year. It would seem that the nests of this species are very well advanced this year. Many beekeepers and cafe owners put out wasp traps baited with something sweet (like jam), an acid (like vinegar) and a drop of detergent. These catch a large number of wasps, but are they effective in reducing the nuisance?

Are they appropriate on environmental grounds? The perceived wisdom is that the number of wasps caught makes very little difference to the overall background population. The population density is dependent upon the supply of food, the availability of nest sites and predation pressure of the site, sometimes known as 'the maximum carrying capacity' of the site. Wasps are quite territorial but if a zone is relatively free of them, others from further afield will tend to move in. The provision of scented sweet baits and traps from which wasps can escape may act as feeding stations and may effectively increase the carrying capacity, luring wasps in to reinforce the local population. Observation of an ineffective trap or a hive under attack reveals an aerial highway of wasps travelling to and from their nest during the

day, but in the evening, many just hang around in the general vicinity. These wasps are probably reaching the end of their foraging life and are indulging their 'sweet tooth'. They are not actively taking sweet food back to the nest, so the nest is not compromised by their disappearance. They would probably die in a few days anyway. As the season advances, these will become a greater proportion of the 'catch', so the effect of wasp traps on a nest will diminish. Traps baited with meat are more likely to affect the growth of a nest but would have to be deployed early in the season. One objection to trapping is the resultant capture and death of non-target species or by-catch. Many will be flies, but butterflies such as red admirals and commas are particularly attracted to sweet and sour foods. If traps are left out overnight, a wide range of moths will be caught as well. After two weeks of serious attacks, the problem has now lessened. The amazing spring and summer, which have fuelled the rapid and early expansion of these wasp nests, have also advanced the ripening of thin-skinned early plums like Pershore Yellow egg and sweet-fleshed Greengages, and many wasps are targeting these food sources instead of the hives. We can expect pears and apples to be targeted as they ripen as well.

My observations suggest *Vespula*

germanica has surged ahead and dominated the wasp population. Whether this will be followed by a surge of activity from the common wasp (*V. vulgaris*) and the median wasp (*Dolichovespula media*) is unclear, but they are not a problem at present. European hornets are present in modest numbers but are not normally a problem despite their size and alarming buzz. The remaining four species have not figured at all in my traps.

It is frequently reported that wasps have attacked and stung people whilst dining outdoors or enjoying a drink. Honestly, in all my encounters with wasps while they have been raiding the hives, at or around the traps or in and around the home, I have not been stung and I have not been chased or threatened. If you disturb a nest or clip a hedge with a nest in it, it may be a different matter. They will defend their home, but while cruising around looking for food, they are not aggressive. Do not wave them away. Calmly take your food or drink indoors, even allowing the wasp to settle on it. Once indoors, the wasp will fly to the light of a window and can be let out. It is a nuisance, but only a transient one and is indicative of the shortage of available food for them in the local area. Perhaps we should all plant Yellow egg plums in hedges and gardens as a diversionary tactic.

Species	Common name	Size of workers	Number trapped
<i>Vespa crabro</i>	European hornet	huge	1
<i>Dolichovespula media</i>	Median wasp	large	5
<i>Dolichovespula sylvestris</i>	Tree wasp		0
<i>Dolichovespula norwegica</i>	Norwegian wasp		0
<i>Dolichovespula saxonica</i>	Saxon wasp		0
<i>Vespula germanica</i>	German wasp	medium	335
<i>Vespula vulgaris</i>	Common wasp	small	10
<i>Vespula rufa</i>	Red wasp		0

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Propagating Pelargoniums

I've got a real soft spot for pelargoniums. They've made their way into almost every show garden I've done over the years - they're just so easy to work with. The cheery colours fit beautifully into any scheme, and their scented leaves are absolutely gorgeous. So, this time of year is the perfect time to take cuttings and get the plants ready for their winter snooze. Propagating pelargoniums is a budget-friendly way to expand the number of plants in your garden. It's simple to do and really rewarding. It's worth giving it a go as you can save money, clone your favourites, and you can refresh your collection before the older plants become tired. Late summer to early autumn is the ideal time to take cuttings as plants are still active but not in full bloom. However, you can take cuttings anytime throughout the growing season. Just avoid the depths of winter when plants are resting.



What you'll need:

- Healthy pelargonium for cuttings.
- Sharp, clean scissors or pruning shears.
- Small pots with drainage holes with free-draining compost.
- Rooting hormone (optional).
- Clear plastic bag with support sticks or a propagator to maintain humidity.

Here's how:

- 1) Select healthy stems from non-flowering stems. Aim for 3-6 nodes in length. Avoid woody or soft stems. A node is where the leaf joins the main plant stem.
- 2) Make a clean cut just below a leaf node using sterilised shears. This is where roots will form.
- 3) Remove lower leaves from the lower half of the stem, leaving a few at the top to support photosynthesis.
- 4) Let the cutting callus and dry for a few hours. This helps prevent rot and encourages healthy rooting.



5) Prepare your potting mix and fill your pots with a well-draining mix. Pelargoniums dislike soggy soil, so drainage is key to healthy and happy plants.

6) Plant the cutting - dip the callused end in rooting hormone (optional), then insert it into the soil. Firm it in gently to hold it upright.

7) Water and cover - water lightly to settle the soil around the plant cutting. Cover with a clear plastic bag or place in a propagator to maintain humidity. Use supports to keep the cover off the leaves. Roots will appear in three - four weeks' time.

Avoid problems with these tips:

- Rotting: Usually caused by overwatering or skipping the callusing step. Let cuttings dry before planting and use a free-draining compost mix.
- No roots: May need more warmth or light. Move to a brighter, warmer spot (but avoid direct sun).



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- Wilting: Cuttings can wilt if they lose moisture. Maintain humidity but ensure airflow to prevent mould.

- Watering: During dormant periods (Autumn and Winter), reduce watering significantly. Allow the soil to dry out more between waterings, typically every two to three weeks.

- Water the soil directly at the base of the plant rather than overhead to avoid wetting the leaves, which can lead to fungal diseases.

A wide range of Pelargoniums is available from the specialist nursery www.fibrex.co.uk who are located in Pensham.

September gardening tips

Early in the month

This is a good time to move established evergreen shrubs, and the traditional time to start planting new trees and shrubs of all kinds. Use some mycorrhizal fungi when planting to aid rapid establishment in the new situation. As the summer bedding plants begin to fade, replace them with cheerful autumn bedding varieties to brighten up the dull winter days ahead.

Make-up winter hanging baskets using pansies, bright evergreens and winter flowering heathers. Prepared hyacinths should be planted and put in a cool, dark place by the end of this month if you want them in bloom by Christmas.

Watch out for aphid attacks on winter flowering pansies. Also, there are three types of leaf spot fungal diseases that can attack pansies, so check the foliage for them too.

Mid - Month

Sow some hardy annuals outdoors in flowering positions in sheltered spots. Now is the time to get

busy with planting spring-flowering bulbs and garden centres will have a comprehensive range on display. If you like to prioritize your buying, the things to go for now are autumn-flowering crocus, Madonna lilies, Colchicums, Fritillarias and prepared hyacinths.

Scarify the lawn to remove "thatch" and feed with Autumn lawn dressing. This is a good time to sow or turf a new lawn and repair bare patches. You could also over-seed all or part of the lawn to thicken the sward. Grease band the trunks of fruit trees to trap the wingless female Winter moths as they climb them to lay eggs. Strawberries should be planted by the end of this month for cropping next year.

Plant garlic now in a sunny free draining spot. They like a long growing season in order to make the best cloves. Sow some autumn lettuce under cloches or for planting in a cold greenhouse. Plant out spring cabbage plants 15cm (6in) apart, in rows 30cm (1ft) apart. If your lawn is infested

with leatherjackets or chafer grubs, control them using natural biological pest control nematodes available from specialist suppliers and through some garden centres. Sow green manure crops on vacant areas of the veggie garden for digging in next spring.

Plant Japanese onion sets to get a lovely crop of flavoursome onions ready from June. Spray Michaelmas daisies with a fungicide or plant invigorator to prevent mildew.

Later this month

Lift beetroot, carrots, turnips and potatoes for winter use. Leave parsnips and swedes in the ground to develop more flavour. Sow some compact hardy annuals in a cold greenhouse to grow into winter-flowering pot plants.

Pick green tomatoes for chutney or ripening in a brown paper bag in a drawer indoors. Don't put them on a windowsill in the sun, this dehydrates them. Reduce watering and ventilation in the greenhouse as temperatures drop. Lift, divide and re-plant early spring-flowering herbaceous

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester



perennials. Bring in any tender shrubby plants taken outside for summer displays (e.g. Brugmansia).

Cut back marginal plants and net your pond to keep out autumn leaves.

Dry some herb foliage for winter use, or chop and freeze them in ice cubes.

Prune summer-fruiting raspberries by removing old, fruited canes. Take cuttings from roses, preferably using shoots that have flowered. Trim them to 23cm (9in) long. Bring in any houseplants that have been outside "on holiday" for the summer.

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Ailsa's Kitchen

Ailsa Craddock

In the middle of a tomato glut! Why do tomatoes all become ripe at the same time? Also, what about the ones which never turn red? All the hard work of growing, looking after and nurturing them to end up with almost too many of the little red bombs! Sun-warmed tomatoes picked straight from the vine are arguably the ideal way to enjoy tomatoes. What can you do with them once you've made gallons of soup and tomato sauce for the freezer, eaten them fresh, fried and baked and given them away?

Stuffed tomatoes - meat

2 - 3 beef tomatoes
1 shallot, finely chopped
125grams lamb mince
15 grams fresh breadcrumbs
150 grams button mushrooms, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
Salt and pepper

Sauce:

4 medium tomatoes, cut into quarters
25ml rapeseed oil
1 garlic clove chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Slice the tops off the beef tomatoes, reserving the tops as before. Scoop out the flesh and put in a saucepan. Mix the shallot, mince, breadcrumbs, mushrooms and tarragon in a bowl. Season. Stuff the tomatoes with the mince mixture (do not overfill as the mixture will expand when cooking and split the skin), drizzle with oil and place the lids on top. Place the stuffed tomatoes in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes.

Sauce: Put quartered tomatoes into a saucepan, plus the flesh from the beef tomatoes. Add oil and garlic, season and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 minutes. Serve the baked tomatoes on a plate and drizzle over sauce.

Stuffed tomatoes - veggie

Cut off the tops, scoop out the insides as above. Bake in the oven for about 10-15 minutes at 190-200°C. Now, add any chopped up (small) vegetables; left over rice, quinoa or couscous, herbs (parsley, mint or basil), garlic (of course). Put all the ingredients you want in a bowl with the scooped-out flesh, mix well and put back into the shells. You can put the lids back on or top them with breadcrumbs and or cheese.



Spaghetti with fresh tomato sauce

200g spaghetti or linguine
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 lemon zest
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
2 tsp caster sugar
300g diced tomato
125g ball mozzarella or burrata, torn into pieces
A handful of basil leaves, torn

Cook the pasta following pack instructions. Meanwhile, put the chilli, shallots, oil, lemon zest, vinegar, sugar and tomatoes into a big mortar. If yours isn't big enough, put it all in a bowl and just use the pestle in that. Add a good amount of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and bash everything together. Drain the pasta and toss together with the tomato mixture and mozzarella or burrata. Scatter over the basil and serve immediately.

(It's worth getting hold of burrata – a softer, creamier relative of mozzarella – for this dish. It will go oozingly melty and create a sauce that clings to the pasta.)

Sweet tomato jam (given a nice kick by adding ginger)

2 tablespoons sunflower oil
2 tablespoons grated ginger
1 red onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup (125ml) red wine vinegar
100g brown sugar
1 small red chilli, finely chopped
450g chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon honey

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the ginger and onion, and cook for 2-3 minutes until the onion is soft. Add the vinegar, brown sugar and chilli, and cook, stirring, for 2-3 minutes until sugar dissolves. Stir in the tomatoes and season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30-35 minutes until thick. Stir in the honey and cool to room temperature.

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Feeling Memories

Angela Johns

When I was on holiday this year, I decided to jot down a line or two about each day so that, when I read it back, it would flesh out the memories. But instead of simply writing: "Stopped outside of Laon for the night", I added: "coughing man". Not just "Cycled up the hills to Chateau Chinon", I added: "horrible coffee in a chipped mug". These little side notes help me see the fuller picture of that town, or day. It helps me have feeling memories, not just seeing memories. I can connect on a deeper level to the experience I had, rather than just having a reminder of where I've been. It helps me recall details of conversations and of giggling. And isn't that why candid photos work so much better than posed ones? The former catching a flavour of a moment, the latter a record of the occasion. But, just like writing a diary which we may rarely re-read, our many photos disappear into our ever-growing library on our phones. What we are left with is how that moment made us feel. The factual details may fade over time but the emotional imprint stays. Reliving a feeling memory can be experienced in our bodies too, as our brains don't always differentiate between past and present. Our stomachs may turn over in excitement or in fear



when our memory is jogged. Our eyes may leak remembering either the joy of it or the pain of it. I think that one of the most wonderful things to embrace as we get older is remembering the small moments in life that have turned out to be the big events. It was the small act of kindness that made the big difference. Our feeling memories come alive in the most impactful way. The big milestones in our life end up as markers between all the far smaller moments, and it is these that give our life texture, flavour and direction. The small moments are rarely captured on camera. They are held instead in our heart. *Angela is a qualified Emotional Therapeutic Counsellor registered with the FETC and NCPS. Also a Reflexologist and Reiki Practitioner, she is passionate about her therapies and spends quality time with her clients to facilitate their wellbeing. You can find her at angelajohns.co.uk*

Everyday Resilience: The strength we often overlook

When we think of resilience, we often picture dramatic challenges - illness, loss, or life-changing upheavals. Yet, as a therapist, I am continually reminded that true resilience is also woven into the everyday moments of life. Strength is not always about grand gestures; it is often found in the quiet ways people keep going, adapting, and choosing to move forward. Take, for example, the parent navigating a busy morning routine. Between work commitments, school runs, and the emotional needs of their children, they often carry a silent weight of responsibility. Yet each day, they get up, prepare breakfasts, offer words of encouragement, and hold their family together. This steady commitment is resilience in action - a daily showing-up, even when energy is low. Another example is found in those managing ongoing health conditions. For many, pain or fatigue becomes part of the background of daily life. Still, they make space for laughter, keep in touch with friends, or celebrate small wins like a walk in the fresh air. Their ability to focus on what is still possible, rather than only on limitations, reflects profound inner strength. Then there are the quiet moments of resilience we don't always recognise: someone making a



Emily Papirnik

difficult phone call, setting a boundary in a relationship, or taking the first step towards asking for help. These choices may not be visible to others, but they are acts of courage that change the course of a life. With my clients, I see every day how strength is expressed in these small but powerful ways. Resilience is not about never struggling - it is about continuing despite the struggle. It is about noticing what we can influence, being kind to ourselves in the process, and taking one intentional step at a time. When we widen our view of what resilience looks like, we begin to see it everywhere—in the neighbour who keeps smiling, the colleague who keeps trying, and even in ourselves, often without realising it. These everyday acts of strength deserve to be acknowledged and celebrated.

"Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall"

F. Scott Fitzgerald
The Great Gatsby (1925)

"Success is getting what you want. Happiness is liking what you get."

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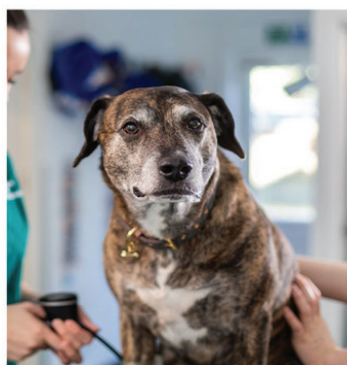
Since being home from university for the summer break, I've been nothing but busy. I've met up with quite a few friends, both from home and university. I had a day out in Oxford with one of my uni friends, where we did a bit of shopping and catching up, and grabbed a bite to eat. My train arrived an hour before hers did, so I was able to go for a walk next to the river. When she arrived, we met for lunch and caught up, then browsed the market stalls and shops. I had a

fabulous day and the weather was lovely. I also visited my uni house and a couple of my flatmates for two nights, where I was able to catch up with them and chill out in our new house. I haven't actually moved much into my new house yet, so it did feel extremely empty, but I've been trying to work out how I want to decorate my room. I've realised I have quite a lot of pink decorations, which is peculiar to me because I've never been the fondest of the colour pink. Apparently, now I am. I've got a fabulous pink blanket too, which will go

perfectly with my room, and so I am super excited for the weather to get a bit colder. Autumn is my favourite season, so I cannot wait! As I am writing this article, I am on holiday in Cornwall with my family. So far, it has been lovely, but the weather has been a bit all over the place. When we arrived the sun was shining but the wind was strong. I could feel the sun warming my skin, which is always a fabulous feeling to have when you're on holiday. However, the wind was whipping us around all day. During that night, thunder awoke me and the wind was banging about. Luckily, this didn't last long and I drifted back to sleep. A few weeks ago, I met up with a friend I hadn't seen in ages. We have been friends for about nine or ten years, as she used to go to Taekwondo with me. She moved abroad for a while, so we could only catch up via messages and calls. Regardless, we would usually see each other once or twice a year (when she came back to visit). However, she is back in the UK now for university, so we are able to see each other a bit



more. We went for lunch and to do a bit of shopping in Worcestershire, which was lovely. I plan on seeing her again soon before the university year starts again. I honestly can't believe how quickly this summer holiday has gone, and there isn't long until I am back in Liverpool for my final year of studying. I am looking forward to living with different friends this year and making new memories! I have already bought the majority of books that I will need for my final year, meaning that hopefully I am ahead of the game on reading. Once I've settled in and organised my room, I am extremely excited to get back to my uni life. I hope everyone who received a school, college, sixth form, or university offer this month got what they hoped for. To all those going to university, in particular, have a great time!



Preventative Health Care



Preventative health care is an important part of veterinary practice. It is a medical approach focused on maintaining good health and stopping diseases before they occur. The main way of doing this is through regular health checks for your pet with vets and nurses and keeping up to date with vaccinations. It can also include regular parasite control for both external parasites (fleas, ticks and mites) and internal parasites (gastrointestinal round- and tapeworms).

What happens at a health check?

At a routine health check the vet will perform a physical exam looking for anything out of the ordinary. Areas that are looked at include:

- Mouth – checking for dental disease or other disorders
- Eyes – looking for signs of aging of the lens and conditions like 'dry eye'
- Ears and skin – checking for signs of irritation or growths that can occur over time
- Chest – listening for indications of heart or lung disease
- Abdomen – feeling for any abnormalities like fluid or growths
- Mobility – are they moving around as freely as they should be

If anything of concern is found, then discussions can be had as to what the next steps could be. This might be further investigations, treatments or just monitoring.

As cats and dogs age much quicker than humans we recommend 6 monthly health checks, often an annual vaccination and health check with the vet and a visit at 6 months with the nurse.

Older animals also benefit from routine blood and urine testing and blood pressure checks. These can often detect conditions much earlier than when looking for clinical changes in your pet's health.

If your pets' vaccination has lapsed this can be quickly got back up to speed with a second 'top up' vaccine to ensure full immunity. We regularly run a Vaccination Amnesty where you can get the vaccination course for the cost of a booster vaccination if your pets' vaccines are overdue.

Best wishes *Eliza*

Gregory's World! Gregory Sidaway Exeter College, Oxford

Graduand's World

Nearly three years since I first entered the Walters of Oxford tailor's shop on Turl Street and bought a mortarboard, I could finally put it on. You're probably thinking: there's planning ahead, then there's buying a mortarboard when you're in first year. But the truth is it does tend to follow you around throughout your three years. I had it under my arm when I matriculated in Michaelmas 2022. I carried it to all my exams. I even took it to a college bop (party) when I had to dress up as something beginning with the first letter of my name; it was the only thing I had in the cupboard, so I went as a graduate. Today, though, I was finally dressing up for real. Today, I was Greg the graduand (a word I learned recently, meaning someone who is about to receive an academic degree) and a graduand required a gown upgrade. So, back to Walters of Oxford I went! As you might remember, fellow reader, I've been wearing a commoner's gown since first year; it's a flappy black waistcoat that creases if you so much as look at it. But the bachelor's gown ... now, you're talking. I hired one for the day, plus a hood, trimmed with the white fur of a Bachelor of Arts.

(One of our mates was graduating with a BFA - Bachelor of Fine Arts - and his hood was trimmed with C-3PO gold.) I tried my new gown on at Walters and couldn't help but swoosh and luxuriate in such a copious piece of polyester. It reached all the way down to my ankles, so I could swish it like a passionate pasodoble dancer. Any more swishing would have to wait, however, because first I had to receive my degree. Satisfied with my hired gown, I reluctantly got back into my old one and delivered the upgrade to the helpers at college. I reunited with my mates and their families in the college quad, where the mum impulse to photograph everything was through the roof. When the families peeled away to take their seats in the Sheldonian Theatre, the Dean of Degrees appeared and told us to listen very carefully to her instructions. Of course, we didn't. Something about bowing? Something to say in Latin? What was it again? 'Do fidem.' The courtyard outside the Sheldonian was closed to tourists. Proctors' officers stood stiffly at every entrance, wearing sharp suits and bowler hats and wielding umbrellas. They herded us into the theatre. Parents filled the upper galleries. Cameras were stationed around the room,

livestreaming everything to my grandparents at home and to hundreds more relatives across the world. The ceremony wasn't exactly the kind of 'Whoop! Whoop!', 'We did it!', punch-the-air scenario I'd seen in films. For starters, it was in Latin. Even our pro-vice-chancellor acknowledged it was a pretty solemn affair, but that the formality was in recognition of the fact that the university was bestowing us with their highest honour. When the BAs were called up, my lot assembled with Exeter's Dean of Degrees in rows of four. We'd had time to get to grips with the bowing routine expected of us, having observed the earlier MAs struggling through it. In a ripple of heads, we bowed to the pro-vice-chancellor in front, the senior proctor on the left, the junior on the right, then back to the pro-vice-chancellor. Next, we pivoted to face the junior proctor, we bowed, and he asked (in Latin) if we would 'swear to observe the statutes, privileges, customs and liberties of the University, as far as they concerned us'. Exactly what these statutes were, I wasn't sure, but I didn't know how to ask to read the small print in Latin. Instead, we murmured: 'Do fidem' ('I swear') and bowed a sixth time. In the neighbouring Divinity Schools, I finally threw



off the commoner's gown and donned my upgrade in a costume quick-change that made me feel like I was in a school production again. Furrier and flowier, we swept back inside the Sheldonian to the roar of applause. Two more bows and we'd sealed the deal. Graduand had become graduate. Later, in the honeyed glow of the afternoon, me and my mates headed to the King's Arms. We took our pints outside and sat on the steps of the Clarendon Building, still wearing our mortarboards and gowns. We were 'Cheers'-ing the day, when a boy, no older than seven, approached us. "Excuse me," he asked. "Are you really from Oxford?" He and his family were on holiday from California. His accent and inquisitive, slightly shy tone made me think of the kids in Christmas films who ask: 'Are you really Santa Claus?' We nodded and smiled. From Oxford? Yeah, I thought, I was.

Evie's Teenage Focus

Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University

It was almost a year ago when I first arrived at university. What would soon be my entire life, packed into the back of my mum and dad's car. The first semester was so incredibly daunting that I barely remember it. It felt like everyone knew what they were doing, knew where they fit in, both on campus and in life, whilst I was trudging along, trying to figure out where I would slot into all the madness. That first week alone was a blur of awkward

conversations, finding out who everyone was and what they were like, but being awfully aware of the fact that I was now also being perceived by the very people I would be spending the next three or more years with. I would get to our lecture rooms early just to wait and see who would sit around me, hoping to find a good group of people. It was in one of those lecture rooms that I met one of my best friends. From her, I finally figured out that, in actuality, they were all just as scared as I was, only they were better at ignoring it. From then on, we showed up to lectures together, participated in everything we could, smiled and nodded along when I had no clue what was going on and faced the coming year together. I feel that, as young adults, we are forced into the belief that going to university brings about a turning point in our lives. Going through our A-levels, we are making these life-altering decisions about whether university is right for us

and, if not, which other route we should take. If we decide that university is right for us, we must then decide where we want to go and what we want to do; it's asking 'where and what?' that potentially determines the rest of our lives. This culmination of important decisions is meant to change us, make us see our lives differently as part of a bigger picture. However, I felt that it also enforced the narrative that we had to do it alone. Now that I'm entering my second year at university, I feel like I am in a good position to give some advice to anyone planning to start university this year. Whilst I can only tell you what I wish someone had told me, I still hope I can help. It might seem silly and a bit simple, but my best advice is to just do it. I know it's scary, the concept of being in a new environment, with new people and what might feel like having to start over, but just remember that you have done it before! You have made new



friends before. You have changed schools before. So, let's be honest, you can definitely do it again! It might seem a bit intimidating at first, but just do it. Talk to as many people as you can and find the right people for you. If you find something you want to do, do it, even if you have to do it alone. I promise it will be worth it. And most importantly, enjoy every second of it! I know for me, while I of course miss home, I can't wait to be back at Oxford. That's all from me for now, though. Until next time! Toodles!



Have you got a passion for global affairs?



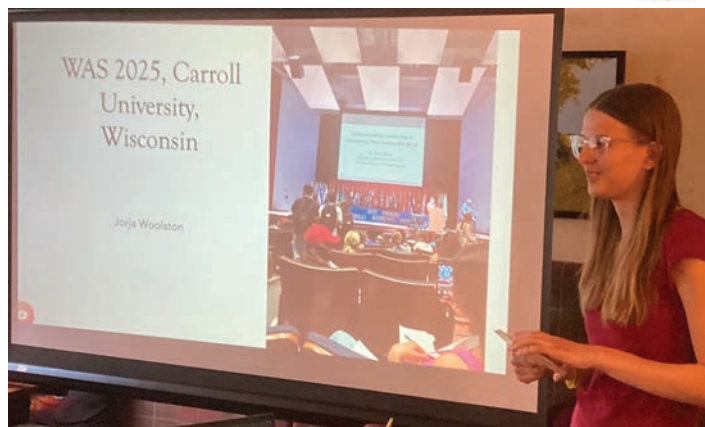
'The most interesting person is the most interested person.'

When Jorja Woolston shared this quote, her audience of Rotary Club members and guests murmured in approval.

On 30th July, Pershore Rotary invited Jorja to be a guest speaker at their evening meeting at the Queen Elizabeth Inn in Elmley Castle. She gave a presentation on her experience at this year's Rotary Youth World Affairs Seminar, held in June. The World Affairs Seminar (now in its forty-eighth year) looks for students across the world with a passion for global affairs. It is an opportunity to stay at Carroll University, Wisconsin, for a week-long conference of lectures and discussion panels, exploring this year's theme: 'Peacebuilding: Creating Lasting Change'. She'd heard the quote above from a lecture by Norma Sánchez (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime). It encapsulates the curiosity among young students and the eagerness to learn that is at the heart of the Seminar. Under-18s can attend as delegates, while anyone 18 and over can volunteer as a counsellor to help co-ordinate the week's events. Jorja stayed with a host family, who made sure she had an absolute blast from the very start. They took her jet skiing on the

Great Lakes, to a baseball stadium and a Harley-Davidson museum, and introduced her to her favourite food of the trip: cheese curds! When the week of timetabled events on campus began, she listened to representatives from foundations such as the Stanley Center for Peace and Security, as well as veterans and refugees from conflicts past and present, such as Vietnam and Afghanistan. Many speakers were available on campus for the rest of the day, should students have questions and wish to explore topics further.

The Seminar was also a great opportunity to meet people with similar passions for geopolitics and problem solving. Others had travelled from as far as Norway, Italy and the Cayman Islands. Jorja got to know them better during group activities, such as the diplomacy simulation. Her cohort were given the case study of the conflict in Darfur, Sudan, divided into groups representing the UN, the Sudanese Government, China, and the USA, and tasked with negotiating a peaceful solution. The evening activities on campus included Just Dance, singing and water balloon fights – where a peaceful solution was not reached. Carroll University marked the Seminar by unveiling a 'peace pole' on campus. It was not, as Jorja first thought, an online forum



poll, but a column inscribed with 'May peace prevail on Earth' in four languages. The unveiling even made the local TV news on Fox 6.

At the end of her presentation, Jorja thanked the Rotary Club for sponsoring her trip. She explained that the Seminar made her more aware of just how widespread issues, such as human trafficking, are across the world. Listening to stories from survivors and refugees foregrounded the human impact of global issues. They helped her to build empathy, which would be invaluable should she wish (as she said she might) to engage in future volunteering and charity work abroad. Another key takeaway she mentioned was recognising that, when aspiring to make changes with far-reaching implications, it is just

as important to make small improvements and help people on a local, community level. More fundamentally, this trip allowed her to grow in confidence. Although Rotary initially intended to sponsor one student to go to Wisconsin, they soon recognised the high calibre of this year's applicants and sponsored three. No other Rotary districts in Great Britain and Ireland have sponsored people to go to the Seminar. Lynne Raymer (Pershore Rotary President) explained they are keen to offer this 'life-changing' opportunity again. *The World Affairs Seminar returns in 2026. If you have a burning curiosity and a passion for global affairs, and would like to be involved next year, please email Pershore Rotary: secretary@pershorerotary.club*

Village Life

John Driscoll



WhatsApp logo

I said this last month, but it bears repeating that the long, hot summer of 2025 continues and is proving a very challenging time for farmers and, to a far less serious extent, for gardeners. We know rain will fall eventually, and pray it isn't too much too soon, with the dry ground unable to absorb much water. I suspect we'll all too soon be dealing with very different weather-related problems. Our Parish Council was far-sighted some time ago and used a grant to fund a mobile pump that is available to all residents if needed. Thankfully, it hasn't been called

on too often, but it's still comforting to know it's here as a communal resource. Sticking with Parish Council-related issues, we held a very well-attended village meeting to raise awareness of the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan. The main message was that we can all exercise our right to comment on future development in our area. Change is perhaps inevitable, but we can have some influence over the shape of those changes, and maybe we can ensure that positive outcomes are included. One of the lessons from that meeting was that some of our village residents are neither familiar nor comfortable with using the WhatsApp group that has become the default for keeping villagers informed of events and local news. Some of the conversations in the chats can be pretty meaningless, but many are actually very informative and replace the days when everyone knew everyone and word spread

quickly. The lines positively glow when there's a power cut, and it's actually very reassuring to know it's not just you! Broadband outages are horrendous for home workers and those running businesses from the village. Again, having regular updates from neighbours is (perhaps) comforting. Maybe the greater benefit of the village group is the sense of being connected to the community, especially for those who may not have much other contact and who may feel isolated. A few slightly younger residents have agreed they will make themselves available to visit those who will appreciate a little support with technology, including WhatsApp. This may well be a case of the blind leading the blind, but it may also turn out to be a good mutual learning experience, as well as providing some of our older neighbours with greater access to news about local 'happenings'. I'd better include a warning, though, that some of the

chats are not exactly fascinating - those new to it may think they're missing the point when there's often no discernible point - other than keeping in touch. Village life has otherwise been quite uneventful, which I suspect suits many residents perfectly. It seems many of us are seeking shelter from the sun and intense heat by day and struggling at night with getting cool enough to sleep. Cooling breezes are always so welcome as we struggle to keep adequately hydrated. As a village, we do have an upcoming party to celebrate four years since our amazing pub re-opened (or should that be 're-invented itself?') and there's sure to be a good turnout for that. No excuse for dehydration that day! Now, the challenge is to be sure that everyone who needs to know is aware of this and future village get-togethers. Community in action, with and without WhatsApp! Enjoy the rest of the summer, everyone!

Realising the vision

Carol Draper

In July, I wrote about planning for business. At that time, I knew I had found new office premises for our business, and I was waiting for the physical plans to be drawn up to show how best it could work. Prior to finding the premises, I had an ideal that I wanted the whole team to be on the same level to help with communication and staff development. Last year, we had rebranded our business, and I wanted any new space we occupied to reflect that brand, rather than just being the space where we had the office. When I first looked at our new offices, they were very basic, but I had a gut instinct that the space would work and could become what I had envisioned. The premises had been available for over a year, but clearly the time was right when I saw them, and following my gut instinct was right too. August is our quietest time. Even if clients do not have children, they still seem to follow the school holidays, so I knew that any move had to happen in August. Having a definite timescale helped with planning and meant we were able to drive how fast things progressed. I tried and (I hope) succeeded in keeping the whole team in the loop of what was happening,



what needed to happen to enable the move to take place, and in making decisions about things that would affect everyone. Everyone has their strengths, and it was by using the individual strengths of the team that I am very lucky to have that the move happened as smoothly as it did and within budget. It may seem that an office move is not much, but we are a small team, and it is enormously satisfying to have had a vision and for that vision to be realised in such a positive way. For anyone taking on a similar challenge, my advice would be to trust your gut, believe in the team around you, use their strengths, maintain communication, listen to their suggestions and, at the end, say thank you.

*Carol Draper FCCA
Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd*



'If you want something said, ask a man.
If you want something done,
ask a woman.'

Margaret Thatcher

Clifton-Crick Sharp Moving on up!



Clifton-Crick Sharp have moved! After taking over the business last year, Carol Draper decided to leave behind their premises on the High Street, where Clifton-Crick had been based since 1992. She knew the old set-up wasn't right. The offices were too far apart, increasing the chance of miscommunication between team members. It was also an older building and gloomy inside; the lights needed switching on, regardless of the season. Carol found rooms for rent at 2a-3a Market Gate. They didn't look particularly big on the Bomford & Coffey website, and they needed a decent paint job, but they had potential. She'd planned to move by the end of August. However, with a helping hand from several clients, they were able to do so well ahead of expectations. PR Associates Ltd made 'such a clever use of the space' by designing a layout that included two offices, a waiting area, and an adjoining space for clients; they ensured the rooms felt open, rather than

disconnected from each other. Carol had long envisioned glass walls for the offices, and they provided the contact to make this vision possible. Paul Richardson Builder and Contractor Ltd, began construction on 1st July, finishing their 'absolutely fantastic job' by the end of the month, while StarSign UK provided the new signage. The new premises were decorated specifically for Clifton-Crick, with their turquoise-grey-white colour scheme continued throughout the rooms. Carol also wanted to thank KC Carpets Ltd, along with Warren's Removals & Storage, who helped them make the eagerly anticipated move within a matter of hours on Friday 8th August. Hughes and Company are also supplying their new business stationery. The finished office is bright and open, so all the staff can more easily be kept in the loop. In this hot weather, the new air con is a definite bonus. Any clients, new or old, are welcome to visit.



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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

The recent test series against India was possibly the best I have ever seen. It really did have everything - batting excellence, bowling prowess, players showing stoicism and bravery in the face of injury and even a certain amount of needling from both sides. (Perfectly normal, I suggest, when tensions are high.) The appalling "100" which - it seems to me as an old school cricket fan and sceptic of the shortened formats of the game - is just a money-making scheme which appeals to the masses who literally do not have a clue about cricket. At the risk of sounding like a snob, I would say that it is cricket for football fans. Not that I have any problem with football, I very much enjoy the game itself (although not what it has become), but it is different to cricket. The recent test series was a

superb example of why Test Match cricket must be saved at all costs. I understand that many countries are struggling to preserve red ball cricket, and it is surely up to the "Big Three" of test cricket (England, India and Australia) to help struggling countries as much as they can?

On another note, in a world where we are being encouraged more and more to adopt a "Global" approach to everything from health to governments, it was good to see two teams and two sets of supporters being actively patriotic. Celebrating their differences and realising that it is okay to be proud to represent your country. Not such a bad thing as long as it is done with honour and humility.

Yours sincerely

Julie Reynolds

Poems for the Editor

Dear Editor,

In reply to August's 'Thoughts from the snug: food, drink and poetry'.

Half Past Five

It must be time,
It's half past five,
I'll pour myself a glass of wine ...
Shiraz, merlot or perhaps some fizz?
I'm going outside,
You deal with the kids.

by Jack Coldicott

Dear Editor,

Poem on food

Whenever you wish to eat,
You will find fruit and veg a real treat,
Enjoy as much as you like,
A real treat with fish or with meat,
A nice sauce you can make if you're able,
Then take it along to your table,
Sit and enjoy a healthy good treat,
A nice crumble to follow you bake,
What a lovely hot meal to partake.

By Rita Ryall, Upton



A Prayer for VJ Day

God of the nations,
Our refuge and our dwelling place,
We remember with thanksgiving,
Those whose service achieved Allied victory in the Pacific,
And hold before you all those who suffered from the
devastation and trauma of war,
Strengthen our resolve to pursue what makes for peace,
Through the one in whom we are reconciled and made one,
In Jesus Christ, Our Lord,
Amen

HMRC and the use of Artificial Intelligence

Following mounting scepticism from tax advisors, a legal battle, and a First Tier tribunal ruling on 2nd August, HMRC now has until Thursday 18th September to disclose how it uses Artificial Intelligence to improve its efficiency and services. In December 2023, Tom Elsbury - a tax expert - logged a Freedom of Information Act request to HMRC about how it uses AI to process and analyse data, as well as the safeguards they have in place to protect and ensure the privacy of that data. A month later, HMRC cited Section 31(d) of the Freedom of Information Act, refusing to disclose this information because it could unfairly sway

'the assessment or collection of any tax or duty or of any imposition of a similar nature'. They argued that confirming or denying whether it used AI could be advantageous to anyone attempting to commit fraud, as they would gain 'valuable insight' into how HMRC operates. For over a year, HMRC has maintained this position. A Decision Notice from the Information Commissioner's Office in December 2024 determined that the public interest in refusing to confirm or deny whether HMRC used AI 'clearly outweigh[ed]' the public interest in confirming or denying it. However, on 2nd

August, the First Tier Tribunal (a court body handling appeals against some decisions made by HMRC) forced them to change tack. Reasons for the Tribunal's decision included the fact that remaining so cryptic would damage public trust in HMRC, and that transparency was 'particularly important when AI's role in decision-making is a pressing concern globally'. HMRC recently admitted to using AI to process and monitor taxpayers' financial records, spending habits, tax returns. More controversially, AI is used to monitor social media posts, though HMRC insisted these tools were only used in the case of criminal

investigations, with 'robust safeguards' in place. It is understood that all of this AI use is lawful and helps to improve the efficiency of departments. Yet the application of AI into peoples' personal social media activity to influence serious decisions has made some uneasy and is not without its critics. We now wait for more detail and clarity of information to be disclosed on 18th September.

Gregory Sidaway



From the Boundary

Peter Jewell

Out of the Jaws of victory came defeat against India. What have we learnt? England needs Ben Stokes for his leadership and drive, leaving aside his batting and bowling. Whatever the result, it shows that Test match cricket is alive and well in England. With Stokes fit, I fancy our chances in Australia, which in their backyard is not easy. Now, we are in pyjama cricket time. I make light of it, but it seems to improve players

in batting, bowling and fielding. It also makes money for cricket, but it should be an add-on to county and test cricket. Not instead of the four-day game, Worcestershire are now in the 2nd division and will be very lucky to get off the bottom of Division One. In the T20, they had no more than a sniff. However, in the one-day cup with one win and one loss, they could do better. The county sides have a number

of players tied up in the 100, so they could sneak in, but they need to win everything in the division; at least they are lying second right now after a win against Derbyshire.

After the Lions' tour on Saturday, I watched the Free State v Western Province. It has become culpably bad and I believe this is because of the quota system. Given that it was a close shave with the Lions, I think they had

the upper hand. I also watched South Africa v Australia. SA are on the wane, their players are great but ageing. But, oh, what a beautiful country! Until next month! In the meantime, I hope we have the much-needed rain.



A View from the Middle



There is much to be happy about personally this month. It may be the warmer weather - although, not too warm please - but things appear a bit cheerier and there are many things to celebrate in the past and look forward to in the future.

The big news on my part is that I finally managed to get back to playing cricket after my knee injury - I even took a wicket with my second ball. I had been a little bit worried that my playing instincts had waned and that I'd moved very much into 'coach' mode in my head, but the reality is that I turned into every bit the grumpy fast bowler the moment a run was scored against me. It is said the most important aspect of the game (of any sport, really) is your mentality, and I was very conscious of keeping my emotions in check when playing. There

was, in the background, a large fear that my knee may give out again and I was playing within myself to protect it. But this was counterproductive. I opted against sliding the conventional way to save a boundary and deliberately fell around the ball in a different way, which hurt much more than if I had done it normally. And, when bowling, I did feel the bubble of anger and took it personally if I didn't take a wicket or at least stop the batter scoring every ball. There was a temptation to run back in and bowl the ball as fast as I possibly could, which I did once and it resulted in a terrible ball because my technique was all over the place. Mindful of this, I gave myself a couple of extra seconds before bowling to calm down and be grateful that my body can still perform this motion, which allows me to exercise, have fun, and spend time with my friends.

I think my brush with injury and my age has given me a fresh perspective on playing sports. I now view it as something to be enjoyed and embraced rather than a frantic slog to prove how good you are or to use to lose weight and/or get fit. Occasionally, I found myself just looking around at the surrounding trees and hills



and thinking that I couldn't think of anywhere else I'd rather be. In some ways, I'm grateful for the injury because it's allowed me to view not just cricket from that perspective but life itself. There were a few worrying days when I wondered whether I'd be able to walk properly or pick up a child again. So now I'm thankful for the fact that I am still able to do those things, and I'm doing the maintenance (stretching, swimming, eating healthily) to keep myself in good condition for longer. This can only help in my day-to-day life as well as my cricketing endeavour. Regular readers may recall that I noted the sad loss of Graham Thorpe in my first column. It was touching to see the support for him during the recent Test match in Surrey, and I can't have been the

only one who became a little emotional when Joe Root celebrated his venturing by donning a Thorpe-esque headband and pointing to the sky. The circumstances surrounding Thorpe's death are distressing, with the coroner concluding that there were failings in the treatment of his mental health in the months before he took his own life. I do hope lessons have been learned and that more conversations and care can happen surrounding mental health difficulties. They are, as we've seen, potentially just as deadly as physical ailments, so I would again encourage you all to take care of yourselves and each other. And, if you are worried about yourself or someone else, do seek help. The charity Mind (www.mind.org.uk) is a good place to start.

Thoughts from the Snug...

We rarely discuss non-alcoholic drinks in the Snug, our focus is elsewhere; after all, the Snug is in a pub! One exception occurred when we discussed tea bags and how they have led to a new social etiquette of supplying your own preferred type of tea when visiting friends. Indeed, within our own small group, preferences for Earl Grey, Camomile, mint and fruit flavoured tea over breakfast

blends as a digestive proved a point. Tentatively, it was suggested we probably need to accept this new trend rather than take offence if one of our guests whipped out a tea bag and declined their host's offer of 'builder's tea' or coffee. "Rude!" voiced one, "Sensible!" said another. However, one who had remained fairly quiet for most of the discourse re-focussed the discussion.

"Tea? Healthy? Bah! Beer can boost the immune system", he announced and then went on to explain drinking beer may be good for your gut health and boost the immune system. "A review of various animal and human experiments acknowledged that purported health benefits of alcohol are controversial, but says sensible consumption has a positive effect on the human immune

Beverages

function. Researchers say supping a pint boosted the immune system thanks to healthy bacteria in the beer that benefits the gut." "Okay!" says another in the group. "It's my round ... One for the road, or perhaps one for the immune system?" "Definitely the latter!" was the collective response.

Buddy Bach

Calling all car, shower and choir singers!



The Greatest Sing - 31st January 2026

A Worcestershire-based charity is calling for you to lend your singing voice to help a wonderful cause. The Greatest Sing is an

all-day event, where one thousand participants will spend the day learning a medley of songs from 'The Greatest Showman' and then perform it the same evening. Other acts will also

take part in the evening show to raise money for a very special cause. Hosted by the BBC's Malcolm Boydén, The Greatest Sing will be held at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern on 31st January 2026. Whether you sing in a choir, or just in the shower or in the car, we need your voice to truly make this The Greatest Sing and raise money for The Anna Wilkinson Mockingbird Trust. The Trust organises and funds days and evenings out for young people between the ages of 16 and 24, who live in the West Midlands, and who have a cancer diagnosis. Treats include live events, meals, theatre visits and safari lodge stays with family and friends. Tickets to take part in The Greatest Sing are £28 each, with an option to buy an event T-shirt (£10) when you book your place.

Audience tickets for the evening are £10. If you can't make it but would still like to support us, you might sponsor a chair at the event for £10. Tickets are on sale at bit.ly/thegreatestsing or through the charity's own website:

www.theannawilkinsonmockingbirdtrust.co.uk

where you can also find out more about us and what we do.

The Mockingbird Trust
Charity number 1169674



What's on . . .

Elmley Castle The Harold Salisbury Film Archive

From 1981 to 1990, covering the 'Big Snow' of 1982 and the 125th Anniversary Cricket Match between Elmley Castle and Worcestershire County Cricket Club in 1989, Paul Pridgeon's Benefit Year

Friday 12th September
Elmley Castle Village Hall,
7:00 for 7:30pm.

Price: £7.50,
Tea, Coffee and Pay Bar.

Tickets from:
Jeanette Smith 01386 710511
Brian Lovett 01386 710286



u3a
Pershore & District

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday 16th September at 2pm
Inside the mind of a cryptic
crossword setter...

With Mark Hartshorne, known as
"PostMark" in his crossword life, delving
into the world of words.

Tuesday 21st October at 2pm
When you hear church bells ringing,
do you ever wonder ...Who, How & Why?
Come along and find out from
members of Pershore Abbey team
and other local bell ringers

All welcome, including non-members
Meetings held at Number 8, High Street, Pershore
For more details, contact Sally Whyte
Speaker Coordinator on
email: u3apershoresally@gmail.com
www.pershore.u3aite.uk



Blame the Huguenots

Brian Johnson-Thomas



Over these last few weeks, we have been fortunate to glimpse the future of British performing arts – and it looks good. Firstly, we watched the Longborough Youth Chorus take part in an excellent, dynamic production of Purcell's 'Dido and Aeneas'. (Yes, you've heard of it – Dido's lament 'When I am laid in earth' forms part of the music played on Remembrance Sunday from the cenotaph.) The enthusiasm and vitality of the entire cast, especially the young people, made it truly a night to remember.

For further details see www.lfo.org/youth-chorus Then it was off to The Other Place to enjoy the Royal Shakespeare Young Company's Next Generation production of 'Timon of Athens', written by the Bard (with a lot of help from one Thomas Middleton). The Next Generation programme recruits not just budding actors but also directors and technical and production roles backstage. Again, vitality and enthusiasm were the keynotes of a gripping evening. For more information, see www.rsc.org

These playwrights, along with Nahum Tate, Purcell's librettist, were well attuned to the cultural cross currents of their time, one of which would surely have been the arrival in large numbers of the Huguenot refugees from France. Not only did they give the English language the word 'refugee', they also revitalised our economy, improving such industries as cutlery manufacturing in Sheffield (and providing one of Winston Churchill's ancestors). However, they were not universally welcomed. Fast-forward a couple of centuries and the Daily Mail was in vituperative form over the arrival of Jewish refugees here as they fled pogroms in Russia. Now, we have the phenomenon of the Boat People arriving over the Channel. This, alas, is an unwanted by-product of Brexit, which of course explains why it's of recent origin. Before we left the EU, any 'unauthorised' arrivals could, under European rules, be sent straight back to the EU country where they had first entered Europe. In our haste to leave, we forgot to keep that law.



We also apparently forgot that we do like to travel to Europe quite often, both for business and pleasure. From next month, this is going to get a little more complicated and, from next year, a little more expensive. A six month rollout of 'biometric data collection' starts on 12th October. This means that, when you first arrive at a European border post (it could be the docks at Calais or the airport at Alicante, for example), everyone over twelve years old will have to get up very close to a futuristic machine; firstly, it takes your picture in a way which records all your individual features electronically and will also take four fingerprints. This process is likely to cause some congestion, I fear. Then, later on in 2026, we will have to go online to register for a visa waiver (along with citizens of South American countries and such like). This will cost us twenty euros apiece. Those under 12 and over 70 are exempt from the payment, but not from the need to register. The resulting permission will last for three years (or the length of time remaining

on your passport, if less than that). Having got that dismal, boring, but necessary stuff out of the way, let's turn back nearer to home. The Malvern Autumn Show opens later this month, on Thursday 25th September, and will, as usual, feature such old established favourites as the CANNA UK Giant Vegetables Championship, along with the Great Malvern Cake Off competitions, the chance to listen to talks from expert celebrities and to taste delicious local food.

For details, see www.malvernautumn.co.uk Finally, something that we can all take pride in. The same weekend as the Malvern Show sees the 200th anniversary of the opening of the world's first passenger railway, up in Darlington. Then our enterprising engineers went on to build such railways the world over. Celebrate these achievements with the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway at Toddington. Find out more about them at www.gwsr.com Maybe I'll see you on the platform?

Be a hoverfly hero

Karen Rose

Late Summer is a great time to look out for another of the unsung insects in our gardens; the humble hoverfly. With over 280 species in the UK, they are vital pollinators for a healthy garden ecosystem. Hoverflies take on a huge variety of forms, often mimicking the black and yellow patterns of wasps or bees to keep predators at bay. If you watch and listen, though, you can soon spot the difference, there is no annoying buzz and the hoverfly will, as their name implies, gently hover and weave their way around plants. In fact, the hoverfly is the gardener's friend, eating sap sucking aphids from our plants and providing food for other

insects and birds. The larvae of some even help to break down dead plant matter. Sadly, though, their numbers are in freefall. A recent survey showed that these essential pollinators are in trouble. That's why the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) is asking gardeners to welcome hoverflies into their gardens. We can help by providing an Autumn buffet for them (blackberries, asters, ivy and buddleia are all great sources of late pollen) and by leaving 'messy' areas for overwintering. So, why not join in – no lycra required – and become a hoverfly hero! Karen Rose is a biodiversity officer for Wychavon District Council



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A militaria collector?

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to learn something new and a place to discuss your passion for
collecting medals and military memorabilia.*

Arrive at 7:00pm for a 7:30pm start at

Swindon Village Hall, Cheltenham GL51 9QP

The evening wraps up at about 9:30pm. Membership is open to all adults.

For more information, contact:

Len Evans at the Soldiers of Gloucester Museum, Gloucester
Docks Tel. 07801 472 396 or Steve Lewis on 01242 519815

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Gracie is a
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Crossbreed .
Missing SINCE
8/9/24 in
PERSHORE,
WORCESTERSHIRE
WR10 Area

Jazz News

Peter Farrall

“Persore Jazz on a Summer’s Day”, on 9th August, proved to be yet another fabulous annual bonanza of classic jazz and was pronounced by some fans as “the best yet”. It was the final event in our artistic and financial year. Now, planning is well underway for autumn and winter club nights and into 2026. In fact, the remaining bands for 2025 are already booked and looking forward to appearing at Persore Jazz Club, some returning, and others for the first time. October brings a return visit from the T.J. Johnson band who, with their always well-balanced programme of jazz, blues, country and gospel, need no introduction to Persore jazz fans. For November, new to the club is violinist, Matt Holborn, who is much inspired by the legendary Stuff Smith, of whom there will be more in a later article. The Christmas Special in December will be quite a departure from the familiar club night formula when we present the Harlem Jazz Orchestra - a thirteen piece band! This entails a reconfiguration of the stage and front row seating, so front row fans will need to bag their seats early for this one. Seating will be limited and bookings with advance payment only are to be taken at the October/November club nights. Back to September’s club session, where we hear musical memories inspired by one of the most colourful characters in early 1900 New Orleans - Ferdinand Joseph LaMothe, better known as ‘Jelly Roll Morton’, a flamboyant



and somewhat egotistical character sporting a diamond-studded tooth and always claiming to have invented jazz. He didn’t, of course, invent it but nevertheless had a huge influence on the development of the music in the early years of the last century. It is claimed that he was the first jazz musician to notate scores and arrangements of the freely improvised tunes of the time and his “Red Hot Peppers” set the standard for contemporary bands. There will be no diamond-studded teeth on stage at this month’s jazz club, just four musicians heartily sympathetic to Morton’s

music, when Nick Ward, a much sought-after drummer for 20s and 30s style bands, will bring his own Jelly Roll Quartet to entertain in the authentic style of the period. (The nickname ‘Jelly Roll’ came from the time when Morton, as a young man, played piano in the

bordellos of the red light district of New Orleans – don’t ask!)

Nick Ward’s Jelly Roll Quartet

- Nick Ward drums
- John Maddocks reeds
- Jon Penn, keyboard
- Brian Mellor, guitar/banjo

Nick Ward’s Jelly Roll Quartet

Wednesday 24th September

Function Room, Persore Football Club

Doors open at 7pm, Music starts at 8pm

Admission £12.50 (to include a raffle ticket)

Book in advance and pay on arrival

Email: club@persorejazz.org.uk Tel: 01527 66692
or find us on Facebook.

Music Matters

Steve Ide

Hans Christian Anderson once said: ‘Where words fail, music speaks’.

In these strange and uncertain times, music is as important as ever. Songs can bring people together, send a message, create a movement or just give us all a bit of peace in confusing times. It doesn’t matter what you enjoy, cheesy pop or classical opera, hard core metal or ambient chill, music is a soundtrack that can take you to a happy place. As Johnny Cash said: “Life and love go on, let the music play”.

Notable new albums

Woody at home
by Woody Guthrie

This is a recording of some of Woody’s best-known songs, plus some unreleased material. All

recorded at his house, we hear him discussing the songs with others, while doors creak and people chat in the background. An intimate look at one of the most important American songwriters of the 20th century. Stand out track: ‘Peace Call’

Find Eldorado
by Paul Weller

A cover album from Paul Weller, but true to his usual form, he chooses some unexpected material to cover. You may not have heard the original versions, but you will undoubtedly enjoy the Weller versions.

Stand out track: ‘Small town talk’

Freak out City
by Brett Mackenzie

One half of Flight of the

Conchords, Brett releases a new solo album. Uplifting and covering multiple music styles with ease, these are enjoyable songs from a talented musician and songwriter. Definitely one for the summer.

Standout track: ‘Freak out city’

The Making of Five Leaves Left
by Nick Drake

A collection of demos, rough takes and unheard songs from the 1969 debut album from Nick Drake. The album was largely ignored on its original release but was later recognised for the genius it is. This is a view into how the album was developed, anything that fills the gaps in Nick’s sparse story must be welcomed.

Stand out track: ‘River man’

Add to playlist

Tear the fascists down
by Woody Guthrie

All of my friends
by LCD Soundsystem

Devil gate drive

by Suzie Quatro

Northern Skies

by I Am Kloot

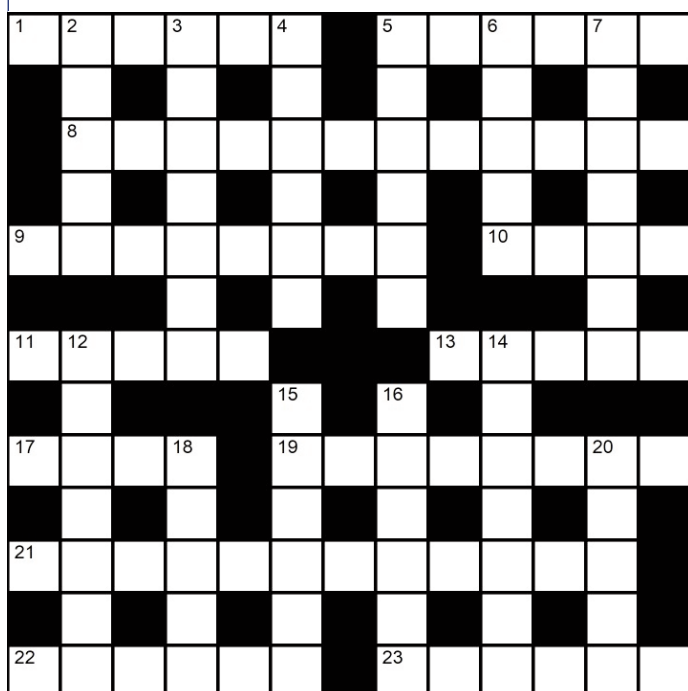
Paper planes

by MIA



Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

- 1 Learned person, or type of idiot? (6)
 5 Scrabble enthusiasts, for example (6)
 8 With hindsight (2,10)
 9 Chief aide, figuratively (5,3)
 10 Covetousness (4)
 11 South American ruminant (5)
 13 Hirsute (5)
 17 Medicos (4)
 19 Dauntless (8)
 21 Orcas (6,6)
 22 Shining (6)
 23 Find (6)

Down

- 2 Person used as one's excuse (5)
 3 Father of Judaism (7)
 4 "The Death of Actaeon" painter (6)
 5 Stable people (6)
 6 Bowling pin wood (5)
 7 Win back (7)
 12 Plundering (7)
 14 Artist's medium (7)
 15 Required number for a vote (6)
 16 Wife of Jacob (6)
 18 Find the answer (5)
 20 Map in a map (5)

Sudoku

Each row and column must contain the numbers from one to nine, without repetitions.

	6			3				
2				1	7	9	6	4
7	9		5					
								7
	7		4		3		5	
3								
					6		9	8
4	5	6	9	2				1
				7			2	

5	7				4	1		
		9						
2					7			4
		8		3			4	
	1	7				5	2	
	9			1		8		
7			4					2
						9		
		3	6				7	8

2	6				4			
					1	8		
7								9
	5			7	8		3	
		2					7	
		7		1	6			8
	8							5
		9	5					
			8				7	4

Wordsearch

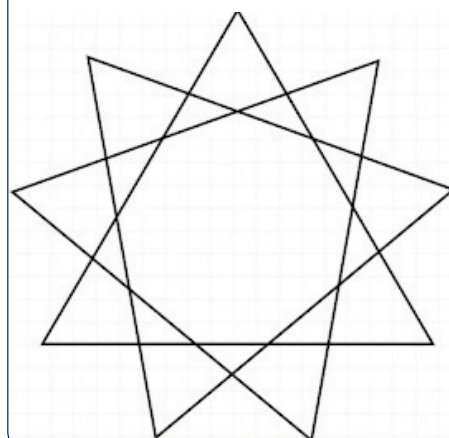
S	F	L	S	P	E	N	L	O	W	N
S	A	H	G	U	S	T	E	R	X	O
A	N	E	R	W	Q	U	I	L	P	S
R	G	E	I	O	R	N	A	G	T	D
B	B	P	P	E	A	C	I	O	L	O
K	D	U	V	N	R	R	O	U	J	D
R	O	I	C	E	P	T	O	I	N	P
O	L	Y	E	K	F	M	N	J	I	J
O	L	V	B	I	E	G	O	P	G	U
K	Y	U	P	R	L	T	O	C	A	P
E	D	S	L	E	A	R	Y	M	F	E

BRASS
 BUCKET
 BUD
 DODSON
 DOLLY
 FAGIN
 FANG
 FIPS
 GRIP
 GUSTER
 HEEP
 JINGLE
 JO
 JUPE

KROOK
 LA CREEVY
 MOULD
 NANCY
 OLIVER
 OMER
 PIP
 PRIG
 QUILP
 SLEARY
 SPENLOW
 TOOTS
 WREN

Brainteaser

How many triangles can you see?



Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

L

Clunton and Clunbury,
Clungunford and Clun,
Are the quietest places
Under the sun.

In valleys of springs of rivers,
By Ony and Teme and Clun,
The country for easy livers,
The quietest under the sun,

We still had sorrows to lighten,
One could not be always glad,
And lads knew trouble at Knighton
When I was a Knighton lad.

By bridges that Thames runs under,
In London, the town built ill,
'Tis sure small matter for wonder
If sorrow is with one still.

And if as a lad grows older
The troubles he bears are more,
He carries his griefs on a shoulder
That handselled them long before.

Where shall one halt to deliver
This luggage I'd lief set down?
Not Thames, not Teme is the river,
Nor London nor Knighton the town:
'Tis a long way further than Knighton,
A quieter place than Clun,
Where doomsday may thunder and lighten
And little 'twill matter to one.

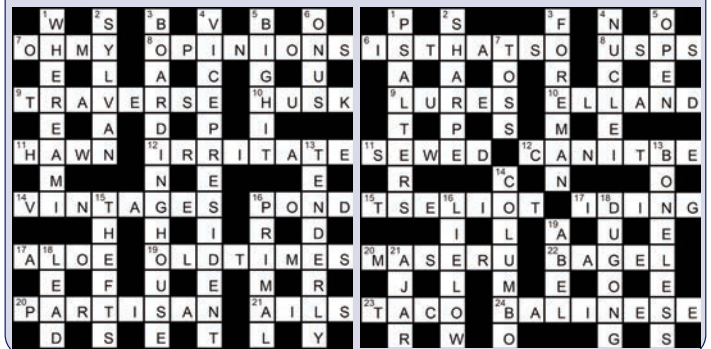
A. E. Housman 1859-1936

Quiz!

1. Into which sea does the Nile flow?
2. Three continents lie on the Tropic of Capricorn, South America is one, name any of the other two?
3. In American currency 10 cents make a what?
4. Afrikaans was developed from which European language?
5. An Orangette is a cross between a tangerine and what other fruit?
6. What Italian word for 'Scratched Drawing' can be found on walls all over the world?
7. What musical features 'Some Enchanted Evening' and 'There Is Nothing Like A Dame'?
8. What was the name of the first manned lunar landing mission in 1969?
9. Which boxer was nicknamed 'The Dark Destroyer'?
10. What was the name of Ritchie Valens' girlfriend?
11. What is the procedure called where an anaesthetic is injected close to the spinal cord?
12. What poisonous oily liquid occurs naturally in tobacco leaves?
13. Who had his first UK top 10 hit with 'Wichita Lineman'?
14. Which sign of the Zodiac is represented by the Scales?
15. In which country was Rudyard Kipling born?
16. What is the gemstone for September?
17. What instrument has been nicknamed the 'Mississippi Saxophone'?
18. One and a half litres of champagne is known as a what?
19. In alphabetical order name the three particles that make up an atom?
20. What is the common name of the 'Aurora Borealis'?
21. How many sides does an icosagon have?

Answers: 1) 1. Mediterranean 2. Australia, Africa 3. Dime 4. Dutch 5. Orange 6. Graffiti 7. South Pacific 8. Apollo XI 9. Nigel Benn 10. Donna 11. Epidural 12. Nicotine 13. Glen Campbell 14. Libra 15. India 16. Sapphire 17. Harmonica 18. Magnum 19. Electron, Neutron, Proton 20. Northern Lights 21 20 sides

August Answers



September Brain teaser: 30 triangles

Did You Know?

The Commonwealth is made up of 56 independent countries and home to 2.7 billion people (roughly a third of the world's population).

Word of the Month

'Balneation'

the act or action of bathing
Definition: (noun)

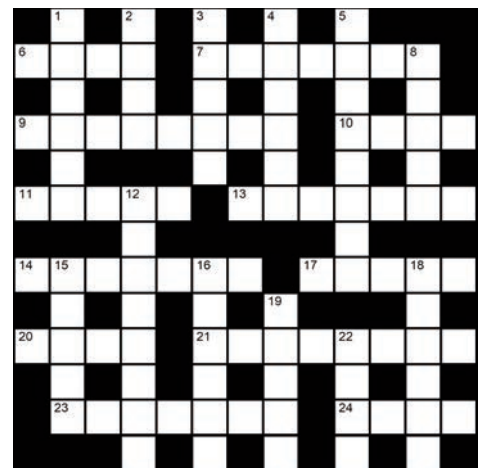
Anagram Crossword

Across

- 6 Tora (4)
- 7 Bastion (7)
- 9 Replayed (8)
- 10 Arne (4)
- 11 Sheer (5)
- 13 Tea sets (7)
- 14 Trained (5-2)
- 17 Neaps (5)
- 20 Stan (4)
- 21 Blessing (8)
- 23 Rebrand (7)
- 24 Goes (4)

Down

- 1 Molars (6)
- 2 Lair (4)
- 3 Kyoto (5)
- 4 Adds to (2,4)
- 5 Webinars (4,4)
- 8 Gears (5)
- 12 Rudeness (3,5)
- 15 Brand (1,3,1)
- 16 Arming (6)
- 18 Atones (6)
- 19 Grids (5)
- 22 Eden (4)



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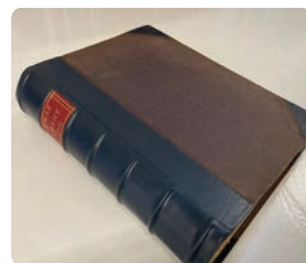
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Copy Deadline for
October Issue - 19th September 2025

Severn Stoke & Croome D'abitot News

Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs

John Henderson

St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke

You may hear the church bells being rung occasionally, if you are in the vicinity. These peels are all part of a study being undertaken by Dr Reza Salami, lecturer in Structural and Mechanical Engineering at the University of Birmingham to scientifically record what actually happens to structures like church towers and their bell frames, when ringing takes place. Ours is the first church in the UK from which such information will be obtained, leading (it is

hoped) to a wider national study. We are incredibly fortunate to have had the hard work and expertise of John Slater, a retired engineer with massive experience of church bells, who has almost single-handedly put in hours of voluntary time, to make the St Denys' bells both safe and ringable. Teams of experienced visiting ringing bands, kindly arranged for us by the Worcester Cathedral Bell-Ringers Association consider it a privilege to ring our unusual bells.

Friends of St. Denys, Severn Stoke

We are raising funds to modernise the church!

Saturday 20th September – Craft fair in St Denys' Church 10 am - 4 pm.

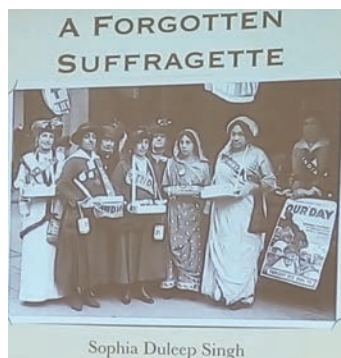
Another opportunity to enjoy seeing the wonderful handiwork of all the stallholders, with an opportunity to buy presents in good time for Christmas and to sample delicious homemade cakes and tea or coffee with visitors, friends and acquaintances.



Kempsey WI

The unconventional life of a Sikh Princess with connections to Worcestershire was the subject of a fascinating talk at the August meeting of Kempsey WI.

Maggi Davis, a volunteer at Croome Court, told the story of British-born Princess Sophia Duleep Singh, one of the daughters of the last Maharajah of the Sikh Empire, who was exiled from his homeland as a boy after defeat in the Second Anglo-Sikh War. Sophia's father was a favourite of Queen Victoria and she was one of the Queen's goddaughters, being brought up as a British aristocrat. Her brother, Victor, married Lady Anne, a daughter of the 9th Earl of Coventry, of Croome Court, which caused great controversy. The Queen was said to have forbidden them from having children. Sophia the socialite grew up to become a political activist and reformer. Although she was excluded from the lavish celebrations in India marking Edward VII's Coronation, she went into the country anyway and toured the Punjab, which spurred her to become involved in helping destitute lascars.



Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery

After meeting Suffragette Una Dugdale, she became heavily involved in the movement, even selling the Suffragette Magazine outside the grounds of Hampton Court Palace, where she had a grace and favour apartment. She famously refused to pay any taxes. She joined many marches and, in 1911, blocked Prime Minister Herbert Asquith's car while holding a placard. But her Royal connections meant she was never charged with any offence. She became a Red Cross nurse during WW1 and later took in refugees at her Buckinghamshire home. She never married and died in 1948, aged 71.

The September meeting will be a bring and share Harvest meal. Monday 15th September, 2pm Kempsey Youth Centre, Plovers Rise.

Cornflower Club

After our summer break, we start back in the Parish Hall, Kempsey on Wednesday 10th September, then 24th September and 8th October. We meet at 2:30 every other week to enjoy a programme of speakers, entertainment and musical events. We would love to see some more ladies or gentlemen over

60 years of age come and join us to enjoy a cup of tea and biscuits and chat with friend. Come along and see what we do, you would be made most welcome.

*Contact:
Sally Linsey 01905 820476
Julia Grant 01905 820138*

Spot & Shop - August Winners

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1) Andrew Bale | 5) Fenella Smyth |
| 2) Michael Washbourne | 6) Carol Buttres |
| 3) Christine Cale | 7) Eileen Croft |
| 4) Bob Dipple | |

**Last month's answer:
Wild Contracts Tree Surgeons**

**SPOT
and
SHOP!**

COMPETITION TIME!

Take a look at the anagram
The answer is the name of a business that is advertising in the Kempsey Times this month

- This month's prizes!**
- 1st - £50 cash**
 - 2nd - £25 cash**
 - Donated by Hughes and Company*
 - 3rd £20 Food Voucher**
at The Queen Elizabeth, Elmley
 - 4th £10 Voucher**
at Revills Farm Shop, Defford
 - 5th £10 Voucher**
at Craftypyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore
 - 6th Reg Moule Gardening Book**
 - 7th Pat's Pantry -**
Jar of home-made marmalade/jam

Complete and return this form or email:
news@hughes.company for your chance to win!

Kempsey Times closing date: 26th September 2025
Answer:

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Camera Club



'Smoke and Mirrors' by Kevin Heywood

As I write, it might seem that we are coming to the end of this long and warm summer, so we hope that you might be looking forward to a greater mix of indoor and outdoor activities, some of which the Club is delighted to be able to offer.

Our new season commences on Wednesday 10th September 2025 with a talk by Gerry Coe FRPS on the subject of 'iPhone Art' - what you can do with the camera(s) in your mobile phone, and how you can do it. Gerry, who will be talking to us from Northern Ireland, is an experienced photographer who has spent some years seeing how far you can push the capabilities of the camera that almost all of us have by us at

all times. This will be followed, as the second formal meeting of the season, with a Members' Evening (for which the agenda has yet to be set - but it will not be any less interesting for it!) on Wednesday 24th September. We would be delighted to welcome anybody interested to either of the evenings listed above.

Please make contact via our website www.kempseycameraclub.uk/, where you will also find further details of our programme for the rest of the new season.

In the meantime, we hope that you will take notice of these two images - 'Smoke and Mirrors' by Kevin Heywood & 'A Pair Of Teasels' by Clive Stanley - the former, one of



'A Pair of Teasels' by Clive Stanley

three top-placed images; the latter, one of four highly commended images - in our competition on the theme of

'Creative' held in late January of this year.

*Malcolm A Hay
Secretary*

Upton Surgery News

2025 Flu and COVID-19 Vaccination Programme:

What you need to know

We're preparing for this year's Flu and COVID autumn vaccination campaign, and there are some important updates we would like all of our patients to be aware of.

What's new this year?

For the first time, the eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine will be different from the flu vaccine. This means:

- Some patients may be eligible for flu only, others for COVID only, and some for both.
- If you are eligible for both, you'll be invited to one of our weekday clinics (not Saturdays).
- Super Saturdays will be for flu vaccines only.

Please wait to be contacted by the surgery before attending for your vaccine(s).

Who is eligible?

You can get a free flu vaccine if you are:

- Aged 65 or over (by 31st March 2026)
- Aged 6 months to under 65 with certain long-term health conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes, heart / kidney / liver disease, weakened immune system)
- Pregnant, a carer, or you live with someone who is immunosuppressed
- A child aged 2 or 3 on 31st August 2025 (offered at the surgery)
- A school-aged child (Reception to Year 11 - offered through school)

- A frontline health or social care worker

You can get a COVID booster if you are:

- Aged 75 or over (by 31st March 2026)
 - Living in a care home for older adults
 - Aged 6 months and over with a weakened immune system
- If you were eligible for the COVID vaccine in previous years, you may not be eligible this autumn unless you meet one of the criteria above.*

Clinic Dates:

- 20th September: Children's Flu Day - Super Saturday. For children only, receiving the nasal spray flu vaccine. No adult vaccinations on this date.
- Flu Vaccine Super Saturdays:
 - 11th October
 - 1st November
 - 22nd November

If you're eligible for flu only, these are perfect dates to attend.

For those eligible for flu, COVID, or both:


- Every Monday and Thursday, 9am to 5pm (by invitation only - please wait to be contacted).

What Happens Next?

The surgery will be contacting eligible patients by text or letter. You will be given instructions to book your appointment. If you think you're eligible and haven't heard from the surgery, you can check the full NHS eligibility at www.nhs.uk

or contact the reception team during their dedicated vaccination phone line hours. Tel: 01684 592696





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SEPTEMBER

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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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29	30					

OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30

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Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council

Firstly, thank you to our outgoing Parish Councillor, Sue Faulkner, who leaves us to devote her attentions to a happy retirement. We are incredibly grateful for Sue's work to champion updated IT, email and website services and in helping the parish to research and regain the valuable services of a volunteer footpaths officer and maintain membership of the Lengthsman Scheme.

Thank you, Sue, for your service to our parish and in particular to Severn Stoke village and Knights Hill residents.

If any resident has a couple of hours free a month to join us on our Parish Council, they would be warmly welcomed. The role is 'what a person makes it' and the hours fit round whatever can be offered. We meet in person only once every two months for a couple of hours and need new parish councillors in particular to help us look over planning applications and with projects assisting biodiversity.

Please contact the parish clerk if you are interested.

The forthcoming merger of county and district councils into a Unitary Authority has seemingly prompted a veritable flurry of council consultations, as local authorities aim to hand over ongoing projects.

Residents can visit the Worcestershire County Council website to take part in the following consultations:

- Development of Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans - Deadline for public input: 31st October 2025.
- Online engagement tool to let residents suggest where they would like an on-street EV charger.
- Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Deadline for public input: 26th September 2025.
- Review of Worcestershire County Council's Rights of

Way Improvement Plan - Deadline for public input: 26th October 2025.

Car Park Closure

The Parish Council recently wrote to those residents in Severn Stoke closest to the old parish hall site to explain about the closure of the car park. The site has been fully closed until further notice. This decision has been made following concerns noted by residents and councillors of the current high risk of impermissible use of the site, and after careful consideration of lease obligations and insurance requirements. The decision to close the site has been made with the safety and security of all in mind.

The Parish Council has been working with the county and district councils to try to solve the ongoing parking difficulties in Knights Hill. Signage funded by the District Council has been installed reminding residents to park sensibly in the turning areas. Unfortunately, it does not look like the Highways Authority is willing to place traffic and parking restrictions in this residential area and your Parish Councillors are waiting for final confirmation of options. Residents have asked the Parish Council for clarification on existing Traffic Protection Orders (TPOs) in the parish and who enforces them. As far as we can ascertain, the following is applicable:

Traffic Protection Orders (TPOs) (often referred to as Traffic Regulation Orders)

are imposed by the County Council (Highways Authority) after consultation and are most usually enforced by the Police and by the District Council. A TPO is a legal document that restricts or prohibits traffic movement on public highways. These orders are used to manage traffic, regulate traffic flow and parking on public roads, enhance

road safety, and improve accessibility for all road users, including pedestrians.

TPOs sometimes include the use of **yellow lines** – imposed by the County Council (Highways Authority). Enforced by the District Council and the Police. TPOs sometimes include the use of **weight restrictions** – imposed by the County Council (Highways Authority). Enforced by the Police only.

Residents can ask for TPOs to be imposed but criteria apply and residents should visit the County Council website for more information on the process. Knights Hill is unlikely to be approved for a TPO for reasons we are trying to ascertain.

Knightshill Pool

Thank you to the residents who complied with social media requests from the Angling Association with regard to the permissive path around Knightshill Pool in Severn Stoke village. It is heartening to see so many residents working cooperatively with local organisations and groups. Our Volunteer Footpaths Officer has also cleared and reported defects on many of the rights of way in this area so that walkers have plenty of options when permissive paths are temporarily closed. Thank you to all residents who have volunteered in a new life-saving project, funded by MHDC and supported by Community Action Malvern & District, called Heartstart West Worcestershire. We look forward to hearing about progress from the organisers.

Upton Surgery

The GP Practice in Upton has been in touch to ask if parish councils can help distribute their newsletters to residents. *Please get in touch with your Parish Clerk to add your name to the list of those receiving this newsletter by email.*

Broadband

The County Council via the Broadband & Connectivity Team has been working to try to plug gaps in broadband provision across the parish. We are assured that some good news will be forthcoming soon for residents at Croome Corner at least.

Please let your Parish Council know if you have any broadband provision issues and we can pass your details on to the Connectivity Team to see if they can help.

Please could residents along the A38 at Clifton and Severn Stoke ensure that their hedges are cut back if they are infringing on pedestrian footpaths and on access to bus shelters/stops. The Parish Council cannot cut these hedges for you and hedges can be cut during nesting season if paths and roads are being affected.

We continue to wait for the new bin to arrive for the layby near Sandford along the A38. ETA is mid-September. Thank you for your patience. Contractors willing to quote for installation would be welcome please.

Next meeting of Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council:

*24th September 2025, 7:30pm
Croome National Trust Visitor Centre SOQ room.*

*Parish Council Clerk,
Lisa Stevens*

*Tel: 07950 256363
parishclerk@severnstokeand
croomedabitot-pc.gov.uk*

Your councillors are:

*Richard Hill, Laurence Freeman,
Ian Daly, Royston Garrard,
Laura McEwan-Hill,
Pat Preston & Raymond Williams.*

We have four vacancies for immediate co-option and the additional more recent vacancy advertised as required.



Severnside Parishes

Contact Information

Vicar: Rev Kat Mepham - tel: 07512 222635
email: revkat@severnside.church

Baptisms: email: libberty.holt@motov8.org.uk

Funerals: email: revkat@severnside.church

Weddings: email: weddings@severnsideparishes.co.uk
Please see social media and notice boards for more information.

Church Services

First Sunday

10:30am	All Age Service	St Mary's Kempsey
10:30am	Holy Communion	St Denys Severn Stoke

Second Sunday

10:30am	Holy Communion	St Mary's Kempsey
10:30am	Holy Communion	St James Norton

Third Sunday

10:30am	Informal Worship	St Mary's Kempsey
10:30am	Holy Communion	St Denys Severn Stoke

Fourth Sunday

10:30am	Holy Communion	St Mary's Kempsey
10:30am	Morning Worship	St James Norton

Fifth Sunday

10:00am	Benefice Service	
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Please see social media and notice boards for more information

Thursday's

10:00am	Holy Communion	followed by coffee morning
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**SPOT
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See Page 27

Never too old to learn something new at the Lawns

We enjoyed a wonderful visit from the Walks with Hawks team, who brought their owls, hawks and falcons to The Lawns.

Many of our residents held a hawk for the first time, and being so close to these magnificent birds, with their stunning plumage, and bright yellow talons and beaks, was a fantastic experience. We learnt so much about falconry and the birds of prey conservation programmes. Afterwards, we created together a huge collage of all the photos from the event. There is a creative photography competition this summer across our Heritage Homes, and we have a lot of possible entries to choose from. The visit inspired us to see what more we can do at home to help our garden birds. Definitely this summer, it's been keeping the bird bath topped up, and last week, Annette put up a new bird feeder. We have been enjoying the garden – a favourite time to get out is the mornings for a coffee and catch-up. We are also still getting out into Kempsey for our Wednesday morning walks. Give us a wave or stop for a natter if you see us out and about! We had our residents and relatives meeting on 20th August, with our home manager, Mel. It was a good time to discuss ideas



for our Autumn activities. We are looking forward to meeting the new cohort of students from Kempsey Primary School and King's College Sixth Form in their Autumn term. Back by popular demand, Zoe Francis is returning to sing songs through the eras in September. We are planning to still be outside as much as possible, hoping for an Indian summer and a bumper harvest of veggies.

We have a Gardening Quiz on Thursday 11th September.

*With best wishes
from Team Lawns*

*The Lawns Nursing Home
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