

Upton Times

A free monthly newspaper for Upton-upon-Severn and surrounding villages



Issue 40

February 2025

FREE



Across the flooded playing fields © Alan Forsdike

A Happy New Year to our readers, advertisers and contributors. The weather in January has been cold but mainly dry, with a little snow, so it would appear 'we' are having a normal winter. We have been very fortunate because in other parts of the country it has been awful, with flooding and all sorts of disasters. However, daylight is now getting longer, the bulbs are starting to shoot through the ground. Spring is around the corner and it is a wonderful time of the year to look forward to.

We have had the great news that the war in the Middle East has stopped. A ceasefire has been agreed and hostages from both sides are being returned.

Let's hope this is the end of this dreadful war and a permanent settlement can be reached, so that innocent people can live in peace. We still have the war in

the Ukraine and let's hope the new American President can bring some leadership and end this disaster soon.

Thank you for all the letters, emails and telephone calls celebrating our 100th edition of Pershore Times in December. These were all very much appreciated and we now move forward to new milestones. The Pershore Rotary Club has made a presentation to us for the support we gave to the Tree of Remembrance Appeal. This is much appreciated and thank everyone very much indeed.

Late News!

We have just received news that a book, we recently designed and produced for the Chicago Golf Club, published by Grant Books Limited has been awarded 'Book of the Year' by the American Golf Association. They are the governing body of Golf in the United States with a staggering 700,000 members. Incredible news for us and the enormity of it is difficult to comprehend. This follows the International Sports Award, we received last year.

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County & District Report



It's that time of the year when winter still bites, but spring is almost upon us. I shouldn't wish my life away, but the glimmer of our sun and its promise of warmth always brings a smile. With the opening of the Kepax footbridge in Worcester and the possibility of the County Council going bankrupt, however, it's going to be a difficult year.

The end of the County Council?



Late last year, the government produced legislation to combine local County and District Councils into one council, which is to be called a Unitary Authority. This new authority must represent at least half a million residents. Worcestershire meets this rule: there are approximately six hundred thousand people within its border. Whether this will be a good or ill move is unknown. But we only need to look to Herefordshire, which is a Unitary Authority, to see just how bad things can be: their roads are appalling. To add to the woes, it was announced mid-January

in the Council's Cabinet papers that Worcestershire County Council are facing a funding gap of £33.6 million for the next financial year, rising to £43.6 million the year after. Are vanity projects one of the main causes of the black hole? The council may have to issue a section 114 notice, which is when an authority effectively declares itself bankrupt. Councils can't actually go bankrupt, but a section 114 notice, issued by its finance officer, means it cannot commit to new spending and makes service cuts more likely.

Sandbags are there if you need them!



As many of you will know, living by our great river brings a set of challenges to some of our neighbours and friends. The risk of flooding seems to have increased year upon year. Can I just reassure residents that there are sandbags available on the Hill Centre carpark at

Tunnel Hill. I will keep an eye on the stockpile. If you do unfortunately suffer from a flood, you can contact Floodline on 0345 988 1188 for useful practical steps. One of the most important things to do is to ensure, if you can, you have insurance that covers flooding/fire.

Councillor Martin Allen

Worcester's Kepax Bridge finally opens!



Finally, after much delay, the Kepax cycle and footbridge opened in December. Personally, I was pleased to see this link in Worcester, between Barbourne and the east side of the river, built. What I am very unhappy about is the initial cost, which I believe was around £5 million, increasing to between £16 and £18 million. The present administration at County Hall

have a lot to answer for. There should be a public enquiry to see how those councillors in charge of this project were so inept. It is normal in larger projects to have a reserve fund, but when costs are allowed to run out of control – in this case more than tripling – questions must be asked whether those running County Hall are fit to do so.

NFU & MHDC help to support farmers



I was delighted to support the first event to bring members of our farming community together to discuss how to support those who work on the land. Jane Clive of Clive's Fruit Farm gave an impressive talk on how she and her husband had diversified their business over

the years. The NFU together with MHDC plan to hold more events throughout the district, with the aims of reducing social isolation and helping farms to not only survive, but flourish. If you run a farm and are interested in coming to the next event, please

and finally . . .

So, that's it – Christmas is now but a memory of puddings and mince pies; by the time you read this the Easter Chocolate Bunnies will be out. Too many temptations. My veg plot looks a little like the County Council's finances: a right mess. So, for me, it's time to

pick up the spade and start digging. I think the same applies to those in power at County Hall! Wishing you all the very best. As ever, I am here if you need me.

Martin Allen

Prosecuted for cutting down protected woodland



A 'before and after' aerial view of the site



Taken after the felling took place

A business in Malvern has been ordered to pay more than £7,600 for illegally cutting down around 5,550 square metres of protected

woodland. J Prosser and Son, a haulage and excavation contractor who own the land, were successfully prosecuted in

Kidderminster County Court in November last year. The business pleaded guilty and were fined £2,677, ordered to pay full council costs, amounting to £4812, and a victim surcharge of £190. A total of £7,679.

A tree replacement notice has also been issued, requiring the landowners to plant just under 800 trees of mixed native tree species at their own cost and within the current planting season. In May 2021, Malvern Hills District Council's Planning Services Team were informed that illegal tree work

was taking place on Lower Howsell Road, next to the former gas works site. When officers visited the site they discovered that approximately 5,500 square metres of protected woodland had been felled which goes against section 210 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The woodland was protected by a woodland Tree Preservation Order 558 (2015), no application had been submitted to the council, and therefore no permission had been granted for the works.

A Positive Outcome?

Having met over their back fences in Hanley Swan during lockdown, Helen and Natasha became great friends, meeting up regularly for a girl's night or with their husbands and children for dinner or adventures. They could never have imagined that three years on they would both be diagnosed with cancer within a few months of each other – Natasha with thyroid cancer in January and Helen with breast cancer in May.

Thankfully, they have both had treatment and the all-clear. Over the past six months, they have individually been on fundraising missions to support University Hospitals Birmingham Charity and The Breast Unit Haven at Worcester Hospital. They are now organising a charity ball on 8th March 2025 at Twynning Park in a large marquee supplied by West Country Marquees and will be raising in aid of Cancer Research UK and Breast Cancer Now. The night will include a three-course meal, auction, raffle, live music and lots of dancing!

Despite an extremely challenging year for them both, they hope that their determination to make a difference for others in the future, both in terms of research and in terms of support on this difficult journey, means that something positive will have come from their experiences. Helen and Natasha would love to hear from you if you could offer anything to support the



event, perhaps by way of a raffle prize, a donation of a bottle of wine, or an item for the auction that would generate enthusiastic bidding – celebrity auctioneer Philip Serrell of Bargain Hunt fame is lined up to run the auction. There are also several sponsorship packages available. Equally, if you would like to join them in raising lots of money for these fantastic causes, tickets will be available in January.

You can find out more information about the event by scanning the QR code below, by visiting www.twynningcharityball.co.uk, or by emailing Helen at helenbanwell@gmail.com.



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Save a Heart on Valentines Day



*Photographs were taken at a Heartstart Malvern training session delivered to Malvern Theatre Staff in December 2024.
Photographs by Malvern Theatres.*

Heartstart Malvern, in collaboration with Malvern Theatre and Malvern Hills District Council, will be attempting to train over 100 people in vital life-saving skills at a special event on Valentines Day. The event called 'Save a Heart on Valentines Day', will be held at Malvern Theatre on Friday 14 February 2025. Five

training sessions, each lasting 90-minutes, will be held during the day. There is no charge for the training. Richard Vakis-Lowe, Chairman Heartstart Malvern said: "If people are looking for one thing to do in 2025 that will make a real difference to the local community, I would urge them to think about attending a

Heartstart Malvern training session. The more people we can train in these simple life-saving skills, the more lives that will be saved". "A cardiac arrest is probably the most urgent life-threatening condition and the immediate actions of a bystander following a person collapsing can have a significant effect impact on the final outcome. With 80% of cardiac arrests happen at home, it is essential that everyone learns how to do CPR and to use a defibrillator. The survival rate from a cardiac arrest in Malvern is currently less than 10%. It could be over 50% if more people learnt simple life-saving skills". Cllr Jennie Watkins, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Housing at Malvern Hills District Council, said: "We are thankful to Heartstart Malvern for inviting councillors and staff to learn these life-saving skills. CPR can significantly increase someone's chances of survival, so it is important that we encourage everyone we can to take up this opportunity. We will explore further

opportunities to increase the survival rate from cardiac arrest across the Malvern Hills District". Richard Vakis-Lowe, Chairman Heartstart Malvern said: "Heartstart Malvern are grateful to Malvern Hills District Council for encouraging local Councillors and their staff to come forward for training. We would also like to thank Malvern Theatres for their support in hosting and promoting the event. We hope to offer our training to more of their Volunteers later this year. I would like to encourage other local businesses and organisations to encourage their staff and colleagues to attend one of the training sessions. We believe that Heartstart Malvern helped to save 3 or 4 lives in 2024. We could save more lives in 2025, if more people come forward to be trained". Although the event is free of charge, booking is essential. *To book a place on a course please visit: www.heartstartmalvern.org.uk or call 07926 615812 if you do not have access to the internet.*

I guess that's why they call it the blues!

January can be a hard month for many, known as the month of Monday's, it feels like a long month. Once the tinsel and decorations are packed away, we are left with the reality of the new year and what that may bring. January can often feel like a bit of a let-down and creates a 'what now' moment for many. It's a traditional time to look for new opportunities and a new role. It's hard to begin the process of change if we are experiencing low mood and a lack of motivation. Setting goals and choosing to begin a process of change can feel like a mountain to climb. But every giant step, always starts with a little one. Remember that to get

something different, we need to do something different. I see a wide range of volunteers; those who want to grow skills and experience as well as volunteers at the end of their working journey, who have retired and know that there's a middle ground between doing nothing and doing something. Whatever the reason for choosing to volunteer, the hardest part is starting. A great place to start is to ask 'why?'. Why volunteer? Community groups and charities have grown because of volunteers. Look more closely within your own community and you will see that there's been a big movement towards

empowering communities to work collaboratively, to support the ideas that benefit their own needs. Skate parks, pump tracks, clearing community spaces, litter picking and community pantries are just some of the schemes that grow and come to life with communities growing together and supporting each other. It's not just project-based schemes that help communities either. Community transport providers exist because families live geographically apart from

each other and they need their own community to support them in times of need. Let's beat the January blues, by connecting with each other and growing our communities. Winston Churchill said "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give"

To find out more about volunteering get in touch with your local community groups or charities and ask how can I help?



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A few words from... Dame Harriett Baldwin MP

MP keeps up pressure to build Severn Stoke Flood Defence

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP has called for swifter progress to be made to deliver the long-awaited flood defence scheme for Severn Stoke.

The MP met with the chief executive of the Environment Agency this week to discuss the progress of the scheme protecting the village and the busy A38 between the M5 and Worcester. Last year, Dame Harriett suggested that Worcestershire County Council take over the scheme and use its own contractors to build the bund and raise the road alongside the village.

The council has already committed to carrying out the road improvement and in addition the Highways team will now deliver a costed plan to construct the bund protecting the village from regular flooding.

Chief executive Philip Duffy assured the MP that work was progressing, and his team and the council were working together to get project started in the summer.

Dame Harriett commented: "Having spoken to both the Environment Agency and the county council team, there

have been some further delays getting quotations from the contractor meaning that the construction work has again slipped back. "Severn Stoke floods regularly and this project could not be more important for the residents as well as the commuters who used that busy A38 road. I have spent over a decade trying relentlessly to prod the various authorities into actually building it. I've asked both teams to make sure that spades are in the ground on the scheme this summer as promised. In my opinion,



we've had too many false dawns on this scheme and I will be keeping a close eye on this project as a plan is costed and built."

Free training to help spot domestic abuse signs



Training sessions are being held across Worcestershire to help professionals spot signs of domestic abuse with their clients. The Cut It Out initiative has been launched by the South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, which Malvern Hills District Council is a part of. It is also supported by Martin Lakeman, Domestic

Abuse and Safeguarding Consultant.

The initiative aims to raise awareness around the devastating impact of domestic abuse, with one in four women and one in six men experiencing domestic abuse at some point in their life.

The free, two-hour sessions are open to any professional working in any sector, volunteers and members of the public.

Everyone who takes part in the

training will receive a Cut It Out badge for their business windows or mirrors to show that it is a safe space. They will also receive a pin badge which is a great way to start a conversation, it gives the opportunity to talk about the training they have completed and then offer support services if a client needs it.

Training takes place on:

Wednesday, 12th February
9:30am-11:30am,
The Civic Centre, Queen

Elizabeth Drive, Pershore

Tuesday, 25th February

9:30am – 11:30am,
The Guildhall, High Street,
Worcester

Monday, 10 March

9:30am – 11:30am,
The Guildhall, High Street,
Worcester

To find event details and to register, visit:
[www.malvern hills.gov.uk/
domestic-abuse-support](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/domestic-abuse-support)

Young people have their say on what's important

Young people across the Malvern Hills have their say on what's important. Climate change and job opportunities are the most important issues for young people in the Malvern Hills District, according to a vote. More than 300 11 to 17-year-olds from across the district had their say on what they would most like to improve as part of a Futureproof vote organised by Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC).

The event, which was held as part of Local Democracy Week in November last year, saw the council set up pop-up polling stations where they asked young people to pick two top issues which concern them. Voters had their choice of nine key issues which were suggested by young people from Malvern Cube Projects.

The issues included:

- Climate change and the environment
- Community safety including tackling cyber bullying

- Education and learning
- Emotional and mental wellbeing support
- Housing
- Jobs, money and opportunities
- Relationships with friends and family
- Things to do for young people
- Transport

MHDC visited Tenbury High Ormiston Academy (where young people also managed the station and became Poll Clerks for the day), Dyson Perrins Academy, Resonate Youth Club in Malvern, Malvern Cube Youth Café, and Upton Youth Club.

More than 300 ballots were counted with just under 600 issues voted for. The top two issues were 'climate change and the environment' and 'jobs, money and opportunities'. The Community Services team and Councillors from MHDC will now be working closely with Worcestershire Youth Cabinet to plan a Youth Citizen's Assembly to bring



Evie Pugh, Community Services Apprentice at MHDC and Cllr Frances Victory, Youth Champion at MHDC

together local young people with decision makers, to discuss those top two issues, voted for by local young people.

This event forms part of the council's Five Year Plan priority to 'give young people the opportunity to have a say in public services'.

Young people can register to take part in the Youth Citizen's Assembly by completing the short expression of interest form at:

[www.malvern hills.gov.uk/
community/youth](http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community/youth)
or by emailing:
[communityservices@
malvern hills.gov.uk](mailto:communityservices@malvern hills.gov.uk)

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Christmas at Croome Court

Tim Hickson

When the Croome Court Wednesday volunteers had their festive, pre-Christmas lunch, I had been asked to do some research to find what George William Coventry, the 6th Earl, would have done on Christmas Day in the 18th Century. This is what I found.

First, the extensive Croome archives contain no mention of Christmas. So I had to deduce what might have happened then. Throughout the Country, at the start of his Earldom, Christmas fun, feasting and games would have lasted from Christmas Day through to New Year's Day. However, as the Industrial Revolution developed, manufacturing and mining employers could not afford for their workers to be away for so long so their holiday shrank towards the two days we have now. This change eventually spread throughout the population. For the religious at that time, which was the vast majority of the Nation, there were two big fasts, one in Lent, the other in Advent (from the 1st to 24th of December.). During that time their food consisted of vegetables and, if lucky, fish. Furthermore, not being permitted to consume animal-derived products, they could not have cow's milk but drank Almond 'milk'. (Not just a fad of today's trendy, it had been a drink since early times, just as that made with soy, coconut, hazelnut, walnut and other plants.) So by Christmas Day most people were craving red meat.

Homes were decorated with greenery, holly and evergreens. Although King George III's Queen Charlotte had introduced a Christmas tree to the Royal Court, trees were not widely adopted until much later when The Illustrated London News published an engraving of Queen Victoria and her family with a decorated tree.

In the C18th, Christmas Day as a religious festival was taken more seriously and, in the morning, everyone would go to church. After that, it was the custom amongst the wealthy to give food and drink to the needy. (There is a photograph of the 9th Earl giving beef and bread

to the children of the tenants on Christmas Eve, 1915). Duty done, the 6th Earl and family, and any guests, could repair to the Court for the Christmas Feast. This is likely to have begun at about 3p.m.

In the Dining Room, food was served a la Francaise, in which there were two courses and, for each one, a large number of dishes were served simultaneously. If you fancied trying something on the other side of the table you had to ask fellow diners to pass that dish across to you. It would have taken quite a time for everyone to have sampled all the dishes that appealed to them and inevitably food grew cold. Soup would not be left for the duration of the course but would be replaced, usually by fish. It is interesting to think that today we find 'small dishes', tapas and mezze fun. Perhaps that is why service a la Francaise persisted?

Once people had had enough of what was on the first course, the whole lot would be replaced by a fresh set of dishes. An example, from 1791, is shown here. Notice that a few sweet dishes were present this time. With the growth of plantations in the Caribbean, sugar had gone from being so rare it would be treated as a spice to something more readily available. However, remember that the mince pies would still contain meat. All this would be accompanied by wine, port and brandy. When eating had ended, coffee would



Queen Victoria & Albert around a Christmas Tree

have been served, normally elsewhere in comfort, allowing the staff to clear up. Then, if the children were still very young, this was the time when they might be brought in. After that it was time for games, including gambling using cards. Conversation and drinking continued with, perhaps, music. A light supper would be available in the evening. Reading about a Christmas Day in 1773 at New College, Oxford, I learnt that the dons sat down to dine at 3p.m.. They also had

two courses but not with as many dishes in each as would have happened at Croome. Still, they did not finish eating until 4.30p.m. Then they retired to the Senior Common Room before going to the chapel for prayers at 6.00 p.m. After that, most went to the nearby Chequers Inn for more drink and roast rabbit as a supper. If the family at Croome gave any gifts, this usually took place on Twelfth Night. Only in Victorian times did Christmas Day become more as we know it today.

BILL OF FARE FOR DECEMBER (1791)
Richard Briggs, *The English Art of Cookery*

First Course						Second Course					
Oyster Patties	Mock Turtle Soup Removed with Salmon				Pilchard of Poole	Mince Pye	Capon Larded & Roasted		Pineapple Cream		
Spinach	Letting Sauce	Chicken Pie		Oyster Sauce	Brown	Stew'd Indiv	Sauce	Partridge Pates		Sauce	Apparagus
Leg of Lamb Fennel	Rump of Beef ala Double				Turkey Boiled & Oyster	Pheasant	Swan Roasted		Sauces		
Mashed Turneps	Plain Butter	Tongue & Oyster		Shrimp Sauce	Stew'd Calves	Stew'd Mutton	Sauce	Calfs Ears Beshamel		Sauce	Green Turtle Stew'd
Custard Milk	Soup Sauter Removed Crisp Sauter				Stew'd Calves	Turtle	2 Wild Ducks				Apple Puffs

Farming

The year of 2024 ended for many of us engaged in the world of agriculture with the Chancellor's announcement, in her Budget, of changes to the application of Tax Relief (IHT and BPR) to farm businesses on the death of a farmer. Since for many years the vast majority of farms have been passed on down directly to a son (and occasionally a daughter) who has joined what has often been for many generations a 'family business', and the profit (returns) from farming are relatively low when measured against the capital value of farm properties and other farming assets, it was considered appropriate for Inheritance Tax on agricultural land and assets to be usually zero rated, unlike many other capital assets. The Chancellor's decision to do away with a large part of that relief has caused a great deal of anger within the agricultural community, and that has spilled over into 2025, in the hope that she and her Government may think again and reverse or at least modify her initial plans. Most farmers who own their land are, in asset terms,

Mike Page

reasonably wealthy as agricultural land has a good value which tends to rise at least in line with inflation. As I have heard it said, land retains its value because it is in limited supply: "they don't make it anymore." Returns from farming, measured against the capital value of land and other agricultural assets are usually measured in lower single figures and I remember having a conversation with a friend who ran a car sales business and he said that no-one in his industry would even consider making a capital investment unless they were looking at a probable return on capital of the order of 20% or better. Part of the problem with giving tax relief on agricultural assets (chiefly land) is that it has encouraged some who have amassed considerable fortunes in other ways to invest that money into agricultural land using it purely as a means to avoid their offspring having to pay 40% Inheritance Tax when they die. Not actually farming a single acre of that property for their own benefit, they are accepting lower returns but taking advantage of a tax relief



Sheep (fattening lambs) grazing stubble turnips, planted after an earlier crop has been harvested on that field. They start off by nibbling away all the top growth (leaves + stems) and eventually just about the entire root mass, which is growing mostly above ground. It is a good feed for sheep: they enjoy it as a food and it lets them increase in size/put on weight at a time when their usual food (grass) is getting in short supply.

primarily designed to support the continuity of farming and safeguarding the national food supply. It will be interesting to see how this confrontation plays out eventually. In the meantime we have enjoyed a better autumn/winter this time than last year, even though conditions have been harsh at times. The newly introduced Government agricultural support measures, which lean heavily towards environmental benefits rather than the total output benefits of

our EU days and earlier, are being taken up by farmers – they are here on this farm; the hope is that, while they will in the short-term have a detrimental effect on total food production, bringing about a better balance with the environment will eventually pay dividends in that the slow but remorseless squeeze on environmental diversity will cease and agricultural production will become a positive player in maintenance of our surroundings.



VETERINARY ADVICE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!



The Importance of Vaccination

Vaccinations are an important part of our pets' healthcare requirements. They are there to protect our pets from potentially deadly diseases, such as canine parvovirus, feline enteritis and rabbit haemorrhagic disease. As well as stopping the potential spread of diseases like leptospirosis to humans.

Unfortunately, there has been a worrying trend of a reduction in the numbers of both pets and humans being vaccinated in recent years. This has led to regional outbreaks of serious diseases that have not been seen in large numbers for some time. Up to a third of pets are not kept up to date with their routine vaccinations. Vaccination, in part, works by 'herd immunity' – the more animals that are vaccinated the less likely those vulnerable to the disease will become infected. With fewer animals being vaccinated the more at risk our animals are, even those that are routinely vaccinated.

Recommended vaccinations:

Dogs

- Core vaccinations (those recommended for any domestic dog worldwide) are for canine parvovirus, canine adenovirus (hepatitis) and distemper, after the initial vaccination course these are needed every 3 years.
- In the UK countryside leptospirosis is not only a potentially fatal condition but can also be spread to humans, this vaccine is needed every 12 months.
- Kennel cough can lead to a debilitating cough and is very contagious, it is recommended for dogs in any setting where there are multiple dogs present e.g. kennelling or training classes, or for dogs that are particularly sociable and enjoy greeting every dog. It is a 12 monthly vaccine usually given up the nose.

Cats

- Core vaccinations are for feline enteritis, feline herpesvirus and feline calicivirus (cat flu). Enteritis is given 3 yearly and the flu viruses are needed yearly.
- Feline leukaemia virus vaccine is given 3 yearly and is recommended for any outdoor cats.

Rabbits

- Rabbits have a single combined vaccination yearly which covers for rabbit haemorrhagic disease 1 and 2 and myxomatosis.

Most vaccination appointments will include a general health check to catch other conditions early, such as dental disease and heart disease. Contact your vet to make sure your pet is up to date with their vaccinations.

Best wishes *Eliza*

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Ailsa's Kitchen *Ailsa Craddock*

This cookery page is a collection of some favourite recipes written at my kitchen table, using ingredients you can find locally and in season. Personally, I love the changes and wouldn't want to live anywhere other than the UK with all its climate and regional diversities. I look forward to the first asparagus from the farm just around the corner, English strawberries from the local market, the freshest fish from our British waters, field mushrooms from an autumn walk.

With less carbon footprint and more freshness, you will soon understand why eating British and following the months will tickle your tastebuds, save you some pennies and help the local economy.

It wasn't so long ago that every meal people ate was prepared using seasonal ingredients because there was no means of transporting international produce between countries. People ate as nature intended and their diet was dictated by what grew locally. There really is no sense or benefit in eating fruit, vegetables, meat and fish that have been flown around the world when you can enjoy native ingredients that have been grown, reared or

caught a matter of miles from home.

Every time we look at our plates, we should ask ourselves where the food comes from, how it was produced and what it cost – not just in terms of money but also in terms of environmental damage.

To entice us to buy fruits and vegetables, supermarkets lay out stacks of perfectly formed specimens. Unfortunately, this means that 20 – 40% of local farm produce is wasted because it isn't "perfect" enough even though it tastes absolutely fine. It also means that to reduce the risk of blemished produce, the former relies more and more on a range of pesticides and fertilisers to keep food available out of season. The fertilisers also cause massive problems in the environment as soil biodiversity and water course are polluted by the run off from fields. Locally grown will often cost less, will be fresher, tastier and more nutritious. It will be less damaging to the Earth due to the reduction in energy used to transport far flung places. You will also be supporting farmers and producers in your area and, in turn, helping the local economy.



We can change things for the better by:

- *Accepting "wonky" or less than perfect vegetables and fruit*
- *Grow your own.*
- *Eat by the season*

Spring is traditionally a time of culinary celebration after the Winter months. Fresh green produce, various meats and berries begin to appear. By the Summer the harvest from land and sea is in progress and many fruit and vegetables are plentiful.

With the advent of Autumn, there is still much about and will now include wild mushrooms, British apples and pears and nuts.

Winter is not the dull culinary season many people think it is with game and winter vegetables that need a touch of frost to bring them to their peak.

Make the best of this month's offerings with warming soups and casseroles and seasonal cooking will never feel so wholesome.

A view from the middle

I would very much like to take this opportunity to wish all readers a very Happy New Year. To my deep regret, I missed last month's deadline due to illness and missed both the opportunity to pass on festive greetings and to feature in this publication's 100th issue. The 101st will have to do! The proprietors and all contributors throughout the years should be congratulated for this achievement. With all the talk of the death of print media, it is remarkable to have survived - and indeed to be thriving - through so many travails. Not even Covid, which saw the collapse of many businesses and ventured, put an

end to it. For that, I am thankful and Pershore should count itself so.

By contrast to the fortitude and adaptability of the paper, I was stuck down by flu before Christmas and was completely stopped in my tracks. There are some terrible bugs going round and this one saw me lose days into a complete haze. Luckily, I recovered and was able to enjoy the big day itself. I only hope that next year I will have a more healthy run up to the day and that, in 98 issues' time, I will meet the deadline for the 200th episode. In the meantime, I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2025.

Coconut Curry Soup – the best soup using leftover vegetables

1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 chopped onion
1 -2 cloves garlic, smashed
Small knob of ginger, grated
1 tablespoon red curry paste
1 tablespoon turmeric
Salt to taste, 1 dessertspoon sugar
1 14 ounce can of coconut milk
1 pint vegetable stock
(from a cube will do)
the fun part - any vegetables you have in the house!
You can add:
potatoes/sweet potatoes/
parsnips/ carrots/ courgettes/
peppers/ mushrooms/ spinach

Heat the oil in a large pot over a medium heat.

Add the onion, garlic and ginger and stir fry for a few minutes.

Add the curry paste, turmeric, salt and sugar.

Stir fry again to combine.

Add the coconut milk and stock - and whatever lost vegetables you have found!

Simmer until soft, blend to silky smooth and serve with some crispy fried onions and/or coriander on top.

"The word impossible is
not in my dictionary"

Napoleon Bonaparte

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Evie's Teenage Focus

Evie Aubin



It feels so good to be writing here again, it seems like a lifetime ago since I last did. I believe the last time I did I was writing about my time at university, but since then I've practically been home the entire time. I think the winter break has been a much-needed change of pace; there is never a dull moment at university however it has been nice to take things slowly again.

Usually, I'm off from school for about two weeks but now I've been home for almost a month and I'm starting to realise all the things I've been missing. First and foremost of course my family, whilst I FaceTime them almost every day it's of course not the same as being there with them or only a few minutes away from them every day. However this one will always be a two-sided coin for me, if I'm at university I miss my family but if I'm back home with my family, I then miss the friends that I have made whilst being at university. In particular two of the girls in my flat, we talk almost daily but I still can't wait to see them again. But still being back home means my dad does most of the cooking, so I'm not being left to fend for myself every night, and even better we have a dishwasher so I'm not having to wash everything up so I will always take it as a win. Going on from this a also massively miss my friends from home, it's so hard to get to see each other now, every moment I get with them I treasure, whether we spend a few hours in the pub or coffee shop, or we all get together for a while and sit

with each other, I am reminded of how deeply I miss them. Another thing I miss whilst at university is nature. Whilst I do love the city in Oxford, I do miss how much nature we have back home, to be honest looking back I think all the time I've spent living around here I've taken it for granted. Having Tiddesley Wood so close and Croome Court a quick drive away I've always been surrounded by nature; and I'm yet to find anything like it in Oxford. I've been to the botanical gardens a couple of times but it's nothing like what we have here, especially when we now have to pay to get in. Whilst I am yet to find a good walk I am often home often enough for it to not be too bad; whilst I do live at university I have somehow made a pattern of coming home for the weekend once every two or three weeks, where I can go for lovely walks with my Gran. So whilst it's not uncommon for me to be home, the winter break has been a nice change of not having to travel so often. That's all from me, until next month,

Toodles!

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Styling your garden with pantone colour of the Year - Mocha Mousse

Are you wondering how to incorporate the 2025 Pantone Colour of the Year into your garden? This year's choice, PANTONE 17-1230 Mocha Mousse, is a rich, warming brown hue that evokes the comforting qualities of chocolate and coffee. This nurturing colour is perfect for creating a cosy and inviting outdoor space. As we cosy up during the winter months, it's the perfect time to dream about transforming our gardens. While snuggling under a warm blanket with a hot chocolate, you can start planning how to bring the comforting tones of Mocha Mousse into your garden. Here's a few ideas on how you can do it.

Start with Plants

The best way to introduce this cosy colour is through your choice of plants. Here are some stunning options for colour from spring to autumn:

Tulipa 'La Belle Époque'

Such a pretty springtime flower. This time of year, you will need to purchase them 'in the green' so they may be tricky to find. But it's worth the effort as it ideal for pots and front of borders to add warmth. Combine them with flowers in pastel shades of pink, mauve, cream and pale green. Or if you want to add drama, use dark colours such as Tulipa 'Queen of the night'.

Nicotiana langsdorffii



'Bronze Queen'

Has muted, bronze-brown chocolate-coloured flowers from June to October and grow to around 1.2m tall. They can easily be grown from seed too, which means you can try them without a huge expense, and they look great with Dahlia 'Café au Lait'.

Dahlia 'Café au Lait'

Boasts huge dinner plate-sized flowers with a dark brown centre and blush pink and cream petals. These perennials need winter protection as they can't survive cold, damp weather. Store them correctly, and they'll come back to life in spring, allowing you to take cuttings and expand



your plant collection for free!

These dahlias grow to around 1.2m tall and 75cm wide, thriving in sunny, well-drained soil. They bloom from July to November, providing late summer and autumn colour. To make the flowers 'pop' in your borders, a dark leaf shrub such as Pittosporum 'Tom Thumb' is a dense evergreen shrub that grows to around 1m tall and is a versatile backdrop to many flowers and is easy to maintain too.

Alternative Garden

Décor Ideas:

If you want to refresh your patio area, in addition to plants, painting is one of the quickest



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and most cost-effective ways. Use Cuprinol Garden Colours and visit a DIY store paint mixing hub for custom colours. Paint fence panels, furniture, and planters, then add cushions and a rug to create a cosy relaxation spot for summer evenings. For stylish home décor items, try Etsy for personalised items.

Pantone Mocha Mousse



February gardening tips

Early February

Continue planting trees, shrubs and perennial plants if conditions are suitable.

Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers. Plant shallot sets (in colder areas start them off in pots of compost in a cold frame)

If you do not have a cold frame just buy a large clear plastic storage box, drill some holes in the bottom put in a layer of grit, pop on the lid and there is a cold frame.

Look after garden birds by providing food and water- try to tailor the food to the birds you have around.

In heated greenhouses sow Antirrhinums, Begonia semperflorens, Verbenas and Pansies for summer bedding. Otherwise buy seedlings or baby bedding plants later to grow on. Sow sweet pea seeds, growing them on in a cold greenhouse or frame.

Buy seed potatoes and stand them on end in trays or egg boxes to chit (begin to shoot) Potatoes are easy to grow in pots above 30cm (12in) in diameter. To this end store some first early seed potatoes in the fridge bringing some out to chit every 10 days. The previously chitted ones are then planted in pots and kept in a frost-free place to grow. You will then have a succession of new potatoes to harvest every 14 days or so.

Mid-February

Complete the pruning of apples, pears and soft fruits. Prune Clematis that have their main flowering period from July onwards back hard to about 30cm (1ft) above the soil. Cut back dead stems of herbaceous perennials to ground level.

Stock up on pots, labels, twine and other quickly consumed sundries before the season gets into full swing.

Prune back old, woody Mahonia stems to keep the plants bushy.

Buy Begonia and Dahlia tubers as well as other summer flowering bulbs such as Gladioli.

Cover some strawberry plants with cloches for an earlier crop.

Prune Buddlejias and the Spiraeas with colourful foliage, like Spiraea Goldflame, back hard.

Late February

Dig up and divide herbaceous perennials.

Check wall trained plants to see if they require watering as it can get very dry at the base of a wall.

In heated greenhouses sow

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester



Dianthus, Lobelia, Ageratum, and multi-bloom Geraniums for summer bedding.

Dig up, divide and re-plant overcrowded clumps of snowdrops.

Prune winter jasmine (Jasminum nudiflorum) by trimming back by two thirds shoots that have flowered. Sow summer cauliflower in trays under glass.

Gregory's World!

Gregory Sidaway Exeter College, Oxford

Strangers on a Train

The train thrummed underfoot, charging northwards from Ljubljana to Salzburg, weaving between the leaning shoulders and craggy faces of the Austrian Alps. Natdog and I had a compartment to ourselves, but I was expecting Poirot to poke his moustachioed face around the door at any minute. I regret to inform you, he did not. Someone else did, however, lots of someone elses. My ears pricked to hollering in the compartment further down. It was on the move. I'd spent our recent nights in hostels, falling in and out of sleep as our fellow inmates creaked and squeaked their way to the loo, or – in Vienna – as a Gung ho cleaner burst in, whacked on the lights, clanged the bin and left everything in a wetter state than he found it. I'd perfected a technique of sandwiching my head under a pillow, rolling a hood over my eyes to block out any light, and using ear plugs, though my single-use pair were getting fluffier every night. So, I'd been rather enjoying this moment of peace in the sublime Austrian wilderness. Our compartment door slid open. A group of Austrians, wearing straw hats with feathery plumes, squeezed inside, took the seats

opposite us and dropped a cardboard crate of beer at our feet. These guys were eighteen and about to begin six months of compulsory military service; they mentioned a health and fitness exam – clearly, they must've already completed it, because it'd barely passed midday and they were collectively keeping Schwechater Bier in business. "Prost! Prost!" they cheered, rotating their cans on the air conditioning vent to cool them down and adding: "No hide and seek!" when Natdog lowered his unopened one. The view outside was as stunning as a laptop screensaver, but all I could focus on was the can of beer cracked open in my face and pushed into my hand – which one of them then tried charging me for! As we plunged through a tunnel and our dark compartment murmured with disembodied laughter, I began eagerly anticipating Salzburg. Like pretty much everywhere, Salzburg offered a historic market square, churches, lots of stairs, no free toilets, and a castle. Maybe it was the overcast weather, but Hohensalzburg fortress felt less like a Disney palace, and more like somewhere Indiana Jones would be held prisoner and have to escape from. We also discovered a plaque marking where Mozart

had lived, and passed the Starbucks next door, where he probably penned his Requiem. Natdog had made a pact with the powers that be – such are his abilities – for our day at Lake Bled to be sunny, warm and photo-worthy. However, those powers then gave us a week of pretty dismal weather after that. Instead of the hills being alive with the sound of music, the heavens came alive with the sound of roaring rain. We took shelter under a tree with a box of soggy chilli-cheese doner meat, finding it hard to believe our Lake Bled visit was only yesterday. Hearing about the vein-popping prices in Zurich, we prepared by buying a picnic of pastries and apples in Aldi (in Austria, fun fact, it's called 'Hofer'). However, we weren't so prepared for the temperature drop. I hadn't packed a coat. Natdog was still wearing his trunks, hoping to swim in Lake Zurich. He seemed to really like the city's business-vibe, while I had a whale of a time inside the public toilet cubicle. Many far more accomplished travel writers have probably captured the atmosphere of Zurich more effectively – a city of coarse greys and steely blues, where a McDonald's box of twenty chicken nuggets costs £15 – but I bet none took the time to inform their readers about this particularly



city gem. Until now, fellow reader! Entry cost one franc. I'd never paid contactless to use the toilet before, but it instilled in me a feeling of high-tech sophistication as a pair of doors hissed open and I stepped inside. Everything was sensor-activated. I couldn't turn my head without loo roll shooting out of the wall. It even timed me, letting everyone else queueing outside know exactly how long I was making them suffer for. I got my franc's worth and tried out all the sensors, only to hurry up when it crossed my mind that this sentient loo might have a designated time limit and might soon eject me. When you leave, the doors seal and the entire cubicle reverberates as its interior becomes a vacuum, sucking away any aromatic traces of the previous occupant. I'm pretty sure it did that for everyone – not just me. Until next time, when Natdog and I embark on the final leg of our journey, to Munich, Berlin and beyond (known locally as Birmingham)!

Romy's Uni Life

Romy Kemp Liverpool University

How is it 2025? With the promises of the New Year, comes New Year Resolutions. Although it's always great to set yourself goals, I do personally believe that New Year Resolutions somewhat set you up for failure. Goals and dreams should be set as a positive setting stone for success, rather than as a compulsory task. This tradition should be embraced positively as a progressive victory which doesn't push you into incidental failure. This year, I've decided to choose growth as my goal, both physically and mentally I want to grow stronger and stay resilient. Change can be a good way to encourage growth. Being at home, for the holidays, has been lovely and I've had a great time meeting up with

family and friends. I've really tried to meet as many people as possible over this holiday to catch up and keep the relationships strong. I find it quite hard staying consistent in messaging and phoning people - one week I respond quickly but the next I can't find the energy to respond. That might sound bad, but I know it's quite common! However, over this holiday I have been extremely active in responses (mostly)! As much as I have enjoyed being back at home over the Christmas break, the feeling of going back to university is such a wonderful one. It's like going back to your second family. I have missed them all so much and look forward to meeting up with them all once again.

The weather over the past month has been incredibly cold and icy. Being back in the countryside has allowed me to see the frosty conditions of flooded fields and ponds. Despite this I am grateful to not be in Liverpool during this bad weather spell, I do miss the bustling energy of a big city. The wind is bitter at this time of year and so I am glad to be away from Liverpool. The fog in my village lasted for days when the weather was at its worst a couple of weeks ago, however I loved watching the fog surrounding all the external house lights. It gave it such a surreal and uncanny feel to the dark streets. Over the holiday, I have been preparing for my exams and trying to prepare myself for the next semester of second year at university. There is, obviously, an immense amount of reading to do for an English degree and



I am miraculously keeping on top of it all but it is not uncommon to fall behind, so there is no need to worry if that is the case for any essays, tests or exams! Everything will work out in the end if you are aware of opportunities and the hard work you must put in to get to where you want to in life. I am extremely excited for 2025 and the opportunities it will bring! If there's a time to be proactive in taking control over your own life, it is the present!

Pure beeswax candles



I have just returned from a trip to visit some Christmas markets in Germany and whilst there are quite a few commercial market traders with bought in goods, the tradition of rural artisans coming into the cities to sell their craftwork is still very much alive. In Mainz, a

beekeeping enterprise had a wonderful display of pure beeswax candles, filling the chalet with the beehive aroma of the wax. Beeswax burns slowly, with a bright flame, and a pleasant aroma, but it is an expensive material, so in Britain 'beeswax' church

Martyn Cracknell

candles may contain as little as 10% beeswax. The designs ranged from simple pillars with a raised pattern or picture, to pinecones, trees, figurines and even a complete nativity scene. I can't imagine this was very decorative after Joseph's head had been lit for an hour or so! These would all have been made by pouring molten wax into rubber or silicone moulds in which a wick had been fixed. An alternative method for making conventional tapered candles is to repeatedly dip a stretched wick in a vat of hot wax, allowing it to cool between dips. It is surprising how quickly the successive layers of wax build up, but to achieve a smooth finish the rate of raising and lowering must be very even. Dipping jigs with wick stretched and fitted vertically enable many candles to be formed simultaneously, and mechanising the lowering and lifting enables uniform batches to be made. This was the method used to make the magnificent candles which flanked the queens coffin at her funeral and lying in state. The Victorian company which made them is Charles Farris, wax chandlers who have a summary of their history on their website and they have a short YouTube



video of candle dipping @charlesfarris6878.

Whilst candles are no longer used on Christmas trees where they pose an unacceptable fire risk, many people still burn candles as table decorations. Remember to place them on a stable fireproof surface, not in a draught, and do not leave them unattended when lit.



Village Life

Life in a village means all sorts to all sorts of people, and a real sense of belonging within a community is perhaps the biggest bonus. There are so few households that it's possible to make contact with the majority on one level or another. Some will become firm friendships; some will remain no more than 'nodding' acquaintances and some may emerge as needing support in some way as life twists and turns.

In a former life, living in a crowded city, it was possible to rub along knowing very few neighbours and being known to a similarly small group of people. Yes, we had friends but very few who lived nearby or shared local experiences.

In a small community it's inevitable that plenty is known about your life, just as you know about your fellow villagers. That took some getting used to when we first moved here, but we now know this is more about sharing experiences than

intruding. We value the fact that others in the village know what is important to us, just as we know what many of our neighbours' value most. I'm constantly amazed at the level of generosity within our community. *A twelve-year-old lad recently tackled a twelve mile walk to raise awareness of homeless people, and to raise funds for Shelter. One mile for each year of his life is just amazing. Mind you, someone should remind him that if he repeats that ratio every year from now on, he'll be walking to Weston-Super-Mare by the time he gets to my age!*

Other great causes supported in our small village include Alzheimer's research, St Richard's Hospice, MacMillan, charities supporting mental health and support with teenage leukaemia, plus our local church. At various times during the year, and particularly over the recent Christmas period, there have been local collections of

funds and donations supporting the Pershore Community Cupboard.

Numerous other great causes have been supported via sponsored bike rides, extreme physical challenges and the like that deserve huge respect for those who take part.

Closer to home, we have raised funds to enhance our village with spring bulb planting and we're looking to subsidising bird boxes so local people can help encourage our feathered friends. We also funded a defibrillator that's available in the centre of our community providing reassurance should it be needed.

The recent festive season will have seen numerous other acts of generosity, many of which will have passed unnoticed and without fanfare. A big thank you to all who participated. All this shows what can be achieved by living and working together in a close community where we can look out for each

John Driscoll



other and offer help where needed. We may not always agree with everyone around us, but with mutual respect we can still work together and achieve great things.

I'm just so glad I didn't take on the mile-a-year challenge all those years ago! No disrespect to Weston-Super-Mare, but if I want to go there, I'll choose the car/bus/train any day over walking!

Inheritance Tax for Farmers

Carol Draper

While the headlines from the last budget have largely died down, many of the impacts have yet to be felt. One of the biggest headlines related to the changes to Inheritance Tax for farmers with different sides arguing about just how many and how badly farms would be affected.

Amidst all the noise the detail is often lost, so hopefully this will provide some clarity. There are reliefs that can be claimed against Agricultural land and property when it is being passed on as an inheritance following a death the most important one for farmers being Agricultural Property Relief (APR). Where the owner of a farm has occupied it for at least 2 years, or the farm has been occupied for 7 years by someone else, APR can be claimed against 100% of the value of the farm's land and buildings. In most cases this has meant farms do not qualify for inheritance tax. The budget changed the rules on APR from April 2026 by capping the value on which relief can be claimed at £1 million per owner. APR relief is in addition to the standard Inheritance Tax allowance, which is £500,000 per individual who owns a family home. A farm owned by a married couple could therefore have a combined relief of £3 million once both spouses have died. If a farm is valued at



more than £3million, tax would be payable on the balance. From April 2026, where inheritance tax is payable on farms, this will be at the reduced rate of 20% compared to the standard rate for inheritance tax of 40%. Ordinarily inheritance tax must be paid by the end of the sixth month after the person died and interest will be charged on any payments made late. Farmers will be allowed to spread the payment of any inheritance tax due over 10 years interest free. The treasury estimated a quarter of farms would be affected by the new rules although clearly not all at once. However, as farms are typically asset rich, and cash poor planning is essential to mitigate the potential impact of future inheritance tax bills.

Carol Draper FCCA

“ My father always told me.
Find a job you love and you'll
never have to work a day in your life ”

Jim Fox



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Spring Bulbs

Angela Johns

Hello to longer, lighter days, bluer skies and stronger sunrays! Slowly but surely we can start to see the awakening of the Earth from the darker duvet days of January. We are halfway to the Spring Equinox, from the Winter Solstice in December. The 1st February used to be celebrated as the beginning of Spring. It is certainly a time when we start to notice new growth, and the sunlight has a new quality to it no matter how chilly it still is.

This winter I feel like I have hunkered down more than usual, taking as many opportunities as possible to rest and regroup my thoughts. By building my inner stores of energy, trying to let those things that no longer serve me fall away, I feel like a Spring bulb. I'm ready to push my way through the soil that has nurtured me and grow into the sunlight. Just like my growing children over the years, I have been nestling in the soil of family, good friends, nourishing food and a warm hearth.

And just like them, I want to be anchored in this soil not buried by it. I want to be free to love and be loved and still be able to make my own decisions. I don't want to be smothered by obligations but to rise up to my responsibilities. And I want to start new projects, not be stuck in the mud. Just like the Spring bulbs I need some time to gather the energy that enables me to push through the soil towards my sunlight. But we can't just take from the soil if we want it to keep on giving, it too needs care and attention. Spring is such a wonderful time to make fresh starts.



We can Spring clean our thought patterns and our habits. We can decide whether our past and our present can be used to feed the future we desire. Like the strong, resilient dandelion that grows through the cracks in the pavement where there is little soil and it must dig deep, there is always hope - green shoots and a burst of someone's favourite colour. Or like the delicate and gentle Verbascum that doesn't flower until the second season, some of us just take a little longer. Neither are confined by the soil but bloom according to their own rulebook, in their own time.

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

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Pain and the brain

Louise Anderson MSci, MSc, BSc, BA, BSc Hons

Breaking the Pain-Depression Cycle: Cognisance's Innovative Treatment in Pershore

Living with chronic pain can be an overwhelming experience, particularly when paired with depression or anxiety. The relationship between physical and emotional pain often creates a vicious cycle that affects every aspect of life. Groundbreaking research into shared brain anatomy is shedding light on this link, and Louise Anderson, who runs Cognisance Pain Management in Pershore, is using these insights to transform how chronic pain is managed in Pershore.

Understanding the Pain-Depression Link

The connection between chronic pain and depression is deeply rooted in the brain. Regions such as the somatosensory cortex, which processes physical sensations, are closely linked to the amygdala and hypothalamus, which are responsible for managing emotions and stress responses. This shared brain structure explains why chronic pain is frequently exacerbated in individuals with depression. Neurotransmitters like serotonin and norepinephrine provide further evidence of this connection. These vital chemicals regulate mood but also play a key role in pain perception. Disruptions in these systems create a feedback loop, where pain intensifies depression, and depression, in turn, heightens the perception of pain. This relationship is evident in conditions like fibromyalgia, migraines, and irritable bowel syndrome. Research suggests that nearly two-thirds of people with chronic pain also suffer



from depression or anxiety. *An Evidenced Based Approach to Treatment* Cognisance Pain Management, led by Louise Anderson, provides evidenced based treatments that address both the physical and emotional dimensions of chronic pain. Her therapy is informed by the latest research and is designed to change the cycle of pain and depression, helping people regain balance and control. "The relationship between pain and depression is complex, but it is not untreatable," says Louise Anderson. "By recognising the shared brain anatomy, we can create personalised treatment plans tailored to each individual." Cognisance Pain Management operates from a clinic room in the centre of Pershore, offering a welcoming space for those seeking help. *Regaining Control* For those struggling with chronic pain and depression, finding the right support is crucial. Cognisance Pain Management combines compassion and science to evidence-based care, giving patients a pathway to recovery and improved quality of life.

For more information, visit www.cognisancepm.com

Self-Love:

The foundation for a fulfilling Life

Self-love is essential for emotional well-being and personal growth. Holistically, self-love means valuing and nurturing your mind, body, and spirit. It's about embracing your authentic self and fostering inner harmony through acceptance, compassion, and intention.

Why Self-Love Matters

Promotes Mental and Emotional Health

Practicing self-love creates a safe inner space, reducing anxiety and self-doubt. By treating yourself kindly, you build resilience and navigate life with clarity and strength.

Strengthens Relationships

When you honour your own worth, you set boundaries that foster healthy connections. Self-love invites authenticity and allows love to flow freely between yourself and others.

Builds Confidence

Recognising your unique gifts fosters unshakable confidence. This empowerment helps you pursue dreams, embrace opportunities, and inspire others. *Supports Personal Growth* Self-love nurtures curiosity and adaptability. By accepting where you are while striving for growth, you build trust in yourself and embrace life's lessons.

Self-Compassion

Being gentle with yourself means recognising that you are doing your best with the resources you have. It involves letting go of perfectionism and accepting that it's okay to make mistakes. In a society that prioritizes productivity, self-compassion is revolutionary. It allows space to:

- Rest and recharge.
- Seek support without shame.
- Adjust expectations to align with reality.



Approaching challenges with kindness doesn't mean giving up. It's about shifting from self-criticism to self-encouragement, treating yourself as a cherished friend.

Cultivating Self-Love

1. *Cherish Your Whole Self:* Engage in activities like yoga, meditation, or journaling to nourish your being.
 2. *Reframe Negative Thoughts:* Replace self-criticism with affirmations and encouragement.
 3. *Set Boundaries:* Say no to draining situations and protect your energy.
 4. *Seek Support:* Surround yourself with uplifting people and communities.
 5. *Celebrate Progress:* Acknowledge every step forward, no matter how small.
 6. *Pause and Reflect:* Take moments to breathe and reconnect with your inner wisdom.
- Self-love empowers you to live authentically and with purpose. By treating yourself with kindness and compassion, you build a foundation of resilience and joy. Start today. Be gentle with yourself. You deserve a life filled with love and wholeness – and it begins with you.

Emily Papirnik
intentiontherapy.co.uk

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**The easy way to
Feel better**

Healthy Heart Tip: Carbohydrates and heart health



Carbohydrates are one of the main food groups, but many people are unaware of the different types of carbohydrates and the impact they have on your health. Did you know that sugar is a form of carbohydrate? Carbohydrates come in all different shapes and sizes, some are good for our health and some are not so good. Fibre, which is a form of carbohydrate that is beneficial for heart health, should be eaten regularly as part of a healthy balanced diet, however only 9% of the UK meet the recommendations. This tip shares the importance of carbohydrates in your diet, where you get them from, and how to increase your intake. *Importance of carbohydrates* Carbohydrates are your bodies main source of energy and should make up 45 to 60% of your total daily energy intake. They fuel most of your body's cells to allow you to carry out everyday tasks and extra ones like exercise. Any excess carbohydrates that you've consumed but not used up are stored in your liver and muscles, these are slowly released throughout the day for

blood sugar stability and brain function. Fibre, a form of carbohydrate that is naturally found in plants, promotes digestive health and helps to reduce your risk of heart disease. It does this by helping to stabilise blood sugar levels, lower bad (LDL) cholesterol levels, reduce blood pressure and inflammation. *Sources of carbohydrates* Some sources of carbohydrates are more well-known than others, such as pasta, rice, bread, potatoes and cereal. These are often your main sources of energy and ones that you pair with other foods to create your meals. It is recommended for better heart health to follow a diet higher in fibre and choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties of pasta, rice, cereals and bread where possible. Sugar is also a form of carbohydrate, called a simple carbohydrate. Your body can break it down quickly to provide immediate energy however, it doesn't have much nutritional value and can be the cause of weight gain. You should consume this in small amounts infrequently. *Increasing your fibre intake* Increasing your fibre intake to meet the recommended guidelines of 30g per day should be done gradually to avoid any unpleasant symptoms such as bloating. It is recommended that you drink plenty of fluids when adding more fibre to your diet to keep your digestive system working effectively. Making healthier choices and increasing your fibre intake will benefit overall health. Make sure you eat 5+ a day of fruit and vegetables, whilst swapping your carbohydrates to wholegrain varieties where possible.

Whatever the problem, we are here to help!



Citizens Advice South Worcestershire helped over almost 8,000 people in the last eighteen months and dealt with over 26,000 issues, raising over a million pounds for them in terms of grants, rebates, dispute resolution and additional financial entitlements.

Are you struggling to pay your bills, worried about the rising costs of living or struggling to pay fuel, housing and other utility costs? Do you have a problem at work causing you stress or are you concerned about how to sort an issue with your tenancy?

Citizens Advice can help you with all these problems and much more. Trained staff, mostly volunteers, are supported by a small expert management team, providing free, impartial, confidential information and advice tailored to help you manage your problems such as eviction, disconnection, challenging benefit decisions or finding ways to manage multiple debts.

Our advisers can advise you on the best ways to manage your finances, improve your household budgeting and look at ways to put extra money in your pocket.

As well as providing information and advice, we also work with local and national

agencies to help tackle the root cause of local problems and deliver vital services that help lift people out of poverty and provide long-term financial stability.

There are many ways to access our free service and find out more about us:

- Call the Worcestershire Adviceline Monday to Friday, 10.00 am to 4.00 pm on 0808 278 7890
- Face-to-face appointments can be arranged if appropriate
- email us on enquiries.malvern@citizensadvice.org.uk
- For consumer advice call 0808 223 1133
- if you need help to make a Universal Credit Claim, call us on 0800 144 8444
- For 24-hour access to information and details of all our services visit our website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Preventing car theft - Part 1

Follow these simple rules to protect your vehicle from thieves.



1. Lock your vehicle

Locking your vehicle, even when filling up or parked on your drive, greatly reduces the possibility of it being targeted by an opportunist thief. Even if you have locked your vehicle, check you haven't left any windows or the sunroof open. It is illegal to leave your vehicle running unattended, while you de-ice it or warm it up in cold weather. If someone takes it while it's left like this, your insurer won't pay out because you won't be covered. If your vehicle has wing mirrors that fold in automatically when locked, make sure you lock it properly. Criminal gangs are looking for vehicles like these where the wing mirrors are still out because it is clear to them that the vehicle has been left unlocked.

2. Keep the keys safe

Vehicles today are more difficult to steal than ever, unless the thief can access your key or fob to clone them. Keep your keys safe, out of view when at home, and away from your front door. It's not uncommon for car keys to be stolen from inside your home by thieves fishing for them with a stick and hook through the letterbox. If you're selling your car and you meet up with a potential buyer, do not allow the keys out of your sight. They may be cloned by thieves and used later to steal your vehicle at a later date.



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The Art of Wellbeing Centre

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WRO IDP

My Money's on the British Contender

Brian Johnson-Thomas



Everyone's heard of St. Valentine, the Italian guy who died back in 273 and is famous for being the Patron Saint of beekeepers but who doubles as the Saint for lovers in his spare time. Not everyone, alas, has heard of our home grown British equivalent, one Saint Dwywnwen. She was around in the dark Ages, just after the Romans had left but after they had brought Christianity to these shores, sometime around the year 500. One of 24 daughters of Brychan, the King of much of south Wales, she is renowned as the most beautiful and also the most spirited. She fell madly in love with a guy called Macsen, son of a neighbouring King, but Daddy wasn't having any and forbade their marriage. So she had a hissy fit and fled to the woods, lay on the ground and cried herself to sleep. A spirit came to her and told her that her boy friend had been turned into a block of ice but, as compensation, she could have three wishes granted. Right, so the first wish was that Macsen should be thawed, the second was that true love should always be protected in her name

and the third was that she should never again fall in love, not marry. She became a nun and travelled Wales setting up churches and praying for those who were troubled in love. Her final stop was just off the Anglesea coast on the island of Llanddwyn, where the remains of her church can still be seen. After her death a well was discovered nearby and some say that the well occasionally boils up and that those who see it will be lucky in love. If you fancy trying your luck then the island is accessible at low tide and is just next to the Nature Reserve at Newborough Warren. If you're that way then easily the best town to stay in is Beaumaris, with its famous Castle, and a good place to stay would be the Bishopsgate House Hotel, also in Castle Street. For details see: www.bishopsgatehotel.co.uk Nearer home, and with Valentine's Day pending, there are some nice staycation offerings just down the road in Ledbury – just far enough to be off the daily routine but easily accessible for us here. Try the Clock Tower at Barton Court for example. It's a romantic little bolt hole,

which was one the head gardener's cottage but has now been carefully restored to make it both comfortable and charming. It has everything that a couple – and their dog – could need, from a wood fired hot tub in part of the pretty little enclosed garden to a cosy sitting room and a well equipped kitchen. Barton Court has a romantic story of its' own and is said to have inspired both Jane Austen and Thackeray with a parade of spendthrifts and cads. Certainly it dates back to mediaeval times. For details see: www.bartoncourtonline.co.uk Nearby Ledbury is also home to Choccotastic, an artisan chocolatier offering delectable chocolate treats for all occasions, not just Valentine's Day. As well as the shop there's also an integral tearoom on the premises. For details see: www.choccotastic.com Back in the more mundane world the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford upon Avon are encouraging us to try something new with them this year. Amongst other things they're offering a new set and props tour and well as theatre ghost tours and cocktail masterclasses to elevate (?) our Friday nights. The new Scenic Workshop Tours will allow us to explore the process of set and prop creation and watch skilled craftspeople bring a show to life. Visitors can now also book into new Ghost Tours to explore areas normally off limits after the theatre has closed whilst learning about the history of theatre superstition, supernatural sightings and ghostly effects on stage. For workshop-tours see: www.rsc.org.uk/overview/scenic

For details of the ghost tours visit www.rsc.org.uk/overview/ghost-tours. Also, when it comes to mastering the art of mixing a really good cocktail, visitors to the Theatre's Rooftop Restaurant can learn how to craft classic cocktails and mocktails and design their own creation. This event happens on Fridays between 8pm and 930pm and costs £25 per person. For details see: www.rsc.org.uk/rooftop-restaurant/cocktail-masterclass Finally, some news of an exciting local initiative from Broadway. There the Museum and Art Gallery have teamed up with the Gordon Russell Design Museum by launching a new oral history project to capture the personal stories of former employees of Gordon Russell Limited. This collaborative effort is intended to safeguard these memories for future generations. If some of those memories are yours – and you'd like to share – then email either Olivia Perry at: manager@gordonrusselldesignmuseum.org or Anona van Lawick at: anona.vanlawick@broadwaymuseum.org.uk. Whatever you do, have a happy Valentine's Day but, next year, why not remember St. Dwywnwen on 25th January?



Barton Court

Making a Small Claim in the County Court

citizens advice

Small claims made in the County court are for simple cases that don't involve large amounts of money or complicated issues. They're often used to get compensation or your money back if something's gone wrong. Small claims are never usually for more than £10,000. You can use small claims for things like:

- A faulty product
- Poor service
- Being owed a refund
- Disputes with your landlord for example, if they haven't

done minor repairs

- Being owed money for work you've done
- Accidents when you've been injured – for example, a car accident

Small claims are sometimes called 'money claims'. They're meant to be simple, so in general you probably don't need a solicitor. However, before you consider using the courts in this way you should always try to solve the problem another way if you can – for example, by making a complaint or using formal

mediation. This is important because it makes best use of the court's time and can save money in the long run because there are fees for bringing a small claim and if you lose your case or the other party won't pay up, then the fee may not be recovered. If you don't have good evidence, you won't have a strong claim, and it might not be a good idea to start one. Gather together any documents or photographs you have to support your claim. It might help you to list what happened

in date order then find evidence to back it up. It might not be worth making a claim if it's going to cost you almost as much as you're claiming. You'll have to pay a fee to make a claim. How much you have to pay depends on what you're claiming. If you're getting benefits or have a low income, you might get the fees reduced or not have to pay any. More information on the process and how to start a claim if you need to can be found on: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Elgar

Martyn Marsh



Graziana Presicce and Emma Arizza shortly after making the film

I (Graziana Presicce) first met Emma Arizza sometime in October 2021. We are two Italian musicians living in the UK for some years – a pianist in Yorkshire and a London-based violinist when our paths crossed for the first time purely

coincidentally on social media. We decided to take advantage of an upcoming London trip to meet in person and soon realised that a new personal and musical friendship had started and two months we were collaborating on our first little

project together. During that meeting, we discussed creative ways of presenting or engaging people with classical music in a way, that this genre is not as frequently presented with “music videos” in the same way as other styles of music. A few days later, Emma got in touch about a beautiful yet lesser-known, piece by Elgar she came across: A Christmas Greeting. A warm, beautiful piece of music, we took this as a sign to take action on the ideas we shared in that first meeting!

Elgar’s music has always been special to us: it represents a deep emotional connection and a unique ability to blend majestic feelings with intimacy. His compositions speak straight to the heart, and we admire how he captures the quintessentially English landscape while allowing many audiences to resonate deeply with his works. A Christmas



Greeting feels particularly magical, as it evokes warmth, hope, and nostalgia – emotions we associate with the festive season.

With a fast turnaround, we planned the music video’s story: where could the mysterious red envelopes found during our journey lead to? We will not spoil the ending, but you can find our music video on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRzFSOsEFJk> or by visiting our websites:

www.grazianapresicce.com and www.emmaarizzaviolinist.com

We hope this is the first of many more projects to come... watch this space for 2025!

Graziana and Emma

Jazz News

Peter Farrall

Breaking news this month is that tickets are now on sale for Pershore Jazz on a Summer’s Day 2025 - a full afternoon and evening of Classic Jazz performed by seventeen masters of the idiom. Vintage Jazz, Swing and Big Band music will celebrate iconic “jazz royalty” with the sounds of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Earl Hines and more aristocrats of the era, all in our much loved Number 8 Arts Centre. Visit our website: www.pershorejazz.org.uk for more details and a direct link to Number 8 box office.

Classic FM Radio recently featured Suite for Jazz Orchestra by Dmitri Shostakovich, which may have suggestions of jazz but cannot be considered jazz as jazz fans know it. In the 1920s and 30s many classical composers produced jazz influenced works, not trying to emulate bands like the Armstrong Hot 5s and 7s, but to create their musical impression of the “Golden Age of Jazz” in which they found themselves. Some European composers were acquainted with jazz on tours of the US. Darius Milhaud, for instance, was enthused for jazz after spending time in New York jazz clubs, which is evident in his ballet composition, La

Creation du Monde, and even more so in a later work, Scaramouche for Saxophone and Orchestra. Maurice Ravel’s G major Piano Concerto, hinting at jazzy rhythms and blues inflections, came about from an admiration of George Gershwin whom he met whilst on an American tour. Classical composers often collaborated with jazz musicians; Stravinski’s Ebony Concerto was composed for Woody Herman’s swing band and Harold Farberman, a percussionist himself, produced a concerto for jazz drummer and orchestra which has featured Gene Krupa and Louis Bellson on occasions. Benny Goodman commissioned Aaron Copland to write a clarinet concerto for him and Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue was written at the request of (self-styled) “King of Jazz”, Paul Whiteman.

Valerie Capers, who overcame blindness to obtain a master’s degree in classical composition, performance and education, forsook her classical career in favour of jazz and is now a well-established performer and educator on the New York jazz scene. Her work in teaching and promoting jazz has earned many accolades including honorary doctorates from no



less than four US universities. We have an intriguing classics and jazz blend of our own at this month’s jazz club with the Rich Hughes Trio, who will take

favourites from the classical repertoire and use their skills of inventive improvisation to produce a swinging evening of jazz in a style all of their own.

The Rich Hughes Trio

Wednesday 26th February 2025

Function Room, Pershore Football Club

Doors open at 7pm, music at 8

Admission £12.50 to include a raffle ticket

Book in advance and pay on arrival

club@pershorejazz.org.uk Tel: 01527 66692 find us on Facebook

Five of the best albums from 2024

Steve Ide

1 Wild God

by Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

Nick reunited with his band for this album and it's a celebration of joy coming from great grief. Musically it covers blues, rock, spoken word and gospel. The songs contain ghosts, mystical horses, spiritual references and there's even a song about frogs. This is the sound of a man healing.

*Stand out track -
Song of the lake*

2 Romance

by Fontaines DC

Since hitting the scene in 2019 with 'Big', these Dublin post-punks have kept improving,

producing albums and electric live shows, always on their own terms. Romance is probably their best work to date, but continues their questioning view of the world

*Stand out track -
Starburster*

3 Father John Misty - Mahashmashana

This album was the last one on the list to be released but was definitely worth the wait. From the radio friendly 'She cleans up' to the wistful 'Summers gone', he continues to hold a mirror to the absurdities of life. Oh and in case your wondering Mahashmashana is a Sanskrit

word for a cremation ground
*Stand out track -
Mahashmashana*

4 Dance, no one's watching - Ezra Collective

This is the jazz quintets follow up their 2022 Mercury award winning album and continues the jubilant, get up and dance rhythms. Jazz, afro beats, funk and Latin grooves all sit happily alongside some of the more laid back tracks, all with the natural joy of their sound running through them

*Stand out track -
God gave me feet for dancing*

5 Songs of a Lost World by The Cure

Robert Smith has been through a lot of sadness in the last few years and it shows on this album. With epic soundscapes, heart breaking, yet beautiful lyrics and an average track length of over 6 minutes, this album gives a stunning, uncompromising glimpse into Robert's state of mind.

*Stand out track -
Alone*



View from the Boundary

I write this to you on Christmas day before having a little something and talking bigger drivel. The three-test series with New Zealand was successful, save for the last test. However, what has emerged is firstly Joe Root who with another 406 test runs would become number two in the world, this could happen in 2025. His next target would be Tendulkar, for that he would need another 2543 runs. This is possible but he would need to be on form for another five years. What is encouraging for the future is the performance of Harry Brook who shows the same potential as Joe Root. Also, the other encouraging factor is the bowling performance of Brydon Carse, Gus Atkinson

and potentially Jacob Bethell. Let's hope that my views come to fruition in 2025.

What of Worcestershire for 2025? T20 and fifty over Tournaments were a disaster in 2024 and they just survived the County Championship as I predicted the weather came to their assistance. Why? is the question. The club was a member's club with a board that came from the members. Now with the change of the rules it has become a cabal of appointees and a chairman who lives some 100 miles away. If the ECB do change the county structure this could mean the end of first-class cricket in Worcestershire. The members should seriously consider this position. Major Jewell, Lord

Cobham and Duncan Fearnley are but a few who will be turning in their grave.

Let's look at what is happening in this country, it is disastrous and really concerning. We have county elections which the government are trying to cancel. If it does happen, before you vote look at the CV of people not their party. This is local and we do not want to go down the same route as the Members of Parliament most of whom are not qualified to do the job and have not really had a proper job. The latest woke idiocy is the, shall we say, person with terrorism convictions trying to bring actions against pubs called the Saracens Head. The boats keep coming. Spousal visas continue, arranged marriages and now an MP stands up in Parliament and announces

that cousins marrying keeps money within the family unit, So, what about the farmers keeping the farms in a family unit. Prediction. The Rotherham, Rochdale and Halifax grooming gangs problem will raise its head again with every effort made to sweep it under the rug. Mr Starmer needs to consider his position; it is a disgrace. People keep coming across the channel and nothing happens. We will see in my next View from the boundary.

Please your comments whether you agree or disagree in this free speech magazine.

We are past December 21st, so at least it is getting lighter with longer days!



Thoughts from the Snug . . .

Energy prices - Shocking

The cost of living is a regular topic of discussion here in the Snug, prompted by almost any radical change in the economy and government policy. Energy costs feature frequently. What tariff to use, how to swap suppliers and the lack of incentives to encourage cheaper, green and sustainable energy crop up regularly. The cutting of the winter fuel allowance to pensioners this year was one discussion that prompted this recollection of a story from the Daily Telegraph:

Commenting on a complaint from a Mr Arthur Purdey about a large gas bill the spokesman for North West Gas said, "We agree it was rather high for this time of year. It is possible Mr Purdey has been charged for the

gas used up during the explosion that destroyed his house." Poor Mr Purdey! We wondered if he now met the new criteria for the fuel allowance. Probably not!

The power of words

Pandiculation is the act of stretching and yawning at the same time. It's a kind of double statement of boredom rarely witnessed in the snug. Fascination, with words and language often erupt with "Did you know" This is often the opening to a discourse involving some quirky bit of language. Susie Dent, famed lexicographer and etymologist of television quiz, Countdown might be impressed by our efforts. Here are a few examples of Snug dialogue: *Did you know (DYK) ...* Tormentone is the Italian word

to describe the summer hit that is constantly played on your car radio, plus every cafe and bar you visit on holiday? Very fitting. *DYK...* The word twitter was first used by Geoffrey Chaucer in 1374. Do we expect Elon Musk's X (formerly Twitter) to enjoy such longevity?

DYK... Obese drivers are more likely to die in car accidents? This caused some discomfort as most of us in the Snug are well padded. An alternative was suggested that short people, who can barely see over the dashboard, are probably more at risk than us tubbies. A counterpoint accepted, so we moved on.

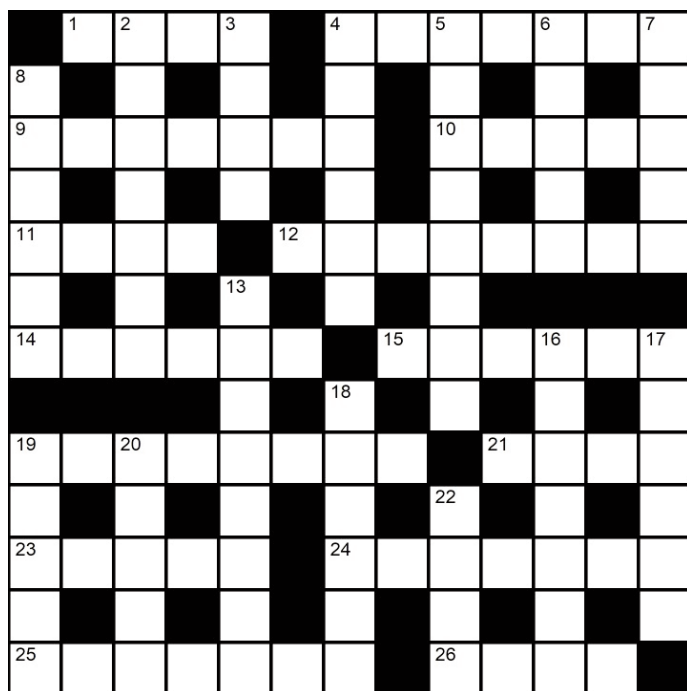
DYK... Edward Elgar had a bicycle that he rode around our Worcestershire lanes and it was called Mr. Phoebus? Was Elgar

guilty of anthropomorphism, the attribution of human traits to non-human entities? Why do people name inanimate objects with human identities? Elgar probably wanted to show off his classical education was one opinion, but another pointed out Phoebus was a Greek God, not a human. So Elgar's not guilty, or was he? Even more mysterious. Plenty to think about. Thank goodness we have such a rich and varied language. Is it better than other countries? Quite possibly; for example, take the German word, Flieerabwarkanne. This, literally translated, reads 'pilot warding off cannon'. Flack is the English abbreviation. So much more adaptable, Say no more!

Buddy Bach

Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

- 1 Thick slice (4)
 4 Layered Italian dish (7)
 9 Eyebrow darkeners (7)
 10 German sea scourge (1-4)
 11 Prepare for publication (4)
 12 Saviour (8)
 14 Permeable by liquids (6)
 15 Capable of wounding (6)
 19 Glove material clanks if disturbed (8)
 21 Getaway spots (4)
 23 Island in the Bay of Naples (5)
 24 Burn unsteadily (7)
 25 Good spot for a summit meeting? (7)
 26 Deep black (4)

Down

- 2 Taller and thinner (7)
 3 Soft cheese (4)
 4 One who pays the rent (6)
 5 It's at home on the range (8)
 6 Brush a horse (5)
 7 Go into (5)
 8 Maintenance (6)
 13 Bright light of day (8)
 16 Thai capital (7)
 17 Dr tees off - could be a very large bunker! (6)
 18 Fish out of water (6)
 19 Series of changes (5)
 20 Pass into disuse (5)
 22 Designed by Issigonis (4)

Sudoku

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

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

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

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

Wordsearch

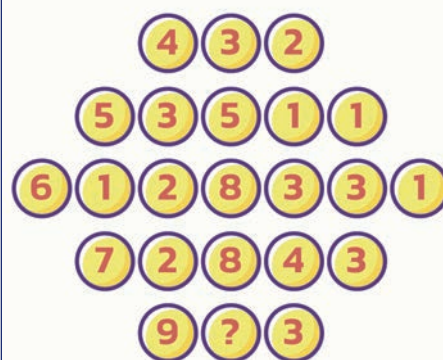
F	S	U	A	Q	W	C	G	K	J	C
H	M	E	N	T	A	L	A	G	E	Q
G	Y	E	P	O	E	T	I	L	U	G
R	N	N	E	J	M	A	B	E	A	T
E	O	I	Z	D	O	M	S	E	R	S
G	D	D	M	H	U	F	O	E	B	B
B	U	D	S	R	T	M	C	C	S	C
O	E	A	I	Q	A	C	R	H	O	U
V	S	A	G	R	R	W	O	O	W	L
S	P	E	C	I	A	L	B	N	N	G
B	U	S	J	L	C	R	S	I	G	F

ALAS
 ARCS
 ARMING
 AT EASE
 BUDS
 C F O
 CARAT
 COMMON
 CONG
 DEEM
 DIN
 DUO
 E T A
 EBB
 ECHO
 EEL
 GUT
 ICE

JOT
 LITE
 MAT
 MENTAL
 NORM
 OMAR
 PAIR
 PSEUDONYMS
 REG
 ROBS
 RUMBLE
 SASH
 SOWN
 SPECIAL
 TLC
 U F O
 USES

Brainteaser

What's the missing number in the circle?



Find the solution on next page

Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

XLI

In my own shire, if I was sad
Homely comforters I had:
The earth, because my heart was sore,
Sorrowed for the son she bore;
And standing hills, long to remain,
Shared their short-lived comrade's pain.
And bound for the same bourn as I,
On every road I wandered by,
Trode beside me, close and dear,
The beautiful and death-struck year:
Whether in the woodland brown
I heard the beechnut rustle down,
And saw the purple crocus pale
Flower about the autumn dale;
Or littering far the fields of May
Lady-smocks a-bleaching lay,
And like a skylit water stood
The bluebells in the azured wood.

Yonder, lightening other loads,
The seasons range the country roads,
But here in London streets I ken
No such helpmates, only men;
And these are not in plight to bear,
If they would, another's care.
They have enough as 'tis: I see
In many an eye that measures me
The mortal sickness of a mind
Too unhappy to be kind.
Undone with misery, all they can
Is to hate their fellow man;
And till they drop they needs must still
Look at you and wish you ill.

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

Quiz!

- 1) The Victorian era ended with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. Which era followed?
- 2) Women over 30 gained the right to vote in 1918 and equal voting rights with men in 1928 as a result of which movement?
- 3) What was the name of the armed insurrection in Ireland against British rule in 1916, which ultimately paved the way for Irish independence?
- 4) Britain experienced high unemployment rates, economic hardship, and social unrest during the 1930's. What was this period known as?
- 5) What event triggered Britain's entry into the Second World War?
- 6) Which report, published in 1942 laid the groundwork for the modern welfare state in Britain?
- 7) What was the name given to the period of conflict in Northern Ireland, lasting from the late 1960s to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998?
- 8) The period of cultural revolution characterised by youth-driven movements, changes in fashion, music, and attitudes towards social norms, during the 20th century became known as what?
- 9) What was significant about the Battle of Edgehill in 1642?
- 10) Who was the famous queen whose navy defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588?
- 11) Which historic document limited the power of the monarch and laid the foundation for constitutional governance in Britain.
- 12) In which century did the Industrial Revolution begin in Britain?
- 13) Which monarch is associated with the expansion of the British Empire during the 19th century?
- 14) In what year did England have its first Norman king?
- 15) Which cousin of Queen Elizabeth I was executed in 1587?
- 16) What was the name of the book, commissioned by William the Conqueror that was a survey of England's land and resources for tax purposes?

Answers: 1) Edwardian era. 2) Suffragette movement 3) The Easter Rising 4) The Great Depression 5) The invasion of Poland by Nazi Germany 6) The Beveridge Report 7) The Troubles 8) The Swinging Sixties 9) It is commonly considered the beginning of the English Civil War. 10) Queen Elizabeth I 11) The Magna Carta 12) 18th century 13) Queen Victoria 14) 1066 15) Mary. 16) Domesday Book

December/January Answers



February Brain teaser solution: $9+3=12(÷2)=6$

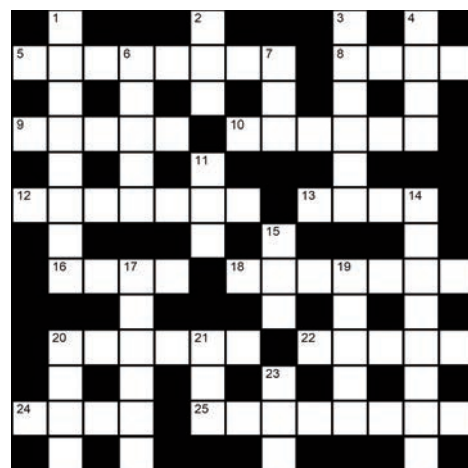
Anagram Crossword

Across

- 1 Thick slice (4)
- 4 Layered Italian dish (7)
- 9 Eyebrow darkeners (7)
- 10 German sea scourge (1-4)
- 11 Prepare for publication (4)
- 12 Saviour (8)
- 14 Permeable by liquids (6)
- 15 Capable of wounding (6)
- 19 Glove material clanks if disturbed (8)
- 21 Getaway spots (4)
- 23 Island in the Bay of Naples (5)
- 24 Burn unsteadily (7)
- 25 Good spot for a summit meeting? (7)
- 26 Deep black (4)

Down

- 2 Taller and thinner (7)
- 3 Soft cheese (4)
- 4 One who pays the rent (6)
- 5 It's at home on the range (8)
- 6 Brush a horse (5)
- 7 Go into (5)
- 8 Maintenance (6)
- 13 Bright light of day (8)
- 16 Thai capital (7)
- 17 Dr tees off - could be large bunker! (6)
- 18 Fish out of water (6)
- 19 Series of changes (5)
- 20 Pass into disuse (5)
- 22 Designed by Isonigis (4)



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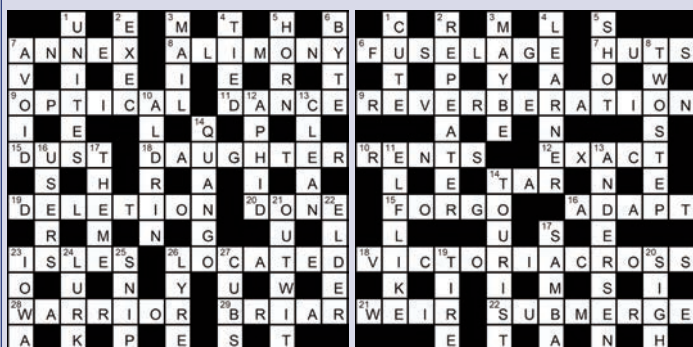
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Copy Deadline

March Issue - 17th February 2025

Christmas Crossword Answers



Writings & Paintings of Susan Catford



The book contains every article, poem and painting, that Susan produced for the Pershore Times. The articles are of a very high quality, each one is different and a joy to read.

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December 2024

Where would you be able to hear a talented singer, take part in a sing-along, practise the twist and hand jazz that you knew years ago, recall childhood Christmases and have a good laugh at the same time? Well, Queenhill WI of course! The celebratory Christmas meeting welcomed Frances Fry who introduced a collection of Winter/Christmas songs with stories of their origins. We were all totally involved in enjoying and contributing to the fun. There was a wide variety of

Queenshill

delicious (and substantial) refreshments; a raffle where everyone managed to win a prize; and also an opportunity to be creative with craft materials and fir cones to make tree decorations for the WI tree in Upton. The business part of the meeting was very short, giving us the chance to catch up on news and chat with other members. All this took place in a delightfully decorated hall (thanks to Anne Spears) that contributed so well to the happy atmosphere. We count ourselves very lucky to be part of such a friendly group.

Our first meeting of the year was on a very cold Thursday 9th January, so we were grateful for the warmth of the meeting room and the welcome we received. At the business meeting, suggestions for fundraising were made and voting for this year's campaign Resolutions took place. Following that, we attempted an interesting quiz compiled by Anne Spears, with questions we don't normally find that challenged our powers of recall (when was Coronation Street first shown on television?) and also our abilities to compare (what was faster, The Flying Scotsman or the Mallard? Which country's population is the larger China or Russia?). None of us got many more than

half correct!

For the 'competition' we were asked to bring children's games. What a varied collection we came up with. It's amazing what we all keep at the back of cupboards and in the loft!

As usual, we enjoyed splendid refreshments, a raffle and conversation until it was time to leave.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 13th February at 2.30 at Queenhill WI Hall (WR8 0QZ) when our speaker will be Robert Arley who will talk about "Producing the Antiques Roadshow".

If you are interested in becoming a member and joining us for this and later meetings, we shall be happy to see you.



Hot Peppers

November's meeting was very well attended and after all the formalities we got stuck in with our Christmas craft night, we supplied a rustic lantern for each member, for us all to decorate our own lanterns.

A supply of Holly, Yew, Fir, Cones, Baubles etc was laid on for everyone and many ladies came prepared with foliage, lights and decor for their lanterns. We have some very talented ladies indeed, with some fantastic creations.

We also had a Christmas Craft competition, there were three categories, Christmas tree decoration, edible Christmas themed and table decorations. Congratulations to all the winner's and runners up Leaza, Bev, Lisa, Val, Jackie & Diane. This was followed by delicious cakes, tea and the raffle. Saturday 30th November, we held our Annual Christmas Fayre at Upton Memorial Hall. We would like to thank all our ladies that volunteered to help

on the day and run the event and of course thank you to those that made cakes, we cannot run these events without everyone's help. Also a huge thank you to all those that came along and supported us and the stall holders.

December Meeting: -

Our December meeting got started with the formalities but these were kept brief.

We had an informal evening with Christmas music playing in the background whilst we did a Christmas quiz.

Instead of our usual tea, cake and raffle, all our lovely ladies bought a plate, so we had a lovely variety of buffet style food along with Prosecco, Mulled Wine, mince pies etc. We also did a Secret Santa.

And this year we also collected a vast quantity of toiletries and sanitary products for a women's refuge - thank you ladies for your generosity.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 27th March, 7.30pm at Upton Memorial Hall



Spot & Shop - Dec/Jan Winners

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Nick Bonehill | 5) V Michell |
| 2) Jenny Masser | 6) Angel Jack |
| 3) Jean Dickinson | 7) June Herbert |
| 4) Judith Robinson | |

Last month's answer:

Phoenix Fostering

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&
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COMPETITION TIME!

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

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**This
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anagram**

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at Revills Farm Shop, Defford

5th £10 Voucher

at Craftpyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore

6th Reg Moule Gardening Book

7th Pat's Pantry -

Jar of home-made marmalade/jam

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Answer:

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The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook Common

Our Carol Service and Christmas Day service were both well-attended, and the mulled wine and mince pies at the former just about lasted out!

Obviously, we will have to expand our catering next time! The church looked beautiful, as usual, and I am very grateful to all who gave their time to decorate it. Thanks also to Charlie and Jane Clive at the Fruit Farm for donating us a wonderful Christmas tree.

At the beginning of January, we sadly said farewell in this world to Vanessa Godfrey,

widow of Stan who led services at The Hook for many years. Vanessa was very much a partner in Stan's ministry and supported The Hook in many ways. We shall miss her very much, but we rejoice that she is now at peace.

As I write this, the weather is bitterly cold but I hope by the time you read it we may be able to look forward to snowdrops and daffodils once again.

Kate Chester-Lamb



Church Services

Sunday 2nd February 2025

09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Matins tbc*

11:00 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook -
Holy Communion

Sunday 9th February 2025

09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Holy Communion*

11:00 St Mary's, Ripple - *Morning Worship*

11:00 St Nicholas, Earls Croome - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 16th February 2025

09:30 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook -

Morning Worship

18:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Evensong*

Sunday 23rd February 2025

09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Morning Worship*

11:00 St Nicholas, Earls Croome - *Morning Worship*

11:00 St Mary's, Ripple - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 2nd March 2025

09:30 St Gabriel's, Hanley Swan - *Holy Communion*

09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Matins tbc*

11:00 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook -
Holy Communion

18:30 St Mary's, Hanley Castle - *Evensong*

Wednesday 5th March 2025 (Ash Wednesday)

10:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton -

Ash Wednesday Communion

19:30 St Nicholas, Earls Croome -

Ash Wednesday Communion

Sunday 9th March 2025

09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Holy Communion*

11:00 St Mary's, Rippl - *Matins*

11:00 St Nicholas, Earls Croome - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 16th March 2025

09:30 The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook -

Morning Worship

18:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Evensong*



Church Services and Online Worshipping
Opportunities for Your Church in the

Old Hills Malvern Churches

FEBRUARY 2025

Sunday 2nd February

Candlemas

9.30am Living Communion at GUARLFORD

11.00am Living Communion at POWICK

Sunday 9th February

Fourth Sunday Before Lent

9.30am Living Communion at CALLOW END

11.00am Living Communion at MADRESFIELD

Sunday 16th February

Third Sunday Before Lent

8.00am BCP Holy Communion at POWICK

9.30am BCP Holy Communion (Said) at GUARLFORD

NO 11am Service

4.00pm Taizé Service at POWICK

Sunday 23rd February

Second Sunday Before Lent

9.30am Living Communion at CALLOW END

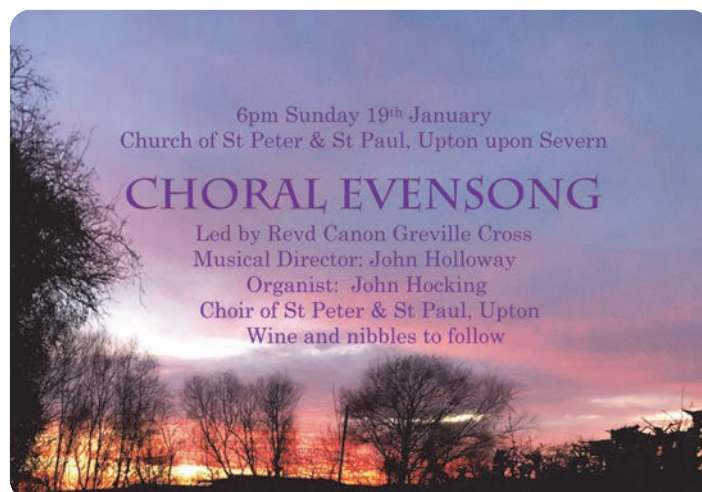
11.00am Living Communion at MADRESFIELD

Midweek Communion at The Orchard Room in Colletts Green
Thursdays 13th & 27th February from 10.30-11.30am



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Severn Stoke & Croome D'abitot News

Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs

St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke

We welcomed Revd. Kat Mephram, as our new Priest in Charge in December together with her family. They are living in Kempsey and Kat will have overall responsibility for Kempsey, Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot and Norton Parishes. She is ably helped by retired clergy and lay readers, as well as two youth workers, to whom we are immensely indebted. In Severn Stoke, we were particularly delighted to have Kat for her first three services before Christmas, but we appreciate that she will have to spread her time and energy throughout the Parishes in the future.

The Church is prepared for possible flooding this winter and until that happens, we are still conducting our usual services, on the first and third Sunday each month at 10.30 a.m.

Friends of St. Denys, Raising funds to modernise the church!

The Carols at The Nash event held last month was a happy occasion with Revd. Owain Bell leading us, with carols accompanied by the Chase Brass Band. Many thanks to Drs. Mark and Catherine Sweeney for again acting as generous hosts. The event raised over £500 towards church funds.



The Severn Stoke and Kinnersley 100 Club Draw winner of £30.00 for December was Lynda Willins of Severn Stoke and the bumper prize of

£100 went to Clive Gittins formerly of Clifton.

John Henderson

St Mary's Church, Ripple

Though events before Christmas may now seem very much in the past, we retain some very happy memories. They include a concert by the Choir of St Peter & St Paul, Upton, a Carol Service and a Crib Service on Christmas Eve, all well attended and The Choir Director, John Holloway, very much had the audience in mind when he arranged items for the concert in late November. The choristers were in top form, and any concert with soloists of the calibre of Sheilagh Armitt, Jayne Swann (sopranos) and Alison Hunka (violin and viola) is guaranteed to be highly enjoyable. Our warmest thanks are extended to John for all the hard work that he and all his musicians out in to provide us with such a feast of lovely music, and we look forward to their next visit!

Rather closer to Christmas, the annual Carol Service was another occasion much enjoyed, and it was a particular pleasure to welcome members of the Tewkesbury Town Band who provided the instrumental accompaniment. Their visits to St Mary's are now so frequent that we feel they belong here! Among the congregation were visitors from outside the Parish, and these we welcomed most warmly. The final event of the Christmas season was the Crib Service on



Christmas Eve, and once again we were delighted to welcome visitors from Tewkesbury and the surrounding area, among whom were a significant number of children of all ages and without whom no Crib Service is complete.

A full programme of events is again being arranged for this year, and full details of these will be published shortly. May I remind all Upton Times readers that they will always be very welcome at any of our Services (2nd & 4th Sunday of each month) and other events.

Roger Gillard



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Upton Surgery 01684 592696

Upton Tourist Information 01684 594200

Upton Town Council 01684 592273

MHDC Council

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Highways issues call: 07875 033759

Please note: This number should not be used for 'day-to-day' enquiries.

- Waste Services 01684 862490

- Planning Dept 01684 862221

- Pot Holes 01905 765765

Help the Homeless 0300 500 0914

Are Solar panels still a worthwhile investment?

That was such a pertinent question fifteen years ago when 2020SolarPV started supplying and fitting systems to local businesses and homes throughout the midlands, and time and experience has proved that if you are looking for a way of saving on your bills, generating your own electricity and reducing your carbon footprint, it was and still is a solid investment, especially when you think that in real terms the cost of installing solar has virtually halved in that time. A typical 3-bedroom house with a 4kW solar panel system can save you between £400 to £800 annually on electricity bills. As well as reducing your impact on the environment, under the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) scheme, households in Great Britain actually get paid for excess solar energy they export back to the grid. Of course, other developments in recent years have increased demand for solar, for example, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging, batteries to time-shift excess energy, as well

as smarter technology have all helped improve the pay-back on investment by harvesting more energy and increase independence from the grid. This coupled with spiralling energy costs and more recent price drops for owning solar has created a 'perfect storm' for consumers and business owners.

Technology has come a long way in the last fifteen years of course, and whilst there are many cheap and cheerful options available, we pride ourselves on using the safest and most up to date products and systems available, you can never take too much care when you are dealing with people's homes, hopefully the care and attention we deliver to our customers is backed up by the highly favourable reviews we receive via Which Trusted Trader.

You can visit our website www.2020solarpv.com and follow a simple link to click your roof, which will generate a no obligation quote for your home, or call us on 01386 802020 for a friendly chat.



Tuesday 18th February at 2pm

The Wonder of Worcester

Colin Millett will give an illustrated talk about the history of Worcester Porcelain from 1751-2009

Tuesday 18th March at 2pm

Richard III- murderer or loyal brother ?
with speaker Max Keen

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,
The article in the November edition to increase parking times in New street has not been thought through. Already parking spaces are often in short supply and to increase parking to 2 hours

instead of 1 hour will make this worse.
It could reduce available spaces by half which will deter people from shopping local!

Yours

David of Ryall

Dear Editor,
I was very interested in two articles in your November issue 99, 1st the story by Roy Albutt about James Payne in Italy 1944 and the war cemeteries, my step-father was in Italy from January until the end of April fighting to hold the Gustav Line at Monte Casino, the German Cemetery was not built until the late 1950's a few kilometers away from Casino. The other article was Refugees by Tim Hickson about

Springhill House and Springhill Lodge POW Camp, My step-father was there and he did go out and work on the land at Broad Campden where he met my mother, he left the camp December 1947 went to Cambridge another camp. 18 months later they got married. Also, I was working in Evesham at Coulters Garage 1950/60s there were people from the Springhill camp came to have work done.

Anthony Wittenberg

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Saturday 15th February Wicked Little Letters Cert 15

A 1920s English seaside town bears witness to a dark absurd scandal in this riotous comedy based on a true story. It follows local Edith & Irish migrant Rose whose neighbours receive anonymous letters (expect strong language)

Saturday 22nd March Conclave Cert 12A

When Cardinal Lawrence is tasked with leading one of the world's most secretive and ancient events, selecting a new Pope, he finds himself at the centre of a conspiracy that could shake the very foundation of the Church.

Saturday 20th April Paddington in Peru Cert PG

Please note earlier start time of 6.30pm Doors open at 6.00pm Child ticket £3.00 Paddington returns to visit his beloved Aunt Lucy, who resides in the Home for Retired Bears. With the Brown family in tow, a thrilling adventure ensues when a mystery plunges them into an unexpected journey.

For films at the Memorial Hall, Upton upon Severn, please enter post code WR8 0HA to see film screening information.

Tickets on the door £5.00



Saturday 8th February 2024
at 7 pm, in Great Malvern Priory

Nelson Mass - Haydn

Cantemus Igitur - Rory Boyle

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Overture to Egmont - Beethoven, The Heavens are Telling - Haydn
Laudate Dominum and Ave Verum - Mozart

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Soloists from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
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For more information visit: malvernfestivalchorus.co.uk

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Lent Lunches

Come and enjoy a tasty soup lunch on Fridays during Lent

Churches Together in Upton
supporting SARA Upton upon Severn
(Severn Area Rescue Association)

Dates

Friday 7th March	- Upton Baptist Church
Friday 14th March	- Church Rooms
Friday 21st March	- Church Rooms
Friday 28th March	- Upton Baptist Church
Friday 4th April	- Church Rooms
Friday 11th April	- Church Rooms

12:00 - 1:30

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