

Upton Times

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



Issue 43

May 2025

FREE



Spring Lambs

We have launched a new newspaper, The Whittington Times! This gives us a residential population in the five postal areas we cover of nearly 90,000 citizens. We look forward to establishing this new project very much indeed, to join our Pershore, Upton, Powick and Kempsey newspapers. Exciting times ahead! Summer is here! Lovely sunny days, the countryside looking fantastic. The sights and sounds are wonderful, yet all the news seems full of doom and gloom! We have to keep on going in spite of all this madness and no better place than in our lovely county of Worcestershire.

We have so much to enjoy, with great history, sport, fabulous

hostelries and countryside with an abundance of wildlife.

One aspect that is disturbing though is 'Social Media'. I am sure many people have been shocked at the way young people are horribly manipulated online! Some of us do not like or take part in any form of social media. We at Hughes & Company have even cancelled our website! Hopefully the new legislation will be successful in protecting young people. We will be celebrating the VE and VJ Day 80th anniversaries, street parties and all sorts of local festivities are taking

place. They were amazing, unforgettable times. Against the odds we did it, somehow the 'Brits' always manage to come good in the end! We will remember forever, those who didn't come home.



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County & District Report



I hope many of you enjoyed the odd foot shuffle – or a full-blown jig – during the Folk Festival. It's a lovely time of the year. As you may know, this festival marks the start of the music season in Upton. I know that not everyone is keen on the festivals, but hopefully you'll all agree that without the festivals Upton would literally be poorer in both cultural and financial terms.

Narnia comes to Upton



I'm pleased to report that the four heritage lights have now been installed, two at each end of Upton's bridge. Also, the existing bridge lighting has been updated to LED; this is to improve reliability as well as reducing running costs. It has taken a long time to find the funding. I had to apply to a County Council Heart project fund to find a way forward, and fortunately I was successful. It was interesting to hear that some residents could see a Narnia element to the lights.

They certainly now mark the entrance to Upton, plus a gateway to the Malvern Hills, which is an area of outstanding natural beauty. It may well be that the Upton Traders Association will consider a Narnia theme for their Christmas window displays. The new lights were carefully selected to ensure that they matched as closely as possible the nearest existing heritage light adjacent to the Plough Pub. Now, I just need to find a way to get the bridge painted!

Councillor Martin Allen

Kempsey says enough is enough!



The horror of yet more new homes being built in Kempsey has incensed many local residents. For years, Kempsey has suffered the blight of more, and yet even more new dwellings being constructed, all without new amenities or infrastructure being provided.

With yet another planning application for around 140 new houses, residents have had enough. A short time ago, I organised a protest and I was amazed at the number of people who turned up to show their opposition to the application.

Severn Stoke gets a tidy up



Parts of Severn Stoke have been long overdue a spruce up. It was good news when, following my request, WCC sided out some of the pavements, and I provided Severn Stoke Parish Council with funding from my divisional fund to get the bench by the Memorial refreshed and

painted. I have always thought that these little jobs can make such a huge difference. Personally, I do wonder if the bench should be facing the Malvern Hills: maybe Severn Stoke's council could consider a change in vista, or install another bench.

and finally . . .

You may be pleased to hear that the moles have left – they have packed their bags and gone. The battlefield that was my garden is now at rest, mounds of earth sunken, peace and order returned. A little part of me will miss the drama of awaking in the hazy dawn of daybreak to find a fresh mound had appeared.

I have an overgrown wild patch at the back of the garden where butterflies, insects and a rather

large number of frogs seem to exist. My granddaughter's favourite is a frog or toad that has lived in a small water feature for years – well at least the last seven. Its name is Trevor, although, as you might guess, there have been several Trevors over the years. When she grows up, I wonder if she will ever realise? Oh, to be young again! As ever, I'm here if you need me.

Martin Allen

Encouraged to get active with Street Tag



Sue Martyr, Active Travel Co-Ordinator at Malvern Hills District Council, and Adele Hodges, Healthy Communities Manager at Freedom Leisure.

An interactive challenge which led to 12 schools walking more than 34 million steps will return next month and will be open to everyone across the Malvern Hills District.

Street Tag is a free, family-friendly smartphone app game that records physical activity and encourages participants to explore their local area by visiting virtual tags and collecting points.

Malvern Hills District Council has partnered with Street Tag for a second year and is now opening the challenge to residents, businesses, workplaces, and community groups as part of its commitment to Active Travel. The Malvern Hills leaderboard kicks off on 1 May 2025 and will run until 2 July 2025.

Prizes will be given out on a fortnightly basis and there will be one winner at the end of the challenge. The council will be working with Freedom Leisure to provide the prizes.

As part of the challenge, virtual tags can be added to various locations and landmarks, with

businesses, community groups, organisations being able to promote their services, events and offers.

Last year, 12 schools across the district took part and walked more than 34 million steps and covered more than 41,000 miles by walking, wheeling, and scootering.

Following the two-month challenge, Hanley Swan St Gabriel's with St Mary's C of E Primary School reached the top of the leaderboard. Jen Taylor, Director of Communities and Housing at Malvern Hills District Council, said: "Street Tag is a great way of getting active and having fun. Last year's challenge was a great success with an impressive number of miles and steps taken. Now anyone can take part in the challenge- not just schools- we hope people get excited about Active Travel and getting out and about in their local area".

Visit www.streettag.co.uk for more information and to sign up to the Street Tag app

Students join forces for new partnership project



Students from University College Birmingham at the Council House in Malvern.

Students from University College Birmingham have joined forces with Malvern Hills District Council to help deliver a new tourism and hospitality project.

The new project aims to attract younger visitors to The Malvern, as well as promote the area as a tourism destination and a location with great employment opportunities.

The students, currently studying International Tourism Management and International Hospitality and Tourism Management at the University, recently visited the Economic Development and Tourism Team at The Council House in Malvern, they will be creating a marketing strategy together, along with developing initiatives that target young people (aged 18-35).

Project features include:

- Highlighting The Malvern as an exciting, dynamic destination and an appealing, must-visit location for younger generations.
 - Promoting youth friendly activities, festivals and events.
 - The development of targeted campaigns.
 - Creation of digital and social media campaigns that connect with younger audiences, showcasing The Malvern as an adventure-filled and culturally rich destination.
- Victoria Carman, Visitor Economy and Towns Manager at Malvern Hills District Council, said: "The district offers an excellent opportunity for tourism growth, and employment, and we are really looking forward to working in partnership with the University on this great new project".



The Upton on Severn Flush Fund



The Flush Fund has been set up to raise money for a much-needed toilet in Upton Church. The church is a wonderful venue for large numbers of people and is used increasingly for concerts and events in addition to its regular services. In the Autumn of 2024 over £1700 was raised by the Nola Bene Concert and a delicious dinner in the Church Room, where our very own Divine Café wined and dined 50 guests. The recent event, by the Gloucester Police Male Voice Choir and featuring our very own Jayne Swann, with ploughman's supper and wine, raised over £1,400! This amount, together with the previous events and a grant from the Blues Festival charity gets us a long way towards achieving our target of raising £5,000 for the Flush Fund this year. We have been supported all along the way by Warners supermarket who have donated, publicised and sold us food for events at cost price and we are indebted to Jack, their manager, for his kindness and to the staff for their helpfulness at every

step of the way. The £5,000 will allow us to pay for the initial architect's plans and to launch the official appeal. We can then contact various charities and grant-giving organizations for extra funds to help cover the costs of the building and new facilities.

Future fund-raising events planned are:

May BH (Monday afternoon)
Folk festival - pop-up Divine Café with drinks and homemade cakes

26th May (BH Monday)
Bell-ringing festival in the church to celebrate Upton's refurbished bell with pop-up Divine Café.

14th June
Arrow Valley Brass Band Concert with drinks and food

28th June
Jazz Festival with pop-up Divine Café.

12th July
Church Choir Music for Summer concert, drinks and food.

*Richard Duckett/
Christine Lamb*



Car park improvement projects completed

Essential maintenance and accessibility upgrades have now been completed on two Council owned car parks in Upton upon Severn. The planned works, from Malvern Hills District Council, started on Monday 3rd March, and finished on Friday 4th April.

The projects, which took place on Hanley Road and New Street car parks, included improvements to ensure safe and convenient access for all users.

Accessibility improvements include:

Hanley Road Car Park

- Parking bays redesigned to incorporate a 1.2m wide access zone, with new yellow hatching.
- New Blue Badge Holders Only signage.
- Pedestrian walkway updated near public facilities, with new ramp lines, existing handrail

extension and new handrail installed.

- Updated bench seating area with space to allow a wheelchair user to be alongside a seated companion.
- Motorbike locking rail installed.

New Street Car Park

- Updated accessible parking bays.
- Ticket machine barrier installed.
- Motorbike locking rail installed.

Mark Hammond, Community Infrastructure and Developments Manager at Malvern Hills District Council said: "We are really pleased with the completed works. It's really important to ensure our car parks are accessible for all users to help residents and visitors feel confident and safe".



Mark Hammond, Community Infrastructure and Developments Manager at Malvern Hills District Council, and Chris Manton, Graduate Building Surveyor at Malvern Hills District Council.

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A few words from...

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP

MP Welcomes Myanmar Aid Pledge

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP has welcomed a Government commitment to ensure that UK aid will help people affected by the earthquake in Myanmar. The Disaster Emergency Committee has launched an appeal for funds to support the international relief efforts across South East Asia including the war-torn country which was at the epicentre of the earthquake last month. The MP quizzed Government Ministers about plans to match donations with international aid support. Millions of people across the region have been left without food or shelter and UK donations will be matched by the Government up to a maximum of £5 million. Dame Harriett said: "I asked Ministers how the good people of West Worcestershire could donate to this tragic humanitarian disaster and I am pleased that



they have stepped up and arranged a very generous way to donate, so that you receive not only Gift Aid but a matching donation. The Disaster Emergency Committee appeal means that 15 partner charities are able to work together to mobilise a community response and I am confident that many generous local people will want to support this if they can."

Wheelchair users to access the waterways

Arden Sailing Club in Defford, near Worcester, is one of the top three clubs nationally to be chosen as a Royal Yachting Association finalist for the award: Presented in recognition of your outstanding work to create a connected, inspired and inclusive boating community. Wheelchair users and people with limited mobility have very limited access to the rivers, lakes and waterways, most smaller boats do not have flat floors and require ramps or cranes to enable wheelchairs to access. The club decided to address this and successfully applied for a partial grant from the Wychavon Rural Fund, sponsored by the 'UK Government in partnership with Wychavon District Council'. We still need to raise funds to pay off the balance of the money required to put the purpose-built craft onto the water. The environmentally friendly boat, powered by an electric outboard, has a dropping ramp at the front and flat floors

throughout to make access easy. Furthermore, the sailing clubhouse is designed all on one level, has full disabled facilities and good access from the main roads. Trips will be starting imminently so we need to find more people who want to use the 'Explorer' boat. If you or your organisation can make use of this facility then please contact us. As mentioned above we have received a partial grant but still have about £15,000 to raise to pay off the balance and to guarantee the future long-term running of this community project. Please check out the website at www.explorerboat.co.uk for donations to this great cause. There is a GoFundMe page, search for 'Wheelchair accessible electric boat for the River Avon'. We are also looking for long term sponsors so if your organisation would like to be associated with this worthwhile community project then please contact us.

New community grant to help support the district



Communities across the Malvern Hills District will have the chance to apply for their share of £1 million to improve the open spaces and facilities in their area. The Community Facility Legacy Grant Scheme aims to support communities to become healthier, safer, and stronger by ensuring they have access to high-quality public open spaces and facilities. The scheme, which is being launched by Malvern Hills District Council on 11 April 2025, will be available to charities, not-for-profit organisations, town and parish councils, and more to apply for a grant of up to £100,000, with match funding required for

applications above £15,000. The grants can be used to improve or adapt a new or existing public open space or community facilities, such as a new football pitch, indoor community centre or village halls, including associated car park improvements, parks, youth activity areas, allotments, and much more.

The scheme opens for applications opened on Friday 11th April and closes at midnight on Sunday 8th June 2025.

For full details of the Grant Scheme, visit: www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community-facility-legacy-grant-scheme

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Rotary News

Richard Lees

It is always a very great pleasure to introduce a new member to Pershore Rotary and we are delighted to welcome Paul Pugh and his partner, Nicci. As a charity committee chairman in his day job, Paul takes pride in making a positive impact on the community and recognises that Rotary's network and resources will enable him to make a difference and enrich other's lives. Paul has a passion for the outdoors enjoying foreign travel, walking and an active lifestyle. Paul's business experience and active lifestyle will be a great asset to the club.

We and a large audience enjoyed the return of the ever-popular Rock Choir to Pershore Abbey. Led by Jacob Ashworth, the 110 enthusiastic singers filled the Abbey with their modern anthems and popular songs, raising over £2,000 for our charity, Parkinson's UK. Many thanks to the choir, its supporters and to everyone who contributed to the success of this event.

We are privileged in Rotary to be able to support many groups of people and projects every year. Occasionally, a very different dynamic combination comes along that conjures up a whole new meaning to the expression 'helping others to help themselves'. Feli's Restaurant

and Malvern Cube are one such amazing combination.

18 youngsters, led by Cube Youth Manager Jo Hine, were treated to an experience second to none. Chef Felice and Fiorinda Tocchini, owners of Feli's Bar and Restaurant, demonstrated a variety of tasty meals for the youngsters to practice and take home to their families. The group were divided into three teams and their meals were then judged by Chef Felice. All those taking part received a Morrisons gift voucher from Pershore Rotary in recognition of their effort and achievement. Pershore Rotary's Lynne Raymer said, "the young people worked hard in teams to make delicious food which was beautifully presented. They took pride in their work and clearly enjoyed the day and their achievements as well as tucking into their lunch."

Malvern Cube's Jo said: "what an amazing day it has been thanks to Felice and Fiorinda who provided such an excellent experience for the young people, enabling them to learn some tasty and accessible recipes."

Looking ahead to an exciting new event, Rotary's 'Cycling for All Festival' will be held at the Evesham VeloPark on Saturday 28th June from



11.00am to 5.00pm. This community event is designed to promote cycling for all ages and abilities, encouraging a healthy lifestyle. There will be biking activities, workshops, fun challenges and competitions for the family and keen cyclists. Worcestershire's Rotary Clubs have brought together interested parties including Cycling Clubs, Cycle Stars, Cycling with PALS adapted bikes, as well as competitive cyclists and cycling groups.

Anyone wishing to sponsor this event, donate or have a stall on the day should contact by email: rotarycyclingfestival25@gmail.com for more information.

If you would like to work with us, we would love to hear from you. Follow us on Facebook, check out our website: www.pershorerotary.club or email at: secretary@pershorerotary.club

Tewkesbury and Bredon Hill Probus Club

The club for retired and semi-retired professionals and businessmen



From time to time at Tewkesbury and Bredon Hill Probus Club, rather than bringing in an external speaker, we arrange a "conversation" with one of our members. This is an opportunity for the membership of our Club to get to know a little more about that member in an informal discussion usually with one of our committee members. On

this occasion the conversation involved our current Chairman elect, Brian Ley and how music has been his passion throughout his life.

All through the conversation, Brian took the opportunity of demonstrating how music had touched his life with a selection of musical interventions, either with recordings or played by himself on his electronic keyboard. Brian has always been an advocate of the power of music and its unique qualities and gave some examples including how dementia patients respond so well when hearing familiar tunes from their life. Brian told us that he went to piano lessons at the age of four, but when he went to school there were very few music lessons and the sort of music one heard on the "wireless" in

the 1950's was trivial nonsense of no interest to any child drawn to music, until popular music changed significantly in the mid-1950's with the skiffle craze and the emergence of rock and roll stars like Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly. Brian told us of his frustration on leaving school when the only career he could enter was as a trainee solicitor until he was offered a place at college to study and train as a music teacher. After several years enjoying teaching music, Brian took up an advisory teacher role to support and advise teachers and schools in Devon and Gloucestershire and later with a UK government and an international music education advisory role. Seldom have I seen such an enthralled audience than on that day. It was informative and

entertaining especially when Brian demonstrated his skill and proficiency on the piano but also the numbers of recordings he played to illustrate his life, his career and his total love of music. Our members just loved it!

Forthcoming Events in May:

6th May -
No meeting: Bank Holiday

13 May -
The Battlefield Detectives (with Tracey Bowers)

20 May -
Jack in the Green (with Mike Bottomley)

27 May -
No meeting: Bank Holiday

Chris Brown
probusclub.net/tewkesbredon

The Great Horse picture

Tim Hickson

The recent racing at Cheltenham reminded me of the picture at the top of the main staircase in Croome Court. This was from the days when races were between just two horses unlike today's races where the field may have many horses. This race took place near the Chateau Impney and was to settle a bet between two local landowners as to whose horse was fastest. The loser had to build a set of almshouses in Droitwich and, furthermore, to name them after the winner's owner. If you go to Droitwich, to a street named The Holloway, you can find the almshouses. Look, online for the Coventry Charity. Croome's huge picture shows the Coventry's winning horse and its rider. If you look closely at it you will notice that the jockey's right arm looks oddly twisted. As a result, that area of the picture was X-rayed. The images gained showed that the picture had been re-painted. Originally, the artist had made the horses neck too long and the man's arm looked normal. However, clearly the horse's image was more important, so its neck and head were re-painted. The painter was John Wootton and this was one of his early paintings; he was still learning. We understand that Wootton began working as a page to the Beaufort family and there he showed a gift for drawing and painting. As a consequence, when the family brought a Dutch master painter to make the family portraits, he was paid extra to give some lessons to the boy.

I have a copy of the autobiography of an C18th



footman, John Macdonald, in which he makes clear that servants were treated as 'junior members of the family'. So to pay to encourage a young servant's talents would not be unusual. At Croome it is also clear that the Coventrys really looked after their staff in the same way. An example of this can be found in the kitchen in the Service Wing, known today as the Red Wing. In kitchens of this period the main food, meat, was cooked on a rotating spit in front of an open fire. The heat was so great that it was normal to have a large screen to shield the staff working in that room.

Anything cooked in a saucepan had to be heated elsewhere and this was done on charcoal stoves. In every other kitchen of this time that I have visited, the charcoal stoves are found out in the room. We know, from



Hampton Court Palace charcoal stoves

contemporary writings, that the staff in those kitchens acquired respiratory problems later in life. At Croome, instead, the 6th Earl and Lancelot Brown had an opening made in the north wall into which were placed the charcoal stoves. Above them a slot went up the wall to ventilate the poisonous gases. After all,

we do not use barbecues indoors today! Other evidence is to be found in the Court of the care taken of the welfare of the staff. John Wootton went on to become a fine artist. Look on the internet for his pictures. He became the C18th's version of the C19th John Stubbs for his paintings of horses.



Almshouses



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Mike Page

Donald Trump continues with his war on trade, wherever he feels the US is getting a bad deal. Trade with the UK has been on a fairly equal and friendly basis for many years; but almost undoubtedly President Trump will be looking for ways and means to put pressure on our Government by offering to reduce tariffs on British goods exported to the US in exchange for reductions in the standards/charges imposed by us on importation of US goods. The use of hormone implants to boost growth in beef cattle, done years ago on this and thousands of other farms across the UK (by the implantation of a small hormone pellet underneath the soft tissue of the ear), was eventually banned as its effect on human health, though not proven to be negative, was open to question. Producing beef this way is still practiced widely across the World, including the USA. Chickens are produced in the USA under far more intensive housing regimes than here in the UK; the move towards less intensive housing (and also towards 'free range') here in the UK was a move towards higher welfare standards for the birds. Much more intensive housing in

the US, combined with lower cleaning standards, means that chickens are likely to be carrying far higher levels of skin bacteria, and this is controlled by 'washing' the carcasses in chlorine towards the end of the slaughter and preparation process. Both hormone implantation of beef cattle and chlorine washing of chicken carcasses are measures that would be illegal if either formed part of the overall farming and food production process here, and the NFU and other organisations representing UK farmers have been fighting hard to have any importation of beef or chicken produced in this way banned. I am certain in my own mind these two practices will be bones of contention when US/UK tariff rules come under intensive discussion.

World reserves of grain stand at around 750 million tonnes—which might sound a lot, but that figure has been going down slowly over the last ten years or so. But in World annual consumption figures it is not a huge figure and countries such as Russia, a major grains producer, are increasingly ready, it seems, to use threats to control their exports as a means of achieving political objectives. We live in a strange



world, and certainly one where the UK being as self-sufficient as possible in basic foodstuffs provision is important. Having said everything above, it is good to see the weather this time round is behaving itself in a more usual fashion, with crops and grass growing nicely and fields starting to fill with flocks of ewes with lambs at foot and herds of cattle let out from their winter quarters and free to graze. But one matter for further thought has emerged just recently there: the possibility of 'growing' meat in the laboratory. It has been on the news recently as a possible means of making food available to those astronauts

living on the International Space Station, without the need of repeated trips by rocket, at huge expense estimated to be around £20,000 per person per day. Is it possible that in years to come, with advancement in production techniques, food will be grown in the lab on such a scale that millions of acres will no longer be needed and allowed to revert to nature? The realist in me says, "no," But would a farmer mowing an acre a day for hay with a scythe 100 years ago have ever imagined the tractor powered mowing machines of today being able to achieve cutting rates of 20 acres an hour?

The Home Wrecker

Visitors to Pershore's Avon Meadows were probably alarmed when large machines appeared last month and started clearing reeds in the pond. Just one month on though the fresh green shoots of new reeds are appearing, and the birds seem untroubled by the disruption. It's a hot spot for birds, some of whom breed in the reeds and will build their nests there. Among them are the tiny reed warblers, who have flown back from Africa, swiftly followed by one of our most iconic birds – the cuckoo. Listen for cuckoos in the willows around the wetland. They are now endangered birds but you can often see and hear them here in Spring. They are

looking for reed warbler nests where they will lay an egg; once the cuckoo chick emerges it will tip all other eggs and chicks out of the nest, taking all the food brought in by its foster parents and giving rise to one of its nicknames – the home wrecker! They only stay here briefly – as the old ditty says, 'The cuckoo comes in April, he sings his song in May, he changes his tune in the middle of June and then he flies away.' So head down to Avon Meadows and, if you are lucky, you might hear this amazing bird, right here on your doorstep. *Karen Rose, A biodiversity officer for Wychavon District Council*



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Harold Wilson

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Gardening to save our butterflies, bees and birds

Newly released data by the Butterfly Conservation has shown that 2024 was one of the worst years on record for butterflies in the UK and, for the first time on record, more than half of butterfly species in the UK are now in long-term decline. Last year our spring weather was really wet which was followed by a cool summer, which isn't conducive to butterflies, so the numbers were depleted further.

So, what can we do to support our pollinators and wildlife?

Here's my Top-Tips ...

- Have a wide variety of habitats which will welcome a wider variety of wildlife to your garden. Include a tree and shrubs if you can. Birds need places to roost, nest and escape to.

- Choose plants which flower, seed and bear fruit at different times of the year as this will give year-round food for the different wildlife that live in your garden.

- Create a watering-hole for the insects and birds. Keep a container with water and stones in it (so insects can rest without drowning) - remember to keep it topped up and clean.

No Mow May is here, and I've read mixed advice on this topic. Some reports say don't mow until September to support insect egg laying. But this is only doable if you can leave a section of lawn to grow wild – not everyone has the luxury of space to do this. Also, some of our favourite garden birds need places to forage and a mown lawn is easier for them to find food such as grubs and worms. It's about balance!

According to the results of the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch, our favourite garden birds are also declining even though the most sighted bird in our gardens are the sparrows, these are reducing in numbers. Bear in mind different birds eat different things!

Birds such as Woodpeckers and Blackbirds are ground feeders and will feed on grubs and worms in the soil. Worms are a good indicator of healthy soil, so it's important not to use chemicals such as slug pellets and lawn feeds as most contain toxins which are harmful to birds. Grow sunflowers as these are brilliant for pollinators when they're in flower, followed by fabulous seeds which Finches love to feast on.

Shrubs with lots of berries such as Cotoneaster, rose hips and Holly supply vital food sources during the autumn and winter months so don't cut these back until the spring.

If you can, grow a natural hedge and include varieties such as hawthorn, beech, spindle and alder (plenty more to choose from). But avoid cutting hedges between March and September which is the main bird nesting season. Under the Wildlife and



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Countryside Act (1981), wild birds' nests are protected from intentional damage, destruction or removal when they are in use or being built.

As you can see there are lots of little changes, we can adopt easily to help our wildlife and help stop the decline.



May gardening tips

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

Early May

Keep all newly planted items well-watered. This includes ones planted last autumn.

Sow seeds of herbaceous plants. Sow or turf new lawns and keep mowing established ones – but not too low.

Treat difficult lawn weeds e.g. clovers, black medic with Weedol Lawn Weedkiller, it has the right ingredients for these weeds.

Hang up a codling moth trap in your apple tree, or a plum moth one in your plum tree, to reduce the number of maggoty fruit.

There is also now a trap readily available for catching box tree moths which are now quite widespread in our area.

Plant out cabbage, cauliflower and other brassicas but take precautions against root fly. Keep on top of pest and disease outbreaks, as well as controlling weeds.

Don't forget your houseplants

feed and water them regularly. Control algae and blanketweed in ponds.

Mid May

Sow suitable varieties of pansies to flower from autumn throughout the winter. Sow biennials for flowering next spring onwards e.g. wallflowers, myosotis, sweet williams, foxgloves and honesty. Plant out chrysanthemums for flowering in borders or for cutting. Plant out summer bedding plants when frost risk is minimal.

Tie in wallshrubs and climbers to their supports try to train them at 45 degrees or horizontally to encourage flowering.

Trim over aubretia and arabis after flowering to keep them neat. Prune wall trained pyracantha and chaenomeles after flowering. Keep strawberry fruits off the soil using straw or mats.

Cut down spring flowering perennials – e.g. pulmonarias and doronicums after flowering

to produce a neat mound of new foliage. Untrimmed plants often become mildewed.

Sow swedes, beetroot, carrots, parsnips, French and runner beans outdoors.

Plant out sweet corn in blocks, rather than a long row, as they are wind pollinated.

Take cuttings from dahlias and chrysanthemums for flowering later in summer.

Plant tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers etc. in a cold greenhouse or outdoors if in sheltered site.

Make up summer flowering hanging baskets and containers.

Late May

Brighten up your patio with some spectacular frost tender container plants, like brugmansia.

Prune clematis montana straight after flowering, if they are getting out of bounds.

Plant out leeks, marrows,



courgettes and melon plants.

Enjoy more herbs by sowing Basil, Coriander and Parsley every fortnight.

Spinach often runs to seed if sown after mid-May – so sow leaf beet instead.

Sow some half-hardy annuals for use a winter pot plants e.g. calceolarias, schizanthus and cinerarias.

Sow ornamental cabbage and kale for winter colour in tubs and borders.

Beware of houseplants getting scorched on sunny windowsills. Listen to the weather forecast in case of any nasty late frosts.

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Ailsa's Kitchen *Ailsa Craddock*

British asparagus and Jersey Royal potatoes! The potatoes have been grown on the island for 140 years and today there are approximately 20 island farmers who grow them (and often no other crops) on approximately 7,300 acres and can only be grown on Jersey to have the name. As for the asparagus, we are very lucky to live in the Valley of Evesham, one of the homes of British asparagus. I know you can buy this most of the year from abroad - but there is nothing like the Real Thing from just around the corner! These three recipes are using our two British stalwarts - but with a twist.

New Potato Salad with aioli -

Crisp, golden new potatoes, paired with fresh radish and a zingy aioli – for when you can't get enough of them and don't need any meat.

1kg baby new potatoes
80g salted butter
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tsp yellow mustard seeds, lightly crushed
2 tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed
1 tsp Dijon mustard
Juice of a lemon
200g radishes, thinly sliced
a bunch dill, roughly torn
2 egg yolks
2 large cloves garlic, crushed
Juice and zest of 2 (more) lemons
250ml olive oil, plus extra for frying

Cook the potatoes in a large pan of boiling salted water for 15-20 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool. Cook the butter and onion in a large frying pan for 5 minutes or until turning translucent. Add the garlic and fry for another 5 minutes. Add

the mustard seeds and coriander seeds, and fry until starting to smell fragrant.

Add the Dijon mustard and juice of 1 lemon and mix. Transfer to a bowl. Tip the cooled potatoes onto a clean worksurface and use the flat side of a knife to lightly squash each one. Fry the potatoes in a little more oil in a large non-stick frying pan for 10-15 minutes or until starting to crisp up.

Tip onto kitchen paper to drain. In the meantime, make the aioli. Put the egg yolks, garlic, lemon juice and plenty of seasoning in a small blender, and whizz until smooth.

Slowly drizzle in the olive oil while still blending on a low speed, until it emulsifies, thickens and is smooth.

Put the crispy smashed potatoes into a bowl and mix in most of the onion butter and sliced radishes.

Spread the aioli across a platter and pile the potatoes on top.

Finish with a drizzle of the remaining butter and lots of fresh dill.



Crab and Asparagus with Thai Mayonnaise

Asparagus spears
crab meat
sliced sourdough bread
olive oil
handful of rocket leaves (I eat spinach nearly every day so you could use this instead)
2 - 4 tablespoons of mayonnaise
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
1/2 - 1 red chilli
freshly grated zest of 1 lime
1 tablespoon fish sauce (if this is the first time you have used it please don't be put off by the smell - it tastes much better!)
chopped coriander

Cook the asparagus in boiling water for 2 - 4 minutes, drain and refresh under cold running water. Stir the garlic, chilli, zest, fish sauce and coriander into the mayonnaise. Season if necessary, fold in the crab meat and set aside. Toast the bread, drizzle with olive oil and scatter over rocket or spinach leaves. Pile the crab mixture on top. Toss the cold asparagus spears in a little olive oil and arrange over the crab meat.

Alternatively, you could cook LOTS of asparagus and serve, on the side, hot with lashings butter - using any leftover toast to soak up the juices.



Changes to local government

You may have read that the Westminster government is changing the structure of local government to something called Unitary Authorities. These already exist in parts of the country, including Herefordshire. A Unitary Authority is a single tier of government, sitting between central government and local parish and town councils. Currently in Worcestershire, we have a county council that deals with things like education, transport, social care and libraries. Below them sit six district councils. Ours is Wychavon, which is responsible for services including planning

applications, waste collection, parks and green spaces and collection of Council Tax. Below the district tier are parish and town councils. Whittington Parish Council aims to reflect local opinion and works to improve the lives of its residents through liaison on local issues with district and county councillors. Parish councillors are unpaid, non-political volunteers. On 31st March 2028, Worcestershire County Council and the six district councils will be abolished and replaced the following day with either a single unitary authority, probably called Worcestershire Council or possibly a North

Worcestershire Council and a South Worcestershire Council. This is still under discussion. A unitary authority managing all the services previously controlled at County and District level should make it easier for the public to report issues. Discussions are ongoing regarding combining several unitary authorities, including Worcestershire into a 'region' with an elected 'Metro Mayor'. London, Birmingham and Manchester have had Mayors for many years, but now there are others covering places like Sheffield, East Midlands and West of England. Some services currently

managed by Wychavon may be offered to parish and town councils in the next three years, including car parks, play areas and green spaces, so the role of Whittington Parish Council may broaden to take on more responsibility. Whittington Parish Council has a vacancy on its team of nine, so if you'd like to shape the look of your parish as we go through these changes together, contact the Parish Clerk, David Hunter-Miller at clerk@whittingtonparish.gov.uk for more information or go along to their meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 27th May at Whittington Community Hall.

The Lungs of Worcester will be concreted over!



The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) named as 'The Parkway Railway Development' is the brainchild of Malvern Hills District Council, Wychavon District Council and Worcester City district Council. It has proposed 26,300 houses and over 350 hectares of employment land over the next 40 years. The plan will engulf the existing villages of Whittington, Norton, Littleworth, Drakes Broughton and Wadborough. It will impact less directly on Pershore, Kempsey and Upton on Seven, but they too will not escape the increased traffic flow, pollution and disturbance to wildlife this plan will provoke. The Parkway development will be larger than the current size of Droitwich. The countryside will be lost to an urban sprawl, becoming a suburb of Worcester.

The creation of this huge project will cause 40 years of disruption. An area larger than the current size of Pitchcroft Racecourse will be allocated to warehouse and industrial units (similar to the monolithic units currently being developed at the Ketch roundabout near Kempsey) that will overshadow Whittington. The land next to the motorway and rail station has played a large part in its selection of this development. At this time, however, there is very little planned to deal with the increase in traffic volumes that thousands of houses, distribution centres, construction traffic and railway parking expansion will bring. Gridlock on the M5 and surrounding road network is already a regular occurrence

and it will rapidly get worse. The planning inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State are currently reviewing the results of the 2022 public consultation. It is important we do not let our fears and concerns rest on this consultation alone. It will need regular repetition and re-assertion of local opinions over the next 40 years. It is fair to say Wychavon has not adopted a totally NIMBY response. Some change and development are essential and arguably, desirable. However, the authorities need to be kept abreast of our concerns. Indeed, several concerns already exist before a single turf has been cut: - Traffic flow and congestion is getting worse. Increased traffic has created 'rat runs' through Whittington, drakes Broughton, Norton and Wadborough as commercial traffic and commuters seek to avert delays.

Air and noise pollution increases and road safety for cyclists, school children, horse riders and pedestrians are put at risk. Parking at the new rail station is now inadequate, as in Pershore.

It is undoubtedly going to get worse as construction begins. Developers have also intimated they plan to build a West Midlands Distribution Centre including large warehouses on Pershore road adjacent to Whittington residential homes. It is understood these warehouses and distribution centres will operate 24 hours a day.

The impact on the village will be devastating; not only light, noise and atmospheric pollution but views obliterated.

- Schools and medical facilities are already at breaking point. There is no provision for Worcester Royal Hospital mentioned and the increase of 26000+ inhabitants must be a priority. Already Children from Whittington are unable to attend their local school because it is over subscribed. They currently travel to Worcester, Littleworth and Pershore for education. Schools, and medical facilities must be established simultaneously as housing is developed.

- When the Warndon Villages were developed a 'Green Space Officer' was appointed to coordinate the green spaces within the development. The Parkway development is twice the size of the Warndon Villages, yet no plan for such a provision has been made.

Indeed, the developer has firmly rejected the idea! What can we do?

It is true to say many residents in the area will face the rest or their natural lives existing on a construction site when development begins. The enormity of the SWDP and its 40-year gestation may seem too much for many. Some may feel there is little point in trying to protect what we currently value when faced with such a daunting challenge.

However, do not fall victim of defeatism. Keep your finger on the pulse of news, keep up to date with developments via local press and media. Exercising your democratic right to discuss issues with friends and neighbours, write or email your concerns, lobby your local councilors, MP and members of the local authority, organise or sign petitions. This is best done early, rather than late; it is easier to prevent something before it has begun rather than stop it when it is underway. Support local Councilors who agree with you. In the meanwhile, it may be interesting to consider these questions:

- 1) Was Wychavon too generous and lenient in letting this development become so big? Could other areas of the county see such schemes developed?
- 2) The new development will have a town centre and at least four neighbourhood areas, plus business areas. Will the local population be consulted on this, or did our consultation stop after 2022?



Spring Bees

The overwintered hives have taken advantage of every sunny spell this spring, to get out and harvest pollen and nectar from the tree blossom. The cool wind and showers have not deterred them and there has not been any torrential rain to dilute or wash away the nectar. The quantity of blossom has also been good with no night frosts to destroy it. The combined result of all this has been a dramatic growth in the number of bees and the amount of stores in the hives, so I have been busy adding extra boxes to prevent overcrowding. Some bees are collecting dark red pollen from horse chestnut whilst others have pale yellow from apple or bright orange from dandelion. When there is an abundance of flowers, bees tend to work on just one type of flower resulting in the distinctively coloured pollen loads on the hind legs. This is called flower fidelity and is quite different from the random behaviour of flies. When a particular plant comes to the end of its flowering period the bees which had been working on it will have to find a new source of flowers. They could

just fly about to try and find a new crop but bees are able to communicate a new source to their sisters using their 'waggle dance' language. Bees returning from a good source will offer a taste to their sisters and then perform a dance on the comb resembling the shape of a capital D. The deviation of the back of the D from the vertical, corresponds to the deviation of the flower direction from the direction of the sun. Whilst making this pattern on the comb the forager waggles its abdomen and the number of waggles indicates the distance of the flowers from the hive. It then repeats the dance in a mirror image. The combination of these elements enables the bee to tell its sisters what can be found, in what direction and at what distance. The overall vigour of the dance also gives an indication of the quality of the source so that poorer sources are likely to recruit fewer foragers. By sharing information, bees can minimise the time and energy spent searching for new sources of nectar or pollen. When a bee visits a flower and takes all the nectar it leaves a scent trail

on the flower which persists for a few minutes and indicates that the flower is 'empty'. Other bees detect the scent and go to another flower and thus avoid wasting time. Bees can efficiently forage on flowers over two miles distant from the hive, giving a foraging area of over 12 square miles, and in extreme cases perhaps up to 25sq miles.

Wasps do not have communication dances. They rely on strong oily footprint scent signals which they leave at the site of food sources. These are detected by other wasps as they fly around. In experiments, they will fly to their nest and return to feeding stations very directly showing that they are very quick to learn the route. In Spring they hunt for small caterpillars and grubs to feed their young and do not need to revisit a specific location time and time again. However in autumn they will attack beehives and take the bees to feed their young and their footprint pheromone plays a part in directing their sisters to unguarded entrances or gaps in the hive woodwork.

Martyn Cracknell



This 1st Class stamp was issued in 2015



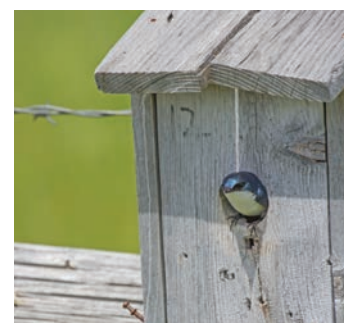
Village Life

Recently our Village Association funded a dozen bird houses for our village. We were lucky enough to be drawn out of the hat and now have one in my garden. Sadly it is still vacant occupation with no takers so far. May be something to do with the magpies who have built a nest in a cherry tree close to our avian 'des res' and the smaller birds writing us off as a bit of a rough neighbourhood! Time will tell – but please spread the word there is at least one unoccupied house waiting for new residents – rent free with no deposit required! My wife and I moved our family from south London to Worcestershire many years ago when our children were young. London schools were not getting their hands on our precious children! Quite a culture shock awaited us but we soon settled and now know it was the best possible move. One of the early surprises was how long it takes to buy a loaf of bread or the weekly vegetables – people talk and are interested in who you

are. Many years in London had meant we had built walls of self-defence around us and in no way expected anyone in the street or in shops to pass the time of day. Far from it, any attempt at friendliness was likely to be regarded as intrusion into personal space and to be discouraged. I recently spent a day in London visiting former work friends. London days are now (thankfully) rare and this trip reminded me why. Who knew so many people could cram themselves into one city? My new-found rural self was genuinely shocked by the crowds milling around just about everywhere. Many seemed to be tourists or just enjoying a day out in the sunshine, but greater numbers appeared to be awfully important people focused on very serious business. Humbling (?) – or a major relief that I no longer need to identify with that tribe. Of course, one significant change since I moved away is that everyone now walks around with a mobile device inches

from their face. No awareness of others or their trajectory as we try to navigate the same pavement space, and certainly no attempt to step aside. Is this a desire to zone out of the general maelstrom they find themselves in or is it just a reflection of modern manners? I suspect a combination of both. How sad for those who miss out on their surroundings and contact with fellow humans as a result. The highlight of any day spent in London, for me, is finally taking a seat on the train home from Paddington. Huge sigh of relief that I've made it to the train, but it's far more than that. A day of crowded streets and underground carriages during which not a single soul has made eye contact let alone exchanged a look. Then the first person you vaguely look towards on the 17.34 from Paddington smiles and you both silently know you're sharing an immense relief! On that particular journey I took a seat next to a lovely person who struck up conversation

with me when she saw me looking at a video clip of my grandson enjoying himself on a swing. We chatted for a good 20 minutes about her children and mine, sharing enjoyment of the safe zone in which we could connect with a fellow traveller for the first time that day. We're unlikely to ever meet again, but how reassuring to know we're not alone and can share refuge on our escape train! Now, to convince those magpies to roll out the welcome mat and to stop spreading rumours that we're hostile neighbours! Not much to ask.



John Driscoll

Romy's Uni Life

Romy Kemp *Liverpool University*



The Easter Break

Having three weeks off in April is great to get back into the rhythm of normal life without the stress of university essay writing. I had an essay due just before leaving to go back home and I have one due just after the Easter break. I have had quite a busy break. I've been on holiday to Newquay where the weather was nice on arrival but storms followed. It was a lovely holiday and I had been looking forward to it for months whilst at university. It was my dad's birthday whilst we were on holiday (that's why

we went on holiday) and unfortunately the day of his birthday was terrible weather of strong wind and heavy rain but a fabulous Thai takeaway made up for this!

I also visited some family in Clacton-on-Sea for a couple of days and was nice to catch up. Since it is about a five hour train journey, we do not see each other often. I will be going back to university soon after the break and it isn't long until exam season begins, so revision is underway and secondary resources are being found. The Three Counties Showground had the flea



market on recently and my friend and I went to it and had a great time. I bought two pieces of sterling silver amber jewellery pieces.

I've got my English Society Ball coming up at university and I'm extremely excited for that but am underprepared (I haven't even got a dress yet but at least I have the shoes)! I went to the ball last year and had a blast. It's a great opportunity to dress up and chat with friends in a more formal environment than university or the pub.

Recently I have been trying to find out what I want to do with my future. I still don't know

what I want to do and it is very nerve-racking because I haven't got long left at university. My mind is all over the place with what jobs and careers I would want to get involved in.

Thankfully, my university offers help and support around this topic. I will need to go to them when I return to university to discuss my options and what I would want to do with my future. I have an academic advisor at university who checks up on me every semester to check that I'm alright and doing the best I can do. She is also there in case I have any questions or concerns.



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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Gregory's World! *Gregory Sidaway Exeter College, Oxford*

Absolutely Norway

Inside the sauna, the air wrapped around my face like a hot, damp cloth. I could almost taste the coarse timber walls and slatted benches. I hadn't been in a sauna for years, not since I was much smaller and my hair much curlier, and that had been in a hotel in a faraway land called Milton Keynes. Back then, I'd had to close my eyes or wear goggles inside, otherwise the hard, grainy heat made my eyeballs dry out and tingle. Now, though, I had no goggles to hand – I'd left mine in my bedroom drawer over 700 miles away. I definitely couldn't close my eyes either. There was too much to see. Fellow reader, we weren't in Milton Keynes any more. Taking shallow breaths, me and my mates shuffled inside the sauna. We laid out our towels and perched on the tiered seating, the air dense in our lungs, the heat lulling us into a warm, sweaty stupor. Among our group, was Natdog – who you've met before – and, towering over us all, was Big Man Sam. Just when I thought interrailing would be the spectacular finale to a year of adventure, Natdog and Big Man Sam hatched a plan for a Christmas city break in Oslo. We'd taken a train from the TORP Sandefjord Airport

through the snowy woods of Narnia just to get here. Bolted into our coats, we hopped between pockets of central heating, from authentic Norwegian bakeries to less authentic 7-Eleven stores. (Oslo has a staggering number of them, about as many as there are Pret a Mangers in London). The night before, we'd gone ice skating at the Christmas market, where I was critiqued on my technique by a six-year-old who could skate and speak a second language far better than me. At the indoor market hall, Mathallen, Big Man Sam tried an elk burger with cloudberries, while I enjoyed a Frydenlund Pilsner. Now, we began a new day at the Oslo Badstuforening sauna. You see, this was a floating sauna, buoyed on the leaden waters of the Oslofjord. Across the water, stood the opera house. Its snow-capped roof slopes upwards from ground level around a jutting, geometric atrium. Icy stairs offer tourists the opportunity to watch the sun as it sets over the fjord, then to break their necks as they slip on the way back down. Norway definitely commits to winter more fiercely than Britain, and it took some getting used to. No wonder these warm, cosy saunas were so popular. I admired the stoic calmness

exhibited by a man sitting beside me, one leg crossed over the other, reading the morning paper, becoming shinier and shinier. Imagine doing this routinely, the self-control, the mindfulness you could attain. People came and left to take the plunge, while we had fun ladling water onto the coals and steaming up the place. Each person's exit was followed by a moment of high-stakes tension when they forgot to close the door properly and compromised our bubble of precious warmth. Inevitably, one of our group – maybe it was Big Man Sam – made the announcement: "I'm actually quite hot in here, lads." The sauna is clever like that, slowly roasting you until you feel stoked-up enough to brave the water outside. Being with a group of mates also bolstered my confidence – I don't know where newspaper-man (sitting alone beside me) had honed his steely self-determination to be here without peer pressure. So, out we marched. The clipped voice of newspaper-man: "Please close the –" I pulled it to. The frigid air rallied every goose bump on my body. Ice crinkled on the water. Earlier, we'd seen a bulky giant of a man (a descendent of Vikings, I



imagined) last barely ten seconds in the water. How would we fare? We made our way along the gangplank. I descended the ladder. Deep breaths ... de-eeppp b-b-b-breathsss – aahh – oooh – take the photo! In one of the photos immortalising this experience, Natdog and Big Man Sam tense their arms like Mr Universe, while I manage a rictus grin of shock. Adrenaline coursed through us. I managed three separate plunges in all. We got so psyched up that some of the others kept wanting to jump back in. Nope, no way! Three times was plenty for me. We scurried back inside the sauna to take stock of ourselves. My body tingled in the newfound heat. (Newspaper-man thumbed his page calmly.) Time for another day of adventure, for thick socks, warm coffees and cinnamon buns. Grinning, dripping and panting, we left to get changed – closing the sauna door behind us!

Evie's Teenage Focus *Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University*

A few months ago, I was telling all of you how nervous I was to go to university. Now I'm almost at the point where I'm moving out, and to be completely transparent, it all seems rather absurd to me. As I write this, I am nearing the end of my two weeklong Easter holidays. When I go back to university, I will have only one week left of teaching before my first year at university is over. I have a couple of assignments due around the start of May, but after that I will be completely finished. My friends however, still have exams till the end of the month. At the moment my plan is to stay with them until they are done as well. Despite being in Oxford for almost a year there are still a bunch of things that we all want to do before our first year is over, and

now that the weather is getting warmer it's the perfect time. One of those things that we are still desperate to do, is to go river punting. Every time we get the bus on our way to Westgate, we go over the bridge, see the boats, and think wow, we should do that. And then we never do. So we have made it our goal that by the end of the year we will go on the punting boats and get ourselves down the river. However, after that, I don't know what I will be doing the rest of the time. I think that it's been mentioned that once we are all finished, we might go lake swimming as it's meant to be a "popular" thing to do, but I'm not entirely convinced yet, the thought doesn't really thrill me all that much. Even though my friends have insane ideas such as

swimming in a dirty lake, the thought of moving out and away from them and university, even if I'll be back in a few months for my second year, now seems just as daunting as moving in. Of course I cannot wait to be back home and be with my family again but now, I have the same problem I did as when I was back home over Christmas, that I'll miss all the new and amazing people that I have met at university. Of course we are all planning to meet up lots over summer, either for day trips in London or at each other's houses, but after getting into a rhythm where we see each other every day it's a rather large change. But as always, I will keep myself busy, I have a bunch of friends here that I cannot wait to catch up with again. In



addition to that I've just started a new job! I've gone from McDonald's to Costa coffee. I know it isn't that drastic of a change, but I've had two shifts there so far and I can already tell that there will be a massive difference (a good one I think). By the next time I write to you I might have already moved out, so wish me luck, and I will tell you how it goes next time. Until then, toodles!

The Walled Gardens at Croome Court



Chris & Karen Cronin, photo by Kitchen Garden Magazine

Nestled within the stunning landscape of Croome Court near Pershore, The Walled Gardens are a hidden gem of historical and horticultural significance. Dating back to the 18th century, these Georgian gardens were once a thriving hub of cultivation, supplying exotic fruits and vegetables to the Croome estate. However, years of neglect saw them fall into ruin. In 2000, Chris and Karen Cronin embarked on an ambitious restoration journey, rescuing the gardens from decay and lovingly bringing them back to life. Now privately owned and carefully maintained, The Walled Gardens at Croome Court stand as one of Britain's most important restorations of its kind, beautifully blending heritage with contemporary gardening practices.

This year marks a momentous milestone as the Cronins celebrate 25 years since they first began their journey to rescue these historic Georgian walled gardens from ruin. Over the past quarter of a century, the transformation has been nothing short of remarkable, thanks to their dedication, vision, and tireless efforts.

The story of The Walled Gardens at Croome Court is one of passion, perseverance, and a deep appreciation for history. The gardens, once part of the Coventry family estate, were among the largest Georgian walled gardens in Europe. By the time Chris and Karen encountered them, the gardens were almost unrecognisable, overgrown with wild brambles, the remnants of agricultural buildings in disrepair, and little more than a shadow of their former glory. To many, the restoration seemed an insurmountable challenge, but the Cronins saw something few others could, the hidden potential beneath the decay.

With a clear vision and an insatiable curiosity for the garden's secrets, the Cronins

committed themselves to the immense task of restoration. Over the past 25 years, they have worked meticulously to restore not only the natural beauty of the gardens but also their rich historical significance. This involved careful reconstruction of the landscape, preservation of original features, and a sensitive restoration approach to maintain the gardens' authenticity while ensuring they thrive for future generations. Throughout their journey, Chris and Karen have uncovered historical treasures and long-forgotten secrets hidden beneath the years of neglect. The project

has been a labour of love, culminating in the opening of the gardens to the public, allowing visitors to experience the awe and wonder that first captivated the Cronins. While the primary restoration is complete, the project continues to evolve. As the garden matures, it reveals new elements and hidden features, ensuring that its story, and the Cronins' dedication, lives on. The Walled Gardens at Croome Court are not just a restored historical site; they are a living testament to the power of vision, dedication, and the enduring beauty of nature.



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Chris and Karen Cronin since 2000.**



Nestled within the Croome Court estate, near Pershore, the gardens are open every Saturday and Sunday from April to September, including Bank Holidays. Opening hours are 11 am to 5 pm, with the last entry at 4 pm.

Admission is £7 per adult, and children under 14 go free
(regular National Trust admission applies).

All proceeds support the ongoing restoration of this historic landscape. Exclusive group tours outside regular hours are available for parties of 15 or more. For enquiries, email info@croomewalledgardens.com.

Discover a hidden gem and explore centuries of history in bloom.

Website: www.croomewalledgardens.com

Facebook: The Walled Gardens at Croome Court

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Sweet dreams are made of this . . .

Angela Johns

I ditched New Years Resolutions years ago. They seemed only to be something with which to berate myself when, a few months down the line, I had dismally failed to keep them. Instead, not long ago, I made a vision board, a manifestation board, a dream board. This shifts the focus from the whats to the hows. It gives a visual of your ideas and dreams.

I spent an evening with a couple of friends cutting pictures out of magazines and getting glue all over my fingers and everything else. We hunched over large pieces of A5 paper in full concentration and mine is now stuck to the side of my fridge with magnets. We three were so engrossed on our own creations that we didn't really look at each other's until we were done. We were all rather amused to see that what we had produced had unintentionally reflected our personalities quite well. Amazing how a collage can do that.

My vision board is colourful and I have already manifested several things on it. (One friend had illustrated "More Sex" on hers, the other "New Car" – both have succeeded already ha ha!). I made three areas of focus: travel, relationships and home. My realisation whilst making my board was that these three areas of my life are not distinct and separate but overlap. The lines I'd created to separate, I had to blur. Somehow that felt so good. Success in one area fed through to another. A challenge in one could be supported by another. And my final piece was more beautiful and flowing. When you move from a goal-oriented list of "whats" that seems to sit there in judgement



until it gets done or gets thrown in the bin, you can move to a creative scene of "hows" that can spark the imagination and free the mind. As it happens I can't let go of my love of making lists so I've ended up with a mix of both - I wrote on the back of mine ways I could take action to manifest my wishes. That was the best thing about it. The pictures and colours I chose brought my ideas to life, which sparked more ideas and gave me solutions to the things that might hold me back. Rather than be prescriptive, my pictures symbolised what I wished for so that I could reshape my plans and change my mind with more ease. The blurring of the categories has helped me see a more integrated life.

I don't consider myself particularly artistic or gifted in crafts but I spent a lovely evening with friends dreaming, creating, laughing – which just happened to be one of the themes on my finished vision board. How nice! *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 www.angelajohns.co.uk*

To collaborate or not?

Emily Papirnik

How often do we find ourselves trying to do it all—create, achieve, struggle, or simply survive—alone? There's an underlying belief many of us carry that we shouldn't bother others with our needs. That reaching out is an inconvenience to others, or a sign of weakness. But what if collaboration could bring not only more ease, but also greater creativity, joy, and momentum?

For most of my life, I held tight to the idea that I had to handle everything on my own—not because I thought I had to prove anything, but because I didn't want to impose on others. Whether I was creating something new, facing a challenge, or working through a personal hurdle, I rarely reached out for support. I believed that asking for help was a burden. That mindset recently shifted, and interestingly—it wasn't even because I asked for help. Instead, people began to come to me offering support with one of my ventures. They believed in what I was doing, and more importantly, they believed in me. They saw my struggle in areas they found effortless and offered their skills willingly. It was eye-opening. Finding collaborators who align with your vision and genuinely want to see you succeed can be a game changer. It doesn't mean handing over control of your dream—it means



welcoming in fresh energy, new perspectives, and complementary talents. It means allowing others to contribute their genius so that your own genius can shine even more brightly. Collaboration doesn't make you less capable. It makes you more connected. It prevents you from getting stuck in problems that others can solve with ease. It transforms creative blocks into opportunities for growth and forward movement. With the right collaborators, momentum builds naturally, and your ideas can flourish in ways you might never have imagined alone. No one ever said you had to do it all yourself. Maybe it's time we let go of the belief that we have to stay quiet about our needs. Maybe those around us—friends, colleagues, even unexpected allies—hold the keys to unlocking the next level of our creativity and purpose. So the question isn't just "to collaborate or not?"—it's "why wait any longer?"

"If you want a thing done well, do it yourself"

Napoleon

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Let's hear it for heat pumps!

William Jenkin



Did you know that the UK government is going to ban new oil-fired boiler installations in homes from 2035?

So, if your boiler is showing signs of age, maybe now is the time to consider a heat pump? Get valuable space back in your kitchen, as heat pumps go outside! Not only that, heat pumps are much more efficient than a boiler, being around 300% efficient, compared to a condensing boiler which is around 85% efficient. This means that for every 1kW of energy put into a heat pump you get 3 to 4 kW of heat, while with a boiler you only get 0.85 kW of heat.

If you add solar PV panels and a home battery to a heat pump installation, then the cost of heating your home with a heat pump drops significantly. This is what I call the 'holy trinity': where in conjunction with a suitable heat pump electricity tariff, you can really get your heating and electric bills right down. Don't forget that the average payback time in the UK for a 3-6kW system with battery is 8-10 years. After that all the electricity you generate is free! The government now obliges the major power supply companies to offer tariffs with a 'Smart Energy Guarantee'. This means you can get paid for exporting electricity which you don't use. I use the 'Agile Outgoing Octopus' tariff and I think of the reduction on my bills from April - October as off-setting the cost of running the heat pump during colder months.

Have you got 300mm of loft insulation?

Now, let's look at home insulation. This is a great step to take to get your bills down, no matter what energy source you have for your home.

Improving your loft insulation is by far the most cost effective (and easiest) measure you can do. As we all know, hot air rises, so if you stop it leaving your home you stay warmer. It's a simple as that. The government has a couple of schemes for encouraging home owners and tenants to improve their insulation and so reduce energy bills. The ECO (energy company obligation) is aimed at tackling fuel poverty. To be eligible you need to be receiving at least one of a list of benefits, such as child benefit or income support. The ECO scheme cannot be used on conjunction with the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (more on that at the end.) Then there's the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) which is aimed at occupants of houses with an EPC rating D-G (ie. houses with poor levels of insulation and therefore high heating bills.) Importantly this scheme covers the cost of loft insulation as well as cavity wall and either external or internal wall insulation.

Get on the BUS

Finally, the most important grant available from the Government at the moment is the £7,500 boiler upgrade scheme (BUS) grant which is available to owners of homes and businesses replacing any fossil fuel based boiler with a heat pump. This means that if you're taking out a oil-fired boiler you'll get £7,500 off the price of your new heat pump installation. It's a serious incentive to reduce your CO2 emissions. And don't forget to think of the 'holy trinity'! *For friendly, no obligation advice and cost effective installations of heat pumps, Solar PV and home batteries please call Malvern Solar 01684 437060*

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Are benefits taxable?

Carol Draper FCCA

All benefits are paid without tax being deducted. However, just because no tax is taken off does not mean that all benefits are not taxable.

The standard tax-free personal allowance is £12,570 and it has been at this level since April 2021. While the personal allowance has not changed in the last four years, many benefits have continued to rise meaning there is the possibility your benefit income could exceed your personal allowance and present you with a tax liability.

The most common taxable benefit is state pension. The full rate for the new state pension for men born after 6 April 1951 and women born after 6 April 1953 is £230.25 per week making a potential total annual income of £11,973, just £597 short of the personal allowance. If your state pension is calculated on a different basis, it is possible your personal allowance may already have been exceeded. Other taxable benefits include bereavement allowance, carer's allowance, contribution-based employment and support allowance, jobseekers' allowance, incapacity benefit, widowed parents' allowance and pensions paid by the Industrial Death Benefit scheme. If you are in receipt of taxable benefits and believe you have exceeded the tax-free allowance, it is your



responsibility to inform HMRC.

Even if your state pension or benefits exceed your personal allowance, HMRC does not have the capacity to tax this income at source. To collect any tax that may be due, HMRC will either amend an existing tax code or, if you are in the position where you do not receive any other income that can be taxed at source, HMRC can issue a tax demand or may request that you complete a Self-Assessment return.

While tax codes may be difficult to understand and requests of any type from HMRC can be worrying, neither should be ignored. It is not unheard of for HMRC to make a mistake, so if you are unsure of the figures being used, do not understand HMRC's calculations or are confused by their demands, speak to someone who will be able to both analyse and explain it fully.

Carol Draper FCCA
Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd

"He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat"

Napoleon



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When can I use Trading Standards?



In England If you think a business has broken the law or acted unfairly, you can report them to Trading Standards.

Trading Standards use the information you give them to investigate unfair trading and illegal business activity, like rogue traders and scams.

Trading Standards can take businesses to court or stop them operating, but they won't help you fix your problem - for example, they can't help you get a refund. You can get help with your consumer problem from the Citizens Advice consumer service.

They can be reached on:
0808 223 1133

What sort of things can I report?

You should report a business to Trading Standards if they sold you something:

- unsafe or dangerous, like an electronic appliance with faulty wiring or food past its use-by date
- fake
- not as described - for example, you bought a package holiday but something advertised wasn't included
- you didn't want to buy - for example, they put pressure on you

You can also tell them about a business if:

- they scammed you - for example, you paid for something online that you didn't receive and you couldn't contact the seller
- they tried to stop you using your legal rights - for example, they said you can't return faulty goods

- they weren't clear about the price or added on extra costs - for example, they advertised theatre ticket prices without booking fees

- they sold products to people who looked underage without asking for ID - for example, alcohol, knives or fireworks

- they didn't carry out work properly - for example, kitchen fitters left your home in a dangerous state

To report to Trading Standards, you need to contact the Citizens Advice Consumer service. They will pass your report to Trading Standards and can also give you advice about your problem.

Trading Standards will use the information you give to decide if they'll investigate. They'll only contact you if they need more information. Even if Trading Standards don't contact you, they might use your evidence to take action against the business in the future. For example, if other people make complaints about the same business.

If a business isn't helping you fix something that went wrong, you could:

- try making a formal complaint
- get help from a dispute resolution scheme
- take them to court

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From the Boundary



Well done to both Rory McIlroy and Justin Rose on their performance at the Masters. The writer has been over the course (not played it). A calmer more patient McIlroy fought off Bryson DeChambeau who doggedly stuck to McIlroy. However, it was Rose who, after leading the first two days fell away on the third day. He fought back and came back on the rails to lose by a short head. McIlroy has now lost the monkey on his shoulder and has become one of the few. He can play with gay abandon now and hopefully the Ryder cup The snooker carries on but still without Ronnie O'Sullivan which does not make for the same interest without him. We will see if he gets his head right for the World championship. Formula One has started with Norris and Piastri leading

championship the field at present with George Russell doing well. Leclerc leads the Ferrari chase; it is clear that Hamilton is not what he was. Lastly Never underestimate Verstappen who is without doubt the best driver on the modern circuit.

Cricket

The test and one day internationals will start soon against Zimbabwe and it is a case of who is fit to play. Worcestershire county cricket continue with their problems. The board have no knowledge of Cricket, let alone the deep history of Worcestershire County Cricket, about the only thing they are is the board is Diversity compliant, oh dear.

OUR Country

The migrants keep coming and despite Starmer saying he will stop it they keep coming, 7000

so far in his reign. More importantly to us in Worcestershire we have County Council elections, The County Council is in financial difficulties, why? because it is the same people year after year. Let's change things and have people who understand big budgets, procurement. Huge money could be saved if only we had the right councillors who can control the officials. A number of people have said that there are too many "brown envelopes" "flying about". Therefore, please before you vote look at the persons CV not their party affiliation and ask yourself can they cut it? My open-ended question regarding the death penalty has, as it was designed to cause some interest and not surprisingly all were for and not one against (keep writing to the editor) Hashem Abedi is serving life for 22 yes 22 murders in HMP Frankland. How on earth could he be able

to cook in a kitchen is unbelievable. No special food, forced to wear overalls and in a cage. Some prisoners in Long Lartin in Evesham are converting to Islam for an easy life from the gangs. The prisons need a massive review and maybe Chikurubi is not such a bad idea. Mr Starmer is not going to invoke a full-scale independent inquiry into the grooming gangs, why because he will lose the Asian vote. Well, you lost it already they are forming their own party.

This country must become strategically independent, we have oil, Coal and Gas we must make our own high-grade steel. Mr Miliband is an XXX instead of shipping frozen gas ore from Australia. Are there no strategic thinkers? Dumb question. Keep those letters coming, it is a free society (at the moment) HOT OFF THE PRESS google Jim Davidson and regarding our Prime Minister with Lord Ali

A view from the Middle

As April slowly drifts into May, so the outdoor cricket season flickers into life. Pavilions which have been locked up since September are opened and tidied up and the groundsman's work begins in earnest (although they would tell you it's year-round job). Players of a nervous disposition (including yours truly) will spend hours fidgeting with kit and panicking about whether we have forgotten how to hold a bat in the last seven months or so. (Which end am I meant to hold again?)

It is all worth it for the reassuring sound of leather on willow and a chance to be out in the sun again enjoying a day spent with your mates. Sometimes I

wonder how we can get away with calling in a sport when I'm lounging around doing the crossword waiting to bat or enjoying another splendid cake when we break for tea. It is a good reminder to enjoy yourself, and the company, as much as you can and try not to focus too much on the technical fallibilities.

To me, the great joy of cricket is that people of a huge range of abilities, not to mention age or gender, can join together and take part on a level playing field each week. And those of us that play are indebted to a huge team of volunteers who prepare the ground, umpire, score, prepare the teas, staff the



bar, and any number of other things. That's not even mentioning long-suffering partners who are unlikely to see much of us for the next five months. (And, even when physically present, we will

probably be practicing cover drives in our heads.) I wish all involved a happy, healthy, and successful season and say a huge thank you to those who make it possible. Go well everyone.

Thoughts from the Snug... Trump Trump Trump

President Donald Trump has provided much stimulation for debate in the Snug. His unpredictable policies and tweets have caused almost as much humour, amusement and exasperated incredulity as serious debate. A recent ambassador to the USA recently tried to reassure folk by saying, "He's already been in office for 4 months. Only another 44 months to

go!" Hardly reassuring we agreed. Nevertheless, we try to remain cheerful by recalling his gaffs and outrageous statements. Our favourite to date involves Trump's condemnation of poor old Jo Biden and Hillary Clinton. Trump says, "I know these old Democrats. They're crazy. Keep on repeating themselves. They're crazy!" Fake news, or a projection

based on his reflection seen in a mirror? We wonder if he ever has any self-doubts. How could he? Donald tells us he is the most intelligent and charismatic White House incumbent in the history of this great nation. It's too easy to totally dismiss, with derision, this undoubtedly powerful and unpredictable politician. But what can we do? Sit tight,

hold on and let's hope we don't get too tarnished in any attempts to protect our dignity as our leaders navigate the impact of this mercurial leader. Only 44 months to go. A cue from Monty Python might help: Always look on the bright side of life Another pint, anyone?

Buddy Bach

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Number 8, Pershore - www.number8.org

Book by Heather Hach, Music and Lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Neil Benjamin
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This amateur production presented by management with Musical Theatre International. All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI www.mtiusa.com




A fair field full of folk

Brian Johnson-Thomas

The mediaeval English poet William Langland (think *Piers Plowman*) once wrote of a vision he had from the Malvern Hills of 'a fair field full of folk'. He must have been prescient because that neatly sums up the appeal today of such events as the RHS Malvern Spring Festival which runs from next Thursday 8th until Sunday 11th May.

I'm sure that you know all about this horticultural extravaganza but I'm also interested in the plethora of food and drink experiences with the Festival is also going to offer and which are sure to add to the already vibrant atmosphere. I quite fancy, for example, booking my own Garden Shed for breakfast, lunch or afternoon tea and escaping for a while from the hustle and bustle of the Show. There again, the Street Food areas are always interesting and it's always nice to drop into the Kitchen Garden Theatre for the various talks and demonstrations. So, it won't be dull. See: www.rhsmalvern.co.uk

Just up the road from us the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford upon Avon is also welcoming the advent of Spring with a whole series of events. I quite fancy their Riverside Tours which help us uncover centuries of the history of Shakespeare's theatres as well as one of the Discover Days looking into the worlds of *Much Ado About Nothing* or *Titus Andronicus* – what a contrast! Comedy or gore? For details see: www.rsc.org.uk

Mind you their best production (so far as I'm concerned anyway) is about to launch in London. It's a new play called 'Born with Teeth' and it imagines what happened when playwrights William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe meet semi clandestinely in the back room of a pub. According to the publicity

it's a "thrilling imagining of the relationship between two literary icons at odds with their time". This may get me banned from Stratford (and a five-mile radius thereof) but I personally prefer Kit Marlowe to Shakespeare and feel that if he hadn't suffered an untimely death in a brawl he would easily have eclipsed the Bard. But he did, so he didn't. If you fancy a trip to Town then the first preview is on 13th August and the play runs until 1st November at the Wyndham's in Charing Cross Road.

Book online at: www.delfontmackingtosh.co.uk or by phone to 044 482 5151

Nearer home the Opera season at Longborough, near Moreton in Marsh, starts this year on the 27th with the UK Premiere of a new work Avner Dorman's "Wahnfried: The Birth of the Wagner Cult" which explores what happened to his work after his death. I always thought that one could simplify Wagner's career into two phases. Firstly we have slightly Dotty Uncle Dickie who writes strange operas loosely based upon mythology (think *Lord of the Rings* with added incest) and who has a penchant for wandering around wearing his wife's knickers. That is replaced after his death with the approved version of Genius Uncle Richard, the hugely successful composer whose works have a significant residual monetary value. Turning to the promotional literature it says that the opera begins with the composer's death and that we will witness the family's determination to construct the myth of the composer, promising "brutal infighting and disturbing political affiliations". Sounds promising.....

For details see: www.lfo.org.uk



34072 at Corfe Castle - Photo by Matt Toms

A different head of steam can be obtained over the second Bank Holiday weekend with the Cotswold Festival of Steam along the preserved railway line between Broadway and Cheltenham operated by the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway. We are, of course, celebrating 200 years since the beginning of the modern railway (but reckon that's just English propaganda, Richard Trevithick's locomotive was hauling passenger coaches to the Penydarren Works at Merthyr Tydfil back in 1803, so there!)

The railway is welcoming a 129 year old Victorian beauty built for the former South East and Chatham Railway back in 1896. It's believed that this is the first time in its entire history that its' moved so far away from home ground. It will be joined by half a dozen other steam locomotives and the railway will also be opening the doors behind the

scenes to the locomotive sheds at Toddington and the carriage sheds at Winchcombe. The owners of the former Gotherington station building are also opening their grounds offering an opportunity to try a 'pump trolley' on their private siding. Access to the event is by prior booking only –

see www.gwsr.com

So far I haven't yet mentioned the celebrations everywhere marking 80 years since the end of the last World War That's because they will hopefully be local to wherever we happen to live. But wherever we are I'm sure that the 8th will be a day to remember. However, at the time of writing there are still some tickets left for the spectacular VE Day Concert in Worcester Cathedral on the 3rd.

For details, contact : davidhallmarkveconcert@gmail.com

Spring at last! Let's enjoy very moment.



Born with Teeth



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thebig450bestival.co.uk

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Music Matters

Steve Ide



It's never been easier to play, it's never been harder to win

In the past, instruments were expensive to buy and learning to play took a serious amount of determination. Learning a song meant hours working out chord progressions, even listening to music was a major investment in money, time and attention. Nowadays, it is arguable that making and

releasing music has never been easier.

Anyone with access to the Internet can learn to play an instrument and anyone with an iPhone can produce a half decent song. Music can be released on YouTube and Spotify with the click of mouse and social media is a great publicist.

This is an exciting and terrifying prospect because it gives amazing freedom and opportunity for new musicians but makes standing above the noise almost impossible. And when it comes to making a living from music, the market is more crowded than ever, even skinny indie kids must eat.

As consumers, we too have more choices than ever so it's good to occasionally move

away from your old familiars or mega-artists like Oasis, Beyonce or Coldplay. Move your radio dial away from Primark FM or check out an album from an unknown band. Try the city center music venue showcasing a local band. The choice is endless, and you never know, your new favorite obsession may be waiting just around the corner.

Notable new albums

Loose talk
by Bryan Ferry & Amelia Barrett
Descriptive stories set to old Roxy Music demos, slightly unsettling... in a good way

Tell dem it's sunny
by Greentea Peng
Overhead a rainbow appears with a bit of swagger

Glory
by Perfume Genius
A creative journey that captures meditations on anxiety, drama and desire

Hard time furious dancing
by Snapped Ankles
Futuristic dance music, the title says it all

Add to playlist . . .

Spike Island by Pulp

Back on 74 by Jungle

Racing green by High Contrast

The world's biggest paving slab
by English Teacher

Killer Bee
by Ben Kweller, featuring The Flaming Lips

Jazz News

Peter Farrall

No trip to New Orleans is complete without a visit to Preservation Hall which would be the highlight of your experience, especially if you're a devotee of traditional jazz. It all began in an art gallery in the French Quarter of the city when the owner, Larry Borenstein, arranged regular jam sessions where many of the legendary figures from the origins of jazz performed. Visitors to the city in the 1960s who enquired where genuine traditional jazz could still be heard were directed to "Larry's Gallery" on St Peter's Street where some of the great names from the past were still playing in the way it had always been. Among these visitors were a young couple, already great followers of New Orleans jazz, Alan and Sandra Jaffe who were thrilled to meet not only Larry but some of the veteran musicians themselves. Inspired by their experiences in New Orleans, the Jaffes soon moved there permanently, taking an essential part in the running of the, almost nightly, sessions in the gallery. Popularity of the venue grew, so much that Borenstein decided to move his gallery to the neighbouring building, handing over the jazz side of things to Alan Jaffe.

Preservation Hall was born and became a place where racial segregation was unknown and the Jaffes, as operators of an integrated venue in the Jim

Crow era, found themselves at odds with the police a number of times.

Nowadays, such is the attendance at Preservation Hall that admittance is by pre-paid ticket only with a premium added for guaranteed front row seats and donations expected for requests to be played (perhaps we could try that at Pershore Jazz Club!) Pershore, of course, is not New Orleans and the Football Club Function Room certainly nothing like Preservation Hall but, in our own very modest way, we are continuing the tradition and spirit of the music.

This month's club band is led by saxophonist Sarah Spenser who, at eighteen years old, was the youngest musician to play at Preservation Hall and who has returned to Britain after 20 years living in New Orleans.

Also on the front line is trombonist Mike Owen, who spent ten years in New Orleans playing in all manner of locations including the riverboats. The band is completed by Pershore favourites Zoltan Sagi (clarinet), Jim Swinnerton on bass, Tom "Spats" Langham (banjo/guitar) and our own Graham Smith in the drum chair. An evening of authentic New Orleans revival by those who know how.

Don't forget Pershore Jazz on a Summer's Day, August 9th!
Booking now at Number 8



Sarah Spencer's Sax "n" Bone Band

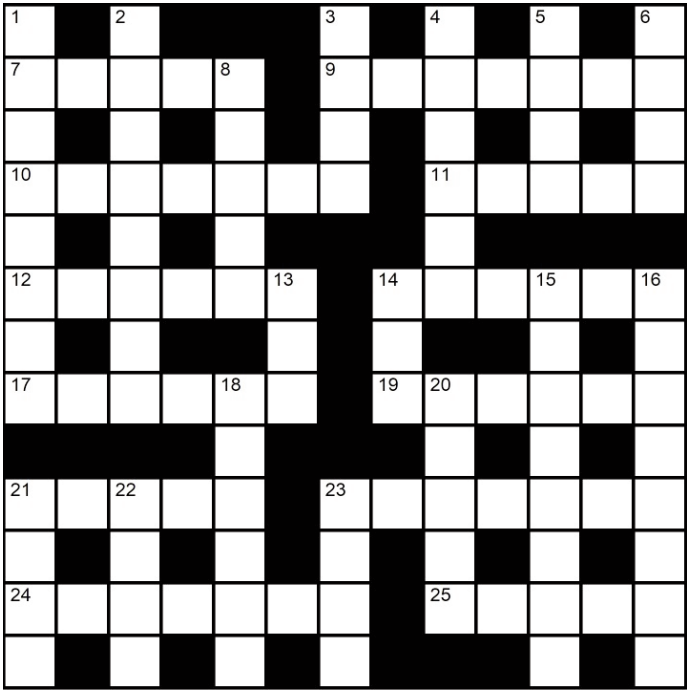
Wednesday 28th May

Doors open at 7.00pm music at 8
In the Function Room, Pershore Football Club
Admission £12.50 to include a raffle ticket

Book in advance and pay on arrival
email: club@pershorejazz.org.uk tel: 01527 66692
find us on Facebook

Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

- 7 Jostle (5)
- 9 Singular (7)
- 10 Correspondence (7)
- 11 Unctuous (5)
- 12 We rave about carpet-maker, perhaps (6)
- 14 Oddball (6)
- 17 Hate (6)
- 19 Burst of speed (6)
- 21 Distance of water exposed to the wind (5)
- 23 Snow vehicle (7)
- 24 Best (7)
- 25 Lustre (5)

Down

- 1 Recently hitched (5-3)
- 2 Theoretical (8)
- 3 Chafes (4)
- 4 Wagga Wagga woman or Manly man (6)
- 5 Mountain lion (4)
- 6 Drama (4)
- 8 "--- the bee sucks, there suck I" (Shakespeare, "The Tempest") (5)
- 13 "Poppycock!" (3)
- 14 Is no more (3)
- 15 Red Irene sorted out Christmas Dancer, for example (8)
- 16 Sociable (8)
- 18 Plot (6)
- 20 Layers (5)
- 21 Sell off (4)
- 22 Small children (4)
- 23 Unspecified in number (4)

Sudoku

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

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

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

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

Wordsearch

U	N	E	L	L	N	G	R	W	T	T
R	S	K	Y	S	L	E	E	Z	B	S
E	D	E	K	G	T	N	E	S	R	E
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Y	C	I	S	W	F	V	S	X	H	K
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DOG
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EBB
EELS
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EX-WIFE
INKY
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LAX
LENT
NELL
NEST

NOOK
NOS
NUTS
ODOURS
OWL
QUEEN
REDO
RETAIN
ROBE
SENSE
SUB
SUM
TIES
WETTER
WIELDS
WIG
WISH

Brainteaser

Math Puzzle

92 + 3 = 73

75 + 2 = 22

84 + 3 = 43

97 + 1 = ??

Poets' Corner

XLIV

Shot? so quick, so clean an ending?

Oh that was right, lad, that was brave:

Yours was not an ill for mending,

'Twas best to take it to the grave.

Oh you had forethought, you could reason,

And saw your road and where it led,

And early wise and brave in season

Put the pistol to your head.

Oh soon, and better so than later

After long disgrace and scorn,

You shot dead the household traitor,

The soul that should not have been born.

Right you guessed the rising morrow

And scorned to tread the mire you must:

Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,

But men may come to worse than dust.

Souls undone, undoing others,-

Long time since the tale began.

ou would not live to wrong your brothers:

Oh lad, you died as fits a man.

Now to your grave shall friend and stranger

With ruth and some with envy come:

Undishonoured, clear of danger,

Clean of guilt, pass hence and home.

Turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking;

And here, man, here's the wreath I've made:

'Tis not a gift that's worth the taking,

But wear it and it will not fade.

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

Quiz!

1) Physicist Albert Einstein was born in which country? a) Sweden b) Switzerland c) Germany

2) Jack Dorsey founded which social network in March 2006?

3) Audrey Tautou plays which title character in this 2001 French happy-go-lucky film?

4) What is the capital city of Bangladesh?

5) Which British architect born in 1935 is best known for buildings including the Stansted Airport Terminal Building, London's Millennium

Footbridge, 'The Gherkin' and the new Wembley Stadium?

6) Which celebrity chef wrote an autobiography called 'Devil in the Kitchen'?

7) The Tan Hill Inn in Arkengarthdale, North Yorkshire holds which distinction?

8) Which is the larger island; Greenland or Iceland?

9) Amarelle, May Duke and Morello are all types of which fruit?

10) Over 700 of Vincent van Gogh's paintings and drawings can be found in which Amsterdam museum?

11) Which American pop star had back to back 2015 chart success with singles 'Sorry' and 'Love Yourself'?

12) In September 1983, Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon released a statement announcing which member had been fired from their band The Clash?

13) John Travolta and Oliver Newton-John topped the UK charts twice in 1978 with songs from the movie Grease. Which songs were they?

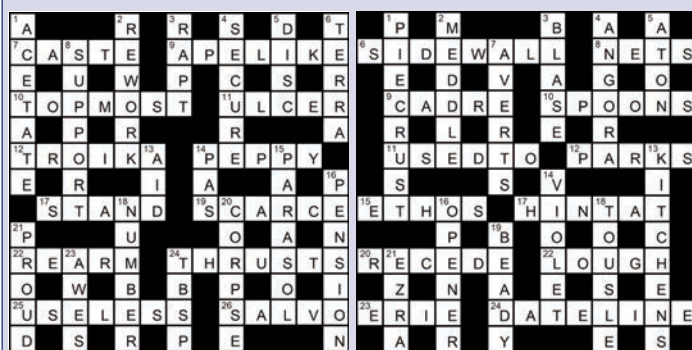
14) What was the title of Lady Gaga's debut single which topped the UK charts in early 2009? a) Just Dance b) Let's Go c) Love Me

15) Which famous diarist started with a first entry on 1st Jan 1660?

16) In January 1877 Queen Victoria was proclaimed as Empress of where?

Answers: 1) c) Germany 2) Twitter 3) Amelie 4) Dhaka 5) Norman Foster 6) Marco Pierre White 7) Highest pub in Britain 8) Greenland 9) Cherry 10) Rijksmuseum 11) Justin Bieber 12) Mick Jones 13) 'You're the One That I Want' & 'Summer Nights' 14) a) Just Dance 15) Samuel Pepys 16) India

April Answers



May Brainteaser solution: 21

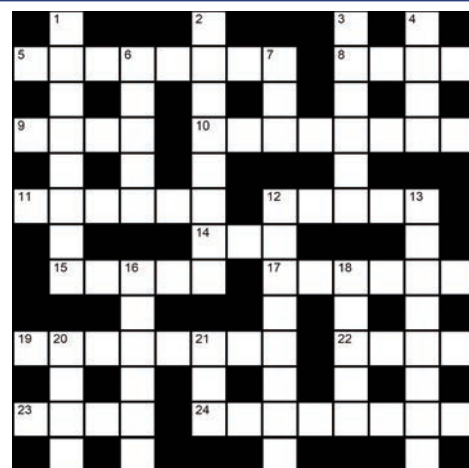
Anagram Crossword

Across

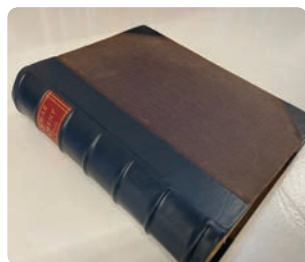
- 5 Turn it on (4,4)
- 8 Lots (4)
- 9 Rift (4)
- 10 Listened (8)
- 11 Read of (6)
- 12 Chars (5)
- 14 Gun (3)
- 15 Slave (5)
- 17 Payers (6)
- 19 Bilks man (8)
- 22 Mils (4)
- 23 Reef (4)
- 24 Roadbeds (8)

Down

- 1 Squatter (8)
- 2 Dungaree (8)
- 3 Casals (5,1)
- 4 Leis (4)
- 6 Snoot (3,2)
- 7 I L O (3)
- 12 Encrusts (8)
- 13 Hair dyes (8)
- 16 Burble (6)
- 18 Pores (5)
- 20 Sari (4)
- 21 A k a (3)



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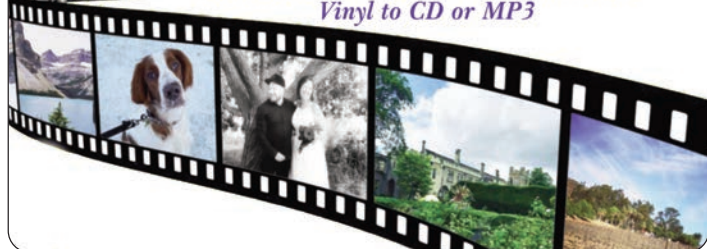
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**Copy Deadline for
June Issue - 19th May 2025**



Queenhill

The majority of our members like to travel to interesting places; most of us enjoy hobbies such as birdwatching; several are fond of walking and exploring different environments, but none of us can compare with our speaker Christine Armstrong and her husband.

In a very interesting talk, Christine told us of her five-week-long backpacking trip to Argentina, followed by five weeks cruising around the islands, birdwatching. We were

full of admiration for her ability to pack for five weeks with just a small rucksack and using local buses for journeys up to 22 hours! What a special trip with so many fascinating tales to tell.

If the talk made us think of our own holidays, so did the sunny weather we had been enjoying for days. The afternoon ended with the usual delicious tea, good conversation and raffle. The next meeting will be on Thursday 8th May from 2.15 to 4pm at WI Hall when we are

eager to invite our friends and neighbours to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a delicious 1940s Tea Party, a raffle and a fascinating talk 'The £2 that Changed My Life' by Lynne Hackles. On this special occasion we ask our

visitors for a £5 entry fee that will go towards the upkeep of our hall.

For more information about this please email: sarah.mcdermott@btinternet.com

"I suppose leadership at one time was muscles; but today it means getting along with people"

Mahatma Gandhi



Hot Peppers

For the March meeting, we welcomed Kirsty from The John Moore Museum who gave us a very interesting talk about The Tudor's, sex, swearing and naughty bits. It was all very interesting, funny and very informative. Amazing how young they got married back in the day, as young as 12! Kirsty also bought along a few objects along too, for us to look at.

We then had a quick update on what trips etc were up and coming before we went onto have our usual tea, delicious cakes, raffle and conversation.

Our next meeting is:
Thursday 22nd May, 7.30pm
at Upton Memorial Hall



Spot & Shop - April Winners

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1) Hillary Price | 5) Rose Small |
| 2) Tim Crowley | 6) Dereth Thomas |
| 3) Philippa Stinton | 7) John Mills |
| 4) Pat Haines | |

Last month's answer:
Home Turf Garden Services

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&
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at Craftypyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore

6th Reg Moule Gardening Book

7th Pat's Pantry -

Jar of home-made marmalade/jam

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The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook Common

We celebrated Easter with an inspiring service led by the Rev. Cannon Greville Cross, whom it was good to welcome back to The Hook, and the Rev. Julieann Watson, whom it is good to see at any time! Once again, I must thank those who decorated the church so beautifully for the service – we are very lucky to have willing people to do this.

Towards the end of May we will be holding a Wildflower Walk from the church, followed by tea. Please look out for posters announcing the date, which depends on when the orchids look like coming into bloom. Looking further ahead, on Sunday 22nd June at 5.00p.m. we will be holding another 'Hymns with Pimms' service. This was very popular last year and we hope for a similar attendance this time.

Kate Chester-Lamb



Church Services

Sunday 4th May

- 10:45 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Folk Festival Service*
 11:00 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Morning Prayer*

Sunday 11th May

- 09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Holy Communion*
 11:00 St Mary's, Ripple - *Matins*
 11:00 St Nicholas, Earls Croome - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 18th May

- 09:30 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Morning Worship*
 18:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Evensong*

Sunday 25th May

- 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 1st June

- 09:30 St Mary's, Hill Croome - *Holy Communion (said, no hymns)*
 09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Matins*
 11:00 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 8th June

- 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*



Church Services and Online Worshipping
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Old Hills Malvern Churches

MAY 2025

Sunday 4th May

The Third Sunday of Easter

- 9.30am Easter Communion at GUARLFORD
 11.00am Easter Communion at POWICK

Sunday 11th May

The Fourth Sunday of Easter

- 9.30am Easter Communion at CALLOW END
 11.00am Easter Communion at MADRESFIELD

Sunday 18th May

The Fifth Sunday of Easter

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion at POWICK
 9.30am BCP Holy Communion at GUARLFORD
 11.00am Morning Praise at POWICK

Sunday 25th May

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

- 9.30am Easter Communion at CALLOW END
 11.00am Easter Communion at MADRESFIELD

Thursday 29th May

Ascension Day

7.00pm Deanery Ascension Day Service at UPTON PARISH CHURCH
A Celebration of Licensed Lay Ministry

Midweek Communion at The Orchard Room in Colletts Green
 Thursdays 8th & 22nd May from 10.30-11.30am



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 For Zoom Access codes and links, please contact us via
revqarycrellin@gmail.com or oldhillsmalvern@gmail.com



Severn Stoke & Croome D'abitot News

Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs



St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke
Members of the Parochial Church Council were re-elected at the recent Annual Parish Meeting, but sadly no Churchwarden's name was put forward. We do need more volunteers to represent the church in our Parish and Benefice to assist our Priest in Charge, Revd. Kat Mephram, who is very much appreciated, since her induction in January. Norman and Julia Snowball - We are saying goodbye to Norman Snowball, who for 25

years has been in charge of Severn Stoke Time - The Church Clock. When the clocks need changing during the year or restarting after a power cut, Norman has always been there to set ours right. We thank him for his loyal but unpublicised dedication. As he and Julia are leaving Severn Stoke, we think, it is an opportunity to thank them both for their long, tireless and endlessly tedious work in representing the Parish for our Flood Alleviation Scheme - the Bund. They have spent many hours on paperwork and meetings and have done everything possible to forward our case over at least the last ten years. We understand that the Environment Agency will make a definitive decision this month, May, and yes, this year,

2025. We are not hopeful. We have also said goodbye to Revd. Rachel Colthurst and her husband Richard. As Canon Mark Badger's Curate, she was suddenly launched into being responsible for three Parishes, when Mark was made Archdeacon of Worcester. She completed these duties with great efficiency, diplomacy and love, which attracted new people to participate and encouraged old hands to further works. We are delighted that she has a post as Chaplain for Worcester Royal Hospital, where her gift of empathy will radiate. A big thank you to those who answered the summons to help re-instate the church furnishings from flood mode, in readiness for Easter Sunday.

Let us hope that we have a fair run of services, before we have to put everything up to reduce damage, when the next flood threat occurs.

Friends of St. Denys, Severn Stoke -

Raising funds to modernise the church!

The Friends of St Denys are planning a concert in church as well as a September Craft Fair. We still need a volunteer to take over the running of the 100 Club, not an onerous task, but it will finish if no one comes forward. It raises over £800 annually towards church funds and many have benefited from the monthly prize draws. Please contact Sally Linsey - 01905 820 476.

John Henderson

St Mary's Church, Ripple

St Mary's has many historic and architectural features, and probably the most well-known are the 15th century misericords. Before the Reformation in the 16th century, the church was staffed by a non-monastic community of Augustinian canons. For the recitation of daily offices, they required a set of choir stalls which are placed on three sides of the chancel, sixteen in all. These have happily survived the intervening years. The misericords - the undersides of the tip-up seats that provided the canons with some relief from the strain on their legs from the need to stand for long periods of the Service - have a remarkably rare and complete set of carvings reflecting the

Labours of the Months. They illustrate the monthly tasks carried out by the peasant population of England from January to December, and are in an astonishingly good condition considering their age. The carvings are by an unknown local craftsman, beautifully carved in amazing detail portraying the everyday life of the poorest class of medieval society, and they can be viewed close-up at leisure. To be in touching distance of the work of a fifteenth-century woodcarver telling the stories of his fellow-villagers is an especially moving experience. I am indebted to a recent work entitled The Treasures of English Churches by Matthew Byrne, a Fellow of the Royal



Photographic Society, for much of the above material. The St Mary's APCM will be held in the vestry of the church at 12 noon immediately

following the Service of Matins at 11 am on Sunday, 11th May.

Roger Gillard

ORGAN RECITAL *by Carleton Etherington* **Wednesday 22nd May at 12.30**

Church of St Peter & St Paul, Upton upon Severn

A light lunch will be available afterwards.

NO ENTRY CHARGE BUT DONATIONS WELCOME
to keep our beautiful organ tuned and repaired!

SUNG MATINS

St Peter & St Paul Parish Church
Upton upon Severn

Sunday 1st June at 9.30am

Led by Revd Julie Ann Watson

With the choir of Upton Parish Church

Musical director John Holloway

Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council



We at Severn Stoke and Croome d'Abitot Parish Council will be celebrating our Platinum Jubilee in May 2025. The resident petition was made for a merger of Severn Stoke Council and Croome d'Abitot Council in 1953 and this was ratified by the county council in May 1955. Thank you to all residents, councillors (past and present), clerks, lengthsman and volunteers for a wonderful 70 years serving our joint communities!

The new parish council website is up and running

The old website will continue to function for now as well, at no extra cost. Local community groups are welcome to ask us to place adverts or their details on our new website. Our new parish council logo has been finalised as is shown above, incorporating the Panorama Tower, with the kind permission of The National Trust.

Next Meeting:

Wed 21st May 2025, 7.30pm - Annual Meeting of Parish Council

Lisa Stevens, Parish Council Clerk

T: 07950 256363

E: parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk

Your councillors are:

Susan Faulkner (Chair), Laurence Freeman (Deputy), Ian Daly, Royston Garrard, Richard Hill, Pat Preston & Raymond Williams.

Report of the annual meeting of Severn Stoke parish residents and of Croome d'Abitot parish residents on Wednesday 26th March 2025, 7.30pm, at St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke Residents asked for...

- an additional bin at the A38 layby (adjacent sewage works), to be paid for by the parish council. The Clerk has begun seeking quotes and an agreement from the district council that an additional bin will be regularly emptied.

- existing bins to be emptied more often and a request has been made to the district council.

- that the parish council pay for additional 30mph signs and 30mph roundels, to be painted on the roads at Severn Stoke and Kinnersley villages. The parish council has begun investigating the rules about additional signage/road markings and seek quotes.

- that the police conduct more speed checks - a request has been made and agreed to by our local policing team.

- replacement zebra bollards on Severn Bank - a request has been submitted via the Worcestershire County Council report an issue website.

Residents can use this website to report defective/broken street furniture.

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/travel-and-highways

- for the 30mph Severn Stoke village speed limit to be moved from adjacent (roughly) to Stoke Gardens to further up the hill at Severn Bank. This matter will be referred to the County Council for them to consider and consult with the police. Residents need to support these efforts by reporting any accidents at this location to the police non-emergency services, *either via 101 or www.westmercia.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us-beta/contact-us/*

It is unlikely that speed limits will be 'changed/moved' without supporting statistics demonstrating that this corner is dangerous or has a higher number of accidents. Also discussed at the meeting.....

- Co-option and warm welcome to Ian Daly who joined the parish council.

- Blocked public rights of way at Clifton - residents and tenants are reminded to keep vegetation cut back please.

- ¾ of the footpaths in the parish have been visited by our parish volunteer footpath warden. 19 issues have been reported in Severn Stoke and 3 in Croome. Assurance has been received from the county council that broken finger posts and signs will be replaced next winter.

Request for residents to please look after the rights of way near your homes. Please also be courteous to land owners who have expensive requirements to look after the land and the public routes through. Councillors asked residents to be responsible when walking dogs through crop fields and private land. Dogs should not be off the lead through crop fields or fields used

for livestock.

- Residents asked that all dog waste be immediately cleared up when out and about and also not left in verges and hedges in little bags - as inevitably it gets forgotten about. Additional signs warning of the fines for dog fouling were requested for Severn Stoke and High Green villages from the district council.

- Residents raised concerns that with increasing visitor numbers, the plans for a new car park at Croome National Trust will still not provide the required parking capacity. National Trust reps noted that the planned new car park will allow delineation of spaces and efficient use of all available space. Matting in the Orchard will allow more use of that space also. Visitors are being encouraged to attend during the week to try to avoid peak weekend parking issues. Many visitors are using the dial a bus service.

- Residents raised concerns that whilst new Croome National Trust opening hours having been approved, with an anticipated ¼ million visitors per year, all traffic plans are out of date with no commitment to renew them. Double yellow lines outside the entrance to the visitor centre have not been sufficiently enforced.

- Update on the Severn Stoke flood bund from Worcestershire County Council: "We've been informed that Tarmac has withdrawn its subsidiary company, Alun Griffiths Contractors, from being available to construct the Environment Agency's Severn Stoke flood risk management scheme as part of wider restructuring. This is particularly disappointing for Worcestershire County Council having been given explicit assurances late last year that the contractor would be able to take on the construction work, should the scheme be assessed by the Environment Agency (EA) as being affordable. We're urgently trying to secure an alternative construction contractor for Severn Stoke and, in the meantime, we continue to work with the EA to continue completion of the scheme design, assessment of the material on site, materials planning, discharging planning conditions and making preparations for a seamless handover to any new contractor (subject to the affordability)."



Additional comment from the Environment Agency: "All parties are working hard to identify other options to construct the flood scheme, but it is unlikely in any scenario that we will be in the situation to start construction this summer as had been the intent".

- Results of parish council survey on the future of parish hall site in Severn Stoke village and whether the parish council should continue with the lease of the land. 78 responses were received in total, with a 50/50 split in opinion as to the way forward. Many suggestions have already been rejected by the private landowners, managed by Savills. Residents cautioned against ending the lease too soon, as they consider this the last remaining asset of the parish in many respects. Options for moveable temporary structures (portacabin style) will be passed onto the hall committee, but Cllrs queried whether it could be permitted that the precept be significantly raised for a temporary building and the matter of the 25-year lease restriction remains. Cllrs agreed to defer any decision until after the outcome of proposals for the flood bund project is fully known. Since this meeting, residents have written to the National Trust to request that they provide land for a new parish hall.

- Residents have asked that at future meetings at St Denys' Church if visitors could please park sensibly and thoughtfully. At the meeting on 26th March, it would not have been possible for a fire engine to make its way down Church Lane and many residential drives were blocked by parked vehicles.



Fri 27th, Sat 28th & Sun 29th June

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Tuesday 20th May at 2pm
Forensic Psychology
It's not like CSI!
A talk by Professor Sarah Brown about forensic psychology and the impact of the media on our understanding of it.

Tuesday 17th June at 2pm
Speaker Chris O'Grady -
"Keep the Sea on the left...remember to turn right at Land's End!"
Tales of a haphazard trek around the edge of our 'sceptred isle', walking the entire coast of England and Wales

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www.pershore.u3asite.uk



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.....(In an emergency always call 999)

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Upton Post Office 01684 592761

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

Rural Reels



Upton upon Severn Memorial Hall
Doors open at 7.00pm Film starts at 7.30pm

Saturday 17th May Driving Madeleine Cert 15
Madeleine, 92, is moving into a care home on the other side of Paris. Charles, a taxi driver, picks her up and she asks to visit the places which have counted in her life, revealing her shocking past along the way. (subtitled)

Saturday 21 June The Problem with People Cert 15
Colm Meaney and Paul Reiser star in this light hearted comedy as two estranged cousins, who having never met before, but must try and put to rest a generation's worth of family disputes – before they start another one!

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

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Dragon Boat Racing



Wednesday 25 June at 6.30pm - Come and try a new sport!

Free Dragon Boat Racing
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learn to paddle with the team,
enjoy the exercise, have some
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Book via the website
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