

Upton Times

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



Issue 49

November 2025

FREE



'Beneath the Hill' by Peter Hodge

November is always a busy month with many events taking place. Each of our seasons has its own charm, and Autumn is no exception! The trees and foliage seem more colourful this year. Is this due to the incredible summer we have had? Going for a walk on a nice, sunny Autumn day is a joy!

Guy Fawkes Night is always lots of fun, but when this event comes around, we all know that winter is just around the corner. One disadvantage of this month is that we turn the clocks back. With the dramatic shortening of daylight, we seem to plunge into winter overnight!

Remembrance Day is always very special. We pay tribute and give thanks to all those who have given their lives for our freedom. During the various conflicts, many families in the United Kingdom lost loved relatives and friends. It is always a very sad day. The church services are full

of dignity, love and compassion, but we must never ever forget the sacrifice that these brave men and women made for us all.

Let's hope that the peace in the Middle East holds up and that the tragic war in Ukraine comes to an end. The signs look promising. We must always have hope that sense will prevail.

The England men's cricket team are in Australia for the Ashes series. This promises to be very exciting. We have a very good team and they could bring back the Ashes!

The Broadway newspaper we launched last month has been very well received. We are already receiving articles from organisations reporting on events, as well as advertisers. A good start, but lots to do and look forward to!

Free Advertising

All new start-up companies will be eligible for three months free advertising in the Upton Times from 1st December. The last entry will be on 1st March 2026.

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County and District Report

Councillor Martin Allen



Okay, who turned out the lights? Yes, sorry to say, it's that time of year again when the gloom of darker days is upon us, and the prospect of shorter daylight hours is not always a welcome one. However, let's not be too despondent. The faint sound of jingle bells and the enticing aroma of mince pies are but a blink of an eye away, reminding us that brighter and more festive days are just around the corner.

Parking boost for Upton



After a long campaign by Town Councillor, Angela Conway, supported by the Town Council and local residents, Worcestershire County Council has increased the free parking period on New Street, Upton-upon-Severn from one hour to two. As your County Councillor, I assisted in making this change, responding to long-

standing requests for more reasonable parking limits. The extended parking time will make visits less rushed and may encourage more spending. Recently, new bunting and lights have been installed in the centre of Upton, with Christmas lights soon to follow, making the town an inviting destination for both residents and visitors.



Cromwell's back!

Cromwell, that well-known dog residing in Upton by the Tourist Information Centre, has been skilfully restored. Chris Oakey and Ruth Heeks have diligently overseen Cromwell's recovery, resulting in his renewed appearance and healthy coat. Upton in Bloom approached me some time ago regarding potential funding for this restoration, and I was pleased to assist. During the refurbishment process, I also

had the opportunity to contribute personally and, with careful supervision, I was allowed to weave in a few sticks. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognise and applaud Upton in Bloom's volunteers for their dedicated work in planting and maintaining the town's notable floral displays. Ali, David and the entire team consistently demonstrate exceptional commitment.

Kempsey seeks leaders!



*Leader Mandy Stevens & Deputy Leader Mike Stevens
with Councillor Martin Allen*

Kempsey Scout Group invited committed individuals to join their growing team of leaders. Located at the Youth Centre on Plovers Rise, Kempsey (WR5 3SA), the group offers a diverse programme for young people aged 6 to 14, organized into three active sections. Each section delivers structured activities aimed at developing skills, confidence and lasting friendships within a supportive environment. As the group continues to expand, enthusiastic adult volunteers are needed to contribute their time – either on a regular basis or occasionally – to assist in supporting local youth. Prior experience is not

required; however, a positive approach and a genuine commitment to empowering young people are highly valued. Additionally, those interested in trustee positions are encouraged to apply, as these roles are essential to maintaining the long-term sustainability of the Kempsey Scout Group. Volunteering with Kempsey Scout Group provides an opportunity to make a meaningful impact within the community.

For further details or to express your interest, please contact Nicki on 07966 403273 or by email at membership@6thworcesterscouts.co.uk

Road closure at Kerswell Green

Severn Trent will be conducting extended roadworks from 17th November 2025 to 8th May 2026 to install a new 450-metre sewer, which includes property connections. The project will involve excavation to a depth of over 1.5 metres. The duration of the road closure and the proposed diversion route via

Birch Lane in Severn Stoke have raised questions regarding suitability. I am having urgent discussions with the County Council concerning whether a single lane road is appropriate for use as part of the diversion. I will provide further updates when more information becomes available.

And finally ...

By the time you read this, there will have been a County Council by-election in Worcestershire. Depending upon the result, the wheels of change and gossip in the local political world will no doubt be spinning in double quick time. Personally, I tend to step back from the machinations and plotting,

which I feel helps me stay sane. I sometimes consider that I get better sense of directions and calm from my veg plot, although I have to admit my Christmas Brussels have started to get me a little excited! As ever, I'm here if you need me.

Martin Allen

Town Council Report

Jeremy Owenson, Mayor of Upton

Remembrance Sunday

This year, we have seen the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, with VE Day commemorations and the final ending of the war in South East Asia with VJ Day in August. Every year, Upton residents come together in November to commemorate those who sacrificed their lives to help keep us and the rest of the world free. War continues to be a curse on the world, from Ukraine to Israel, but there are the less reported wars in Sudan, Congo, and Yemen. People continue to lose their lives over political arguments to expand borders or gain control of countries, often using one religion or another to supposedly justify their efforts. Religion and war are the exact opposite of each other, and this is why, in Upton, all the Churches come together to remember the sacrifices made on Remembrance Sunday. The people of Upton walk respectfully through the town centre to commemorate, pay their respects, and then congregate at St Peters and



St Paul's Church for an Ecumenical Service. The Parade and Remembrance Sunday service will take place on Sunday 9th November. The parade will start at the Old Fire Station on New Street at 10.20 am. The Remembrance Service will start at 10.45 in the Church opposite the Rugby Club car park. On Armistice Day, Tuesday 11th November, there will be a short wreath-laying ceremony at the Pepperpot Churchyard at 10.30am, followed by a short ceremony at the Memorial Hall at 10.45, with the two minutes silence at 11am. Please feel free to join us!

Philharmonic Northern Lights Concert

Join the Worcester Philharmonic orchestra in celebrating the 160th anniversary of the birth of Finland's national hero, Jean Sibelius (1865–1957). Our programme opens with his famous tone poem, Finlandia, written in support of his homeland's struggle to gain independence from Russia. The WPO, conductor Dan Watson, is joined by Shulah Oliver-Smith in a performance of Sibelius' much-loved violin concerto. Of all his works, this is the one Sibelius would most liked to have performed himself, but this was not to be. Earlier in his career, he had been turned down by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, because the jury thought he was too nervous to make a professional violinist! In 1901, Sibelius was on holiday in Rapallo, Italy, when he started work on what would become his 2nd Symphony. The light and dark motifs in this masterpiece symbolise the Finnish people's struggle against Russian rule. Our soloist, Shulah Oliver-Smith,

is a vibrant and talented professional violinist who has a busy freelance career performing as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician. She has performed extensively across the UK and Europe. Shulah was appointed Artistic Director of The Midland Sinfonia (a professional chamber orchestra) in 2021. She has played with many renowned orchestras such as The Hallé, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and European Chamber Orchestra. Shulah completed her Masters Degree in Performance with Distinction at the Royal Academy of Music, London where she was awarded the Diploma for an outstanding Final Recital.

Tickets £15 (Under 16's free but ticket required) available from Tourist Offices in Worcester/Pershore*/Malvern (*cash only) or www.worcesterphilharmonicorchestra.ticketsource.co.uk

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NORTHERN LIGHTS CONCERT



Saturday
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2.30pm
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WR10 1BL

Celebrating the
160th Anniversary
of Sibelius' birth

Finlandia
Violin Concerto
Symphony No 2

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Tourist Offices: Worcester/Pershore*/Malvern (*cash only)

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Giant pumpkins for care home!

Elgar Court care home, Malvern, has hosted a den of ghoulish activity as the home's spooky Halloween week got into full swing after launching their giant pumpkin decorating competition to the local schools this month. The giant pumpkins were dropped off by the Elgar Court Care Home team for the pupils to decorate as they wished. And wow! The care home's residents were overjoyed by the creative spooktacular decorating skills the schools came up with. The fabulous pumpkins have been admired by residents for both the thoughtful and careful work that has gone into these giants! Powick C of E School's after-school SMILE Club decided to write messages on homemade leaves about what autumn means to them and cover their pumpkin. Lesley and her husband Hugh read through each leaf! The Downs School in

Colwall made their pumpkin magical, completing it with a wand to grant wishes. Lastly, Madresfield C of E made two ghoulish pumpkins complete with cobwebs, spiders and scary monsters!

Mrs Hibell, Headteacher at Madresfield C of E School, said: "We would like to thank Elgar Court Care Home and Barchester for this fun and creative opportunity for our children who attend the after-school club."

Lesley Richards, resident at Elgar Court added: "It has been such fun and so wonderful to see all the schools go to so much effort, and I really enjoyed reading through the children's autumn leaves!"

General Manager, Sarah Cadwallader, said: "Our residents love any excuse to mix and meet with our local communities! The home looks fantastic as well with all the



Elgar Court's Senior General Manager, Sarah Cadwallader, with Madresfield's Head Boy, Callum Wilkes, and Head Girl, Jessica Styles

pumpkins and decorations – we've all had a brilliant time! If you would like to look at these delightful creations, please come to our home and also enjoy tea and cake with us during the day.

Our varied life enrichment programme keeps residents active, and provides a daily choice of engaging physical, mental and spiritual activities tailored specifically to them."

Tewkesbury Choral Society

Charpentier
Te Deum

Handel
Royal Fireworks Music

Haydn
Harmoniemesse

Tewkesbury Choral Society
with Regency Sinfonia and five soloists
Directed by John Holloway

Tewkesbury Abbey
Saturday 6 December 2025 at 7.30

Tickets £20 (carers & children free; students £10)

- from members of the Society
- from The Abbey Shop (01684 856148)
- from Alison's Bookshop (01684 274600)
- on-line: www.ticketsource.co.uk/t-c-s
- at the door on the evening

Tewkesbury Choral Society

Our Winter concert this year features three pieces of music unrelated to Christmas or the season of Advent, and spanning the period from the Baroque to the Classical.

We begin with Charpentier's setting of the Te Deum, the great hymn of praise which has inspired many composers. Charpentier's version begins with an orchestral prelude, which has become familiar in a very different context, because it was selected as the signature tune for the Eurovision Song Contest.

The second choral work of the evening is the Harmoniemesse, Haydn's final and finest setting

of the Mass. It is the last work that he completed and was composed in 1802, shortly before his death.

Between the two choral works is the famous Music for the Royal Fireworks, which was written by Handel and commissioned by King George II to celebrate the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. It was first performed in April 1749 by a large band of wind instruments to an enthusiastic audience in London's Green Park, a very different venue and acoustic from Tewkesbury Abbey.

Please join us for an evening of choral and orchestral music!

Supporting resettled communities

A new community drop-in session is being set up to support Ukrainians and other resettled communities who are living in the Malvern Hills district. The Welcome Hub is a weekly drop-in space for individuals and families who have resettled in the district, including people who are part of the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. The hub will be held from an existing community venue in Great Malvern, and plans are being finalised to ensure it can open safely whilst protecting

vulnerable users. The aim of the hub is to provide a welcoming and safe environment where people who have settled locally can access English language support, wellbeing activities, social connection, and practical guidance. It will also act as a shared space for residents, community groups, and volunteers who wish to participate in cultural and wellbeing events. This model is building on the successful weekly Help Centre located at Malvern Town Football Club, which supported over 1,200

residents last year. The project is being co-ordinated by local voluntary and community organisations working closely with Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC). It is funded by the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, delivered by MHDC and Worcestershire County Council.

"We hope this drop-in will provide a welcoming and safe space for members of our resettled community," said Jennie Watkins from Malvern Hills District Council. "Malvern Hills has a

strong commitment to community support and inclusion, with resettled families and individuals contributing positively to local schools, employment, and volunteering. A special thanks to 'Malvern Welcomes' and its role in the support and integration for individuals and families in the district who have, over a decade, worked tirelessly to nurture a culture of welcome in which people fleeing violence and the horrors of war can live fulfilled and happy lives as part of the community."

A few words from... Dame Harriett Baldwin MP



Welcoming Waitrose Local Producers Commitment

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP has welcomed the work of a major supermarket to support local food producers in its stores. She visited Waitrose supermarket in Malvern to hear about the company's commitment to source produce from local producers where possible and sell local fruit and vegetables when in season. Dame Harriett also met with Evesham-based PrimaFruit which sources fresh fruit for the supermarket chain. She was briefed on the challenges both businesses are facing with extra costs as a result of employment taxes and increased wage costs.

Backing High Street Beauty Businesses

Dame Harriett Baldwin has also offered her support to a popular small business based in Malvern as she celebrated the important work of the hair and beauty sector in supporting Britain's High Streets. She visited Belle Beauty, based on Worcester Road, Malvern, as part of a national initiative to highlight the importance of people working to make local people look and feel better. She chatted to salon owner Lucy Watkins to hear about the challenges she is facing to keep a successful business both popular and profitable. The hair and beauty sector is worth £5.8 billion to the national economy, and three quarters of businesses employ fewer than five people. Many are owned and run by women and for women. Dame Harriett said: "I'm grateful for the wonderful welcome I got from Lucy and her team, and I was given some really useful insights into the challenges she is facing as a

"I've visited Waitrose in Malvern on a number of occasions while I have been MP and it is always useful to get an update on current trading conditions," said Dame Harriett. "I've taken some useful feedback from the meeting about how businesses of all sizes are being hit by extra costs and the risks this has on price inflation and the cost of living. I'm also pleased to see the green charity token system returned which supports local good causes. Waitrose has always been a good corporate citizen and a popular local employer and I welcome to efforts the local team does to support our hard-working local food producers."

small business employer who wants to grow her business. Lucy has been running the Belle Beauty Malvern for over fifteen years and has weathered the dual storms of the pandemic and inflation. She is clearly proud of what she has achieved and is positive about the future. Over recent weeks, I have been meeting with beauty businesses of all sizes to hear their views on the sector's challenges and, as a Shadow Business Minister, I will be passing important feedback directly to the Government. I want to say thank you to Lucy and everyone who works in hair and beauty businesses in West Worcestershire. They do a great job, and their hard work is always appreciated." Belle Beauty Malvern owner, Lucy Watkins, added: "It was lovely to meet Harriett during National Beauty Week to champion the beauty sector and ensure that the challenges we face as a small business, and those we may face in the future, are heard, so we can continue to grow."

Hold the Moment's Midwife Miles Challenge

Can you step up for Midwives this November and make every mile a moment that matters? This November, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity is inviting everyone across Worcestershire to get moving in support of the Hold the Moment - Maternity Appeal. Did you know one of our Community Midwives travels more than 345 miles every month caring for newborn babies and their families? The Midwife Miles challenge aims to collectively match those incredible journeys - a total of 41,400 miles, the distance Worcestershire's Community Midwives travel each month. Everyone is encouraged to take part in their own way, clocking up as many miles as possible, whether that's walking the dog, cycling to work, swimming a few lengths, or enjoying a family stroll. Every mile and every pound raised will help enhance maternity services across the county. Funds raised will go towards:

- Buddy beds, so partners can stay close during those first nights together.

- Specialist jaundice meters for quicker, gentler newborn testing.
- Welcoming maternity spaces that bring calm and comfort.
- Expanded Bereavement Suite, including a new memory-making room.

Laura Gregory, Community and Events Fundraising Officer for the Charity said: "This challenge aims to bring our community together for something truly special. Every mile represents the incredible journeys our midwives take - both on the road and in supporting families through life's most precious moments. We hope to see lots of people getting involved."

To get involved or make a donation, visit: www.justgiving.com/campaign/midwifemiles and help move maternity care forward for every family in Worcestershire.

Laura Gregory,
Community and Events
Fundraising Officer



District Council Residents' Survey 2025

Residents are being reminded to take part in Malvern Hills District Council's Residents' Survey and have their say. The annual survey, which was launched on Sunday 12th October 2025, gives people a chance to tell the council what is important to them. The survey asks questions on a variety of different topics, including what people think of their local area and the services the council provides.

The feedback from the survey will be considered and used to improve services. Residents who complete the survey will be able to enter a prize draw to win a £75 voucher to use at a local, independent restaurant or retailer of their choice, within the Malvern Hills District.

Residents can visit www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/MedRS2025 to complete the survey.

The survey is only open to Malvern Hills District residents.

The deadline for responses is 9th November 2025



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Branch news



Some members spent a weekend down in Dorset and paid a visit to Bovington Tank Museum. We had an excellent day talking and seeing Tanks with our own personal guide, Vice Chairman Simon Dudfield.

We are coming up to a very busy and Important period in the Royal British Legion Calendar, this being Remembrance. We will have a table with all things Remembrance in Asda during the week and Outside Asda on Saturdays, lasting from Saturday 25th October up to Saturday 8th November. Last year, the Branch raised over £21,000 for the Poppy Appeal, which was brilliant. Thank you!

Please support us as we wish to raise this to over £22,000 this year, as this goes to a very good cause, namely supporting serving and ex-service personnel, and their families.

We will have a garden of Remembrance along the alley up the side of the Town Hall to place any crosses of Remembrance, if people wish to do so.

Remembrance Sunday will be the 9th November. Please support us. Last year, it was fantastic to see the townspeople all along the route. It was an honour to be parading through the Town. The feedback on social media was amazing.

If there are any current serving or ex-service personnel who would like to parade with us, please, it would be great for you to join us.

We will be forming up in front of the Leisure Centre at 10:00.

Kohima

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them."

If anyone does wish to join the most proactive RBL Branch in Worcestershire, please contact our Chairman, Gerald Gregory. Tel: 07802 897088



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Local Conflicts: Part One

Tim Hickson



Bevere Island



The remains of ancient hill forts on Bredon Hill

Most of the time, throughout history, the Vale of Evesham has been relatively peaceful. However, there have, of course, been exceptions. Also, given the fact that we are quite close to Worcester, whatever happened there could well have affected our area. Furthermore, the route to Oxford and London passes through Pershore, Evesham and Broadway, so these places are likely to have endured the



*Empress Matilda (Maud)
(1102 - 1167)*

passage of large bodies of armed men with all that that entailed. We know the Romans came here after their invasion in 43AD, and there would have been inevitable conflicts. The hill forts on Bredon Hill and on the Malverns are likely to have been attacked. River crossings are likely to have been contested. However, rivers provided access for Viking raids starting in the 8th and 9th centuries. In those times, when the Severn was tidal, it could be forded at Worcester, so that place became an important and wealthy trading venue. Also, its cathedral contained treasures, and so the city became a target for Vikings seeking loot. Later, in the 1000s, a Viking, apparently delayed returning to his boat by trying to steal the Sanctus bell, was caught by enraged citizens and skinned alive (flayed). His skin was then nailed to the great west door of the cathedral as a warning to his fellows. Some of that skin is still kept in the Cathedral Library. In 1041, during the reign of Cnut, huge taxes were imposed on Worcester, which so enraged the citizens that they murdered the two unfortunate tax collectors. As a consequence, a force was sent to punish the town. Whilst the majority of its people managed to escape to Bevere Island,

north of the city, the town buildings were burnt to the ground. In 1135, King Henry I died. His son and heir drowned when the White Ship sank in 1120, so Henry had taken the unusual step of making the barons vow to accept his daughter, Matilda, becoming queen. England had only been ruled by Kings until then. However, Matilda had married a foreigner and was abroad when her father died, so Stephen (her cousin and son of William the Conqueror's daughter, Adela) persuaded London to back him and was crowned King. A number of the barons persuaded themselves that King Henry must have changed his mind, and so they, too, backed the likeable if impatient Stephen. Matilda, who insisted on being called Empress Maud, was arrogant and unforgiving. Those barons who stuck to their vows included her half-brother, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, an able military commander. The consequence was that there was civil war in England. It is known as The Anarchy and caused unrest all over the country. (Much can be learnt of this period in this area from Ellis Peter's tales of Brother Cadfael at Shrewsbury Abbey.) In 1139, on the 7th of November, a large and strong army from

Gloucester attacked Worcester. The assault from the south was repelled. However, the north had fewer defences and the enemy forces broke through. They then burnt houses and took away many cattle, sheep and horses as well as men and women as captives for ransom or slavery. The Benedictine Abbey was looted and later required help from both the Pershore and Evesham Abbeys.



*King Stephen
(c.1090 - 1154)*

Farming

Mike Page

Writing this today (4th October), the ground is at long last wet, after the first quantity of rain in a long time (that I would class as 'better than just a shower') fell last night and this morning. Cultivation and seeding of arable land can now get underway in the more usual fashion for this time of year in the Autumn. As far as managing livestock, it is good to see most fields of maize being cleared, with many trailer loads hauled away, although I suspect much of that is destined for production of gas or electricity rather than to be stored as winter food for cattle. At least all grazing fields are at last showing some growth – even if it's not a lot – and looking green again. Livestock, when turned into a fresh field, will soon let you know which parts of their new area they prefer to graze. I have often wondered: does instinct drive their grazing behaviour? Do they go for the most nutritious vegetation available? Or is it simply a case of what tastes best to them? I have a feeling it might be the latter. Some years ago, well into the Autumn, I turned my flock of ewes into a grass field with a small (two acres or so) area of

old pear trees growing at one end. Those pears used to be gathered by a friend to be crushed and pressed to make perry. Apart from an odd basketful each year, they are not harvested anymore. The whole flock was more or less immediately under the trees, eating any fallen fruit for a short time, until everything on the floor (or still hanging from a tree, but low enough to reach) had been consumed. They then moved off to graze grass in the open field, all except half a dozen or so ewes, who stayed under the trees to carry on eating any fruits that continued to fall in fair numbers. They were attracted by the 'thump' heard when any fruit fell and hit the ground, and would head off in that direction, with the first one there getting the prize. Nearly all the fruit that had fallen and continued falling had reached full ripeness and had also been damaged by birds or insects. As a result, much of it had been invaded by yeasts or other organisms and was partially rotted and well fermented. Those ewes remaining under the trees were, after a time, very obviously seriously inebriated and staggering about rather



The cattle took an interest in the photographer, thinking he might be arriving with more food! They still have some grass to graze, now that it is growing again, but not a lot; some fodder needed to supplement their appetite. Most cattle are wintered indoors, but can be left outdoors, where they will be okay, providing adequate fodder is given to them each day.

aimlessly in pursuit of further fruits, but (with the advantage of having a leg at each corner) just about managing to remain upright. It was amusing to see, but as the early evening progressed and light started to fade, those ewes eventually gave up their attempts at staggering around in pursuit of further reward and settled down for the night to sleep it off. None the worse for wear by the next morning, and after another short session of 'boozing', they moved on to join the rest of the flock, grazing grass out in the open field.

I told this tale to a farming friend. He had had a rather similar experience involving a small herd of cattle turned into an old apple orchard. It must take a lot of fruit/alcohol to get an animal weighing the better part of a ½ tonne inebriated, and to watch an animal of that size staggering round, drunk out of its mind, must be amusing to see: just like sheep, they have a leg at each corner, so never end up 'legless', and with a fence or hedge surrounding them, never get into real trouble.

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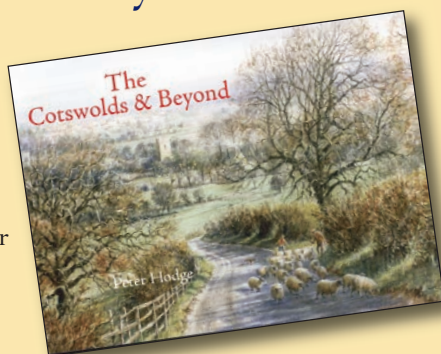
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The Cotswolds & Beyond

Peter Hodge

This book contains a fine collection of Cotswold landscape paintings by Peter Hodge, for which he is best known, as well as images and insights from his many and diverse forays into graphics, surrealism, ceramic and textile design. Told with down to earth honesty and humour, he comments on paradoxical quirkiness of creating art; balancing integrity and enthusiasm with the demands of making a living in the precarious world of artistic endeavour.



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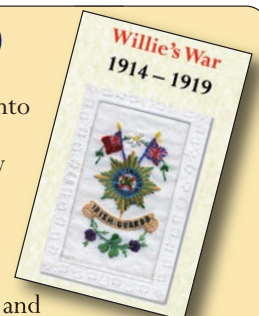
This book contains every article, poem and painting that Susan produced for the Pershore Times. The articles are of a very high quality, each one is different and a joy to read.

**All proceeds donated to
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Willie's War (1914 – 1919)

Robert Maude

This book provides a valuable insight into the life of a soldier who fought on the front line in France and who amazingly survived the First World War. He was William (Willie) Henry Barry and his story is told by his nephew Robert Maude. This account is written using Willie's own words taken from letters and postcards sent home to his mother Sarah Barry in Dublin, Ireland between 1914 and 1919. Many of the images from the postcards have been added to the text to support and illustrate his story.



£11.95

Published by Hughes & Company

What is the 'best' honey?

Martyn Cracknell



In Britain, September marks the end of the active beekeeping year and the beginning of the 'Show' season.

Competitive honey shows are held locally, in each County, nationally and even internationally. There are many different classes to enter, and

from the looks and comments from the visiting public at the Malvern Autumn show, where the Worcestershire County Honey show is held, it is evident that most people cannot fathom out what makes one honey a winner and another not. Judges, who have to undergo

training and must themselves have been successful exhibitors across a range of classes are certified by the British Beekeepers Association to guarantee independence and rigour in the achievement of standards. For Clear Honey, each sample is assessed visually with the naked eye and with a torch to detect any particles (for example, wax, any bubbles, and any sign of crystals forming). The clarity or cloudiness is assessed and specially calibrated 'Grading Glasses' are used to establish whether a sample is Light, Medium or Dark. The lid is unscrewed and gently tilted up to allow the aroma to be assessed. It should be fresh and inviting, without any hint of taint or fermentation. The surface of the honey is examined. It should be perfectly smooth and clear without bubbles or floating particles, e.g. of pollen. A rod is dipped into the honey and gently raised again.

The viscosity determines how thickly the rod will be coated and how quickly it will drip back into the jar. Thick honey

has a better 'mouthfeel' and scores highly. The water content may be tested to check that it is below 20%. (A higher percentage would disqualify the honey.) Finally, a sample is tasted. The immediate taste and the mouthfeel, followed by the development of multiple aromas and flavours, and then the finish with any lingering aftertaste, will all contribute to the quality assessment. A honey with complex layers of flavour generally scores highly. Most honeys will be slightly hazy, or lack a distinctive flavour profile, or tend to be runny, so are unlikely to win prizes, although they are perfectly good. However, occasionally the bees gather something extraordinary, and if you notice it by its colour or aroma when you are extracting, it is worth setting it aside and bottling it for friends and family and for the show bench. These 'super honeys' are usually in very limited quantities, and the only way to experience them is to become a discerning beekeeper, or better still, a honeyjudge.

Village Life

John Driscoll

Last month, I wrote about the approach of autumn after a long, hot summer. It's certainly marching on, with trees giving a beautiful display of seasonal colour and temperatures falling. The clocks will have gone back by the time you read this, so dark evenings will be with us and the battle to keep the heating as low as possible will be lost in many households! Halloween will come and go – though I suspect many of us are pretty overwhelmed by this American custom. Guy Fawkes night used to involve bonfires and fireworks, and I suppose these will still feature despite the ever-present focus on health and safety and environmental protection. I'll say this very quietly, but Christmas will be here in no time, with all that entails.

Meanwhile, it's been time to transition from hanging onto the hope of a late summer to accepting the inevitable. The barbecue has been packed away for the winter, garden furniture covered, and the grass cut for the last time – maybe! Seasons really do seem to be blurring – or is it true that we still have four seasons, but often all in one week?!

We were lucky enough to have a late summer break in the sun, which was a real luxury, returning home with mixed feelings, as always. Sadness that the adventure was over, lifted by getting back to our home and village with familiar surroundings and no more airport crowds! We never take this for granted and never fail to appreciate the freedom to spread elbows and enjoy a bit of space after venturing out into the hustle and bustle of the 'outside world'.

I've reported previously on the hub of our village, also known as 'the pub'. What an absolute delight, a few weeks ago, to pop in for a few drinks with friends on a Saturday night and to find the main bar set up for a very grand birthday party. We knew our place and retreated to a quiet corner, where rumour informed us that entertainment was imminent and we were welcome to stay (as long as we kept out of the way). Another drink was called for, and to our delight, a fabulous saxophonist arrived and set himself up before us. He has apparently played Ronnie Scott's, as well as other well-



known jazz venues, but didn't appear at all phased by these slightly more humble rural surroundings. He played solo, with recorded accompaniment, for well over an hour. The music was sublime. The birthday party certainly enjoyed the performance, and I can assure you our small group of hangers-on was wowed. What a privilege to be allowed to sneak into someone's special day, and what a treat to hear such a soulful and moving set. We felt we sort of paid him back by giving him directions to the nearest filling station, as he was evidently a townie and a bit shocked at our lack of amenities, not even

streetlights! Hopefully, we weren't too star-struck and he was able to follow our instructions. Imagine being stranded in the middle of Worcestershire with only a saxophone for company! Now, onwards into autumn and winter. Pumpkins and Guys ready (do you still give a penny for the Guy or are you expected to use a card machine?), then time to trim the halls and hang the mistletoe (now that sounds fraught with danger in 2025!). A wonderful time of year, even for summer babies such as myself, who will hibernate until the first signs of spring, which can't arrive soon enough! Happy autumn, everyone!

Escape from Mariupol, Ukraine: Part Three Denys Bielov



*Warning:
The following describes details
you may find disturbing.*

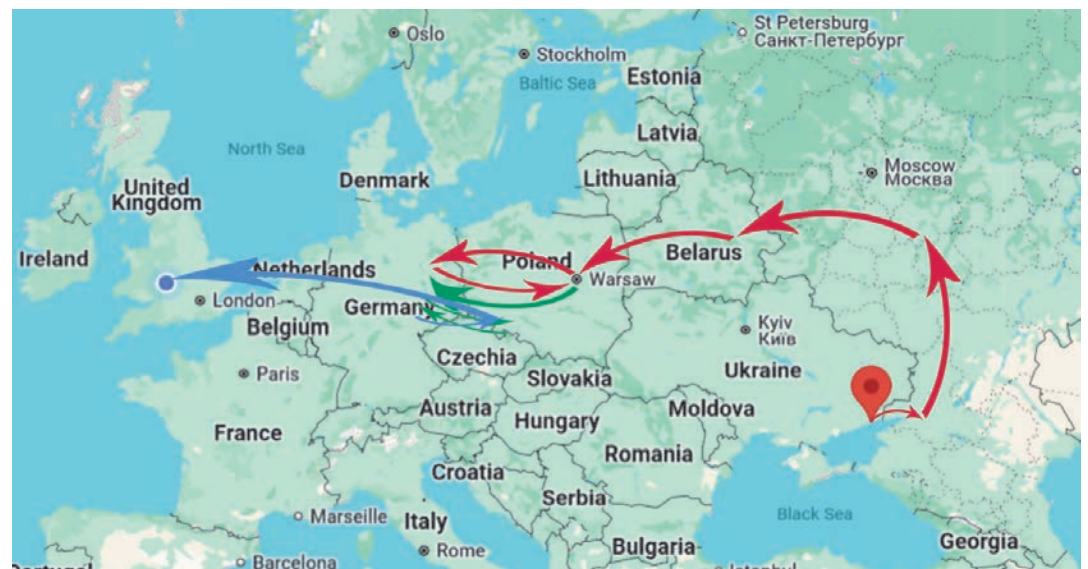
The continuation of my eyewitness account is horrifying. These stories are personal. I was unable to write them, for security reasons, while I was in Mariupol under occupation. I didn't want the occupiers to figure out where I lived if they got their hands on this material. Now, I can and want to share my stories. During a lull in the fighting, we went outside to look for food, water and firewood. Sometimes the artillery shelling started suddenly, when people were trying to find something on the street. I saw private houses being blown to pieces by direct hits. There were neighbourhoods in which every tenth house was destroyed, while in others, almost everything was destroyed. It's hard to estimate the scale of the destruction! And there were probably bodies of people lying in these ruins. Whole blocks of flats had collapsed, and you could see TVs, cots, sofas, and carpets hanging from the still-standing ceilings. The most maddening thing was not knowing when this hell would stop, who would die and who would survive the next 'artillery rain'. It was as if we were in an endless ocean of horror. But the biggest horror was the dead people lying in the street. A few people removed them during the shelling. Friends and relatives, risking their lives, dragged the dead to the nearest lawn or flowerbed under fire, because it was impossible to take them to the cemetery. They were buried with makeshift wooden crosses with inscriptions indicating who was buried here. By mid-May 2022, the whole city was covered in crosses: there were thousands of crosses in yards, flower beds, parks,

alleys, and gardens. Russian occupants have turned our beautiful and prosperous Mariupol into a cemetery in ruins. When our neighbourhood was stormed, there were noticeably more bodies with white bands on their arms and legs, as worn by the Russian occupiers, on the street than with blue bands, as worn by our Azov fighters. While the Azovs moved mainly in groups of three to five, or even less, the Russians were running in groups of twenty to thirty, and accordingly, they were being killed in masses under the fire of our defenders. It was a most dangerous time, when shootings took place right under our windows. I once came across a group of occupiers around the beginning of April. My mother and I were starving, and what little we had we stretched as much as we could. We heard a rumour that someone was selling wheat groats in a house half a kilometre away from us in the direction of the front line. I immediately went there, despite



the danger. To die of hunger was not much better than from a bullet or a shell. We had to get food somehow. As I neared, I saw a group of soldiers huddled by a fence. Behind them, was an infantry fighting vehicle. From a distance, because of my poor eyesight, I couldn't see whether they were ours or not. Of course, I was afraid. I continued to walk calmly because I realised that they had already seen me. If I had tried to run away, I could have been shot. When I came closer, I saw that they were Russians. Overcoming my fear, I asked them in Russian: 'I have heard they sell porridge here, do you know where?' They immediately pointed two automatic guns at me and ordered me to strip down to my waist and show everything I had in my pockets and rucksack. This is how they look for tattoos and any sign of involvement with the Azov regiment, which they fear like fire. I undressed. It was about 4°C outside and the wind was very cold. It was very

scary ... what would happen next? When I was naked with my hands raised, they decided to let me go. 'Get dressed and go where you came from!' shouted their commander. I guess they didn't see anything suspicious about me: I had no tattoos, and I didn't look like a military man – I was skin and bones and all overgrown. I got dressed quickly and left, forgetting about my hunger. It was a good thing they didn't take me prisoner. I noticed they were mostly young boys, twenty to twenty-five years old. They all had some kind of animal fear in their eyes. No wonder. After all, they realised that around every corner, they could be shot or blown up by our much more experienced fighters.



Denys' journey from Mariupol. He travelled by train into Russia, through Belarus, to the Polish border. After several trips back and forth between Poland and Germany, he finally flew to the UK.

Winter wildlife: Being a garden guardian

As the leaves fall and the garden slips into its winter slumber, it's easy to think nature has gone quiet. But, beneath the surface, wildlife is still bustling, foraging, sheltering, and surviving.

November marks a turning point: the last chance to prepare our gardens as sanctuaries for the creatures who share them with us.

Feed the birds

Birds are among the most visible garden visitors in winter, and their presence brings joy to even the greyest days. As natural food sources dwindle, your garden can become a vital feeding station.

- Offer a variety of seeds, such as sunflower hearts, fat balls, and nyjer seeds, which attract different species from goldfinches to robins.
- Keep feeders clean and topped up as hygiene is crucial to prevent disease, and consistency helps birds rely on your garden.
- Add fresh water daily during frosty weather as a shallow dish

or birdbath can freeze quickly, so check it often.

Hedgehog Havens

Hedgehogs begin hibernation around November, seeking dry, undisturbed places to nest. Sadly, their numbers have declined, so our gardens play a crucial role in their survival.

- Leave leaf piles and log stacks, providing natural shelters that are perfect for nesting and foraging.
- Check bonfires before lighting as hedgehogs often crawl into wood piles for shelter.
- Provide food such as meaty cat or dog food (never milk or bread) in a shallow dish.

Bug Hotels

Pollinators may seem absent in winter, but many are simply sleeping. Ladybirds tuck into crevices, solitary bees nest in hollow stems, and butterflies find shelter in sheds or leaf litter.

- Leave seed heads and hollow stems such as teasel, echinacea,

and sedum which provide both food and shelter.

- Create a bug hotel by stacking hollow bamboo canes, pinecones, and bricks in a sheltered spot.

- Avoid pesticides - even in winter, as residues can harm hibernating insects.

Rethink the Winter Garden

Winter gardens don't have to be bare. In fact, structure and texture become more important than ever - not just for aesthetics, but for wildlife.

- Plant evergreen shrubs with different leaf shapes and colours, along with some grasses, as they offer cover and nesting spots while adding visual interest.
- Choose berry-bearing shrubs such as Holly, Cotoneaster, and Pyracantha which not only feed birds but they brighten the landscape too.

Being a garden guardian also means thinking ahead. November is a great time to assess your



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space and make small changes that have big impact.

- Install nesting boxes: Birds begin scouting for spring nesting sites early.
- Create wildlife corridors: Leave gaps in fences or hedges so creatures can move freely.
- Mulch borders: Not only does this protect plants, but it shelters worms and beetles.

This winter, turn your garden into a sanctuary, a shared space where nature is welcomed. Whether you're planting, pausing, or simply peering out of the window with a cup of tea, know that your care makes a difference. Because every garden, no matter the size, has the power to make a difference.



November gardening tips

Early in November

Try to finish bulb planting soon. In fact, this is a great time to be planting tulips, but if your soil is heavy, put some coarse grit into the planting holes.

Mounded, fleshy-leaved alpiners benefit from protection against getting too wet. Cover with a small cloche. Plant trees, shrubs, fruiting plants and roses of all kinds. They will be able to settle themselves in before the spring. Sow Aquadulce Claudia broad beans and round-seeded peas, like Feltham First, in sheltered spots for cropping in June. Christmas roses (*Helleborus niger*) flower better and earlier with a little protection from a cloche. Hellebores hate being disturbed, but if you must move one, this is the best time. Lift it with a good, large ball of soil around the roots.

Mid November

Check tree stakes and ties before winter winds cause damage. Plant Paperwhite narcissi for Christmas flowers. Clean the

glass and insulate your greenhouse using bubble polythene. Pinch out the tips of autumn-sown sweet peas when they are 10cm (4in) tall. Plant garlic by the end of this month; it enjoys a well-drained position. If in doubt, plant cloves 10cm (4in) deep in mounded rows 15cm (6in) high. Take hardwood cuttings of soft fruit bushes and shrubs. Plant bare-root hedging plants. Keep greenhouses and frames ventilated on bright days. Grass growth generally slows down a little this month, so only give your lawn a light mowing if the grass is dry. If you have not already done so, treat the lawn to a dose of autumn lawn fertiliser and aerate it. This treatment will pay dividends in the spring. Some herbaceous plants - e.g. *Dicentra spectabilis* and *Primula denticulata* - can be brought indoors for early flowers. If your garden is lacking colour, plant some winter-flowering shrubs now. Sow fast-maturing

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

carrots, radishes, winter-hardy salad onions, etc, in the greenhouse for harvesting in April. Plant a container with winter-flowering heathers to brighten up your patio. Trim over summer heathers to remove the old flower stems. Slugs find greenhouse conditions ideal, so they will still be very active in there. Take some steps towards controlling them. Clean patios and concrete paths to remove potentially slippery moss and algae.

Late November

Feed flowering houseplants weekly, but foliage ones once a month. Pot up pieces of chives, parsley and mint to bring indoors for fresh foliage all winter. Begin pruning grapes as soon as the leaves have fallen. Garden birds benefit from extra feeding all year round, but it is especially important in the winter months. Try to put out appropriate food for the species living in your garden, and make sure that water is readily



available too. Prune free-standing apple and pear trees after leaf fall. Place houseplants on wide saucers of moist gravel to provide extra humidity. Grouping them together on trays of moist gravel helps even more, as central heating is very dry. Begin washing pots and trays in disinfectant, ready for the new sowing season if you have had trouble with seedlings rotting off last year. There are safer ones available now based on citrus waste, such as Agralan Citrox and Vitax Greenhouse Disinfectant.

Ailsa's Kitchen

Ailsa Craddock

November, and a sharp drop in temperature, so we really need something warm and sustaining - and what could be better than soup? I know it's easy to open a tin, a packet or a carton, and, yes, some of them are very nice - but wouldn't you like to make your own with fresh ingredients and no preservatives? It can be more economical using "wonky veg" and the odd vegetable found lurking at the back of the fridge, and you can vary it in lots of ways by what you add to it.

Extras you can add to soups:

Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, Mint, Thyme, Oregano, Basil, Chives, Coriander, Kaffir Lime Leaves, Chervil, Single or Double Cream, Crème Fraiche, Yogurt, Sour Cream

Croutons –
cube some bread and fry in butter.

Croutes –
French bread of slices of bread, brushed with olive oil and toasted in the oven.

As above, but rubbed with garlic.

As above, but covered in cheese and toasted.

You can make your own stock, boiling up the carcass or bones of a roast dinner with some vegetables - but stock cubes are perfectly acceptable - there are lots of good ones in the shops now.

Canned beans (e.g. cannellini), pulses (e.g. dried beans and

lentils), grains (e.g. rice, pearl barley and couscous) can all be added to bulk out simple soups. How about you make one of the below, go for a walk in the lovely crisp air and come home to a bowl of soup? Don't forget to pick up a nice crusty bread to go with it - and you definitely want some nice butter to go on it - no margarine!

Broccoli and Stilton Soup

A quick recipe (cooking time: about 10 mins). Serves 4

12oz broccoli, cut into small pieces

14fl oz vegetable stock

1 oz butter

4 spring onions, sliced (or 1 leek)

1 3/4oz Stilton, crumbled or to taste

3 1/2 fl.oz double cream

Salt and pepper

Pinch of nutmeg



Put broccoli pieces into a glass bowl. Pour over stock. Cover the bowl with cling film and put in microwave. Cook for 4 minutes till tender. Heat a frying pan till hot and add butter. When it starts to foam, add onions and cook for 1 minute. Put cooked broccoli and stock in a bowl/blender. Add onions, stilton and cream and blend together. Transfer mixture to a pan and bring gently to a simmer.

Leek and Potato Soup with cheesy mustard croutons

10 grams butter

2 leeks

1 teasp dried tarragon (optional)

1 large potato

500 ml stock with boiling water and a stock cube

30 grams watercress (optional)

Melt butter in a large pan and add chopped leeks and tarragon. Add the chopped potato and stock. Bring to boil and cook until potato is soft. Add the watercress if using, simmer for 3 minutes and blend till smooth. Preheat grill to high and toast 2 slices of

bread/ baguette until crisp. Spread each slice with some Dijon mustard and top with some grated cheese (any kind you like). Put the soup into a bowl, top with a cheesy crouton and serve.

Carrot and Ginger Soup

1 tbsp oil

1 large onion, sliced

2 tbsp coarsely grated ginger

2 garlic cloves, sliced

500 grams of carrots

850ml vegetable stock

A little nutmeg

Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, ginger and garlic, and fry for 5 mins until starting to soften. Stir in the nutmeg and cook for 1 min more. Pour in the stock, add the carrots, then cover and simmer for 20-25 mins until the carrots are tender.

Scoop a third of the mixture into a bowl and blitz the remainder with a hand blender or in a food processor until smooth.

Return everything to the pan and heat until bubbling. Serve topped with a little nutmeg.

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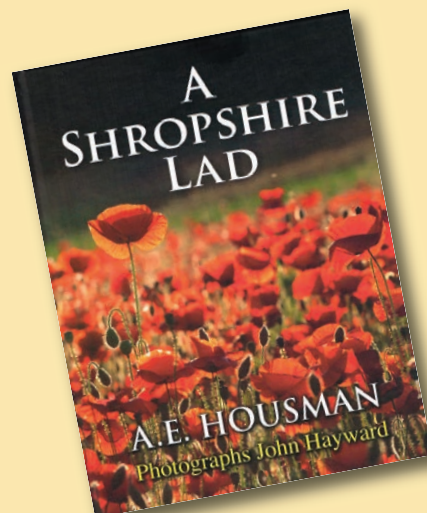


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To plan or not to plan?

Angela Johns

In the interest of listening to my own voice and the voice of my tribe, I am trying to go more with the flow, ease up, loosen my grip. It'll be easier, they say, calmer. For what we resist, persists. What am I resisting? Well, that's the big question. In practice for my last trip, I embraced that idea. I decided not to endlessly research stuff and plan things to the hilt but to have a quick look and just see when I got there. My friend, who was my holiday buddy, did just that too. So, what happened? Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, is a small city with a big outlook. We climbed the surrounding hills and took in the panoramic view of Czechia, Austria, Hungary, as well as Slovakia, with the Danube threading its sinuous way across the landscape. It was the only thing I picked out that I definitely wanted to do, and we did it. We decided to visit Devin Castle, 20 minutes away on the bus, a ruin with a long history and a great view. We were chatting so much we missed our stop and had to make our way back in the rain – only to find out that it's closed on a Monday. As the café was closed too, we had to add to the trickle of the tributary to the Danube behind some bushes. I thought the bus was tap on/tap off, but it's only tap on, so I paid twice. The next day we bused it to Vienna. We walked around the massive Das Wiener Rathaus, trying to find the entrance, only to be told that it's been closed to the public on Tuesdays for three years. So we made our way to the Justizpalast. Apparently, they did a tour, and the café has incredible views of the city. As we got to the reception desk window, the official put up a sign



that said the tour was full. Back in Bratislava, I was still on the search for a good dark beer. When I was in a restaurant that sold it, I was in a red wine mood. When I was in a restaurant that didn't sell it, I was in a dark beer mood. The brilliant sunshine and spotless blue sky were on the day we were leaving. Okay, that bit cannot be planned. So what did we learn? Well, we had fun anyway. We were in good company, and there were other things to do and choices to make, so not much! On reflection, though, I realise that going with the flow isn't about giving up your role in looking ahead or not anticipating outcomes. It's not about relinquishing responsibility for your choices. It's not even being "chill" with everything, come what may. I found that it is about trust in myself. That I will try to handle it, and do that with aplomb. There is no right or wrong path, just an attitude while you are on the path that you are on.

Angela is a qualified Emotional Therapeutic Counsellor registered with the FETC and NCPS. Also a Reflexologist and Reiki Practitioner, she is passionate about her therapies and spends quality time with her clients to facilitate their wellbeing. You can find her at angelajohns.co.uk

Finding power in every moment

Emily Papirnirk



"I don't have a choice!"

How often have you heard yourself - or someone else - say that? For a long time, I believed that difficult situations were completely out of my control. Life seemed to throw challenges my way that I simply had to endure.

Over time, I began to realise something powerful: even when I couldn't control the situation itself, I always had a choice in how I reacted, how I behaved, and how I moved forward. Choice is where our true power lies. It's the quiet space between what happens to us and how we respond. In that space, we find influence, self-awareness, and direction. Every moment invites us to choose how we think, how we feel, and what we do next. When we forget that we have a choice, we hand over our power to circumstance, to others, or to so-called "fate." Life is not meant to simply happen to us - it's meant to be created by us. Even choosing not to choose is still a decision, and it determines the direction of our day, our relationships, and ultimately our lives.

So, today, take a moment to pause and notice what you're choosing.

Choose your thoughts - are they kind or critical?

Choose your emotions - are they supportive or draining?

Choose your actions - are they aligned with your truth?

When we start to live from a place of conscious choice, we move from reaction to creation. We stop waiting for permission or for life to feel "right," and instead begin shaping our path with intention and awareness. If you've felt unable to choose until now, perhaps this is your invitation to begin. Each choice, no matter how small, is a step towards freedom. Your life is yours.

Choose it.

Live it.

Feel it fully.

'Remember, remember,
the fifth of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
I see no reason
Why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.'

John Milton (1626)

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Romy Kemp *Liverpool University*



Settling In

There is now a chill in the air here in Liverpool, and the leaves on the trees are falling. The floor is coated in orange and red. Autumn is my favourite season, so I am loving it! The air is starting to smell different and is reminding me that Halloween and Christmas are approaching (as well as my birthday, of course). All of my housemates and I are excited to decorate the house for the winter holiday and make Sunday roasts for each other. We are also planning a trip to

the pantomime before we all go home for the Christmas break. It has been nice seeing everyone back at university and I have met up with a quite few friends already. The modules that I am taking have been enjoyable so far, and I have really enjoyed being back at university doing the work. The topics that I am doing have been captivating, and I am understanding the work - which is a bonus! The assignments will hopefully be as straightforward as the information that is being covered in the lectures and seminars. It has been a tiring

couple of months so far, I feel as though I am tired constantly and lacking in energy. I hope this will go away soon, as nothing is going to get easier or less tiring. Assignments will be due in November and December, so thankfully, I still have time to crack on and get everything sorted. I have been trying to stick to a routine this year.

However, it has not been as successful as I would have liked it to have been. I feel like I constantly have so much to do but not enough time to do it all. I tend to stick to a schedule for a few weeks, and then it all goes wrong and I forget about it. I find it easier to write a list of things that I need to do and then cross off the ones that I have done after I have finished them. I love doing this system as it feels like I'm accomplishing my tasks quickly, and then I can erase them from my mind. My birthday is in November so I plan on taking a little trip home so that I can spend it with my family. I have had quite a few people, family and friends, ask me what I want for my birthday and I honestly don't know. I have had a couple of ideas, but



I am now stumped. I have already got trainers for my birthday, which are fabulous, and I am super excited to wear them. They are brown and blue. Maybe I will try to find a jumper/sweatshirt to go with them, so that I can wear them to university.



VETERINARY ADVICE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!



Acupuncture for dogs and cats

Many people find acupuncture helpful as part of a holistic treatment for various conditions, but not everyone knows that acupuncture is also available for dogs and cats.

Acupuncture consists of inserting very fine needles in various parts of the body. In pets this is usually the back and limbs. It is carried out by a vet, with the owner present, and each session lasts about 20-30 minutes. Most dogs, and many cats, are very tolerant of the procedure.

Acupuncture is what is known as a complementary treatment, which means it is used alongside traditional medicines and therapies, usually as an additional source of pain relief.

It can be particularly helpful for older pets with arthritic pain, especially when they are starting to struggle with mobility despite conventional treatments but can also help young and middle-aged pets following injuries or surgery.

About 80% of pets are thought to respond to acupuncture, the only way to find out if it will help your pet is a trial treatment, usually consisting of four treatments a week apart. If this helps, then an individual plan can be developed. Many insurance companies will pay for complementary therapies, you would need to check your individual policy to find out if this applies.

If you think this might be something you are interested in for your pet then, feel free to ring me at the surgery.

Monica

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martinandcarrvets.co.uk



Gregory's World!

Bonkers in Yonkers

What time was it? Were we late? My calves throbbed as I power-marched along 49th Street. Drains hissed steam like geysers. Injury lawyers grinned at us from glossy adverts. According to Google Maps, we were five minutes away from the British consulate. In New York City, five minutes soon became ten, then fifteen, as we hopped – stop-start, stop-start – from block to block, waiting for the ‘walking man’ signal (he was white here, rather than green) or risking the honking wrath of a fleet of yellow taxicabs. It had been a 7 am start for me and Natdog. The worry of being late was so pressing in my mind that I’d apparently even talked in my sleep that night about needing to get changed. Stifling our yawns and rubbing our eyes, we took the bus from our Airbnb in Yonkers, down through the Bronx, and over into Manhattan. “You owe me a Dunkin’ Donuts for this,” said Natdog. Indeed, I did. I’d put him through a lot of vein-popping stress. Our dream of the open road, the billowing stars and stripes, the hot dogs, the blaring Bruce Springsteen ... stalled when I lost my passport before even leaving the Avis car rental in Boston. When we returned to the Avis reception desk to ask

about my missing passport, the staff assumed we were giving our car back. They vacuumed, deep-cleaned and decluttered the car before we could say ‘Our bags are still in there!’. With the help of a gentleman who didn’t say much besides ‘No Inglés!’ and ‘Me, David!’, we retrieved our car, most of our belongings, and our resting heart rates. I went onto the gov.uk website, cancelled my missing passport, applied for a £125 emergency one, and arranged to pick it up in New York. We then embarked on a week’s road trip, up and down the muscular arm of Cape Cod, over the bumpy highways of Rhode Island, through leafy Connecticut, into NYC. Here, in the city that never sleeps, I would finally obtain a passport and be able to sleep more soundly.

The One Dag Hammar skjöld Plaza is a shiny, dark-glass skyscraper looming over Second Avenue. I entered the lobby and approached a well-dressed man at reception. “Hi there, I’m here to pick up an emergency passport. I have a 9:30 appointment.” He asked to see my driver’s licence (thankfully, I hadn’t lost that as well), then instructed me to take the lift to the twenty-seventh floor. I had to go alone. From here on, it was a Natdog-

free zone. The lift climbed past the consulates of at least thirteen other countries. When the doors opened, I recognised our Royal Coat of Arms, our romping lion and frolicking unicorn. Even though I was loving America, it was still comforting to know I’d found a little pocket of home in the middle of this sensory whirlwind of neon lights, baseball caps and pastrami sandwiches. The British consulate was a clinical-white room with a red telephone box in the corner, and a portrait of the King hanging on the wall (I appreciated the effort). Sky News was on the TV, the French Prime Minister was addressing the National Assembly before an impending no-confidence vote. A security guy showed up and scanned me with a metal detector wand.

“Okay, you’re clear.” At the main desk, another receptionist slid me my new, cyan-coloured ‘EMERGENCY PASSPORT’, valid for one trip. I flicked it open and saw the photo Natdog had taken of me back in Boston; I did not look amused, standing up against the back of a chicken street vendor van (the only white background we’d been able to find). I signed for the passport, held it tight, and rejoined Natdog downstairs. We stepped outside into the muggy, pretzel-smelling air,

Gregory Sidaway



and what d’ya know, fellow reader? Directly across the street, advertising a \$6 breakfast bagel, hash brown and coffee meal deal, was a Dunkin’ Donuts. Their slogan is “America runs on Dunkin’” and, for once, this is not just marketing. Quite how a chain that is named after a very specific snack, specialising in watery coffee and squashed bagels, has managed to conquer the fast-food breakfast market and run over one and a half thousand stores (many of them drive-thrus) across New England and New York, I’ll never know. But Dunkin’ seems to be as entrenched a part of American culture as church and ignoring the speed limit, so we had to check it out. We both had our identities, a way home, and another week of road-tripping to look forward to. Freedom, like our breakfast bagels, tasted very good indeed.

Evie's Teenage Focus

It's been just over a month since I returned to university. So far, it's been a mix of familiar routines and new challenges. Within a couple of weeks of lectures, the workload was already piling up. Lectures, readings, and assignments were consuming my life, and before I knew it, the deadline of my first big essay was glaring me down. This year feels different, maybe it's because I understand what's expected of me more clearly, or perhaps because I want to prove to myself that I have grown since my first year. Either way, juggling lectures, studying, and personal life has been a real challenge for me this year. Last year, I learned the hard way about leaving assignments till the last minute - for anyone wondering, I promise you, the procrastination is not worth it, start it early. But this year, I'm

determined to stay ahead. My first assignment was for my design and typography module, and surprisingly, I had a lot of fun making it. It wasn't the typical essay assignment, which I'm used to; whilst it was still a writing piece, it was only 1000 words, and the vast majority of it revolved around photos. The task was to choose an area within media, journalism, or publishing, and compare its design and style guides. I chose to do mine on the publication imprints, Harper Voyager, and a Penguin imprint named Del Rey.

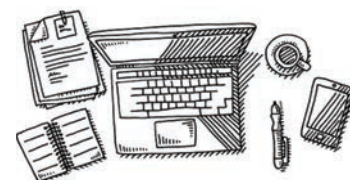
I spent the weeks before the assignment trolling through their individual websites, looking for anything and everything I could say about them, and surprisingly, there was a lot. The week before my assignment was due, you would've been able to find me

in a quiet spot on the top floor of a nice building on campus, furiously typing away; AirPods in, blasting music (probably Ethel Cain or Taylor Swift), a drink next to me (probably a tea or a diet coke or more than likely both) and a pile of snacks shoved in the corner. I think that week I probably spent more time on campus than I did at my own house. However, even with careful planning, a workload can feel incredibly overwhelming at times. I had to remind myself countless times that taking breaks is essential and that burning out at the start of the semester won't help me produce better work, even if it means I get it done quicker. As the semester continues, I know the challenges will keep coming, but this year I will remember to take time for myself, whether it's a walk,

Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University



making time to go home, or just an evening with friends, it's all just as important as any lecture or essay. Anyway, it's back to essay prep for me. Until next time, Toodles!



Local Government: effective or what?

Richard Catford

Problem-solving in local politics is supposed to work in a hierarchical fashion. Local folk identify their needs, convey this to their local councillor, and it's discussed and hopefully acted upon. Often, the problem requires the involvement of regional and national organisations to help fund and resolve the issue. Why does the hoped-for solution so often fail at this point?

Although not in this area, the recent flooding disaster at Tenbury Wells illustrates this point well. It is a story of poor local decision-making and late efforts that resulted in indifference to urgent local needs. It serves as a parallel and example to several situations that haunt us here in South Worcestershire; that is, when local needs and necessary action fail to be adequately dealt with when authorities, like the County Council and the Environment Agency (EA), become involved.

For example, take the Tiddesley Wood planning situation. Here,

a late appeal by Malvern and Wychavon District authorities has allowed a very unpopular development to go ahead unchallenged. Late, tardy action means local opinions are ignored. Another example of incompetence, concerning the Seven Stoke Flood prevention scheme, has rumbled on for nearly ten years. Five years ago, Harriet Baldwin wrestled the problem from the EV and placed the responsibility with the County Council. Dame Harriet instigated a low-cost plan, using spoil from local civil engineering projects, to create the defences. Since then, Worcester County Council have done nothing, and the paralysis and indecision mean Seven Stoke faces yet another winter of flooding with half-built flood defences mocking their need. The final cost is also mounting. Why? Fortunately for Tenbury Wells, the current situation has been saved. The log-jam of paralysis and indecision, due to



Severe flooding in Seven Stoke in February 2020

a late application by the local council, has been dynamited, and funds from an alternative source have been found by the Flooding Minister, Emma Hardy, after Dame Harriet Baldwin's intervention. Will a similar intervention shift the inactivity at Seven Stoke? Why do we have to resort to these last-minute, desperate interventions? Meanwhile, indecision by local councils which prevaricate, miss deadlines, spend millions of

pounds on consultations, advice, appeals, court cases and millions on EA salaries and running costs will no doubt continue to frustrate us. Local authorities need to wake up, be more alert and in tune with local needs. As individuals, we need to support our local councillors and help them apply pressure to issues that so many of us meekly accept as inevitable. We should not take it for granted that a solution will naturally present itself.

Protecting against inappropriate development

Planning inspectors have confirmed the three South Worcestershire Councils will have enough land to resist inappropriate housing development in the future, offering greater protection to communities. Inspectors scrutinising the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review (SWDPR) are satisfied Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon District Councils would have a five-year housing land supply, with a 5% buffer, once the Plan is adopted. This means the three councils have identified enough land for the required number of homes over the next five years, with some additional land in case

some housing sites aren't developed as fast as expected. Inspectors were also happy for proposed development land at Worcester South, Rushwick, Worcestershire Parkway and Mitton to be included in the Plan as allocated housing sites. The confirmation follows a series of public hearings to examine the Plan to ensure it is sound and legally compliant, along with additional evidence provided by the three councils about progress on the Worcester South Urban extensions. The Plan can now move on to the next stage of the process, where all the changes proposed by the inspectors - known as main modifications -

will be consulted on either later this year or early in 2026. They are mainly technical changes to fix any issues that could delay the Plan from being found sound and legally compliant. The consultation will give residents and organisations the chance to highlight any issues arising from the modifications only. All comments will be sent to the inspectors for their further consideration, informing their final report. Once the final report is received, the three councils can officially adopt the plan. It is expected the Plan will go before councillors early next year. Cllr David Harrison, Chair of the SWDPR Joint Advisory Panel,

said: "I'm pleased, following the further evidence we provided to the inspectors, they have agreed we will have a five-year housing land supply upon adoption of the SWDPR. This will considerably strengthen our ability to resist speculative development in inappropriate locations that would harm our communities. I would also like to thank and congratulate all the staff for their work on this project over the last five years - well done all."

Details about the modifications consultation will be released soon. Visit www.swdevelopmentplan.org to read the inspectors' latest letter.

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Poem of the Month:

'Transformation'

Nature has done it again!
Just when it looked as though
There was a weariness, a lethargy, a fading,
She has performed her Autumn trick.
Trees that had become tired and listless
Have metamorphosed into stunning creatures.
Reds, browns, oranges, yellows have blossomed,
Arranged it would seem,
To complement each other.
They have become a bold statement,
Vying to show off their beautiful gowns.
Acquiring a new definition,
Their individuality is now displayed.
The autumnal sun is their ally.
A golden spotlight that illuminates them
So that their blaze of colour
Has made them the stars of the show,
A multi-coloured chorus line,
Bold, beautiful and breath-taking.
But it is a limited performance-
A last night at the Proms
Before Winter takes over
And strips them once more of their brazen beauty.

Susan Catford

Monthly Reflection

Bouquets or Brickbats? Hopefully, there aren't too many times we receive brickbats, criticisms for our work, employed or voluntary. So many programmes we see on TV focus on people being awarded for their achievements. A lovely feeling, but is that the only reason why we do what we do? Luke's Gospel reading this Sunday reminds us all that that shouldn't be our only objective. Fulfilling the duty we have been asked or volunteered to perform, knowing we've done a good job, should be reward in itself. Let's own it and buy ourselves a bunch of flowers this week.

Angela Gerrard, Pershore Abbey

Thought Plants

Susan Catford

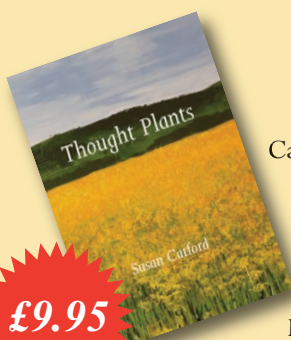
This book is a collection of writing and poems by Susan Catford, exploring ideas, events and everyday life.

At times serious and thoughtful, at others enjoying the whimsical, lighter side of things.

It grew surprisingly well from early seeds and a fertile imagination.

Available from:

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What to pay

Carol Draper

As an employer, it is often difficult to know what rates to pay employees and what value a job is worth. So, what guidelines should you use? For all employees, there is a legal minimum that must be paid, the National Minimum Wage. The rates payable depend on the age of the employee, but for those aged 18 and above, the current rate is £10 per hour. For those aged 21 and over, it is £12.21. Any changes to the current rates will be announced in the budget in November. An alternative to the national minimum wage is the Real Living Wage. This is not a legal minimum but is calculated by the Living Wage Foundation as the minimum amount needed to cover basic living costs. The rates are set in October each year, and for those employers who have signed up to be a Real Living Wage employer, the rates are payable to all employees aged 18 and above. The latest rates have just been announced as £13.45 per hour, a rise from £12.50 per hour. Real Living Wage employers are encouraged to adopt the rates as soon as possible, but certainly by May 2026. A quick Google search will provide suggestions for pay levels for



various roles, though these will be an average of results taken from a range of business types, sizes, and locations, so will need to be adjusted to reflect individual circumstances. Local authorities also publish pay scales for all their roles. There is a range of unions, HR and employment organisations, all of which could be used for guidance.

For employers, what to pay employees is often a compromise between what the business can afford, its needs and employee requirements. While money is important, it is not the only thing to consider when attracting or rewarding employees. Other things to consider are the working environment, the facility for flexible working, staff benefits, training and development opportunities and even the job title of a role.

Carol Draper FCCA
Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd

'The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts. Therefore, guard accordingly, and take care ...'

Marcus Aurelius
'Meditations' (161 - 180 AD)



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A masterwork returns to Broadway

Anona Van Lawick
Museum Director



'Mrs. George Lewis (Elizabeth Eberstadt)' by John Singer Sargent
(Image Credit: James Williams, Cotswold Media Creative)

A highly important portrait by the internationally celebrated artist, John Singer Sargent, has been accepted by HM Government in Lieu of Inheritance Tax from the estate of the Honourable Jane Cohen and allocated to the Broadway Museum and Art Gallery. The portrait has not been on public view since 1926, when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in the Sargent Memorial Exhibition.

The sitter

The German-born Elizabeth Eberstadt (1844-1931) married the highly successful Jewish solicitor, George Lewis (1833-1911), as his second wife in 1867. Lewis, who rescued Edward VII from various legal scrapes, was knighted in 1893 and created a baronet in 1902.

The Broadway Connection

Lady Lewis was a summer renter in Broadway and a close friend of the American actress, Mary Anderson de Navarro, at Court Farm. She was to die at nearby Orchard Farm, the home of her friend, Lady Maud Bowes-Lyon, aunt of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. Her unmarried daughter, Katie, inherited the portrait and, during World War II,

moved to Wychwood House (now Hawstead House), Broadway, where the portrait hung, with her own portrait by Sargent, until her death in 1961. Lady Lewis was a celebrated hostess at the couple's London home in Portland Place, where the most prominent artists, writers, musicians and actors of the day mingled with lawyers and politicians. Lady Lewis kept an extensive correspondence with, among others, Oscar Wilde and Burne-Jones, and the couple collected contemporary art, notably works by their friend Burne-Jones and by Whistler.

The writer and caricaturist Max Beerbohm wrote of her in his obituary of her for The Times: 'Good books, good pictures and, above all, good Music were for her no mere topics of conversation, but vital needs of her nature.'

The Portrait is a superb example of Sargent's mature style, and it is fitting that it should come to the Museum in the hundredth anniversary year of his death. The work is characterised by Lady Lewis' unaffected poise and the sophisticated harmony of her black and gold evening dress. Behind her, hangs a



length of antique brocade, either Italian or French in origin. The portrait perfectly captures the mood of the woman who was described by the writer and artist Graham Robertson as 'a strange woman ... with a wonderful gift of sympathy and understanding'.

Conservation

The portrait has been conserved by Jevon Thistlewood, Conservator of Paintings at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. The reproduction Victorian frame of a type favoured by Sargent was made by John Davies Framing, Fakenham. Both conservation and framing were made possible by generous American friends of the Museum: Michael Shane Neal, Leslie Nordness and Sandra Murzyn.

The Broadway Colony

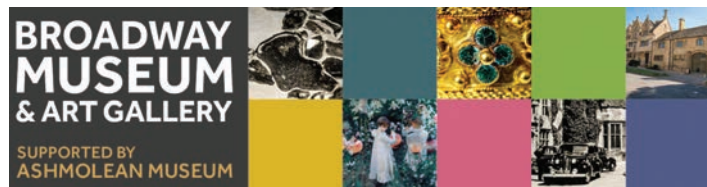
This major work by Sargent immediately becomes the cornerstone of the Museum's display devoted to the Broadway Colony of writers, artists and musicians that flourished here in the late nineteenth century. Artists included, in addition to Sargent, the Americans, Francis D Millet and Edwin Austin Abbey, and an English contingent that included painters Lawrence and Laura Alma-Tadema, George Henry Boughton, Alfred Parsons, and the illustrators Frederick Barnard and Phil May. Writers included Henry James, J.M. Barrie and Edmund Gosse. It is hoped that the arrival of Mrs George Lewis will stimulate further acquisitions by the Museum, and collectors are encouraged to contact the Director.

Fun facts:

- Lady Lewis spent her summers in Broadway before returning for her last trip, where she died, staying with Maud Bowes Lyons.
- George and Elizabeth Lewis were friends and great supporters of Sargent.
- Lady Lewis' painting hung in Broadway for 40 years and has finally returned home.
- Lady Lewis' painting is on public display for the first time in nearly 100 years.
- The painting was produced in payment for services rendered. Sargent used George Lewis (Edward VII solicitor) as his personal solicitor.
- This is one of a set of Lewis's. Sargent painted Elizabeth, George and daughter Katie, as well as producing charcoals of each. Don't miss the chance to step into the world of John Singer Sargent and discover the vibrant, artistic history of Broadway through the eyes of one of the greatest portraitists in history.

Broadway Museum & Art Gallery, Broadway, Worcestershire (shown below)
Admission: £7-£10
Open Monday to Saturday 10-4.30pm

For more information, visit www.broadwaymuseum.org.uk or contact us on 01386859047



Wild at heart!

Have you ever heard about an enthusiastic band of individuals who call themselves wild swimmers, and thought: I'd really like to try that, but how do I get started?

If you're looking to start wild swimming in Worcestershire, Lenches Lakes is the perfect place to dip your toes in.

Designed with conservation at its heart, this outdoor swimming oasis has been my go-to location for over four years. Set within a tranquil woodland, this spring-fed swimming spot offers a rare blend of recreation and rewilding. Back in September 2021, I joined a Cold Water Introductory Session at Lenches Lakes. I timed it perfectly because the water was

at its warmest. There were around ten to twelve of us, all curious newcomers to cold water swimming, eager to see if this could become our new favourite hobby.

The session began with a theory segment that was incredibly informative, especially for those of us who had never swum outdoors before. Then came the real test: stepping into the lake under the watchful eyes of the safety team. In water temperatures that seasoned outdoor swimmers might call comfortable, we squealed, "It's freezing!", grinning from ear to ear as we embraced the chill.

Whether you're a seasoned wild swimmer or a curious beginner,



the Lenches Lakes offers a safe, scenic, and welcoming environment for cold water swimmers in Worcestershire. With expert guidance, warm changing room facilities and homemade cakes available

every week, it's the perfect place to reconnect with the natural world and begin your outdoor swimming adventures! For more information, visit: www.lencheslakes.co.uk

Sophie Sidaway

A View from the Middle

Regular readers will be forgiven for thinking that we had mistakenly printed the same front cover for the last two editions of this paper, as England's women won the Rugby World Cup and football's Euro 2025 competition. It is unfortunate that we are going to press before the denouement of the women's cricket World Cup, but I'm pleased to say that England are doing well and, at the time of writing, had qualified for the semi-final.

This is all a world away from when I was a child and was restricted to netball, tennis and hockey at school. I don't think I was aware that any of these other three sports were an option for girls, at least until my late teens. Now, there are visible and realistic role models for girls (and boys) of any age. I am delighted when I see youngsters wearing the name of England captain, Leah Williamson, on the back of their football strips or trying to copy the bowling actions of England's Lauren Bell or Sophie Ecclestone. And women's rugby is going from strength to

strength with a range of options available in clubs nationwide. I must confess that rugby is the least attractive of the three to me because I fall a little short in the courage department. I remember going to try out a beginner's session at university. I was a natural at passing and kicking from hand or tee. But, as soon as tackling came into the equation, I flinched and ran away. I much, much, much prefer non-contact sport. Having said all this, my brief career as a football goalkeeper was characterised by what one coach described as "bravery to the point of stupidity". Unfortunately, my penchant for diving to wrestle the ball from the feet of onrushing strikers ended up with a trampled (and broken) hand on one occasion, so I decided to specialise in a sport where you get to wear pads, gloves, and a helmet. Returning to cricket, I was encouraged to see Ebony Rainford-Brent this month at the Cheltenham Literature Festival - which is a fine event and well worth a visit next year. It was

pleasing to hear Ebony speak about cricket and how she managed to make her way in the game with a trio of disadvantages involved with being a working-class woman of colour. It is remarkable, but perhaps not surprising, that cricket remains dominated by a wealthier demographic, whilst there is a heap of untapped talent and people being deprived of the opportunity to play the game due to the costs of equipment and training. Ebony has sought to combat this with the development of the ACE Programme, which seeks to support talent of African and Caribbean heritage into the professional game. This has seen some fruition, particularly with the expanse of contracts associated with the new competition, 'The Hundred', being awarded to some more diverse players, including a fairly local young woman, Davina Perrin, from Warwickshire, with the Northern Superchargers. But it is not just at the elite level where I'd like to see more participation in cricket. It is such



a fun and rewarding sport and has brought me more friendships than I can count. It is wonderful to see initiatives from local clubs and cricket foundations providing free cricket coaching for players who may be young or old or blind or with other disabilities. It is certainly worth looking up your local cricket foundation to see whether there are any free sessions on offer - and I'm sure they'll provide the equipment. On a serious note, I have found that throwing myself back into sport has helped a lot with the grieving process following my recent bereavement. I'm grateful to my teammates and colleagues for their support and similarly thankful to the staff at this publication for their patience and encouragement at this time.

Thoughts from the Snug..

Visitors to our shores are welcomed, and we certainly appreciate their interest and enthusiasm when they confirm how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful part of the world with so much history and character. However, our visitors sometimes get it wrong, as described in a recent BBC article reporting on an overseas visitor who visited

Wordsworth's Dove Cottage at Grassmere in the Lake District. In the visitors book, he extolled the beauty and quaintness of the cottage but laments the absence of William Wordsworth himself. He thought it a poor show the man himself was not there to show them around. Dove Cottage is still owned by the Wordsworth family and William's Great Great Grandson

Misunderstandings - Don't get irritated!

penned a reply to the critic, explaining William had died in 1850. Furthermore, he advised the visitor that other famous Lake District poets and authors, like Samuel Coleridge and Beatrix Potter, were also unavailable to give guided tours, as they too had died. A helpful response, we thought. This story provoked a memory from a Snug regular who was a

volunteer at Croome Court. The guide had just completed a tour of the house, when one of the enthusiastic American visitors rounded off his thanks to the guide by saying: "This a very fine house. Shame they built it so close to the motorway!" The guide politely nodded and moved on. Least said, soonest mended.

The revised Highway Code: carrying pets in the car



For many, the sight of a dog's head sticking out of a car window, with its ears flapping as it thoroughly enjoys the breeze, is highly amusing. However, it is illegal! Rule 57 of the Highway Code requires all pets to be restrained to avoid causing a distraction. Drivers who allow their passenger pets to cause a distraction will attract the attention of the police or a traffic

officer, who will also want to confirm the animal is correctly and competently restrained. Acceptable methods include:

- A harness that is attached to a seat belt,
- A pet carrier or crate
- A dog guard to separate the boot from the passenger area.

It is not adequate to simply attach a lead to a collar, nor to travel with a pet in the front seat in

front of an airbag. Not complying with this rule can lead to points on your license and up to a maximum £5000 fine for driving without care and attention.

Child restraints and seat belts

Rules 99 to 102 detail the requirements of the seat belts, or restraints that all children under 14 years, or under 1.35 (4ft 5ins) must use. Different models of backward and forward-facing seats are only appropriate for children of a specific height. Precise rules exist on when a baby seat, child seat, booster seat or booster cushion must be used. They must be appropriate for the child's age and size and fitted to the manufacturer's instructions. Rule 102 also states children should enter or exit the car via the door nearest the kerb. It is

the driver's responsibility to adhere to these technical rules, in addition to ensuring child locks on doors are engaged when carrying minors. Drivers are responsible for the safety of their passengers. Drivers should ensure everyone has clunk-clicked, not just the children. Seat belt offences carry a £500 fine for each transgression.

Richard Catford



What's on . . .

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Tuesday 18th November at 2pm
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from horticulturist and bee keeper,
Fiona Gibson

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please visit www.hollandhouse.org

How serendipitous is that?

Brian Johnson-Thomas



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Whilst it was good to read last month that Dame Harriet Baldwin MP has been successful in getting the early train from Worcestershire Parkway to Birmingham reinstated, what's really interesting is that it's actually part of a through service from Bristol to Stansted Airport – and that easily opens up a whole new range of travel options for us. That's because Stansted – and, to a lesser extent, Luton – offer low cost flights to many eastern European destinations which aren't accessible from Birmingham, such as Sarajevo, Skopje and Tirana. Say "Sarajevo" to someone of my generation and we immediately think of the 1984 Winter Olympics with Torvill and Dean dancing to 'Bolero' – and there's your first trigger – winter sports centred on Mount Igman at a third of the cost you'll pay in the Alps. It's also these days a lively and vibrant city with an exciting market area and lots of history – think of the sad end there of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, which led

inexorably to the cataclysm of the First World War. Similarly, Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, has a lot to discover. I especially like the restored Ottoman Market area. Again, hotels and restaurants there are bargains, but the real attraction is to be found in the countryside. Lake Ohrid, for example, is every bit as spectacular as Lake Como, but staying there is probably a third of the price of staying in Italy – and you'll have the place to yourself! The far side of Lake Ohrid is, of course, in Albania – another destination which is only just coming to our attention. Again, expect welcoming people, good value-for-money accommodation and eating and lots of quirky sights. You really must visit Kruja Castle, base of the Albanian national hero Skanderbeg who led a successful revolt against their Ottoman overlords. (And I once bought a really nice vintage rug from the bazaar at the castle's base!) Another reason why these places are so enticing is that they're

not part of the EU's Schengen Zone and so are not affected by the rollout of the electronic entry and exit system. This six-month process is already causing significant delays at some border crossings, and it appears that there's more to come! Several low-cost airlines, including Ryanair and Wizz Air, operate in this Balkan region, and seats typically cost around £120 return. Of course, they are low-cost airlines, so almost everything is an 'extra' that has to be paid for – but we've learned to expect that. Mind you, it could be worse. My first experience flying to Sarajevo was back in the 90s when former Yugoslavia went up in flames. The only way into besieged Sarajevo was by the airlift operated from Ancona in Italy by a fleet of Hercules transport planes from a variety of Air Forces. We called the operation Maybe Airlines – because maybe you'd get there and maybe you wouldn't. We had to fly very low to avoid missiles and the like, so the mess stewards back at Ancona used to joke that they didn't 'serve' us breakfast – they only 'lent' it

to us. After experiences like that, even Wizz Air counts as luxurious ...

Talking of Wizz Air, I've just seen on the internet an 'extreme day trip', to Tirana from Stansted for just £32 return. This would make for an interesting Christmas shopping destination! To be fair, there's no doubt that once we've all been fingerprinted and photographed, entry formalities into Europe will be quicker than having our passports manually stamped, but, oh, how I resent those who advocated Brexit without thinking it through! It's like those people who erect St. George's flags everywhere – don't they know that he was a Turkish soldier in the Roman army? Maybe we should all take a little time to look again at our rather mixed heritage. We all live near the River Avon. When the English invaders got this far, they asked the local Welsh inhabitants what the river was called, and they replied 'afon', which means 'river' in Welsh. Similarly, 'Bre' and 'Don' are names for 'Hill'. So, from the banks of the River River in the shadow of the Hill hill hill, see you next month!



Lake Ohrid, Albania

The Woodcock Pilot

Karen Rose



This year's Autumn colour has been spectacular, but as the amber and crimson leaves fall off the trees, it's now possible to spot a tiny bird with its own jewelled appearance – the tiny

Goldcrest. The Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) is Britain's smallest bird, weighing in at just five grams – that's the same weight as a 20p coin. Despite its tiny size, it's a feisty

little bird, easily identified by the striking golden stripe on top of its head. In summer, it's hard to see amongst the leaves, but in winter, its noisy, high-pitched calls and flash of gold among bare branches make it easier to spot. Life for the Goldcrest is fast-paced. Females can lay up to a dozen eggs in their intricate nests, woven from moss and spiders' webs high up in woodland trees, and they have to work hard to raise their large broods. While some Goldcrests stay year-round, in late Autumn, flocks from Scandinavia arrive. This gave rise to one of the most charming pieces of British

folklore – the idea that Goldcrests hitched a ride across the North Sea on the backs of migrating Woodcocks. People saw both birds arrive together and believed that the smaller birds had used the bigger birds as transport, earning the Goldcrest the nickname 'Woodcock Pilot'. We now know better, but while science may have spoiled the tale, the idea of the tiny Goldcrest riding on a Woodcock through moonlit skies remains a delightful part of rural folklore.

Karen Rose is a biodiversity officer for Wychavon District Council.

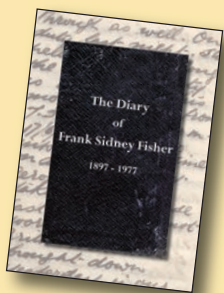
The Diary of Frank Sidney Fisher 1897 - 1977

Charles Dieppe

This is a true record of the early adulthood of the youngest son of an ordinary London family, who fought for his country in World War 1. It has been written and compiled by Charles Dieppe and obviously Frank Fisher.

Charles is married to Frank's daughter, Christine.

Published by Hughes & Company



£10.00

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Christmas Short Story Competition!



***Have you got a Christmas story
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with readers?***



*The winning entry will
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December/January
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Up to 500 words

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Monday 17th November

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Jazz News

Peter Farrall

Some sad news this month: celebrated Scottish guitarist, Jim Douglas, passed away in October at the end of a happy retirement in the Philippines. Jim began guitar during the skiffle era and soon turned to jazz, rapidly rising through the amateur ranks to join the Clyde Valley Stompers (who made the Top Twenty in 1962 with "Peter and the Wolf".)

Still, in 1962, he found a destiny with the great Chicago-styled Alex Welsh Band and stayed with them until 1981, when they disbanded due to Alex's ill health. Since then, Jim's vast experience was always in demand, performing and recording with all manner of groups, including "Shades of Jazz", led by our own chairman, Graham Smith. Jim's book "Tunes, Tours and Travel-itis" recounts the crazy shenanigans and some more serious moments of life in the Welsh Band.

Goodbye to a great musician and a good friend of Pershore Jazz. Probably, the instrument most associated with jazz by people in general is the saxophone, and there are countless logos where the J of jazz is morphed into an alto sax. But few non-jazzers will regard the violin as a major jazz icon unless they perhaps remember that French bloke on TV in the black-and-white days (Stephane Grappelli, of course). But the violin was, in a way, the precursor to brass instruments via the New Orleans string bands of the late nineteenth century (remember "Playing with

Strings" at Pershore Jazz on a Summer's Day 2004?), and there has been a constant presence of fiddles in jazz ever since. In the US scene, amongst many others, were Eddie South with his Alabamians, Joe Venuti, who formed a popular duo with Eddie Lang and recorded with the likes of the Dorsey Brothers, Bing Crosby and Zoot Sims. The "wild man" of jazz violin, Stuff Smith, was a versatile musician who held his own in the swing era but also seemed at home playing with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, although he professed not to like bebop! He is unofficially credited as being the first electric violinist.

These and other violin virtuosos have had a lasting influence on the present generation of violinists in Britain, none more than this month's artist, Matt Holborn, who quotes Stuff Smith as his main influence and has recently issued an album "For Stuff". We can look forward to learning more about this legendary but half-forgotten musician when Matt and his band perform a programme devoted to the man. Matt was introduced to jazz by his grandfather, studied at Leeds Conservatoire and is now well established as a performer, teacher and writer with regular podcasts on all aspects of jazz violin. He is a founding member of the London Django Collective and brings his critically-acclaimed Quartet to Pershore for what will be an educational and entertaining evening of dazzling virtuosity.



Matt Holborn Quartet Wednesday 26th November

*Function Room, Pershore Football Club
Doors open at 7pm, Music starts at 8pm
Admission £12.50 (to include a raffle ticket)*

*Book in advance and pay on arrival
Email: club@pershorejazz.org.uk Tel: 01527 66692
or find us on Facebook.*

Music Matters

The Mercury Music Prize is an annual award that celebrates UK and Irish music. It is arguably one of the most prestigious music awards and on par with The Booker Prize for Literature or The Turner Prize for art.

This year's shortlist of twelve albums was typically eclectic and featured albums from jazz, pop, folk, indie and more. It was ultimately won by Sam Fender for his album 'People Watching', a well-deserved, if slightly surprising, winner (CMAT's excellent EURO-COUNTRY was widely tipped to win).

But that's fairly typical for the Mercury jury, picking the unexpected. Previous winners have included PJ Harvey, Ezra

Collective, Anthony and the Johnsons, Dave and Young Fathers.

So check the list on the Mercury Awards website, go to your favourite streaming site and dive into some of the albums on the shortlist or watch some of the performances from the evening's ceremony, you might just find something that surprises you ... in a good way.

Notable new albums

*Getting killed
by Geese*

An odd and slightly unsettling album, but strangely compelling. Dark in places, but it draws you in, if you allow it, an album that will improve with every listen.

Standout track - '100 horses'

Steve Ide

*Michelangelo dying
by Cate Le Bon*

Cate is truly a unique artist, and she produces beautiful, enjoyably off-kilter songs. She describes her latest album as a meditation on love, loss, and identity. A wonderful, honest collection of songs, one to dive into like a warm bath

Standout track - 'About time'

*Idlewild
by Idlewild*

Idlewild have spent the past ten albums perfecting their poetic, rock sound. The Scottish five-piece band gives us an album that is sure to gain critical acclaim and bring them to a wider audience.

Standout track - 'The mirror still'



Add to playlist

*Video games
by Lana Del Ray*

*Tightrope
by Jenelle Monae*

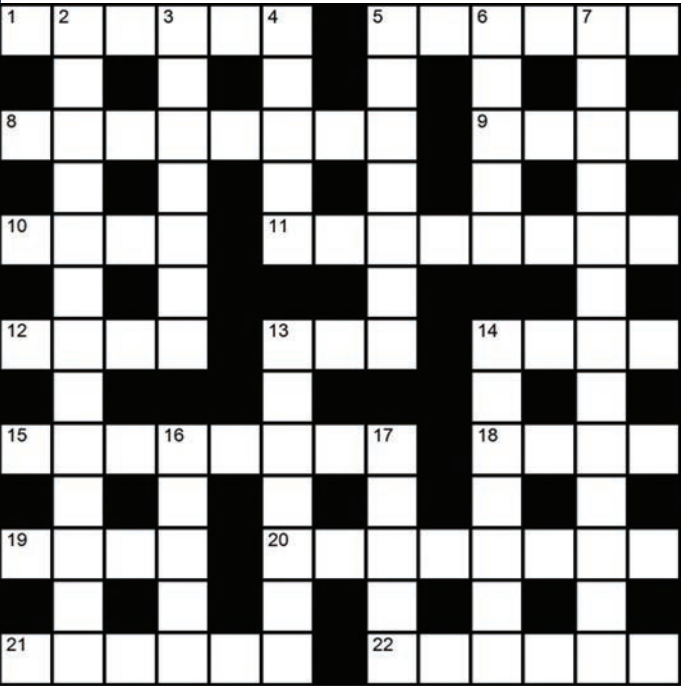
*Love and hate in a different time
by The Gabriels*

*The Isle of Arran
by Loyle Carner*

*Hey Dude
by Kulashaker*

Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

- 1 Rubber (6)
- 5 False (6)
- 8 Burden excessively (8)
- 9 Principal (4)
- 10 Family (4)
- 11 I o W town (8)
- 12 Irritate (4)
- 13 Gone by (3)
- 14 World's longest river (4)
- 15 Skew-whiff (8)
- 18 Lower jaw (4)
- 19 Flightless bird (4)
- 20 Tied up (8)
- 21 Elder (6)
- 22 Something unusual (6)

Down

- 2 Effect a radical change (13)
- 3 Squeeze together (7)
- 4 Spacious (5)
- 5 Experience (7)
- 6 Characteristic rhythm (5)
- 7 Thick (13)
- 13 Account checker (7)
- 14 Atomic (7)
- 16 Literary genre (3-2)
- 17 Discourage (5)

Sudoku

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

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

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

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

Wordsearch

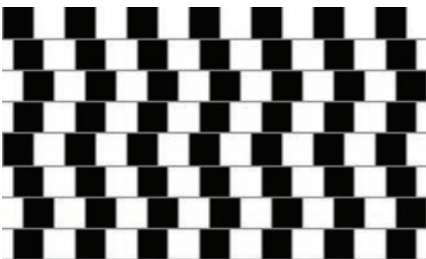
D	E	G	G	E	L	S	S	O	R	C
W	R	L	N	A	C	S	Y	I	Y	Q
J	O	O	E	L	L	P	A	S	T	
N	D	S	B	U	H	E	B	M	T	N
H	E	E	N	H	Q	G	N	W	E	S
A	C	M	K	S	T	E	U	E	B	T
M	E	I	L	I	A	H	S	T	S	S
T	C	S	R	C	P	O	G	O	H	S
E	B	L	A	N	O	S	M	I	U	A
E	M	E	R	G	E	N	C	I	E	S
S	R	E	D	D	I	K	T	K	T	T

- ASEA
- BETSY
- CON
- CROSS-LEGGED
- DEBT
- DONE
- EELS
- EIGHTH
- EMERGENCIES
- ENRICH
- GALE
- GOOSE
- GUT
- HAIL
- HEGEL
- HICK
- HUBS

- ICE
- INMOST
- KIDDERS
- LAG
- LEO
- LON
- OMIT
- RIP
- ROD
- SASS
- SEQUEL
- SEWN
- SOW
- SPIKED
- STAY
- SUIT
- TEMPS
- UNMET

Brainteaser

Are the horizontal lines straight or crooked?



Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

LII

Far in a western brookland
That bred me long ago
The poplars stand and tremble
By pools I used to know.

There, in the windless night-time,
The wanderer, marvelling why,
Halts on the bridge to hearken
How soft the poplars sigh.

He hears: long since forgotten
In fields where I was known,
Here I lie down in London
And turn to rest alone.

There, by the starlit fences,
The wanderer halts and hears
My soul that lingers sighing
About the glimmering weirs.

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

In Flanders Fields

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

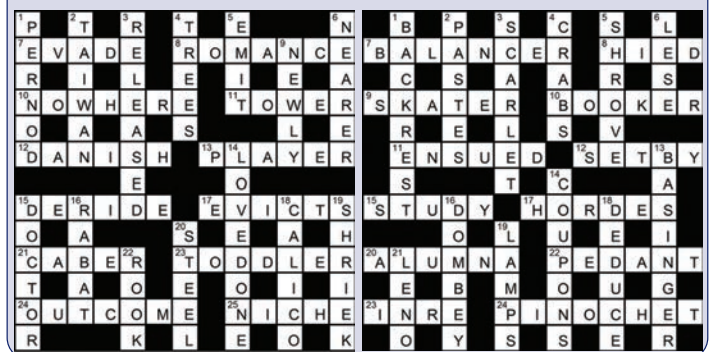
John McCrae 1872 - 1918

Quiz!

- 1) What was the name of the Bronze Age civilization which grew up on and around the island of Crete in the Mediterranean?
- 2) Saint Petersburg, Stockholm, Helsinki and Riga are all cities situated on which sea?
- 3) Which film has the following as its last line: "I do wish we could chat longer, but... I'm having an old friend for dinner. Bye."
- 4) Shirley Crabtree Jr was a huge presence on the UK wrestling scene under what name?
- 5) What was the Manhattan Project?
- 6) In which city is the famous Edvard Eriksen statue, The Little Mermaid?
- 7) Which book by Ray Bradbury starts with the words - 'It was a pleasure to burn.'
- 8) What is the capital city of Canada?
- 9) Which actress, writer and producer wrote the first series of Killing Eve and was the creator and writer of Fleabag?
- 10) In 1953 Edmund Hillary was the first man to reach the summit of Everest along with which other person?
- 11) Lulu, the Scottish singer-songwriter and actress, was born in which decade?
- 12) What was the name of the female American sharpshooter and exhibition shooter who died in November 1926?
- 13) The first section of the M1 motorway was opened in which decade?
- 14) In November 1960, Penguin books was found not guilty of obscenity in a case about which book?
- 15) Born in November 1934, in what field of activity did Ken Rosewall achieve fame?
- 16) A bill creating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was signed by which US President in November 1983?
- 17) Acker Bilk was famous for which musical instrument?
- 18) In which country would you find the largest circulation English language daily newspaper originally founded in 1838?

Answers: 1) Minoan 2) Baltic Sea 3) Silence of the Lambs 4) Big Daddy 5) The development of the Atomic Bomb 6) Copenhagen 7) Fahrenheit 451 8) Ottawa 9) Phoebe Waller-Bridge 10) Tenzing Norgay (Sherpa Tenzing) 11) 1940s (1948) 12) Annie Oakley 13) 1950s (1959) 14) Lady Chatterley's Lover 15) Tennis 16) Ronald Reagan 17) Clarinet 18) India (The Times of India)

October Answers



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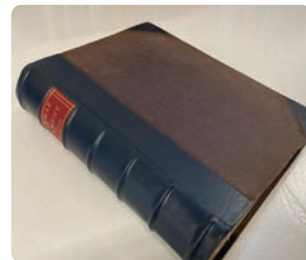
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Copy Deadline for
December Issue - 20th November 2025

Severn Stoke & Croome D'abitot News

Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs

John Henderson

St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke

Congratulations to Sally Linsey, who has single handedly raised a staggering £1,240 this year towards churchyard maintenance, through kind and generous people sponsoring her 'Walk round the Parish'. What an example she sets, as she has been doing this annually for several years and she still has plenty of friends!

Our Remembrance Sunday Service will be held on Sunday 9th November at 10.45 a.m. with the 1st Troop, Severn Stoke

Brownies presenting their standards, followed by the annual procession to the village war memorial.

Please join us in this special national act of Remembrance. All are welcome to join the 1st Troop Severn Stoke Brownies and their parents for the annual Christingle Service, which they lead, on Wednesday 3rd December at 6.00 p.m., followed by light refreshments, for which donations are requested from the congregation participating.

Friends Of St. Denys

Raising funds to modernise the church!

Advance Notice:

The traditional 'Carols at The Nash' will be held at The Nash, Kempsey, WR5 3PB, by kind permission of Drs. M&K Sweeney on Friday 5th December at 7.30 p.m.

The Chase Brass Band will accompany us as usual, with Carols and readings, followed by delicious seasonal light refreshments.

Tickets are £12.00 each, available for purchase in November.



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Spot & Shop - October Winners

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Dave Bruton | 5) Kate Edgar |
| 2) Alison Borton | 6) Mr D.M. Halliday |
| 3) Cathryn Lynch | 7) James Pritchard |
| 4) Sue Wilks | |

Last month's answer:

Upton Vision

CHORAL EVENSONG

Sunday 16th November 6pm

**St Peter and St Paul,
Upton upon Severn**

Led by Rev Canon Greville Cross

With the choir of Upton Parish Church

Organist Simon Gibson

Musical Director: John Holloway

Music by Walmsley and Fauré

SPOT & SHOP!

COMPETITION TIME!

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

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This month's prizes!

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2nd - £25 cash

Donated by Hughes & Company

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4th £10 Voucher
at Revills Farm Shop, Defford

5th £10 Voucher
at Craftypyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore

6th Reg Moule Gardening Book

7th Pat's Pantry -
Jar of home-made marmaladeljam

Upton Times

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 Revills Farm Shop - Rose & Crown, Severn Stoke
 Severn Sweets - Spar - St. Richards - Upton Chippy
 - Upton Library - Upton Newsagent
 Upton Post Office - Upton Surgery - Warners
 Welland Post Office - White Lion Hotel - Yorkshire Grey

Complete and return this form or email:
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Upton Times closing date: 21st November 2025

Answer:

Name:

Telephone/email:

Return to: Hughes & Company/Upton Times

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Callow End WI



Recently, we celebrated 110 years of the WI with a cheese and wine evening. We enjoyed several games and lots of laughs.

Our next meeting will be on 6th November, when we will be making Christmas table centres.



Queenhill



After a successful Summer visit there, Queenhill WI members were very happy to welcome Philip Collins as our speaker on the subject of Sudeley Castle. Once the business meeting was completed, we were keen to hear Philip's talk. He is an excellent speaker - and those of us whose hearing is not perfect were grateful for someone who spoke clearly and audibly, as well as knowledgeably. We enjoyed a comprehensive account of the history of Sudeley Castle from the earliest times. It was a lovely mixture of lighthearted and entertaining stories about interesting people and their lives, and fascinating details of significant events in

the past. There was so much that we don't usually get to hear about or read in guide books. What a treat! Our meeting ended in the usual way with good food and conversation, raffle and competition items and plenty to look forward to next month.

Next month our meeting begins at the earlier time of 2pm on Thursday 13th November at WI Hall, WR8 0QZ. Neil Faram will talk about Upton Railway Bridges. There are many of us who know too little about our local area - perhaps you, too, would like to know more. You would be most welcome to join us.



Upton upon Severn Memorial Hall
Doors open at 7.00pm Film starts at 7.30pm
Licensed Bar and Refreshments, Berry's Ice creams

Saturday 15th November Mr Burton Cert 12A
Mr. Burton tells the true story of the relationship between Port Talbot schoolmaster Philip Burton and a wild young schoolboy called Richard Jenkins, the son of a wayward drunk, who dreamt of becoming an actor.

Saturday 17th January The Penguin Lessons Cert 12
Starring Oscar nominee Steve Coogan, this poignant comedy drama follows an Englishman's personal and political awakening after he adopts a penguin during a cataclysmic period in Argentine history.

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

Christmas Fayre

14th December 2025 - 9am-12noon

Crafts & Food Stalls

Hanley Swan Village Hall WR8 0DF

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Upton Library 01905 822722
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.....(In an emergency always call 999)
CrimeStoppers 0800 555 111
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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In an event of an emergency call: 0300 003 5367

To report faulty traffic lights or urgent

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

Rotary News

Richard Lees

As autumn settles in and thoughts turn towards Christmas, Pershore Rotary is once again focusing on remembrance, community and global causes.

We celebrated the life and music of Gordon Hartley-Bennett in Pershore Abbey on Saturday 18th October. A packed Abbey was captivated by the big orchestral sounds, organ and brass solos delivered by many who had known and played with Gordon over the years. Funds raised at the concert will be shared equally between Parkinson's UK and Pershore Rotary. Every year, on 24th October, Rotarians come together to recognise the incredible progress made in the fight to end polio and the work that still lies ahead. Since the World Health Assembly's commitment to eradicate polio in 1988, Rotary and its partners have helped immunise more than 2.5 billion children in 122 countries.

Today, we've reduced polio cases by 99.9% worldwide, an extraordinary global health achievement. This year's World Polio Day comes at a pivotal time. Despite global challenges and funding pressures, the fight continues with renewed determination. From emergency vaccination efforts in conflict zones to international commitments reaffirmed at the UN General Assembly, the message is clear - we can finish what we started. Closer to home, Pershore Rotary launches its annual Tree of Remembrance Appeal at the Georgian Christmas Fayre in November. *Upton Times readers and families are invited to remember a loved one at www.pershoretreetofremembrance.com*

The names of those remembered will be displayed at Number 8 Arts Centre and the Acorns Hospice shop in Pershore, as



well as in our online Book of Remembrance. Funds raised this year will be donated to Acorns Children's Hospice, St Richard's Hospice and the Midlands Air Ambulance. Collections will take place in December outside Asda, the Co-op and at the Georgian Fayre, with festive music and carols performed by local choirs and bands outside Asda. The familiar sound of carols in

Chapman Court last year added to the spirit of Christmas, with many shoppers stopping to listen or sing along.

Anyone interested in joining or supporting the club can visit www.pershorerotary.club our Facebook page, or email secretary@pershorerotary.club



Tewkesbury & Bredon Hill Probus Club

The club for retired and semi-retired professionals and businessmen



There are a good number of car enthusiasts in Tewkesbury and Bredon Hill Probus Club, and nearly all of them went on a guided tour of the iconic Morgan Motors Car factory in Malvern Link. Although the factory has been in Malvern since 1910, when it was set up by HFS Morgan, it is substantially the same as it was more than 100 years ago.

At the start, we gathered in a presentation area to watch a promotional video about the company and to introduce our two guides, who then took us on the

factory tour. We viewed the latest models outside, then moved into the storage areas where the all-aluminium chassis are kept before assembly inside the factory itself.

Morgans are built like no other car. For anyone who has visited a modern mass production car factory with frenetic activity and robots assembling the cars and components, the Morgan factory is a revelation. There are no production lines, just individual human beings building cars, often an individual car being built by just one person. I noticed that

our guide referred to the operatives building the cars as engineers, rather than assembly workers. His reply to my observation was that other manufacturers just assemble cars, but Morgan actually builds them. Despite the age of the buildings, the factory is very clean and the personnel in each of the workshops seem to have a relaxed approach to building the cars and their components. It was astonishing to watch the engineers' skills in manipulating their specific components to ensure a perfect fit. Morgan cars are unique in having an ash frame and it was fascinating to watch skilled woodworkers using hand tools to create the perfect finish of the wood frames before the all-aluminium panels are attached. The last area we visited in the factory was the finishing and testing facility, where final preparations are undertaken before the cars are sent to their proud new owners.

This was a memorable visit to a unique company which is still thriving and supplying an exclusive product to many happy customers around the world. For more information on Probus Club, please visit our website or contact our Secretary Steve Tucker on 07803 907243



Forthcoming Events in November:

- 4th November - *Stories from the Concorde flight deck* (with Capt. John Hutchinson)
- 11th November - *The French Foreign Legion* (with Richard Jaynes)
- 18th November - *The Javelin Park incinerator* (with Diane Green)
- 25th November - *Spies and spying* (with Gavin Coulthard)



The Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook Common



Our Harvest Hymns and Tea service was well attended, and people seemed to enjoy both the tea and the service. My thanks to Mary Weatherill for organising the service and to

all who contributed to the refreshments and the decoration of the church. The autumnal flowers were particularly beautiful! We were able to make a substantial donation to Malvern Food Bank with the items that people brought. We were glad to welcome our Area Dean, Gary Crellin, who gave a thought-provoking address. The next event in our calendar will be Advent Hymns and Sherry on Sunday 30th November at 4.00 p.m. All are welcome to this, the true beginning of our journey towards Christmas. On Sunday 21st December at 4.00 p.m., we will be holding our joint carol service, hosted this year by Upton Parish Church, so there will be no service at The Hook that day. The service at Upton will be the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols, and we hope that many from the Hook congregation will attend.

Kate Chester-Lamb

Church Services

Sunday 2nd November

- 11:00 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Holy Communion*
- 16:00 St Mary's, Ripple - *Service for the faithful departed*

Sunday 9th November

- 10:00 St Nicholas Earls Croome - *Remembrance*
- 10:45 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Remembrance*
- 10:50 St Mary's, Ripple - *Remembrance*
- 12:30 St Mary's, Ripple War Memorial - *Remembrance*

Sunday 16th November

- 09:30 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Morning Worship*
- 11:00 St Mary's, Hanley Castle - *All-Age Service*
- 18:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Choral Evensong*

Sunday 23rd November

- 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 30th November

- 10:30 St James, Welland - *Benefice Holy Communion Service*
- 16:00 Church of the Good Shepherd, Hook - *Advent Hymns and Sherry (Benefice invite)*

Sunday 7th December

- 09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Holy Communion*
- 11:00 Good Shepherd, Hook - *Holy Communion*

Sunday 14th December

- 09:30 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Holy Communion*
- 11:00 St John the Baptist, Strensham - *Carol Service*
- 16:00 St Nicholas, Earls Croome - *Carol Service*

Wednesday 17th December

- 19:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Carols by Candlelight*

Sunday 21st December

- 11:00 St Mary's, Hanley Castle - *All-Age Service*
- 16:00 St Mary's, Ripple - *Carol Service*
- 16:00 St Mary's, Hill Croome - *Christmas Carol Service*
- 16:00 St Peter and St Paul's, Upton - *Nine Lessons and Carols*

Free Advertising

All new start-up companies will be eligible for three months free advertising in the Upton Times from 1st December.

The last entry will be on 1st March 2026.

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NOVEMBER 2025

Sunday 2nd November

Fourth Sunday before Advent (All services with Revd Gary Crellin)

- 9.30am All Saints Communion at GUARLFORD
- 11.00am All Saints Communion at POWICK
- 3.00pm Little Angels Bereavement Service at POWICK
- 4.00pm Benefice All Souls Memorial Service at POWICK

Sunday 9th November

Remembrance Sunday

- 9.30am Remembrance Service at GUARLFORD
(With Rev Dr William Rumball)
- 10.45am Remembrance Service at POWICK
(With Revd Gary Crellin and Revd Canon Eric Knowles)
- 10.45am Remembrance Service at MADRESFIELD (With Julia Davis)

Sunday 16th November

Second Sunday before Advent

- 8.00am BCP Holy Communion at POWICK (With Revd Gary Crellin)
- 9.30am BCP Holy Communion at GUARLFORD (With Revd Canon Eric Knowles)
- 11.00am Morning Praise at POWICK (With the Morning Praise Team)

Sunday 23rd November

Christ the King/Sunday next before Advent (Both services with Revd Gary Crellin)

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

Sunday 30th November

Advent Sunday (With Revd Gary Crellin)

- 10.30am Old Hills Malvern & Christchurch Advent Carols at CHRISTCHURCH

Midweek Communion at The Orchard Room in Colletts Green
Thursdays 6th & 20th November from 10.30-11.30am

01905 830270 www.oldhillsmalvern.co.uk
For Zoom Access codes and links, please contact us via
revgarycrellin@gmail.com or oldhillsmalvern@gmail.com




St Mary's Church, Ripple

Careful planning, hard work and excellent advance publicity were the main contributors towards a highly successful autumn programme of events at St Mary's this year. Following on from the National Heritage weekend in mid-September (enjoyed by so many), in October, the Tewkesbury Town Band provided us with their usual very full and varied selection of musical items from their wide repertoire, and one became aware of how many hours of practice must have been put in in their twice-weekly sessions in order to reach such a high level of performance. There is a distinctive 'Tewkesbury Band sound' that we are now so familiar with and appreciate so much. A concert of a very different kind, yet of an equally high standard, was provided by the Upton Parish Church Choir a week later, and Director John Holloway's programme had something for everyone in it. The attendance, however, was a little disappointing, and those

not present missed out on some fine singing from this very good local choir with some outstanding individual performers. The Harvest Supper, this year held in the Ripple Parish Hall, was another event at which everyone enjoyed themselves. Attendance was just over 60 - I think a record for this event. The local WI served an excellent supper, and many generous donations contributed to a very successful raffle, the proceeds from which went to the St Mary's Church Transformation Fund, while the presence of a bar ensured plenty of lively conversation. To complete this very busy October programme, the Sealed Knot Society paid their annual visit for the Founders Day Service, conducted by the Reverend Barry Unwin. It was colourful as usual, and included several short sketches by members of the Society of important events and prominent personalities in the English Civil War, and appropriately, among them was an account of



the run-up and sequel to the Battle of Ripple as well as the battle itself by Yeoman Professor, Ronald Hutton. The Service in the church was followed by a short ceremony outside in the Cremation area in memory of Joan Young, wife of Brigadier Peter Young, who founded the Society in 1968. Among the many visitors and members of the Society, we were delighted to welcome the Mayor and Mayoress of Worcester, who were given a brief tour of the church after the Service.

Next month, before we enjoy the official Christmas Services in St Mary's, an important date for diaries is the Christmas Fair in the Ripple Parish Hall on Monday 6th December from 9am to 1pm. There will be a wide variety of stalls, entry is free, and light refreshments will be available. A reasonable amount of car parking is available opposite the Hall, and all will be most welcome to come along.

Roger Gillard

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Upton

The Ceilidh which took place on 26th September, advertised here previously, attracted people of all generations and raised over £1000 towards a much-needed toilet in the church. The Whole Caboodle Electric Ceilidh Band from Worcester were fantastic and their caller was so patient as we fell over ourselves and each other, trying to perfect the various dance steps! The band even presented us with our very own loo seat to use as a fund-raiser - you'll have to come along to the next event to see how it is used!

The whole Flush Fund Team worked hard to produce dozens of Ploughman's suppers - thanks to Jack and Becky at Warner's supermarket for sourcing the food we needed. The Flush Fund bar staff were tireless, serving beer from The Three Kings at Hanley Castle (thanks to Sue Roberts), cider from Clives Fruit Farm (thanks to Jane Clive), plus soft drinks. Looking forward to the next one!

*Christine Lamb
(On behalf of the
Upton Flush Fund Team)*

'Alone, we can do so little;
together, we can do so much.'

Helen Keller



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Malvern Town Football Club car park complete!



A muddy, potholed, and uninviting car park at Malvern Town Football Club has been transformed to become more welcoming and easier to access. The project has turned what was once a difficult and unattractive space into a high-quality, community-friendly facility that provides safe and easy access for visitors to the club and its growing number of community users. The improvement works included a full resurfacing and reconfiguration of parking spaces,

along with the installation of a new overflow car park. The aim was to enhance accessibility, safety, and the visual appearance of the site, while also reducing on-street parking in surrounding residential areas on match days. The upgraded parking facilities now provide a total of 104 spaces, including 51 in the main car park, 33 in the new overflow area, and 20 in the dedicated players' section. The improvements also include accessible bays, bike storage, safer pedestrian



walkways, enhanced drainage, and a widened entrance. The scheme represents a partnership between Malvern Hills District Council and Malvern Town Football Club, with the council and club investing more than £425,000 as part of its Community Infrastructure Investment Plan (CIIP) adopted in March 2025. The CIIP will see more than £3 million invested across the district into community facilities and council-owned assets, including Upton Hill Community Centre, Sport Martley, and a new open community space in Leigh Sinton. "This project shows what can happen when local government and community clubs pull in the same direction," said Chris Pinder, Chairman at Malvern

Town FC. "What was once an ugly, bumpy car park that gave a poor first impression has been transformed into something we can all be proud of. It's a great example of partnership delivering real results for the town. The improved facilities are already making an impact with visitors. Over 1,000 people have attended the Malvern Town Help Centre since it opened on site, and the stadium now hosts local schools, wellbeing programmes, and community events every week - making it one of Malvern's most utilised community hubs."

For more information about Malvern Town Football Club, visit www.malverntown.co.uk



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