

Powick Times



A free monthly newspaper for Powick, Callow End and surrounding villages

Issue 10

February 2024

FREE



Malvern Hills from the parish of powick

Welcome to a new year which started with hurricanes, 100 mph winds, floods and all sorts of travel chaos! Not a very nice time, yet only a week later we have lovely clear, sunny, warm days. A feeling of Spring is in the air! Lots of green shoots, grass growing, more daylight every day. This time next month we turn the clocks forward and we move into a wonderful time of year when nature wakes from its slumber and shows us how beautiful everything looks in the Spring!

We have lots to look forward to - making plans, for our gardens, getting plants ready, mowing the lawns. We also have Valentine's Day, remember; it's a leap year! In contrast we have all sorts of gloomy news, the cost of living crisis, the Rail Workers, Doctors and Teachers taking strike action

and probably more. We have to just take all this in our stride and get on with things, no good 'wingeing'.

We have published a new newspaper this month, 'The Kempsey Times'. This joins Pershore, Upton and Powick papers. We have also expanded

our Upton Times, by incorporating the Bridge Parish magazine of Earls Croome. These actions have enabled us to increase our readership and offer a larger market for our advertisers. We are looking forward to a very exciting new year with lots of good things in store. We wish all our readers and contributors a belated Happy New Year.



Coming soon . . .

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Primary children gain insight into careers



A Worcester primary school has been given an insight into careers in horticulture and healthcare after winning a coveted gardening competition. St George's Church of England Primary School won the Worcester Schools Gardening Competition at The Worcester Show earlier this year, with first prize being a trip to renowned horticulture centre Pershore College. The prize was in recognition of St George's school gardening project, which was carried out by their lunchtime gardening club and submitted for the competition which is run by the Worcester Allotments Forum. The college welcomed 30 year 6 pupils from the school, who were given a guided tour

around the state-of-the-art facilities at Pershore. The collections house is environmentally controlled through a sophisticated electronic management system and the children learned about the different environments in which certain plants can grow. Pupils were also given the chance to meet the range of animals which call the college home, including reptiles, rabbits and donkeys. They learned about how they are looked after and had the chance to feed some of the animals. Finally, the children visited the recently opened care suite at the college which supports the development of students seeking careers in the health and social care sector.

Flurries of snowflakes cover carehome



Residents pictured with Logan and his winning Snowflake, Malvern St James and St Joseph's Catholic School.

A flurry of beautiful snowflakes landed on Elgar Court residential home in Malvern this week! In November, the residents launched a Snowflake competition with The Friends of Malvern Community Hospital, asking local school children to create their own unique Snowflake designs to decorate around Elgar Court residential care home. The Residents have already had a lot of fun getting out the tinsel and unravelling the fairy lights, ready for a whole host of celebrations for their first Christmas at Elgar Court, and these Snowflakes are just the spectacular icing on top!

Elgar Court joined forces with the Friends of Malvern Community Hospital, to highlight and promote the excellent work the hospital does for our community, including the frequently used Minor Injuries Unit service by local families. Andy Sayers, Chairman of the Friends of Malvern Community Hospital said, 'Malvern Community Hospital is at the heart of the local people, and we encourage everyone to use the services they can provide when possible'.

The Winners were:
St Matthias Primary School

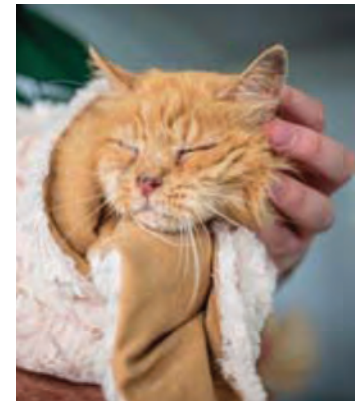
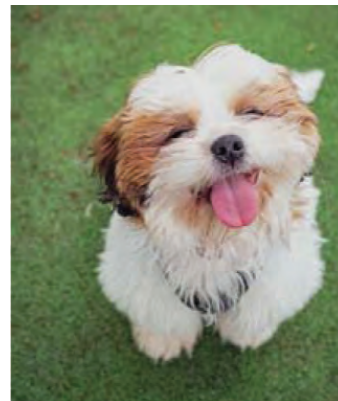
Worcestershire Animal Rescue Shelter

Some readers may not have heard of us as we are tucked away down Hawthorn Lane off the A449 Worcester to Malvern Road between Powick and Newland.

We are a small independent Charity formed in 1983 and following an intense period of fund raising, we finally rehomed our first dog in 2001. Worcestershire Animal Rescue Shelter opens its doors to abandoned, unwanted and mistreated animals in need of urgent care. Our main aims are to give shelter, medical treatment and care, and, of course, to re-home cats and dogs, all of which are vaccinated, neutered and microchipped. On occasions we also rehome ex-battery hens. We do not receive any public funding, relying completely on the generosity of our valued supporters ensuring all animals

that come into our care find their forever loving homes, which they so rightly deserve. Last year we rehomed over 250 dogs and cats, WARS also has the stray dog contract with the local council and we take in many strays via the dog warden. Last year we saw 97 stray dogs come through our gates and with the lowest rate in many years of those dogs being reclaimed by families, a sizeable percentage stayed for rehoming.

Like many other rescues 2023 was certainly one of the highest intake rates we have seen with incoming enquiries and telephone calls from people needing to give animals up. We will continue to work tirelessly during 2024 to continue helping the best we can whilst looking at ways we can help more animals remain in homes too by supporting the public



**WORCESTERSHIRE
ANIMAL RESCUE SHELTER**

with their pets during this difficult time. If you feel you could help us in any way, then please visit us and our onsite shop, we would be delighted to see you.

Amie Jones
Shelter Operations Manager
Tel: 01905 831651
Email: info@wars.org.uk
www.wars.org.uk

Create a Coronation Community Orchard

Local communities could receive up to £10,000 towards the cost of a Coronation Community Orchard thanks to a new tree planting grant. Between £200 and £10,000 is available from Malvern Hills District Council to support the creation of community orchards within the district, including costs for trees, protection, fencing and installation. The aim of the fund is for local community orchard creation projects to provide a lasting commemoration of the Coronation year, and to further the King's lifelong work conserving the natural environment.

The UK Government has provided a total of £2.5 million in funding to local governments, through The Coronation Living Heritage Fund (CLHF), which celebrates the coronation of King Charles III and supports tree planting projects across England. Malvern Hills District Council are inviting applications from groups including schools, residents' associations, community groups, charities, businesses, and parish/town councils to create community orchards on private or public land, which provide community access and engagement opportunities.



Cllr John Raine, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Emma Burton, Parks and Green Spaces Officer, and Alastair Pounder, Biodiversity Officer.

Councillor Tom Wells writes . . .

I know many of us struggle with the dark dank days of winter, but spring is just round the corner as evident by daffodils already in bloom in parts of the village. Our mental health can take a real hit at this time of year. Recent health surveys highlight that both young and older residents are experiencing poor mental health and this appears to have been exacerbated as a consequence of lockdown and covid. I recently visited Hanley Castle High School and met up with some very impressive pupils who told me about their project to develop a quiet space within the school to support their mental well-being. I was delighted to be able to provide some funding to deliver this important project in the school. Physical and mental health are closely intertwined and I was pleased to visit Powick School to meet up with pupils who showed me the new sports equipment I was able to negotiate funding for. I am increasingly concerned for the mental well being of older residents, particularly those living by themselves. Loneliness can be a killer and sadly many local residents live with very

little human contact with others. There are many excellent local community groups who provide activities and support for such people. Nevertheless, rural isolation remains a real issue and there is a desperate need for good local transport links to address this. That's partly why I have been so keen to see the reinstatement of the 44 bus in the evening and on Sundays. Since Covid, although the daytime service remains good, we have lost all buses after 7.00 pm. I shall continue to campaign for its return and am determined that some of the recent £3m government grant funding the county council has received will be used to subsidise this important evening and Sunday service. That does not help residents in Callow End, of course. But here, because of the very poor service throughout the day, the village qualifies for the Worcestershire On Demand Bus Service. This provides an opportunity for local residents to travel into Malvern to a number of locations, including Barnard's Green, Great Malvern Railway Station and the Retail Park in Malvern Link. Parts of Worcester can also be accessed,

such as St Peters Garden Centre and Worcestershire Parkway Railway Station. Upton and neighbouring villages are also included in the scheme which operates from 7am to 7pm, Monday to Saturday.

The minibus can be booked via the mobile app, or through the dedicated phone number 01905 846108. Pick up points tend to be existing bus stops or other key locations within the village. The flat rate cost is just £2.50 per journey and those with concessionary bus passes do not have to pay to use the service. The project is initially for two years and is jointly funded by Worcestershire County Council and Malvern Hills District Council. Why not give it a try. A local resident recently wrote of her positive experience using the new service.

"I used the mobile app, but if you prefer you can call 01905 846108. If you've ever ordered an online taxi the app works in a similar way. If you want to go out immediately you put in your destination and the next available bus will show. However, if you want to schedule a trip, you change the date with the drop down menu and request a time slot. You will receive a confirmation text message and another with the exact time an hour or so before your departure. When you are near your pick up time you can track the progress of the bus on the app. It will also give details of the vehicle, including the plate number. I was collected in Upton, outside Henry's and dropped off outside Morrison's. The return ride was



equally straightforward." Our resilience to flooding has been tested again in recent weeks and, in the main, the measures we have put in place coped pretty well. This time the flood protection bund to the rear of properties in Powick village held the water back and in Callow End, the bund in Beauchamp Lane also did its job aided by the new pumps I was able to deliver funding for. The new flood prevention walls and membranes at Pixham House and to a property in Lower Ferry Lane were severely tested, but performed well. Of more concern was the partial closure of the A449 near the new Powick Roundabout and members of Powick Flood Forum and I recently met up with the county council to express these concerns. As Leader of the District Council I am very keen to get out and about to listen to residents at first hand. My monthly Talk to Tom Leader's surgeries are staged on the first Monday of each month and sessions can be booked via the council website. As always, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I can't promise miracles, but will do my very best to assist wherever I can. *Cllr Tom Wells*
email: talwells@btinternet.com
tel 07702 996203



Callow End WI



Creating a buzz about bees

Bee keeper Meriet Duncan gave a very interesting and informative talk. We gained knowledge about the variety of bees and their individual tasks.

We now understand how the hive is built and used. A lovely entertaining evening.

We meet the first Thursday of the month in Callow End village hall.

Simpler road signs to protect small animals

Hedgehogs and other small animals will be better protected on English roads under rule changes announced today (22 December) to make it easier for local authorities to put up wildlife warning signs. The current hedgehog sign will be updated following feedback from the sector to make it clearer for drivers. Alongside this, rules around the small wildlife warning signs will be relaxed to make it easier for local authorities to put up small wildlife warning signs, helping to better protect hedgehogs and other small animals.



Changes made by the Department for Transport will ensure local authorities are able to place small wild animal warning signs where they are needed most rather than having to apply to the Department on a case-by-case basis.

Powick Times

Collection Points:

Hughes & Co, Pershore - Link Nurseries, Powick
 Petrol Station, Powick - St Peter's Church, Powick
 The Bank House Hotel - The Bear and Ragged Staff, Bransford
 The Blue Bell, Callow End - The Fold Cafe, Bransford
 Stanbrook Abbey Hotel - The Crown Inn, Powick
 The Old Bush, Callow End - The Swan Inn, Newland

News from Powick Parish Hall

The Annual General Meeting of the Parish Hall trustees, users and residents will be held on Tuesday 12th March 2024, at 7.30pm, in the Community Room at the Parish Hall. All users of the hall and residents are welcome to attend. As well as reporting on the activities of 2023 this is a good opportunity for suggestions, improvements, etc, to be discussed. If you wish to make any comment before the meeting,

please email the Secretary at rogerdgurney@btinternet.com. This is an opportunity to mention that there was a break-in at the Hall in the week after Christmas. Fortunately the damage was not great and the building was quickly made secure. The Police took photos and evidence of fingerprints of the area of damage and this is being assessed. This followed on from some damage to the Scout Group area in November

Malvern Fire Cover protection plan

Harriett Baldwin has called for extra work to make sure that South Worcestershire will be properly protected as the fire service consults on service changes.

Harriett met with the county's fire chief to hear his plans to re-organise and improve local fire crew coverage.

Chief Fire Officer Jon Pryce is currently consulting on proposals to re-organise the number of on-call staff but increase permanent staff, to allow him to make better use of the service's resources. Harriett has called for greater clarity on the proposals to make sure that Malvern's fire cover is improved by the changes and to ensure that on-call staff changes are made in a fair and balanced way.

Harriett said: "I have had a detailed briefing from the Chief Fire Officer, and I am grateful for his time to explain what he has in mind. Having listened to his briefing, I am clear that we must ensure that the right level of cover is available for a town the size of Malvern as well as the wider south Worcestershire area. We discussed the issues that he has recruiting on-call staff and I would be reluctant to see any proposals come forward that saw a compulsory reduction in on-call head count.

"Fewer people are choosing to work on-call shifts for the service, and I think this should be an important balancing factor in any decision about allocation of staff resources. Malvern fire station has been re-built and

now has a good base both for local crews but also some of the specialist vehicles which the service needs from time to time. I welcome the plans to invest in extra vehicles to help crew attend incidents, but I am keen to see the plans honed to ensure these changes improve local coverage. I also welcome the Chief Fire Officer's assurance that no involuntary redundancies will take place in Malvern and that there are spare vehicles for use during maintenance periods for each engine."

The plans will be consulted on until March and details on the proposals can be found at www.opinionresearch.co.uk/HWFire



Chief Fire Officer Jon Pryce.

A few words from... Harriett Baldwin MP



MP Calls for Malvern Pharmacy Coverage Review

Harriett Baldwin MP has called for a review of Malvern's pharmacy provision following the closure of Boots in Great Malvern and the threats of a second closure on the same street soon.

Peak Pharmacy has confirmed that it is planning to close its outlet on Church Street on 29th February.

Harriett has discussed the closure with staff and also met with the local NHS team responsible for managing pharmacy provision across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area and taken them to Church Street.

The MP has this week written to Simon Trickett, who oversees the two counties' health system to make sure that there is appropriate coverage for local people to be able to access a convenient, local chemist to collect prescriptions. On Wednesday 31st January, the Government launched Pharmacy First, an initiative which encourages more people

to get health advice and support from pharmacists on seven common ailments to help take pressure of the local GP network.

Harriett said: "The closure of the Boots was, perhaps, understandable but a second closure on the same street within six months will be extremely disappointing for local people who will have to use other Malvern pharmacies. I'm worried about the patients who will now have to identify a new pharmacy, and this will inevitably mean extra car journeys for some people, as the two nearest pharmacies are not an easy walk away.

I am briefed that the formal review of pharmacy services is carried out on a very broad, county-wide perspective, and doesn't take into account local considerations like the steepness of the hills in Malvern or the challenges accessing public transport. I understand that this is another issue that appears to fall at the front door of the Integrated Care System and I have written asking for a review of provision. Pharmacists can do so many useful things in the community and take the pressure off GPs.

In parallel, I have written to the Department for Health and Social Care asking about support to help recruit and retain more pharmacists, but I'd like a detailed local plan for making access to pharmacy better for local people."

Transport charity banks on future success

A community transport charity is banking on success after rolling out the red carpet to welcome VIPs to the opening of its new Malvern headquarters. Malvern and District Community Action has moved into the former Lloyds Bank building in Malvern Link to make it easier for staff, volunteers and service users to access the charity. The volunteer charity has moved from premises above the Town Council in Belle Vue Terrace and West Worcestershire MP Harriett Baldwin was invited to do the ceremonial ribbon-cutting at a gathering of stakeholders and volunteers.

Harriett said: "The transformation of the old bank is stunning and as someone who has trekked up the stairs at the old offices, I am delighted to see the charity in a more user-friendly office. Community Action delivers vital support for local people and I have supported its work for many years, so I was honoured to be invited to open the new headquarters. I hope that the new base helps the charity to grow and that Community Action will thrive, helping elderly and vulnerable people to get out and about more often."

Train company under 'Constant Review'

Beleagued train company West Midlands Trains is under 'constant review' after concerns were raised over the poor performance of services between Birmingham and Malvern.

West Worcestershire MP wrote to the Department for Transport sharing her concerns after a series of complaints from local people about delays and cancellations.

Transport Minister Huw Merriman has confirmed that the Department has had detailed conversations with the rail operator to understand the cause of a series of service issues in the run up to Christmas.

Half of the delays were caused by staff sickness and absenteeism with the company currently experiencing quadruple the levels of absenteeism compared to the national average. Delays caused by infrastructure issues and flooding amounted to two out of five instances and one in ten delays were caused by

'passenger incidents'. Industrial action is also a root cause of the poor service, and the Department for Transport has committed to work with the rail operator to aim for an improved performance.

Harriett said: "I wrote to the Department for Transport after receiving a disappointing letter from the managing director of West Midland Trains and the Government has carried out a full review of my concerns. The above-average sickness rate is troubling and it is clear that an overtime ban, and other industrial action, is directly harming the ability of my constituents to access a reliable train service to and from the second city. However, I have been informed that the recruitment issues are being resolved and that enough train drivers are now available to actually run the trains. I'll be watching this issue closely over the coming months and I am reassured that the Department for Transport is doing exactly the same."

Calls for locals to back return of Malvern bus service

Harriett Baldwin MP has called on local people to speak up as she calls for the return of a bus route for Malvern residents. Harriett has supported a petition which is looking for Worcestershire County Council to reinstate the X43 bus service connecting north Malvern to Worcester. The council was recently awarded £3.4 million to improve local bus service provision.

The service ran between 2005 and 2018 but was gradually amended until it was finally withdrawn in March 2020. Harriett said: "People living in the North of Malvern feel that they are being let down by the local bus services.

"I've spoken to First Bus about increasing the frequency of the

44 service between Malvern and Worcester, but I'm now getting a clear message that residents would like to see the old X43 service brought back. "I've also raised my concerns directly with Councillor Mike Rouse, who is responsible for delivering the bus service improvements and I will be sharing the petition with him to show what strength of feeling there is for this proposal. "The county council has a substantial sum of money specifically intended for this purpose, so I am calling on local people to speak up and help us to make the case for this improvement."

The petition can be found at <https://chng.it/TwtDR2kwrn>.

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Air source heat pumps increase in popularity!



Air Source Heat Pumps are gaining momentum as an alternative to fossil fuel boilers as more people switch away from traditional forms of heating. It's clear there are many advantages to having a heat pump installed, including lower energy bills and reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Switching to an electric only tariff could save a standing charge. You may even be able to take advantage of some energy company's Heat Pump Tariffs that provide reduced running costs where savings can be significant.

Air source heat pumps create hot water by taking heat energy from the outside air and compressing it in refrigerant gas. The gas heats up and heat is transferred through a heat exchanger. The resulting hot water is stored in a cylinder or pumped around your heating system. This process uses electricity, but you can expect to get up to 4kw of heat energy for every 1kwh of electricity used. This makes heat pumps very efficient with none of the fossil fuel gasses.

The Government has ambitious targets for the installation of heat pumps, 600,000 installed per year, as part of its commitments to Net Zero by 2050.

Having reneged on some of its commitments, it is still supporting qualifying heat pump installations by increasing the BUS Voucher (Boiler Upgrade Scheme) from £5,000 to £7,500. As a renewable installation it is also VAT exempt providing further savings. There is a great deal of misinformation regarding heating houses with heat pumps but the fact is, most properties are suitable when correctly fitted. It is still a daunting prospect switching to an air source heat pump as there is a lot to consider. It should never be a quick process and you will need surveys etc. to determine the most efficient system for your home. We suggest speaking with specialist installers and we produce a free guide that can help you on your renewable journey.



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Care home is crowned champion!



Excitement is running high at Elgar Court in Malvern where the talented residents have been named the winners of the annual Barchester Christmas Cake competition for the Central Division. Each year residents from Barchester's care homes and hospitals up and down the country compete for the coveted Christmas Cake of the Year title. The competition is run by the central hospitality team and the bar is set very high. Many of Barchester's residents are very skilled bakers and the Christmas cake designs can be very elaborate. Competition is fierce and only the very best recipes and designs prevail.

The residents at Elgar Court put their heads together and donned their aprons to come up with the most amazing Christmas cakes decorated to perfection. Their fabulous cakes are designed as Christmas Baubles and consisted of delicious ingredients such as succulent fruit and of course, brandy encased in marzipan and icing and decorated with gold! *Elgar Court is run by Barchester Healthcare, one of the UK's largest care providers, which is committed to delivering high-quality care across its care homes and hospitals. Elgar Court provides Residential care, Dementia care and respite care.*

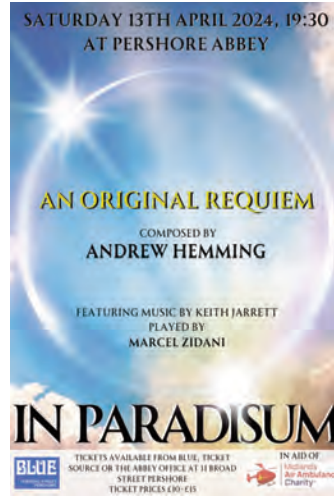
Significant intervention to cap rail fares

The Government has announced a significant intervention to cap the new year's rail fare increase at 4.9%, considerably below the 9% July's RPI figure on which they are historically based. This comes as the Government delivers its commitment to halve inflation by the end of the year with the latest statistics showing inflation is at its lowest level for over two years at 3.9% - helping to keep fare rises lower in the long-term. Since 1996, under both Labour and Conservative governments, regulated rail fares have increased closely in line with RPI inflation - never being more than 1% above or below RPI before last year's significant Government



intervention. The announcement means fare increases are lower than last year's rise and will not increase until the 3rd of March 2024. This means passengers will not see any changes in their fares until then, giving them more time to purchase season tickets at the current rate and keeping fares as low as possible for longer. Fare changes will now take place in March every year moving forwards.

String Musicians needed for Charity Concert



Pershore couple Andrew and Jen Hemming are looking for string musicians to play for a charity concert on the evening of Saturday April 13, in Pershore Abbey. The programme, titled "In Paradisum" will feature an original Requiem composed by

Andrew (Musical Director for Pershore Operatic & Dramatic Society) as well as music by Keith Jarrett played by renowned local concert pianist Marcel Zidani. All funds raised will support the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity. Andrew told us, "There's something special about performing choral music in the soaring majesty of Pershore Abbey, even more so when it helps keep our air ambulance soaring to rescues. It's a big ask, but your time and skills with string instruments will help save lives!" Scores and guide recordings are available, and a rehearsal, lunch, and refreshments will be provided on the day.

If you can take part or for more information, please email inparadisum2024@outlook.com

Eco-friendly places new award scheme

Eco-friendly buildings and biodiverse land across the Malvern Hills district are types of projects that will soon be recognised with the introduction of a new award scheme. The Malvern Hills Greener Places Award has been created to recognise and promote schemes that go above and beyond to create sustainable places in the district. Projects could include development from individual buildings to whole developments, or involve beneficial land management and biodiversity enhancements, as well as supporting infrastructure such as renewable energy or transport. Anything that contributes towards Malvern district being a more sustainable and climate resilient place may be eligible. However, projects that raise the bar on the following issues would be particularly welcomed:

- Energy efficiency and reducing space heating demand
- Utilising low carbon heating systems
- Installing renewable energy technologies

- Improving biodiversity and habitats
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change
- Active and low carbon travel

Applications can be submitted at any time and projects will be considered throughout the year. They can be submitted by people/organisations directly involved in the project or they may be nominated by someone externally. The council may also identify projects for consideration for an award. Awards will be granted on individual merit and the final decision will be made by the council's Environment Policy Development Panel.

Visit www.malvernhillsgov.uk/greener-places-award for more information.



King's Worcester - *One of Top 30 Sporting Schools in the country*



King's Worcester has been named in the top 1% of sporting schools in the country this week. This impressive ranking sees King's sitting alongside some of the country's top sporting independent and state schools,

such as Millfield, Epsom College, and Repton School. The School has jumped 98 places in the last 12 months and this Top 30 ranking puts King's in the top 1% as well as being the only school in Worcester to

appear in the Top 165. The list, independently created by School Sport Magazine, is compiled from 20 different sports and over 120 different events. Weighting is given to success in a range of sports rather than a particular sport, and to those sports with more schools competing. To be listed, schools must have reached the later stages of at least two, three or four national competitions. Foundation Director of Sport, Jonny Mason commented, "This is fantastic news for sport at King's. We've had busy and successful few years recently, and the hard work that both the Sports Department and the pupils have put in has really paid off. We are so fortunate, as a day school, to be able to offer such a wide range of sports and to compete in these at national level. Consistently playing at such a standard takes skill, resilience, and determination." Headmaster Gareth Doodes added, "Sport has always been incredibly strong here at King's and it's wonderful to be recognised for this and to be up there with the best sports schools

in the country. We are fortunate to have an enviable, finely honed, and impressive sports programme, with dedicated and professional experts guiding the pupils to achieve their very best and more, both collectively and individually. The opportunity for our pupils to play at national level is something that most of us could only have dreamed of as a child."

This news for King's follows hot on the heels of their recent Top 10 national ranking for academic performance, as the School was named in the prestigious Sunday Times' Parent Power 2024 Schools Guide as one of the Top Ten Independent Secondary Schools in the West Midlands.

Ranked for their academic excellence against some of the county's 900 secondary schools, King's appears in seventh position, alongside King's High Warwick, King Edward VI High School, Birmingham, and Solihull School. This is a testament to the rounded education and inclusive ethos of the King's Foundation of Schools.

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Four generations of printers

Women's Hour! Happy Birthdays! Susan Catford



One thing we all have in common is that we all have a birthday. These are generally regarded as happy events to be celebrated. As a child, I was often disappointed by my birthday as I was born in early January and after the Christmas/ New Year celebrations, it seemed that I was forgotten. I wished my birthday was later in the year, particularly as my mother thought it sensible to make me a second Christmas cake for my birthday which was not to my childish taste! My sister had a birthday two weeks later and I envied her for the sponge birthday cakes she enjoyed. Over the years, however, this situation improved considerably, partly due to the

arrival our first son, also in January. He should have been a December baby, expected on Boxing Day but he didn't arrive then, or on New Year's Eve or on my birthday the following week. He was reluctant to make an appearance and eventually, after waddling around looking as if I had consumed the turkey whole and the Christmas pudding too, they decided to take pity on me and induce his birth. So here was another January baby but it proved to be good news for me! Suddenly everyone remembered my birthday because it was days before his!! Admittedly my cards weren't up for long before they were replaced by his but it was always a joy to celebrate his birthday anyway. January has proved to be a popular month for both friend's and family birthdays over the years. We now lurch from Christmas to New Year then stagger from birthday to birthday. Strangely enough, June is also well populated with birthdays so it is an expensive month too! We have always enjoyed celebrating our two sons' birthdays as in the early days it was a good excuse to have friends join us for a beer or glass of wine while the children

tucked into their chocolate fingers, crisps, mini-sandwiches and cocktail sausages. As they grew, 'at-home' parties were replaced with party 'venues' such as Macdonalds. These were not cheap affairs particularly when most of the class from school were invited. 'Goodie' bags were also obligatory- more expense! It all got easier when they reached the age where a visit to the cinema with a couple of friends sufficed. Even later, they had their own celebrations with friends at the pub and Mum and Dad were not even invited!! Birthdays cease to have much significance as the years progress apart from the 'milestone' birthdays. At first they have novelty value- 40 years old?? where have the years gone? A good excuse for partying and bringing together family and friends, these were fun. A few decades on and it is not the same turning a corner into a new decade. I was disappointed not to be able to celebrate my last 'big one' due to Lockdown (together with many other people of course). I now have to wait for the next significant one but already three years have passed and I am not keen to rush to that one!



My father-in-law decided in his late sixties that he needed to celebrate his birthdays with a party in case he didn't reach the next one. As only daughter-in-law, it fell to me to lay on the food and drink for these events, transporting everything to Somerset at the end of a working week. Needless to say he survived until he was ninety so there were a few good parties with lots of beer consumed! Wishing someone a happy birthday is a nice thing to do but I always wish for many happy returns as it is wishing them lots more to come. Meanwhile, I have just taken down my birthday cards even though they will not be replaced by my son's. A late bottle of champagne and a bouquet of flowers have prolonged my celebrations this year. I will now look forward to celebrating everyone else's over the coming months.

February

January days have passed, now February's here

With new green shoots and snowdrops

To show that Spring is near.

Still days are short and night times long

But now we wake to more bird song.

The stormy winds which often blow

Bring heavy rain and sometimes snow.

While frosty mornings, sparkling white

Bring rosy dawns and sunshine bright.

This year the month has one more day

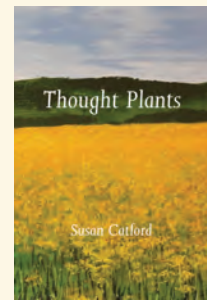
And Valentines may come your way.

While Cupid waits with arrows poised

To pierce the hearts of those who dare,

With beating hearts, their love declare.

Happy Valentine's Day!



'Thought Plants' is Susan's first book and is a new collection of writing and poems exploring ideas, events and everyday life.

At times serious and thoughtful, at others enjoying the whimsical, lighter side of things. It has grown surprisingly well from early seeds and a fertile imagination.

120 pages A5 full colour illustrated by Susan Catford

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Farming *Mike Page*



The present conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have shown they can have severe effects on prices and availability of many imported goods, including basic and specialist foods; it would not be the end of the world for us in the UK if import of, say, Saffron or Kobe Beef became difficult, but import of millable wheat or other grains used in, quite literally, thousands of basic foodstuffs consumed by millions every day could

become a matter of major national importance.

A debate is developing between farmers (through their representative organisations) and the Government about how best new support policies, aimed primarily at support of environmental objectives, can be squared with the essential objective of food production. Some of the fields here are awkwardly shaped and small, and quite frankly a pain to work on with modern large

machines, no matter how sophisticated they may be, and I (along with many other farmers) am thinking of planting them with trees (a move strongly supported in the SFI). Since we import around 80% of the timber used within the UK it might be argued that this is a good move, but it would take my fields, and potentially many thousands of other fields having good agricultural soil out of food production for perhaps 50 years (or possibly even longer). Taking less productive land out of growing food crops is perhaps a way in which this major difference of interest might be addressed. A spokesman for the Forestry Commission commented recently: "We don't want to plant trees on good quality land; food security is vital; but we can't stop that happening if a farmer chooses to do so." The National Trust has announced that it wants to put some 50% of its land holding in the UK (some 620,000 acres) into environmental schemes. However, since much of that land is good agricultural soil, and tenanted by farmers (ie used for food production), such

a move could result in a downturn in home-produced grain measured in possibly millions of tonnes. Hopefully all the conflicts of interest between minimising (and possibly reversing) environmental degradation and attempting to maintain food production present in the SFI schemes being introduced will be resolved eventually, but the present upset over the long delay in setting right the Post Office scandal over their accounting software does not fill me with confidence. Or perhaps lessons will have been learned? But I am reminded of a well known saying: "The only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history."

The photograph is a 'general shot' from the farmhouse here (looking out directly West), but showing surface flooding (now largely subsided) from natural saturation of the soil profile following exceptionally heavy rainfall in October-November-December. That is the reason the field is still stubble from the 2023 harvested crop, and has not yet been planted with a crop for 2024 harvest.



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.

info@martinandcarrvets.co.uk
martinandcarrvets.co.uk

Monica

Planting Ideas for Pantone colour of the year – Peach Fuzz



Nikki Hollier
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Colour of the Year – Peach Fuzz
 Every year Pantone creates a ‘Colour of the Year’ and this year it’s “Peach Fuzz”. This shade has been chosen as it captures our desire to nurture ourselves and others. It’s a velvety gentle peach tone whose all-embracing spirit enriches mind, body, and soul. This can be easily incorporated into our flower borders and pots, and here’s my suggestions on plants to use and also what to coordinate with them. Peach-coloured flowers are a great way to add a pop of colour to your garden. They are soft, warm, and inviting, and can create a beautiful contrast against purple foliage. Here are three of the best peach-coloured flowering plants that are available here in the UK:
Salvia ‘Peach Parfait’
 Salvias are one of my favourite perennials to include in any border due to the variety of colours available and they are just so reliable (in my opinion!) as they’re semi-evergreen, bushy and are loved by pollinators.

This particular variety has a gorgeous purple stem, grows to around 90cm tall, and will continually flower from June until first frosts. Ideal for any sunny border or container. Using the colour of the purple stem, it will go well with a purple leaved plant such as the evergreen Pittosporum ‘Tom Thumb’ and a dark purple



flowering Verbena (which is also long flowering). Plant them individually in containers of different sizes and group them together to make a colourful display on your patio. The Salvia is available from Hayloft Plants and here’s the link to buy – Hayloft Plants Salvia Peach Parfait

Digitalis Dalmatian Peach
 Foxgloves are one of my favourite flowers, especially when they’re planted in swathes under a white-stemmed silver birch tree such as the Jacqmontii. Foxgloves come in many colours but this ‘Peach’ variety is semi-evergreen and biennial which means they bloom during their second year before setting seed. It grows to around 90cm tall.

Rosa Dannahue
 With so many beautiful pastel roses to choose from, this new variety called Dannahue is an apricot beauty! Named after Danny Clarke, aka ‘The Black Gardener’. It’s a repeat flowering English Shrub rose which grows to around 110cm tall, so its gorgeous for a border or container. Obviously it’s scented and adored by bees! What’s not to love about this beauty?
 This would look gorgeous with Verbena bonariensis as it grows to around 1.5m tall and then underplant it with Geranium ‘Rozanne’ which flowers from June to October.

All loved by pollinators and the sunshine!
 These are just a few of the many peach-colored flowering plants that are available in the UK. Whether you’re a beginner or an experienced gardener, there’s a peach-coloured plant out there that’s perfect for you.



February gardening tips Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

Early February

Continue planting trees, shrubs and perennial plants if conditions are suitable. Plant Jerusalem artichoke tubers. Plant shallot sets (in colder areas start them off in pots of compost in a cold frame) If you do not have a cold frame just buy a large clear plastic storage box, drill some holes in the bottom put in a layer of grit, pop on the lid and there is a cold frame. Look after garden birds by providing food and water- try to tailor the food to the birds you have around. In heated greenhouses sow Antirrhinums, Begonia semperflorens, Verbenas and Pansies for summer bedding. Otherwise buy seedlings or baby bedding plants later to grow on.

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

Mid February

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

Cut back dead stems of herbaceous perennials to ground level. Stock up on pots, labels, twine and other quickly consumed sundries before the season gets into full swing. Prune back old, woody Mahonia stems to keep the plants bushy. Buy Begonia and Dahlia tubers as well as other summer flowering bulbs such as Gladioli. Cover strawberry rows with cloches for an earlier crop. Prune Buddlejias and the Spiraeas with colourful foliage, like Spiraea Goldflame, back hard. **Late February**
 Dig up and divide herbaceous perennials. Check wall trained plants to see if they require watering as it can get very dry at the base



of a wall. In heated greenhouses sow Dianthus, Lobelia, Ageratum, and multi-bloom Geraniums for summer bedding. Dig up, divide and re-plant overcrowded clumps of snowdrops. Prune winter jasmine (Jasminum nudiflorum) by trimming back by two thirds shoots that have flowered. Sow summer cauliflower in trays under glass.

Cooking for fun! *Ailsa Craddock*

Carrots can be Carats

Since last month's column, we've had days and days of rain and then flooding but as I write this we now have brilliant sunshine albeit bitterly cold. Corky, the cat, is sat by the fire, the hens are snug in their coop and The Husband disappeared into his warm office, only to reappear for coffee and sustenance as it's obviously too icy even for him to go fishing! So it's back to comfort food - but still want healthy. And what could be better than carrots - the unappreciated gold amongst vegetables? Carrots are one of the most versatile foods that Mother Nature has to offer. From stews to salads, roasts to juices, this bright-hued veggie can be part of nearly any meal. The best part about them, though, is that carrots are high in nutrients that support your health from head to toe — and they can taste great.

Too often presented as a side dish of extraordinary dullness, they can be pepped up with herbs, lemon juice and butter - or made into any of the below recipes.

Spiced Carrot and Lentil Soup

2 tablespoon butter
2 onion, finely chopped
2 -3 cloves of garlic
1 dessertspoon grated ginger
1/2 teaspoon each chilli flakes,
ground turmeric, ground
coriander, ground cumin
3 - 4 carrots, peeled and
chopped
1 tin chopped tomatoes
160g red lentils
1 litre vegetable stock

Melt the butter in a saucepan and gently fry the onion, ginger and spices and cook until soft. Add carrots, lentils and stock and slowly bring to the boil.



Cover and simmer for about 40 minutes until tender. Serve, with toasted sourdough, in a bowl with a swirl of yogurt and mint for garnish.



Quick Carrot and Walnut Bread

350g plain flour
150g wholemeal flour
1 teasp salt
2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
150g carrots, peeled and grated
walnut or pieces, a handful,
toasted
300ml Greek yoghurt
125ml semi-skimmed milk

Heat oven to 230c/fan 210/gas 8. Mix the flours, salt and bicarbonate of soda, then stir in the carrot, walnuts and yoghurt, followed by enough of the milk to make a soft, quite sticky dough. Tip onto a floured surface and form a flat ball, put on a baking sheet, slash the top and bake for 30 minutes until risen and cooked. It'll sound hollow when you tap it.



Carrot Muffins (makes 6)

75g margarine
125g carrots
100g sugar
100g Self raising flour
3/4teasp cinnamon
1 tea sp baking powder
1 large egg
60g sultanas
25g nuts

Preheat the oven to 200C/gas mark 6/fan 180C. Melt the margarine in the microwave. Top and tail, then peel and grate the carrots. Combine the carrots, sugar and margarine in a bowl. Sift in the flour, cinnamon and baking powder. Beat the egg in a small bowl and then add to the mixture. Also mix in the nuts and sultanas. Line a muffin tray with 6 muffin cases and divide the mixture equally between them. Bake for 20 minutes. Allow to cool - and either enjoy them as they are or mix a little cream cheese and icing sugar together as a topping.

Thoughts from the Snug...

The Snug's Best Friend?

Like so many other local pubs our Snug welcomes dogs. There are treats readily available and even Doggy Ice Cream for sale. However, some customers are not always enamoured by their presence, but in general most tolerate the mutt that sits obediently at the feet of a responsible owner and does not invade their space. Prue Leith, writing in the Oldie magazine recalled a hotel owner's notice that read:

Dogs are welcome in this hotel. Why?

We have never had a dog that smoked in bed and set fire to the blankets.

We have never had a dog who stole towels, played the TV too loud or had a noisy fight with its travelling companions

We have never had a dog that got drunk and broke up the furniture.

So... if your dog can vouch for you, you are both welcome.

The management.

Nobody in our Snug can recall a customer and their hound being asked to leave because of misbehaviour. Indeed, we have always seen management extend the warmest of welcomes to customers and their pets. Nevertheless, awareness and respect for non-dog enthusiasts must prevail and acknowledgement of their tolerance appreciated by the owner.. but it's probably best not to let the dog show its appreciation on these occasions. Cheers. and Woof woof.

Buddy Bach

Reg Moule

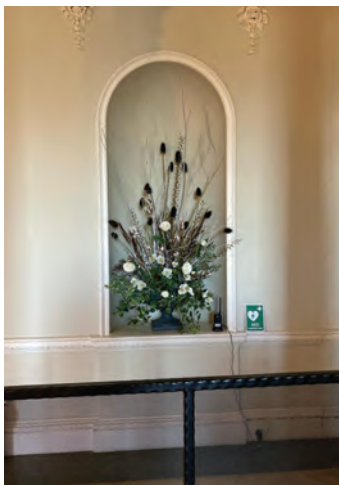
In addition to his award winning media work Reg is also available to speak at Gardening Societies and other organisations



Something that he has been doing regularly since 1972.

If you would like Reg to visit your group please email reg.moule@gmail.com for further details and to check availability.

Flowers and Decorations in Croome Court Tim Hickson



For those new to this area, Croome Court is a National Trust property about 4 miles from Pershore towards the Malverns. It was the home of the Earls of Coventry until World War 2 when the 10th Earl was killed, in France, as the Worcestershire Regiment covered the Allied Army's retreat to Dunkirk in late May, early June 1940. Croome Court became nationally famous in the 18th Century when the 6th Earl, George William Coventry, inherited the property and brought in Lancelot Brown (later to be known as Capability Brown) to enlarge and to 'modernise' the old house in

which he had grown up. Later, talent-spotting again, he brought the Scot, Robert Adam to design interiors. The results produced by these three very talented men attracted the attention not only of other wealthy landowners (who copied what had been done at Croome) but also the King, George III. When he was in Cheltenham, taking the waters, he came with the Queen and the Princesses to spend a day looking at what had been done. When, after the War, the family could no longer afford to keep the Court and its estate, it was offered to the National Trust. Unfortunately, that organisation was not interested so the remarkable contents, house and land had to be sold. Today, after about fifty years in other hands, the Court, some of the estate, and part of the original contents are being looked after by the National Trust and the Croome Estate Trust. Thousands of people visit this property each year. It is fascinating and impressive and worth going to see at any time but over Christmas not only was the Court splendidly decorated but the ladies who, each week make brilliant flower arrangements,



really went to town. Some of the decorations, made by Croome staff and volunteers are shown

in the accompanying pictures as well as some of the works of our talented flower team.



Changes to reporting Self-Employed profit

Carol Draper

While you may have just completed and submitted your Self-Assessment return for April 2023 and probably do not want to think about the next tax year, there are some important changes that could affect you if you are a sole trader or Partnership with a year-end other than 31 March or 5 April. Up to 5 April 2023, the system called basis period reporting was used for reporting profit. This meant the profits reported were from the business trading year that ended within the relevant tax year. For example, if your business year runs to 31 December, you will have reported profits in your 5 April 2023 Self-Assessment return for the year 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. From 6 April 2024, the new tax year basis applies. This means you must report only profit generated during the tax year, regardless of whether your trading year finishes at a different time. The tax year to 5 April 2024 is being treated as a transition or 'catch up' year and for this year only the profit reported in your Self-Assessment return will need to include both the profit from your last trading year plus any additional profit earned between the first day of your new trading period to 5 April 2024.



For a business with a year end of 31 December the profits reported will be for the year ended 31 December 2023 plus three months profits for the period 1 Jan to 5 April 2024. This additional profit is being referred to as transitional profit and HMRC have indicated that any additional tax due on this profit can be divided up and paid over five tax years, although exact details have yet to be provided. Businesses do not have to change to a 31 March or 5 April year end. However, if they decide to retain their current trading year, for future tax years profits will need to be apportioned between sets of accounts and HMRC have issued detailed guidance about how this can be done. If this affects you and you want further explanation or guidance, speak to your accountant.

Carol Draper FCCA
Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd

In the Kitchen

Angela Johns

In the absence of an office, here in the kitchen, the paperwork is filed. Behind a magnet on the fridge, on a pile on the kitchen table, or in a letter rack that gets full to bursting point. Some paperwork simply has no home. Too important to throw away but not urgent enough to deal with straightaway, so two piles develop, one Reference/Reminder, one Urgent/Better Do It Today. That is until it gets past its importance date and simply gets thrown away. And why is it the kitchen? It seems like the worst kind of place for paperwork. Appointment letters and reply slips stamped with a circular tea mug stain, (school secretaries must see plenty of those!).

The kitchen is the hub of the house though, isn't it? The crossroads of all members of the household. Through the ages it has been the hearth, where food was cooked, where family gathered, where visitors were invited to sit, the nerve centre, the heart of the house. When my friends pop in we occasionally sit in the lounge room but I like it best at the kitchen table with our mugs of tea. The vase of flowers is pushed off centre, the paperwork piles stacked to one side along with the other oddsments that seem to end up on the kitchen table. There is nothing between us except two mugs and maybe a deep secret vulnerability yet to be brought to light. But that's OK. Compassion can be shown without knowing the details. Help is asked for in the most subtle and covert ways. Love



can be shown in time spent with someone, not coming up with the answers. You can hold them in your arms, hold them in your heart or hold space for them in your kitchen. Troubles can be shared over the kitchen table as the unswept crumbs are gathered into a three-dimensional doodle. The overhead spotlights go off as do the bright white strips that light the countertops because the soft lamp in the corner goes on instead, for that two mug conversation.

There are those of us that like that side by side kind of chat, one chopping veg while the other keeps the washing up straight, the hands and eyes occupied while the heart is opened. Either way, the kitchen is the facilitator, providing the necessary combination of ingredients to satisfy our personal recipe for showing and accepting support.

Currently training as an Emotional Therapeutic Counsellor with the AETC, Angela is a qualified Reflexologist, Aromareflex Practitioner and Reiki Teacher/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

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.

Albert Einstein

Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co.

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The important stuff on the inside..

Karen Harris



I ended last months article with the following paragraph..... A house collapses without proper foundations, the body is the same. Take time to look after the basics rather than the cosmetics, use good nutrition and varied movement rather than pills and potions and aids. The picture below sums it up. I'm sure the New Year began with virtuous intent by many to 'get fit', do more, play more sport, join a gym etc, and encouraging health and fitness is always a good thing - for body and mind. There may be a bit of vanity involved as we all like to have toned skin, good muscle tone - sometimes muscle bulk - and look good in our clothes. But all the stuff showing on the outside is only a cover for the more important stuff on the inside - the aforementioned foundations. The unsupported house on the left still looks like a house but, in body terms, it has joint issues, lack of range of motion, feet that roll in, aches and pains, and is probably tired from having to support a structure that lacks stability. Strengthening the outside, both house and body, is akin to putting a plaster on a broken leg. The weight from the roof and upper levels are no doubt going to impact further on the crumbling effect. The same with excess weight on our lower load

joints, the pelvis, hips, knees, and of course the lower back, all increase the pressure and wear and tear. One of the best ways to understand what's happening with someone's foundations - how their musculoskeletal system is working, or not - is to look at their posture and foot position, its an absolute dead giveaway. A dropped shoulder, arms that hang forward of the outside thigh with the backs of the hands facing forward, a head sitting forward of the body, the hips forward of the ankles, feet pointing out not forward; to name but a few deviations to your body's blueprint design. If your aim is to 'get fit' without addressing the basics of structural dynamics, my bet is the onset (depending on your chosen activity) of shin splints, knee pain, muscle soreness, back pain, niggly body aches and pains that curtail your new fitness journey when you were just getting into it! After 31 years of teaching fitness, believe me, I've seen it quite a few times! Posture isn't just standing up straight and pulling your shoulders back, it's the external representation of your body's structural integrity, dynamics and balance. To think that this doesn't matter, to not take it into consideration is to seriously undermine health and wellness. Let's not do that shall we!

YES or NO?

Do you want to take control of your aches and pains?
Do you want to stop having to take pain killers?
Do you want the knowledge to be able to help yourself?
Do you want to feel how empowering that feels?
Do you want to feel that weight lifted from your shoulders?

YES, of course!

Even just the FEELING of the weight being lifted off your shoulders from knowing there IS an alternative to pain, pills & injections is a step in the right direction!

Karen Harris, Posture Alignment Specialist, Fitness Trainer
07954 544595

Embracing Individuality

Emily Papirnik

The power of being unapologetically yourself



In a world that often pressures individuals to conform, embracing one's own uniqueness can be a revolutionary act. As an individual, you possess a medley of thoughts, memories, joys, pains and idiosyncrasies that make you distinctly you. Despite this, societal norms and expectations can create a pervasive need to fit in, causing many to overlook the inherent value of their authentic selves. The paradox lies in the fact that while each person is inherently unique, there is a societal tendency to conform to perceived norms. The desire to fit in can stem from various sources, such as societal expectations, fear of judgement, or a need for validation. However, in the pursuit of conformity, individuals risk losing the essence of what makes them extraordinary. It's crucial to recognise and celebrate your worth as an individual. Your thoughts, experiences and emotions are valid and contribute to the rich tapestry of human existence. Acknowledging your uniqueness fosters self-acceptance, paving the way for a more fulfilling and authentic life. Consider the celebrities and influencers who have captivated the world with their authenticity. The most revered figures in entertainment and beyond often stand out precisely because they embrace their individuality. By being true to themselves, they not only carve out a niche but also inspire others to do the same. To break free from the chains of conformity, it's essential to

start believing in your own worth. Understand that the qualities that make you different are the very ones that contribute to your distinct identity. By embracing your oddities, successes and failures, you empower yourself to navigate life authentically. Embarking on the journey of self-discovery involves understanding your strengths, weaknesses, passions and values. Embrace your unique features, whether it's the shape of your nose or the colour of your hair, as they are integral parts of what makes you whole. Celebrate your personal narrative, for it is yours to own and share. In a world that constantly beckons conformity, embracing your individuality is a revolutionary act of self-love. Recognise that you are as worthy and important as anyone else, and by being true to yourself, you contribute to the diverse mosaic of humanity. Let go of the need to fit in, and instead, revel in the power of being unapologetically yourself. The world needs your unique perspective and it's time to shine as the individual you were meant to be.

me helping me

The app to Feel better

Romy's Uni Life *Romy Kemp*

Liverpool University

A New Year

As the New Year has rolled in, a chance for hope and change have emerged. For me, it was lovely to go home for Christmas and for the New Year. After not seeing family and friends for a good few months, travelling home was wonderful yet slightly nerve-wracking. This is because people might have changed since the last time you saw them. I, for one, have changed - I feel more confident and independent since going to university.

Everyone seemed rather similar when I arrived home, except for one - my younger brother. As a teenage boy he is growing up, and I am shocked at how much he has in just the few months I have been gone. My parents, who I missed tremendously, were exactly the same yet happier because I was actually home - which was so lovely! I missed my dog significantly, and couldn't wait to give her the biggest hug, and my parrot who gave me kisses. Coming back to university brought me mixed feelings. As much as I loved my first semester, leaving home again was upsetting. I didn't want to leave my pets, and my family. Catching up with my friends was also delightful - asking them about their university experiences so far, and it seemed like I was leaving so soon. I already miss my mum's home cooked food and the chatter between my family. As lovely as it was to come back to my accommodation, I



was still overwhelmed with the sadness of not being home, which is totally normal. So if anyone is away from home or missing someone, or even missing what life used to be, it is perfectly normal and even expected. Growing up means expanding independence. My first week back in Liverpool was stressful due to my continued exams - so revision took up most of my week. Catching up with my uni friends was lovely after a few weeks apart. Your uni friends turn into your second family because you spend so much time with them, so spending a few weeks apart was definitely strange. My second semester starts soon, and I am delighted to begin. Although I will miss my home and the area around, it is wonderful to continue discovering a new place. The New Year has made me realise that I need to become more productive and independent - I must stay on top of everything in my life, in order to remain happy - which will increase my chances of success in life. I must continue with my growing confidence, in order to flourish, as I know I can! Happy New Year everyone, I wish you all the best!

Evie's Teenage Focus

Evie Aubin



I'm back at it once again! The holidays were a well deserved break after mocks exams, allowing me to see family, and finally relax. But I'm already almost a month back into school, and I am counting down the days to my first A-level. I remember when I first started sixth form, thinking about how much fun it would be to finally focus on the subjects that I love, but now it's more stressful than ever. I keep telling myself that this buildup of anxiety towards the A-levels will be worse than the actual exams (although I'm more than likely just lying to myself). The main issue that I've come to find is the time frames. I've never been good at keeping to deadlines, and I think the amazing team here at the Pershore Times vouch for that. With my impending A-levels looming over me, it's not the best time to finally start to figure that out. I find that when I'm stressed about something, I tend to procrastinate until what I'm doing becomes a last-minute debacle and, unfortunately, the biggest stressor I have at the moment is my art course. As I'm writing this, I have no more than a week until my final piece for the coursework section of this A-level is due in and we fall into the exam unit. Normally this would be fine; I would finish the final piece put everything together, and then complete, and hand in my art book. However, the issue I'm facing here is that I decided to use a completely new art medium and start a new piece with only a week to go. So far within my art I have tended

to stick with either pencil sketches, watercolor or gouache and yet now, I have had a change of heart (and art style) and decided to use oil paint for the first time. This idea was sprung on me when I went rummaging around in my art cupboard, and I found six small tubes of oil paint. And I, being the foolish artist that I am, figured that this would be enough. All I can say, is let's take a moment to thank my gran for being an amazing artist and oil painter herself, and stopping to help me before I tried to complete an entire oil painting with only that amount.

In the end I was given plenty of equipment for oil painting loaned from my gran; and I'm pleased to say that I think it's going well. Art, like reading, has always been a big part in my life and despite it being a stressful course, in the end I am glad that I chose to take it as a subject. I still remember when I was growing up and for my birthdays, my mum would always get me these big artist sketchpads. I would savour those pages using every bit of space to create my very own drawings, and now that I get to do it for an A-level, well, I think that it may just make the stress worth it.

'Wondrous Machine' with the Elgar Chorale

A choral celebration of Pershore Abbey's new Ruffatti organ with Worcester's well-known chamber choir, The Elgar Chorale directed by Piers Maxim returns to Pershore Abbey in March and is joined by Paul Trepte, recently retired former Director of Music and Organist at Ely Cathedral in an exciting programme of music from Eastern Europe showcasing the recently installed Ruffatti pipe organ at the Abbey. Featuring composers Zoltán Kodály, Leoš Janáček, Antonín Dvořák, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Henryk Górecki, the Chorale

is also joined by John Upperton (tenor), Shulah Oliver (violin) and Natasha Gale (harp) bringing a wonderful variety of musical pieces to the audience.

Two substantial works in the programme are Kodály's *Missa Brevis* and Janáček's *Otče náš* (Our Father). The *Missa Brevis*, first performed during the siege of Budapest towards the end of the second world war, was written at a time of great uncertainty, danger and personal hardship. It is a tour-de-force - colourful, expressive, exuberant, and energetic, a choral masterpiece

with a very identifiable voice. The version here is scored for organ, chorus and soloists and in fact the work received its British premiere, in an orchestrated version at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester Cathedral in 1948. Janáček was a fiercely spiritual agnostic when he wrote his *Otče náš* and it represents his faith in the community as a product of a shared Slavic heritage and spirit. Here it is scored for solo tenor, mixed chorus, organ and harp. There are wonderful moments in it as with the solo tenor's heroic entries *Thy Kingdom Come* and *Thy Will Be Done* and the chorus's stirring responses. Other pieces in the concert include Kodály's *Laudes*

Organi (In Praise of Organs) his last completed work with its particularly triumphant conclusion, marking a fitting end to the career of the composer whose contribution to the Hungarian choral tradition remains unrivalled; also Janáček's *Zdravas* (Hail Mary), Rachmaninoff's *Bogoroditse Devo*, Górecki's *Totus Tuus* and Dvořák's *Goin' Home* (theme from the *New World Symphony*).

At Pershore Abbey on Saturday 23rd March 2024 at 7.30pm
Tickets £18 full, concs (over 60) £16, under 18's free) are available from BLUE, 19 Broad Street, 01386 553847, Pershore Visitor Centre, Town Hall, 01386 561561 or www.elgarchorale.com

Gregory's World! Gregory Sidaway Exeter College, Oxford

The Adventure Continues

Moving from home to uni used to feel like a seismic shift. There's a point about half an hour into the journey to Oxford when the road bends around the foot (fin?) of Fish Hill, climbs its I-know-it-looks-tempting-but-don't-do-more-than-thirty-mph slope, and swings round so that you can peer through the passenger seat window and catch one last glimpse of home. One last glimpse of home waiting below, and my legs would wobble and my heart would jitter like a needle on a seismograph and, well, it wasn't much fun. Suddenly, I'd hopped from one world and another had risen up around me: yellow-stone arches looming, bicycles zooming, pigeons plume-ing. I remember my first meal in the dinner hall at college when the sweetcorn was trembling off my fork before I could eat it. Not so much any more – otherwise, dinner would be getting pretty cold by now. Having just entered my fifth term, the move has thankfully lost its magnitude. Driving into Oxford (breathing in as we skirt

around the edge of the zero emission zone) is almost like watching a 'Previously ...' segment on your favourite TV show. It's a compound of sights and smells and memories – and I have to remind myself that, yes, I have nearly completed half of my course already. Slowly but surely, I have been assembling a bulging, unwieldy timeline in my head of over a thousand years of history, literature and thinking, continuing to prop it up with new research and ideas, texts and authors. I'm currently reading from a 'Complete Works of Chaucer' so hefty that it should probably be registered as an offensive weapon. For those who don't know, reading Chaucer is pretty difficult even if you've only got one page of him (and not enough to wedge a door or buffer a small tank) because he writes in what we now call 'Middle English'. It's an ancestor to our current language today and – to give you a February-related example of what it looks like – here's how Chaucer describes Valentine's Day in Parliament of Fowls (1382): 'For this was on Seynt Valentynes day / Whan every

foul cometh there to chese his make ...'

'For this was on Saint Valentine's day / When every bird comes there to choose his match ...'

It's basically like that. You read three words compatible with modern English and then you hit a weird one – so it can become quite a hurdle race after several hundred lines. Incidentally, fellow reader, I have been known to speak Middle English after a few pints at The Pickled Plum. In the first year, our accommodation was ours for only the eight weeks of term. At the end of week eight, we all had to leave without a trace and play the fun game of figuring out how we were possibly able to fit so much stuff into one suitcase before. This time around, the accommodation is ours for a nine-month stint. This means I could leave some bigger things in my room over Christmas. So, when I arrived and unlocked my bedroom door, I was reunited with an old friend. Fry was waiting for me – and I had a new Tesco voucher to make sure he would be properly fed on a diet of whatever beige



potato product caught my eye in the freezer aisle. I'm no air fryer artisan, but I feel like I'm starting to get the hang of this business. Most recently, I've had a blast from the past and bought those smiling potato faces they used to serve at Wacky Warehouse, Bungo's Barn and all good children's establishments. I'll tell you what, I know it sounds silly but if you're feeling a little gloomy, I would definitely prescribe a hearty dose of optimistic food. With those in mind, I think I'll head down for dinner. I'll think of you back at home, fellow reader, as I welcome the new term! It's nice to be able to properly appreciate both worlds now. Not sure what veg I'll do yet, but I leave you in the knowledge that it won't tremble off my fork.

I heard the news today, Oh Boy!



How can we protect our own mental health with so much bad news around? Sometimes, sitting at home watching the evening news, it feels like we have all become Alex in *A Clockwork Orange*. In Burgess's novel (and the controversial film), Alex is forced to sit for hours watching endless violence on film. The news in recent times has been equally distressing: war, terror attacks, natural disasters. Every day we witness through our TV screens and radios a catalogue of sorrow. And if the raw facts were not painful enough, newscasters present the news in a way

designed to grip our emotions. Understandably so, as they want us to engage fully - and we cannot do that without an emotional response. But what effect does all this have on our mental wellbeing? Graham Davey of the University of Sussex writes in *Psychology Today* how a diet of bad news in the media can aggravate our personal anxieties. Upsetting stories on the news can awaken bad memories from our own lives and reinforce negative feelings. He reports an experiment he did in which different groups watched different news stories. He found

that the group with a diet of entirely negative stories were more likely to catastrophize their own worries, making their own problems feel worse than they were before. So how can we control this? How can we keep abreast of what is happening in the wider world while maintaining our own mental health? Of the many suggestions health experts make, there are three that consistently come to the fore:

1. Take a break

Switching off occasionally is crucial to our wellbeing. Give your mind time to process things and to re-gain strength. There is a danger with mobile phones of incessantly clicking on the next story and disappearing for hours down bad news rabbit holes. The term "doomscrolling" (recently added to the Oxford dictionary) captures this perfectly. So try to give yourself the odd news-free day.

2. Talk to people

If you find yourself getting

stressed about what's in the news, talk about this with friends and relatives. Sharing our worries can help us put things in perspective. Many organisations (including the Pershore Wellbeing Hub) provide a friendly space where you can drop in for a cup of tea and a chat. The Hub's website (see below) has details of various local places which offer a welcoming face and a chance to talk.

3. Do something practical

As we watch more accounts of human misery each night on the TV news (war zones, natural disasters), it's easy to feel overwhelmed and helpless. One way of counter-acting this is to do something practical to help. Get involved with a charity, raise money, write to your MP and remember to look for the positive things on the news that show what others are doing to help. We may live in a troubled world - but we can do our bit to make it better.

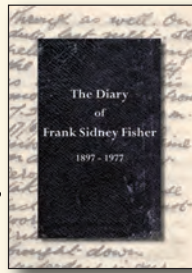
Paul Morris

www.pershorewellbeinghub.co.uk

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.



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'And another Thing' Handbook Volume 3

By Reg Moule

This new Handbook gives more detail and explanation on many of the topics mentioned in Reg's previous publications, but without fear of repetition. Although it is not intended to be an instruction book on growing all crops it does cover a very wide range of fruit and veg.



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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.

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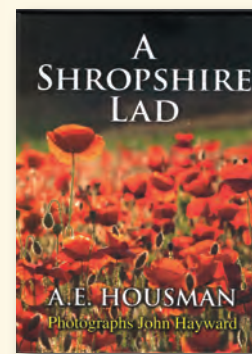
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Captain Chris

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£11.99



'A Shropshire Lad'

Author: John Hayward

This is the first photographically illustrated edition of 'The Shropshire Lad', timed to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the A E Housman Society, recently launched by the BBC television presenter, Nick Owen. Photographer John Hayward follows the different locations mentioned in the poem with stunning, full-colour plates.

Published by: Merlin Unwin Books, Ludlow, Shropshire
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Written by Dr. Rand Jerris and Peter Lewis

A Celebration of Golf and Music 1870-1939

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The authors are two well-known and highly-respected golf historians, Dr. Rand Jerris and Peter Lewis, who also are excellent collaborators. This unique and important new entry in the Library of Golf is 324 pages, which includes a comprehensive Bibliography and Index, together with profuse colour illustrations. The book is printed on acid-free paper with an illustrated dust jacket in a limited edition of 1500 copies. Produced by Hughes & Company



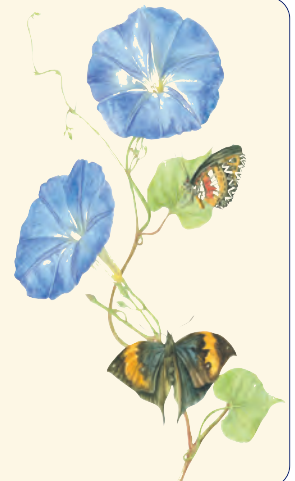
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Along the Wall



It's a sobering thought that the British Empire only grew to full size just over a century ago – to be exact on 29th September 1923 – with the addition of Palestine and Transjordan. The thinking apparently was that adding those extra territories would make the route to India (aka the Jewel in the Crown) more secure by expanding the frontier. That other great empire – the Roman Empire – had much the same idea when they built a strong wall across the northern province of Britannia, again to make their possessions more secure by delineating the frontier. However they built, as it turned out, a rather longer lasting legacy in the shape of Hadrian's Wall which still stretches from the North Sea to the Irish Sea. Designed to keep the barbarians out the complex system of the Wall itself, the sequential Milecastles for small garrisons and the larger garrisons with their surrounding small towns are all amazingly well preserved after some two thousand years. The Northumberland side of the Wall is perhaps the better preserved and makes a good destination for a weekend or other short break, especially

since it offers the chance of staying in or near some rather nice towns like Hexham, which is big enough to be interesting but small enough not to be off-putting. We stayed nearby in the Slaley Hall Hotel which lies due south of the town in a thousand acres of surrounding woodland and which offers two 18 hole golf courses as well as a Spa and other facilities. It's a sensitive addition to the old Hall, with most of the bedrooms being in the new wings – which perhaps paradoxically ensures that they're up to date and very comfortable. We also found the restaurant menu interestingly varied and the food was well cooked and presented. We didn't actually try the heated indoor pool or the Spa though they both looked very nice. See www.slaleyhallhotel.com It's about half an hour's drive north to the nearest spot on Hadrian's Wall which runs for 73 miles from coast to coast - a lot of the way through some rugged and spectacular landscape –and the whole of which is classed by the UN as a World Heritage Site. It's

Brian Johnson-Thomas

difficult to know where to start but I was impressed by Housesteads, Britain's most complete Roman fort and also the Roman baths at the cavalry fort of Chesters not far away. (Interestingly the Roman Army didn't have any cavalry regiments so they hired in riders and horses as 'auxiliaries' from other parts of the Empire, some are known to have come from as far away as present day Hungary and Spain – I often wonder what they made of the weather up there in Winter...)

If you go to the English Heritage site – www.english-heritage.org.uk – and click on Hadrian's Wall then you can get a plethora of information about the wall itself, life in Roman Britain and even useful tips on using Roman makeup. They also suggest a couple of walking routes although you can find on the Web several private companies who offer walking tours in the area. Now to something a little less palatable, I have mentioned before that the time is coming when we'll all have to get pre authorisation to travel across the Channel to Europe and, after several delays, this is now set to begin in the second half of this year (*please read www.travel-europe.europa.eu for the fine details.*) Basically there will be a new entry/exit system for non-EU nationals (that's us) travelling for a short stay in the 29 countries of the EU. In addition to registering online, and paying the necessary fee it seems that the first time you enter Europe you will be fingerprinted and have your face scanned, so expect long queues at Border points when



this first comes into force. (Indeed, it's said that the reason for the delay in implementing this new system is because of the Paris Olympics this year – the French are expecting quite enough hassle at their borders without the additional burden of a new system, thanks) Eventually, of course, it's envisaged that this new high-tech system will do away with passports altogether. Indeed as early as next year returning Brits to Heathrow may just have to scan their faces at the electronic booths which currently scan your face and your new e-passport concurrently. Given the unfolding scandal of the Post Office's IT system I somehow have the feeling that this new bit of IT kit may well also end in tears! Oh well, here's to the onset of Spring!



Get ready to Rock the Dock, Gloucester Tall Ships

If, like the poet Masfield, you yearn for a 'tall ship and a star to steer her by' then you'll need to get down to Gloucester Docks for the Tall Ships Festival over the Spring bank Holiday weekend from Saturday 25th May until Monday 27th May. The organisers tell us that they intend to celebrate the global connectivity of the city with a packed programme of entertainment ranging from a Rock the Dock extravaganza on Saturday to traditional sea

shanties on the Monday as well as ending each day with an hour of mass dancing and singing. What about the ships attending? Well, already we know that the Phoenix (which recently featured in Ridley Scott's blockbuster 'Napoleon'), the Greyhound will be inbound from the Caribbean, the Spirit of Falmouth (crewed by retired Armed Forces veterans) and the Irene (whose film credits include Pirates of the Caribbean and Alice Through the Looking

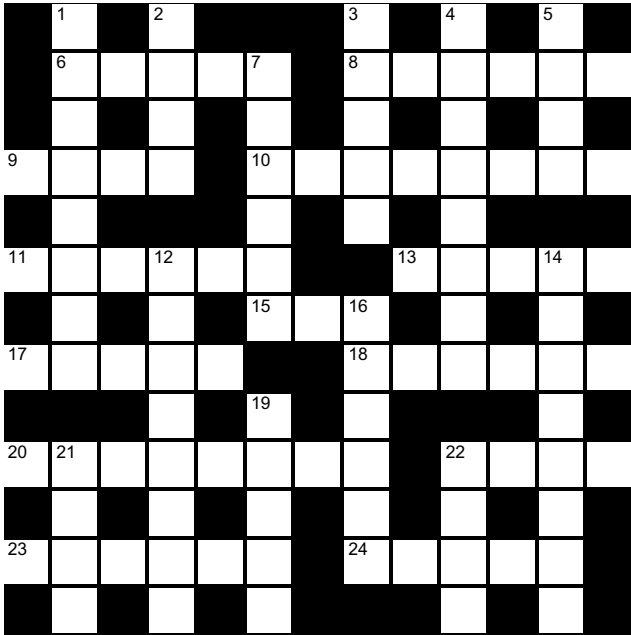
Glass) will be taking part. Tickets are now on sale and there are two options; Sea Legs tickets allow access to the festival and also onboard the ships, or a Land Lubbers ticket for just the festival site.

Since there aren't all that many Sea Legs tickets available it makes sense to book early if that's your preferred option, via the website www.gloucestertallships.co.uk. Maybe see you there?



Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

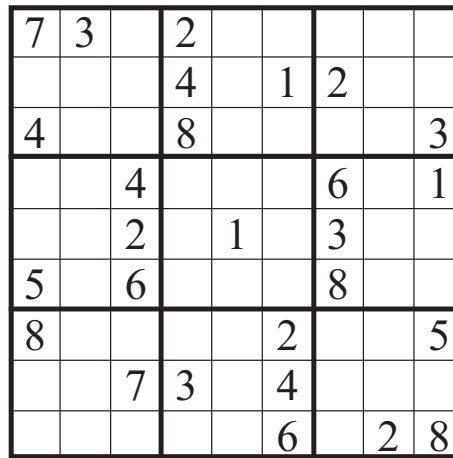
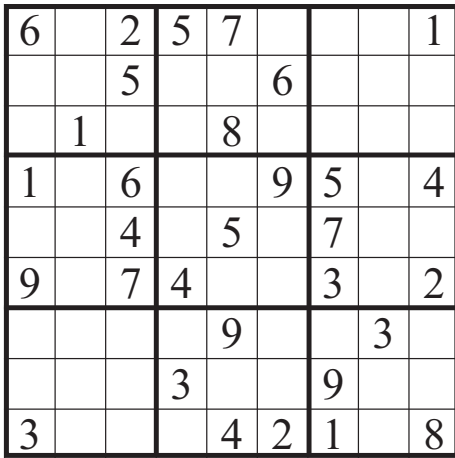
- 6 Type of male (5)
- 8 Scattered rubbish (6)
- 9 Inhabitant of e.g. Helsinki (4)
- 10 Insensitive (8)
- 11 Biased (6)
- 13 Morsels (5)
- 15 Exclamation of contempt (3)
- 17 Renown (5)
- 18 General escape (6)
- 20 Elongate (8)
- 22 Religious practice (4)
- 23 Seventh planet (6)
- 24 Proof of being elsewhere(5)

Down

- 1 Reasonable (8)
- 2 Atop (4)
- 3 Not in silence (5)
- 4 Short dagger (8)
- 5 Long fish (4)
- 7 Soak up (6)
- 12 Self-important (8)
- 14 Peak (8)
- 16 Rupture (6)
- 19 That group (5)
- 21 Lugs (4)
- 22 Restraint (4)

Sudoku

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



Crosswords

Sudoku

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Wordsearch



- | | |
|--------|-------------|
| ALSO | KIN |
| AMIR | LOANS |
| AVENGE | MISCHIEVOUS |
| BAIL | NOTION |
| BOHR | REAP |
| BUY | RIDE |
| CAA | ROAM |
| CLIMB | RUSTY |
| COD | SARS |
| DEC | SANE |
| DEER | SLAB |
| DNA | SOUP |
| E E G | SPIT |
| EHUD | STOW |
| GERM | WAN |
| HERB | YEARNED |
| KAISER | YES |

December Answers



Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

XXII

The street sounds to the soldiers' tread,
And out we troop to see:
A single redcoat turns his head,
He turns and looks at me.

My man, from sky to sky's so far,
We never crossed before;
Such leagues apart the world's ends are,
We're like to meet no more;

What thoughts at heart have you and I
We cannot stop to tell;
But dead or living, drunk or dry,
Soldier, I wish you well.

XXIII

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair,
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill
and the fold,

The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till
and the cart,

And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,
And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the
grave.

I wish one could know them,
I wish there were tokens to tell
The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish
them farewell
And watch them depart on the way that they will not
return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing
to scan;
And brushing your elbow unguessed-at and not to be told
They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

Spot & Shop - December Winners

- 1) Helen Woods
- 2) Jan Winward
- 3) Sandy Pomeroy
- 4) Ella Michell

Last month's answer:
Resolve Law group

Fun Quiz!



1. In relation to its body size, the tube-lipped nectar bat has the longest what of all animals?
2. Which major Italian car company used to make tractors?
3. Which swimming stroke is sometimes known as the frog stroke?
4. What chemical makes leaves and plants green?
5. Globophobia is the fear of what?
6. Who invented the word 'bump'?
7. What is the structure on top of the Empire State Building?
8. Which bird species has the highest population?
9. Which super villain is the main antagonist in the marvel film Infinity War?
10. On which sea was Jesus said to have walked on water?
11. When is national girlfriend day in the UK and USA?
12. Which football manager famously climbed into the wrong dugout during the 1998/99 season?
13. In which country do you have to apply to be reincarnated?
14. What does Hz stand for in physics?
15. What name is given to the easternmost region of Africa in which Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia are located?
16. What is the opening line to 'Islands in the Stream' by Kenny Rogers?
17. What is the most expensive film ever made?
18. What is the radius of a circle if its diameter measures 19.5cm?
19. What type of car is a T-Bird?
20. True or False: The world's longest domestic cat is 118.33cm / 3 ft 10.59 in?

Answers: 1. Tongue 2. Lamborghini 3. Breaststroke (due to the way that the legs and arms move)
4. Chlorophyll 5. Ballrooms 6. Shakespeare 7. A Zeppelin dock 8. Chicken 9. Thanos 10. The Sea of Galilee
11. 1st August 12. Ron Atkinson 13. China 14. Hertz 15. Horn of Africa
16. Baby when I met you there was peace unknown, I went out to get you with a fine tooth comb
17. Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides 18. 9.75cm 19. Ford Thunderbird 20. True



COMPETITION TIME!

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



- This month's prizes!**
- 1st - £25 cash**
donated by The Royal Oak, Kinnersley
 - 2nd - Coronation Jigsaw**
Value £20
 - 3rd - Reg Moule's Gardening Diary**
Value £10
 - 4th - Pat's Pantry -**
Jar of home-made marmalade

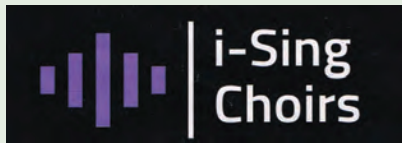
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Powick Times closing date: 26th February 2024

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Telephone/email: _____

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Malvern WR14 1GD

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Email: helen@i-singchoirs.co.uk

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Conductor –
Dexter Drown
Leader – **Graham Longfils**

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Watkins – Out of the Stillness for Cor Anglais
Debussy – Rhapsody for Cor Anglais
Dvořák – New World Symphony**

Tickets £15 (under 16s free)

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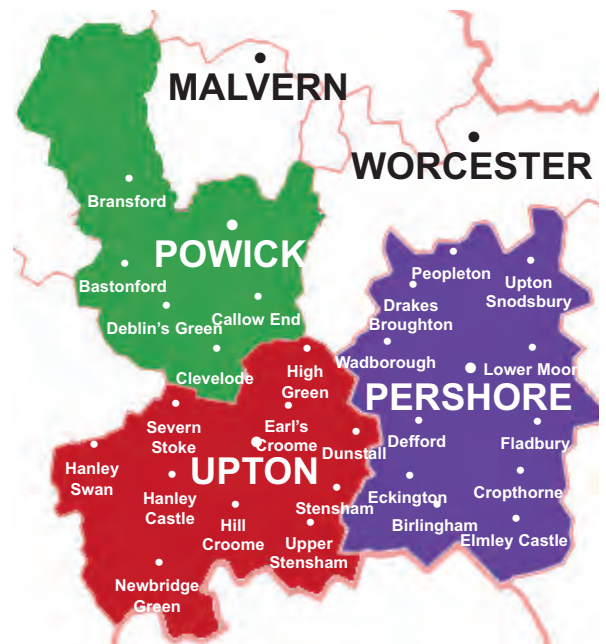
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Mixed Charity Touch Tournament

Since Worcester Warriors have gone into administration, The Worcester Warriors Foundation has lost a huge amount of funding. Despite this the Foundation still operates and lives up to its Mission Statement, "Worcester Warriors Foundation exists to help build a legacy for sport, education, health, and social cohesion across our communities.

We use the power of sport to engage and inspire people who are vulnerable across all age groups to live an active, healthy, and rewarding lifestyle. We support people who are isolated, disengaged, disadvantaged, living with a range of disabilities or conditions such as dementia; and those who have individual and complex needs."

At Pershore RFC we are holding a Mixed Charity Touch Tournament, to raise money for the Worcester Warriors Foundation, so they can carry on providing amazing and vital service through sport. So if you or your workplace would like to take part, then it is teams of 12 mixed players. If you don't have enough to enter a team of 12 people we can team you up with another small team to take part. Also if you would like to part sponsor the event that would mean more monies raised go to the Foundation.

For more information please get in contact Andrew
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