

Kempsey Times



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

Issue 25

May 2026

FREE



Lambs in May

May is a marvellous month, green hedgerows, blue bells, dandelions and daisies, longer daylight! Summer is here to enjoy, and Mother nature is amazing. The arrival of new born lambs is a signal that the long dull days of winter have gone! The new year seems to be moving faster than ever.

The one outstanding international event has got to be the amazing Artemis II space project. The distance travelled, 700,000 miles around the moon and back is hard to imagine. They also arrived back on earth in the right place

exactly on time! Incredible! This project apparently opens the door to more extended space travel. We will have to wait and see, but congratulations to the engineers, technicians and also the courage and professionalism

of the crew! An outstanding achievement. To commemorate the centenary of Queen Elizabeth II's birth, we have a rare and unique article describing her Coronation from a chorister who actually took part in the service. I am sure you will find this very interesting. We also have an outstanding article on global warming from a distinguished meteorologist. We continue to add outstanding contributors to our already excellent team.

In addition to our newspapers and book production, we have designed a new website that reintroduces 'Today', our online newspaper. So we have had a busy but very enjoyable and productive month.

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County and District Report

Councillor Martin Allen



“Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning” is one of those hymns that, when it gets into my head, I’m stuck with for days. It seems rather appropriate as I write this on Easter Sunday to be thinking about oil. I hope sanity returns soon. Meanwhile, here in our bit of blighty festivals and flower shows have started in a world of turmoil. I believe we need to embrace our community and the joy it brings!

New Come and Sing hits the right note



Come and Sing in Kempsey has been a great success. Beginning just after Christmas, it quickly climbed to the top of the charts.

Thanks to Libby James, Jan Venables and other dedicated volunteers from Severnside Parishes, a Come and Sing event takes place on the first

Monday of each month from 12:00 to 13:00 at The Firs on Old Road North, Kempsey. The event is free, and everyone is invited to join. Just a reminder that there is a coffee morning first between 10:00 and 12:00, so you can always call in for a coffee to wet your whistle beforehand.

Local roads and pavements refurb



Over the years, I have consistently pressed the County Council to refurbish roads and pavements in our area. Although it has been a lengthy process, my efforts were rewarded in March when improvements were made to Ryall Road Pavement, The Grove Main Road, and a hazardous section of pavement in Tunnel Hill. I visited Ryall Road to personally thank the crew for

their work, I was pleased to receive feedback from residents commending the workforce’s cheerfulness, professionalism and courtesy. While I have made much progress, there remains a considerable list of outstanding issues, particularly in Kempsey and Upton. I will continue to pursue further action and ensure we are not forgotten by those in County Hall.

Croome Court powers up!



Councillor Rebecca Rollinson and I were delighted to observe that the National Trust at Croome Court has installed electric charging points. As an increasing number of individuals transition to electric vehicles, it is essential that destination sites such as Croome Court offer appropriate services. During our

visit, we just had to stop by the café, which has maintained its high standards. It was staffed by lovely very friendly people, which always makes a difference. Please note that passengers travelling on the Worcestershire On Demand Bus should retain their ticket so they can claim a complimentary hot drink.

Upton cleans ship! Well done, Steve Dunwell!



In my Navy days, Clean Ship seemed to be a very regular occurrence. Thanks to local organiser Steve Dunwell, the cleaning bug arrived in Upton. On a sunless Sunday, the brilliant folk of Upton answered Steve’s call and spent the day making Upton spic and span. It was a mammoth effort, especially

clearing the caked-on mud at the Waterside, with men, women and children all pitching in. Upton gleamed and outshone the rest of Worcestershire, just in time for the start of Upton’s festival season. Can I say, I am immensely proud of each and every one of you that took part – thank you.

Foiled by toothpaste?

I was pleased to hear that we can now add spent toothpaste tubes and clean tin foil to our recycling bins. With food Caddies coming

later this year, it’s nice to know we are doing our bit. If you want to find out more, why not have a look at www.lets-wasteless.com?

And finally ...

There are moments as I dig away with fork or spade, in my little bit of England, that I fear my allotment will ever look pristine, especially, after watching Monty Don’s perfection on the television. But there’s something inside me that keeps me digging

– a bit like being your Councillor, I despair at the political nasty games, but there remains that stubborn bit, deep inside me, that isn’t giving up; after the efforts from so many brilliant folk cleaning Upton, how can I? As ever, I’m here if you need me.

Martin Allen

A few words from... Dame Harriett Baldwin MP



Pictured visiting the Croome Hunt Kennels in Kinnersley (L-R) George Bowyer, Pippa Wilkinson, Nigel Huddleston MP and Dame Harriett Baldwin MP

Joining Local Opposition to Rural Sports Cull

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP has slammed the Government's plans to cull rural sports with consultations which threaten people who enjoy hunting and shooting pursuits. She recently met with experts representing local shooting clubs who are concerned about proposed changes to the way shotgun licences are issued, which could drive local people away from the popular sport. Last week, she wrote to hundreds of local people who have expressed their opposition to a consultation to make trail hunting illegal. Dame Harriett has regularly spoken up for people who enjoy rural pursuits and recently visited the kennels at Croome Hunt, where the British Hound Sports Association told the MP that hunting is estimated to be worth £80 million to the rural economy. The Labour Government has introduced a

slew of measures which have made life worse for people living in rural areas, including the hateful Family Farm Tax, and is conducting a range of consultations to underpin its plans to legislate. "My email inbox has been overwhelmed with people who have shared their opposition to the latest Government consultation which threatens the future of hunting," explained Dame Harriett. "And coming just days after hearing the concerns of local shooting clubs, it is clear to me that metropolitan MPs are planning a cull on our rural sports and our traditions as part of an ongoing assault on people who live and work in our beautiful English countryside. I am grateful for the many people who join me opposing these proposals and I'll be speaking up in Parliament against them should this lead to legislative proposals."

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Concert at St Denys'!

The Worcester Male Voice Choir will be performing in St Denys' church on Saturday 16th May from 7:30 - 9:00pm. There will be refreshments and Tickets are £10.

St Denys' Church, Church lane, Severn Stoke, WR8 9JQ
Tickets available from
John Henderson 01905 371218
Julia Grant 01905 820138

Cornflower Club

The club is held in the Parish Hall, Kempsey, every other week. Wednesday May the 6th and May 20th we will be musically entertained. Going on into June 3rd we have music, June 17th a speaker. If you are a lady or gentleman over sixty years of age please,

come and join us. We enjoy a cup of tea and biscuits with friends, we also have a raffle. You would be made most welcome.

Please phone
Sally Linsey 01905 820476
Julia Grant 01905 820138

Teddies for Tragedies

Please, keep your knitting coming. I realise during the summer we tend not to do so much but it is important we do as much as we can to help those families who don't have warm clothes for their children or a teddy to comfort a little child.

We need hats, gloves/mittens and scarves in sets if possible. Blankets, cardigans and of course the teddies. You can drop the items off to me.

Please phone Julia on 01905 820138

Music Society

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



Our meetings will take place at The Firs on Old Road North from 2:00pm - 4:00pm on:

Thursday 7th & 21st May, 4th June

For further details please contact Anne on 07931 636309

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Local playwriting success!

'The Hand of Sarah Nelmes' by Martin Lytton has won the 2026 Three Counties Talent Hub playwriting competition and toured venues in Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. The Three Counties Talent Hub 2026 playwriting competition brought together Malvern Theatres, the Everyman Theatre Cheltenham and Worcester Theatres to produce a new play performed at their venues. The joint venture aims to identify and support emerging writers, providing a platform for new work to reach wider audiences across the region. Inspired by the UN's designation of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, this year's competition explored the theme 'women in rural communities', inviting writers to uncover untold stories from across the three counties (Gloucestershire,

Herefordshire, Worcestershire). 'The Hand of Sarah Nelmes' is a bold, witty, sometimes irreverent, time-shifting drama that reclaims the forgotten story behind one of the greatest medical breakthroughs in history. Moving fluidly between rural Gloucestershire in the 1790s and a world locked down by a modern pandemic, the play weaves together past and present to ask urgent questions about science, sacrifice, memory and who gets written into history. At its heart is the milkmaid, Sarah Nelmes - observant, curious, and uncredited - whose courage and insight helps lay the foundations for vaccination, while others take the fame. Sarah-Jane Morgan, Chief Executive & Artistic Director at Worcester Theatres said: "Martin Lytton is exactly why



we should be championing new writers. It is important to provide a platform to ensure scripts become real productions, and also encourages our audiences across our varying auditorium spaces to experience new dynamic writing."

'The Hand of Sarah Nelmes' was performed in April at Malvern Theatres, Cheltenham Everyman Theatre and the Swan Studio in Worcester. Hopefully, this success will inspire a whole new wave of local creatives to take up the pen.

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From the Parish Council



Kempsey's first Daffodowndilly
The event brought a burst of spring colour to Kempsey, with residents, families and volunteers gathering for an inaugural celebration of the village's growing Daffodil Project. On the day, visitors picked up handouts on the project's background, enjoyed a knitted and crocheted daffodil sculpture created by Kempsey Women's Institute, and browsed a children's art competition. Potted Tete a Tete and Mimolette daffodils were on sale alongside locally sourced wildflower seeds, with "Lovely Jubbly" refreshments keeping everyone going. Support came from local councillors, Kempsey Parish Council, St Mary's Church, Kempsey

Women's Institute, The Lawns Care Home, Kempsey School, Platform Housing Group and Kempsey's own Community Interest Company. Organiser Susan Bott said: "Kempsey is on the map, and the map is yellow!" Heartfelt thanks go to Susan for her vision, hard work and determination in bringing the event together and making the displays such a success. With ambitions for a "Golden Mile", additional bulbs have been purchased for further planting later this year, helping the displays to grow year on year. Daffodowndilly will return on 13th March next year. *Pavilion Community Cafe*
A reminder that the Pavilion Community Cafe at Plovers Rise



Playing Fields is open every Friday, 10.30am-5pm, serving barista-style fresh coffee and a tempting selection of cakes and savouries locally sourced. With the warmer weather arriving, we shall be adding outside furniture to the café's facilities. In addition, the café is planning to expand its opening hours with a monthly get-together where customers can enjoy a themed "stitch and chat".
Rocky Bridge
The large bridge at The Rocky, close to Church Street, is due to be replaced. Part funding has been secured through the FCC Communities Foundation and, if all goes to plan, we hope to see the new bridge in place by the end of the summer. As the

project progresses, updates will be posted on our website, www.kempseyhub.co.uk
Parish Office
Please note that the Parish Office now has a new email address: clerk@kempseyparishcouncil.gov.uk
For more information regarding the activities of the Parish Council, please refer to our website
www.kempseyhub.co.uk
For all enquiries, please contact Sharon Dunn, Parish Council Clerk and Financial Officer on 01905 828183 or by email at
clerk@kempseyparishcouncil.gov.uk

New Lifesaving Scheme for Kempsey

A new scheme to help save lives is being launched in Kempsey. Heartstart Kempsey is now taking bookings for its free 90-minute training sessions. During the training session, participants are taught how to do Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), use a defibrillator and how to treat a heart attack. The training is very practical, and the lifesaving skills are very easy to learn. No previous knowledge or experience is needed. The survival rate from a cardiac arrest in Worcestershire is about 10%. Research has shown that if people can start CPR within three minutes of a person collapsing and they can be defibrillated within five minutes of the collapse, survival rates can be in excess of 50%. With about 80% of cardiac arrests happening at

home, it is vital that everyone can do CPR and use a defibrillator. Heartstart Kempsey is funded by Malvern Hills District Council and is part of a network of Heartstart schemes being developed by Community Action Malvern and District across West Worcestershire. The training is being delivered by a small team of volunteers. *Anyone interested in registering for a course or volunteering for Heartstart Kempsey, should email Anne Piercy (Heartstart Kempsey Coordinator) at*
heartstartkempsey@gmail.com



Carer's Allowance - Are you eligible?

Carer's Allowance is a weekly benefit paid to people who are caring for someone with a disability or life-limiting illness. You could get £83.30 (2025-2026 rates) a week if you care for someone at least 35 hours a week and they get certain benefits.
Caring covers a broad range of activities, including things like:
- helping with washing and cooking
- taking the person you care for to a doctor's appointment
- helping with household tasks, like managing bills and shopping.
You do not have to be related to, or live with, the person you care for but you don't get paid extra if you care for more than one person. Sometimes a family member acting as a Carer may be working but finding this increasingly difficult if the level of care needed by the disabled

person gradually increases. However, you can still work if you are a Carer, provided you do not earn more than £204 per week (April 2026 figure). For each week you get Carer's Allowance, you'll automatically get National Insurance credits. This is important in helping to protect your National Insurance record and future entitlement to the State Pension. Carer's Allowance can affect the other benefits that you and the person you care for get. You have to pay tax on it if your income is over the Personal Allowance.



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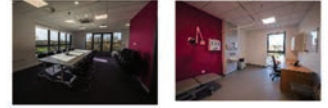
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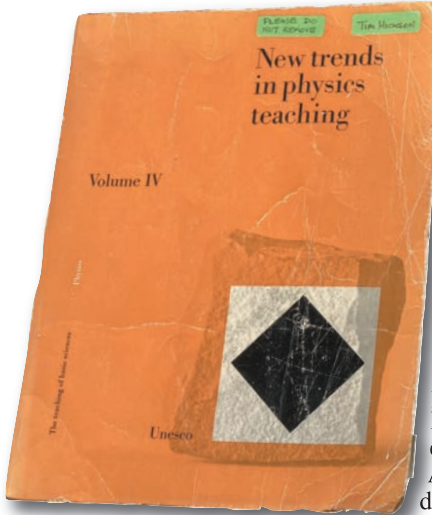
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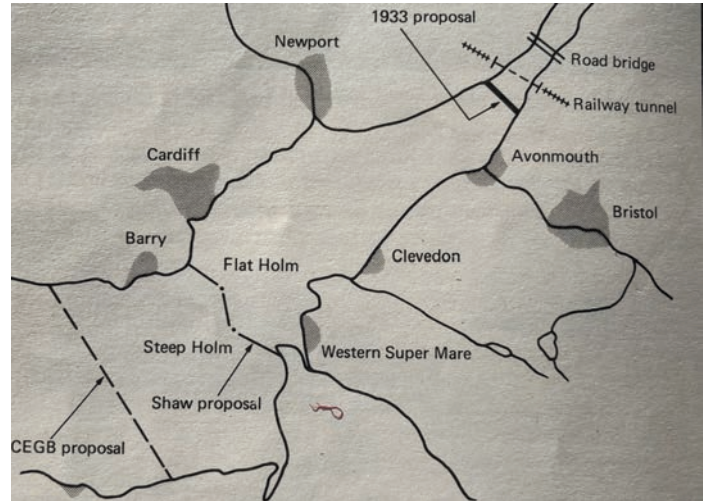
Tim Hickson



ago as 1933, schemes had been suggested to harness that energy and convert it to electricity (see below). Dr T. L. Shaw of Bristol University was carrying out a feasibility study in the early 1980s. Another design by the Central Electricity Generating Board estimated that 12% of the country's energy needs could be produced by this. However, there were ecological problems. A number of different designs of machines to harness the energy in waves

Recently, I was 'requested' to tidy my study. When I began, I came across two books containing chapters I had written in the early 1980s (shown above) when I was involved in developing ways of teaching Sixth-formers about the problems of providing the world with energy. At that time, aware of the fact that the sources of fossil fuel, coal, gas and oil were limited, I was very interested in the work being done to develop the use of alternative, renewable sources of energy. These included the use of waste material, as well as hydro-electric, tidal, wave, wind and geothermal power. The Severn Estuary has a large tidal rise and fall, and as long

were tested off the coast of Scotland and northern Cornwall. One interesting version was known as the Salter's duck. As with wind turbines, the energy generated throughout the year would match the changing demand, as shown in graph 3.8. For solar power (both for water-heating and generating electricity), of course, the reverse was true, shown in graph 3.11. I also remember there was test drilling for geothermal energy in Kempsey in the late 70s and early 80s. Ocean thermal energy conversion methods, using the difference between the temperature of the sea at the surface and at depths, and using



The proposed barrages on the Severn Estuary

plants to produce biogas, were also being developed. I was reminded that, at that time, my analysis of Britain's future energy use meant that, however many of these alternative/renewable sources were actually used, we would still need to use oil, gas, coal and nuclear if we were to maintain our standard of living. We were fortunate in having reserves of oil and gas in the North Sea. However, I gather our political leaders have decided not to continue to extract these but, instead, to buy these fuels from other nations. Transporting these will, of course, produce considerable pollution and I gather

we will buy gas from Norway, who get it from the North Sea fields that we were using. After WW2, Britain led the world in the use of nuclear power. Unfortunately, successive governments have allowed our prowess in developing nuclear power stations to evaporate. Even we decided to build the nuclear power stations we will need, the expertise will now have to be bought from other nations. The time taken between the deciding to build a power station and getting it working used to be eleven years. With today's increased bureaucracy, how long would it take now?

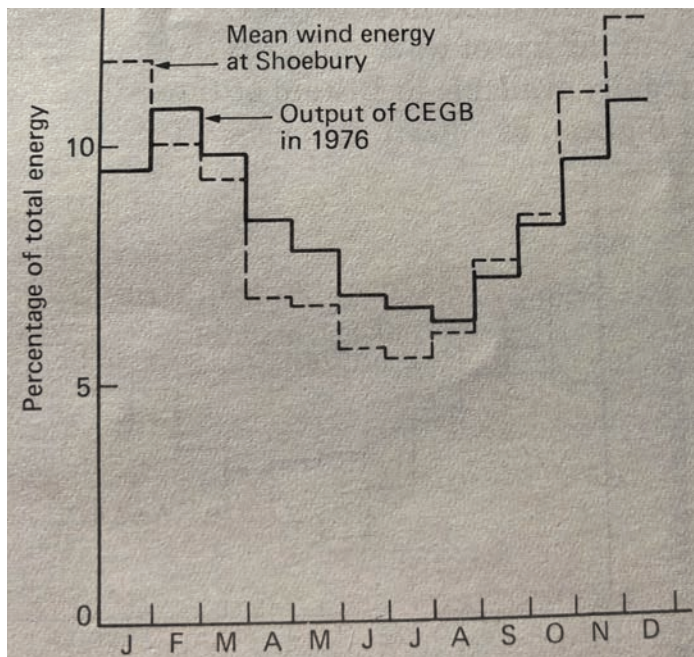


Fig. 3.8

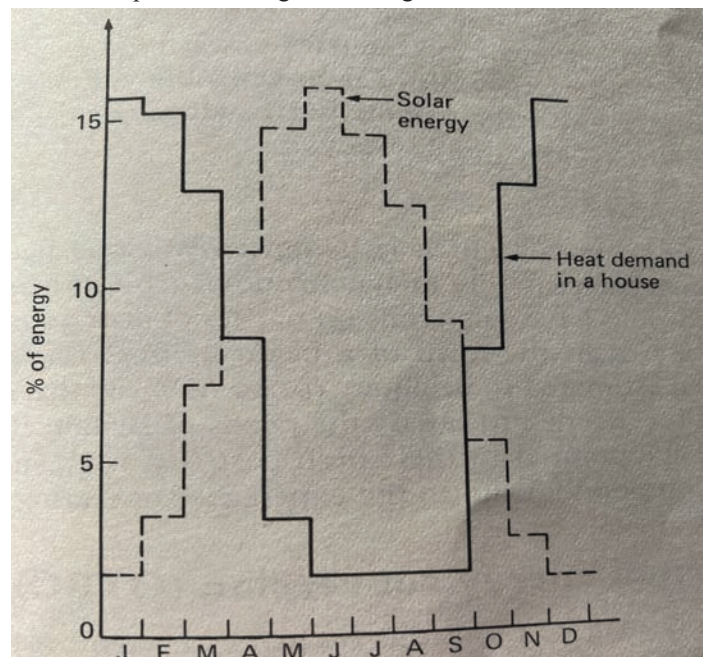


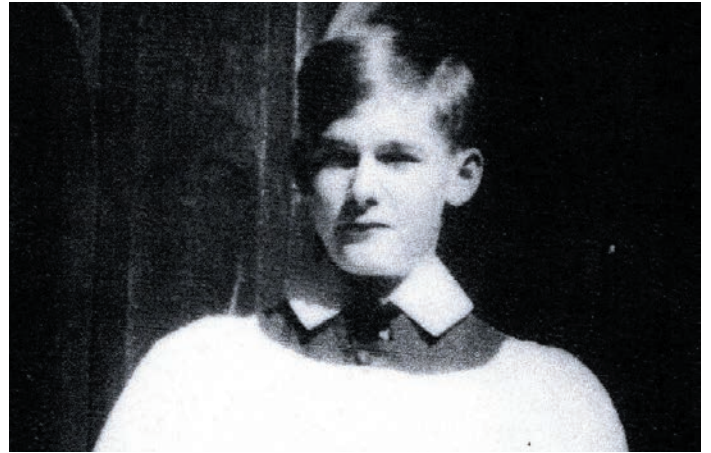
Fig. 3.11

The Queen's Coronation, 1953 - I was there!

Allan P. Ledger, Stow-on-the-Wold



Her late Majesty, the Queen, and His Royal Highness, the Duke of Edinburgh, on the balcony of Buckingham Palace



My chorister days, aged nine

I was just nine years old when I took part in Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation. We were woken at 4am, having little sleep that night. From the coach which took us to London, I was amazed at the crowds lining the streets near the Abbey, some of whom had been there for three days. By 6:30am, as we were lining up in the south cloisters, I remember being told that Mount Everest had been conquered by Sir Edmund Hillary, which I found extremely exciting!"

Positioned high up in the Abbey rafters on specially constructed platforms near the organ loft, I remember it was cramped and uncomfortable as we choristers were there for nearly eight hours. There was a huge advantage to being so high up: the magnificent view of all the dazzling pageantry, especially all the gold and silver of the mantles of the nobility. We saw the Queen curtsy to each corner of the 8,000 strong congregation, North, South, East and West after they had cried 'God save the Queen!'

Chorister rations for the day fitted into our cassock pockets. Sandwiches, Horlicks tablets and a small bottle of milk - most of which was consumed long before the first note was sung!

The Coronation Sacred Oil

As a nine-year-old boy chorister of St. George's Chapel, Windsor

Castle, I was privileged to sing at the coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, little knowing that on my mother's side of the Squire family, the family were responsible for the manufacture and distribution of the holy sacred oil used at the coronations of British monarchs since Queen Victoria's coronation in 1837. The formula for the oil contains the oils of orange flowers, roses, cinnamon, jasmine and sesame, with benzoin, musk, civet and ambergris.

At the coronation, the oil is contained in the solid gold ampulla, a vessel in the shape of an eagle. The sacred oil is poured from the beak of the eagle. The ampulla was made for the coronation of Henry IV in 1399. The anointing spoon, c.1200, is silver with four pearls in its handle. The bowl of the spoon has a ridge down the centre, which forms two compartments into which the Archbishop dips his fingers when anointing the sovereign.

The following extract is from The Pharmaceutical Journal, 30th May 1953:

'The oil to be used at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II is not unlike that used for Charles I, and has been prepared from the secret formula used by Peter Squire, which he made for the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. The same formula was

used by the late Sir Peter Wyatt Squire for the coronations of King Edward VII in 1902 and King George V in 1911. For the coronation of George VI in 1937, a new supply of oil was prepared by Messrs. Squire and Sons from the old formula. The remaining oil was kept in the Dean's study at Westminster Abbey, which was destroyed by bombing in World War II. The original formula of Peter Squire had been preserved in a Chanel no. 5 perfume bottle by great Aunt Mabel (Mrs. Mavrogordato), daughter of the late Sir Peter Wyatt Squire.'

It was Sir Peter Wyatt's father (Peter Squire, 1798 - 1884) who was responsible for the coronation oil formula used in the 19th and 20th centuries at Westminster Abbey.

In 1831, Peter Squire, who came from a farming background in Bedfordshire, bought a building in Oxford Street, London, no: 413, on the corner of Duke Street. In 1837, Peter Squire was appointed Chemist and Druggist in Ordinary to Queen Victoria's Medical Establishment.

In 1851, Peter Squire bought a medieval manor house and farm at Basmead, near St. Neots, to grow his medicinal herbs. The land is still farmed by the Squire family today. Peter Squire was a founder member of the Council of The Royal College of Chemists and The Royal Botanic Gardens in Regents Park. He was a fellow of the Linnean Society and a member of The Royal Institution. He died at the family home at 12 York Gate, aged 86, in 1884. He married Mary Jane Balmanno and by her had five children. It was their third son, Peter Wyatt Squire, who carried on the business and was knighted in 1918 for services to the Royal family.

Years later, I was fortunate to be privately presented to Her late Majesty at Windsor Castle as one of her Royal Coronation Boy Choristers, where we reminisced about the wonderful day. At the time, I felt that this meeting was meant to be. It will always be a greatly treasured memory and a truly significant moment of my life.

'Goodness will prevail ...
A brighter dawn is never far
from the horizon.'

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



Why texture makes your garden sing

When we think about garden design, most of us picture colour first - the soft pinks of spring blossom, the bold purples of summer borders, the fiery tones of autumn. But there's another design element that quietly shapes how a garden feels, and it's one we often overlook, and that's texture. Texture is what gives a garden depth, character, and atmosphere. It's the difference between a border that feels flat and one that feels alive. And as I've been preparing my show garden for RHS Malvern this month, texture has been at the heart of every planting decision.

What do we mean by "texture"? In gardening, texture refers to the leaves, bark and structure of plants - their size, shape, colour and surface qualities. Some plants are soft and airy, others bold and architectural. Some catch the light; others create movement or bring structure. When you combine different textures, you

create contrast. And contrast is what makes a garden visually interesting, even when the flowers aren't in bloom. Think of it like decorating a room: colour is the paint, but texture is the cushions, fabric and wood grain. It's what makes a space feel layered and inviting. Texture does three important jobs in a garden:

1) *It keeps the garden interesting all year*

Flowers are brilliant, but they can be short-lived. Foliage is what carries the garden through the seasons. When you mix different leaf shapes and finishes - feathery, glossy, bold, soft, velvety - the border still looks good even when nothing is flowering.

2) *It adds depth and movement*

Different textures catch the light in different ways. For example, grasses shimmer and create movement when it's breezy, while ferns can soften the border.

3) *It helps plants complement each other*

A border full of plants with the same leaf shape can feel flat. But pair a spiky phormium with a gentle geranium, or plum-coloured heuchera with a hebe and suddenly the whole border comes alive.

Some simple ways to introduce texture into any garden:

Mix leaf shapes and sizes - Combine large, bold leaves with fine, feathery ones. For example, hostas with their big, luscious leaves, which work beautifully with shuttlecock ferns, which have soft, feathery foliage - perfect for gardens with dappled shade. Or pair *Viburnum plicatum* 'Mariesii', with its textured leaves, alongside a Japanese maple such as *Acer palmatum* 'Atropurpureum', which has delicate purple foliage. Repeat textures for harmony - if you're planting a new garden, choose a few favourites and repeat



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them through the border to create a sense of cohesion which is easier on the eye. As I've been planting up my show garden, I've been reminded just how transformative texture can be. It's the quiet hero of garden design, so next time you're choosing plants, don't just think about colour. Think about how the leaves feel, how they move, how they catch the light. Because when you get texture right, the whole garden sings.



May gardening tips

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

Early May

Keep all newly planted items well watered. This includes ones planted last autumn. Sow seeds of herbaceous plants. Sow or turf new lawns and keep mowing established ones - but not too low. Treat difficult lawn weeds using a designated lawn weedkiller. Hang up a codling moth trap in your apple tree, or a plum moth one in your plum tree, to reduce the number of maggoty fruit. There is also now a trap readily available for catching box tree moths which are now quite widespread in our area. Plant out cabbage, cauliflower and other brassicas but take precautions against root fly. Keep on top of pest and disease outbreaks, as well as controlling weeds. Don't forget your houseplants feed and water them regularly. Control algae and blanketweed in ponds.

Mid May

Sow suitable varieties of pansies to flower from autumn throughout the winter. Sow biennials for flowering next spring onwards e.g. wallflowers, myosotis, sweet williams, foxgloves and honesty. Plant out chrysanthemums for flowering in borders or for cutting. Plant out summer bedding plants when frost risk is minimal. Tie in wallshrubs and climbers to their supports try to train them at 45 degrees or horizontally to encourage flowering. Trim over aubretia and arabis after flowering to keep them neat. Prune wall trained pyracantha and chaenomeles after flowering. Keep strawberry fruits off the soil using straw or mats. Cut down spring flowering perennials - e.g. pulmonarias and doricums after flowering

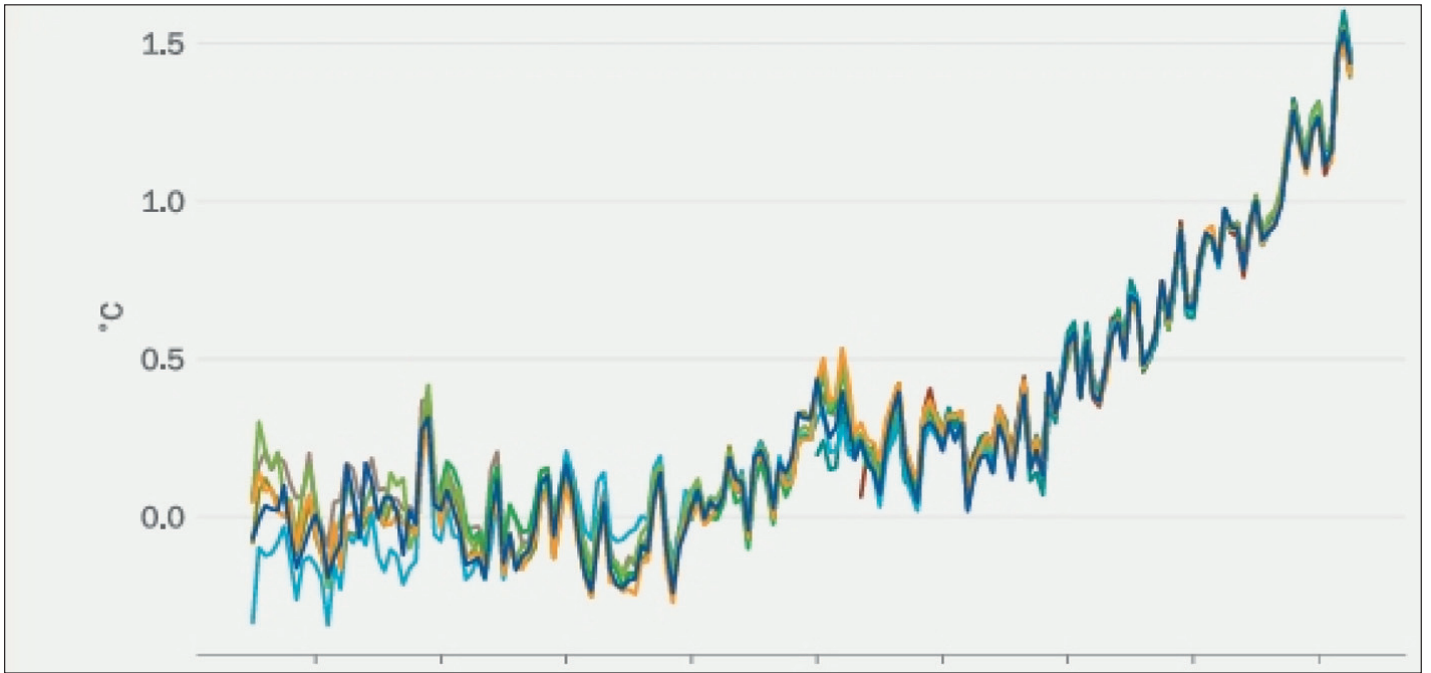
to produce a neat mound of new foliage. Untrimmed plants often become mildewed. Sow swedes, beetroot, carrots, parsnips, French and runner beans outdoors. Plant out sweet corn in blocks, rather than a long row, as they are wind pollinated. Take cuttings from dahlias and chrysanthemums for flowering later in summer. Plant tomatoes, peppers, aubergines, cucumbers etc. in a cold greenhouse or outdoors if in sheltered site. Make up summer flowering hanging baskets and containers. *Late May* Brighten up your patio with some spectacular frost tender container plants, like brugmansia. Prune clematis montana straight after flowering, if they are getting out of bounds. Plant out leeks, marrows, courgettes and melon plants.



Enjoy more herbs by sowing Basil, Corriander and Parsley every fortnight. Spinach often runs to seed if sown after mid May - so sow leaf beet instead. Sow some half-hardy annuals for use a winter pot plants e.g. calceolarias, schizanthus and cinnerarias. Sow ornamental cabbage and kale for winter colour in tubs and borders. Beware of houseplants getting scorched on sunny windowsills. Listen to the weather forecast in case of any nasty late frosts.

How is Global and Central England climate changing?

Professor Chris Folland



Graph One: The rise in global mean surface temperature since 1850

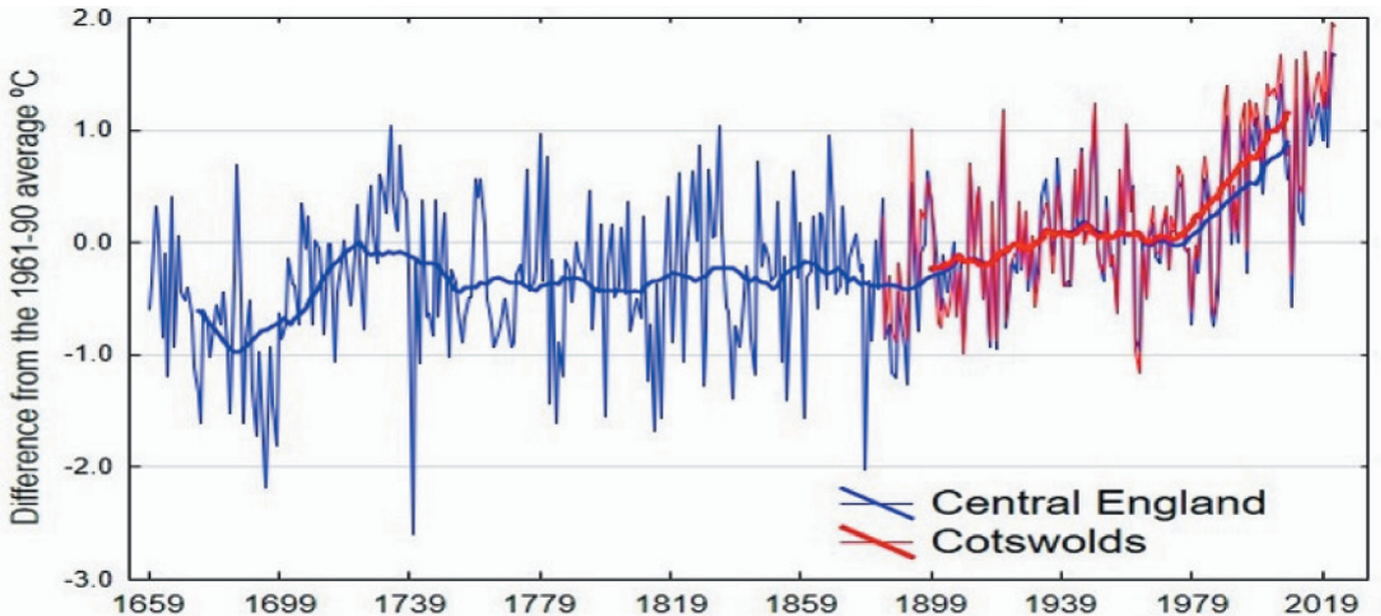
Many readers will have heard recently that global warming has reached another peak over the last decade, caused by increasing greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide and methane. The first picture shows how the global mean surface temperature has risen since 1850 using instrumental records. Global annual mean land and ocean surface temperature differences from an 1850-1900 average data sets published by the World Meteorological Organisation show that warming has not been uniform

but is now the fastest in the record. There was no warming in the second half of the nineteenth century because greenhouse gases hardly increased then. Warming since 1900 is now about 1.3°C. Some warming during the early decades of the twentieth century was caused by slowly increasing greenhouse gases, but some was caused by natural factors, including a very small increase in heat from the sun, which stopped by 1960. Greenhouse gases have increased much faster over the last fifty years, accounting for

almost all warming since then. Temperature wobbles from year to year, or sometimes several years, are caused by short-term natural climate variations, notably warming and cooling of the tropical Pacific Ocean surface known as El Niño (warming) and La Niña (cooling). The warmest year was 2024, 1.55°C above the 1850 to 1900 average, warmed further by a fairly strong El Niño while 2025, 0.12°C cooler, was cooled by a weak La Niña. Another human activity cools global temperatures. This involves

emissions of aerosols into the atmosphere, mainly from the emission of sulphur particles by coal power stations and ships. These cause incoming solar radiation to be reflected and also an increase in low clouds, further reflecting sunshine. Sulphur pollution has appreciably reduced the global warming which would otherwise have happened over much of the last century. Recent laudable efforts to reduce it, especially by greatly reducing the sulphur in fuel used by ships, might unfortunately increase warming.

Graph Two: Annual mean Cotswold and Central England temperature anomaly series 1659 to 2023



How is local climate changing?



A dry Thames near Cirencester during summer 2022



Above: Lyme Regis beach during the summer heatwave of 1976
Below: Hyde Park during the summer heatwave of 2018

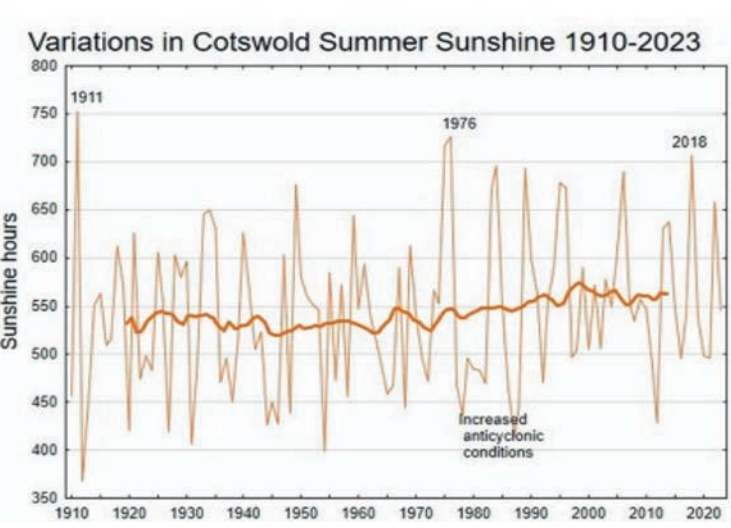
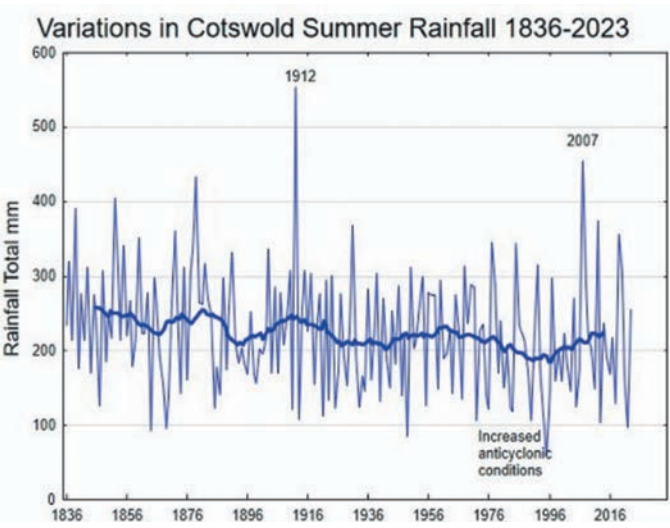


In the Midlands, we are lucky to have the longest instrumental temperature record in the world, starting in 1659, called Central England Temperature. Graph Two includes a more localised north Cotswold temperature series from near Cheltenham provided by the Meteorological Office starting in 1884 and finishing in 2023. This shows slightly more recent warming than Central England temperature. Note that the slowly varying lines are twenty-year averages. Both records show similar warming since 1900 to the global series of about 1.3°C; even the slower variations in the three series are quite similar. Furthermore, all four north Cotswold and Central England seasons have warmed by at least 1°C, spring and autumn warming most. We have good North Cotswold records of rainfall. Rainfall trends are less clear than temperature trends, though rainfall data extend back to 1836. However, the last three decades

do show increasing winter rainfall as expected from predictions of a warming climate using physical climate models. However, summer predictions indicate decreasing rainfall due to a long-term increase in dry summer weather patterns over Britain. Graph three shows slowly decreasing north Cotswold summer rainfall over the last two centuries. However, recent decades show marked multi-decadal fluctuations due to varying weather patterns, though very recent years have often been dry like 2025. Summer 2022, the last low point on the rainfall graph, was also particularly dry, as reflected by the photograph of a dry Thames near its source not far from Cirencester (above). Finally, records of the north Cotswold sunshine are available since 1910. Here we show summer sunshine. The glorious summer of 1976 stands out, as does the very warm sunny summer of 2018,

highlighting the large variations of sunshine between many summers. Overall, there is a slight increase in summer sunshine in the last fifty years.

Before retirement, Prof Chris Folland was Head of Climate Variability and Forecasting research and a Science Fellow at the Meteorological Office Hadley Centre for Climate Change



Ailsa's Kitchen *Ailsa Craddock*

With oil and gas prices going through the roof, adding not only to our own daily wallets but also to the cost of food and its distribution, it is even more important to shop locally and seasonally. Forget strawberries from Spain, beans from Mexico and tomatoes from Tunisia and see what your local farm shops and greengrocers are selling. Now is the time to pull together as a community and support all our local farmers and shops. It's also the time to make the most of whatever food you buy, so this month is a selection of what you can make with just one chicken and a few extras along the way. All the recipes serve four – so twelve meals for the cost of a large chicken – and, with the last, an opportunity to clear out the fridge!

Coconut and Lime Roasted Chicken

- 65g cooked rice
- 1 lemon grass stalk, finely chopped
- 2cm piece of ginger, grated
- 2 garlic cloves
- Chopped coriander
- 2-3 kaffir lime leaves, chopped
- 60g shredded coconut, toasted
- Medium to large chicken
- 45g brown sugar
- 60ml fish sauce
- 60ml lime juice

Preheat oven 180°C.

Chop lemongrass, ginger and garlic, coriander and lime leaves finely. Add to the cooked rice with the coconut and mix well. Spoon into the chicken cavity.

Pour 500ml of water into a roasting pan with the fish sauce and brown sugar and stir to dissolve. Place the chicken, breast-side down in the pan and roast for 40 minutes, basting occasionally. Turn the chicken and roast for a further 40 minutes, basting again. To serve, pour the lime juice over. Whilst the chicken is resting, I thicken the pan juices with a little chicken/vegetable gravy granules. You can add all sort of different spice to the rice mix – experiment!

Sweet And Sour Chicken And Pineapple Salad

- Leftover chicken meat shredded
- 100g pineapple cut into chunks
- 3 spring onions chopped



Sweet and Sour Chicken and Pineapple

- 1 head pak choi separated and shredded (you could also use spinach/lettuce)
 - ¼ cucumber halved lengthways, deseeded and sliced
 - A handful of leaves, coriander to serve, sesame seeds (optional)
- Dressing**
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame oil
 - 1 lime, juiced

- 1 tsp runny honey
 - 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- Mix together the dressing ingredients and season. Put all the salad ingredients, except the coriander, in a bowl, add the dressing and toss well. Add the coriander and toss again. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds, if you like.

PODS' latest summer sizzler!

Pershore Operatic and Dramatic Society

KISS ME, KATE

Music and Lyrics by Cole Porter
Book by Sam and Bella Spewack

8th - 13th June 2026

Number 8, Pershore
www.number8.org - 01386555488

This amateur production of KISS ME, KATE is presented by arrangement with TAMIS-WITMARK, an imprint of Concord Theatricals Ltd www.concordtheatricals.co.uk

Banking Hub now open!

Pershore Library, Church Street, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 1DT, Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm

Here, you can withdraw cash, deposit cash and cheques, make balance enquiries, pay utility bills, access other cash services, such as floats and coinage (for registered businesses). There is also a private space where you can speak to a community banker from your own bank about more complicated issues. The hub is not a Post Office, so you can't send parcels or buy stamps.

The hub has a counter service operated by the Post Office, where customers of all major banks and building societies can regularly transact cash. A different bank will be available throughout the week:

Mon: NatWest
Tue: Lloyds
Wed: HSBC
Thurs: Barclays
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www.cashaccess.co.uk
02045 831200
support@cashaccess.co.uk

Kiss Me Kate at Number 8

PODS turn up the heat with a summer sizzler. Pershore's popular Operatic and Dramatic Society (PODS) bring the musical 'Kiss Me, Kate' - Cole Porter's playful nod to Shakespeare - to Number 8 this June. The story unfolds as a theatre company attempts to stage The Taming of the Shrew, only to find explosive egos and romantic rifts spiralling backstage, mirroring the fiery relationships they're meant to be performing. Shakespeare that's more sizzle than sonnet, this production takes the spark of the original play and wraps it in full-throttle

comedy, dance, and musical energy. With a live orchestra - from the swagger of Brush Up Your Shakespeare to the razzle of Too Darn Hot - PODS raise the Wunderbar with high-energy choreography and Porter's iconic musical numbers. For a summer evening alive with sass, energy and classic Broadway sparkle, a ticket to 'Kiss Me, Kate' is simply too darn hot to miss. *Kiss Me, Kate* - 7.30pm from Mon 8th - Sat 13th June. For tickets from Number 8 Box Office, call 01386 555488 or visit www.number8.org

Coming home to peace

Emily Papirnik

Peace is often spoken about as though it is something we must search for, somewhere distant, waiting patiently for us to arrive. Yet when we pause and really consider it, peace can be far more fluid than that. It is not always a destination. Sometimes, it is something that finds us. For some, peace is a place. A quiet beach at sunrise, a favourite chair by a window, a woodland path where the light filters gently through the trees. These places seem to hold a certain energy, one that softens the noise of everyday life. The body relaxes without effort, the breath deepens, and for a moment, everything feels held. The external environment creates the conditions for an internal shift. For others, peace is found in a person. Someone whose presence alone brings a sense of calm. There is no need for explanation or performance - just being is enough. In their company, the nervous system settles, thoughts slow down, and there is a quiet reassurance that, in this moment, all is well. It is a reminder of the power of connection and the safety that can exist within it. And sometimes, peace is found in a thing or an action. A piece of music, a creative practice, the rhythm of breath, or the repetition of movement. These moments invite us back into ourselves. They create space - space to feel, to release, and to simply be. For me, peace often arrives through the natural world. There is something about the sound of waves, the steady, rhythmic rise and fall, that seems to mirror a deeper truth within us. It reminds me that everything moves in cycles, that nothing is permanent, and that there is a natural ebb



and flow to life. Birdsong has a similar effect. It draws me into the present moment, gently pulling my attention away from the noise of the mind and into something simple and real. And walking in nature - feeling the ground beneath my feet, noticing the details around me - becomes a way of returning. Not to somewhere new, but back to myself. Without those external factors, I believe that peace is a feeling - an inner state that can arise unexpectedly. It might come in the middle of chaos, a brief but powerful pause where everything aligns. A sense of acceptance. Of letting go. Of no longer needing things to be different from what they are. This kind of peace is less dependent on external circumstances and more connected to awareness and presence, this is the way I am now trying to access peace daily, going inward to the peace that is always within me. Perhaps peace is not one thing, but many. Perhaps it changes depending on what we need in that moment. And maybe the real invitation is not to search endlessly for it, but to begin to notice where it already exists in our lives. When we recognise it, even briefly, we realise something important: peace is not separate from us - it is something we can come home to, again and again.

Watch Out for Devil's Fingers

Karen Rose



Many of us know Constable's famous painting 'The Hay Wain', with its peaceful Suffolk landscape and wagon crossing the millpond at Flatford Mill. What often goes unnoticed are the towering trees in the background - once a common sight, now one of Britain's rarest natives: the black poplar. These remarkable trees were valued for their light, springy and unusually fire-resistant wood. It was widely used for clogs, pegs, baskets, construction, and even early artificial limbs. In Constable's day, even the cart in the painting was likely made from black poplar. Today, only around 8,000 black poplars remain in the UK. Their decline is due to the loss of wetland habitats, the widespread planting of fastgrowing hybrid poplars (which readily crossbred with natives), and the unpopularity

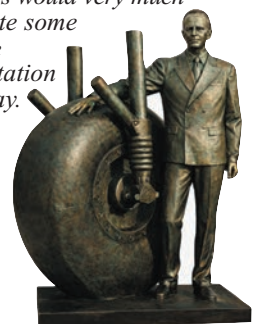
of female trees, whose drifting white seed fluff was considered a nuisance. True natives can live for two centuries and reach an impressive 40 metres. At Avon Meadows in Pershore, the Friends of Avon Meadows are helping to safeguard the species by planting three young black poplars. We're also keen to locate any local surviving wild trees. Native black poplars are distinctive: deeply gnarled dark trunks, heavy burrs and, in older specimens, sweeping low branches, but at this time of year the catkins are the best clue - bright yellow-green catkins on females and deep red 'devil's fingers' on males. So look out for those devil's fingers - they may just point you to a local treasure.

Karen Rose is a biodiversity officer for Wychavon District Council

Dowty statue unveiling

A statue of Pershore-born inventor and businessman, George Dowty, will be unveiled in Lincoln this month, during a ceremony held on Wednesday 27th May. His inventions saved lives on a monumental scale and he made a significant contribution to the winning of the Second World War," commented Martin Robins, Chairman of the Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee. "Over fifty years after his passing, it is most appropriate to have a statue erected in his memory at the International Bomber Command Centre in Lincoln given that his most famous design was probably that of the undercarriage for the Lancaster bomber. In 1956, George Dowty received a knighthood and in 1967 the Royal Aeronautical Society made him an honorary fellow, the greatest distinction it can confer, in recognition of

many years of outstanding service to aviation." The Sir George Dowty Memorial Committee is delighted that Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Graydon GCB CBE is to lead the service. *Of the three places associated with Sir George Dowty - Pershore, Worcester and Cheltenham - there is no representation by Pershore at the statue unveiling. The event organisers would very much appreciate some Pershore representation on the day.*



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Romy's Uni Life

Romy Kemp *Liverpool University*

Warm weather and keeping busy

The weather in Liverpool is finally becoming sunnier, but the wind does still kick up a storm, and coming back to university for the final time is rather crazy. Everyone knows that it comes to an end, but experiencing it is something else. I have loved my time at university, although my final year has been frustrating and there has been a lot of trouble. I am proud of myself for not giving up and seeing my degree through. On the whole, the modules I have taken have been extremely interesting and I have loved exploring niche details within these subjects. I will miss my university life but I am looking forward to starting a new chapter, although the thought of being in the real adult world is pretty scary.

My Trip to Nottingham

Last month, I spoke about a trip to Nottingham to see my best mate. I had a great time meeting her friends and exploring the place she lives. We did a bit of shopping, which I'm always down for, and picked up a few new things. As most young people do, we had a little house party and from there, some of us went clubbing. The club we went to had been chosen in advance because it plays some of the best metal music (so it was a proper vibe in there)! My trip wasn't all fun and games though, because I had an essay due a few days later, so it was great for my best friend and I to have a study session, like we used to do in high school.

After a fabulous few days in Nottingham, I was dropped off at the train station, but from here,

things got chaotic. My TrainLine app was glitching and I didn't know which train I was meant to be getting (long story). The train I was meant to get went all the way to Cardiff with a stop at Birmingham New Street. However, my app wouldn't tell me the stops further than Birmingham New Street. So I did what any anxious person would do and I asked a group of people who were standing next to me. As they were helping me look, the train that I should've gotten on exited. Thankfully, though, the men I had asked worked for the railway! These wonderful men let me board the next train with them and helped me feel calmer than I was before. We had a nice chat before I had to get off for my next train, so I thanked them and exited.

From here, you would think that I was able to get onto my final



change train ... You would be wrong. My second change was delayed, so I ended up missing my final change. Luckily enough, I was able to get onto a train from Birmingham to Worcester, but because of trespassers on the lines, this train was packed. Thankfully, we all had a bit of a chat. I spent over an hour standing up with tens of other people on a very packed train. Honestly, it was an adventure, and I got to meet nice new people, though the timing for my essay (which was due in literally the next day) was comedic.

A Place to Meet

Chloe Pickstock



"Pen portraits," one of the regulars, Rodger, says to me, handing over the money for his coffee as he stands chatting with his friend Richard. I pause. "Sorry, what?" "Have you ever thought about doing pen portraits - like drawing people, but with words?" It made me think about the people I've met and how closely observing them is really just another way of understanding connection. I've always been drawn to people - their stories, their conversations - and it made me think about how each person is unique, and yet we're all looking for the same thing: connection.

Maybe this is why we go to places like cafés, because we want to experience that feeling in some way. At The Orchard, I see a constant flow of faces. Every day, I listen to fragments of people's lives while I make their coffees, and sometimes I am even invited into the conversation. Since travelling, I've started noticing

these moments of connection everywhere.

I remember walking along the street in Seoul, and I found myself distracted by two older men walking ahead of me. I couldn't understand a word they were saying, but with their hand gestures and expressive tone, I could tell that whatever they were talking about, it was interesting. Their conversation made me wonder about their lives. How often did they meet up? Did they have a certain place they were heading to or coming from? I realised I'd seen this before. The language was different, but the rhythm was the same. It reminded me of Richard and Rodger, in the café, mid-conversation.

In Asia, coffee culture is huge, and while I was there, I learned about traditional tea ceremonies. Rooted in Buddhism and Daoism, these ceremonies centre on the care of serving tea and cherishing the fleeting moment of social gathering. Taking part in one, I learned how to mix matcha to create the perfect drink. Alongside others from around the world learning the art, we had our own moment of connection. A tea ceremony, then, I guess, is a version of what we do now. Like modern cafés, both act as the "third place" that I mentioned in my first article, centred around the appreciation of a carefully prepared drink and the experience that comes with it. They offer a



moment of calm on a busy day, and a space for connection and conversation. Perhaps those two men in Seoul were coming from a café and taking a moment to connect in their busy days. Maybe we all need this. Each country has a different language

and culture, but something that can always be translated is connection. Now, back at The Orchard, I hear those same conversations every day - just in a different language. Maybe every conversation is its own kind of portrait.

Gregory's World!

Let's go, Worcester!

Dum-dum! beat our hearts. *Dum-dum!* beats the basketball. Shoes squeak on the gym floor. The Worcester Wolves close in, dribbling, dodging, chest-passing, shooting – score! The crowd erupts. They stomp their feet and jab the air with their foam fingers. “Let’s go, Worcester! Let’s go!” Come and join us, fellow reader. Help yourself to one of Big Man Sam’s cheesy nachos. All of this was his idea. He invited me and Natdog along to the NBL semi-final – Worcester Wolves vs Manchester Magic – at the University of Worcester Arena. If you’re like me (and you were told off for using your knees in P.E. basketball at school, or you keep calling the ‘hoop’ the ‘goal’), then let me clarify some things. Manchester Magic are the ones in the white-on-red kit. Our Wolves are wearing the same colour scheme as a chocolate orange. The six-foot-tall, Looney Tunes-looking wolf by the hot dog stand is our mascot, Wolfie, and he will gladly have a selfie

with you at halftime. But right now, we have a game to win. “Deeeee-fence!” Here come Manchester Magic. To be fair, it must be tough playing away from home. Every time they get a free throw, the arena trembles to a drum roll of feet – but falls totally silent if they actually score. A tad anticlimactic. It can’t be very conducive to self-esteem. The Wolves triumph, 82-66! Time to queue up with all the six-year-olds and get a fist pump from each player. After the celebrations, we remember that a group chat of old Sixth Form friends has been buzzing away on our phones all evening. They’re out in Worcester tonight too. “Wanna make this a double-bill evening, Gdog?” “I think I do, Natdog.” Let’s go! You’re invited too, fellow reader. If you’ve never done a night out in Worcester, let me suggest a three-part framework to start with. It’s not the classiest, it’s not the most hygienic, but you have to be making a concerted effort to be

Gregory Sidaway

miserable not to enjoy yourself. Firstly, if you’re after a spot to warm up, catch up and booze up, there’s no establishment finer than Wetherspoons. It’s cheap and lively, the tables are sticky, the carpets are eggy, and, if you’re really lucky, the first-floor bathroom might just leak through the ceiling into your seating area. Forge your way inside, pull a few tables together, avoid stepping in the last customer’s mayo-and-carpet-fluff pitta, activate the ‘Spoons app, and order two drinks at a time to avoid waiting aeons at the bar. Not if you’re at the back of the building, though – the deeper you go, the worse the WiFi gets, so the app won’t work. You’re off to a strong start! Secondly, stagger over to Bierkeller. It’s my favourite club in Worcester. Jump up onto the benches and bang your head like a woodpecker to anthems like ‘Mr Brightside’ and ‘Shut Up and Dance with Me’. Thirdly, when you start to yawn and the ceiling starts to rain, trudge to McDonald’s. Hurry, the bouncers will turf you out at 4am. Maccies is where we all seek



refuge, a cheeky McNugget, and an answer to ‘what on earth just happened?’ Faces from your past can inexplicably wash up. Everyone’s numbed to zombies under the glare of bright lights. You feel a sense of camaraderie generated by collective fatigue. My ears are muffled. My voice is croaky. My head is spinning. Okay, I think, let’s go. Seagulls swoop and cry outside, clearing up the chicken strips you drop or forget as you rush to support your giddy/sobbing/intensely apologetic mate, or to chase after your Uber taxi that can’t find you. Home is just a speedy drive away. Unlock the front door as quietly as you can, creep upstairs, climb into bed and you’re done! Right, same time next week?

Evie's Adventures

Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University



The second year at university is almost over! I’m not entirely sure how it went by so fast. It feels like just yesterday I was coming back after my first year, thinking I had everything figured out. Spoiler: I absolutely did not. This year has felt so different from my first. The energy was more confident, not surrounded by new things, covered in a blanket of slightly terrifying energy, but rather a quiet pressure to actually get things right. The assignments meant more, the expectations were higher, and the reality that university doesn’t last forever has started to sink in. It wasn’t overwhelming all

the time, but it was definitely there in the background, like a constant reminder to take things a bit more seriously. Academically, this year felt like a slow process of figuring things out. It wasn’t always obvious in the moment, but looking back, I can see where things started to make more sense. Some assignments came together more easily than I expected, while others took a lot more time and effort than I’d originally planned. There were still a few late nights and last-minute rushes, but I think I handled things better than I would have last year. It wasn’t perfect, but it felt like progress, which to me at least, matters more.

Outside of university work, though, this year is what I’ll probably remember most. The random weekday nights that turned into something way more fun than planned, the endless “quick catch-ups” that lasted hours, and just the comfort of having a solid group of people around. There’s something really underrated about reaching a point where university feels familiar; where you know your routines, your favourite spots, and the people who make everything feel a bit easier. At the same time, there’s been a noticeable shift. The second year is very much a middle ground, no longer the novelty of the first year, but not quite the final stretch either. It’s that weird in-between stage where things start to feel more real. Conversations about the future come up more often, even if they’re usually followed by jokes to avoid actually thinking about them too deeply. I’ve also realised how much I’ve changed, even in small ways. I’m a bit more confident, a bit more independent, and slightly better at managing everything (though still far from perfect). I care more about doing well, but I’ve also learned that it’s okay not to have



everything sorted all the time. Now that it’s almost over, there’s a strange mix of relief and nostalgia. Relief that deadlines are almost done and I can almost breathe for a bit, but also that slightly weird feeling of knowing this chapter is about to be finished. The second year wasn’t perfect; it was real, messy and stressful, but most importantly fun. And with my third year around the corner, it’s hard not to wonder how quickly that will disappear, too. With all that said, whilst I will definitely miss university over the next few months, I cannot wait to be home again. Surrounded by family (most importantly, my cat. Sorry, not sorry), impromptu trips with friends, and of course, the occasional trip back to university to catch up with friends. That’s all from me for now, Toodles!