

Village Life

John Driscoll



How can we be approaching the halfway point in the year already? This seems to be a familiar refrain this year more than most. Is this the result of all of us ageing, or is there something more sinister going on?

One thing's for sure – we're not far off Midsummer Day. Some say that's 24th June, but the longest day this year is actually the 21st, and that's the important bit to me as it gives us the most daylight hours. Summer Solstice will apparently occur at 09:24 BST (thank you, Google!), so start making those daisy chains now! May was notable this year as we had two full moons, with the second therefore known as a 'blue moon'. What's not to love about two very bright moons in one month – unless you're hiding from a gamekeeper, of course! Anyway, cue for a song, and I'm sure many of us can spring into instant crooner mode with a rendition of the old 1934 Rodgers and Hart classic (again, thanks Google), which seems to pop up regularly. For me, another classic track springs to mind. Nanci Griffith sang 'Once in a Very Blue Moon' a bit more recently and it's worth a listen. Sorry, sounds like I'm straying into Steve Ide's territory here! Other Blue Moons are, of

course, available, but maybe the message should be that unusual things can be expected during a blue moon, so let's keep fingers crossed for pleasant surprises. May weather has been disappointing up to the time of me writing this piece, but thankfully, it is due to improve towards the Bank Holiday. It's living up to its reputation of "it may rain, it may be sunny, it may yet snow!" and of course we have to remember "Ne'er cast a clout til May is out!" – which seems to refer to keeping warm layers at hand until the month is over. They knew a few things in them olden days! It's still been a lovely month to live in this little neck of the country. Popping out into the garden between showers has been rewarded with beautiful birdsong and bats patrolling in the evening twilight. Then, out of nowhere, one afternoon, a tractor and grass cutter appeared in a neighbouring field and spent an hour tracking up and down clearing previously neglected pasture. Now, this may not seem too exciting, but with a two-year-old grandson who is absolutely obsessed with tractors, I just had to go out and film this event. Sadly, he wasn't with us to witness it, but he was certainly bowled over by the resultant film

clips. In case you were the tractor driver wondering why a random 'mature citizen' was filming you, this is my cover story! Can't wait for harvest time! So, village life? It's sadly been a bit turbulent around here of late, with the ups and downs that are maybe inevitable in any 'family'. However, I've just been reminded what a fantastic community we have after one of our residents posted a question on our village WhatsApp group asking for advice on the disposal of unwanted waste. This was sadly deposited in their garden by unknown passers-by and caused some concern. Within a few minutes, a good number of villagers posted helpful suggestions and showed both community concern and

resourcefulness. How wonderful to be reminded that there is support around us and a strong network when needed. Little thoughtful gestures can make such a big difference. Onwards to June and time to enjoy all the delights on offer. Sadly, there are still too many conflicts in the world, and we have to live with the fallout from some of these. We must remember there are many people who have far worse to suffer than we do, and also that a little kindness can go a very long way. Perhaps remember the timeless advice given to Bambi by Thumper (the rabbit, not Mike Tyson!): "If you can't say nothin' nice, don't say nothin' at all". What a wise rabbit – enjoy June, everyone!

Pershore Flower Club

Twenty-two members of Pershore Flower Club had a visit to Morton Hall Gardens, near Inkberrow, on Wednesday 6th May, where we were treated to having the founder, Anne Olivieri, as our guide. She gave us a history of the house, Morton Hall, and then her reasons for 'falling in love' with it and how she came to create the beautiful gardens surrounding the house. This entailed a huge amount of removing laurel bushes and trees and then planting more trees, creating an orchard and a Japanese garden with ponds and a tea-house. After walking along paths, stepping over large stones and passing wonderful planting all guided by Anne, we then arrived at the borders near the house, which were filled with tulips – Morton Hall Gardens had held their annual tulip festival over the previous weekend – along with glorious flowering shrubs and plants. Here we were handed over to Ollie, the head gardener, who

then told us about the layout of the garden and the work involved to create such a place of beauty. Following our tour, we enjoyed a delicious cream tea with homemade scones and jams in the orangery. On Wednesday 20th May, we welcomed Beverley Short of Stratford-upon-Avon to give her demonstration entitled 'Best of British'; however, the writer of these reports was unable to attend the Club meeting, but those members who did reported that it was very enjoyable with lovely flowers and designs as always.

Our next Pershore Flower Club evening is on Wednesday 17th June at 7.30 p.m. at Bishampton Village Hall when Jackie Page from Chipping Norton will give her demonstration entitled 'Connections'. For further details, ring 01905 840024 All visitors welcome.



Moon and Back

Angela Johns

How exciting it was that we sent humans to the far side of the Moon. Far more interesting than sending some overly made-up women in a rocket for a few minutes, that's for sure.

I heard on the radio recently that measuring gravity is the hardest scientific experiment because the gravitational pull of everything else cannot be eliminated to study just one. I did think that this was just like family dynamics, with each member having a push or pull effect on all the others, whether they are aware of it or not.

Even absence creates effect. Is this one reason why we find life so complicated sometimes? We are one thing to someone and something else to another. We want this from them, but that from the other. And just who are you on your own? Can you ever really be your own person when you want to be someone to somebody else? Can you be grounded and sure of yourself when you want to love someone else to the Moon and back? Maybe it can be both.

The Moon pulls on the solid Earth so that it bulges at their closest point, so slightly that we don't even notice. This bulge is seen in the seas, however, as their fluidity gives us the tides as the Earth rotates. We can think of our bodies as like the Earth, and our emotions like the seas – the tides, the currents, the deep dark stillness, the loud and crashing surface. And our emotions speak to us, our emotional energy transformed into watery messages. Our eyes leak with sadness or relief; our palms get sweaty when we feel we need to prove ourselves; our insides turn from solid and



sure to liquid and unpredictable when we are faced with our own fears. We do so want to be anchored and secure, able to predict our near futures, but in these liquid moments, we feel untethered and tossed on the waves. What is the safety advice if we fall into a river? It's: don't struggle, float feet-first to protect your head because you will be carried downstream, where eventually the current will meet the riverbank. Sometimes the best advice is not to struggle to deny our emotions but to be carried by them as they teach us more about what we want for ourselves. We know that further on, we will be washed up on the river-beach to dry off in the sun-rays of the future. Will we wash up spent, or roll in with a giggle and newfound sense of joy? Maybe it can be both. Well, we don't know - but that's life on Earth.

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

Limited or Sole trader

Carol Draper

If you are thinking about starting a business, one of the first decisions to make is whether to be a self-employed Sole Trader or a Limited Company. I have covered this area before, but many of the goalposts have moved, so it is worth looking at again.

The first thing to do is to consider what you want to achieve, who your intended customers are, what their expectations are, who your suppliers will be, and what risks are associated with dealing with them.

If your main motivator is paying as little tax as possible, then for a start-up businesses there is virtually no difference between the two. While personal and Corporation Tax rates have remained level for the past few years, Employer's National Insurance has increased, and this year, the dividend tax rates have gone up by 2%, which means extracting funds from a limited company has become more expensive. Becoming a sole trader is straightforward, and you can start immediately without filing any paperwork. You are required to register with HMRC to advise them you are self-employed and to register for Self-Assessment and Class 2 National Insurance. This will ensure you don't miss out on State Pension contributions.

While you pay tax on the profits you make, the funds from your business are yours to keep. However, Sole Trader



reporting requirements are changing and depending on your turnover, you may need to register for Making Tax Digital and send quarterly returns of your income and expenditure to HMRC. A Limited Company is incorporated and registered at Companies House. It is a separate legal entity, which offers the shareholders protection of their personal assets against any claims which may be made against the company. There is a legal requirement to submit accounts, which are published on Companies House. Corporation Tax is paid on the profits of the business, but tax is also payable on funds extracted from the business. If you are looking for investment, then you will need to set up a Limited Company. If you need advice on what the best course of action is for you, speak to your accountant.

*Carol Draper FCCA
Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co Ltd*

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Jazz News

Peter Farrall



Pete Allen Jazz Band

A recent BBC news item featured the England World Cup football team setting up a training camp in Kansas City. The article contained a very brief reference to jazz in the city, but jazz and football probably don't really go together (except perhaps at Pershore Town FC's Community Stadium!).

Anyway, if they wish, the team can safely go jazzing at some of the city's many nightclubs on their time off. But it wasn't always so; in the nineteen twenties to early forties Kansas was, like Chicago, rife with gambling, drugs, illicit liquor, prostitution and gang war – not the ideal environment for a top football team. These shady goings-on took place in nightclubs quite

blatantly because the city's political boss, Tom Pendersgast, was as corrupt as the gangsters. Word soon got around that there was good money for jazz musicians to be had in the vice areas of Kansas, and so began an almost mass migration to the city. An indigenous Kansas band leader of the earlier years was pianist Benny Moten, whose successive orchestras were already showing the emergent Kansas City style, but the major development came when Moten recruited pianist William "Count" Basie to the band. Basie and another new member, bassist Walter Page, transformed the rhythm section from the erstwhile stomping style to a more rolling beat in some ways similar to

boogie woogie. Over time, the orchestra shed the constrained style of contemporary dance bands and reverted to head arrangements with improvised solos backed by ad hoc riffs from the rest of the band to create a very exciting, blues-flavoured sound. Basie went on to form his own bands, which many regard as the epitome of the Kansas City style.

These days, a myriad jazz clubs in the City present a whole spectrum of jazz but the KC style is still strongly represented and it's good to know that the old delinquent days are long gone. Sad news last month was the death of Len Thwaites, respected bassist, bandleader and jazz club promoter. Over his long career, Len played with many prestigious bands, including one that he himself formed at short notice to accompany US President Bill Clinton playing his saxophone in Hay-on-Wye. Monty Sunshine, Alex Welsh and Bob Wallis, amongst others, have been driven along by Len's robust bass lines, but this month's club night band leader will have special memories. Len was part of the Pete Allen Band during their tour of the USA when they took part in the Sacramento Jazz Festival in 1983.

Like Len, Pete Allen has enjoyed a long, successful life in jazz and will bring his latest eight-piece lineup for us to enjoy the very best in the traditional style.

Pete Allen Jazz Band

Wednesday 24th June

Doors open at 7pm, music at 8pm

Admission £12.50 to include a raffle ticket.

In the Function Room, Pershore Football Club.

Book in advance and pay on arrival

Visit www.pershorejazz.org.uk Tel: 01527 66692

find us on Facebook.

Music Matters

Steve Ide

Fifty years ago, in June 1976, The Wurzels were number one with Combine Harvester, ABBA released Fernando, and The Good Life was on TV. Meanwhile, at The Manchester Lesser Free Trade Hall, the Sex Pistols played two gigs that would change music forever and still influence bands today. These poorly attended, confrontational gigs inspired the creation of some of the most important bands of recent times. Bernard Sumner and Peter Hook were at the show and started Joy Division the next day because of what they saw; Stephen Morrissey was there, and his work in The Smiths was influenced by the shows; Mark E Smith went on to start The Fall after seeing the Pistols; Tony Wilson was at the show and went on to create Factory Records and The Hacienda nightclub. Some of the most important bands of recent times, Radiohead,

Happy Mondays, Suede, Oasis, Belle and Sebastian, The Cure, The Killers, The White Stripes and many more have been impacted by people at the shows. So we have a lot to thank The Pistols for. On those sweaty nights in Manchester, four young punks came and the world would never be the same again.

Notable New Albums

In Times Of Dragons

by Tori Amos

Lush arrangements and Tori's wonderful voice cover subjects such as female empowerment, the elites and politics.

Occasionally, the messages are a bit obvious, but the music hooks you in.

Standout track - 'Shush'

Peaches!

by The Black Keys

This is a bluesy, rock covers album, full of fabulous riffs and wonderfully unrefined playing.

Possible side effects of this album are foot tapping, head nodding and joy.

Stand out track - 'Tell me you love me'

Procreation Percolation

by The Super Furry Animals

A collection of the band's early Welsh language records and EPs. This is a glimpse into the origin story of one of the UK's most original, yet underrated & under-appreciated bands

Stand out track - 'God! Show me magic'

Add to playlist

Botanical Garden

by Anna Erhard

Satisfied

by Honey Dijon

Handbags and Glad Rags

by Rod Stewart

The Luckiest

by Ben Folds

Ode to Billie Joe

by Bobbie Gentry



Is that a 'Honey Blonde'?

Martyn Cracknell



Honey in tea

As we are now well into May, we can surely look forward to calm sunny conditions and good weather for colony growth and nectar gathering. Winter always imposes stresses on the bees and it is normal for some colonies to die, but this year we have seen well over the 10–15% that we normally expect, and some beekeepers have lost half or even more of their colonies. It is tempting to point the finger at this or that particular cause, but in reality, there are many different factors at play, and since the losses have been experienced over large geographic areas, urban as well as rural, it is most likely a weather and climate effect. The surviving colonies have, in contrast, bounced back with renewed vigour, and the winter losses should soon be replaced by wild and managed swarms. I have just returned from Northern Spain, where I spotted a beekeeper at a local market with a huge array of different products containing honey or hive ingredients. I was intrigued by the honey hair shampoo for lightening the hair. Honey contains secretions

from the bees' honey stomach, including an enzyme called Glucose oxidase. When honey is slightly diluted, this enzyme induces a reaction which liberates a little hydrogen peroxide, and this has a mild antiseptic and bleaching effect. I have found a recipe from the British Beekeepers Association which you may like to try. I don't have enough hair nowadays to give you a demonstration, but in the picture, you can see a lightening in the glass of tea on the right, in which I stirred a teaspoon of honey. 'Mix six tablespoons of distilled or rainwater to one tablespoon of honey. Apply to the hair and comb through for an even finish. Pop a shower cap on and leave for an hour before rinsing off. Repeat weekly for an enhanced result.'



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'We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men.'

Herman Melville

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From the Boundary

Peter Jewell 



The test series against New Zealand is upon us. The question will be: has England sorted out their top order and will Harry Brook, a man of great talent, play Test Cricket properly rather than playing test cricket as if it was 20 over cricket? Worcestershire, Oh dear! Now unlikely to get into a promotion situation. Bumpy Rhodes built up a great team of youngsters

who left and are doing well with other counties. Handled well, they would have been in the same position as Worcestershire were in the 1964/5 season. The local elections were somewhat of a surprise. I knew Reform would do well, but not that well, and I expected the Tories to have perhaps a little bounce back. I am afraid they are dead in the water for ten years.

Labour are dead for the next fifteen years at least. The Greens are no longer a genuine environmental party. I did expect them to do better. The Liberals are really a no-show and will go back to a dozen seats at the next election. Politics in this country is in a mess. So will Starmer go or be pushed? It is certainly a summer that turns to winter.

However, I believe that he will still be there at Christmas. Is it right that the country has to bear the cost of a bi-election that is simply a put-up job? Also the moral question is: should the Mayor of Manchester resign as Mayor to contest the seat? The case is that if he loses, he will go crawling back to Manchester as a failed parliamentary candidate.



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Feeling Festive

Brian Johnson-Thomas



One of my favourite memories of the Royal Three Counties show

It's that time of year again when there's lots to do and places to visit. We've just come back from the RHS Malvern Spring Festival, made even nicer by the presence of a new category of garden called 'Blooming Borders', which had an entry from a lady who also writes for us in these pages, namely Nikki Hollier of Borders in a Box (sponsored by Hughes & Company). 'Reminders of Home Borders' blended nostalgic cottage garden charm with a fresh, modern feel, inspired by childhood memories of family gardens. Soft, calming colours, a classic cream picket fence and a playful willow dog sculpture created a warming, homely atmosphere strongly suggesting a typical British garden of the sort we all enjoy. Whilst there, I also took the opportunity of looking for 'different' Father's Day gifts from the various exhibitors, which I later supplemented with a sort of Round Robin of PR agents. Lots of ideas have prompted me to pick one each day for a week. (Well, what's wrong with Fathers' Week?) So, here in no particular order are some suggestions for fathers (and grandfathers) everywhere ...

Sunday

A Fish Pal pass. Treat him to fishing permits, licences, etc., and check river levels. Put as much credit on the Pass as you want.

See www.fishpal.com for details

Monday

But he'll need stout boots. I've been impressed by a new brand called NORTIV 8. Their PRO hiking

boots are very comfortable and quite lightweight, not expensive at £54 and available from Amazon.

To buy, go to www.amazon.co.uk/NORTIV-Waterproof-Lightweight-Armadillo-SNHB26001M/dp/B0G8JGF3QS/

Tuesday

Something to drink is also called for when fishing, I sourced a one litre flask and two cup set from Mountain Warehouse for just £24.99 (and they have a nice new shop in the Cotswold Designer Outlet just outside Tewkesbury).

Wednesday

Coming in from outdoors, you may need a shower and some grooming. I recently tried some environmentally friendly shampoo, conditioner and body wash, which says that it's 99.5% natural in origin and it is made by a company called - appropriately enough - Faith In Nature.

For details, see www.faithinnature.co.uk

Thursday

Like many dads and Grandads, I've squirreled away lots of treasured drawings done by the kids when they were young. Now the chance exists to display such memorabilia much better. So if, for example, you fancy a child's drawing printed on a golf towel or maybe on a chef's apron, then try a new company called Ooh Baby Baby Store.

For details, see www.oohbabybabystore/outline

Friday

Once you've got the apron, you may as well go and get the pizza oven. Barbecues are so old that,

nowadays, everyone wants a pizza oven in the garden.

A very popular stand at Malvern was The Pizza Oven Shop, who offer models in both gas and charcoal from around £300 up to £3000. Not only do they sell the ovens, they will also fit you up with all the ancillaries from dough balls to a woodbundle.

For more, see www.thepizzaovenshop.com

Saturday

I have saved my favourite till last - remember balsa wood models? Well, at Malvern for the first time, I met the Vintage Model Company, who offer lots of models to build at various levels of difficulty, ranging from an easy two hour build up via the Spitfire, which takes some twenty hours and is 'medium' difficult to the Lancaster Bomber or the Fokker D1 - the Red Baron's infamous tri-plane - which is a hard thirty hour build.

For more, take a look at their comprehensive website: www.vintagemodelcompany.com

As you might gather, we rather enjoyed the Malvern Festival and we're already looking forward to the Royal Three Counties Show next week (from Friday 12th until Sunday

14th, to be exact). Certainly, we will watch the daily parade of livestock avidly - I just love seeing small kids leading some enormous animal ... but children especially will also enjoy the Attwell Farm Park, showcasing not just farm animals to meet, but also their rainforest bugs roadshow. Then I really must watch the Red Devils display before sampling the best of the Food and Drink Festival and maybe settling in for a cookery demonstration. There's lots of shopping too, but, alas, I don't have the excuse of Fathers' Day research this time ...

As usual you can buy tickets over the phone during office hours on 0344 338 5400.

There are still a few tickets available for this year's season at the Longborough Festival Opera, with performances this month of Handel's 'Orlando' on the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th and Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde' on the 20th.

For more, see www.lfo.org.uk
The opera house is just outside Longborough village on 'our' side of Stow-on-the-Wold and don't forget to bring a picnic ... although they do a mean Pimms in the bar!
Maybe see you there?

Did You Know?

In some Catholic countries in Europe, Father's Day has been traditionally celebrated on 19th March since the Middle Ages. The 19th March is St Joseph's Day, a feast day dedicated to Joseph of Nazareth, the husband of the Virgin Mary and the legal father of Jesus. It soon became the day to celebrate other fathers too!

A gourmet evening at Wick Care Farm!

Imagine a group of dedicated supporters relaxing together, and you'll have a clear picture of the convivial gathering recently held at Wick Care Farm.

Professional chef, Dirk de Cuyper, and his wife, Allison along with their daughter, Chloe, treated local diners to a stunning three-course seasonal pop-up dinner to raise funds for the farm's vital work. Dirk, whose culinary career has taken him across the globe, is now settled in Wick. At weekends, he and his family volunteer their time helping with the farm's livestock.

For this special event, thirty-seven guests gathered in the barn - converted by farm owner, Tom Meikle, for the activities of Wick Care Farm run by his wife, Isobel - which was elegantly transformed by Allison and her team into a fine-dining setting. The evening began with canapés

in the evening sun, then sitting down to a farmhouse salad starter, followed by pork tenderloin en croute, and a medley of desserts, all served by a team of enthusiastic young waiters who moved seamlessly around the room. The diners included local residents, volunteers, and families of the farm's clients, all coming together to support Isobel Meikle's remarkable enterprise. Wick Care Farm provides a sanctuary where children and adults find purpose through therapeutic tasks, from animal care to growing and cooking their own vegetables. It is a true 'win-win' for the community, and we hope Dirk's pop-up dinners become a regular fixture. Thank you to everyone who made the night a success.

Check out our website to see how you can get involved:
www.wickcarefarm.co.uk



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Let's talk about anal glands



You may think anal glands is a bit of a disgusting subject to talk about but they are one of the most common reasons for a visit to the vets.

So, what are anal glands?

Anal glands are small (usually around pea sized) sacs that sit near to a dog or cat's anus, at about the 4 and 8 o'clock positions, there is one gland at each position. They produce a thick, smelly discharge that is usually emptied through the animal's usual bowel movements. To us they have a very strong and unpleasant fishy smell, but animals find the smell fascinating and use them for things like communication and identification.

The ducts that empty these glands are narrow and prone to blocking. When blocked the glands fill up and become uncomfortable and irritating. Signs that the glands could be blocked include:

- Scooting, pulling their bottom across the floor
- Turning round suddenly to nibble or lick at their back end
- Excessive licking or chewing at the back end, including around feet and legs
- A fishy smell from the mouth

If these signs are seen an anal gland emptying can be performed by either a vet or a nurse.

Sometimes the glands will become blocked and fill unnoticed resulting in an anal gland abscess which can burst out through the skin. These need more intensive treatment by a vet.

There is no set treatment to prevent the glands becoming blocked. Sometimes a change in diet or varying the amount of fibre can help. There are supplements which some find useful as well. Some will need regular emptying throughout their life. If emptying is problematic or the glands are causing a persistent irritation, then surgery can be performed to permanently remove the glands.

Best wishes *Eliza*

info@martinandcarrvets.co.uk
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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,
I commend Kempsey Times for including a column by fifteen-year-old, Joe Bowsher, in May's edition. I would only ask that Joe and his friends do some fact checking before describing the Reform Party as Far Right. But I wish Joe well and encourage him to take an interest in this country's politics - just take a bit of advice and get the facts.
Sincerely,

Simon Bott, Kempsey

Dear Editor,
Last month marked marks Deaf Awareness Week (4th-10 May), which aims to raise awareness of deafness while celebrating the UK's deaf community. This year, the National Deaf Children's Society is highlighting the early signs of deafness in children and reassuring families that support is available from the very start. Deafness isn't always obvious. Many children have mild or one-sided hearing loss, meaning signs can be easy to miss. A child might not respond when called, struggle in noisy places, seem tired or withdrawn, or miss parts of conversations. Spotting these signs early can be life-changing. With the right support, deaf children can develop strong communication skills and grow up confident and proud of who they are. Sometimes, simply knowing what to look for makes all the difference.

If you're worried about your child's hearing, it's important not to dismiss concerns. The National Deaf Children's Society supports families of children with all levels of hearing loss, offering free information and advice.

Find out more at www.ndcs.org.uk or call the charity's free Helpline: 0808 800 8880

Yours faithfully,
George Crockford
Chief Executive of the National Deaf Children's Society

Dear Editor,
Here at The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), we're gearing up for our biggest volunteering opportunities of the year so far. This June, we're asking people to take just an hour of their time to help make a vital difference for blind and partially sighted people in their local areas. Reading and books are absolutely crucial to children with vision impairment and blind and partially sighted adults. Books in accessible formats like audio and large print help to open up a world of information and learning, and open doors to the imagination which would otherwise remain hidden. As RNIB's Library Services Manager, I am writing to encourage you to take part by visiting your local library between 1st-14th June to check what books are available for blind and partially sighted readers. It only


takes a few minutes to ask the library staff and find out whether their library shelves include large print, braille or audiobooks. We'd then love you to share what you find with us using our quick online form, or by calling our Library Team. This simple action will help RNIB build a far clearer picture of accessible library services across the UK and support our work to ensure everyone can enjoy reading in a format that works for them. *I would be grateful if readers who would like to take part could complete our quick form online at <https://tinyurl.com/7xh99ppz>, or if you are unable to do so online, contact our Library Team by calling 0303 123 9999*

For this opportunity, RNIB is working alongside The Big Help Out – a UK-wide event which runs from 5th-8th June and sees millions of volunteers turn out to help community causes. The first two weeks of June also mark Hi-Vis Fortnight - an event organised by charities Share The Vision and RNIB; this celebrates library services for blind and partially sighted people and highlights the importance of books in accessible formats. By taking just a little time to support us, you will be helping improve access to vital reading resources for blind and partially sighted people in communities right across the country.

Thank you!
Yours faithfully,
Lara Marshall
Library Services Manager, RNIB

Dear Editor,
Volunteers who serve in Croome's RAF Museum recently received an email from the Property Manager saying that 'we are looking to extend our food and beverage offer ... and the Ambulance Garage has been identified as a potential suitable place'. This, she tells us, will mean losing the Canberra. This move would mean taking away a large part of the museum that covers the Cold War contributions of both RAF Defford and RAF Pershore. Not only does the Canberra help visitors to see how the invention of ejector seats saved lives, but the fact that it housed a Navigator reminds the young that such people were needed before GPS became available. Also, the funding for the restoration of the building was specifically for its use as a museum. Likewise, the planning application to Malvern Hills District Council was for this purpose. Finally, all parts of this museum serve as a memorial to the memory of those young people who gave their lives for this country, particularly as the Mortuary (part of the building) was where their bodies were laid out after accidents. This proposal desecrates their memory.

Tim Hickson
(who did his National Service in the RAF)




Banksy's latest artwork is a statue unveiled in Waterloo Place earlier this year, called 'Blind Patriotism'

Thoughts from the Snug Graffiti

We had been discussing the graffiti artist Banksy and began to recall a few examples of inspired graffiti, written, rather than drawn, that had caught our attention. Some were humorous, but a few provided food for thought. Some examples follow:

My greatest failing is not being able to finish anyt.....

How is it that children can never find their shoes, but can always find a bit of onion in their dinner?

In life it is important to know when to stop arguing with someone and simply let them be wrong.

Silence is golden unless you have children. Then it is plain suspicious.

The three hardest things to say:
1) I was wrong. 2) I need help, 3) Worcestershire sauce.

Behind every angry woman is a man who has absolutely no idea what he did wrong.

Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy cake. That's almost the same thing!

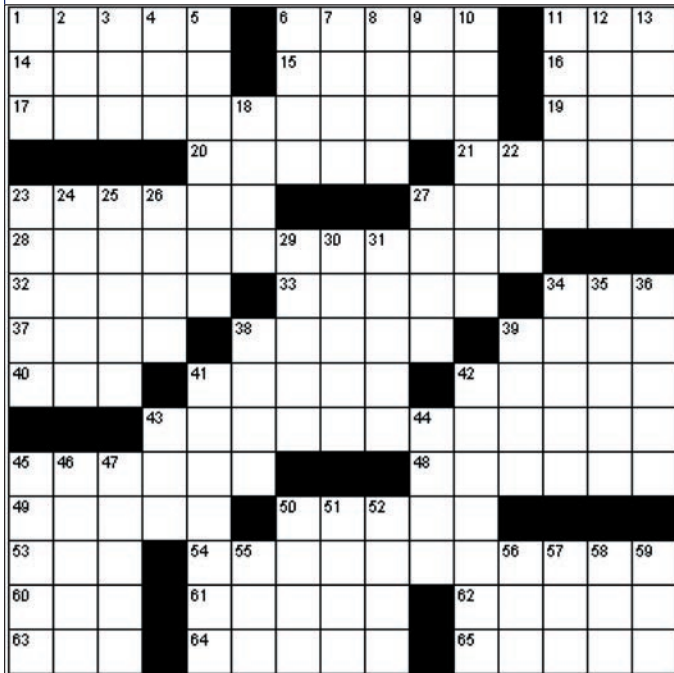
However, we decided the best one, seen outside a ladies loo at a pub in Kempsey. It read as follows:

**O I C A Q ! & I 8 2 Q
B 4 I P !**

(Hint: The clue to unravelling this graffiti lies in its location.)

Buddy Bach

Coffee Break Crossword



- Across**
- 1. In accompaniment
 - 11. Perish
 - 15. A region of Asia Minor
 - 17. Tympanis
 - 19. Constellation "The Lion"
 - 20. Fails to win
 - 23. A sandstone boulder
 - 27. An East Indian annual herb
 - 28. Ridiculous
 - 33. French for "Love"
 - 34. Armored Personnel Carrier
 - 37. An enclosed conduit
 - 38. Anagram of "Urban"
 - 39. Anagram of "Leaf"
 - 40. Estimate (abbrev.)
 - 42. Alewife fish
 - 43. Explicit approvals
 - 45. A shaman
 - 48. Rental agreements
 - 49. Sporting venue
 - 50. A hymn of praise
 - 53. Dung beetle
 - 60. East southeast
 - 62. Not here
 - 63. A division in a tennis match
 - 64. Overweight
- Down**
- 2. Away from the wind
 - 3. Choose
 - 5. A square-rigged sailing ship
 - 6. Warning
 - 14. Reddish brown
 - 16. L
 - 18. One who massages
 - 21. Assemble
 - 22. Small intestine
 - 24. 100 eyed giant (Greek myth)
 - 25. Respond
 - 26. Expectorate
 - 27. Tart
 - 29. Latin-American ballroom dance
 - 30. A piece of hot glowing coal
 - 31. Noises made by lions
 - 34. Long periods of geologic time
 - 35. Glue
 - 36. Category
 - 38. Cancel or reverse an action
 - 39. Any wingless bloodsucking insect
 - 41. An orange-red dye
 - 42. Agreeableness
 - 43. Even
 - 44. Ancient Middle-eastern kingdom
 - 45. Walks through shallow water
 - 46. Came up
 - 47. A hat with no brim or bill
 - 50. Wan
 - 51. Picnic insects
 - 52. Nature of being
 - 55. A bone protecting the lungs
 - 56. Definite article
 - 57. E.g., Earl Grey or orange pekoe
 - 58. Go astray
 - 59. Lair

Sudoku

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

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

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

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

Types of food wordsearch

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

- TUNA
- SPAGHETTI
- FRUIT
- ONION
- RADISH
- SALAD
- HAM
- STEAK
- NOODLES
- MACARONI
- FAST FOOD
- TV DINNER
- VEGETABLES
- BUTTER
- PORK
- ROLLS
- GRAVY
- HOT DOGS
- CASSEROLE
- CEREAL
- BURGERS
- BREAD
- LETTUCE

Brainteasers

- 1) What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?
- 2) What can be broken but never held?
- 3) A man shaves several times a day, yet he still has a beard. Who is this man?
- 4) I have cities, but no houses. I have mountains, but no trees. I have water, but no fish. What am I?

(1) A towel (2) A promise (3) A barber (4) A map

Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

LXII

Terence, this is stupid stuff:
 You eat your victuals fast enough;
 There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,
 To see the rate you drink your beer.
 But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
 It gives a chap the belly-ache.
 The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
 It sleeps well, the horned head:
 We poor lads, 'tis our turn now
 To hear such tunes as killed the cow.
 Pretty friendship 'tis to rhyme
 Your friends to death before their time
 Moping melancholy mad:
 Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad.

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,
 There's brisker pipes than poetry.
 Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
 Or why was Burton built on Trent?
 Oh many a peer of England brews
 Livelier liquor than the Muse,
 And malt does more than Milton can
 To justify God's ways to man.
 Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
 For fellows whom it hurts to think:
 Look into the pewter pot
 To see the world as the world's not.
 And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past:
 The mischief is that 'twill not last.
 Oh I have been to Ludlow fair
 And left my necktie God knows where,
 And carried half way home, or near,
 Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:
 Then the world seemed none so bad,
 And I myself a sterling lad;
 And down in lovely muck I've lain,
 Happy till I woke again.
 Then I saw the morning sky:
 Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
 The world, it was the old world yet,
 I was I, my things were wet,
 And nothing now remained to do
 But begin the game anew.

(To be continued)

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

Quiz!

- 1) Trooping the Colour is held in London annually on a Saturday in June, on which parade ground?
- 2) June has two zodiac signs, name both?
- 3) Which historical novel begins in 1815 and culminates with the 1832 June Rebellion in Paris?
- 4) What takes place near Pilton in the last week of June, each year?
- 5) What historical event happened on Tuesday 6th June 1944?
- 6) In 1215, Zhongdu was captured by Ghengis Khan and the Mongols. What is the city known as now?
- 7) Anne Boleyn was crowned queen of England, but in which year? a) 1533 b) 1583 c) 1633
- 8) What is the name of the purple flowering plant often seen in bogs and heathlands in Ireland in June?
- 9) Which June-flowering plant in Ireland is known for its medicinal properties and was historically used to treat wounds?
- 10) Which plant has feathery foliage and is named for its use in the flavouring of alcoholic beverages, particularly gin?
- 11) What film tells the true story of a small detachment of British soldiers defending an outpost from an overwhelming enemy force during the Zulu War in 1879?
- 12) Can you name this movie: a dramatic war film about the British Royal Navy's intense hunt for a German battleship during World War II?
- 13) In 1967, Sidney Poitier starred in which 1967 movie, where we are reminded he is to be called "Mister Tibbs"?
- 14) What device, first released on 29th June 2007, revolutionized personal technology?

Answers: 1) Horse Guards Parade 2) Gemini and Cancer 3) Les Misérables 4) Glastonbury Festival 5) Normandy Landings 6) Beijing 7) 1533 8) Heather 9) Yarrow 10) Sweet cicely 11) Zulu 12) Sink the Bismarck! 13) In the Heat of the Night 14) iPhone

Did You Know?

One theory is that June was named after the Roman goddess of marriage, Juno.
 Another is that its name originates from the Latin word 'iuniores', which translates into "younger ones".
 Another possibility is that the month was named after Lucius Junius Brutus, the founder of the Roman Republic.

Famous June Birthdays!

- Marilyn Monroe (1st June 1926)
- Sir Edward Elgar (2nd June 1857)
- Captain Robert Falcon Scott (6th June 1868)
- George Orwell (Eric Arthur Blair) (25th June 1903)

Word of the Month

'Juxtamarine'
 located by the sea
 describing anywhere
 Definition:

May Answers

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

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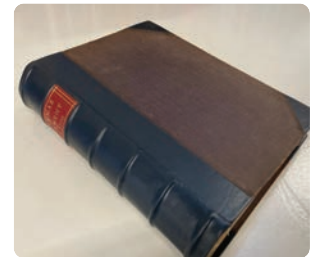
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Copy Deadline for
July Issue - 15th June 2026

Severn Stoke & Croome D'abitot News

Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs

John Henderson

St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke

There has been some preliminary work on the Flood Bund over these last couple of months. At last, we are seeing diggers at work, and no doubt the next thing that we shall be complaining about is the noise and dust from the lorries bringing in spoil to build the Bund. We shall just have to be patient, as we have waited so long for this game-changer for the Village. We are proud of our ancient church and well-maintained churchyard. Please come and explore its history since the 12th Century. It offers a welcome and calm, and is open every day between 9am and 5pm using the small Chancel door, which might need just a

light kick at the bottom to let you in. Our church services are Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month and Morning Worship on the third, both starting at 10.30am.

Friends of St Denys' Severn Stoke - Raising funds to modernise the church!

Last month, we had a very enjoyable concert from the Worcester Male Voice Choir in church, and our next fundraiser will be a lively entertainment by the Gospel VoxRox Choir, singing Country, Rock, Pop and Soul and everything in between, with a Cream Tea included in the £10 ticket on the door on Sunday 23rd August. Make a date in your diaries!



Cornflower Club

The club holds its meetings in the Parish hall every other week from 2:30 until 4:30 on a Wednesday. June 17th going on to July 1st will be our last meetings before we take a break. If you are a lady or gentleman over 60 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 knitted items coming. We need hats, scarves and mittens/gloves in sets if possible. Blankets, cardigans

and of course the teddies. You can drop the items 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 4th & 18th June, 2nd July

For further details please contact Anne on 07931 636309

Spot & Shop May Winners

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Richard King | 2) Mark Stables |
| 3) Janette Young | 4) Rose Price |
| 5) Julie Wooding | 6) Anne Martin |
| 7) Hillary Price | |

Last month's answer: Trimpets Dog Grooming

COMPETITION TIME!

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



This month's prizes!

1st - £50 cash

2nd - £25 cash

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3rd £20 Food Voucher

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at Revills Farm Shop, Defford

5th £10 Voucher

at CraftyPyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore

6th £10 voucher

at Upper Crust, Pershore

7th Pat's Pantry -

Jar of home-made marmalade/jam

Complete and return this form or email: news@hughes.company for your chance to win!

Kempsey Times closing date: 22nd June 2026

Answer:

Name:

Telephone/email:

Return to: Hughes and Company/Kempsey Times

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John Steinbeck, *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961)

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Camera Club



'At Water's Edge' by Cathryn Dhonau

As we approach summer (and with our well-attended Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner now past), the Club's programme is entering its alternative form, with fewer regular meetings but still plenty to keep members and potential members interested and engaged. We commence June on Wednesday 3rd with the presentation and discussion of groups of images which members

have taken in response to the geometrical challenge of "Squares". This was originally programmed for the end of May but was deferred due to unforeseen circumstances. Then, on Wednesday 10th, we have talks by two of our members: 'Shanghai' by Johnny Wilkinson LRPS, and 'From the Beginning to Creation' by Al Haden, good opportunities to see where



'Rickshaw Riders' by Colin Trow-Poole

members' interests lie and the work that they produce. We would be delighted to welcome anybody interested in the occasions listed above; please make contact via our website: www.kempseycameraclub.uk where you will also find further details of our programme for the post-AGM 'summer' season hinted at above. In the meantime, we hope that you

will find intrigue and interest in these two quite different images, 'Rickshaw Riders' by Colin Trow-Poole and 'At Water's Edge' by Cathryn Dhonau, one of the five top-placed images and one of the five commended images, respectively, in our second 'Open' projected image competition of the season, held in late February.

*Malcolm A Hay
Secretary*

Kempsey WI

Kempsey WI's guest speaker for April was Nigel Smith, the custodian of the Fleece Inn, Bretforton. Nigel outlined the history of the building, which started life as a farmhouse built in c.1400 by Henry Byrd and passed down through his family for almost 700 years until 1977, when the last descendant, Lola Taplin, left it to the National Trust. The building housed a brewery from at least 1919, set up by a later Henry Byrd, who was a wine and spirit importer. Lola herself was a third-generation Brewster matriarch, and to all accounts, "a formidable woman". (The WI likes those!) Nigel passed round several original artefacts from the pub,

including a pewter tappit hen (for ale), a very old wooden platter and a bible box. He described the interesting furniture in the Fleece, which includes a curved settle (complete with cupboards for birds under the seat since it was once used in a cock fighting ring), a spinning wheel, and a set of chairs by Clissett (A Bosbury chair maker whose 19th century designs influenced designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh in the 20th Century). He also described the various "Witch Circles" present around fireplaces in the pub, said to keep the evil spirits out. Lola Taplin used to polish them with a donkey stone. (If you are too young to remember scrubbing

steps and suchlike, look it up!) In 2004, as fire swept the Fleece Inn, all those artefacts, and many more, were saved from the inferno by a number of willing helpers. Although the thatch and upstairs were badly burned, downstairs fared better. The County Architect was able to survey and date the various "bones" of the building before the National Trust restored and reopened it, albeit with an updated kitchen area. The Fleece is famous for its Asparagus Festival, which starts on St George's Day. "100s" of Asparagus are auctioned, with profits supporting the local Silver Band. The festivities include "Bacon & 'Gras" rolls, Morris dancing, fun for the children and an Asparagus Run to places as far afield as the

Houses of Parliament. (In 2026, the run would be more local, to Croome.) All this mention of Vale of Evesham asparagus was quite mouth-watering for some members of the audience, so there were broad smiles when Roger produced and kindly donated a bunch for the raffle! Roger then listed the appearance of the pub in films and TV series, including Land Girls and Father Brown. He concluded with a tuneful rendition of the traditional "Farmers Song". *Kempsey WI's July meeting will be an afternoon out at a local historical site. On 17th August, SARA will be telling us about their work. For WI details, contact kempseysec@wfedwi.org.uk*



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The Bells are back in Elmley Castle!



Elmley Castle certainly hasn't done things quietly this week ... although, with ten bells arriving, that was probably never going to be possible. On Monday 11th May 2026, Elmley Castle's history received a very loud delivery with the arrival of the church's ten restored bells returning from the Foundry in Loughborough, where they had been cast and restored by John Taylor & Co Bell Founders. The bells were arranged proudly along the church path and decorated with white hedgerow flowers, blossom and ribbons, following the long-standing tradition before bells are raised into the tower. Pupils from Elmley Castle C of E School lined the pathway beside the bells whilst the Vicar, The Revd Katryn Leclizio, led the children in a cheerful chorus of Alleluia, Amen. The children then took

part in a lively Questions and Answers session, keen to test the experts with some surprisingly difficult questions about the bells' age, weight and history. Fortunately, Bellhanger Eliza Lewis-Skeath and Elmley Castle Tower Captain and Bells Project Manager, Steve Bowley, were well prepared and avoided being stumped by a group of highly determined primary school historians. During the blessing of the bells, the children joined the Vicar using long strands of rosemary dipped in water. Some pupils approached this solemn moment with great reverence; others seized the opportunity to splash their classmates with holy water at close range. The event brought together school staff, bellhangers, church members, bell ringers and villagers, creating a wonderfully



uplifting celebration and a reminder that few things unite an English village faster than children, church bells and the possibility of getting slightly wet. As an added treat, the school's new Head Teacher, Miss Natalie Harbron, was presented with a beautiful tin of hand-baked bell-shaped biscuits for the children, lovingly made by Mary McKenzie of St Mary's PCC. Rumour suggests these may have disappeared faster than the bells themselves will rise into the tower. The sound of bells has formed part of England's heritage for centuries, and much of our history can be traced through the stories of the towers that ring above our villages and towns. Elmley Castle is now actively recruiting new bell ringers to learn this ancient craft - an activity that keeps both mind and body active,

while also providing a legitimate excuse to disappear into a church tower for several hours or possibly afterwards at The Queens quenching one's thirst! The new lighter bells will make ringing far more accessible, and it is hoped they will inspire a new generation to take up the ropes. For further details, see elmleycastlebells.uk We are keen to engage with local groups and invite them to St Mary's to learn more about the project, which has cost around £160,000, have a go at ringing. Please do get in touch on 07966 171861 Grateful thanks are also due to our donors in addition to our NLHF grant. *Worcestershire & Districts Change Ringing Association* John Taylor & Co. Limited



How Shire Stories is transforming regional writing

Shire Stories is celebrating six months of championing new regional writing with workshops, script development opportunities, and an upcoming showcase of original plays by West Midlands writers and actors. Shire Stories is a two-year literary department project designed to inspire and support local talent across the four counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Worcestershire. Shire Stories' mission is to uncover unique perspectives from underrepresented communities through a combination of dynamic workshops and personalised feedback from professional script readers and dramaturgs. In February 2026, Shire Stories launched new collaborative workshops with The Monday Night Club, a social club in Worcester, supporting adults with learning difficulties or autism to try new activities whilst making

new friends. The 10-week sessions were interactive and engaging, concluding in a showcase of scenes devised by participants and performed at the end of April. In May 2026, Shire Stories is looking forward to its event 'Tiny Plays, Big Ideas', where writers from across the West Midlands will showcase plays in development as part of the organisation's writing workshops, performed by local actors. The five plays include 'Geoffrey with a G', a dark comedy play that explores what happens when Jackie, a young woman who's recently lost her partner, is visited by the very real manifestation of her grief, a middle-aged man named Geoffrey; 'Me Is A God' follows Samuel/Gideon as he revisits people who have been impacted by the crime he committed of a school shooting in the UK; 'Socially Distant' is a realist drama set in suburban Bristol



during the 2020 Covid lockdown, exploring toxic masculinity, addiction, domestic abuse, and relationships under strain; 'Searching for Sarah' is a story about 'getting out of other people's mirrors' and 'learning not to hide who you are but to own it'; 'Waiting Time' is a darkly comic social drama that follows Alex, a once-successful tech entrepreneur whose life unravels after betrayal, bankruptcy, and a terminal

brain tumour diagnosis. 'Tiny Plays, Big Ideas' is on Sunday 24th May 2026 in the Swan Studio at 7.45pm. Tickets are £8.00 + transaction fee. Recommended for ages 14+ due to strong language and references to violence. Tickets can be purchased at worcestertheatres.co.uk/whats-on/shire-stories-presents-tiny-plays-big-ideas or through the Box Office on 01905 611427

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Living life to the full at the Lawns!



And here we are in June! Where is the year going? Our patchwork project that we started in early Spring, is now a double bedspread – every resident has contributed in their own way, and we have decided to raffle it off to raise some money for our Residents Fund. We have enjoyed messy fun making papier mâché lanterns, gardening club have been busy potting and planting and our bakers have been whipping up some delicious treats in our residents' kitchen. Often, lots of residents want to get involved in these hands-on activities, so extra helpers for our lifestyle team are very welcome. Thank you to our carers, management team and all our volunteers for pitching in and for your ongoing support.

In June, our bakers are having classic dessert month, baking everything from lemon meringue pie, to summer pudding and strawberry cheesecakes.

We are having Garden Games Day on the 19th with Pimm's and activities through the month, including stone painting, flower arranging and making suncatchers, which will all take place outside – weather permitting. We are also having a coffee morning in the garden on the 23rd and music in the garden on the 27th.



Other musical entertainment through June includes our tribute to ABBA on the 5th and to Elvis on the 20th. And the Malvern Singers and Stringers are coming in on the 11th June. Then, we shall be enjoying all the traditions of

the Wimbledon fortnight. Fingers crossed for some lovely weather. We are welcoming new admissions for long stay or respite care. Please give us a call for more information and see our new video on our website:

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