# Kempsey Times

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

**Issue 31** **November 2026** **FREE**




*Croome Court, photographed by Kim Freeman*

**We remember this month all the men and women who gave their lives during many wars for our peace and freedom. We must never forget. These were dreadful times and we owe immense gratitude and profound thanks to each and every one of them.**

'Remember, remember, the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot'. Bonfire night used to be a big day during my childhood with fireworks and bonfires, often in peoples gardens. Hot toddies and baked potatoes cooked in the bonfire were real treats! Happy days! Today we have a different way often with big gatherings and organised firework displays. All very enjoyable but maybe not as neighbourly or as friendly. This was of course the signal that the next big event was Christmas Day and that was not far away.

The weather has turned, after a remarkable summer. We have a more typical November, cold, wet and foggy! Also dark! Don't like changing the clocks back an hour, winter seems to arrive overnight!

We have a new column in the Magazine called *Speakers Corner*! This is where anyone can express an opinion. The current writer's articles you may find controversial. If you agree or disagree you are welcome to write in and start a debate! We think this could be very interesting.


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# County and District Report

*Councillor Martin Allen*



The food waste bins, first instructed by the Conservative Government and now enacted by Labour, have finally arrived. Unfortunately, the lid on my kitchen caddy does not fit securely, allowing flies in, plus the caddies seem rather flimsy. Are you also disappointed with their quality? If so, please let me know, and I will pass your concerns to the current District Council administration. On a more positive note, County Hall - long regarded as a millstone - is finally being offered for sale. Its disposal would save taxpayers £1 million a year. I wonder what the ghosts of former councillors wandering its old corridors of power would make of it all!

## *County Hall Sale, Shrub Hill Options*



County Hall along with 16.6 acres of land is now for sale, price available on application. The NHS was asked whether it wished to purchase some or part of the land but, I am told, declined. Let's hope it sells soon. Interestingly, discussions are under way with the NHS about establishing a new Community Diagnostic Centre in the Shrub Hill Quarter on land owned by WCC. The centre would provide easier access to tests, scans and diagnostic services, helping to reduce pressure on hospitals and shorten waiting times.

## *Kempsey flood warning*




A long-standing project of mine has, amazingly, finally been completed. Everyone in Kempsey knows the ford beside our lovely St Mary's Church, where each year at least one unfortunate driver gets stuck in the floodwater. The County Council has now resurfaced both approach roads to reduce the risk of vehicles sliding. It has also extended the depth gauges so that they remain visible above the floodwater, giving drivers a clearer indication of the true depth before they enter. Let's hope - and dare I say pray - that no one gets their feet wet this year.

## *Council News*

Free Parking in Upton:
I am delighted to share the news that free parking will be available in the MHDC car parks in Upton on three Saturdays in December: the 5th, 12th and 19th. While this will come at some cost to local taxpayers, it is worth supporting our local shops.

## *Severn Stoke bund: Are we there yet?*



As it takes shape, the Severn Stoke Bund has understandably attracted considerable interest. I like to check up on things in my patch so, a few weeks ago, I called by to monitor progress, and was pleased to hear that work is going well. Subject to the weather not throwing a googly into the mix, the project should be completed and the site cleared before Christmas - tremendous news. As you can see, the roadway over the Bund is also progressing nicely. This is the final major piece of infrastructure required. I was interested to learn that the Bund was constructed 300mm higher than its intended final height to allow for settlement. It looks set to be a wonderful Christmas present for Severn Stoke.

## *And finally ...*

OK, let's talk leeks, but not the Severn Trent kind. After the summer's heat, I feared they were lost - amazingly they are still here, growing taller and thickening. Maybe the cabbage king has become the lofty leek grower! I find there is real pleasure in these small successes; truly, they can help carry us through life's tougher moments. I hope the remainder of your year brings you successes both big and small.

As ever, I'm here if you need me.

*Martin Allen*

**New Business!**

Heartstart Kempsey

**Saving Lives Together**

**Our aim is to save lives by increasing the chances of surviving a cardiac arrest in Kempsey and the surrounding villages. We will achieve this by providing free life-saving training.**

During training sessions participants are taught to do Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), use a defibrillator and how to treat a heart attack.

Individual and/or group bookings can be arranged

**To book a place on a free 90 minute course please email:**
**HeartStartKempsey@gmail.com**

The training is being delivered by a small team of volunteers.

PARISH COUNCIL Kempsey

**New Community & Sports Centre Planning Approved**
Planning permission for the new Kempsey Community & Sports Centre has now been formally granted on community land at Old Road South/Pixham Ferry Lane allowing the Parish Council to move into the delivery phase of the project. The Centre is dependent on the construction of passing bays along Pixham Ferry Lane and other highway works by Taylor Wimpey as part of the housebuilder's obligations arising from permission for their Lygon Green housing estate immediately to the east of the community land. The new facility is currently funded predominantly from developer funds retained by Malvern Hills District Council with a significant contribution from the Parish Council's reserves and will be developed in phases according to the available funding. KPC has worked with architects Calfordseaden LLP throughout the design and planning stages of the development. The planning permission phase, which took 18 months to arrive at a decision, was a particularly challenging process and we are indebted to MHDC planners for their support for this very important community project.

**South Worcester Urban Extension**
Although housebuilding has been going on for some time in the north of parish, mainly along Taylors Lane and the A38, work on the largest area, to be called Hopfields, has yet to start despite receiving outline planning permission in 2022. Extensive Site Wide Design Principles and other preparatory guidance has been prepared which is to ensure consistency for future detailed proposals since the land is to be split between a number of builders. The area will provide some 2200 dwellings as well as a primary school, local centre, sports facilities and employment units. As such, it will be an important contributor to the 5-year housing land supply which all local planning authorities are required to have. At last, an application has been made for a first phase which includes the construction of houses and apartments, some 246 of them, again on land alongside the A38, north of the Bromford scheme currently being built. There will be a new roundabout on the A38 by the Listed Clerkenleap Farmhouse so expect some traffic interruptions. The scheme is not without issues and the Parish Council has made comments. However, we welcome new housing coming forward which will hopefully relieve pressure to allow unplanned development elsewhere. On a less favourable matter, the new owners of the Hopfields land, Vistry, have asked for their financial contributions to infrastructure and services, such as highways, education and health, to be significantly reduced and not to be index linked (by inflation for instance). This would be a real time reduction the value of which will reduce further over time. The contributions were calculated on the need arising from the new development itself and are committed by a legal obligation entered into by the previous owners at the time of the outline planning permission. The need for infrastructure and services will not go away, the cost will inevitably increase and, if agreed, there will be a shortfall of funds to pay for them. They would either not be provided as needed or public money would have to be put in. Vistry says the Hopfields development, the land for which they purchased a short time ago, is not viable without a reduced contribution. A little late to find out, perhaps. Too many housing schemes take place without supporting services, it is extremely disappointing that even this well-planned development (it has been on the go for over 10 years) cannot look after itself and make proper provision for its future residents who will, after all, have to pay for it. The decision rests with the other councils, sadly not with KPC.

**Clear Audit Outcome for Parish Accounts**
Kempsey Parish Council's annual audit has once again confirmed an accurate and compliant set of accounts. Both the KPC appointed internal auditor and the external auditor appointed through the National Association of Local Councils have approved the Council's financial records with no concerns raised. This outcome reflects the Parish Office team's careful management of public funds and their consistent commitment to accurate and transparent reporting together with best financial practice.




**Bridle Gate Improvements at Kempsey Back Common**
Works have recently been completed at Kempsey Back Common to improve access and safety for riders and livestock. The existing bridlepath gate has been repositioned into a central alignment and rehung on new sawn gate posts. Rails have been installed on either side and a new huntingstyle latch has been fitted to make the gate easier for horse riders to use. These improvements form part of ongoing maintenance across the Common to support safe access for all users while ensuring the area remains secure for grazing stock.

**Autumn Hedge Cutting Reminder**
With the birdnesting season over , autumn is the ideal time for residents to cut back hedges and vegetation on private property that may be overhanging public pavements and roads. Keeping pathways clear is especially important for vulnerable users such as children, blind and partially sighted people, those with prams and people who rely on mobility scooters.
Cutting back now also helps prevent branches becoming brittle or hazardous once frosts arrive. Thank you to all residents who already keep their boundaries tidy - your efforts genuinely make a difference to the safety and accessibility of our village.

*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 Responsible Financial Officer*
*Phone: 01905 828183*
*or by*
*Email: clerk@kempseyparish council.gov.uk*




*Sound Matters*

"It isn't just a wind chime. I can't escape the sound in my own home."

A Worcestershire resident is calling for greater recognition of the impact persistent, intrusive sounds can have on people with sensory sensitivities, after experiencing ongoing distress from repetitive wind-chime noise from a neighbouring property.

What may sound pleasant or insignificant to one person can be profoundly different for someone with sensory hypersensitivity.

For somebody whose brain struggles to filter repetitive sounds, continuous tinging, rattling and metallic tapping can become extremely difficult to ignore. And when that sound is coming from outside the home, the person experiencing it may have no ability to switch it off.

"Where do I go to escape it?"

That is at the heart of the Sound Matters campaign.

The chimes can be heard from inside the home, including with doors and windows closed.

When the wind moves them, the sound becomes repetitive and unpredictable. There is no switch. There is no pause button. There is no guarantee that moving to another room will make it disappear. And when the sound continues into the evening or interferes with sleep, there may be little opportunity for the person affected to recover from the sensory overload.

The World Health Organization recognises environmental noise as a public-health issue and identifies effects including annoyance, sleep disturbance and stress among the potential consequences of environmental noise. The National Autistic Society also explains that people with sensory hypersensitivity can experience sounds as significantly more distressing than others may experience them. This is not simply about disliking a noise.

The issue is not whether wind chimes are normally considered pleasant. It is about what happens when a sound becomes persistent, repetitive, unpredictable and impossible for the person affected to control. For someone with sensory sensitivity, the impact can go far beyond irritation.

Persistent unwanted sound can contribute to:

*Heightened stress and anxiety; Sensory overload; Difficulty relaxing; Difficulty concentrating; Exhaustion; Disrupted sleep; Emotional distress; Difficulty carrying out normal activities; Feeling unable to properly switch off inside one's own home.*

"Home should be somewhere you can switch off."

The purpose of Sound Matters is not to demand that everybody live in silence. It is to encourage greater understanding that sound affects people differently. A sound that one person finds relaxing can become overwhelming and distressing to another.

People with sensory sensitivities should not have to demonstrate that a sound is unbearable to everybody before their experience is taken seriously.

The question should not simply be: "How loud is the sound?"

It should also be:

How persistent is it?

How repetitive is it?

How unpredictable is it?

Can the affected person escape it?

Can it be heard inside their home?

Does it interfere with sleep or daily life? And what impact is it having on that individual?

*Sound Matters*

This campaign is calling for housing providers, councils and relevant agencies to take greater account of sensory vulnerability and the cumulative impact of persistent noise when dealing with noise-related complaints.

This is about reasonable consideration, awareness and finding solutions before someone's wellbeing deteriorates.

*The Message*

A sound doesn't have to be unbearable to everybody to be unbearable to somebody.

Sensory sensitivity is real.

Persistent unwanted noise can have a real impact.

And people deserve to feel able to recover and feel at peace in their own homes.

*Sound Matters*

Because what sounds like "just a little chime" to one person can become an inescapable source of distress to another.

*Media contact:*
*Julie Middleton*
*Pershore, Worcestershire*
*juliemid11@gmail.com*
*07423 770627*

# *Sensory-friendly sessions at Winter Glow*

Winter Glow has extended its sensory-friendly offering this year as part of its ongoing commitment to making Christmas as accessible for as many families as possible.

The West Midlands' biggest multi-attraction festive experience, Winter Glow is due to be held from 20th November to 31st December at the Three Counties Showground in Malvern. While at Winter Glow, visitors can enjoy ice skating on the West Midland's largest indoor ice rink, UV Glow Crazy Golf, the Illuminated Light Trail with more than 30 unique installations with the theme of The Tale of Atlas Frost for 2026, and truly special personalised Father Christmas experiences. In response to demand and as part of Winter Glow's continuing dedication to improving accessibility, sensory-friendly sessions will take place throughout the duration of the festive event. New for 2026, sensory-friendly ice-skating sessions are planned to take place at 6pm on 4th, 11th and 18th December as well as at 5pm on 27th December. These sessions will offer a much-reduced capacity as well as lower music volume.

Sensory-friendly light trail sessions will begin at 4.15pm, in daylight, and also include lower music volume and reduced capacity. These sessions will be held on 27th November as well as on 4th, 11th and 18th December. And for those wanting to visit the Father Christmas experience, sensory-friendly sessions, also with reduced capacity and lower music volume, will be held at 5.40pm on 27th November, 4th and 11th December, as well as at 10.20am and 6.20pm on 18th December. Winter Glow and its attractions are all wheelchair accessible, and the event also offers complimentary carers tickets for the Illuminated Light Trail and UV Crazy Golf to make Winter Glow even easier for families.

*Tickets are on sale now, subject to availability. Terms and conditions apply. For more information, please visit: https://winterglow.co.uk/accessibility*

# *Sutcliffe & Co wins SME of the year Award*




*Duncan Sutcliffe, Managing Director at Sutcliffe & Co receiving the SME of the Year Award at the Great British Business & Community Awards*

Worcester-based Sutcliffe & Co Insurance Brokers is celebrating a major achievement after being named SME of the Year at the Great British Business & Community Awards. The national accolade follows an earlier success this year when the company won SME of the Year at the South West Business & Community Awards, earning its place as a finalist at the national awards.

This latest recognition marks a significant milestone for the growing insurance brokerage, which continues to thrive through its strong team culture, commitment to exceptional customer service and dedication to making a positive impact within the wider industry and local community.

As a fourth-generation insurance broker, Sutcliffe & Co continues to go from strength to strength, combining traditional values with a forward-thinking approach to the evolving insurance landscape.

*For more information about Sutcliffe & Co and its award-winning insurance services, please contact 01905 21681 or email enquiries@sutcliffeinsurance.co.uk.*

# A few words from...
## *Dame Harriett Baldwin MP*




*(L-R) Richard Cooper, Dame Harriett Baldwin MP with John Campion*

Dame Harriett Baldwin MP has supported plans to improve the prevention and detection of rural crime during a meeting with local police chiefs. The MP met with West Mercia Police Chief Constable Richard Cooper and Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion to get an update on local policing initiatives. Rural crime is a significant concern for Dame Harrett's constituents, and she was given a briefing on plans to improve action on crime prevention as well as efforts to increase staffing numbers to increase police visibility across the force's largely rural area.

Dame Harriett said:

*"Rural crime and fly tipping are two of the major issues that are raised with me by rural business owners and I encouraged the police leadership to work with the local community to understand the challenges and act where there is evidence of offences. I am told that action is being taken and arrests have been made but I have been asked to share the message to constituents that it is important that local people report crime to allow the police to collect intelligence and act where possible. Over recent weeks, I have had meetings with local farmers and business owners and they have seen a rise in hare coursing which needs prompt action. We also discussed the challenges of organised crime moving onto UK high streets and I was reassured that the appearance of dodgy vape shops, car washes and barbers in West Worcestershire are under close scrutiny. The Government is consulting on whether to merge police forces and I am extremely concerned that important resources will be lost from rural areas to shore up stretched resources managing urban crime. I took this opportunity to pass on my thanks, on behalf of my constituents, to the police. We are blessed to live in an area where very serious crime, is thankfully very rare and it means that they can focus their attentions on matters like the sale of illegal drugs, cannabis farms, anti-social behaviour and low-level criminality which still affect our every day lives."*

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*Worcester Philharmonic Orchestra Autumn Concert on November 14th Pershore Abbey at 2.30pm*

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The concert opens with the overture to Verdi's opera masterpiece Nabucco, and features the iconic Hebrew Slaves theme.

The orchestra concludes the concert with Brahms' 4th Symphony, considered by many to be his finest.

Don't miss this chance to share the whole emotional range of these musical masterpieces.

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*Pershore Tourist Information and ticketsource.co.uk (booking fee applies)*

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November 2026 **Magazine** Issue 24

Pershore, Upton, Powick, Kempsey, Whittington, Broadway, Tibberton, Bredon

# Local Railways

Tim Hickson




*Original Pershore Station*



*Upton upon Severn Station*

Pershore gained its first railway in 1852 as part of the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway. There are stories that it was initially planned to run through the middle of Pershore and that the short road off Three Springs Road called The Railground was where materials were planned to be stored. However, its route ended up further north, beyond what was Pershore's Racecourse, to its present position. Originally it was double track. In 1890, the 9th Earl of Coventry established a jam and pickle factory by the Station so that his tenants could sell their produce at a fair price, saving the cost and risk of sending large consignments of perishable goods on long journeys. Strawberries, raspberries, currents and fruit from orchards now had a local outlet. In 1954, John Betjeman, travelling from Hereford to London, stopped at Pershore, heard the Abbey bells and wrote Pershore Station, a Liverish Journey. If you have not read it, go to the station where it appears on a stand.

When the first railway came near Worcester, the station was actually at Spetchley and passengers had to get a horse-drawn carriage to take them from the city up the hill to the yard which can still be seen by the bridge. This was opened in 1840 but it closed for passengers in 1855 though carrying on for freight until 1961. I think landowners could not agree on a site for a station in, or even touching the edge of, Worcester until 1850. Then Shrub Hill Station was opened. Finally, in the centre, Foregate Street Station opened in 1860. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Severn, Henwick had a station from 1859 to 1965.




*Steam train on the Broadway to Cheltenham Racecourse line*

To the east, there were stations at Norton and Stoulton, before Pershore, and then at Upper Moor and Fladbury, before Evesham. After that there was a station at Honeybourne and then a major junction with a GWR line from Stratford with stations at Weston sub Edge, Willersley, Broadway, Buckland, Toddington and others on to Cheltenham. Importantly, there was a station at Cheltenham Racecourse. Today there is a very well-run remainder of that line from Broadway to the Racecourse (on several occasions I have taken grandchildren for a ride on a 'proper train' - particularly at Christmas time. The adults thoroughly enjoyed themselves also). Originally, Broadway Station opened in 1904 and operated until its closure was announced in 1960. However, although the buildings were demolished in 1963, it remained open for passengers until 1968 and for goods until 1976.

In 1962, the Minister of Transport, Ernest Marples, with interests in the motor industry, appointed Dr. Richard Beeching to look at making the railways more economic. Consequently, in 1964, British Rail, the nationalised railway system, announced a plan to close many stations, including Pershore. This provoked significant opposition.

So, three years later, a new plan was put forward to withdraw passenger services between Stratford, Evesham and Worcester and to close Pershore and Honeybourne stations. Demolition had started when Pershore Parish Council complained to Sir Gerald Nabarro, M.P. for South Worcestershire who lived in Broadway and had been heavily involved with the Severn Valley Railway. He got the then Minister of Transport to intervene. It was agreed that the station should remain open, if unstaffed, in the interest of the dozens of commuters who travelled to Worcester every day. However, we have only one line now.

My Ordnance Survey map published in 1946 shows a London, Midlands and Scottish Railway line heading south through Evesham, with stations at Hinton, Ashton under Hill, Beckford, Ashchurch and Tewkesbury before crossing the Avon and then the Severn just south of Upton. At that time there was a splendid station at Upton before the line went on to Malvern. There was also an L.M. & S.R. line, still there, heading south, passing Worcester at what is now Worcestershire Parkway, with stations at Wadborough, Defford, Eckington and Bredon before the one at Ashchurch where there was a junction with the line from Evesham to Tewkesbury.

Powick's station was actually Bransford Road Station, open from 1860 to 1965. Inhabitants of Kempsey used what was called Pirton Station but only from 1841 to 1844. Wadborough was better served as that station operated from 1841 to 1965; now it is the site of a level crossing.










# Poets' Corner

## Tommy

I went into a public 'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no red-coats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:
O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait outside";
But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap.
An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"
But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes," when the drums begin to roll.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;
While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Tommy, fall be'ind,"
But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
O it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Chuck him out, the brute!"
But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool - you bet that Tommy sees!

Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936

# How to create a Winter Border for Christmas



*Hamamelis*

Winter might seem like a quiet time in the garden, but with a little planning you can create a border that looks beautiful right through the colder months.
Winter borders rely on structure, evergreen foliage, colourful stems and winterflowering plants - all of which bring cheer on even the greyest days. And while most bees are tucked away in their hives, a few will still forage during mild spells, so adding plants that offer nectar in winter is a thoughtful way to support wildlife too.
*Start with Structure:*
Begin by looking at the bones of your border. Include evergreen shrubs such as Sarcococca hookeriana humilis (Christmas Box), which provides yearround foliage and wonderfully scented white flowers from December to February. It's ideal for a shady spot and, if planted near a path, you'll enjoy the fragrance every time you walk past. After flowering, it produces shiny black berries loved by birds, adding another layer of winter interest. Grasses and seed heads also shine at this time of year. Leaving perennials such as sedum, echinops, phlomis or rudbeckia standing over winter gives height, texture and food for wildlife. Their frosted seed heads look magical in low winter light. Add festive plants for additional colour.
*If you'd like some plants with festive names (they make ideal presents for gardeners too), here are a few suggestions:*
**Helleborus niger 'Christmas Carol'** A personal favourite. This hellebore flowers from December to March and looks fabulous planted in swathes. It prefers partial shade and grows to around 30cm tall. If the leaves develop black spots (helleborus leaf spot), simply cut them back to the ground and add a layer of organic matter.



*Hellebore Christmas Rose*

**Clematis cirrhosa 'Jingle Bells'** A winterflowering clematis with large, creamy scented flowers from December to February. It's perfect for growing over an obelisk or pergola and reaches around 5m tall. After flowering, it forms attractive seed heads. Prune lightly after flowering to keep it tidy and add compost around the base.



*Clematis Jingle Bells*

Include bulbs for early cheer such as Snowdrops and crocuses which are loved by bees and are brilliant for filling gaps in the border. Buying them "in the green" means you can see exactly where to place them without disturbing other bulbs. Choose singleflowered varieties, as they're easier for pollinators to access.
*Add height and texture*
Every garden benefits from a small tree or shrub to add height and structure - and birds need somewhere to perch. A lovely choice is Hamamelis, commonly known as witch hazel. This deciduous shrub (or small tree) is famous for its fragrant, spidery winter flowers and vibrant autumn foliage. It prefers a spot in full sun to light, dappled shade.
*Finishing touches*
A winter border doesn't need to be complicated — just thoughtful. With the right mix of structure, scent and winterflowering plants, your garden can stay beautiful, atmospheric and full of interest all season long.



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# November gardening tips

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

*Early in the month.*
Try to finish off bulb planting soon. In fact this is a great time to be planting tulips but if your soil is heavy put some coarse grit into the planting holes. Mounded, fleshy leafed alpines benefit from protection against getting too wet. Cover with a small cloche. Plant trees, shrubs, fruiting plants and roses of all kinds. They will be able to settle themselves in before the spring. Sow Aquadulce Claudia broad beans and round seeded peas, like Feltham First, in sheltered spots for cropping in June. Christmas roses (Helleborus niger) flower better and earlier with a little protection from a cloche. Hellebores hate being disturbed but if you must move one this is the best time. Lift it with a good large ball of soil around the roots.
*Middle of the month.*
Check tree stakes and ties before winter winds cause damage. Plant Paperwhite narcissi for Christmas flowers. Clean the glass and insulate your greenhouse using bubble polythene. Pinch out the tips of autumn sown sweet peas when they are 10cm (4in) tall. Plant garlic by the end of this month, it enjoys a well-drained position. If in doubt plant cloves 10cm (4in) deep in mounded rows 15cm (6in) high. Take hardwood cuttings of soft fruit bushes and shrubs. Plant bare root hedging plants. Keep greenhouses and frames ventilated on bright days. Grass growth generally slows down a little this month, so only give your lawn a light mowing if the grass is dry. If you have not already done so, treat the lawn to a dose of autumn lawn fertiliser and aerate it. This treatment will pay dividends in the spring. Some herbaceous plants –e.g. Dicentra spectablis and Primula denticulata can be brought indoors for early flowers. If your garden is lacking colour plant some winter flowering shrubs now. Sow fast maturing carrots, radishes, winter hardy salad onions etc in the greenhouse for April harvest. Plant a container with winter flowering heathers to brighten up your patio.
Trim over summer heathers to remove the old flower stems. Slugs find greenhouse conditions ideal, so they will still be very active in there. Take some steps towards controlling them.
Clean patios and concrete paths to remove potentially slippery moss and algae.
*Late in the month.*
Feed flowering houseplants weekly but foliage ones once a month. Pot up pieces of chives, parsley and mint to bring indoors for fresh foliage all winter.
Begin pruning grapes as soon as the leaves have fallen.
Garden birds benefit from extra feeding all year round, but it is especially important in the winter months. Try to put out appropriate food for the species living in your garden and make sure that water is readily available too.
Prune free standing apple and pear trees after leaf fall. Place houseplants on wide saucers of moist gravel to provide extra humidity. Grouping them together on trays of moist gravel helps even more, as central heating is very dry. Begin washing pots and trays in disinfectant ready for the new sowing season if you have had trouble with seedlings rotting off last year. There are safer ones available now based on citrus waste such as Agralan Citrox and Vitax Greenhouse Disinfectant.






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# Ailsa's Kitchen

Ailsa Craddock



November comes in with the bang of fireworks and then can often go downhill into grey, rain, wind and cold, dictating that stews and comfort food are what we want/need to eat. Let us not forget, though, winter salads - but with a hint of warmth to keep out the chill. You can eat them on their own - but they will easily sit happily alongside lamb or pork chops or baked fish – and give you a quick boost of Vitamin C and all things sunshine.

**Warm Mushroom and Bacon Salad**

*25g butter*
*1 clove garlic, peeled and thinly sliced*
*250g mushrooms, quartered*
*3 tablespoons olive oil*
*1 small ciabatta bread, torn into bitesized pieces*
*150g smoked bacon shopped*
*1 tablespoon red wine vinegar*
*Salad leaves eg rocket*
*100g blue cheese, crumbled*

Melt half the butter in a frying pan, add the garlic and mushrooms and cook 5 minutes to golden. Set aside. In the same pan, melt the remaining butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add the ciabatta and bacon. Cook for 5 minutes until crispy. Set aside. Toss the mushrooms with the vinegar and remaining oil and season to taste. Pile the rocket onto a plate and scatter over bacon mixture, mushrooms and dressing and scatter with cheese.

**Thai Vegetable Salad**

*2 - 3 carrots, peeled and pared into ribbons*
*1 red onion, peeled and thinly sliced*
*1 small cucumber, thinly sliced*
*2 – 3 tomatoes, chopped*
*1 little gem lettuce*
*Bean sprouts*
*Small can of water chestnuts, drained and halved*
*1 – 2 red chillies*
*2 garlic cloves*
*Add chopped mushrooms (raw), sliced peppers, radishes, cashew nuts, coriander, sliced cabbage, seeds of your choice*
*Dressing:*
*2 tablespoon sesame oil*
*2 tablespoons vegetable/ sunflower oil*
*1 teaspoon grated ginger*
*2 teaspoon castor sugar*
*1 tablespoon sherry vinegar*
*2 tablespoon light soy sauce*
*4 tablespoons water*

Deseed and finely chop chilli; peel and slice garlic. Heat the oil and fry the chilli, garlic and ginger for 30 seconds. Add the sugar, vinegar, soy sauce and water and simmer for 1 minute. Remove from heat and cool. Put all the salad ingredients in a large bowl. Add the dressing and toss well. Serve at once with a scattering of sesame seeds.

**Hot Potato Salad**

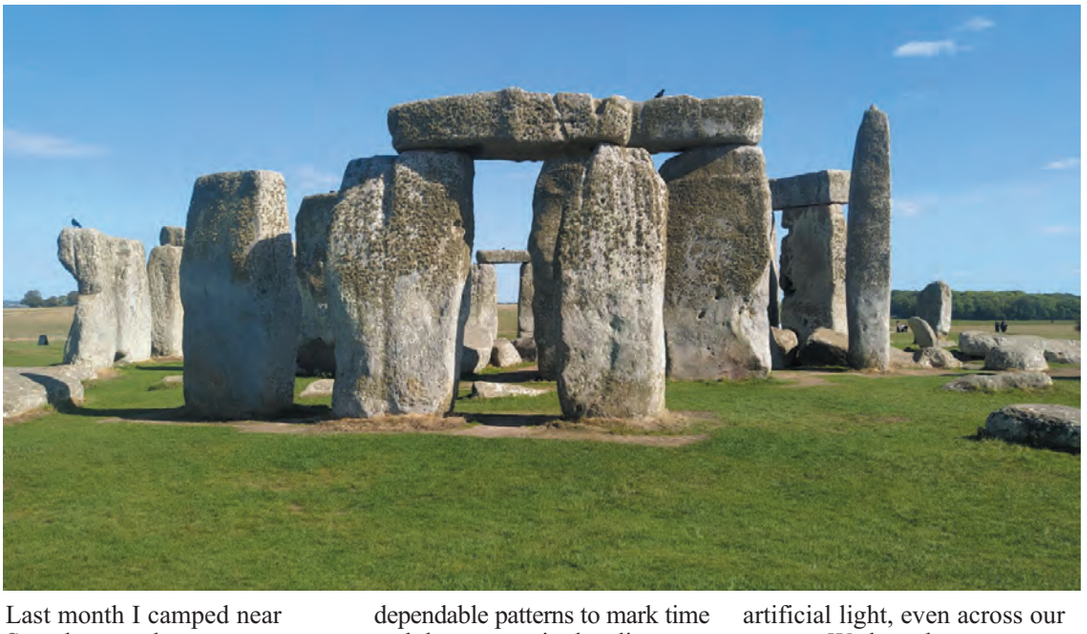
*500g salad potatoes*
*1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard*
*1 tablespoon white vinegar*
*1 ½ tablespoon olive oil*
*Juice of ½ lemon*
*½ red onion, thinly sliced*
*Salad leaves*
*1 avocado, stoned and cut into chunks*
*250g smoked mackerel*

Boil potatoes until tender and drain. Cut them in half and put in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk the mustard, vinegar, oil and lemon juice together and pour over the potatoes, tossing to coat well. Add the red onion, leaves and avocado and flake in the smoked mackerel and gently mix.



# Switch Off, Look Up

Karen Rose



Last month I camped near Stonehenge, close to an internationally recognised dark-sky area. With a new moon and clear skies the planets and stars shone with amazing clarity. It was easy to imagine our Bronze Age ancestors looking up at the same sky and using its dependable patterns to mark time and the seasons in the alignment of their great stone circles.
Apart from campfires and cooking fires light belonged to the heavens. Move forward to today and our world is brightly lit, day and night. Satellite images reveal how few places escape the glow of artificial light, even across our oceans. We have become so accustomed to keeping the dark at bay that we rarely stop to ask what constant brightness costs. Earth's predictable rhythm of day and night is encoded in the biology of living things, including us. Artificial light disrupts those rhythms, altering behaviour and biological clocks. It can confuse migrating birds, silence frogs' mating songs, hasten blossom, disturb insects and make hunting harder for bats. In nature, everything is connected, so these changes spread through whole ecosystems. We can all help. Before switching on an outside light, ask whether it is really needed. Fit motion sensors, choose warm-coloured bulbs and direct light downwards, where it is useful, rather than into the sky. Draw curtains at night and turn off unnecessary indoor lights. Businesses, councils and householders can light places carefully and safely without lighting everywhere all of the time. Darkness is natural and we need to embrace it.
If we switch off what light we do not need we'll help wildlife to thrive - and future generations can look up and rediscover the stars.

*Karen Rose is a biodiversity officer at Wychavon District Council*

# Roaming with Romy

Romy Kemp





I have gone about 21 years without playing poker... until now. On my trip to Liverpool for the weekend, my boyfriend and I met up with his friends to play poker (Texas Hold 'em). Hosted at his friend's house, we arrived with pizza. Thankfully a few of us hadn't played before. I did have a look at the rules and whatnot but the more I read the more confusing it became. Eventually some of it started to make sense and that was good enough for me. I would say as long as you have a good poker face then you are set to play! Out of nine people playing, I drew in first place!

It may sound unbelievable but if anyone was shocked it was me! Three of us drew for first place because we had been playing for hours and the time was getting on. Two out of three of us who drew in first place hadn't played before! I'd say that is pretty amazing! Pizza was our prize as we got to take whatever pizza was leftover. It was a great night of laughing and I would definitely play again (and I'm not just saying that because I won).

**Cooking**

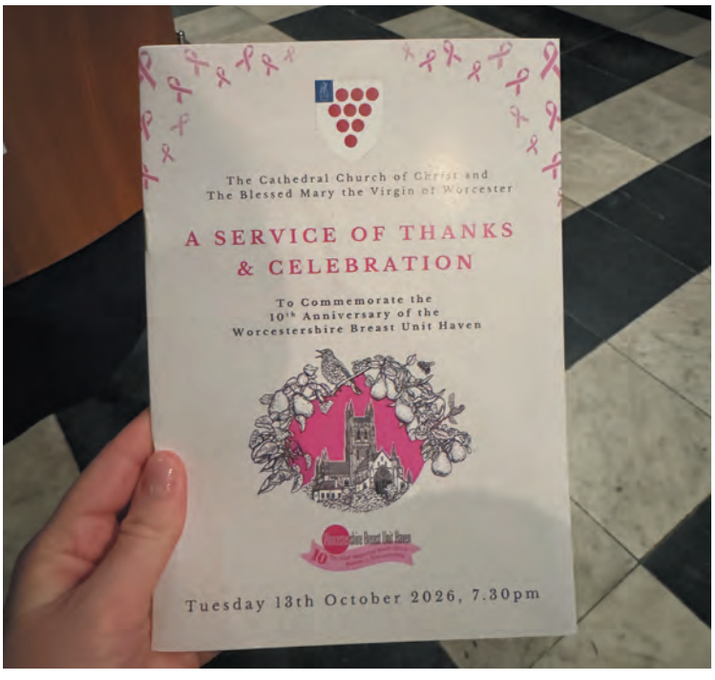
For ethical reasons, I decided to go vegetarian just over a month ago. I may also eventually become vegan because of the negative impact that the meat and dairy industries have on the planet as well as the animals that it harms. Since going vegetarian, I have felt so much better, both mentally and phyiscally. I have never been a big meat eater anyway nor do I eat much dairy. Although I cook quite a bit at home, finding new ways to cook with vegetables and tofu has been such fun. I really do enjoy cooking and making new foods. I am not really one to follow a recipe - as long as I have the ingredients list, I basically wing it from there! Quorn products are an amazing alternative to meat products and I highly recommend their Quorn mince. My family have used it for years and I cooked with it a lot in my third year of university (as I haven't eaten mince meat in years).

It is great in burritos, lasagne, tacos... pretty much anything that requires it! My photograph this month is of a vegetarian lasagne that I made a few weeks ago. It was thoroughly enjoyed by my family.

I also made a Quorn mince cottage pie as well. To anyone thinking of going vegetarian, I highly recommend the change. Even if it isn't a permanent change, anywhere that we can swap to non-meat options, we should - for the sake of the animals alongside us on this planet as well as for the health of the planet itself.

# A Place to Meet

Chloe Pickstock






Last Tuesday, I had the privilege of watching the cathedral service for the 10th anniversary of the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven. The service featured readings and songs from volunteers, including a close friend of mine who took part in a special choir performance from *Sister Act*.

The service was truly beautiful and inspiring, and it reminded me of what was at the heart of the evening: community.

As I sat among men and women, families and friends, I found myself feeling a mixture of emotions. Everyone in that cathedral had a story, and many shared a connection to illness, loss or the people they love. Yet, despite the melancholic nature of the occasion, there were so many smiles, moments of laughter and a real sense of togetherness. I felt grateful to have been there. Hearing about the work Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven has done over the past decade made me proud to be part of this county. More than anything, the evening reminded me how important it is to have people around us who understand what we're going through, and places where we can turn for support when we need it. Going through grief myself, I know how isolating it can feel to watch everyone go about their lives while you are trying to navigate your own.

Watching so many people come together reminded me that, even when we can't take away someone else's pain, we can still show up for them. I think that's what community is about. It's not always having the right words or even knowing exactly how to help. Sometimes, it's simply about being there, reminding someone that they don't have to face everything alone. Evenings like this remind me that it is the people who make a place feel like a home, and I am grateful to live somewhere where that sense of connection is still so visible.

# Gregory's World!

Gregory Sidaway



***The Eagles have landed***

I have flown the nest and built a new one in a faraway land called Ealing. It's a little noisier because I live near the eighth wonder of the world, the Hanger Lane gyratory. Apparently, it carries up to 10,000 cars at rush hour. The swoosh of traffic is so continuous that I pretend I'm listening to the rush of waves on a shore. However, on balance, Ealing is leafy, peaceful and a fantastic springboard into all the activities, sights and eye-wateringly priced pints that our capital city has to offer!

Nor am I alone. I live with Natdog. We found ourselves in a new city, keen to meet new people. So, we joined the local running group: the Ealing Eagles.

When I was officially accepted on their website, I was designated the rank of 'competitive athlete'. Woah. Athlete? My heart raced more than it does when I run a 5k. All I wanted was to jog a few yards and have enough oxygen left in my brain to come across as witty and charming in front of my friends-to-be. What kind of club was I joining?

A very dedicated one, it turned out. The Eagles organise a packed weekly schedule. Any distance, any terrain, any day of the week… they've probably thought of it. You could go running with them every single day, if you really hated your knees. Me and Natdog like the Monday and Wednesday evening runs. The distance is manageable and the turnout is pretty high.

It's also a great opportunity to get to know people over a longer period. Familiar faces appear regularly to track their stats and achieve a new P.B. This means 'personal best'. However, in my family it always meant 'peanut butter', so I did get a bit confused the first time I turned up.

These guys were runners *and* peanut butter loyalists? (I had a similar mix-up when Natdog used to refer to 'CDM', 'Central Defensive Midfielder', in football. In my family, 'CDM' meant 'Cadbury Dairy Milk'.

He'd talk about last night's match and I'd start getting peckish.)

At twenty-two, I am the youngest eagle. Natdog is the second youngest, he's nine days older than me. Like the eaglets we are, we're still learning about our new environment. The runs are very useful for scouting out some interesting local gems. Have you heard of Ealing Studios, fellow reader? It's the oldest continuously working studio facility for film production in the world.

It's particularly famous for the line-up of films it produced while under the leadership of Sir Michael Balcon from 1938-1955, including *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and *The Lavender Hill Mob*. More recently, the studios have facilitated productions such as *Downton Abbey*, *The Crown* and *Darkest Hour*. I ran past their renovated, art-deco-style buildings with the Eagles. Sir Michael Balcon now lends his name to the blue plaque on the old studio building, as well as our local Wetherspoons. If a film studio isn't dramatic enough for you, how about the North Korean embassy? Yep, that's also in Ealing. It's a seven-bedroom house on Gunnersbury Avenue. Passers-by would likely think it was the home of a fairly affluent neighbour, if it wasn't for the slightly conspicuous North Korean flag billowing over the building. In August, North Korea actually downgraded its embassy in retaliation to recent UK sanctions against them. Needless to say, though, should the North Koreans ever want to talk to us again, our borough of Ealing will be at the centre of what's bound to be an awkward geopolitical chat.

Me and Natdog attended our first pub social last week. We had an epic time and couldn't help but notice a theme with our fellow eagles.

"What are you interested in?"

"Running."

"Apart from running?"

"Oh, um, gym. Swimming."

"Wow. Cool. Anything non-sporty?"

"Chatting to people –"

"Oh yeah?"

"About running."

Yep, they're dedicated.

So, it's the start of a new era. I'm now an athlete, I have a new home, and Natdog and I make quite the dynamic duo. Of course we do! Birds of a feather flock together.

# Evie's Adventures

Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University





Wow, what an exciting month it has been; the semester is well and truly underway. If you've ever started a university year, you'll know the usual feeling: a pile of deadlines somewhere in the distance and a firm policy of not looking directly at them, and this term, for reasons I can't fully explain, I looked them dead in the eye and got a head start. The notes are made, the reading is done, and my assignments are sitting there all planned out like well-behaved little tasks instead of the looming monsters they usually become. The dissertation is the big one, obviously, and maybe that's why I've been so on top of everything this month. But here's the honest update: I feel good about it. Like, actually good. The groundwork is done, I know what I'm writing, and I'm sleeping normally. But don't worry, I haven't turned into some serene productivity robot, because I am still stressed about it, and I reckon that's healthy. It's just that background hum that keeps me showing up and doing a bit here and there instead of cramming everything into the final month. If you're writing one too, I hope yours is going just as well (and if it isn't, we can be stressed together; that's what friends are for).

Now, the module I'm genuinely obsessed with this semester: my Fiction and Non-Fiction module. It's all publishing-based, so we get to pull the curtain back further on the publishing world, how books are sold and put into people's hands, and honestly, every week feels like being let in on a secret. It's one of those modules where the reading feels like a treat rather than a chore. You know when a subject just clicks? That's this for me.

I also ended up in London twice last month, which was an absolute treat. It started with a friend's birthday, which meant hopping between some genuinely lovely cocktail bars all afternoon and evening, the kind with dim lighting, fancy garnishes and menus you need a minute to read properly. By the time we called it a night, I'd tried more fancy drinks with bizarre names than any reasonable person should, but that's what birthdays are for. Then, because apparently I don't do things by halves, there was also a trip to Ascot with my university for a day at the races. Getting dressed up, clutching a race card I only half understood and shouting encouragement at horses I'd picked purely because I liked their names. Between the cocktails and the racecourse, I came home tired, happy and already planning the next trip.

And because no semester is complete without a social update: I have found a new pub. It's called Grapes; it's in the city centre, close to the old Waterstones (which I'm still grieving, as its once-beautiful building has now been taken over by a Mountain Warehouse, but that's a rant for another time) and it's lovely. Vintage and buzzing, the kind of place where one drink turns into three because nobody feels like leaving. Anyway, that's me: assignments sorted, dissertation humming along, one brilliant module, great people, and a new favourite pub. I hope your month has treated you just as kindly. Until next time, toodles!

# Farming

Mike Page



I have started listening to a short series on Radio 4 marking the 75th anniversary of broadcasting of the Archers, and examining how much country life, and farming in particular, has changed over those years; and making educated guesses as to what country life and agriculture might be like some 75 years into the future. The Archers is based around the people, farms and other facilities in the fictional village of Ambridge, widely assumed to have much of its basis on the village of Inkberrow, only a few short miles away. Farming has changed certainly over the last 75 years, starting when I was just a small child; back then my father employed four regular workers, as well as joining in himself in the field at particularly busy times such as haymaking or harvest, lambing, shearing or testing cattle for bTB, to keep on top of jobs around the Farm. The Farm grew to be somewhat bigger up to the time my father retired, and by then, with modern methods, mostly based on mechanisation the farm could be managed by me alone, with occasional help from a local contractor, usually operating a particularly specialist, or very expensive(!), piece of machinery. The Radio 4 programme has touched on the subject of how the countryside should be being used, and how it should develop in the future. Recently, we have heard some Government officials promoting the idea that we should all start stockpiling some food in our pantries, as a safeguard against any shortfall in imported food supplies that might come about through political or military actions abroad. Whilst there is much to commend this sort of action, it falls far short of what this or any other government should be doing. At best, if taken up by the vast majority of households this might keep food on the table for most for perhaps a fortnight, and as we have seen in the Ukraine, a military conflict can last as much as four years or much longer. A much better solution to a potential problem of this sort is by enhancing home food production right back at basic production level (in other words, on the farm), but in spite of the best efforts of organisations such as the NFU and CLA, the Government of the day seems to think that producing about 65% of our own food is good enough. Enhancing farming to increase production does not sit easily alongside efforts to support conservation of the environment, but it is an area of research where the Government should be active, not only by leading in research but current action. The drought weather affecting much of the UK (as well as many parts of Europe) has shown that food production is not going to be what we simply assume based on levels of production that we have come to assume are 'normal'. And efforts to ensure production, and even increase it, should be sitting high on the Government's Agenda, alongside efforts to conserve and enhance environmental improvements. On the Farm itself, grassland is starting to recover from its dormancy during the worst of the drought, and there is at least enough to keep sheep content as they can graze right down to virtually soil level; not so easy for cattle as they do not graze that close, and many herds are being supplemented with hay or silage gathered originally as winter feed. That leaves the possibility of being short of animal food if we should have a long winter or late spring. On the arable side, although it does not affect this farm, there are plans afoot to close down beet processing at the Cantley Sugar Beet Factory. There remains the possibility it may remain open but to process and refine imported raw cane sugar. Closing the Kidderminster Sugar Beet Factory a few years ago effectively finished off sugar production in this area of the Midlands, once an important crop. Yet another example of Government failure to provide support where needed. With the possibility of El Niño this year and next giving rise to further continuation in drought conditions in many parts of the World, including the UK, prospects do not look good. We can and must remain hopeful.

# Tales from my travels

Lucy Clayton-Smith



My first foray into South Africa was ten days in Cape Town. Initially daunted by the stories I'd heard, my confidence grew as I got to know the city.

To mark the end of my stay, I booked a Saturday morning hike up Table Mountain. At 6am, I admired the city below, cloaked in a sunlit haze. Alongside my guide, Codi, was Pam, an older American woman who had arrived the previous evening. It didn't take long to realise I'd underestimated what I'd signed up for! After an hour, we stopped for photos, a breather and some of Codi's grandma's delicious flapjacks. But as we prepared to continue, Pam voiced her concerns. After an unsuccessful attempt to get help from mountain rescue, we were contemplating turning back when another local guide, Peter, appeared with a friend. They offered to take me onwards while Codi and Pam returned. I was sad to leave them, but wanted to face the challenge. At the toughest section of the India Venster Trail, where metal chains help hikers cross between rocks, I froze, unable to go forwards or back.

Peter reassured me, "Trust me," and held out his hand. As I gathered myself on the other side, a brightly coloured cap appeared from the rocks below. "That's Pam! She's made it!" I couldn't believe my eyes. There she was, with Codi and an older gentleman they'd met as they turned back. He knew the mountain well, and his calm manner seemed to give Pam the confidence to try again. As we walked in single file along the final, narrow ledges, the burnt ground bursting with beautiful, bright flowers (controlled burns can encourage regeneration), I felt a real sense of satisfaction. We'd made it! At the top, we shared coffee and cake to celebrate our new companion's birthday. "I can't believe you spent your birthday leading me up the mountain," Pam told him. Codi and I smiled at one another. The mountain had become a metaphor for life.

# Sophie's Teenage Focus

Sophie Faulkner





Hi, I'm back for another month! Firstly, I want to talk about my plans after GSCEs, as I didn't mention it in the last column. Luckily, my school has a sixth form so I'm going to stay and do A-Levels there. I'm feeling quite excited about it because I'll actually like all the subjects I study, and won't have to wear school uniform! I'm planning on taking English literature, History, Psychology and Politics as my subjects, although I might drop one a few weeks into sixth form. After that, I'll probably go to university because I'm thinking of doing something in law or journalism, but I don't know for sure. Then again, who does know what they want to do when they're fifteen!

Now, a bit more about my life outside of school. The last couple of months have been quite busy, as lots of my family and friends have had their birthdays, and mine is coming up on the 4th November! I will be 16, which feels like quite a big deal, even though nothing is really changing. To celebrate, my mum and I are going to Cheltenham to do some shopping and see the musical Heathers. I'm very excited, as I love musicals and I love shopping, especially for clothes!

Before that though, I'm going to Keswick in the Lake District with some of my extended family. It will probably be quite wet (even after the dry summer we had) but it's always nice to meet up with family and go on pretty walks. Each year for the past couple of years, we've visited Keswick at this time of year so I'm quite familiar with it now. I'm excited to go back because I love the town centre, but also love the beautiful hills nearby! I will write about how everything goes in my next column. Until then, goodbye!

# 28 Really useful gadgets / The Porter escape

Martyn Cracknell

At the various shows where we have live bees, we are frequently asked how we manage to steal the honey when there are so many thousands of bees crawling over the combs and guarding it. It is a good question because when the honey is ready in mid August, the hive population is really high, and if a colony has been attacked by wasps or has been disturbed by the beekeeper too often, it can be really defensive. Back in the early 1900's, when straw basket hives were used, the colony would be held over a pit of burning sulphur which killed all the bees, and then the honey was taken.

This brutal exploitation of the bees meant that skeps were empty until a swarm was caught in the following spring.

The introduction of the moveable frame hive, as we use today, was called Humane beekeeping because the honey could be taken without killing the bees, which survived overwinter to the next season. Various strategies have been adopted to obtain the honey such as using a blast of air to blow the bees off the combs, or a cloth soaked in chemicals which the bees find repellent, or brushing off with a soft brush (or traditionally with goose feathers), or a sharp shaking of each frame, but my preferred method is the Porter escape. This is a one-way valve which fits in a hole in a panel of wood. The panel is placed underneath the boxes of honey with the escape fitted. A cover is placed on top to prevent bees or wasps getting in the top. After a few hours or overnight, the hive is revisited and all the bees should have made their way through the escape into the boxes below leaving the honey filled boxes free of bees and able to be removed without any fuss.

Inside the escape there are two thin strips of copper which the bees can easily push apart but which prevent re-entry. It is a simple idea but is not always successful and many alternative patterns have been marketed over the years.



*Two escapes, removed from their wood panel and opened to show the one-way valve, the lower one gummed up by the bees.*

If left on the hive for more than a few days they become completely clogged up with propolis and are either gummed open in both directions or sealed fully shut. Despite these shortcomings it is a gentle method and is still my favourite.

## Thank you Peter!

Peter Farrel has told us that due to a change in circumstances he will not be able to submit future articles to the Pershore Times. We are very sorry to receive this news as Peter has been a major contributor for over ten years! We wish to thank Peter for his contribution and enthusiastic participation which has certainly helped to make this publication successful.

We send Peter our thanks and very best wishes for the future.

*Best Regards, Alan Hughes*

*Editor /Proprietor*

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# Tired but in a good way



## Angela Johns

Life changes when you have cleaned your teeth, washed your face and put on whatever you wear to bed. It's a watershed moment when we have the chance to finish the day and make space for rest and sleep for the night. It's one of my favourite everyday things to do - to become Ready-For-Bed Me. Sometimes, I complete this nightly ritual early and feel the self-satisfaction of being ahead of the game. Sometimes, when I've left it late, I'm so tired I feel like I really can't be bothered. Even so, rarely do I not complete it as it moves me into a readiness for repose and rest, a signal to my mind to switch from doing mode to being mode. Ready-For-Bed Me helps Responsible-for-All-Sorts-of-Things Me to become, well, Just Me. It's important to spend some time being Just Me, because this is the time I can learn how I want to show up in the world, the True Me if you will. I can drop the masks I wear, hang up the various hats too and see how comfortable I am without them all - in being Just Me. Ready-For-Bed Me knows whether I have done everything I should or could have today, or any other day, and she will have a range of feelings about it. This may mean she spends time dwelling on the past, immediate or distant. It may mean she worries about what is to come and how Just Me will manage it. She may also feel thankful and pleased about what has been, or excited and confident about the future. Will she be able to let go of all of those so Just Me can get to sleep? Hmm. Usually she can but sometimes she struggles. Ready-For-Bed Me has all sorts of good intentions of winding down for sleep and thinks the bedtime ritual is plenty enough, but reviewing the shoulds and coulds gets in the way. And don't get her started on other people's shoulds and coulds because in that case All-The-Mes will wake up tired! Maybe the key is to spend all day getting ready for bed. That would mean taking time to make amends, have out that disagreement, find something to laugh out loud about, speak up, make up, plan, give up, mind your own business, cry, show them what love is… That sounds a lot and it's not the lot. Ready-For-Bed Me would be tired, but in a good way. And Just Me can have her moment.

*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*

### 75 years ago ...

In November 1951, British Olympic team members were put inside an aeronautical wind tunnel to test their windproof clothing and aerodynamics. with simulated gales of up to 80mph.

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# Long Service Award



## Carol Draper

Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co accountants have been trading since the 1980s and this year our longest serving member of staff Meinir Bird will have been with the practice for 32 years.
We missed her 30th anniversary with the firm, so it seems only right to rectify that and celebrate the anniversary now. Meinir trained and qualified with Price Waterhouse Coopers but wanting a life as well as a job she applied to Clifton-Crick Sharp & Co, convinced them she was what they needed to take the practice forward and was subsequently employed as the Audit Manager they required. If starting a new job was not enough, in the same year she joined Meinir also got married and moved home.
Having settled in Meinir set up the Audit Systems the practice was missing and wrote the new practice handbook. She built up her own clientele, and it is credit to her that 32 years on she has continues to deal with the accountancy requirements of some of her original clients.
As Meinir's role in the practice grew, so did her family.
She gave birth to two daughters, both of whom have gone to university and are pursuing careers of their own.
We wanted to say thank you and recognise Meinir's long service though rather than the traditional Carriage Clock, she has asked we buy her tickets to Australia so she can visit her daughter. We hope you have a fabulous journey.
HMRC also recognise long service should be rewarded and will allow a gift that is equivalent in value to £50 per year of service to be given without any tax implications to the employee.
Whether members of staff are short or long term they are all essential for a business to operate well and efficiently. Customers deal with and buy from people rather than a business as without people there is no business.
Attitude, customer service and problem solving comes from the staff who work for an organisation so look after your staff and your staff will look after your business.

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

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01386 561100
mail@clifton-crick.co.uk
www.clifton-crick.co.uk

### Did you know

November was originally the ninth month of the Roman calendar year.
The word 'month' itself is related to the moon - originally measuring how long it took for the moon to complete a cycle around the earth. So 'moon' and 'month' come from the same root.

# Village Life

John Driscoll



I confess to feeling a bit of a fraud writing this article as we have spent virtually all of October (so far) out of the country, enjoying a fabulous trip to Norway. Returning to our little corner of England we always appreciate just how gentle the pace of life seems after spending time in the 'big wide world'. On this occasion though, as we've spent most of our time in rural areas, there are many parallels to be drawn. Our trees ar e at the same autumnal stage as many parts of southern Norway, and our temperatures are not hugely different. Part of our trip took us into the Arctic Circle where trees had long accepted winter conditions and temperatures were much lower. Smaller towns and villages along the way were not too dissimilar to our own, though it has to be said that the basic infrastructure including roads and public areas in Norway are far better maintained than some of ours. So, some amazing memories, but as always we're grateful to return to familiar surroundings and the comfort of a great community surrounding us. Not that it has been without disturbance lately, with a very unwelcome house break-in in the village while we were away. A horrible experience for the resident. I believe the culprits were caught but that's likely to be of limited relief to the victim.

If any positive can be drawn from this it has to be the immediate supportive reaction from numerous people via the village WhatsApp group with constructive support including the offer of fellowship and practical assistance plus review of CCTV footage. I've said before in this column that WhatsApp has been a great means of communication for our village and once again it proved its worth, not only offering help but alerting others to be careful and to watch out for neighbours, especially anyone who may be alone or vulnerable. One reality we've returned to is the shadow cast over our community by the planned Wychavon Town development, which will be on our doorstep. Planning applications have started to be presented and we are aware that now may be the last opportunity to have our voice heard. We rightly feel we have every justification to have our opinions considered given the impact that the new town will have on our surroundings. The challenge has been deciding how to best organise a response to maximise our impact. We are small fry facing large and well resourced organisations who can marshal impressive resources. Planning applications so far submitted have included a vast number of 'documents', often running to many pages of inaccessible narrative. How do we decide which are relevant, and how to review so much detail and form meaningful opinions? Then, how do we mobilise local opinion and raise relevant objections (or indeed support)? A large number of villagers have joined a WhatsApp chat through which we can spread news and views. A smaller core group has been brought together through which we can focus attention and action. Between these and general 'all population' messaging we aim to empower our neighbours to share their views and register comments on the Wychavon website. We have been pretty successful so far though we have no way of knowing what impact our comments have when applications are considered. However, we're confident we'll be able to refine our approach as we gain experience. We accept that the new town will likely go ahead but will not sit back quietly and accept whatever disruption results from construction and eventual occupation of the development. There - I feel better for that! Other village news is limited. Our phone box still hasn't been painted, and spring planting hasn't yet been organised, but then this autumn is running late so there's still time! The clocks will have changed by the time you read this, and the count-down to Christmas will have officially started. Whether it's Bah-Humbug or Yo-Ho-Ho, it's inevitable so let's hope for a good few weeks before the fun begins!
Snow this year (?) - who knows?

# Music Matters

Steve Ide




60 years ago, The Beatles released their seventh studio album Revolver. This was to be the final record before they retired as live performers and is regularly included in 'best album of all time lists' Tracks like "Elenor Rigby" and "Got To Get You Into My Life" make this a timeless album that gave glimpses to the future of music production. Having freed themselves up from having to reproduce the album in a live environment, the band were able to experiment with some original and inventive techniques, with lyrics that easily match the production. *"Elenor Rigby"* is a heartfelt song about loneliness, following the story of the main character who dies alone and the priest that appears to have lost his faith "no one was saved". *"Here, There and Everywhere"* is a romantic ballad by Paul, inspired by The Beach Boys, that uses a double tracked, sped up vocal to produce a higher tone. *"Tomorrow Never Knows"* is possibly the most experimental track on the album, reversed guitars, looped tape effects and receptive drum tracks give a glimpse into The Beatles future *"Love you To"* was written by George, heavily featuring the Sitar, reflecting the bands Indian musical influences. The song has been lauded as groundbreaking in its introduction of Indian musical forms to western rock audiences. Revolver expanded the possibilities of rock music and remains to this day, a must have in any music collection.

**Notable New Releases**
- Dopamine Chamber
*by Fontaines DC*
Sounding like an Irish New Order, this is another step up from one of the best bands around. A dark but hopeful view on how to survive these odd times.
Stand out track - Six Shot Morning
- A man from the future
*by The Pet shop Boys*
A wonderful and beautiful concept album about the life of Alan Turing. Sublime storytelling, the spoken work elements work to complete the pictures.
Stand out track - He dreamed of machines

**Add to playlist**
Give me love
*by George Harrison*
I'm the Man-Wulf
*by The Primals*
Elephant
*by Tame Impala*
This is the day
*by The The*
Levi Stubbs tears
*by Billy Bragg*

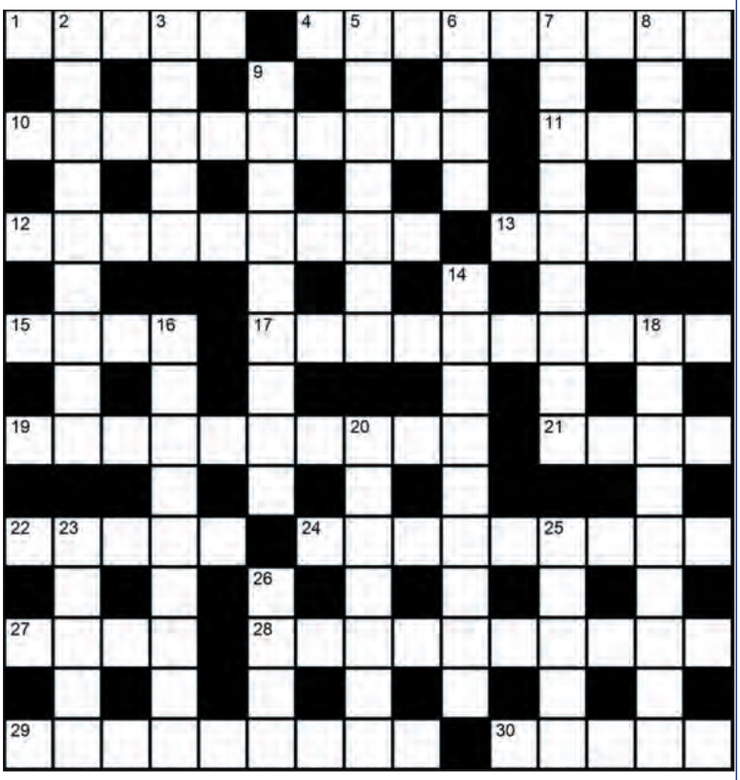
# Coffee Break Crossword

## Across

1. Rapid nuclear reactor shut-down (5)
4. Helper (9)
10. Dressing (10)
11. Atop (4)
12. Ministers (9)
13. Bender (5)
15. Sets of equipment (4)
7. Female big cat (10)
19. Herefordshire town (10)
21. Type of heating fuel (4)
22. Reprimand (5)
24. Contented (9)
27. Waist band (4)
28. Volume for preliminary artistic studies (10)
29. Steam locomotive (4,5)
30. One of these means almost cloudless (5)

## Down

2. Truce (5-4)
3. Isolated (5)
5. Snow vehicle (7)
6. Notion (4)
7. Fabricated (7-2)
8. Hangman's knot (5)
9. Emphasise (9)
14. Wig (9)
16. Ignorant person (9)
18. Whipping boy (9)
20. Makes journeys (7)
23. Gaiety (5)
25. Legend (5)
26. Capital of Norway (4)



# Sudoku

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

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

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

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

# Famous British authors wordsearch

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | C | U | H | J | A | X | A | I | N | H | M | I | K | T | H | W |
| P | V | S | T | E | Ë | I | Q | R | U | R | V | L | L | L | G | Y |
| B | E | K | X | O | W | H | S | M | H | S | J | R | M | L | N | A |
| N | V | N | R | Q | I | M | T | D | B | E | R | T | J | E | I | G |
| E | I | M | P | E | P | L | I | H | Q | A | H | K | V | W | L | A |
| T | R | Z | A | B | T | I | E | U | A | O | Z | C | Q | R | P | T |
| S | G | W | D | R | J | I | N | E | M | X | T | X | S | O | I | H |
| U | I | J | I | O | Y | Z | A | A | G | H | Ë | I | R | E | K | A |
| A | N | K | K | L | D | S | S | N | E | R | W | I | R | G | D | C |
| E | I | O | R | S | F | H | H | B | F | E | O | G | E | R | R | H |
| N | A | X | X | P | A | R | R | E | L | L | M | E | J | O | A | R |
| A | W | F | B | R | F | O | E | S | L | Z | E | Q | G | E | Y | I |
| J | O | S | D | Ë | N | C | C | D | F | L | S | M | Y | G | D | S |
| W | O | Y | A | T | C | R | O | Q | O | S | E | S | I | O | U | T |
| H | L | Ë | Ë | F | R | U | Ë | Y | N | W | D | Y | M | N | R | I |
| I | F | S | H | M | U | Ë | W | K | B | E | E | Ë | F | T | G | E |
| L | W | H | Z | O | O | V | B | J | Y | D | X | N | Y | V | R | F |

JANE AUSTEN
MARY SHELLEY
IAN FLEMING
THE BRONTËS
C S LEWIS
GEORGE ELIOT
VIRGINIA WOOLF
GEORGE ORWELL
RUDYARD KIPLING
AGATHA CHRISTIE
WILFRED OWEN
THOMAS HARDY

# Brainteasers

*1) What is unusual about this phrase: "The five boxing wizards jump quickly"?*

*2) What is bought to eat but is never consumed?*

*3) Without reordering any letters, how many animals appear in the sequence:*

***frogirafferreteallamacawhaleshark?***

*1) It is a pangram - meaning it contains every letter of the alphabet.*
*2) A plate.*
*3) Nine: frog, giraffe, ferret, teal, llama, macaw, whale, shark, whale shark.*

# Thoughts from the Snug

## UK-Europe's Future

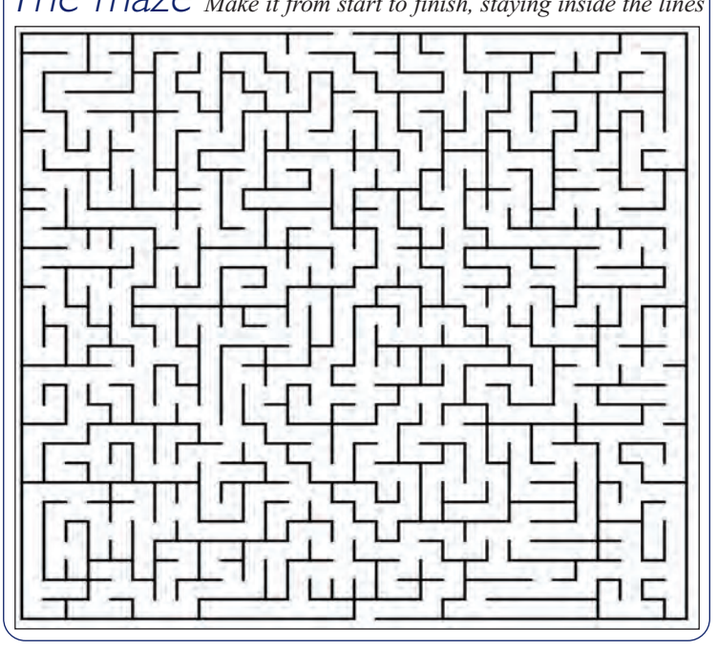
We were reflecting in the Snug it is over a decade since Brexit. There are now serious discussion on a U turn. The Uk's original dissatisfaction stemmed from not being in control of our own destiny. In Britain we seemed to believe we should be permitted to do what we wanted unless it was expressly prohibited by our government. Autonomy! We seemed to believe in germany all was prohibited unless expressly permitted and the French permitted all that was expressly prohibited. Certainly, there was little harmony and, as a family of nations, constant fall-outs and arguments prevailed. Furthermore, it cost a lot and we convinced ourselves being independent from Europe we would thrive. So, we got out! Ten years on we are getting worried. UK trade with our neighbours is now a big bureaucratic struggle and we feel alone in the threats from Eastern and Western power blocks who are bullying us with countless forms of intimidation and threats. Europe probably feels even more anxious than the UK; their pipelines, cables and communications have been severely compromised in recent years, a four-year war has been raging on their doorstep. If anything can be done to relieve the anxiety in Britain and Europe it's got to be through dialog and cooperation. Better, closer cooperation between the UK and Europe is essential. Competition, trade protectionism and blame is divisive and that's where we are at the moment. The plea from the Snug is to remind ourselves of the words from a famous statesman, "Jaw, jaw, jaw is better than war, war, war!" Who said that? Answers on a postcard or email to the editor with your views would be welcome.

Cheers, Buddy Bach

## *Did you know*

On the 29th November 1641, England's first newspaper was published.

## *The maze* *Make it from start to finish, staying inside the lines*

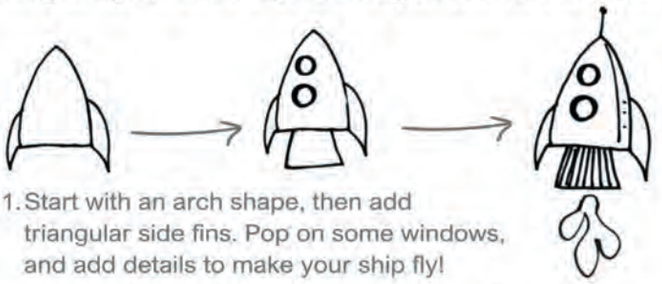


# *Let's draw!*

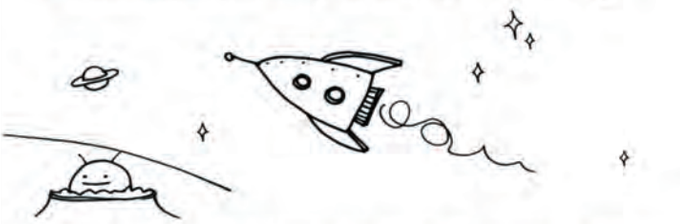
Nesta Munro
*Friendly drawing fun*
*www.nestamunro.com*



*The nights are longer and it's a great time for stargazing! Grab your favourite pen and let's draw...*



1. Start with an arch shape, then add triangular side fins. Pop on some windows, and add details to make your ship fly!



2. Now let's place it in Space! Add stars, planets and other friendly space folk to tell your spaceship's story.

**Competition Time!**

Now it's your turn- send us your best rocketship drawing, and our favourite will win a prize!

*Email: news@hughes.company | Closing date 20/11/26*

## *Word of the Month*

## *'Anachronistic'*

*Definition:*
*When something does not fit with its historical context.*
*E.g. Henry VIII using an iPad: two different eras, the iPad belongs outside of its historical time period.*

## *Flower of the Month*

## *Chrysanthemum*

*Symbolising passion, tenderness, joy, friendship, and well-wishing. Referred to as the queen of the autumn flowers, the "mum" symbolises joy, life, friendship, luck, and rebirth. It is resilient in the face of sudden temperature drops.*

## *Famous November Birthdays!*

Marie Curie
*7th November, 1867*
Winston Churchill
*30th November, 1874*
Tilda Swinton
*5th November, 1960*
Ryan Gosling
*12th November, 1980*

## *Did You Know?*

*The Pleides star cluster sits within Taurus the Bull constellation. With over 1,000 stars in the cluster only six are visible without binoculars or a telescope. Will be visible throughout winter.*

## *October Answers*

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

# 'Tis the Season - Almost

Brian Johnson-Thomas







*Train photographed by Jack Boskett*

Whether you loved them or loathed them the halcyon days of heatwaves are now long past us as we begin the slow inexorable slide into Winter. To try and mitigate the onset of any misery I've put together as short compendium of places to go, things to do and even presents to buy. This latter category arises almost by chance - I sent a sort of Round Robin to PR companies in general asking for unusual ideas for Christmas presents so here's my suggestions for a weeks' supply of goodies:
Sunday - an Aeropress Travel Coffee Mug. IT's double walled and vacuum insulated, plus it's dishwasher friendly - ideal form out and about RRP £29.99.
*See www.aeropress.co.uk*
Monday - a Life Saver Liberty water purifying bottle. Ideal for camping and hiking enthusiasts it's a great way to purify water as you go...which also fits in nicely with the Government's call for us all to stock up for emergencies RRP £130 - but it lasts and lasts.
*See https://iconlifesaver.com*
Tuesday - Steenbergs organic Christmas Tea with infuser gift set. Full of spices and thus flavour it's a niche £16 stocking filler.
*See https:// steenbergs.co.uk*
Wednesday - Also from Steenbergs I fancied the Taste for Baking Jute Gift Bag, which does what you'd expect and makes a nice prezzie for the chef in your life RRP £55, also from Steenbergs.
Thursday - Feeling peckish? We went vegetarian a while back and it's still quite hard to find suitable food sometimes, so I was pleased to find that a company called Oggs make some really nice vanilla cupcakes and that you can buy them from Sainsburys.
Friday - they also make a really scrumptious rich chocolate fudge cake surrounded with a gold coloured chocolate fudge. Ideal for a "different" Christmas cake? Just £16 at sainsburys.
Saturday - Only for someone very, very special try the Ultimate Advent Calendar, or to give the full title the Chili No.5 Hot Sauce and Spice Advent Calendar which is guaranteed, they say, to give you 24 days of gourmet delights and which I'm told is "the ultimate gift". RRP £125 from Selfridges. Whilst we're talking larger amounts of money, we went to the foreign property exhibition at the NEC that I mentioned some months ago. As well as the usual suspects - Spain, France and the like I was especially struck by as company offering new build apartments on Egypt's Sea coast at Hurghada starting from as little as £20,000.
*If you're feeling like an adventure then see www.hurghadaapartmentsales.com for more details.*
You might also remember that I told you about Ambassador Cruise Lines and their no-fly offers sailing from Bristol. We had the chance to look over the 'Ambition' cruise ship recently which she was in port between cruises. It's one of the smaller ships these days with only some 1,200 passengers which does mean that there seems to be more space to stretch out, if you see what I mean. They have quite a range of cabins, but they all seemed comparatively spacious - and the suites, for example, were rather luxurious. I liked the range of dining options, standard British, or Mediterranean or Indian, and, judging by the lunch we enjoyed, well cooked and superbly presented by attentive staffs. Not as expensive as I'd expected, either. If you want a Christmas where you do nothing by enjoy yourself then their Christmas and New Year Cruise from London Tilbury to Spain and Portugal looks excellent value with prices starting from £1829 for 15 nights departing on December 21st.
*See www.ambassadorcruiseline.com for all details.*
A lot nearer home then the National Trust's Wightwick Manor near Wolverhampton will be decorated for a traditional Christmas from the 20th of this month with an emphasis on William Morris decor. The Mander family, whose home it was, were keen followers of the Pre-Raphaelites. Normal admission charges apply.
*See www.nationaltrust.org.uk.*
Finally, how about a trip by steam train in the dark ?
The Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Steam Railway has two nice offers this month. Firstly there's the chance to combine a train ride with the fireworks display at Cheltenham Racecourse with a train from Toddington direct to the Racecourse next Saturday, November 7th and if you can't make that date then they are also offering steam trains from Toddington to Broadway for the Christmas Shopping Evenings on Friday the 27th of this month and December 4th. With a shuttle bus into the heart of Broadway from the station it seems the ideal way to go shopping.
*See www. gwsr.com for details.*
Maybe see you there?

# Speakers Corner *(Hyde Park)*

*Peter Jewell*

***From the boundary***

*Cricket*

The cricket season is over, and Worcestershire have once again failed to make a meaningful impression in any of the competitions. I have said it before, and I shall say it again. There comes a point when continued failure must be met with accountability rather than excuses. England performed well against Sri Lanka and Pakistan, but one must ask just how strong the opposition really was.
We shall see what England are made of when they head south. That will be the real test, and I hope they rise to the occasion.

*Football*

England seem to be going great guns, and long may that continue. There is genuine reason for optimism, although, as every football supporter knows, optimism can be a dangerous thing.

*Immigration - When Will It End?*

Britain has now recorded more than 80,000 small-boat arrivals since July 2024. That is an extraordinary number, and one that should concern anyone interested in border control, public expenditure and the future of our immigration system.
The cumulative total has been reported at approximately 83,279, a figure comparable with the numerical strength of the Regular Army, although the precise comparison depends on which Army personnel measure is used. On Wednesday 23rd September, 781 people arrived by small boat. During the first three days of that week, there were 1,085 arrivals. It is true that arrivals so far in 2026 are substantially below the equivalent period in 2025. Nevertheless, more than 20,000 arrivals in just over nine months remain a considerable challenge.

*Politics and the Economy*

The party conference season has come and gone, accompanied by the usual mixture of promises, speeches and, frankly, a considerable amount of political nonsense. Britain continues to spend beyond its means. Government borrowing, the national debt and the cost of servicing that debt cannot simply be wished away. I fear that, unless we restore financial discipline, we could face a serious economic downturn, accompanied by sharply rising borrowing costs, falling confidence in government bonds and further pressure on sterling. A substantial fall in the value of the pound would increase the cost of imports, feeding inflation and placing still more pressure on households and businesses. These outcomes are not inevitable, but the risks should not be dismissed.
We cannot continue indefinitely to spend money we do not have and expect future generations to settle the bill.

*Energy - Use What We Have*

Britain has substantial coal reserves, potential offshore oil and gas resources, and shale gas deposits. I recognise that there are environmental, economic and practical objections, particularly in relation to coal and shale gas. Nevertheless, energy security and affordability must be central considerations. Where domestic production is commercially viable and environmentally lawful, I would rather see those resources used to benefit British consumers and businesses. We should also examine how energy is priced and taxed. I would favour a simpler and more transparent system, including consideration of fixed duties and the removal of unnecessary layers of taxation. The expression tax on tax may sound like an exaggeration, but it accurately reflects how many consumers perceive the cumulative effect of duties and VAT. Affordable energy is fundamental to a successful economy.

*Prisons - An Extraordinary Cost to the Taxpayer*

I have joked about our prisons in the past, but this is now a serious matter. According to Ministry of Justice figures, the prison population of England and Wales stood at 85,858 on 30th June 2026.

*Welfare - Helping Those Who Really Need It*

The welfare system is an area in which I believe there is considerable room for reform. There are people who genuinely cannot work because of illness, disability or other serious circumstances. They deserve proper support, dignity and financial security. Yet there are cases of fraud and abuse, and the Government must ensure that public money reaches those who genuinely qualify for assistance. We should not confuse legitimate claimants with those deliberately exploiting the system, nor should we assume that everyone receiving benefits is capable of employment. My concern is that bureaucracy, waste and poor administration can leave those most in need struggling to obtain help. The system should be firm but fair. As for the pension triple lock, I believe it should be retained.
Those who have worked and contributed throughout their lives deserve a measure of certainty in retirement.



*Finally - The Right to Speak Out*

I recognise that some of the views expressed in this column will be regarded as controversial. I have tried to distinguish between established facts, reasonable assumptions and my own opinions. Readers are perfectly entitled to disagree with my conclusions. Indeed, I hope they do challenge them. A newspaper should not simply repeat what its readers already believe. It should provoke discussion, question accepted thinking and provide a platform for different points of view. That is one of the reasons I value this publication. But freedom of speech carries responsibilities. We should strive for accuracy, acknowledge facts that do not support our arguments and remain willing to listen to opposing views. So, to you, the readers, I say this: have your say. Agree with me, disagree with me, challenge my figures or offer a better solution. What matters is that we continue to debate the issues affecting our country.
One of Britain's greatest traditions is freedom of expression. We should cherish it, exercise it and never take it for granted.

*At Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park, anyone can speak on almost any subject without prior notice, provided the speech remains lawful.*

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,
I have just read the Upton Times from cover to cover and it was a rattling good read. I was particularly impressed with the space you give to your young writers so they can hone their writing skills.

*Clive Smith, Upton*

Dear Editor,
As Remembrance Sunday approaches, the Peace Pledge Union is encouraging people to remember all victims of war, civilians and military, by wearing a white poppy at their local ceremony. Civilians bear the heaviest cost of war. The UN recorded a 40% surge in civilian deaths in conflict in 2024 alone, and since the Second World War, civilians have made up an estimated 85% to 90% of those killed in armed conflicts. With recent Ipsos polling showing that one in two Britons (48%) say there are no circumstances in which they would be willing to take up arms for Britain, and with conflicts continuing to rage around the world, it's time to look to peaceful alternatives. This is the message white poppies have carried since 1933, when members of the Co-operative Women's Guild, many of whom had lost loved ones in the First World War, first made them to say "ever again.". You can buy your white poppy at ppu.org.uk.

*Colin Kerr, Davide Dionisi, Liz Cooke, Rev Matt Harbage, Chris Green*
*Council Members of the Peace Pledge Union.*

Dear Editor,
I'm looking for people that would have any old maps of Pensham or Pershore that have Pensham on it with dates between 1949 and 1952. If yes, please call or text Lesley Evans on 07817 530687

*Lesley Evans*

Dear Editor,
I was on holiday in Worcester and picked up your latest September edition of the Whittington Times.
May I sincerely congratulate the editorial committee and contributors on an excellent publication. Each article is so interesting, and although I don't live in the area but in Wales, it does encourage me to return!
I hope the monthly newspaper continues to thrive!

*Cyril Evans*

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### St. Mary's Church

The family of the late Ann Windsor would like to sincerely thank friends and neighbours for all their kind messages, prayers and support they have received. Also to everyone who attended Ann's funeral.

*A total of £234 was collected for St. Mary's Church.*

## *Cover Photo Competition!*

Winner of front cover photography competition:
Kim Freeman
*Congratulations!*

## Bin Collections

| NOVEMBER | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | T | W | T | F | S | S |
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| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | |

Green recycling bin  Black waste bin




## Spot & Shop October Winners

1) Tony Clarke
2) Rexanna Wedgwood
3) Val Jackman
4) Phil Thomas
5) Veronica Nailor-Smith
6) Sue Southwick

***Last month's answer: KJB Carpet Cleaning***

## COMPETITION TIME!

SPOT and SHOP!

*Take a look at the anagram*

***The answer is the name of a business that is advertising in the Kempsey Times this month***

Chance to WIN £50 CASH

This month's anagram
**ICE CLEAN SCREAMED**

**This month's prizes!**

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***4th £10 Voucher***
*at Revills Farm Shop, Defford*

***5th £10 voucher***
*at Upper Crust, Pershore*

***6th 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: 24th November 2026**

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# Camera Club



*"Nuthatch On The Trunk" by Aaron Dodd*



*"Carder Bee On Agastache Rugosa" by Simon Brackenbury*

With autumn temperatures and shortening days upon us, we are glad to be able to offer a mix of indoor and outdoor activities which might be of interest to both existing and potential members. Where indoor activities are concerned, our November commences on Saturday 7th with our first print competition of the season. Given the physical nature of prints, this will be an in-person meeting, the subject for the prints is Open and the judge is Mike Glyde. As with our judge in October, this will be Mike's first visit to the Club, so we particularly look forward to hearing his comments on our work. This meeting is followed, in quite close succession, by an evening of talks by two of our most able photographers, Jayne Winter and Colin Trow-Poole, on Wednesday 11th. Occurring immediately after our participation in a three-way inter-club "battle" in Stratford-upon-Avon on Tuesday 24th, our final meeting of the month is on the evening of Wednesday 25th. This will take the form of a "critique" evening, where a panel of volunteers from within our ranks make constructive comment on images submitted by other members. We would be delighted to welcome anybody interested to either of the evenings listed above; please make contact via our website (https://www.kempseycameraclub.uk/), where you will also find further details of our programme for the rest of the coming season. In the meantime we hope that you will enjoy these two further excellent natural history images - "Carder Bee On Agastache Rugosa" by Simon Brackenbury & "Nuthatch On The Trunk" by Aaron Dodd - both selected from the eight commended images in our "In Our Garden" themed projected image competition held in March of this year.

*Malcolm A Hay*
*Secretary*

---

the WI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Kempsey WI's September meeting was a Harvest Social. Members arrived at the venue carrying platefuls of finger food to share. These colourful plates were deposited onto the buffet table and, as the table filled up, there was the usual wonderful balance of sweet and savoury options for the ladies to choose from later. A table in the corner was bedecked by pink prizes donated by members and friends for the "Big Pink Raffle" - the first fundraiser for our Charity of the Year namely Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven. However, before members could start eating there was some business to attend to! Members were reminded about the Christmas Crafting Day, the Book Club, a fund-raising coffee morning, the Open meeting in October and a "Ladies Lunch" date. They heard about efforts to communicate their frustrations about current health provision in Worcestershire to our MP and local planning authorities and about the results of a recent dip test of the River Severn for the WI's "Clean Rivers" campaign. Needless to say business was swiftly concluded and the ladies moved on to the main event of the day, sampling the food and drink and socialising - and laughing as a humorous anecdote was narrated.

*The next meeting, on Monday 16th November 2-4pm in Kempsey Youth Centre, is billed as "A Festive Story". For any enquiries about visiting or joining Kempsey WI please contact kempseysec@wfedwi.org.uk*



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# Severn Stoke and Croome D'Abitot Parish Council

A huge thank you to everyone who has taken the time to speak with our councillors during our recent doorstep conversations and to those who completed our survey. We have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of our parishioners and hearing your views, ideas, concerns and aspirations for our community. Your feedback is invaluable and will help shape future priorities and initiatives for the Parish Council.
Please remember that our Clerk remains available throughout the year to receive comments, answer questions and help signpost residents to the appropriate services and organisations where needed. Once all feedback has been reviewed, we will publish a summary of the results along with any responsive actions that the Parish Council intends to take.
We look forward to continuing the conversation and welcoming residents to future Parish Council meetings.
Thank you once again for helping us build a stronger and more connected community.

Severn Stoke & Croome d'Abitot Parish Council
*Next Meetings: Wednesday 25th November, 7.30pm at the SOQ meeting room, Croome National Trust Visitor Centre.*
*Parish Clerk, Lisa Stevens, T: 07950256363*
Join our friendly team and help us keep the OK in Severn StOKe and Croome d'Abitot!!
*E: parishclerk@severnstokeandcroomedabitot-pc.gov.uk*
Your councillors are Richard Hill (Chair), Simon Bott, Ian Daly, Laura McEwan-Hill, Pat Preston and Raymond Williams. We have six vacancies for immediate co-option.

# *Happenings in Severn Stoke and Environs*

*John Henderson*



**St. Denys' Church, Severn Stoke**
The major works on the Flood Bund have been completed, in what could not have been a better year for weather. We are extremely grateful to all those who have worked so hard to bring this project to fruition.
Please come to St Denys' Church on:
*Sunday 29th November at 4pm* - for A Service of Celebration for the Construction of the Bund to offer grateful thanks to all those who have been involved over many years, followed by a modest Bunfight with Fizz at 4.30pm! All are welcome to join us including those, particularly residents and businesses affected and those who have planned, funded and are building this major undertaking for the benefit of our community.
**Friends of St. Denys, Severn Stoke**
*Raising funds to maintain and modernise the Church.*
The Craft Fair last month raised a much needed £900 towards Church Funds. Congratulations to all who assisted in making this event a success.
Carols at The Nash on:
*Friday 4th December at 7.30pm* - with the kind consent of the owners, we are again holding our annual gathering at The Nash, with carols accompanied by the Chase Brass Band followed by seasonal refreshments. There will be a bucket collection during the event for the Charity named by the Band, so please bring cash. Tickets for this popular event are £15.00 including refreshments, available from the usual sources. Funds raised will go towards the maintenance of this ancient church and churchyard. We are desperately short of funds and need your generous assistance.
*Congratulations and grateful thanks to Sally Linsey, for her personal efforts this year seeking donations towards churchyard maintenance totalling an incredible £1,300.00 and thanks to all those who gave so generously.*

**For care homes**
**Help us recycle community equipment**

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- *Store equipment safely for collection*
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*www.hacw.nhs.uk/services/service/worcestershire-community-equipment-service-44/#service-how-to-arrange-a-collection-tab*



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*Different rules apply to Nursing Homes, contact service if you require clarification.*

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Kempsey Times

SPOT & SHOP! See Page 23

# News from The Lawns







We visited Worcester cathedral in our wheelchair enabled minibus for a history tour with one of their volunteers. Resident Bernice's husband used to be the vicar in Kempsey and Pat's father was a curate, so there was lots of interest in the trip. Our Wednesday walking group is as popular as ever. Thank you to all our volunteers who come and support our residents every week. Residents have been enjoying baking, making their own waffles - polished off with cherries and whipped cream!

As part of our continual staff training the head chefs across our Heritage group came together for a fantastic day of training with Andy Cullum, better known as "The IDDSI Guy". https://www.theiddsiguy.com/ The IDDSI (International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative) framework is a standardised global system that uses an 8-level continuum (0 to 7) to classify food textures and drink thicknesses for people with swallowing difficulties. It is important for our chefs to ensure that the food they prepare meets the specific IDDDSI level for each resident, whilst keeping its flavour and appeal. The team discussed gentler cooking techniques, adapting recipes and shared ideas. Andy set up a discussion group so going forwards he can offer help and support and the team can share their recipe successes. Coming up in November, we are building our own Guy and retelling the story of Guy Fawkes for Bonfire Night. The Kings School students and Kempsey Primary children are visiting each week. Singer Ian is entertaining us on the 19th and we are armchair travelling to Australia on the 28th November.

*We are welcoming new admissions for long stay or respite care. Please give us a call for more information and see our video on our website. https://www.heritagemanor.co.uk /our-homes/the-lawns*

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