

Whittington Times



A free monthly newspaper for Whittington and surrounding areas

Issue 7

November 2025

FREE



'Gold and Silver Morning' by Peter Hodge

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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At our most recent Parish Council meeting on 23rd September, I was delighted to be elected to take on the role of Chairman of Whittington Parish Council. My thanks to my fellow councillors for their support. I am looking forward to leading our group of volunteer parish councillors, and I'm excited about the great things we will continue to achieve and deliver for the residents of Whittington. Recently, we were pleased to welcome our new neighbourhood policing team from West Mercia. We were encouraged by their plans to improve relationships with the residents of Whittington. They told us about their plans to hold further drop-in sessions in Whittington and encourage everyone to log any issues for the police by calling 101 or using the form found at www.westmercia.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/

From the Parish Council

Of course, for emergencies, you should still call 999.

At our Parish Council meeting, we were joined by staff from Whittington Pre-school, which is facing closure in July. We were struck by the passion that the team at the Pre-school have for the children who attend and the real worry they have about the impact on the children of Whittington and beyond if the pre-school does close. We want to support them in any way that we can in finding a new building to continue the wonderful work they do. If anyone has any contacts who may be able to offer them a building to use, please do contact the pre-school; they would be keen to hear from you. The Parish Council hugely appreciates the time that many of you took to complete the residents survey that came through your doors. Our thanks to Richard and Christine Boase, who undertook the huge task of hand-delivering each survey across the parish - I wouldn't like to guess their step count on those days, many more than the 10,000 daily steps that I can never hit! We will now take a little time to work through the survey feedback and comments, and then publish

the results. We want to make sure that the parish council uses the results of the survey to guide our priorities for 2026 and beyond. One of the themes that we have seen loud and clear in our initial view of the survey results is the need for improvements to our roads, footpaths and highways. Whilst the Parish Council isn't directly responsible for these, we will ensure that we continue to work with our county and district councillors to push for improvements. The comments and feedback from the survey will help us to show how important these topics are for the residents of Whittington. The recent days have become noticeably colder, and the nights are getting darker earlier; that can only mean Christmas won't be far away!

The community hall will be holding their ever-popular Winter Warmer on 23rd November from 10.30 am to 3 pm.

Do pop along to see the selection of handmade Christmas gifts available to buy or treat yourself to a slice of cake and a cup of tea (or something stronger!)

I'm delighted to say that Santa will be back again to visit

Whittington this year. It's always a wonderful sight to see so many young residents, and those who are young at heart, out on the streets waving to Santa and making donations to our important local charities. A big well done and thanks to the team who have worked so hard in previous years and will again this year to make the Santa sleigh a success.

Key dates for Whittington:

Friday 5th December-
Whittington Village and The Swan Pub

Sunday 7th December-
Wildmore Estate

Saturday 13th December-
Whittington Walk

More details about Santa's routes will be available online closer to the time at

www.whittington-events.com

The next parish council meeting will be
Tuesday 25th November,
7.30pm.

The meeting is held at the Community Hall in Whittington Village.

We always love it when the public come to see us, you'd be more than welcome!

*Until next time,
Adam*

District Councillors November 2025 Report

Here I try to give you a brief update on District Council and other items that we have been involved in, within the Ward of Kempsey. Produced on 21st October 2025. The contents of this report are provided by David Harrison, who is the sole person responsible for the contents.

The Ketch Roundabout and A4440 (Southern Link Road)

What further can I say? One major accident removing a lamp post, and if people had been on the pavement, I hate to think of the outcome. Please, please, slow down. I do not yet have a response to our 31st July meeting with Worcestershire County Councillor Karl Perks. There are still road closures and diversions nearby so please take care and allow extra time.

Updates on Planning within Kempsey

Further detailed plans have been submitted for the 2205 houses between Taylors Lane and Broomhall Lane. Please note that these were approved to go ahead in 2013, and more details need

to be approved. No news yet on any of the planning applications within Kempsey but those between Broomhall Lane and the Southern Link are progressing and I am having meetings with the developers and planners.

General problems within the Ward

Both John Michael and myself have continued to deal with all sorts of questions to try to resolve residents' problems – our details are attached. This includes overgrown pavement hedges and anti-social behaviour.

Unfortunately, major damage has occurred to the wooden bridge and seats in the Rocky Area, but the Rocky Bridge and the seats are being investigated by the Parish Council.

Defibrillator Training

There are several free sessions in Kempsey and Malvern. Details from Kempsey Parish Council for Kempsey Sessions.

Development Plan for the three Councils - SWDPR

Well, the enquiry has finished and we are now awaiting the final

report, but the inspectors have written that "on adoption of the Plan", we will have a five year housing Land Supply, and they also noted after more evidence was submitted that houses will be built between the Southern Link road and Broomhall Lane.

Kempsey Flood Defence

A visit took place at the end of October to the Kempsey Flood Defence to view the updates that has taken place this year to hopefully make it future-proof. Further details and photos next month.

This is the last call for groups in Kempsey and Severn Stoke to apply for part of our £2000 grant funding. Individuals can no longer apply – it must be a registered group with a registered bank account.

*John Michael - 01905 317930
18 Meadow Close, Kempsey
john.michael@malvernhillsc.net*

*David Harrison - 01905 828107
8 Brookend Lane, Kempsey
david.harrison@malvernhillsc.net*

Whittington Parish Council

Tel: 07513 122918 | mail: clerk@whittingtonparish.gov.uk

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Whittington Parish Allotments

The Parish Council maintain 15 allotments for rental to
Parishioners at:

Wildmore, Honeywood Place, Whittington WR5 2SL

Parish Council Meetings

We meet at 7.30pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month at
Whittington Community Hall.

Future meeting dates and times are on the website:

www.whittingtonparish.gov.uk

Whittington's War Hero



Arthur Roland Parkinson
(courtesy of Veterans Affairs Canada)

On 19th November 1942, a Halifax bomber towing a Horsa Glider with seventeen Royal Engineers Commandos onboard took off from Skitten Airfield, near Wick in north east Scotland, heading for Norway to a landing site for the glider on the Hardanger Plateau.

The plateau was deep in the mountains near the Norsk Hydro factory in Vemork, where "heavy water" was being produced to develop atomic weapons for the Nazi regime. The pilot was Flight Lieutenant Arthur Roland Parkinson, born 9th March 1916 in Canada, the son of Arthur Hugh Parkinson of Worcester and Ethel Kate Parkinson, nee Rayer, of

Whittington, whose mother, Eleanor Ann Hobbs Rayer, is buried in Whittington Church as she lived in the village in Swinesherd Cottage. The weather over the mountains in Norway turned so bad that the pilot could not see the flares, which were bringing light in the dark to show the glider's landing spot. Pilot Roland went round the mountain range a second time and sought the flares on the ground by flying lower. He could not and needed to climb out of the valley. Ice on the wings made the plane heavier, and the pilot increased the throttle to gain height. The crash just after midnight near the mountaintop killed everyone inside the plane and three of the glider men. The remainder were captured and executed the same day. The aircrew are buried at Helleland Church. A young man with Whittington roots is forever in a Norwegian Church and never forgotten by his family, still in the village. A film, 'The Telemark Heroes', told the story of these brave men and more who repeated the exercise with eventual success.

David Hallmark



Parkinson's route to Norway (courtesy of assaultglidertrust.co.uk)



A Halifax bomber towing a Horsa glider (courtesy of alchetron.com)



Branch news

Some members spent a weekend down in Dorset and paid a visit to Bovington Tank Museum. We had an excellent day talking and seeing Tanks with our own personal guide, Vice Chairman Simon Dudfield. We are coming up to a very busy and Important period in the Royal British Legion Calendar, this being Remembrance.

We will have a table with all things Remembrance in Asda during the week and Outside Asda on Saturdays, lasting from Saturday 25th October up to Saturday 8th November. Last year, the Branch raised over £21,000 for the Poppy Appeal, which was brilliant. Thank you!

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

We will have a garden of Remembrance along the alley up the side of the Town Hall to place

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

If there are any current serving or ex-service personnel who would like to parade with us, please, it would be great for you to join us. We will be forming up in front of the Leisure Centre at 10:00.

Kohima:

"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

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

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





St Philip & St James' Parish Church Services Whittington

A Ninth Century Chapel rebuilt in 1844

Sunday 2nd November	<i>All Saints</i>
11:00am	Parish Communion
3:30pm	Forest Church
Sunday 9th November	<i>Remembrance Sunday</i>
10:55am	Family Service
Sunday 16th November	<i>Kingdom 3</i>
11:00am	Parish Communion
Sunday 23rd November	<i>Christ the King</i>
11:00am	Family Communion
Sunday 30th November	<i>Advent 1</i>
11:00am	Morning Prayer

'If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England.'

Rupert Brooke
'The Soldier'

WYCHAVON

Residents' Survey 2025



Wychavon is inviting residents to take part in the annual Residents' Survey, launching on Sunday 12th October, to share their views on life in the district and local council services. This is an opportunity to tell Wychavon what matters most to you - from local services and community priorities to the things that make Wychavon a great place to live. The feedback received helps shape the decisions that the council makes and the services it provides. Completing the survey takes just ten minutes, and every response counts. As a thank you, entrants will be entered into a

prize draw to win one of four £100 vouchers to spend at a local business of their choice. The results will help the council understand local priorities and make informed decisions about where to focus its time and resources.

The survey is open until Sunday 9th November
It can be completed online at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/25Media

Residents can see how the 2024 Residents' Survey helped shape Wychavon's services at www.wychavon.gov.uk/contact-us/you-said-we-did

Hold the Moment's Midwife Miles Challenge

Can you step up for Midwives this November and make every mile a moment that matters? This November, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Charity is inviting everyone across Worcestershire to get moving in support of the Hold the Moment - Maternity Appeal. Did you know one of our Community Midwives travels more than 345 miles every month caring for newborn babies and their families? The Midwife Miles challenge aims to collectively match those incredible journeys - a total of 41,400 miles, the distance Worcestershire's Community Midwives travel each month. Everyone is encouraged to take

part in their own way, clocking up as many miles as possible, whether that's walking the dog, cycling to work, swimming a few lengths, or enjoying a family stroll. Every mile and every pound raised will help enhance maternity services across the county. Funds raised will go towards:

- Buddy beds, so partners can stay close during those first nights together.
- Specialist jaundice meters for quicker, gentler newborn testing.
- Welcoming maternity spaces that bring calm and comfort.
- Expanded Bereavement Suite, including a new memory-making room.

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

To find out more or to make a donation, please visit www.justgiving.com/campaign/midwifemiles to help move maternity care forward for every family in Worcestershire.

Laura Gregory,
Community and Events
Fundraising Officer



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Whittington Times

Collection Points:

Hughes and Company, Pershore
The Swan, Old Road, Whittington
Brentknoll Vets, Whittington Road; Whittington Community Hall
Whittington CofE Primary School
Oak Apple, Spetchley Road, Worcester;
St. Peter's Garden Centre, Broomhall

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Local Conflicts: Part One

Tim Hickson



Bevere Island



The remains of ancient hill forts on Bredon Hill

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



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

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

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

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



*King Stephen
(c.1090 - 1154)*

Farming

Mike Page

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

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



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

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

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

Christmas stocking fillers!

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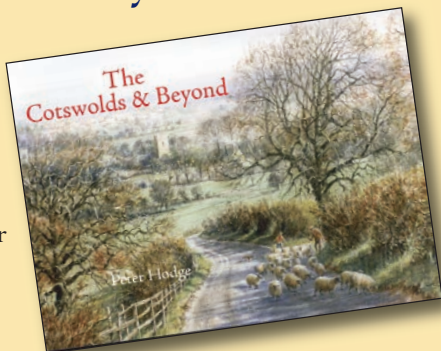
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The Cotswolds & Beyond

Peter Hodge

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



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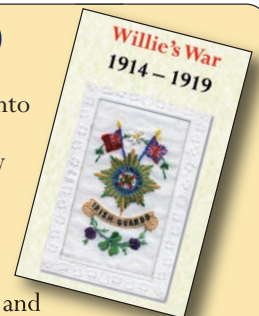
This book contains every article, poem and painting that Susan produced for the Pershore Times. The articles are of a very high quality, each one is different and a joy to read.

**All proceeds donated to
Cancer Research UK Ltd**

Willie's War (1914 – 1919)

Robert Maude

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



£11.95

Published by Hughes & Company

What is the 'best' honey?

Martyn Cracknell



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

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

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

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

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

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

Village Life

John Driscoll

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

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

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

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



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

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

Escape from Mariupol, Ukraine: Part Three Denys Bielov



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

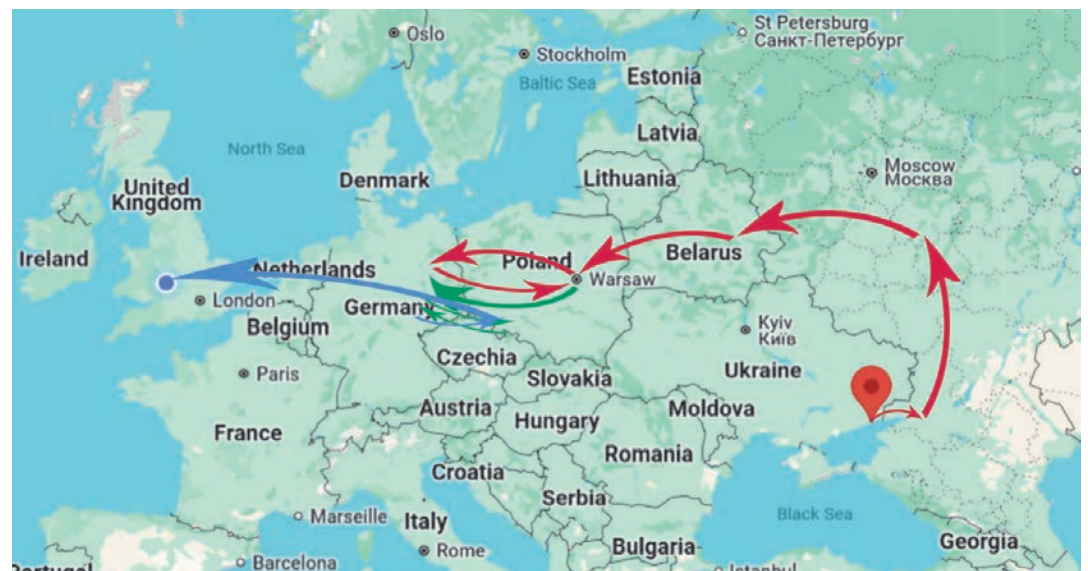
The continuation of my eyewitness account is horrifying. These stories are personal. I was unable to write them, for security reasons, while I was in Mariupol under occupation. I didn't want the occupiers to figure out where I lived if they got their hands on this material. Now, I can and want to share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

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



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

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



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

Winter wildlife: Being a garden guardian

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

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

Feed the birds

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

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

or birdbath can freeze quickly, so check it often.

Hedgehog Havens

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

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

Bug Hotels

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

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

and sedum which provide both food and shelter.

- Create a bug hotel by stacking hollow bamboo canes, pinecones, and bricks in a sheltered spot.
- Avoid pesticides - even in winter, as residues can harm hibernating insects.

Rethink the Winter Garden

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

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

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



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space and make small changes that have big impact.

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

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



November gardening tips

Early in November

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

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

Mid November

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

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

Reg Moule BBC Hereford & Worcester

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

Late November

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



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

Ailsa's Kitchen

Ailsa Craddock

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

Extras you can add to soups:

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

Croutons –
cube some bread and fry in butter.

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

As above, but rubbed with garlic.

As above, but covered in cheese and toasted.

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

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

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

Broccoli and Stilton Soup

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

12oz broccoli, cut into small pieces

14fl oz vegetable stock

1 oz butter

4 spring onions, sliced (or 1 leek)

1 3/4oz Stilton, crumbled or to taste

3 1/2 fl.oz double cream

Salt and pepper

Pinch of nutmeg



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

Leek and Potato Soup with cheesy mustard croutons

10 grams butter

2 leeks

1 teasp dried tarragon (optional)

1 large potato

500 ml stock with boiling water and a stock cube

30 grams watercress (optional)

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

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

Carrot and Ginger Soup

1 tbsp oil

1 large onion, sliced

2 tbsp coarsely grated ginger

2 garlic cloves, sliced

500 grams of carrots

850ml vegetable stock

A little nutmeg

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

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

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

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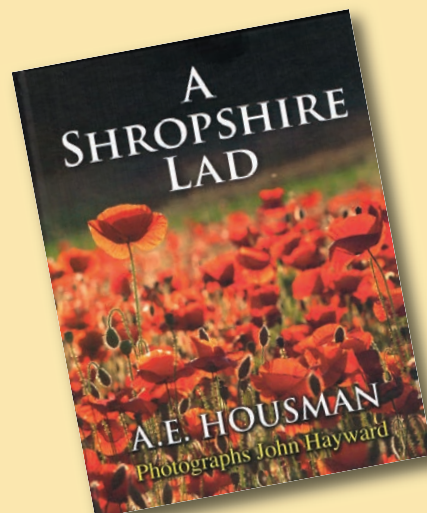


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To plan or not to plan?

Angela Johns

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



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

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

Finding power in every moment

Emily Papirnik



"I don't have a choice!"

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

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

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

Choose your thoughts - are they kind or critical?

Choose your emotions - are they supportive or draining?

Choose your actions - are they aligned with your truth?

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

Choose it.

Live it.

Feel it fully.

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

John Milton (1626)

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Romy Kemp *Liverpool University*



Settling In

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

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

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

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



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



VETERINARY ADVICE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU!



Acupuncture for dogs and cats

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

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

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

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

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

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

Monica

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Gregory's World!

Bonkers in Yonkers

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

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

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

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

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

Gregory Sidaway



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

Evie's Teenage Focus

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

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

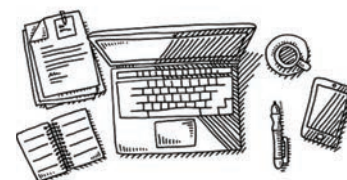
I spent the weeks before the assignment trolling through their individual websites, looking for anything and everything I could say about them, and surprisingly, there was a lot. The week before my assignment was due, you would've been able to find me

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

Evie Aubin Oxford Brookes University



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



Local Government: effective or what?

Richard Catford

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

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

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

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



Severe flooding in Seven Stoke in February 2020

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

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

Protecting against inappropriate development

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

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

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

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

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

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Poem of the Month:

'Transformation'

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

Susan Catford

Monthly Reflection

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

Angela Gerrard, Pershore Abbey

Thought Plants

Susan Catford

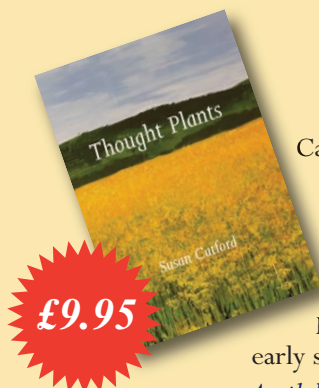
This book is a collection of writing and poems by Susan Catford, exploring ideas, events and everyday life.

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

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

Available from:

Hughes & Company



What to pay

Carol Draper

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



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

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

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

Marcus Aurelius
 'Meditations' (161 - 180 AD)



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A masterwork returns to Broadway

Anona Van Lawick
Museum Director



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

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

The sitter

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

The Broadway Connection

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

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

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

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



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

Conservation

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

The Broadway Colony

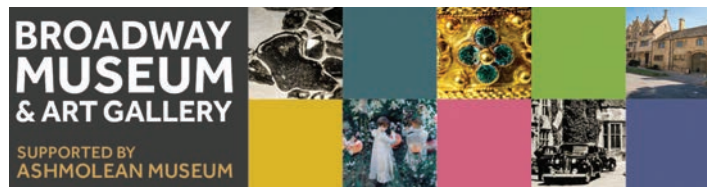
This major work by Sargent immediately becomes the cornerstone of the Museum's display devoted to the Broadway Colony of writers, artists and musicians that flourished here in the late nineteenth century. Artists included, in addition to Sargent, the Americans, Francis D Millet and Edwin Austin Abbey,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

Fun facts:

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

Broadway Museum & Art Gallery, Broadway, Worcestershire (shown below)
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For more information, visit www.broadwaymuseum.org.uk or contact us on 01386859047



Wild at heart!

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Sophie Sidaway

A View from the Middle

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

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

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

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



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

Thoughts from the Snug..

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

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

Misunderstandings - Don't get irritated!

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

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

The revised Highway Code: carrying pets in the car



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

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

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

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

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

Child restraints and seat belts

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

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

Richard Catford



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please visit www.hollandhouse.org

How serendipitous is that?

Brian Johnson-Thomas



Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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

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

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

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

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



Lake Ohrid, Albania

The Woodcock Pilot

Karen Rose



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

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

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

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

Karen Rose is a biodiversity officer for Wychavon District Council.

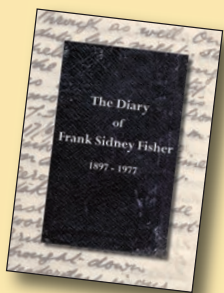
The Diary of Frank Sidney Fisher 1897 - 1977

Charles Dieppe

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

Charles is married to Frank's daughter, Christine.

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Jazz News

Peter Farrall

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

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

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

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

These and other violin virtuosos have had a lasting influence on the present generation of violinists in Britain, none more than this month's artist, Matt Holborn, who quotes Stuff Smith as his main influence and has recently issued an album "For Stuff".

We can look forward to learning more about this legendary but half-forgotten musician when Matt and his band perform a programme devoted to the man. Matt was introduced to jazz by his grandfather, studied at Leeds Conservatoire and is now well established as a performer, teacher and writer with regular podcasts on all aspects of jazz violin. He is a founding member of the London Django Collective and brings his critically-acclaimed Quartet to Pershore for what will be an educational and entertaining evening of dazzling virtuosity.



Matt Holborn Quartet Wednesday 26th November

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

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

Music Matters

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

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

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

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

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

Notable new albums

Getting killed
by Geese

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

Standout track - '100 horses'

Steve Ide

Michelangelo dying
by Cate Le Bon

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

Standout track - 'About time'

Idlewild

by Idlewild

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

Standout track - 'The mirror still'



Add to playlist

Video games
by Lana Del Ray

Tightrope
by Jenelle Monae

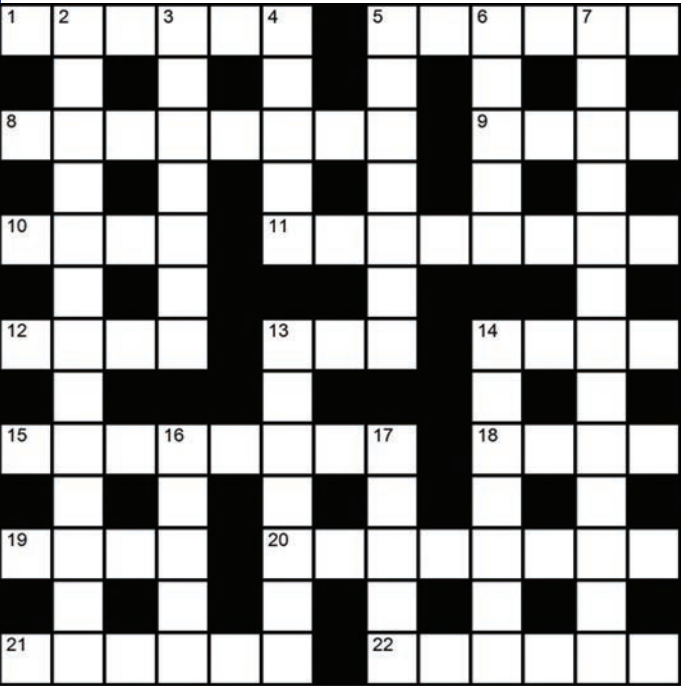
Love and hate in a different time
by The Gabriels

The Isle of Arran
by Loyle Carner

Hey Dude
by Kulashaker

Coffee Break

Crossword



Across

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

Down

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

Sudoku

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

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

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

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

Wordsearch

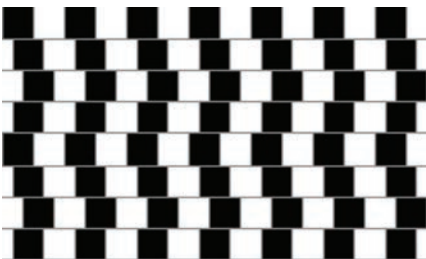
D	E	G	G	E	L	S	S	O	R	C
W	R	L	N	A	C	S	Y	I	Y	Q
J	O	O	E	L	L	P	A	S	T	
N	D	S	B	U	H	E	B	M	T	N
H	E	E	N	H	Q	G	N	W	E	S
A	C	M	K	S	T	E	U	E	B	T
M	E	I	L	I	A	H	S	T	S	S
T	C	S	R	C	P	O	G	O	H	S
E	B	L	A	N	O	S	M	I	U	A
E	M	E	R	G	E	N	C	I	E	S
S	R	E	D	D	I	K	T	K	T	T

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

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

Brainteaser

Are the horizontal lines straight or crooked?



Poets' Corner

A Shropshire Lad

LII

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

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

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

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

A. E. Housman 1859-1936

In Flanders Fields

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

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

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

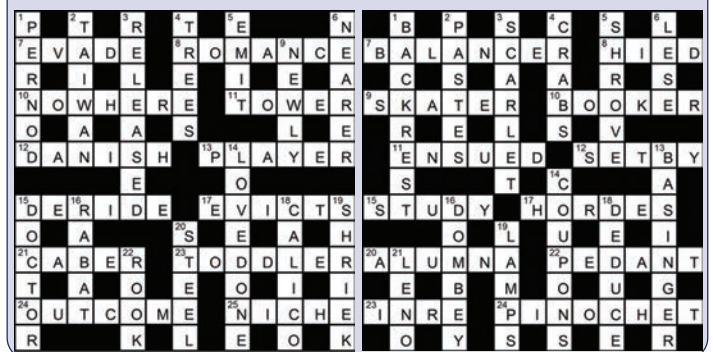
John McCrae 1872 - 1918

Quiz!

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

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

October Answers



November Brain teaser: Straight

Did You Know?

Until 1959, it was illegal not to celebrate Bonfire Night in Britain.

Only Guy Fawkes' old school, St Peter's school in York, refused to burn an effigy, out of respect for their former student.

Word of the Month

'Degust'

Definition: to taste something fully, to savour and appreciate it.

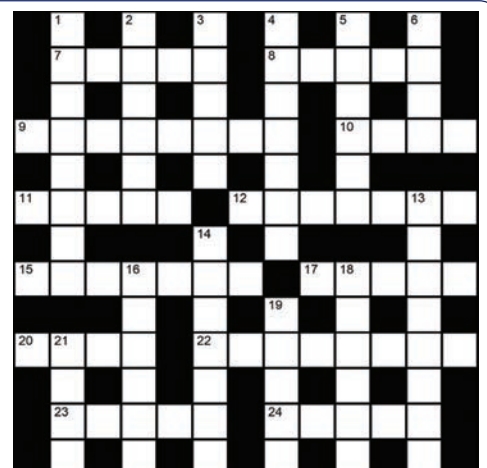
Anagram Crossword

Across

- 7 Atlee (5)
- 8 Irons (2,3)
- 9 Climaxes (8)
- 10 Sian (1,1,1,1)
- 11 Dr. Boa (5)
- 12 Lash owl (7)
- 15 St Neots (7)
- 17 Rusty (5)
- 20 Prue (4)
- 22 Hustling (8)
- 23 Seine (3,2)
- 24 Clare (5)

Down

- 1 Rope T. Rex (2-6)
- 2 Warble (6)
- 3 Binge (5)
- 4 Senator (3-4)
- 5 Serial (6)
- 6 M R S A (4)
- 13 War chest (8)
- 14 Rio's gun (7)
- 16 Cruets (6)
- 18 In duet (6)
- 19 Can ET? (5)
- 21 Eels (4)



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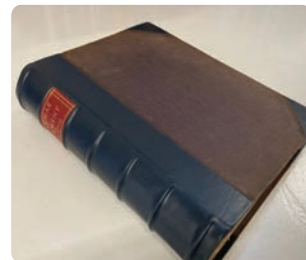
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Copy Deadline for
December Issue - 20th November 2025

Inspiring the next generation of performing arts

Back in September, Worcester Theatres held their Performance Hub BTEC at the Swan Theatre in the heart of Worcester. The Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma in Performing Arts provides a high-quality arts education for students aged 16 to 19 in Worcestershire. The two-year BTEC course provides practical hands-on experience for students to learn and develop areas of dance, drama, music and musical theatre in a creative collaborative environment. Worcester Theatres is one of the few professional theatres in the UK to offer a fully-accredited BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Performing Arts. They can personalise their education experience with thirteen modules to choose from, such as

'Performing Arts in the Community', 'Theatre Directing' and many more. Upon completing the BTEC course, they will have the knowledge and skills to progress into higher education, or straight into employment in the performing arts sector. Worcester Theatres will host three open days for 2026 entry at the Swan Theatre on Monday 3rd November at 5pm, Saturday 14th February 2026 at 1pm, and Saturday 18th April 2026 at 1pm. The open days will be a chance for prospective students to explore the Swan Theatre, chat to tutors, and meet other students who also have a passion for the performing arts. With only fifteen places on the BTEC course per year, not only will students receive an attentive



personalised education from our experienced tutors, but students themselves can hone in on their specific subjects of interest, varying from drama, dance, music, to musical theatre. If you are a student currently browsing your further education

2026 options, why not pop along to one of our open days held at the Swan Theatre. Get in touch today! To book a place on one of our Open Days, please contact the Outreach team on outreach@worcestertheatres.co.uk

Whittington Community Hall: Dates for your diary

Saturday 22nd November 2025

Winter Warmer

Christmas stalls and seasonal refreshments, 10.30 - 15.00

Saturday 10th January 2026

Martin Harley in Concert, Live & Local, Blues guitarist
Bar opens at 18.30. Starts at 19.30.

Saturday 21st February 2026

Helios, Live & Local

A modern re-telling of an ancient myth.

Bar opens at 18.30. Starts at 19.30.

Saturday 28th March 2026

Vintage Event, pre-loved items table top sale

Spot & Shop - October Winners

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

Last month's answer:
Border in a Box

**SPOT
&
SHOP!**

COMPETITION TIME!

Take a look at the anagram

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

Chance
to WIN
£50
CASH

This month's prizes!

1st - £50 cash

2nd - £25 cash

Donated by Hughes & Company

3rd £20 Food Voucher

at The Queen Elizabeth, Elmley

4th £10 Voucher

at Revills Farm Shop, Defford

5th £10 Voucher

at Craftypyro, Bakers Arcade, Pershore

6th Reg Moule Gardening Book

7th Pat's Pantry -

Jar of home-made marmalade/jam

This
month's
anagram

**AMER BAKERS
TROTTER**

Complete and return this form or email:

news@hughes.company for your chance to win!

Whittington Times closing date: 21st November 2025

Answer:

Name:

Telephone/email:

Return to: Hughes & Company/Whittington Times

8 Church Street, Pershore Worcestershire WR10 1DT



Meet your safer neighbourhood team

Officers can be contacted on the below numbers depending on community issues. To report a crime in progress call 999 and for non emergencies, report online at www.westmercia.police.uk/report. If you are unable to report online, you can contact us via the 101 non-emergency number.



Inspector
Dave Wise



Sergeant
Cathy Atkinson

Pershore Rural SNT (pershorerural.snt@westmercia.police.uk)



PCSO Claire
Doughty
07814 040601



PCSO Lee
Stirling
07483 108189

Pershore Town SNT (pershoretown.snt@westmercia.police.uk)



PC Molly
Keeler
07817 947084



PCSO Rebekah
Ashley
07773 053576



PCSO Jo
Rice
07929 091572

Worcester
Philharmonic
ORCHESTRA

Soloist **Shulah Oliver-Smith**
Conductor **Dan Watson**
Leader **Graham Longfils**

NORTHERN LIGHTS CONCERT



**Saturday
8th November
2.30pm
Pershore Abbey
WR10 1BL**
**Celebrating the
160th Anniversary
of Sibelius' birth**
**Finlandia
Violin Concerto
Symphony No 2**

Tickets: £15 (under 16's FREE but ticket required)
Tourist Offices: Worcester/Pershore*/Malvern (*cash only)
Ticket Enquiries: 07805 077279
Online www.ticketsource.co.uk (booking fees apply)
Registered Charity Number 512073



Worcester Philharmonic Northern Lights Concert

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

is a vibrant and talented professional violinist who has a busy freelance career performing as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician. She has performed extensively across the UK and Europe. Shulah was appointed Artistic Director of The Midland Sinfonia (a professional chamber orchestra) in 2021. She has played with many renowned orchestras such as The Hallé, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and European Chamber Orchestra. Shulah completed her Masters Degree in Performance with Distinction at the Royal Academy of Music, London where she was awarded the Diploma for an outstanding Final Recital. *Tickets £15 (Under 16's free but ticket required) available from Tourist Offices in Worcester/Pershore*/Malvern (*cash only) or www.worcesterphilharmonicorchestra.ticketsource.co.uk*

Community Hall Classes

MONDAY
10.30am-11.30am - Zumba -
with Aimee Ford, email: aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk
5.30pm - The Star Project Children's Theatre
(term time only) with Jo Payne, email: director@thestarproject.info

TUESDAY
4.00pm-6.30pm - Dance (for 3 year olds and above)
with Elizabeth Gibbs, email: lizdance@icloud.com
6.30pm-9.30pm - Gong Bath & Sound Meditation
with Angela Latham. (varying monthly dates available)
email: evenstartbabe@msm.com

WEDNESDAY
4.30pm-5.30pm - Yoga
with Natalie Houlding, email: natalie@zafyoga.com
6.30pm-7.30pm - Pilates
with Rebecca Hadlington, email: fitness-worcester.com

THURSDAY
10.00am (for 10.15am start) - 11.00am Zumba -
with Denise Wrafter,
11.00am-12.00 Yoga -
with Denise Wrafter, email: sdwrafter@btinternet.com
7.15pm-9.15pm T'ai Chi -
with Dr Marc, email: Contact:marc@obelison.com

FRIDAY
9.45am-10.45am Zumba -
with Aimee Ford, email: aimeeford@yahoo.co.uk
12.00noon-1.00pm Nia Barefoot Movement -
with Sarah Handley, tel: 07935 150853
6.00pm-7.00pm Duke Yoga
with Fiona, email: fib42@hotmail.com

Useful numbers

Fire Station 0300 333 3000
Library (The Hive) 01905 822866
Police Station 101
.....(In an emergency always call 999)
CrimeStoppers 0800 555 111
Post Office 01905 353537
197 Bath Rd, Worcester WR5 3AH
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St Peters Drive, Worcester WR5 3TA
Haresfield House Surgery 01905 368503
37 Newtown Road , Worcester WR5 1HG

Whittington Parish Council
Clerk- David Hunter-Miller07513 122918

District Council
Out of Hours Emergency Hotline -
In an event of an emergency call:0300 003 5367

Worcestershire County Council
To report faulty traffic lights or urgent
Highways issues call: 07875 033759
Please note: This number should not be used for 'day-to-day' enquiries.
- Waste Services 01386 565018
- Pot Holes 01905 765765
Help the Homeless 0300 500 0914

Funding Primary School Nativity visit

This season, the Elizabeth Stephens and Fanny Clifton Charity is looking to support children from less well-off parish families to attend a Nativity at Longlands Farm. The visit will be a wonderful opportunity to bring the children's learning to life. As part of Whittington Primary School's Religious Education and wider curriculum, the children have been learning about the Christmas story and the importance of kindness, respect, and community. At Longland Farm, they will have the chance to see and participate in a live Nativity, meet the animals, and experience the story in a real and memorable way. The visit will support the school's RE curriculum and help children understand the Christmas story in context. It will encourage confidence and teamwork as they take part in the performance and will also promote respect for others' beliefs and traditions, in line with the school values. It will provide a joyful, hands-on

learning experience to enhance the children's understanding and wellbeing.

"We believe this experience will be both educational and inspiring, helping children make meaningful connections between their classroom learning and the wider world," said Kelly Leeming, Head teacher.

Volunteers from the Elizabeth Stephens and Fanny Clifton Charity will be at the Winter Warmer at Whittington Community Hall on Saturday 22nd November 2025. They are running a charity stall to raise funds to enable children from less well-off families in Whittington Parish to be able to attend the school visit to Longlands Farm Nativity.

Do come along and meet us there between 10.30am and 3pm to support the endeavour.

For more information, visit www.elizabethstephensandfannycliftoncharity.org.uk



*Whittington Primary's last visit to Longlands Farm in 2024
(Picture courtesy of Whittington Primary School)*

*by Helena Bennett,
Katie Lambeth-Mansell
and Susan MacLeod*

*Trustees of Elizabeth Stephens
and Fanny Clifton Charity*

Meanwhile, at the Community Hall ...



Reproduced by kind permission of Les Wiltshire's estate. Anyone interested in buying a copy of 'Whittington Worcestershire - A History of the Village' Compiled for the Millennium by Les Wiltshire, please email info@whittingtoncommunityhall.co.uk

The Old Village Hall

On 20th November, it will be the 71st anniversary of the old original Whittington Village Hall being opened in 1954, by the then Mayor of Worcester, Mrs Rosa Radcliffe. Villagers turned out for what seems from the old black-and-white photos to have been quite a cold and misty day. Many ladies wore hats or headscarves, and a few even had fur coats. Bunting and a large marquee were erected to mark the special nature of the occasion. Plans had been taking place since 1939 for a hall in the village, but were halted by World War II. A youth club was formed in 1947, which expressly left out

debate on religion and politics! By 1952, it had developed into a popular Young People's Club, which used the College for the Blind for functions and the village school to meet. But as the club flourished, they had issues taking furniture and equipment in and out. A village hall was needed more than ever.

In 1953, a committee was formed and £2,000 was raised by local people, including £435 from before the war. Land in Church Lane was bought from Berkely estate for £50 and an ex-War department building, sourced from RAF Throckmorton near Pershore, was rebuilt on the site where



our existing modern Community Hall now stands. The Hall did have heating, though not as we know it! But its one great luxury was an oak parquet floor, ideal for dancing. In the Hall's early days, as well as the Young People's Club, there were games evenings, whist drives, dances, WI meetings, Sunday afternoon cricket teas, and private bookings. Wooden foldaway chairs and green baize card tables were used for functions. We still have a few of the latter for old time's sake in the Hall today. They and the floor are remembered fondly by those of us who have memories of the old Village Hall.

*by Susan MacLeod, Chairperson,
Whittington Community Hall
Management Committee*

*(Extracts taken from
'The History of Whittington' by
Michael Craze and 'A History
of the Village' by Les Wiltshire.
Photos courtesy of the Late Les
Wiltshire, from A History of
Whittington.)*



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Worcestershire's Men: 1918

by Willow Pinchin

1918 was a turbulent year for countless Worcestershire families whose sons, brothers, husbands and friends served within the county regiment. The British Army - much unlike the army that had been raised in 1915 (not inherently better than, but far more adept at "bite and hold" tactics and combined arm operations) - had recently been thrashed by the German Spring Offensive, and, soon thereafter, the Hundred Days Offensive. The Brits faced these operations with support from their usual Dominion pals, and the ebullient men serving in the American Expeditionary Force! Retrospectively, we see that the war was drawing to a close (and perhaps this was to be expected, as nearly all forces were exhausted by the Summer of 1918). Still, the men of the Worcestershire Regiment continued to power on. For instance, the 1st Battalion had moved on to the Passchendaele Ridge and had fought almost continually from January, continuing on to Villers Bretonneux and then onto the Aisne, in a new operation with the 8th Division. This would lead to the Third Battle of the Aisne, which began on the 27th May. The action had desecrated the battalion, with A Company

making a particularly stoic stand against the enemy. Notably, Major J.B.F. Cartland, who commanded the battalion in place of Colonel Davidge, was killed in action, but he was never recovered for burial. The 4th Battalion, an Edwardian service battalion with troops in India, had crossed continents. It was a unit that had served long and strenuous battles in Gallipoli and Mesopotamia, but the future of the battalion was swiftly changing. From fighting the Ottoman Empire among the crumbling earth of Suvla Bay, the battalion was, by 1918, in France, and firmly embedded in fighting Operation Michael - the Spring Offensive. Attached to the 29th Division, this unit powered through unknown terrain and subsequently saw plentiful action at Ypres, in the process of taking Gheluvelt. They continued on to Flanders in September. Yet, despite high hopes, the armistice was not the end of overseas service for the men in this unit. In December, they became an Occupational Army and took occupation of Germany. For the Worcestershire Yeomanry (or the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars) the war almost ended on a high. The 1/1st, which had participated in the



A platoon in the 1st Worcesters at the Aisne, May 1918

Egypt and Palestine campaign with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, became XX Corps Cavalry Regiment in May: a new rebrand. The 2/1st Battalion was stationed in Ireland by the end of the war, and the 3rd line became a reserve cavalry regiment. For a distant cousin of ours, the sprightly Charles Preece (who was brought up in Ivy House in Hanley Castle), life was starkly different from his service with the 1/1st Bn Worcestershire Yeomanry. His war was tough, from strenuous service in the Middle East to losing his brother on the Somme. By 1918, he was with the Royal Flying Corps and

was promoted to Lieutenant at the sprightly age of twenty-two. He began teaching at the Observer's School for Reconnaissance and Aerial Photography (OSRAP). Needless to say, the end of the war came as a relief to many, but also brought about its own challenges. My great-great-grandad, Len Preece, was unfit for work as he recovered from wounds sustained in 1916. The recovery was long and stressful for both him and my great-great-grandmother, Eva. But, despite all odds, they married and had their first child as the 1910s drew to a close.

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