

May 2017

West Berkshire, North Hampshire & East Wiltshire

# OUT & ABOUT

A Newbury News Ltd publication

## Almshouses for Newbury

The mystery of benefactor  
Mabel Luke and plans to  
keep her legacy going

Ahoy there  
Lesley Foden has challenged  
herself to row round  
Great Britain for charity

Art for all  
Open Studios invites you  
to see artists at work



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RELAIS &  
CHATEAUX

## WELCOME to the May issue of OUT&ABOUT

Did you know that Newbury has an abundance of almshouses? Tony Vickers takes a look at the rich history of generous benefactors and particularly the legacy of Mabel Luke (p13).

Trish Lee rounds up some of the highlights of the Open Studios taking place over the next three weeks (p21) and Angela Knight visits local artist Lesley Foden, who has temporarily swapped her paintbrushes for oars as she prepares to row round Britain (p35).

The days are getting longer, people are enjoying the sunshine and gardens are starting to spring to life. Jonathan Hopson (p5) savours the aroma of freshly-mown grass, while Kate Gould (p43) makes some suggestions for the flowerbeds, which will create a lovely floral scent.

Talking of flowers, we have also rounded up some High Street dresses that are truly blooming (p11).

We hope you'll get some inspiration from these, plus enjoy the food, travel, books and much more.



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13



35



21



24



11



38

## Out&About

May 2017

### Features

- 13 **Lasting legacy** Mabel Luke was a local benefactor who gifted almshouses. Tony Vickers delves into the history and brings it up to date
- 21 **Art house** See artists at work during Open Studios. Trish Lee takes a look
- 35 **Row, row, row the boat** Angela Knight meets up with Lesley Foden who is on a mission to row round GB

### Fitness & beauty

- 7 **Keep on track** Top 10 tips to keep sight of your fitness goal from Vicki Brown
- 9 **Summer preparation** Theresa Fleetwood advises on how to feel good for the summer months

### Fashion

- 11 **Floating florals** A selection of stand-out spring fashion available from high street stores

### Food & drink

- 24 **Country cuisine** Hilary Scott enjoys a sumptuous tasting menu at the Esseborne Manor Hotel
- 27 **Top Tipples** James Allen welcomes the rise of the Riesling
- 29 **Fine tuna'd** Simon Rhodes extols the virtues of fresh tuna
- 30 **Café culture** The Honesty café at Lambourn is a relaxing stop for all says Romilla Arber, plus a delicious coconut cake recipe
- 32 **Cupboard love** Hilary Scott gives advice on how to arrange your kitchen cupboards

### Homes & gardens

- 38 **Bear necessities** No matter how threadbare, your cuddly toy could net you a few pounds says Thomas Plant
- 43 **Garden scent** Kate Gould makes some fragrant recommendations

## Regulars

### Comment

- 5 **Jonathan Hopson** contemplates the joy of a newly-mown lawn

### Travel

- 44 **South American adventure** Richard Laker treks across some wild and beautiful terrain

### Books

- 47 **Romantic mystery** Helen Sheehan and Lissa Gibbins are enthralled by an unlikely love-story centred round a creature of folklore

### Motoring

- 49 **Suzuki SX4** Maurice and Annette Hardy recommend the compact SUV

### Time out

- 51 **What's on** Four pages of listings on where to go and what to see and do this month
- 57 **Free as a bird** Feathered friends return after their winter break

### Competition

- 46 **Highclere Countryman Show** Win tickets to premier country show



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# Jonathan Hopson

## ... contemplates caring for the green, green grass of home

As the clocks have gone forward and British Summer Time starts, this is a good time to briefly consider the quintessential British pastime of mowing the lawn.

The other reason for the choice of this month's subject matter is that a friend specifically requested it – while visiting the annual art exhibition, ArtEx, at East Woodhay recently, she suggested that lawnmowers might make an interesting article.

I'll leave the reader to judge whether any of what follows is interesting or not.

Remembering the sound of a lawnmower evokes many happy memories of summer days at school, swimming in an unheated outdoor pool, hours spent playing cricket and the sound of leather on willow.

I also recall some of the famous lawnmower brands from yesteryear – Atco, Hayter, Qualcast, Ransomes and Suffolk – it's reassuring to know that some of these are still around today.

And let's not forget the sweet smell of freshly cut grass.

### Eau de Mow

Have you ever wished you could bottle the soothing aroma of freshly mown grass?

An Australian company has attempted to do just that in a product called Serenascent.

Based on the research of Nick Lavidis, a neuroscientist at the University of Queensland, the product contains three plant compounds that may act as stress relievers.

For a stronger whiff without the bottle, get out the lawn mower.

According to *Psychology Today*, the benefits of mowing your own lawn don't extend just to the grass itself.

The simple act of the job can do wonders for your entire body.

The most obvious health benefit comes in the form of a solid cardio workout.

“  
Nothing is more pleasant to the eye  
than green grass kept finely shorn.

FRANCIS BACON

Unless you're using a ride-on mower, cutting your lawn can be a physically taxing exercise (yes, even if you're using a self-propelled mower; you still have to do all the walking).

For someone who might not be very physically active, cutting the grass every weekend is a great way to get moving.

In addition to the cardio benefits, *Psychology Today* also says that the “repetitive movement of mowing helps you slip into a calmer state of mind”.

Add in the lush surroundings, the ‘soothing aroma’ of freshly-cut grass, and the pride that comes with a well-manicured lawn, and you've got a quick pick-me-up in the form of a weekly chore well done.

I'm sure I'm not alone in believing that mowing the lawn can be very therapeutic.

A neighbour has a large area of lawn to look after and once a fortnight during the summer months, we do a ‘duo mow’.

Mowing solo would take more than a couple of hours and the duo mow cuts this down to around an hour.

In addition to a feeling of wellbeing at the end of the duo mow, there's also the added benefit of composted grass clippings, which can be recycled back to the garden.

So dust off the mower from its winter hibernation and bring it back to life ready to welcome the imminent sunshine. 



### THE MOWER'S SONG

By Andrew Marvell

*My mind was once the true survey  
Of all these meadows fresh and gay,  
And in the greenness of the grass  
Did see its hopes as in a glass;  
When Juliana came, and she  
What I do to the grass, does to my  
thoughts and me.*

*But these, while I with sorrow pine,  
Grew more luxuriant still and fine,  
That not one blade of grass you spy'd  
But had a flower on either side;  
When Juliana came, and she  
What I do to the grass, does to my  
thoughts and me.*

*Unthankful meadows, could you so  
A fellowship so true forgo?  
And in your gaudy May-games meet  
While I lay trodden under feet?  
When Juliana came, and she  
What I do to the grass, does to my  
thoughts and me.*

*But what you in compassion ought,  
Shall now by my revenge be wrought;  
And flow'rs, and grass, and I and all,  
Will in one common ruin fall.  
For Juliana comes, and she  
What I do to the grass, does to my  
thoughts and me.*

*And thus, ye meadows, which have been  
Companions of my thoughts more green,  
Shall now the heraldry become  
With which I shall adorn my tomb;  
For Juliana comes, and she  
What I do to the grass,  
does to my thoughts  
and me.*





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# Countdown to fitness success

VICKI BROWN lists 10 things that can hold you back from achieving health and fitness goals and gives pointers on how to beat them

Everyone faces different challenges when trying to get fitter and healthier. Taking the time to look at what your biggest setbacks are will help you address those issues and not let them stop you reaching your goals.

I will go through 10 potential issues that people may face, although ironically what may be a stumbling block for one person may help another person achieve their goals.

It's about finding out what works for you.

## 1. NEGATIVITY

This is an issue for many people. Don't focus on the negatives as this makes it extremely difficult to succeed. Look at the positive and build on that, while being realistic. Thoughts usually spiral and build, so look for the good and how to achieve the next positive thing, which is far more motivating for success.

## 2. SUPPORT

Get help and support from the people you spend time with, especially your family and friends who can help you achieve your goals. If you go it alone or they are not aware of what you are trying to do, it may be detrimental to reaching those goals.

## 3. LACK OF ROUTINE

Plan a routine, write it down and stick to it. If you have no routine and are inconsistent with what you are doing, chances are you won't get the results you are looking for. Make it flexible to fit your lifestyle, but you need to be consistent as far as is possible.

## 4. BOREDOM

You may start to get bored of your routine. Be aware of this and make the necessary changes. Just do a different workout every now and again to keep it interesting or plan a routine that means you are constantly challenging yourself in order to keep it interesting. Trying new things may help this too.

## 5. MONOTONY

If you find yourself doing the same thing week-in week-out, you may want to consider changing the routine slightly every few weeks in order for your body to continue adapting. Or even alternate between two routines on a weekly basis. It is also important that you have enough recovery and rest time so your body can repair and adapt. Don't forget to plan these things into your routine to keep it fresh.

## 6. UNWRITTEN GOALS

It is easy to lose track of your goals and before you know it you have reached, or even passed, your deadline and not achieved what you wanted. Write your goals down and put them somewhere you can regularly see them to keep on track.

## 7. TEMPTATIONS

If you are easily tempted by foods around you and are always fighting the urge not to eat them, then quite simply don't have them around. If they're not in the house you can't be tempted. Similarly, try and remove those temptations at work and ask colleagues not to bring things over to you if you are trying to avoid them.

## 8. INCONVENIENCE

If you have to go out of your way to go somewhere or get something chances are you will often find an excuse not to do it. It is important to find ways to make it easier. Find a gym that is close, pack everything you need for the next day the night before and try to go with someone to encourage you to stay on track as you won't want to let them down.

## 9. OBLIGATION

Do you see fitness as a chore or something you have to do? Instead focus on the positive things that you can enjoy because you have that level of health and fitness. You can take a walk, play games, tax yourself without too much effort. Think about the fun things in life that it allows you to do and it may not seem such a chore.

## 10. PERFECTIONISM

There is nothing wrong with having high expectations and goals, but if anything less than perfect feels like a failure then it's time to re-evaluate. Firstly, no one is perfect. Secondly, by setting small realistic goals that you can achieve you are far more likely to stay on track. So, push yourself but don't be so hard on yourself that you will never be able to do it.

*I hope these points have given you something to think about and will help you push through those barriers. See which ones you have and work around them. The smallest changes could help you see some big results. *



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# Is your skin ready for the summer holidays?

**THERESA FLEETWOOD offers some tips to help you to start getting your skin ready for your summer holidays now by exfoliating, nourishing and cherishing your skin in time for your summer holidays**

**N**ow is the time to start thinking about your summer holidays. After those cold winter months of being covered up by layers of clothes, your skin may not be looking its best so here are some ideas about how you can get your skin ready for the summer holidays.

## PERFECT PINS

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Starting a course of treatment as early as possible is important to ensure you complete the course before your holidays.

## BANISH THREAD VEINS

If thread veins are making an unwelcome appearance and knocking your confidence, there are non-invasive treatments providing instant improvements.

Laser technology is very effective – applying thermal energy in short bursts, closing the veins without damaging them so they disappear gradually during following treatment.

## SAY “TA-TA” TO UNWANTED TATTOOS

If you're afraid of showing your body because of a tattoo you're no longer in love with, tattoos can be removed using laser treatments.

The laser breaks down ink pigmentation, which your body can then flush away, leaving your tattoo a thing of the past, and leaving you free to focus on the present.

## EXFOLIATE AWAY DEAD SKIN

It is really important to exfoliate daily in the summer to get rid of flaky, dry skin on your body.

The DMK Hydra louffa product is a superb, refreshing body cleanser and exfoliant in one and can be applied directly to the skin while showering or bathing.

It is great for preparing the skin for a fake tan ensuring a long-lasting even coverage.

Alternatively the Andresa Exfoliating Mitt is very effective – gentle and penetrates deep into the skin.

## KEEP YOUR SKIN MOISTURISED

You will need to drink more water during the summer months to replenish the water you are losing.

Drink at least two litres of water a day and use a good quality body lotion like DMK's Maxim Moisture.

## THINK ABOUT YOUR NUTRITION

At this time of year there are so many wonderful fresh fruits and vegetables in season so make sure you eat or juice these everyday to boost your skin health.

Supplements like Colladeen Derma Plus contain super nutrients that can help the skin cope with exposure to sunlight and prevent sun damage so provides sun protection from within.

Also don't forget to apply your SPF broad spectrum sun cream once a day during the summer whether the sun is out or not. 



Theresa Fleetwood is the founder of Andresa Skin Health Clinic, which offers bespoke, non-surgical skincare and anti-ageing therapies. Located in an oak-beamed barn conversion in the Wasing Estate, Aldermaston, the Andresa beauty suite offers a wide range of beauty and relaxation treatments alongside the five-star Andresa Skin Health Clinic. [www.andresa.co.uk](http://www.andresa.co.uk); email: [info@andresa.co.uk](mailto:info@andresa.co.uk); telephone: (01635) 800183

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Saturday 17th June	Beginners Crochet (£25)	14.00-16.00
Saturday 1st July	How to read a Knitting Pattern (£25)	11.00-13.00
Saturday 1st July	How to read a Crochet Pattern and Chart (£35)	14.00-17.00
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- 7. Laura Ashley £75
- 8. Nine by Savannah Miller Debenhams £65
- 9. Autograph M&S £69
- 10. F&F Tesco £16
- 11. River Island £45
- 12. Laura Ashley £160

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# JOHN KIMBER'S ALMSHOUSES

## Newbury Almshouses: yesterday and today

This is the story of philanthropy and welfare and how the need for charity or “alms for the poor” in the field of housing has never gone away; of how almshouses in Newbury came to be so important and why they are still needed today.

They have the potential to comprise a significant proportion of social housing, for which there remains a growing and urgent need.

It is also a tale about Mrs Mabel Luke, a lady of North Hampshire, who in 1928 bought land and built four almshouses in Newbury.

One of the trustees of the charity TONY VICKERS explains the history behind the almshouses and how the charity aims to continue to stay true to Mabel Luke's legacy and help more families in the process. ►

**Newbury, including Donnington, has an exceptionally large number of almshouses for its size: 142 in 2016, rising to 154 upon completion in 2018 of Mabel Luke Place in Mill Lane. Most are to be found in 'the city' area near Newtown Road, including King John's Almshouses in Argyll Road, built by the church under royal charter of 1215 for a priest and 'poor brothers'.**

This is Newbury's oldest almshouse site, although the current buildings date from *only* 1698.

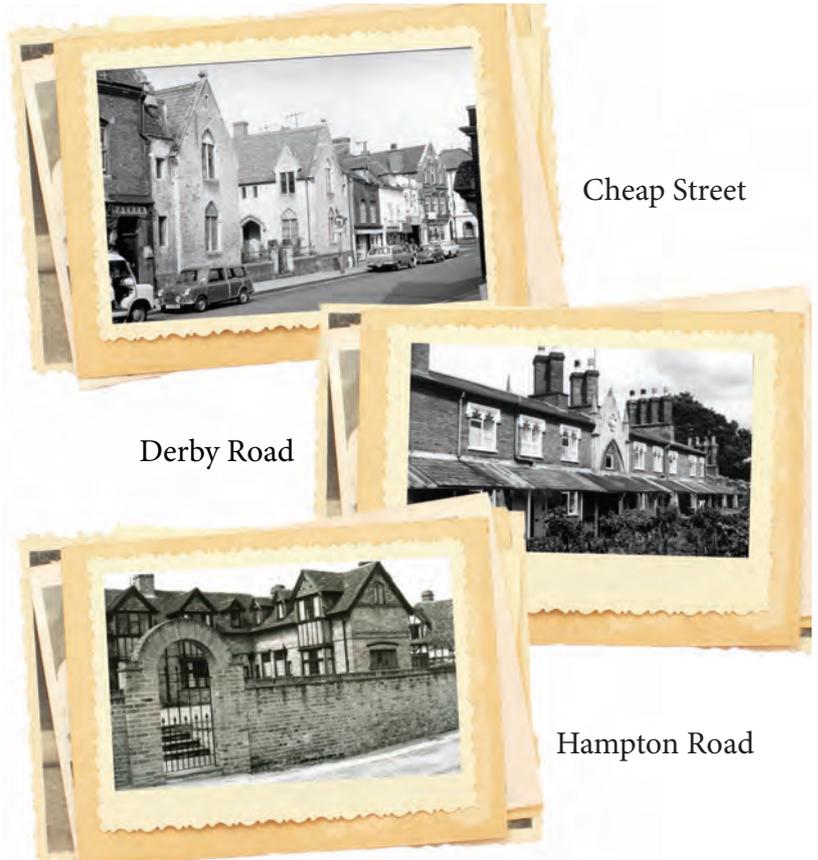
Several others were clustered around St Nicolas church, but have since been sold and money used to build further away from the river Kennet. [see timeline]

Almshouses share two important features, wherever they are found: firstly, they owe their existence to an initial grant from a wealthy local landowner or merchant wishing to provide homes for poor residents of the town; secondly, the beneficiaries are not tenants but occupy their homes under a Licence Agreement.

Benefactors of Newbury almshouses included Francis Winchcombe, a descendent of Jack of Newbury and member of that fabulously wealthy clothier family; Philip Jemmett, a Newbury-born London brewer; and John Kimber, one-time mayor of Newbury. Their contributions to Newbury's prosperity are fairly well-known.

All almshouses are managed by charitable trusts. Originally the clergy were often entrusted with management by donors. After the Reformation, and especially in the 19th-century, the power of the Church diminished and boards of trustees, who were regulated by the rules of the individual Trust Deed, more generally took on a management role.

Often the town corporation appointed the trustees and sometimes they failed in their duties. It was not until the Charities Act of 1960 that the trustees were regulated under law.



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The Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke is unique in Newbury and unusual among all almshouse charities in that it was founded well into the 20th century. It also has no age restriction for its residents: the founder expressly wished that families with children be given priority.

The trustees of the Charity of Miss Martha Smith – Lloyd Henry Baxendale of Greenham Lodge, Rev Blagden of Greenham Vicarage, Rev Stenning of St Johns Vicarage and Aubrey Butler of Sandeiford Priory – put up for sale 19 building plots in the triangle of land between Kings Road, Mill Lane and Denmark Road.

Mabel Luke, in a conveyance of January 13, 1928, purchased five plots fronting onto Mill Lane. She built a terrace of four houses on three of the plots, but the two largest plots remained undeveloped.

The land of approximately half an acre, cost £300 and was to be used to provide homes for "the deserving poor, of the working classes, resident for at least a year of the town of Newbury or parish of Greenham".

Later comments by Mabel Luke indicated that she wished further houses to be provided on the land from surpluses from income.

In a deed of October, 24, 1928, Mabel Luke transferred the land and houses to her charity, The Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke. The initial trustees were Mabel Luke, Margaret

Vyvyan Luke and Lloyd Henry Baxendale.

Mabel Luke's own family seems to have come from Surrey and include several lawyers and members of the clergy.

Her father Frederick Clifford was a lobby correspondent in Parliament and became editor of Macmillans Magazine, a political monthly journal, in the 1890s, mixing with politicians of all parties. He wrote the seminal work on Private Members' Parliamentary Bills.

Mabel was 33 when she married Stephen Paget Walter Vyvyan 'PV' Luke, who was more than 20 years her senior, in Kensington in 1901. They had one daughter Margaret, born in 1906.

PV Luke had had a career with the Indian Telegraph Service. Although not a soldier, at the outbreak of the Afghanistan Campaign in 1878, he led the team that laid the first overland telegraph through the Khyber Pass into Kabul. He was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Afghan Medal and Clasp.▶



Mrs. P. V. LUKE  
WHO PRESENTED  
HER DAUGHTER, MISS MARGARET VYVYAN LUKE



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Trustee TONY VICKERS

Recently a collection of his black and white photographs of Afghanistan were discovered in rubbish bins outside the British Embassy there: they are now in the British Library.

In about 1910, Mr Luke acquired the Adbury House estate. Although he seems not to have become involved in public or community affairs, it is almost certain that his wishes were being fulfilled as much as his wife's when she built the four dwellings in Mill Lane.

She told a meeting of Newbury Corporation in 1949, when appointing the councillors as future trustees, that she and her husband had been "concerned about the many slums and great shortage of houses" and "were determined to do a little to help, especially bearing in mind the children, because they understood families with young children found it difficult to get accommodation".

Mabel and her daughter Margaret, who served throughout the Second World War in London with the Womens Voluntary Service and later became local Newbury Divisional President of the Red Cross, were both trustees of the charity bearing her name, at least up to the time it was entrusted to borough councillors.

At the time of this handover, three of the four dwellings still had their original 1928 beneficiary families in residence. The spare building plots had been part of the Dig for Victory wartime food production effort, which led neighbours to erroneously believe that the building plots had been allotments. Her quoted remark above shows that was not true.

The 1972 Local Government Act made no provision for Newbury District Council (NDC – successor to the Borough) to continue appointing trustees, so the Charity Commission agreed to appointment of five fresh trustees, two of whom were to be nominated by NDC.

Gradually the properties "became administered as part of the housing stock"

of the council, with modernisation proposed in 1976. At that point, NDC discovered they didn't own the properties.

Plans were also approved for a new block of eight flats on the spare land, although funds were not available and permission lapsed.

A new Charitable Scheme was drawn up in 1982, which gave one of the NDC nominee trusteeships to Greenham Parish Council (GPC). The charity and its properties were virtually abandoned by trustees until three local councillors, including current chairman Bill Piner, concerned by the situation, applied to and were appointed by the Charity Commission as trustees.

Bill and his fellow trustees had previously made several unsuccessful efforts to develop the spare land but were advised in 1993 that the charity's overriding duty was to manage its existing properties and not to build more.

Consideration was given to using income from sale or lease of the spare land to relieve poverty in the area in other ways, but the trustees decided instead to seek grants and invest in major repairs and renovations, which were completed in 1997.

The state of the spare land continued to cause concern locally, as it became very overgrown and a fly-tipping destination. Some town councillors investigated whether it could become a public play area or park, because land between Mill Lane and Kings Road was fast become mainly high-density residential with little green space.

By 2013, the Almshouse Association, which exists to support England's 1650 independent local almshouse charities, had acquired some experience of negotiating with Government bureaucracy and tapping into grant funding for development.

Almshouse Consortium Limited (ACL) was formed specifically to do that, employing specialists to assist both the Consortium and the individual almshouse charities. ACL supported Bill and his trustees with

a successful grant bid the following year, initially to remodel the four existing dwellings, but also build two blocks of new flats on the spare land.

On approaching WBC planners, trustees were advised that the council would prefer a wholesale redevelopment of the site. Plans for 16 one and two-bedroomed flats in three blocks were approved in May 2015.

However, among the many conditions of Government grants were:

- the charity must become a Registered Provider of Social Housing;
- the development project must be shown to be financially viable over 25 years;
- grant funding from the Local Housing Authority (West Berkshire Council).

The total project cost is well over £2m. Almost all the charity's reserves have been used to prepare for a new build contract with local firm Feltham Construction Ltd. Trustees have become directors of a not-for-profit Company.

The enabling work, including demolition, began last autumn. Mabel Luke Trustee Ltd, at the time of writing, is about to sign a Loan Agreement of more than £1m, to be repaid from the weekly maintenance charges levied on residents of the new flats.

Licensees to occupy the new flats will be selected by trustees from nominees taken from the council's waiting list. All 16 flats in Mabel Luke Place should be occupied by April 2018.

As the construction work gets underway, the charity is looking to forge better links with other West Berkshire almshouse trusts, which may help it develop and sustain the best standards of almshouse management, and to provide affordable accommodation for future residents, aligned to the original wishes of Mabel Luke.

To find out more about the project and make a donation visit <http://mabelluke.co.uk/OA>

# Timeline of Newbury Almshouses



**1215** King John grants charter to St Bartholomew's Hospital, City area. These become known as King John's Almshouses, originally for a priest and poor brothers.

**1592** Church Almshouses, Bartholomew Street (next to St Nic's, where church hall now stands) known to exist – but probably much earlier. "Up to 12 poor souls" in residence in probably only 2 properties

**1604** Francis Winchcombe gives rent of two houses in Cheap Street as income to support almshouses in Mary Hill, which now forms the southern end of that street. These may have originated in the 13th-century as part of the leper hospital of St Mary Magdalen.

**1650** Philip Jemmett, London brewer born in Newbury, converts stables next to Bartholomew Manor (Argyll Rd) into 12 almshouses for six men and six women.



**1671** Thomas Pearce leaves £400 to set up houses to support "two decayed weavers"

**1672** Two houses in West Mills purchased (for £48) with Pearce bequest and £310 spent on land, rent from which supports the trust



**1676** Philip Jemmett gives his grandson Jemmett Raymond the almshouses in Argyll Rd. Raymond buys nearby land and uses rent from this and the Globe Inn (now the site of Lloyds Bank) to help pay for upkeep. His mother adds to the endowment. In his will, Raymond bequeaths his almshouses to Corporation of Newbury.

**1690** Francis Coxedd's almshouses (also West Mills) established for "two honest and religious men of Newbury".



**1698** St Bartholomew's Hospital & King John's Almshouses, Argyll Rd, rebuilt.

**1727** Thomas Hunt leaves a house and two tenements in West Mills to "provide succour for three women".

**1754** Benjamin Robinson endows three cottages in Bartholomew Street as almshouses for "three old weavers". Their precise location is not known.

**1764** Robinson's charity leases three tenements in Northcroft Lane (where Pembroke Road car park exit now is) to replace those in Bartholomew Street.

**1793** John Kimber leaves most of his fortune (more than £13k plus land at Wash Common) to establish almshouses for six men and six women, built the following year in Cheap Street (next to PO building and occupying most of its parking area). Kimber's Almshouses are the first to be independent of church and corporation. Kimber's will left nothing to his only surviving child: he had fallen out with his family. He also endowed the Blue Coat School.

**1796** Raymond's Almshouse Charity builds 12 almshouses in Fair Close, Newtown Road: "Lower Raymonds".

**1798** Rector of St Nicolas church accepts lease of Raymond's Almshouses in Argyll Rd (recently vacated for new Fair Close properties).



**1814** St Bartholomew's charity build 10 almshouses known as New Court on site of old Cheese Fair in Newtown Road.

**1817** Hunt's Almshouses in West Mills demolished and new houses built on site.

**1823** John Child, a sailmaker, endows land and property in Northcroft Lane (still standing, behind Lock Stock & Barrel) for "poor Newbury men".

**1824-1840** Dispute over disposal of Mary Hill Almshouses caused by its mismanagement by corporation. Eventually reaches Attorney General.

**1826** Raymonds Almshouse Charity builds a terrace of 10 almshouses north of Derby Rd: Upper Raymonds.

**1864** St Mary's Almshouses rebuilt in Cheap Street on site now occupied by Mill Reef House.

**1882** John Child's Almshouses sold and proceeds given to church help to build. ➤



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# Timeline of Newbury Almshouses

continued

**1883** Church & Child's Almshouses, Newtown Road. Former Raymond's (then Church) Almshouses in Argyll Rd left derelict until



sold to Dr Wynter (see below) in 1920.

**1883** Coxedd's & Pearce's Almshouses built off Enborne Rd after original properties in West Mills deemed unsuitable for habitation.

**1919** Dr Walter Essex Wynter, upon retiring from Middlesex Hospital London, buys 15th-century Bartholomew Manor in Argyll Rd. His father Andrew had collaborated with Charles Dickens and shared his concerns for single women with no homes. He then bought and



modernised the nearby Church Almshouses.

**1921** Robinson's Almshouses in Northcroft Lane (then owned by St Bart's Grammar School) sold, proceeds used to support Hunt's almshouse residents and for land next to school.

**1926** Dr Wynter buys two cottages and some outbuildings next to his house, converting them to four almshouses for retired nurses from Middlesex Hospital. They form Bartholomew Close, on the corner of Pound Street and Argyll Rd.

**1928** Mrs Mabel Luke of Adbury House, Burghclere purchases land in Mill Lane and builds four houses for local people "in need, hardship and distress" on part of it. She stated a preference for "families", unlike all other benefactors of almshouses in Newbury.

**1929** Dr Wynter buys the derelict former Raymonds Almshouses in Argyll Rd, modernising them with recovered 18th-century fixtures including shutters from Eton College.

**1943** German bombs destroy New Court almshouses, later rebuilt as Fair Close social housing and day centre.



**1951** Kimbers Almshouses built in Kennet Rd, to replace those in Cheap Street that were then demolished.

**1956** Hunt's Almshouses replaced with three bungalows in St Davids Rd and West Mills property sold as a private house.

**1962** Lord Astor of Hever donates money to enable Essex Wynter Trust build bungalows as almshouses in Hampton Rd.

**1970s** Two pairs of bungalows built in gardens of Upper Raymonds Almshouses, off Derby Rd. St Mary's Hill Almshouses demolished soon afterwards.

**1987** Land owned by Newbury Church & Almshouse Charity off Fifth Road (Harvest Green) sold for development on condition that a block of 12 new almshouses is built on part of it.

**2013** Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke decides to apply for government funds to redevelop its site in Mill Lane.

**2015** Planning consent given to build three blocks (16 flats) on whole Mill Lane site. Greenham Common Trust (GCT) awards grant of £125k, subject to matched funding from local sources. Government's Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) awards £420k to The Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke to build 12 additional almshouse units.

**2016** Contract to build Mabel Luke Place awarded to Feltham



Construction Ltd. Mill Lane dwellings demolished. Charity's trustees form Mabel Luke Trustee Ltd, become its directors and Charity Commission certifies the Company as sole Trustee of the Charity.

**2017** January – HCA approves Mabel Luke application to become a Registered Provider of Social Housing, enabling West Berkshire Council to confirm its grant of £238k and securing GCT's grant. HCA grants a further £140k to replace the four demolished almshouses.

**2018** Mabel Luke Place due completion.



(source: The Almshouses of Newbury, Phil Wood and West Berkshire Museum, 2006)

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# The Studio door is Open – come on in!

For the first three weeks of May, more than 100 local artists and makers are inviting the public to visit them in their studios and workshops and view their work in group exhibitions across West Berkshire and North Hampshire. TRISH LEE talks to four of them about taking part in Open Studios. ►

Sculptor Johannes von Stumm Picture: xxx xxxxx



John Brazendale

The popularity of BBC TV's *Great Pottery Throw Down* and *Big Painting Challenge* has given fresh impetus to public interest in watching artists and makers at work.

Twenty-nine years ago, former head of art at Theale Green School, the late Pat Eastop came to me, then artistic director of the Arts Workshop, with the idea of setting up an Open Studios project in Newbury, to run alongside the Newbury Spring Festival, having been impressed by already-established schemes across the country – not least in Oxford.

We headed north to the city of dreaming spires to research the best way of realising this – after all, why reinvent the wheel? Soon after, with Oare potter Mike Taylor on board, we were a committee of three – an arts educator, arts administrator and practising craftsman – and recruited eight local artists for our first year.

Those eight opened their 'studios' for limited times during the festival period, proving so popular with the public that we soon secured Arts Council funding to grow the scheme.

And it grew like Topsy... today more than 100 artists and makers are involved and the organisation is entirely artist-led.

Now, at various times throughout three weeks in May, people can visit studios spread across West Berkshire and North Hampshire – plus a little bit of Wiltshire – to meet artists in their own environment, to discuss their techniques, watch them work, view exhibitions or riffle through piles of sketches and working drawings.

The studios range from back rooms and garden sheds to purpose-built spaces or rented barns; you can see painters, printers,

sculptors, jewellers and goldsmiths, potters, photographers, glass and textile artists, furniture-makers and woodworkers, working in many mediums.

At New Greenham Arts, there's a taster exhibition of work by every participating artist, *Insight 2017*, to help people identify those that interest them most, in order to plan their visits around the area. There too, they can meet and view the work of the nine Studio 8 artists based in the centre.

A working artist can often feel isolated, so visitors will find a warm welcome at the studios, where their feedback is really appreciated, no



People become very attached to the sculpture they choose. I've even had someone cry after they commissioned me to make a sculpture of a family pet that had died. (I assumed they were crying for the right reasons – they seemed to like it! I thought it was best not to ask...)

Diccon Dadey



matter if they have come to buy or just want to browse and ask questions.

One of the most experienced participants, painter and printmaker Susan Kirkman has opened her studio in the lovely wild Wiltshire landscape for 24 years.

She was originally a physicist until the day, about 25 years ago, when she picked up a leaflet promoting courses at the art school in Queens Road, Bristol. She signed on for etching classes and rapidly became hooked.

"I particularly enjoy the technical processes involved and have done various short courses in other printing techniques."

The added bonus of a visit to her studio near Ramsbury is the beautifully-planted two-and-a-half acre garden and orchard. Does it give her inspiration?

"I haven't often been able to paint the more cultivated parts because they involve too much colour and would look OTT! But the wilder parts have inspired several images. I shall have a recent image of some of the trees and shrubs, which provided interesting shapes, in this year's open studio."

Back in urban Newbury, in his Cloud Studio off the Andover Road, ex-head of art at St Bart's John Brazendale is enjoying his retirement, throwing and hand-building large jugs and pots.

After 11 years away from the demands of the classroom, he says: "I'm now in a very fortunate situation of being able to make what I want to make."

"I enjoy chatting to visitors and seeing their reactions to my work. I get a real buzz watching my visitors being challenged by some of the pieces."

The wheel is

undoubtedly the big attraction for visitors: "We've always been attracted to the potter's wheel from the early BBC black and white interlude recordings to the recent BBC *Throw Down* programmes. This year I will be throwing during my open days and if someone wants to have a go..."

At the other end of town, young ceramicist Sophie Waite has a new riverside studio in a small close-knit artists community at Lower Way Farm, where she has been experimenting with slip-casting and burnishing.

She joined Open Studios in 2010 and has participated every year since then.

"I love taking part with the other artists at Lower Way Farm, being part of a team effort in a gorgeous location. It attracts more people as there are several artists and different artwork to see. I am also excited to be exhibiting at

Photographs: Phil Cannings and Louise Bellaers

Sandham Memorial Chapel this year with nine other artists.

"I enjoy meeting the public, you get a real impression of how they feel about your work. Art is very subjective and so it is a fabulous feeling when you meet someone who is passionate about pieces you have made.

"Back in 2010 I tried to impress my new boyfriend with my studio; seven years later we are married and expecting our first baby, so it seems to have worked."

Diccon Dadey, creator of quirky metal sculptures in a barn near Woodland St Mary, is quite a character too – the magnificent steel rhino head on display is a talking point at every show.

He picked up his skills in manipulating metal and welding while working in engineering.

"I've always been quite creative but never saw it being something I could really make a living at. I started playing with some pieces, more as a hobby, and it took off. All those skills came together into creating sculptures that appeal to people, mainly for their gardens."

He ran DadeyMetalArt alongside the 'day job' for a couple of years before taking the plunge and hasn't looked back.

"Opening my studio is a great chance for people to browse without feeling they have to make an appointment or buy something and it gives me a good opportunity to gauge the response of potential clients. The one-to-one feedback is really helpful – it always amazes me how many ideas come out of Open Studio months."

Diccon has never needed to spend money on advertising – his work speaks for itself.

"My sign-written truck, with a sheep or a horse's head or a dragon and a couple of owls on the back, soon drums up interest.

"We were recently in a traffic jam on the M6, listening to the radio, and heard a call from a listener saying that they were sitting behind a red truck with a life-size horse head on the back!"

It would be a superhuman feat to visit every artist and show in the three weeks, so the free illustrated directory describing each artist's work and listing individual opening times and directions is a must to plan a productive route.

Copies are available around town and online at [www.open-studios.org.uk](http://www.open-studios.org.uk) – you can use it in conjunction with the taster exhibition and satellite shows which, says the scheme's president, Fawley sculptor Johannes von Stumm, "hint at wonderful treasures to be discovered by poking your head around the door of a sculptor's workshop or painter's studio".

All the 2017 Open Studios participants are looking forward to meeting you. 

**Clockwise Susan Kirkman, Sophie Waite, Diccon Dadey**





# In a manor of speaking

HILARY SCOTT finds Esseborne Manor – no thanks to her satnav – and has difficulty deciding what is her favourite thing on the tasting menu

The hotel, a delightful family-owned manor house, has been run by the Hamiltons for more than 22 years. Son Mark whose father returned from a high-flying career in Hong Kong to buy it, presides over a charming, just under 20-bedroom place that's comfy yet rather splendid and its Courtyard restaurant serving innovative food from Dutch born executive chef Dennis Janssen and head chef Marek Ciesielczuk.



The tasting menu is £55 a head and a bargain in the world of tasting menus. It was hard to find one stand-out dish as most fulfilled that brief – and a quick survey with fellow diners at the end of the evening proved inconclusive too as we all had different favourites.

You can have an accompanying wine flight, but we chose a Sauvignon from one of the most reasonably-priced wine lists I've seen in a long time.

From the canapés served in the bar with our aperitifs to the petit fours at the end of the meal, flavour was the name of the game.

We greedily grabbed the bite-sized crispy kale leaves with apple and hazelnut, downed the dinky glass of cucumber and almond gazpacho and savoured the cheese sticks with our Bloody Marys.

We then took up our table in the dining room with large windows where every vista was like a framed painting, showing off the hotel's pretty and large grounds.

A basket of breads – cheese, caraway and mustard – were voraciously devoured too.

Our first course was a cauliflower risotto with capers – it was nice though salty, and for me did not really give much of a hint of the top-notch courses to come.

Interestingly, the menu does not follow a vegetable/fish/meat format for next up was a lamb faggot with savoy cabbage. The rich faggot was called 'hamburgery' by my dining companion who I think meant it had more meat than anything else.

The cabbage was creamed, there were rich ceps on the plate and more crispy kale and a smooth potato puree. We loved it and I ticked the 'my best dish' box a little prematurely as it was to turn out.

Our second course was a perfectly cooked scallop and a sticky black pudding slice with a quail's egg, apple matchsticks, apple puree, a Savoy cabbage purée and a packed-with-flavour jus. First class cooking once again.

If ever a Thornback ray fish was caught in vain, it wasn't for Esseborne. We had a flaky yet firm and meaty portion with two smoked mussels perched like bookends on the plate, a piece of salsify, wilted spinach, charred spring onions and a sweet pea purée all smothered in a mussel foam. It was this course that confirmed we were having a generously-portioned tasting menu. If, like me, you can't abide dots of purée so small you can barely taste them, then Esseborne is for you. Each carefully-crafted sauce, jus or purée came in plentiful amounts.

We had venison next – a perfectly pink-in-the-middle roundel with a crisp croquette of slow-cooked venison, almost like pulled meat. The poached pea, and pear purée made a change from other fruits that are often served with this meat and the mustard mayo and celeriac purée melded perfectly.

It was lovely to be offered a short break before our two dessert courses – and the service all evening was good. It was heartening to see that all the diners thought so too.

So, the challenge as we were pretty full was how to appreciate the rhubarb posset with sorrel and ginger.

Well, the challenge was a piece of cake. What



an unusual and pretty dish we thought as it arrived in a simple glass – layers of pastel posset with a disc of deep red jelly dotted with pale pink slivers of rhubarb then a vibrant sea-green sorrel sorbet and micro sorrel on top with a garnish of crunchy, aerated gingerbread like a gingerbread Aero bar.

Sorrel is a very tangy, acidic herb and its sour taste comes from oxalic acid, which also gives rhubarb its tartness so the match makes sense. It was divine, a not-too-sweet posset and tiny yet tasty pieces of rhubarb, a fruity jelly and the superbly-textured sorrel sorbet. And here's where I deviate from my usual habit of my favourite dish on tasting menus virtually always being savoury. This sang with freshness, clean yet sparkling tastes, and was, er maybe definitely, possibly, my best dish.

The final course was a coffee panna cotta that was one of the best textured I've tasted, all silky and wobbly and with a deep coffee flavour. With its hazelnut macaron, bitter coffee jelly and nougat parfait it hit the mark again.

The petit fours – coco-nutty chocolate, fruit jelly, macaron and a chocolate marshmallow – were lovely and a fitting end to a great menu.

We chatted to chef Dennis after our meal and he's very keen and knowledgeable. He spent 12 years on Jersey, a culinary hotspot, and has honed his skills.

They are pretty proud of him at Esseborne Manor and rightly so.

It's proper cooking and I could say it's to the manor born, but it's so seriously good, a pun would only detract. **OA**



Left, cauliflower risotto with capers; below left, scallop and sticky black pudding slice with quail's egg and apple matchsticks; below, lamb faggot with savoy cabbage; centre left, Thornback ray fish with smoked mussels; centre right, venison with pea and pear purée



**FIRST TIP:** Don't rely on your sat nav to get to Esseborne Manor Hotel. It often takes you right past its door and, in fact, makes it look harder to find than it is.

**SECOND TIP:** Just go there.



Left, coffee panna cotta; above, petits fours; right cucumber and almond gazpacho; far right, rhubarb posset with sorrel and ginger



Pictures: Dijana Capan

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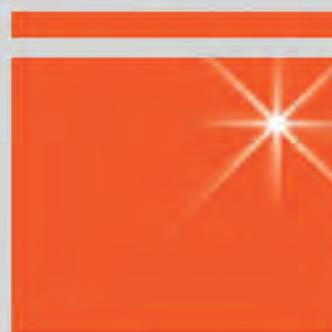
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# toptipples

by James Allen

## the Riesling grape

Riesling is experiencing something of a resurgence and JAMES ALLEN has sourced some tasty recommendations from local wine merchants

Greetings everyone. This month I'm going to put a spotlight on a grape; the Riesling

This wonderful variety makes a great variety of wines, from dry to sweet and even to sparkling. In Victorian London, the wines from the Moselle and the Rhine used to command a premium.

Recently a tasting was held of ancient bottles of wine from Württemberg from the 1670s. Some were still more than drinkable and the best guesses were that these were made from Riesling.

Literary records go back even further with references to the grape being made in the 1400s.

Known mostly for wines from Germany, it is now grown worldwide, with particularly good examples coming from Australia and New Zealand.

Riesling suffered owing to the craze for Liebfraumilch with which it was (wrongly) associated. But now, with some great vintages and some dedicated growers, it is making a storming comeback.

In their youth, Riesling wines are fresh and zingy. As they age they develop a grapefruit, kerosene quality, which is much prized.

Here are some great selections for Riesling to be found around Newbury:

### Pauletts Riesling, 2011, Clare Valley, S. Australia

Unusual to find a mature Riesling with seven years bottle age for such a keen price.

A fantastic bargain.

The cool breezes in the Clare Valley enable the grapes to ripen gradually and keep their freshness and balance. This 2011 wine shows the classic Germanic Riesling character, intense kiwi and very ripe tropical fruits, pungent almost. The palate has amazing clarity of flavour with a deft balance of sweet fruit and acidity. Classic stuff.

**£15.99 per bottle**  
The Naked Grape, Hungerford



### Peter & Ulrich Dry Riesling, Mosel, 2016

At the other end of the spectrum we have a young Riesling with lovely lively fruity characteristics.

The rich fruit flavours and refreshing acidity are perfectly balanced to match salads, fish or lightly-spiced meats. A real gem here, with notes of peach, apricot and ripe apple, its perfect for those who love German wine or are looking to discover something new.

**£11.99 per bottle**  
Majestic Wines, Newbury



### Hochheimer Riesling 2014, Domdechant Werner, Rhine

From the wonderful south-facing slopes of the Rheingau comes this classic, this time showing the off-dry style.

The Rheingau is a very traditional region, with stunning views and magnificent historic estates. The Hochheim area, with its south facing slopes and chalky, mineral rich soil, is renowned for the outstanding quality of its Rieslings. Dr Franz Werner Michel is the seventh generation to head the Domdechant Werner estate, comprising a stylish manor house with surrounding vineyards overlooking the picturesque city of Mainz and the Rhein-Main landscape. Made purely from estate grown fruit, this Domdechant Werner Riesling Classic is off-dry in style, with a soft peach character backed by racy acidity. A perfect apéritif, it is a great partner for shellfish dishes or smoked salmon salad.

**£14.99 per bottle**  
Laithwaites, Theale



### 2014 Picnic Riesling, Two Paddocks, Central Otago

This just off-dry style of Riesling is a real delight and extremely more-ish.

Bright, pale silver-lemon in colour, aromas are zesty, floral and mouth-watering. The palate is light in body, silky in texture and very refreshing. With a long, vivacious finish, this is perfect to drink at lunchtime, before a meal, or as a partner to Thai-style cooking.

**£14.95** Haynes, Hanson & Clark, Whitchurch

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# O for tuna

Forget the tinned variety, SIMON RHODES will get your taste buds tingling at the thought of fresh tuna

**M**any people assume that tuna comes in a tin; you'd be surprised how many customers say that when confronted by my sashimi grade tuna.

In fact tuna belongs to the Thunnini species, which is closely related to the mackerel.

Thunnini comprises 15 species the sizes of which vary greatly.

They range from bullet tuna, which can grow to 50 cm and can weigh 1.8kg, up to the Atlantic bluefin tuna that can grow to an amazing 15ft (just over 4.5m) in length and can weigh in excess of 684kg. The bluefin averages 6ft (1.8m) in length, and is believed to live for up to 50 years.

Their circulatory and respiratory systems are almost unique among fish, enabling them to maintain a body temperature higher than that of the surrounding water.

An active and agile predator, the tuna has a sleek, streamlined body, and is among the fastest-swimming fish – the yellowfin tuna, for example, is capable of speeds of nearly 50 mph.

Found in warm seas, it is extensively fished commercially, and is popular as a game fish.

As a result of over-fishing, stocks of some tuna species, such as the southern bluefin tuna, have been reduced dangerously close to the point of extinction.

Because of their fondness for swimming in close proximity to dolphins the tuna-fishing industry has given itself a poor reputation by also indiscriminately catching the dolphin.

So now the preferred method to catch tuna is by rod and line, which is not only environmentally friendly, but also sustainable.

Bluefin tuna command an excessively high price, especially in Japan where a record £1.05m (yes you did read that right!) was paid for a bluefin tuna in 2012. Even the buyer, a sushi chain owner, said that it was a bit high for a fish.

At The Lobster Pot Fishmongers we stock the more common yellowfin tuna, which is proving exceptionally popular.

This delicious fish makes wonderful sashimi and has a deep red colour. The raw taste has a texture like fillet steak, but is a lot more delicate on your palette. (Why not ask for a taste when in our shop). 

“

*the yellowfin tuna is capable of speeds of nearly 50 mph*

”



## GET COOKING

If you fancy having your tuna cooked I suggest that you sear it in a very hot pan, but still maintaining a pinkish colour in the middle. Your tastebuds will happily dance around among the cooked and raw texture of the tuna.

If you wish to take your tastebuds to heaven and back why not season the tuna further with cracked black pepper and a little chilli before searing. Accompanied by a quality soy sauce you won't want to come back to earth.

Tuna makes wonderful salad Niçoise, which is basically a tuna salad with boiled egg (remember 8½ minutes for the perfect egg) blanched french or dwarf beans, anchovies, fresh lettuce leaves, artichokes, tomatoes and cucumber.

To make the dressing simply add some crushed garlic and cracked black pepper to some extra virgin olive oil, add a little red wine vinegar, a pinch of sea salt and a little Dijon mustard.

Whisk together and always remember to taste so you can always add more of any of the above ingredients.



## About the author

Simon Rhodes owns:  
The Lobster Pot Fishmongers, Cobbs Farmshop, Bath Road,  
Hungerford, Berkshire RG17 0SP  
Telephone: (01488) 686770

# Café Culture



ROMILLA ARBER says her team at Honesty Lambourn have created a welcoming environment for busy mums, the local racing community and a starting point for cyclists with the new Honesty Cycle Ride



Honesty Lambourn opened on October 1, 2016.

It is the biggest of our coffee shop sites and sits on the high street rather like Honesty Kingsclere.

There is plenty of parking in the car park at the back which is a great benefit to the place. It is open from 8am until 4pm every day.

The shop sells cooked breakfasts in the morning and hot lunches in the afternoon, along with all the Honesty favourites like the French pastries, biscuits, cakes, sandwiches, wraps and panini.

We have also recently started to serve a beef burger in a bun and hot meat pies, which are proving very popular with the locals.

All the food is made either in our wholesale kitchen or in our bakery and then delivered first thing in the morning.

This is the model that works well for our coffee shops. We don't want to be cooking on site as there are all sorts of implications then regarding ventilation and odour.

We are always looking at new ideas for 'grab and go' items to make peoples lunches more interesting.

This spring we will be starting to sell our salad boxes, which we hope will go down well with those customers wanting something different from the usual sandwich or wrap.

Trying to develop new products for the coffee shops is definitely one of the most interesting things about running the business.

Trying to stay one step ahead of the competition, while continuing to offer a good and varied range of products to our customers so they stay engaged, is a challenge.

Lambourn is of course well known as the Valley of the Race Horse, being home to many trainers and breeders and it is nice being able to offer them a hot breakfast or a hot lunch.

We also get a lot of young mums with their children, meeting other mums and there is plenty of space for prams, which is always a concern for parents with young babies.

Louis and Jack are the main employees at Lambourn and have been with us since we first opened. Jack is off travelling for three months, but we hope he will return when he's back in the UK.

They both live in Lambourn and are cheerful and hardworking and really want the place to be a success. Courtenay has also been with us since we opened, working on Saturdays. Her grandmother is a regular of ours.

Making a success of the coffee shop in Lambourn really is about engaging with the local community and making sure that everyone who lives in Lambourn and in the surrounding villages knows we are there.

It is also about convincing people that it is better to pay

a little bit more for bread and the handmade pastries, rather than the factory-made alternatives that, yes are cheaper, but that contain so many hidden extras that they cause damage to one's health.

As a way of engaging with the local community we are about to launch the Honesty Cycle Ride.

Cyclists will start off from Honesty Lambourn and when they get to Honesty Inkpen will be able to collect an Honesty cycle vest, specially designed for us by Black Hound sportswear company.

Cycling fits in very well with the Honesty ethos in that being healthy helps us make the most of life, eating well and living well.

So come along to Honesty Lambourn next time you are at a loose end. We are next to the old police station and there will be cup of Honesty blend coffee waiting for you.



# Recipe

## Coconut Layer cake

This cake looks magnificent when it has been iced and makes a great birthday cake

### Makes 1 x 20 cm cake

- 110g butter at room temperature
- 250g caster sugar
- 2 eggs
- 175ml milk
- 210g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 drops vanilla essence

### Frosting:

- 340g caster sugar
- 2 egg whites
- 3 tbsp water
- ¼ tsp cream of tartar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 50g desiccated coconut

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas 4. Grease 2 x 20 cm sandwich tins and line them with baking parchment.
- Place the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl and cream thoroughly with an electric hand-whisk until pale in colour and light and fluffy in texture. Add the eggs and milk and mix again, then gently stir in the flour, baking powder and vanilla extract.
- Divide the cake mixture evenly between the tins and bake for 25 minutes, until the sponge is springy to the touch. Leave the cakes to cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then turn them out on a wire rack.

### To make the frosting

- Put all the frosting ingredients (except the coconut) in a glass bowl and place the bowl over a pan of simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Gently stir the mixture until the sugar has dissolved and you can no longer see or feel any grittiness from the sugar.
- Whisk the mixture for about 5 minutes, until the icing stands in peaks. Remove the pan from the heat and continue to beat until the icing is thick and easy to spread.
- When the cakes are completely cool, sandwich them together with some of the frosting. Using a knife, spread the rest of the frosting over the top and sides of the cake then sprinkle the top with desiccated coconut.



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# Kitchen clearout

Old ingredients, spills, sticky stains – we've all been guilty of letting our cupboards get into a state. HILARY SCOTT shows you how to give your cupboards some love – and what basic ingredients you should put back in.

## CUPBOARD LOVE

When the sun starts to shine, we really don't want it to shine on our food cupboards.

## WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD CUPBOARDS

Nasty surprises can lurk at the back of our kitchen cupboards if we're not careful.

Mould, flour weevils and rice weevils can all invade our ingredients. But if you clean and organise your cupboards regularly, you can avoid any horrors.

First, take everything out and check sell-by dates. Bin what's past its best – yes even herbs and spices. They may not go off, but they do lose their strength the older they get. Whole spices last longer than ground.

Flour can go rancid (you will smell it) and can be invaded by weevils which turn into moths so be particularly careful.

Sugar keeps for a long time but after two years it is probably best to bin it. It will often turn hard the older it gets and solidify into a lump so to soften it, put the sugar in a glass or ceramic bowl with a moist paper towel and cover it with a lid or plate. Microwave for 20 seconds or until soft again.

Dried pasta will usually have a two-year expiry date, but you don't risk much by adding a few months on to that date.

Dried beans and pulses have been known to last decades – in fact researchers at Brigham Young University found that only after 30 years did the overall quality of pinto beans decrease. Cans, too, can last for years – the only things to watch out for is eating anything out of a rusted, bulging, leaking or badly dented can.

Honey lasts for a very long time, but it may go thick and caramel-coloured – to make it clear and runny again put into microwave and give it little blasts until it is restored.

Jams and jellies will last too, if the knife or spoon you use to dish them up is clean and free from bacteria. Always use an implement for pickles and things like sun-dried tomatoes – dip your bacteria-laden finger in and that's how mould will start.

## CLEAN-UP TIME

So, once everything is out, clean your cupboards with a lemon you've saved from cooking – just remove any spills then rub the cut side of a lemon all over.

Get rid of stubborn stains or sticky residue with a sprinkling of bicarbonate of soda topped with some hot water – leave until the stain has softened and wipes away.

You can also use bicarb with a sprinkling of vinegar for persistent stains. Leave for a while after it has stopped fizzing. If you have just moved into a new home and the cupboards smell musty, fill a shallow bowl with white or cider vinegar and leave overnight. The smell should have gone by morning.

Finally, empty and wash any storage jars and leave to air-dry before refilling.

Now you should have an idea of what foods you use most often and those you don't. You can rearrange your cupboards so the most-used ingredients go at the front.

As for your kitchen equipment cupboard, again take everything out.

Be ruthless – if you never use that breadmaker put it on ebay or give it to a charity shop that takes electricals. If anything is broken and you've shoved it in the cupboard thinking you will get it fixed one day, well today's the day to put that in motion – or put it in the bin.

Many people may own a larder or pantry – these have had a resurgence recently.

Larders should keep things cool and produce like tomatoes, eggs, soft herbs, butter, onions, potatoes, olive oil, honey, cheese, bananas, courgettes, peppers, mushrooms and root veg all benefit from being kept in a cool, rather than cold, place, ie the fridge.



## TOP TIP

**Can't get the lid off your jar?**

Pop on a pair of rubber gloves. They will give you the extra grip you need to get it off



## USEFUL ORGANISERS

Keeping cupboards organised can be easy with specially designed equipment. Lakeland, Dunelm and IKEA are good places to buy.

Roto caddies are clever stackable turntables that let you 'rotate' jars and cans making it easy to store, review and access, starts from £15.99. LAKELAND



Variera plate holder, £6. IKEA



Korken storage jar, £1.75. IKEA

Expandable shelf organiser helps you see at a glance what's in the cupboard, £15.99. LAKELAND



## ESSENTIAL STORECUPBOARD INGREDIENTS AND KITCHEN KIT

Here at *Out&About* we'd say: salt, flour, oils, vinegar, sugar, rice, tinned tomatoes, pasta, tinned pulses, tomato puree, herbs and spices.

But we talked to the experts about what kitchen equipment and gadgets a good cook should own.

Deputy manager at Sonning's Coppa Club, Matt Siadatan, gave us his essentials.

"Oregano for Mediterranean vibes. Great for sprinkling on to and into anything, from ragu sauces, to roast potatoes, to feta salads.

"Tinned tomatoes, essential for sauces, soups, stews, casseroles – a true all-rounder!

"Sea salt flakes will last you longer than table salt, and encourage you to use less salt in your cooking."

Principal at the Edinburgh New Town Cookery School, Fiona Burrell (right) is an expert in life skills cookery, and has written extensively on "how to stock a kitchen".

She says: "My essential store cupboard ingredients are tinned chick peas as they can be added to stews, salads or made into a quick hummus.

"A packet of dried mushrooms to give mushroom risotto a depth of flavour or to add pep to a mushroom ragout served with pasta.

"Capers – to add to salads and sauces to give a bit of pep and zing. Sun dried tomato puree will add some punchy flavour to many dishes. And extra virgin olive oil – always spend as much as you can afford on this – it makes such a difference to dressings and can be drizzled onto soups and pasta dishes before serving."

Matt's essential equipment includes:

"An extra-large, non-stick frying pan; so universal! Then a speed (vegetable) peeler – it changes your world! And, of course, a decent chopping board."

Fiona swears by a microplane grater – for zesting citrus peel, grating parmesan and grating ginger and garlic for stir fries. **OA**



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Non-dairy milks like almond and soy, gin, chocolate biscuits and sparkling flavoured water have all entered the Office for National Statistics 'Basket of Goods' for the first time. And Waitrose has revealed how they sell in their stores.

Gin sales are up by 16 per cent, non-dairy milks by a whopping 170 per cent, chocolate biscuits by 28 per cent and flavoured waters by 32 per cent.

Director of Ambient Buying for Waitrose Michael Andrews says: "With the UK experiencing a 'ginnaissance', it's no wonder gin has entered back into the basket this year.

"It has consistently been our fastest-growing spirit and with so many new boutique brands entering the market this shows no sign of slowing.

"The gin trend has been driven by an increase in smaller distilleries, which use new combinations of botanicals to create unique flavours."



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# All at sea

Local artist Lesley Foden has just turned 60 and has set herself the challenge of rowing round Great Britain, to raise money for the RNLI and Sea Changers. ANGELA KNIGHT caught up with her between training sessions.

It's early February before dawn, there's frost on the ground and two terriers, Bert and Monty, are guarding a shed in a quintessentially English country garden as the church clock chimes the hour.

From within, comes a whooshing sound – and, it has to be said, a bit of heavy breathing – it is the sound of their mistress, Lesley Foden, who is working out in the early hours – on a rowing machine.

– clockwise, and you could say backwards too, because she will have her back to the direction in which she is heading.

On June 3, at Burnham-on-Crouch, she will step into the sleek rowing boat, *Liberty*, draped with a Union Jack on the front, and start the gruelling challenge, rowing 24 hours a day, two hours on and two hours off, round the clock for eight whole weeks.

the odd submarine surfacing alongside, Lesley will be arriving back, across the finish line, where she started at Burnham-on Crouch, on July 29.

When I ask her why she is putting herself through this, she replies cheerily, "To see if I can – and because I'm 60 this year.

"I also want to want to inspire older people to exercise, raise awareness of plastic pollution in the seas and to raise funds for Lifeboats and Sea Changers".

It's fair to say that Lesley usually leads a fairly uneventful life – she is an artist, painting exquisitely-detailed still lifes of nature.

Lesley was drawing before she could write and ever since she can remember she was always drawing from nature.

Her dream as a child was to be Gerald Durrell's illustrator on his travels. She paints, for example, bees, onions, flowers and animals, in such detail that you are tempted to touch them, they seem so real and have a richness reminiscent of the Dutch style. ►



Lesley says that at first Bert and Monty were terrified to see this 'creature' with a head-torch tiptoeing into the shed in the dark before dawn.

When she emerged in the light they were overjoyed to discover that there wasn't a one-eyed monster in the shed, it was just her putting in some training.

This summer, Lesley will be embarking on an 1,800-mile journey rowing around Great Britain

*Liberty* will stop seven times to change crew – at Cowes, Padstow, Dublin, Oban, Lochinver, Fraserburgh and Scarborough.

Depending on currents and waves the boat could be either 150m or 60 miles from the shore line.

If she survives sea sickness, strong coastal currents, conflicting tides, whirlpools, huge waves, crossing shipping lanes and perhaps





She lives at East Woodhay, near Newbury, where she is also chairman of Neighbour-Care Volunteer Driving, ferrying people to and from their medical appointments. Lesley is also a keen member of St Martin's Church choir and rings the church bells.

Lesley's first introduction to rowing was as a spectator in the 1980s, when she would regularly watch her husband, Mark. He was stationed with the Royal Engineers at Hermitage, but she soon got fed up just watching so she decided to take it up herself. She learned to row at Abingdon Rowing Club on the River Thames, where she was in a four with three other women.

They thought nothing of driving a couple of hundred miles to compete in a regatta, but after three years she found rowing was taking up too much time and gave it up.

She hadn't rowed since.

"When I thought of this mad idea, I discovered that ocean rowing is nothing like rowing on a river – the boat has sliding seats for a start.

"Nearly 30 years later I found myself wanting to get in a boat again so I went back to Abingdon and began training, but everyone seemed to be 35 years younger.

"This will be more of an endurance challenge, facing things I haven't done before in an environment I know nothing about," says Lesley.

It certainly won't be comfortable or luxurious, as regards facilities because there aren't any, just a plastic bucket on deck at the back.

In her two-hour break there may be time to eat, drink, steer the boat or sleep, depending on what is going on.

To keep her strength up Lesley has to absorb 8,000 calories a day, which will be provided by freeze-dried, high-energy food that requires hot water.

"I don't mind as long as I can take tea bags – as I shall miss having a cup of tea the most."

Lesley tells me there will be five people on the boat with three rowing, and she is preparing herself for rough weather when the boat might thrash around.

At night, when it's pitch black, waves can slap them in the back – that's when they will all have to squeeze into the very tiny cabins, three people at the front and two at the rear, without getting any water into the cabins because they can't dry out.

"We could get stuck somewhere for several days if the weather is really bad – enough to anchor and seal ourselves inside the cabins, which has just enough space for us to crouch inside.

"There will be a lot of challenges and I will take it an hour at a time, then a day at a time and a week at a time."

Rather worryingly, Lesley tells me cheerfully that the boat is designed to turn over as it doesn't have a keel, but it should right itself.

Oddly enough it's not sea sickness she is worried about, but land sickness if they come ashore at the end of each week to change crew. She's not sure how she will cope with that.

Behind every successful adventure there is a strong team in the background.

Rannoch Adventure builds boats and is skilled at organising training and equipment for rowing challenges – in February their boats won all four places in a race across the Atlantic.

They usually organise races across the Pacific and Atlantic, and this is the first time they have run a rowing challenge round Great Britain, in the hope that it will make rowing available for anyone.

Rannoch Adventure GB Challenge 2017 will also be arranging a yacht for sponsors to follow the rowers.

There are eight legs to the challenge, and as so many people want to take part, there is a waiting list just to do one leg.

Lesley is determined to do all eight legs and there is only one other woman who will try to cover the same distance.

For a set fee per leg, Rannoch will supply the boat, clothing, food and equipment, so the rowers have to raise money for the voyage as well as raising money for charity.

As Lesley is doing eight legs, she has to raise £20,000 for the row and £20,000 for her two charities.

At the time of writing, she has raised £9,000 by selling some of her paintings and through some corporate donations so she still has a long way to go.

"It's possible that raising the money may be actually harder than rowing round Britain's coastline."

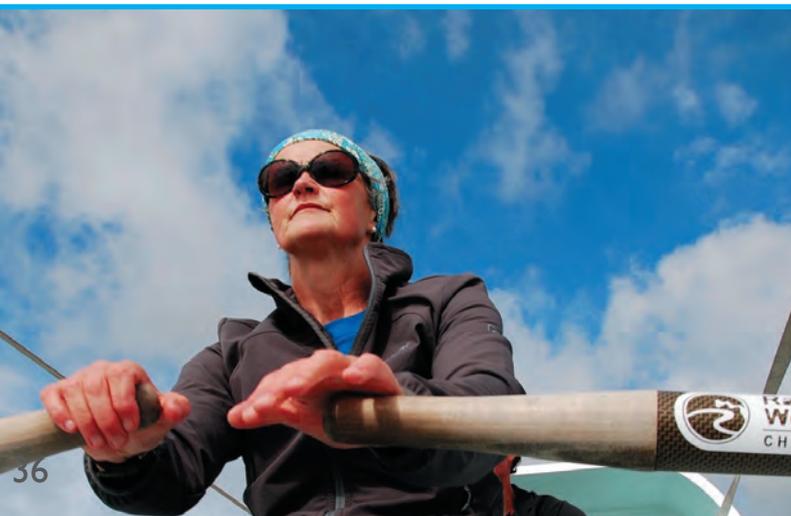
She has paid her deposit and is in a bit of a quandary as she divides her time painting, training and fundraising.

She said: "I don't want to be kicked off the boat if I don't raise enough money. I've got all these supporters so I'm going to do all or nothing."

In preparation for this arduous adventure, Lesley is seeing Gus Barton, a personal trainer in London, who was part of the winning crew racing the Atlantic last year.

Gus is giving Lesley tips and putting her through her paces so that she is physically prepared.

It is not only a physical challenge she will have to face, but a psychological one as well so she is also being mentored by Gwyn Batten,



# Lesley's challenge

who skippered the women's crew across the Atlantic in 2016.

Between now and June when she sets sail, Lesley has to do a Rescue at Sea, which will mean she will be "chucked in the water to see if I sink or swim".

She also has to learn First Aid and how to use a VHF radio.

Husband Mark and daughter Poppy say they are really proud of Lesley and think it's a fantastic adventure for her.

As well as moral support, Mark is offering technical expertise. He has made a video and created a website called 'Lesley's Row', which gives details of her progress and information about how to donate and how the money will be used.

Lesley said: "I suspect Mark and Poppy think I had better get this out of my system and then I'll be back to normal again.

"But if I'd known how hard it is to get corporate sponsorship I would have painted lots of paintings and sold them, trying to do both is almost impossible."

Meanwhile, on the leg from Dublin to Oban, Scottish friends are 'plotting to ambush' Lesley on their boat when *Liberty* reaches Scottish waters West of Gigha, a small island off the west coast of Kintyre.

Then, if they can keep up with Lesley, they will escort her towards Oban, while serenading her with bagpipes.

To see Lesley's paintings visit:  
[lesleyfoden.com](http://lesleyfoden.com) 

As Lesley is doing eight legs she has to raise £20,000 for the row and £20,000 for her two charities.

On her website it says people can donate £10 towards 'chocolates and navy issue rum' or £100 per leg for a (rather useful) pair of oars.

Friends have already given a donation towards a life-raft.

The boat and skipper's fees plus all the equipment and clothing has to be paid for before Lesley sets foot on the sea.

Lesley will be raising money for the RNLI, whose services she hopes she won't need, and for Sea Changers, which raises awareness about the severe environmental problem of plastic pollution in the seas.

To find out more about Lesley's rowing challenge and to donate visit:  
<http://row.lesleyfoden.com>



“

*I don't mind as long as I can take tea bags – as I shall miss having a cup of tea the most*

”

# Bear fruit

That favourite teddy bear tucked away in an old box could be worth a small fortune, but be sure of your cuddly toy facts says, THOMAS PLANT

**A**t Special Auction Services we hold two auctions a year which take place every June and December that are entirely dedicated to teddy bears.

There are also four 'Express' sales throughout the year, which comprise around 50 lots of bears in each.

Bear sales are going from strength to strength thanks to the expertise of Daniel Agnew who joined the SAS team in March 2013.

Daniel is a world-renowned expert in teddy bears and has used his previous successes at Christie's to organise the standalone sales.

We regularly sell some fantastic bears with amazing stories attached to them and their owners. Last year we sold a 1910 German golden mohair teddy bear that was lost at

Bristol Airport and subsequently reunited with its owner after a public appeal, and in 2014 we sold Jena Pang's outstanding collection of 32 antique Steiff teddy bears and animals that went everywhere with him.

The top two bears in Jena's collection were Constantine, a centre seam Steiff c1905, which sold for £8,260 and Hugo, an apricot mohair bear c1905, which made £8,024.

It was the best single-owner collection of early Steiff bears to be seen at auction for many years and it was certainly the finest collection of antique bears ever to appear regionally in the UK.

It was a real privilege to sell them and I am pleased to say that every bear has gone to a good home. **OA**

“

I'm supporting the inaugural **Teddy Bear Festival** which taking place on **Sunday, June 11 at Woburn Abbey**

so why not come along and celebrate 115 years of teddy bears

[www.woburnabbey.co.uk/events](http://www.woburnabbey.co.uk/events)

”

An extremely rare Chad Valley purple mohair teddy bear, 1930s – £2950 – December 3, 2015





Jena Pang with his collection



A very rare Steiff black teddy bear, circa 1912 (known as the Titanic Bear) – £18,880 – June 12, 2014

**ONCE YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE MARKET:**

1. Buy the best you can afford.
2. Don't over-restore.
3. Buy a display cabinet, keep all your bears here. It is much easier to protect your investment. Once full, buy another cabinet, before another bear.
4. Consider purchasing bears by smaller unknown makers – they can be just as rare and charming as well-known makes.
5. Teach yourself how to gently clean bears, starting with low-value ones, then do small 'mum-style' repairs. Never use glue. If something special needs doing, give it to a good restorer.
6. Important to keep bears dust-free, check monthly for moths and every new purchase should go in the freezer for 48 hours wrapped in several plastic bags.

**TOP TIPS FOR TEDDY BEAR COLLECTING:**

1. Do your homework. Buy reference books, study the market. Don't rush into buying.
2. Start cheap – there are plenty of vintage bears for as little as £20 to £80.
3. Visit museums, auctions and fairs – where you can see bears in person and handle them. When buying at auction, ask for advice and condition reports.
4. Talk to dealers, often a reasonable place to buy your first good bear. At least you know you are getting what they say it is.



An extremely rare Steiff 'paper-plush' teddy bear circa 1919 – £8,260 – July 18, 2013

**BEWARE**

- If it's under £200 and it looks like an antique Steiff in good condition, it is not an antique or Steiff
- Do not buy on-line until you know your stuff

Thomas Plant discovered his love for auctioneering at a young age, living on the family farm. Watching the man with the gavel at local cattle auctions was a regular event, and Thomas quickly decided on which side of the rostrum he'd rather be.

He went on to take a degree in antiques and served his apprenticeship with leading auction houses, including Christie's in London.

Today, Thomas is the co-owner of Special Auction Services in Newbury and is also a favourite TV expert on BBC programmes, including *Bargain Hunt*, *Flog it!* and *Antiques Road Trip*.

If you've any jewellery, antiques and collectables you'd like valued for auction, don't forget SAS hold free valuation days every Wednesday at:

Saleroom Two, 80 Greenham Business Park, Newbury, RG19 6HW.

**Telephone (01635) 580 595** for an appointment.

**www.specialauctionservices.com**



# SAS

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Thomas Plant and the Special Auction Services Team would like to invite you for Free Auction Valuations of your Jewellery, Watches, Antiques & Collectables. Is it time to sort out your jewellery box or clear out the loft? Give us a Ring on **01635 580 595** for an appointment today.



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# A country day out

Five pairs of tickets to the Highclere Countryman Show to be won

The Highclere Country Show returns to the grounds of Highclere Castle on May 28 and 29, bringing another countryside showcase and programme of activity for all ages to enjoy.

Visitors can enjoy a superb line-up of activity, including equestrian film action with Europe's number one stunt and trick riding team, the Devil's Horsemen, the ancient art of Falconry with Ye Olde Redtail Falconry, Britain's longest established and leading dog display team, the Essex Dog Display, as well as demonstrations from Hywel Morgan, Chris Green and Brian Brinded.

For those interested in all the championship action this 2017 season, Highclere welcomes qualifying rounds in the Chudleys Gundog Championship, has competitions throughout the weekend over at the Clay Shooting Festival and offers a wide range of Terrier and Lurcher showing classes and field events.

Visitors can also enjoy the ever-popular Folk Roots Festival, a Food Festival and a brand new BASC Village housing everything to do with shooting and conservation.

There's the Gunmaker's Roadshow, which

brings together world-class shotgun manufacturers and distributors, a Survival Camp and craft and antiques marquees, not to mention a whole host of family-inspired entertainment. From animal displays and an airgun range, to a mole show, there is also a huge array of have-a-go fun, musical entertainment and demonstrations in every rural craft.

For more information on all of Countryman Fairs events visit [www.countrymanfairs.co.uk](http://www.countrymanfairs.co.uk) and see their Facebook page for latest news and developments.

For your chance to win one of five pairs of tickets to this year's Highclere Country Show, answer the following question:

**Which dog display team will be performing in Highclere's Main Arena this year?**

- a) Essex Dog Display
- b) Hampshire Hound Display
- c) Newbury Dog Team

Send your answer on the form, to Highclere Country Show competition, OUT&ABOUT, Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2DW. The closing date for entries is Tuesday, May 8.



**Highclere Country Show competition**

Answer.....

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# FILL THE GARDEN WITH SCENT

**KATE GOULD** has a nose for the fragrant aromas that enhance the enjoyment of sitting out in a summer garden

**O**ur olfactory sense is fast becoming a highly-recognised centre for memory generation as well as good scents giving a greater sense of well-being.

When it comes to the gardens we have access to and spend our time in, the trend of planting for scent is fast climbing the list of must-haves for home-owners and designers alike.

When we think of gardens we no longer just think of them in terms of how they look but also in terms of how they make us feel. Much of this feeling is derived from how the garden is laid out; does it make us happy, feel safe, do we want to linger or walk briskly through it? If we linger, why do we do so? Is it because the garden has evoked a memory of times past? If so it is potentially a scent that has triggered it.

Mown grass, summer rain and roses all conjure up memories of lazy summer days when work is far from your mind and the summer seems endless. So many heady scents in the garden can take us back to happy times, but there is no reason to plant solely with the past in mind. With so many fragrant plants to choose from there are many more new memories to make.

When I think of scent in the garden the first thing I think of is high summer; those rich spiced musky fragrances that linger in the evening, jasmine and the warm scent of herbs that have had the sun beating down on them all day.

But there are so many other plants that flower at different times of the year with equally alluring fragrances. If you plant cleverly you can easily have scent in the garden all year round, which is a great reason to entice you outside, even in the depths of winter.

Some plants to try to add scent to your summer garden:

This is when scent is at its most romantic and powerful. There are, of course, masses of plants to choose from but these are absolute favourites.

**Philadelphus 'Belle Etoile'** is a rangy deciduous shrub that looks not overly interesting until it is smothered in white cup-shaped flowers in summer.

More commonly known as mock orange it has the same orange blossom scent that reminds you of holidays in warmer climates. Once flowered it can be pruned, but essentially this *Philadelphus* is a low-maintenance shrub which

copies very well with a wide range of soils and conditions. For scent, it is a plant that is hard to beat.

**Rosa 'Falstaff'** is an old fashioned shrub rose with wonderful double-cupped flowers of the darkest wine-red, which persist throughout the summer.

Its scent is classically 'old rose' and being only about 1.2m tall and wide at maturity, it could find a home in all but the smallest of gardens. As roses go, it is fairly pest and disease-resistant, but if you grow roses you have to be prepared to put the time in to care for them – the rewards are well worth the effort.

**Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica* 'Halliana')** is a great plant for a sunny or part-shaded location and will in milder areas retain most of its leaves during the winter. It is the flowers though that it is known for.

Tubular white flowers age to cream and literally smother the plant, which can grow up to 10m in height for months on end in the summer. It is therefore best grown up a sturdy pergola or an old tree stump and will do best when mulched with well-rotted manure in the spring. It is perhaps a little bit of a martyr to aphids, so watch out for these and treat accordingly.

***Paeonia lactiflora* 'Festiva Maxima' AGM** is heavily scented with a sweet and musky perfume and ***Paeonia lactiflora* 'Duchess de Nemours' AGM** is a sumptuous white with a pale cream ruffled centre, with an intoxicating lemon scent. Another great lemon-scented peony is ***Paeonia* 'Bartzella' AGM**, which is an intersectional peony (a cross between a tree peony and an herbaceous peony) that offers huge bright yellow flowers to boot. Intersectional Peonies can be hard to track down sometimes but [www.primrosehall.co.uk](http://www.primrosehall.co.uk) have a good selection worth checking out.

If you only plant one plant this year make it a scented one.

Flowers and scent combine to make a garden feel much more than just a collection of plants. A scented garden entices you outside and makes you linger which for gardeners who are often too busy working in their gardens to appreciate the results of their toil is a very good reason to stop, reflect and enjoy.

For more garden inspiration visit [www.kategouldgardens.co.uk](http://www.kategouldgardens.co.uk) 



Mock orange



Rosa 'Falstaff'



Honeysuckle



*Paeonia lactiflora*



# More than a taste of Chile

Now is the time to spring into a South American adventure and RICHARD LAKER gives you a taste of the perfect itinerary

Located at the bottom of South America, Chile extends 2,650 miles from southern Peru to the icy waters of Cape Horn and its diverse landscapes vary from the world's driest desert, the Atacama, to the granite towers of Patagonia.

On its southwestern coast tiny islands splinter into the Pacific, while 2,182 miles away lies its Polynesian satellite, Easter Island, one of the most remote inhabited islands in the world.

Chile requires the longest direct flight in British Airways' schedule but the 14 hours are well worth it.

Over the years I've visited Chile throughout the seasons, travelling through most of its 39 degrees of latitude, and the country never fails to charm and amaze me with its many scenic wonders, enhanced by the generosity and warmth of the Chilean people.

Arrive in Santiago during our northern hemisphere winter and you'll find a delightful southern summer.

An hour west of this cosmopolitan city is the Pacific Ocean, an hour south the winelands, and east takes you quickly to the Andes for

summer resorts or winter skiing.

Forsaking the pleasures of Santiago on this trip I headed north with a two-hour flight straight to the Atacama Desert, one of the most unique and varied regions on the continent.

Just a short drive from the airport is the oasis town of San Pedro de Atacama where Awasi Atacama stands out from other hotels for its native architecture; a construction of adobe, wood and stone with thatched roofs.

Immediately on arrival the stunning interior details and the warmth of the welcome are striking.

Each room is assigned a private guide and vehicle and the menu of tours included makes a four or five-day stay essential.

Within an hour I was exploring 'downtown' San Pedro with my guide.

The Archaeological Museum here contains the eerie remains of lost civilisations including ancient mummies that have been preserved in the dry desert air. The museum is impressive and a good starting point for exploring the surrounding desert, supposedly the world's

most arid region and renowned for its profound beauty – and this is where the guides of Awasi truly excel.

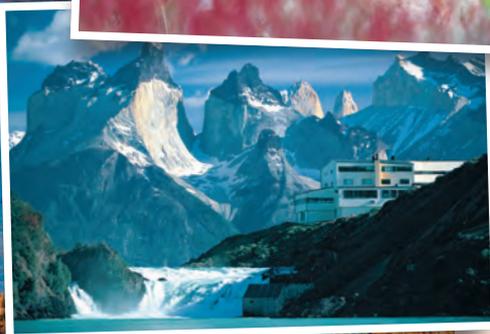
Rising early at 4am when it's close to freezing is not a pleasant prospect in most parts of the world, however, encouraged by my excellent guide Juanjo, the morning felt full of promise.

I've travelled with dozens of guides over the years but Juanjo and his colleagues have a love for the Atacama which is as contagious as it is inspiring.

We drove out of town through valleys and passes in the dark to be rewarded with the view of geysers bursting from the frozen earth at sunrise.

The altiplano, or high plain, is bare of trees and myriad colours of iron ore and rust contrast in the glorious sunshine with the blues and greens of the springs and the brilliant white of the nearby salt flats.

This is also home to the flocks of pink flamingos that made their debut 'ballet' performance so hilariously on the BBC series *Planet Earth*.



Returning home to Awasi a Pisco Sour awaits – probably my favourite cocktail to be had outside Cuba.

The exquisite food that follows is creatively prepared to feature flavours of the desert such as Carob and the Chanar fruit. Most importantly, the Awasi team are among the very best hosts anywhere in the Americas and this wonderland is hard to leave.

Travelling south to Chilean Patagonia takes two flights on the reliable Lan Chile.

The aerial views flying over the Andes, the lakes and rugged coastline, give an impressive preview of what is to come in Patagonia.

The south of Chile remains one of the world's great remaining wildernesses and has always been a highlight for me.

Torres del Paine National Park is a five-hour drive from Punta Arenas, but the stunning mountainscapes and genuine frontier territory make the drive feel like a timeless film set.

My destination is the exclusive Explora Patagonia. Perched amid rushing waterfalls and the imperious Andes, the location was

visionary from the outset and the national park rules have since excluded any other development within the park, making a stay here feel like a privilege.

I was welcomed by one of the local guides who tailor fantastic itineraries and activities including hiking, mountain biking, kayaking and horse riding.

We started the next morning with a full day trek into this frontier wonderland.

Condor and flamingo, Grey eagle, puma and guanaco are just some of the wildlife that lives in the formidable landscapes of Torres del Paine. Part of the magic of the place however, is how few other humans you will see.

Early the next morning we rode out to take in the vast, dramatic landscapes just as explorers would have done centuries before, followed by kayaking on a flat azure lake alongside creaking glaciers.

This is a truly incredible part of Chile and the closest you can get to Antarctica without travelling the three days further south across the Drake Passage.

For my final adventure in Patagonia, I took a Jeep with a driver guide across the border to the Los Glaciars National Park and El Chaltén in Argentina.

This is great trekking territory; the Fitz Roy Mountains, the thick forests, glacial parks and lakes just beg to be explored.

I may just have to return to these extraordinary lands and spend a week traversing their wonders in my own Jeep Chevrolet – it seems to me yet another very good reason to return to Chile.

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## Finding Love on a Farm

**Trudy Smith**

All's well that ends well. From the beginning we know that Trudy Smith has an amazing daughter and a passion for life. Remembering this makes it easier to read of the trials, injustices and abuses she went through in her life. And yet my past still weighed heavily and dragged me down... and kept me there, because it was never far away.

Smith allows the reader to meander with her through her life against a backdrop of the South African veld with colourful imagery and descriptive prowess. We all have so much to learn, not only from our own past, but from the lives of others. To take comfort and strength from the success and happiness of those who have struggled and won. Her debut novel is a reflective look back over her life in South Africa. It still resonates today on a personal and global level. There is something for everyone to take away from Smith's debut novel.



"I lived in Newbury for about ten years and thoroughly enjoyed walking in the countryside and along the river. I was so fascinated that it went through the town and couldn't resist feeding the swans and ducks. Retirement came around suddenly and it was then that I decided to gather all my thoughts I'd stored for a lifetime and write my memoirs."

**Biography:**  
Trudy Smith was born in Pretoria and lived the majority of her life in South Africa. In this, her first novel of a trilogy, Smith paints a portrait of life in South Africa in the 1970s. As readers we can picture the landscape and almost hear the wildlife as we are transported back to a different time and place into Trudy's childhood and early life. Now living in London, Smith is retired from a career in the cosmetic industry, and has time to reflect on a life filled with uncertainty and self-doubt. There is something for everyone to take away from this thought-provoking and evocative debut novel.

186 pages, ISBN 978-3-99048-805-8

£ 13.30

Trudy's book 'Finding Love on a Farm' is available from Amazon and [www.novum-publishers.co.uk](http://www.novum-publishers.co.uk)

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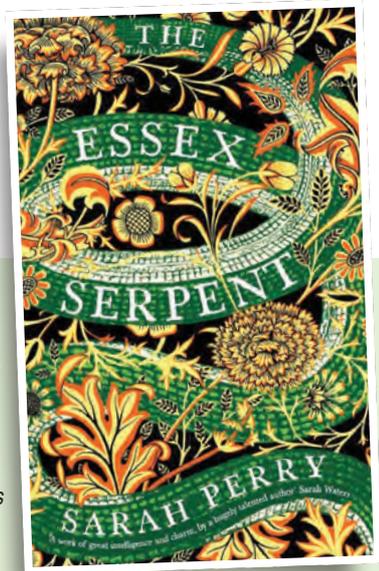
# Snake in the grass

A mysterious creature and a complicated love story gives *The Essex Serpent* by Sarah Perry an extra edge that HELEN SHEEHAN and LISSA GIBBINS find intriguing

*London 1893. When Cora Seaborne's husband dies, she steps into her new life as a widow with as much relief as sadness: her marriage was not a happy one, and she never suited the role of society wife. Accompanied by her son Francis - a curious, obsessive boy - she leaves town for Essex, where she hopes fresh air and open space will provide the refuge they need.*

*When they take lodgings in Colchester, rumours reach them from further up the estuary that the mythical Essex Serpent, once said to roam the marshes claiming human lives, has returned to the coastal parish of Aldwinter. Cora, a keen amateur naturalist with no patience for religion or superstition, is immediately enthralled, convinced that what the local people think is a magical beast may be a previously undiscovered species. As she sets out on its trail, she is introduced to William Ransome, Aldwinter's vicar.*

*Like Cora, Will is deeply suspicious of the rumours, but he thinks they are founded on moral panic, a flight from real faith. As he tries to calm his parishioners, he and Cora strike up an intense relationship, and although they agree on absolutely nothing, they find themselves inexorably drawn together and torn apart, eventually changing each other's lives in ways entirely unexpected.*



This historical novel, set in London and Essex in 1893, deliciously and unapologetically reveals the hidden secrets of love and friendship, superstition and faith, wealth and poverty. It is a compelling Gothic tale of the Victorian age in which the author tears up our preconceptions of prim Victorian customs and paints a real and honest picture of the deepest seams of life in that morbid and gloomy age.

The story centres around brilliant, yet damaged, Cora Seaborne, a recently-widowed young mother whose Marxist attendant and companion Martha, and eccentric, aloof 11-year-old son Francis, add to her unusual aura and unconventional reputation among the high society in which she lives.

The death of her dominant and fastidious husband, whose Whitehall-based job had entailed "twice the politician's power with none of the responsibility" is as much a relief as a sadness to her. Seeking refuge from the expectations and boundaries imposed by London society, Cora, Martha and Francis head for some rural peace.

The upper classes in 1890s London were obsessed with palaeontology, and stories of extinct animals come to life. Cora, with her "masculine intellect" is no different, having been first inspired by a tale of Mary Anning's fossilised finds on the south coast. So where better to go than the wilds of the Essex coast where a recent landslide had uncovered bones of animals long-departed?

The three take lodgings in Colchester. A chance encounter there with one of her late husband's colleagues, Charles Ambrose, leads Cora to the rural parish of Aldwinter, to the "good Reverend" William Ransome and his wife "little Stella, no bigger than a fairy and twice as pretty" and to the mysterious story that is swirling around like the mists of the Blackwater estuary – the Essex Serpent.

Aldwinter is in a state of superstitious panic. Since the discovery of a drowned man, after the New Year's celebrations; "naked, his head turned almost 180 degrees, a look of dread in

his eyes", fear and horror have crept into the psyche of the villagers.

Why has this serpent, a type of Leviathan with "wings of leather and a snapping beak" awoken from its 300-year hibernation? The villagers are simple, unsophisticated folk, and pagan in their beliefs; stringing up skinned dead animals and hanging horseshoes in a tree known as Traitor's Oak to scare off the serpent.

For Cora, who disregards the superstitions as nonsense, this is a mystery with the possibility of finding a genuine survivor of the dinosaur age, a Loch Ness monster of the Blackwater. For William, the rector of Aldwinter, exasperated by the madness which is taking hold of his flock, the serpent is nothing but a nuisance and a distraction.

It is within this context that the friendship between Cora and William develops into something that is ardent, intense and addictive.

However, this relationship is not clandestine – it is conducted within the accepted boundaries of friendship in full view of those around them. Despite their disagreements on the juxtaposing roles of science and religion, on what constitutes a miracle – "There are no fewer miracles in the microscope than in the gospels", says Cora – and on the intellectual subjects of geology and evolution, they find a strong and joyful accord in the wonder of nature. Where Cora has given up her faith in order to have the freedom to think, William believes that religion is necessary for people to remain steady and rational.

William and Cora's attraction to each other remains unspoken, although it simmers under the surface during their encounters, where sparks fly so wildly that eventually it is impossible to prevent the fire from igniting. Their desire surprises them both; Cora's "man's tweed coat" and scruffy hair, and the smell of cordite from her fossil hunting, confuse the rector and belie her wealth and social standing. This is in total contrast to Stella, his pretty wife who, despite her tuberculosis, remains loving, devoted to God and uncomplaining in the face of her almost certain demise.

There is an equally stark contrast in the characters of the two men who hold Cora in their hearts. Luke Garrett, who has openly loved Cora from the outset, is an ambitious and highly-skilled London surgeon whereas William Ransome, the rector, has committed his family to life in the Essex wetlands, away from the modern world, and devoted himself to "shepherding his small flock in a bleak village down by the Blackwater estuary".

He is frightened and disdainful of the Victorian bourgeoisie in London, which is presented as violent and immoral, trampling, in its quest for money and power, on the poor and helpless. Again, we see an interesting conflict in the characteristics of one of its perpetrators, Charles Ambrose, who is portrayed as gluttonous and pompous, but also genial and warm-hearted.

Far from the moral restrictions that might govern a lesser Victorian novel, *The Essex Serpent* is a richly rewarding honest account of the kaleidoscope of human emotions.

Sarah Perry's Aldwinter is so atmospheric, so Gothic, that winter barely turns into spring and yet the story winds its way through the mud and mire to reveal the dazzling shows of nature.

The author leads us through the many forms in which love can be expressed; the human heart at its truest has no boundaries or rules, and friendship and faith in the present matter above all. No one says it better than Cora – "...I am torn and I am mended – I want everything and need nothing – I love you and I am content without you. Even so, come quickly!"

Read it – you won't be disappointed! 

Helen Sheehan and Lissa Gibbins are writers and owners of Aide Memoire, Great Bedwyn. Inspired by their passion for words, they write memoirs, edit novels and documents and proofread for a wide range of clients.

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# From the land of the Rising Sun

MAURICE and ANNETTE HARDY find the Suzuki SX4 surprisingly roomy



Best bits: sensible small SUV from Suzuki

When the Japanese car industry was embryonic, it kept itself busy manufacturing designs from the west. Datsun (as it then was, literally son of Dat) started with a remanufactured Austin 7. But there's no shame in that, for BMW did exactly the same in Germany.

Sadly, these car makes kept on developing while those in England stagnated to such an extent they all-but disappeared, at least from British ownership. Some blame the unions but the principal culprit was chronic underinvestment.

Either way, Datsun, now Nissan, owns Europe's most efficient car plant right here in the UK, while the biggest British motoring icon ever, MINI, belongs to BMW. Ironic, really, but MINI is the modern successor to the Austin 7.

The Japanese engineers were hard at work while we basked in our shrinking glory. They had already created some impressive motorbikes and then Daihatsu (actually the first Japanese brand imported into the UK – most people think it was Toyota) hit us in the 80s with the one-litre, three-cylinder petrol engine in its GTi supermini hatchback.

British reviewers, and a smallish number of buyers, were fascinated by its lionhearted roar, the decibel-laced indication that here was something a bit special. By the standard of the day it flew.

That three cylinder format has stood the test of time, probably far better than the car that brought it to us. Major manufacturers are keen to use it and so, too, is Suzuki. But when we first saw the size of the Suzuki SX4 S-Cross, which we tested in its original format with a much beefier motor, we thought its one-litre

three-cylinder might be overwhelmed by the combination of the physical size of the car.

However, this game crossover SUV proved us wrong. Not only did it perform well, but it also showed that the power-to-weight ratio must have been about right as it averaged 48.6mpg on a diet of unleaded. In a world where diesel cars are being ostracised and their drivers quite possibly face being hit with punitive taxes later this year, the antipathy to diesel is palpable.

Maybe the secret of the SX4 S-Cross is revealed in the engine's name – Boosterjet. It churns out 111bhp at 5,500rpm and only 113g/km of CO2 pops from the end of the exhaust. Perhaps its 48.6mpg achievable in real world motoring will cheer up drivers who, instead of getting zero road tax in the first year and £30 a year bills thereafter, will now face a first year tax bill of £160 and ongoing renewals at £140.

The new on the road list price is £19,749 after the changes – but Suzuki's cunning plan is to offer three years' extra tax back as an upfront discount, which the buyer can then use to fund the higher VED.

The SX4 S-Cross is quite a large car that has just undergone a facelift. It's difficult to tell if that's a good thing or not. Certainly the toothy-looking chromed front grille could do with some revision already. It just looks too much, but in this Suzuki is no more guilty than many other makers who all seem to want to adorn their cars with massive grilles when a little more discretion would be nice.

It's a cyclical thing and as soon as one maker is brave enough to shrink a grille all the others will follow.

With its equipment list and price, it would appear that the SX4 S-Cross is a range-topping

model, but in fact it's only the second up from the bottom. If you really want to splash the cash at your local Suzuki dealership you could hand over more than £25,000 and get a diesel-powered model with even higher trim standards and all wheel drive, too.

But most buyers will be content to go no further than the SZ-T trim of the text car as it brought more than enough to the party to keep everyone entertained. More importantly, it brought sufficient space to give its occupants lounging room while the ride quality and seating, while not magic carpet quality, ironed out the bumps far more efficiently than might be expected of a smallish car. There was also more headroom than most people need, too, giving the lie to the theory that smaller cars are cramped.

The SUV styling also delivered usable boot space, an impressive 430 litres with the seats in place and 875 litres with them folded, the latter figure maybe not be as good as some rivals, but it was at least sensibly shaped. **OA**

**Car:**  
**Suzuki SX4 S-Cross**  
**1.0 Boosterjet SZ-T**

**Does it fit your ego...**  
0-62 mph: **11.0 secs**  
Top speed: **112mph**  
Bhp: **111 @ 5,500rpm**  
Torque: **125 lb ft @ 2,000 – 3,500rpm**

**...and your wallet...**  
Price: **£19,749**  
Combined: **56.4mpg**  
CO2 emissions: **113 g/km**

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**28th & 29th May 2017**

For more information and to book your tickets visit  
[www.highclerecountryshow.co.uk](http://www.highclerecountryshow.co.uk)



\*When accompanied by a full paying adult.

# What's on

Find out what's happening in West Berkshire and the surrounding area this month, with concerts, theatre, fetes, lectures, exhibitions and markets to choose from. You can find more detailed listings every Thursday in the *Newbury Weekly News* or online at [www.newburytoday.co.uk](http://www.newburytoday.co.uk)



**Monday, May 1 and Monday, May 29**  
**St Michael & All Angels Church Highclere will be open to visitors**  
**2.30pm – 5 pm**  
 Teas will be available in the Dunlop Room adjoining the church. Everyone welcome (and Sunday, June 11, following the church fete on June 10)

**Sunday, May 7**  
**Newbury Rotary Annual Charity Sponsored Walk,**  
**Snelsmore Common Country Park**   
**start between 11am and 12noon**

Allowing individuals or groups to generate sponsorship income for their own favourite charity, club, school, church etc by walking a route marshalled by the Rotary Club of Newbury. There is an 8-mile or alternative 5-mile route. Refreshments will be available on your return. Details and sponsorship forms are on the Newbury Rotary website, [www.newburyrotary.org](http://www.newburyrotary.org) or can be obtained by emailing: [walk@newburyrotary.org](mailto:walk@newburyrotary.org) or telephoning 01635 42027. Interested walkers and groups can turn up on the day, but it is helpful if you could let the organisers know beforehand. If you do not have your own sponsorship you are welcome to enjoy the walk with for a small donation to Newbury Rotary Charities (include EndPolioNow, West Berks Mencap, West Berks Young Carers, Parkinson's, The Stroke Association and other local charities)



**Ladies Lunch Club**  
 Every last Monday of the month Esseborne hosts a Ladies Club where guests are entertained by interesting speakers after lunch.  
 There is a set 4-course menu with a glass of wine, coffee and petite fours.  
**£28 PER PERSON**  
**Monday 15th May**  
**The Ladies of the Tower**  
*by Tony Strafford - the retired Beekeeper*

To book call 01264 736 444  
[www.esseborne-manor.co.uk](http://www.esseborne-manor.co.uk)

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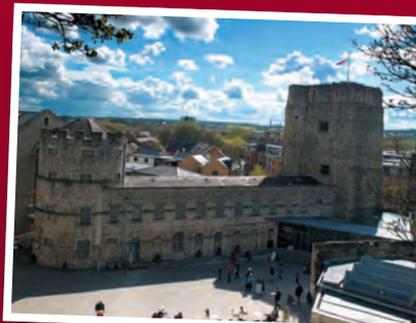
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**57 Cheap Street,  
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[www.ryans-newbury-antiques.com](http://www.ryans-newbury-antiques.com)

**Monday, May 22**  
**Neighbourhood Watch meeting**  
**Council Offices, 7.30pm**  
 Talk by Detective Chief Superintendent Ray Howard on Cybercrime.  
 Representatives from the police and fire service will give crime updates and both answer any questions.  
 All welcome.



**Saturday, May 27 May – Sunday, June 4**  
**Oxford Castle Unlocked,**  
**10am to 5.30pm (last tour 4.20pm)**  
 Oxford Castle Unlocked embraces a magical Merlin theme for May half term.  
 Take a guided tour of the 1000 year old castle prison and discover the underground crypt, where Geoffrey of Monmouth first wrote the Legends of King Arthur in the 13th century. Families are challenged to embark on a quest around the castle completing a themed activity trail before venturing to the neighbouring Key Learning Centre to brew their own magic potion.  
[www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk](http://www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk)



**St John's Church,  
 Newbury**  
**ANNUAL  
 PLANT SALE**  
 with Grand Draw  
 and other Stalls  
**Saturday May 27th**  
 10.00am to 1.00pm  
 in the  
**PARISH ROOMS**



# May dates for your diary

## Monday 1

**Crafty Craft**, Newbury. This year's theme is *Uniforms all the way*. The annual race is organised by Newbury Round Table. For more information visit [www.craftycraft.com](http://www.craftycraft.com)

**May Day**, Market Square, Newbury. Garston Gallopers will be taking to the maypole where you can join in the fun of May Pole dancing or sit back and watch the dancers in full Morris Dancer swing! The festivities also include face painting where little ones (and adults a like!) can get in the spring spirit with their choice of face decoration before visiting the selection of children's fair ground rides on offer.

**Explore Newbury Heritage Walk: the local history of Wash Common** with Dave Stubbs, 2.30pm (walk lasts two hours). Tickets from the Corn Exchange Box Office 01635 5218218. [www.comexchangenew.com/event/explore-newbury-heritage-walk-the-local-history-of-wash-common](http://www.comexchangenew.com/event/explore-newbury-heritage-walk-the-local-history-of-wash-common)

## Wednesday 3

**Interakt Theatre** present *Divided Kingdoms*, Corn Exchange, 7.30pm. Box office 0845 5218218

**Kintbury Wildlife Group** An evening stroll near the River Kennet between Ramsbury and Littlecote, meeting at 7pm in Kintbury square. All welcome, but please ring 01488 682301 in advance.

## Saturday 6

**Sandham Memorial Chapel**, 11am – 4pm. First World War Poetry reading. Usual entry fee to the chapel.

**Tadley and Baughurst Art Club** Spring Exhibition in the Ambrose Allen Centre, 10am to 5pm (Sunday 7, 10am to 4pm). Around 100 original paintings, crafts, cards and 3D images for sale. Free admission and parking. Artists in residence and refreshments. The exhibition will be opened on Saturday by local professional artist Mike Skidmore.

**Newbury District Ornithological Club** Joint morning walk with BBOWT. Meet in the Crookham Common car park at the eastern edge of the common at 8.30am to look for spring migrants including nightingale and warblers. Grid ref 174/SU523645. All welcome, please book through BBOWT in advance. More info from 01488 682301.

**Youth Methodist Choir concert**, 7.30pm, Newbury Methodist Church, Northbrook Street. Free entry, retiring collection.

**Car Display**, Newbury, 11am to 4pm. The town centre will play host to a car show featuring a whole host of makes and models of cars. Parkway will showcase some amazing supercars while Northbrook Street and Bartholomew Street will step back in time displaying vintage and retro vehicles.

To May 20, **Newbury Spring Festival**, various venues. A fortnight of music and arts entertainment. For more information visit [www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk](http://www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk)

## Sunday 7

**Love that Jazz**, The Old Bluecoat School, Thatcham. A no-holds-barred, across the board quintet dedicated to anything that smacks of jazz, from Dixieland to Thelonious Monk! Tea and cake will be served from 3.30pm. Concert starts at 4pm. Tickets available from Lily's Ladies Fashion, Kingsland Centre, Thatcham or on the door. Tickets £10 adult, £5 school children. For more info phone: 01635 292770 Email: [simon@witcombs.co.uk](mailto:simon@witcombs.co.uk)

**Blewbury Brass Band**, 3pm-5pm, Bandstand, Victoria Park, Newbury.

## Monday 8

**Sandham Memorial Chapel**, 11am–1pm, Chapel talk. £6 plus usual entry to chapel (free for NT members). Listen to the story behind one of the most important 20th century artists – Sir Stanley Spencer and how his dream of a Holy Box came to fruition. Booking 0344 249 1895

**Newbury Embroiderers' Guild** monthly meeting, St Francis de Sales Church Hall, off Andover Road, 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome – £5. A practical meeting focussing on sketchbooks, sharing sketchbooks, ideas and inspirations. Contact: 01635 862289 or email: [info@newburyembroiderers.org.uk](mailto:info@newburyembroiderers.org.uk) [www.newbury-embroiderers.co.uk](http://www.newbury-embroiderers.co.uk)

**Newbury & District Association of the National Trust**, New Greenham Arts, New Greenham Business Park, 7.30pm. Talk: *Putting Newbury on the Map: from Gough to Google* by John Leighfield. John is an Oxford graduate and his career has been in IT since 1962, with major interests in education (he was Pro Chancellor of the University of Warwick from 2002 to 2011), and in the collection of old maps (especially of Oxfordshire and Cornwall) on which he has lectured regularly. His talk will give a brief introduction to maps in general, but will concentrate on maps of Britain from 1360 and, in particular, printed maps from 1574 onwards. He will consider various developments in mapping including road maps, the Ordnance Survey, and the impact of today's technology. The illustrations will concentrate on Newbury and district. Visitors £3. For more details call either Keith Spires on 01635 30457 or June Hearsey (Membership Secretary) on 01635 551034.

## Tuesday 9

**Sandham Memorial Chapel service.**

Free – donations welcomed.

**Newbury Floral Society**, British Legion Hall,

Newbury, 2pm. Area Demonstrator Jane Haas presents *April Showers bring May Flowers*. If you are interested in flower arranging, Newbury Floral Society meet on the Second Tuesday of each month for demonstrations and workshops. Guests are welcome. Contact (01635) 48852 OR 253874 for further information.

## Wednesday 10

**Berkshire Family History Society**, Newbury branch meetings, Shaw Church Hall, 7.30pm to 9.30 pm. *My favourite ancestor* – following a short branch annual meeting, a few members will give short talks on their own family history research, and everyone will be welcome to join in the discussion. All welcome. Free parking. Refreshments. Good company. Non-members are requested to make a £3 donation towards costs. Enquiries to [newbury@berksfhs.org.uk](mailto:newbury@berksfhs.org.uk) or see [www.berksfhs.org.uk](http://www.berksfhs.org.uk)

## Thursday 11

**Newbury Rotary Fun Charity Golf Day**, Donnington Valley Golf Club

Registration 8.45am, first tee off 10am. In aid of Parkinson's UK Newbury & District Branch and other selected local Rotary charities.

Teams of four for a full handicap Stableford competition – 18 holes of golf followed by a two-course meal with prize presentation ceremony and a raffle. Registration with bacon rolls, tea or coffee. First tee off from first and 10th tees. For entry forms or hole sponsorship call Trevor Gibbons on 01635 254123 or email: [golf@newburyrotary.org](mailto:golf@newburyrotary.org) or [trevor.gibbons@outlook.com](mailto:trevor.gibbons@outlook.com) or visit [www.newburyrotary.org](http://www.newburyrotary.org) Team registration now open. Cost: £240 per team of four. Corporate advertising opportunities available. Sponsored by Charter Travel.

## Friday 12

**Newbury District Field Club**. Talk on the *Coastal Path* by Dave Stubbs, 2.30pm Council Chamber, Newbury Town Hall, Market Place.

## Saturday 13

**Design, create and frame for kids with Bonni Southey**, City Arts, Newbury, 10am to 1pm. Trained initially as a fashion designer and illustrator, expressing a love of textiles and a 'magpie's eye' Bonni Southey offers this creative workshop for children when they can learn the design process, experiment with a variety of materials and explore colour. For age 10 plus. Cost: £25 including all materials. Email: [info@cityartsnewbury.co.uk](mailto:info@cityartsnewbury.co.uk) to book your place.

## Sunday 14

**Newbury District Ornithological Club.**

A morning walk around the gravel pits at Woolhampton. Meet in the Rowbarge PH carpark at 8.30am. Grid ref 174/SU572667. ►

## May dates for your diary

Arts editor Trish Lee picks four of the best events on the arts scene in April. Reviews of all of these – and for more arts news – see N2 in the *Newbury Weekly News* each week

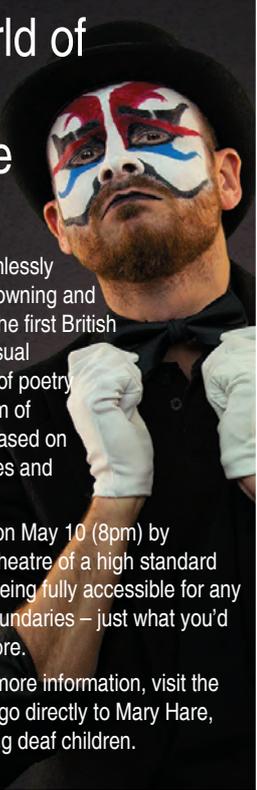
### Plunge into a world of visual vernacular & physical theatre

**Cirque VV Arlington Arts**  
[www.arlingtonarts.co.uk](http://www.arlingtonarts.co.uk)

*Cirque VV* is a cabaret show that seamlessly integrates physical theatre, comedy clowning and British Sign Language and it's one of the first British productions to be fully-performed in visual vernacular – encompassing elements of poetry and mime to create a theatrical art form of physical expression and storytelling, based on body movements, iconic signs, gestures and facial expressions.

It's being presented at Arlington Arts, on May 10 (8pm) by D-Live!, a company that aim to make theatre of a high standard for deaf audiences, at the same time being fully accessible for any audience. Great stuff – pushing the boundaries – just what you'd expect from the arts centre at Snelsmore.

Tickets are Pay What You Think. For more information, visit the website. All profits from Arlington Arts go directly to Mary Hare, a school and national charity supporting deaf children.



### Feast for music lovers

**Newbury Spring Festival**  
[www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk](http://www.newburyspringfestival.org.uk)

Newbury Spring Festival (May 6 to 20) is a glorious fortnight of world class music in and around Newbury, with some 45 events in 18 venues, where international symphony orchestras, ensembles and soloists rub shoulders with jazz legends, world music artists and the stars of tomorrow – Bournemouth Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and Moscow Philharmonic, plus Britain's finest choral company, The Sixteen. Stephen Hough, Alice Coote, Alison Balsom, Sir Thomas Allen, Tasmin Little, Noriko Ogawa, John Lill and Susan Bullock are some of the greatest classical musicians of our time returning this year. But there's more than classical music: trad jazz Dutch Swing College Band, Black Dyke brass and Indian-style Bollywood Brass Band; sparky comedy with sensational piano playing by Worbey & Farrell and Ghanaian drumming and dancing from Kakatsitsi. Plus more... Pick up a programme or visit the website for full details.



### And back in the house *House and Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn

**at The Watermill** [www.watermill.org.uk](http://www.watermill.org.uk)

What better way to celebrate The Watermill's 50th year – yes really – than with the work of national treasure Alan Ayckbourn. *House and Garden* is a pair of comedies performed simultaneously by the same cast between the theatre and covered seating in its beautiful gardens. With hilarious consequences, one character's entrance to *House* in the theatre is another's exit outside from *Garden* in this fast-paced duo of plays. *House and Garden*'s storyline can be enjoyed through the eyes of different characters in either setting. Both are complete plays with an interval. You watch either *House* or *Garden* or both on separate occasions – it doesn't matter in which order.

This will be the first time that Ayckbourn's plays have been performed both inside and out, promising to be very special productions, epic and intimate in equal measure. The production opens on May 25 and runs to July 1. It's what the Watermill does so well...



### Step into the garden

**At Bohun Gallery, Henley-on-Thames**  
[www.bohungallery.co.uk](http://www.bohungallery.co.uk)

Head out to Henley's Bohun Gallery, one of the leading 'out-of-London' art galleries since 1973, which regularly exhibits work celebrating the British garden, and this May is no exception. A joint exhibition of paintings opens on May 6, featuring the popular Scottish artist Shona Barr who, using luscious colour and texture, explores the flora and fauna of her native isles, accompanied by Clare Bigger, one of the UK's leading sculptors, whose work in stainless steel and bronze has featured in several award-winning RHS Chelsea show gardens and numerous commissions, including Priors Court, Hermitage.

This is a cracking little gallery and you can catch this spring show right through to June 3. Why not make a day of it and picnic along the picturesque riverbank that is home to the world-famous Royal Regatta later in the summer.

15 Reading Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 1AB; Telephone 01491 576228.



# newburyspringfestival



## Betty Blue Eyes

Friday 12th May  
7.30pm  
Corn Exchange, Newbury  
Tickets £21



## Close to You

Saturday 20th May  
7.30pm  
Corn Exchange, Newbury  
Tickets £21



## Bollywood Brass Band

Friday 19th May  
7.30pm  
Corn Exchange, Newbury  
Tickets £21



Box office  
0845 5218 218

[newburyspringfestival.org.uk](http://newburyspringfestival.org.uk)

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# MEET AND GREET 28TH, 29TH & 30TH MAY 2017



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# May dates for your diary



**Royal Wooton Bassett Brass**, 3pm-5pm, Bandstand, Victoria Park, Newbury.

**Sandleford Place open gardens**, 2pm to 5.30pm. Part of the National Garden Scheme. Various areas of shrub and mixed borders, old walled garden and long herbaceous border flanks wild flower meadow. A garden for all seasons. [www.ngs.org.uk](http://www.ngs.org.uk)

## Wednesday 17

To May 20, **Newbury Dramatic Society** presents Terry Pratchett's *Maskerade*. Box office 01635 46044. [www.watermill.org.uk](http://www.watermill.org.uk)

## Friday 19

To Sunday 21, **Southern Motorhome Show**, Newbury Showground, 9.30am to 5pm (Sunday 4.30pm). 200 exhibitors with 250+ new and used motorhomes. You can also stock up on your lifestyle accessories from the thousands of products displayed. The National Park and Holiday Homes show sits alongside with the opportunity for visitors to explore the park and holiday home lifestyle, with more than 25 choices on display from a range of manufacturers and park sites. Day tickets can be bought at the gate on arrival – adults £7, children (16 and under) free.

[www.showgoer.co.uk](http://www.showgoer.co.uk)

## Saturday 20

**Al Shaqab Locking Day**, Newbury Racecourse, first race 2pm. [www.newburyracecourse.org.uk](http://www.newburyracecourse.org.uk)

**Mum2Mum market**, Park House School, 10.30am to 12.30pm. Top quality pre-loved baby, children's and maternity goods and equipment at a fraction of their high street price – all great brands in top condition. Free goody bag for the first 100 people. Entry £2 per adult (kids are free). Free entry in last half hour. Cakes and refreshments available.

## Sunday 21

**Pete Allen Reeds 'n' Rhythm**, Chequers Hotel, Newbury, 3pm. Tickets at the door £12.50 (cash only).

**1st Wash Common Scout Group's EPIC Obstacle Fun Run**, Wash Common park, from 10am. Family, toddler, competition and fancy dress race. For tickets and details visit [www.washcommonscouts.org.uk](http://www.washcommonscouts.org.uk)

**Sunday Afternoon Concert**, William Penney Theatre, AWE, Tadley, 3pm. Live Music spanning the decades, with Chris Stanbury. Interval, refreshments and raffle. Bar

available. £8 on the door. Sylvia 0118 932 3971.

**Cove Brass**, Bandstand, Victoria Park, Newbury, 3pm-5pm

## Saturday 27

**Newbury District Ornithological Club**  
A full day visit by car to Studland and RSPB Arne in Dorset, leaving Newbury at 7.30am. All welcome but please ring 01488 682301 in advance.

**Ceramic wall hanging** with Clare Mahoney, 10am to 2pm. Make a wall-mounted ceramic sculpture. Part of the workshop is a walk, to collect materials. You will make a clay mould of plants, flowers and fauna. You will use the process of 'press mould porcelain'. The cast dries quickly and can be taken home that day. For adults. Cost: £25 (all materials included). To book email: [info@cityartsnewbury.co.uk](mailto:info@cityartsnewbury.co.uk)

## Sunday 28

**Wantage Silver Band**, Bandstand, Victoria Park, Newbury, 3pm-5pm

**Bayer Newbury 10k race**, Newbury Town Centre. To register see Bayer website. [www.bayer.co.uk/newbury-10k](http://www.bayer.co.uk/newbury-10k)

## Tuesday 30

To June 2, **Big Lego bricks build**, Kennet Shopping centre, Join us in adding to the large Lego model of Highclere Castle. Build your piece and put it on the Big Build, watching this fantastic model come to life over the week. This event is to be confirmed, to check details visit [www.kennetshopping.co.uk/events.aspx](http://www.kennetshopping.co.uk/events.aspx)

## Wednesday 31

**Marvellous mini beasts** at Shaw House, 10am to 3.30pm. Make a mini beast (bug) of your choice out of a selection of polystyrene shapes, pipe cleaners, Deco pens and craft materials. There will also be a new activity trail available. £2 per child. For 4-11 year olds, but younger and older children are welcome. No need to book, just drop in.

**Slow Dating Speed dating event** for men and women in their 20s and 30s, Slug and Lettuce, 7.15pm. £15. [www.slowdating.com/speed-dating/newbury/106684.aspx](http://www.slowdating.com/speed-dating/newbury/106684.aspx)

OA

**Deadline for listings for June issue:  
Tuesday, May 9**

Email: [report@newburynews.co.uk](mailto:report@newburynews.co.uk)  
or tweet: @outnaboutberks

## Village markets



**Aldworth Community Market**, every Saturday, 9.30am to noon. 01635 578090.

**Basildon village market**, 10am to 12.30pm. Last Saturday of the month. 01491 671515.

**Beenham village market**, 2pm to 3.30pm. Second Saturday of the month. 0118 971 4822.

**Bradfield market**, Bradfield Village Hall, 10am to 11.30am on the second Saturday of the month. 0118 9744068.

**Bucklebury Artisan Food market**, The Bladebone Inn, Chapel Row, first Saturday of the month, 10am to 12noon. Love food @BuckleburyAFM

**Farmers' markets** – Newbury, first and third Sunday of every month, 9am to 1pm; Hungerford, fourth Sunday, 9am to 1.30pm; Purley-on-Thames, second Sat, 9am to 1pm.

**Hamstead Marshall market**, second Saturday of every month, 10am to 1pm, 01488 658932/ 658168.

**Hermitage farmers' market**, second Sunday of every month, 10am to 1pm, 01635 201555.

**Inkpen Food and Craft Market**, Inkpen Village Hall, 3rd Sunday of every month, 10am - 12.30pm.

**Silchester Market**, Silchester Village Hall, first Saturday of the month, 10am to midday.

**Spirals Craft market**, raising money for The Brain Tumour Charity, dates and venues vary. See [www.spiralscraftmarket.co.uk](http://www.spiralscraftmarket.co.uk)

**Thatcham Community Market** every Wednesday, United Reformed Church Hall, Church Lane, Thatcham 10am to 11.30am. 01635 872713.

**Wolverton Village Hall**, market first Saturday of every month, 9.30am to 11am. 01488 608594.

**Woolhampton Village Market**, first Saturday of the month, 10am to midday. 0118 971 3637.

**Woolton Hill Village Market**, last Saturday of every month, 10am to 1pm.

## April competition winners:

**Voces8 & dinner:** R Boys, Woolton Hill

**Legoland:** Mrs D Watts, Hungerford; Luisa Rayner, Newbury

**General competition rules:** The winner(s) will be the first entry(ies) drawn with the correct answer. In the event that a winner must be notified quickly and is unavailable on the daytime number provided,

another winner may have to be chosen. Newbury News Limited employees, and employees directly involved in the competition, and their families, are not eligible to enter. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Responsibility not accepted for entries lost or torn in the post. Postal entries must be on the original form. There are no cash alternatives to the prize.



# Amners Farm Lambing Days

Adults: £6 / £7.50\*  
Children: £4.50 / £5\*  
Family: £20 / £23\*

Open 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> April & 1st May  
6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> May 2017  
11am - 6pm (last entry 5pm)

Pre-sale Prices  
\*If purchased on the day  
(Family ticket includes 2 Adults, 2 Children)



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[www.amnersfarm.co.uk](http://www.amnersfarm.co.uk)  
or call us on 01189 833 437

Pregnant women are advised not to attend the Lambing Days.  
No dogs allowed.

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# One good tern...

The birds are returning after their winter migration and a band of volunteers with the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust have been busy sprucing up their nesting places says WENDY TOBITT

**W**e're welcoming back the sea-swallows to the Nature Discovery Centre, along with the cuckoos, reed warblers and sand martins.

Sea-swallow is the affectionate name for the common tern, an elegant and graceful bird with a bright red bill and legs, black cap and long tail feathers.



These gulls have just arrived back at the Nature Discovery Centre in Thatcham after winter spent in western Africa, and will be pleased to find their rafts have been spring cleaned.

Common terns like to nest on open ground, which makes them highly vulnerable to predators such as foxes.

At BBOWT we have created special rafts on the lake at the Nature Discovery Centre, and also Hosehill Lake near Theale, to give the terns a fighting chance to raise their broods.

During the year, grasses and other plants grow in the gravel. Just before the terns come back in April we remove the weeds and clean the gravel, so it's ready for nesting when the terns fly in.

The work to spring clean the rafts and lots of other jobs to keep the Nature Discovery Centre in excellent condition for visiting wildlife and people is carried out by our monthly work party.

They meet on the second Thursday of each month. No previous experience is necessary, just lots of enthusiasm to be working outdoors.

To join this friendly group contact:

**wbll@bbowt.org.uk**

Spring-cleaning is more than a seasonal task for the happy band of keen volunteers. They've been clearing paths and tracks to make sure everything is in good condition for visitors.

One of the recent additions to the Butterfly Lake is a pond-dipping platform, which is being used just about every day from April right through the summer, by children and families from the different clubs and groups that visit the Nature Discovery Centre.

The monthly Nature Explorers club for young children (5-8 years) and their parents is a very popular outdoor play session.

Young Rangers (8-12 years) meet every two weeks on a Tuesday throughout the year. Lots of fun, wildlife-themed games and activities, such as animal tracking and making dens, help children discover the world of nature all around them.

Teen Rangers, for 12 to 18-year-olds gives enthusiastic young conservationists the chance to help look after the wild places around the Nature Discovery Centre and other BBOWT nature reserves, learning the skills they need to become wildlife warriors. 



## YOUR MAY DIARY

- **Tuesday, May 16, 9.30am to 11.30am**  
Linking the Landscape Nature Tots.  
Bring your pre-school little ones for a fun morning of bug-hunting and mud-painting.
- **Wednesday, May 31, 8pm to 10pm**  
May Evening Safari. Crafts, games and bats.  
Meet bat expert Dave Endacott to learn about the bats that live around the Nature Discovery Centre, use bat detectors to hear their squeaking, squirting sounds.
- **Saturday, May 20, 10am to 12 noon**  
Nature Explorers Club for 5-8 year olds with their parents. Hands-on wildlife crafts and child-led activities.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
ABOUT THESE EVENTS  
[www.bbowt.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.bbowt.org.uk/whats-on)

Pictures: Ben Vanheems, Emma Bradshaw,  
Margaret Holland

# RIO'S FLAME GRILLED BURGER BAR



DECIDE BETWEEN FLAME GRILLED:

**BEEF BURGER • CHICKEN BURGER • VEGGIE BURGER**

CHOOSE THE SIZE

**4** oz **8** oz

**CLASSIC** plain & simple

3.30 4.40

**MICKEY MOUSE** melted cheese & salad

3.40 4.50

**DISNEY** cheese, bacon & salad

3.60 4.70

**CASABLANCA** salad & mayo

3.50 4.60

**MALIBU** bacon, BBQ sauce, pineapple & cheese

3.80 5.00

**DEVILS PINCH** hot chilli sauce, cheese & onion

3.60 4.70

**DAYTONA** coleslaw, cheese & salad

3.60 4.70

**PALM BEACH** cheese, pineapple & mayo

3.60 4.70

**BLUESTON** blue cheese, salad & mayo

3.50 4.60

**PHOENIX** sweet chilli sauce

3.50 4.60

**PACIFIC** prawns in tasty cocktail sauce

3.80 5.00

**RIO GRANDE** blue cheese sauce & bacon

3.80 5.00

**CHICAGO** cheese, bacon & BBQ sauce

3.70 4.80

**SUPREME** swiss cheese, mushroom & garlic mayo

3.60 4.70

**VOLCANO** pepperoni, cheese, jalapenos & chilli sauce

3.80 5.00

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	Large	Small
CHIPS	1.80	2.50
CHEESY CHIPS	2.70	3.50
ANGRY CHIPS	2.80	3.80
grated cheese, hot chilli sauce, jalapenos & onion		
COLESLAW 8oz TUB	1.80	
ONION RINGS X10	2.50	
MOZZARELLA STICKS	3.20	
EXTRA SAUCE 4oz TUB	60p	
garlic mayo • chilli sauce • blue cheese • BBQ sauce		

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onions • pineapple • gherkins • blue  
cheese sauce • mushrooms

## SOMETHING DIFFERENT

RIO 3000	6oz beef, chicken, pepperoni, chilli sauce & garlic mayo	6.80
RIO 2000	4oz beef + 4oz chicken, bacon, BBQ sauce, salad, mushroom & mayo	5.50
PAYDAY	any choice from the beef menu with a giant 3x 1/4 pound burger	6.00
BEAST	5oz cumberland sausage ring, 4oz beef burger, slice of smoked bacon & BBQ sauce	5.50
NUGGETS	8 chicken nuggets with dip	3.50

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