

YOUR

OCTOBER 2025

# ALMHOUSE

MAGAZINE



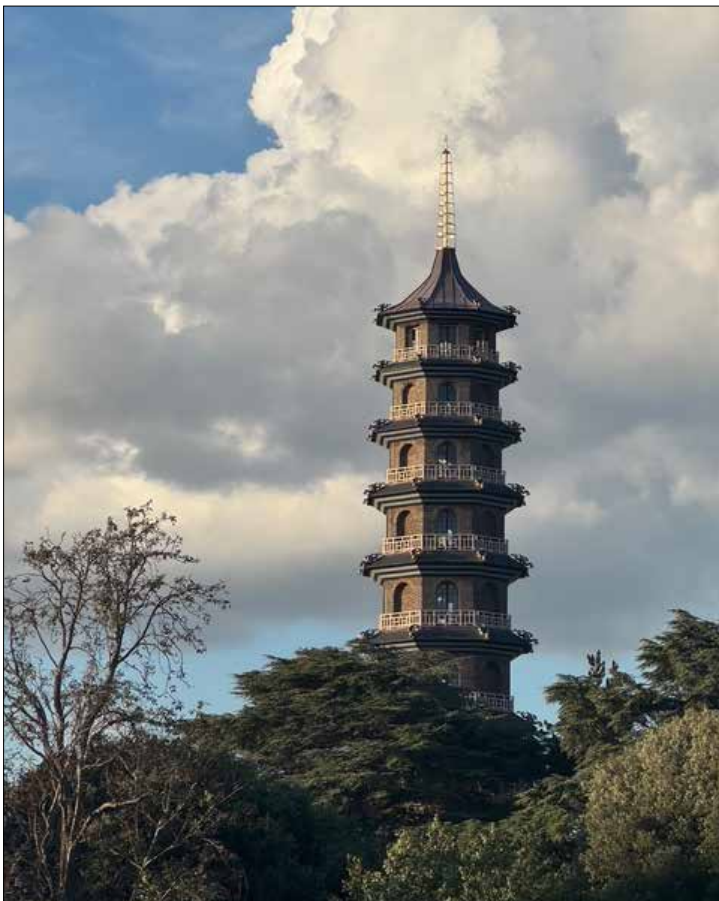
## Your Photos



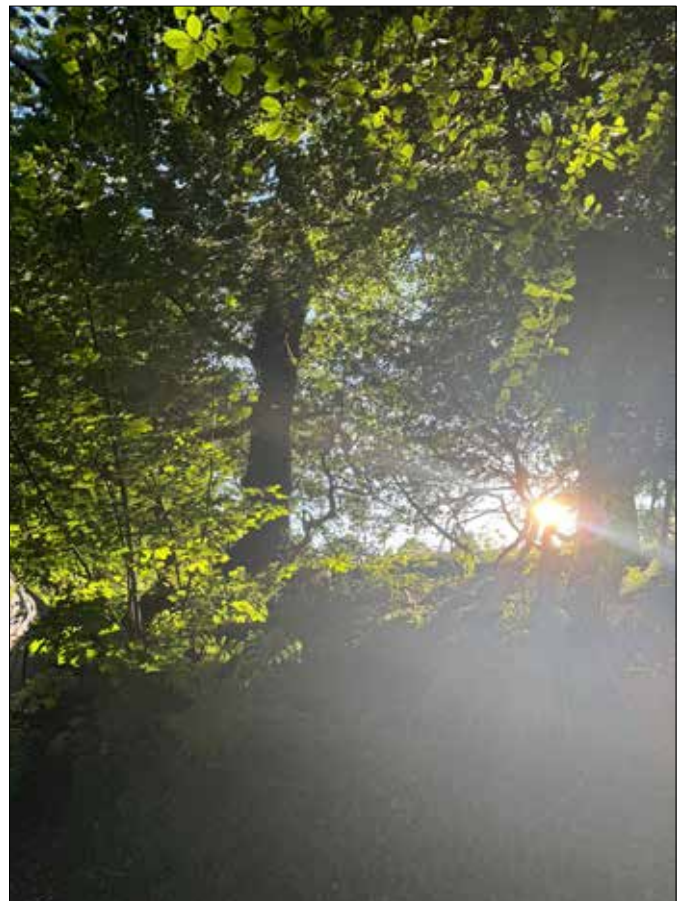
*Tom, Dick and Harry and my pond by Alan Shirley*



*View from my window by Mike Townsin*



*The Great Pagoda at Kew Gardens by Gwen Davis*



*Forest Bathing by Chantal Richards*

## Farewell

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to:

**Michael Cordell** from Hickey's, who has moved to a care home.

### Photo Credits:

Front Cover:  
Autumn Trees  
by Helen Davies /Adobe Stock

Back Cover:  
Migrating Birds by Elena Noeva /Adobe Stock

### Seasonal or local photographs.

To have **your** photos appear on page 2, please send the images on WhatsApp to:

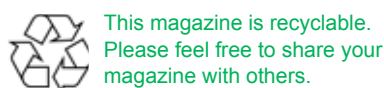
Becky Evans  
**07386 667185**  
or Derrick Thompson  
**07796 619697**

### Editorial Committee and Content:

Mike Townsin *Editor*  
Emma Halford *CEO*  
Lorraine Bradley  
Rebecca Evans  
Debbie Flaherty  
Chantal Richards  
Derrick Thompson  
Gennie Thompson

### Magazine Design:

Chantal Richards



## Dates for Your Diary

**October 5.**  
**St. Francis Day Service**  
see page 9

**October 7, 14, 21.**  
**Wellness Walking**  
see page 7

**October 14.**  
**Out and About,**  
William Morris Gallery  
see page 3

**October 15, 29.**  
**Film Club**  
see page 8

**October 21, 28.**  
**Tuesday Fellowship**  
see page 8

**October 22.**  
**Singing Together**  
see page 8



**Don't forget!**  
The clocks next turn back by one hour at 2am on 26 October 2025.

### Forthcoming Out and About Days

**Tuesday 14 October**  
William Morris Gallery, Walthamstow. Meet at Richmond Station at 10am.

**Tuesday 11 November**  
Visit to the Bank of England.

**Tuesday 2 December**  
Mini bus trip to Adrian Hall Garden Centre in Feltham.



# Out and About Trip to Greenwich

by Richard Yardley

Around 650 years ago, a group of woollen cloth merchants came together to support each other and further their trade. Today, the Drapers Charity funds projects in education, almshouses and projects to do with the textile industry.



Queen Elizabeth College Almshouses were founded in 1576 for the poor elderly people of Greenwich. The present-day buildings were erected in 1818 and, after much modernisation, now provide forty self contained one bedroom cottages. Also on the estate is Lambard House, built in 1967, which consists of twenty-eight self contained flats eight of which have a second bedroom. The almshouses are set in pleasant landscaped gardens. Facilities include a community hall for social activities, a Chapel and a laundry.

We had a very nice day meeting up with Gail, the resident Scheme Manager, who used to work for Richmond Charities. Also, a resident called John, who talked to us about Drapers, the company which owns the almshouses, about the wonderful window in the Chapel and the visit of the late Queen Elizabeth II who unveiled the window in 1974.

After lunch we met with Ivy, another resident, who very kindly showed us her almshouse. We enjoyed a walk around the estate looking at the rear gardens and the residents' car park.

After saying goodbye to Gail we got on a bus to Greenwich and walked past the *Cutty Sark* to the river getting the Uber boat to Vauxhall, a nice one-hour boat trip along the river; however, it was a very high tide and at Westminster we had to change boats as ours could not pass under Westminster Bridge.

Sue was talking to some other passengers about the effect of a full moon on the tides, when a lower boat called the *Moon Clipper*, which was able to pass under the bridge, took us on to Vauxhall — it gave us all a laugh.

A great day out, and many thanks to Gail, John and Ivy at the Queen Elizabeth College Almshouses.



# Croquet at Church Estate

by Nick Taylor

We played on the lawn on August Bank Holiday, which was a gloriously sunny day. Here in the pics are the elite! Players led by Maureen Bliss as they pot for gold and a podium result. Experienced players amongst you will know that, to start with, competing pairs or singles are selected before each player chooses a colour of ball and then carefully strokes it with their mallet in the order of colours on the central post. Play then proceeds through the hoops around the lawn in an orderly way via flower beds, overshoots and much laughter.

Skills are helped by a strategic approach and forgiveness when it is often needed — saying 'sorry' is not asked for as we all make mistakes. Each game is won, lost or drawn by the number of hoops won.

There is a growing number of people who have ventured forth to play at irregular intervals, not all at the same time, and it is a game which provides a system of handicaps to equalise the different skills — although we dispense with this added finesse to the game because many of us have enough handicaps already. There is plenty of room for more residents to play and enjoy fun in a lovely setting, while meeting other pals at the same time: why not make a note and just 'have a go' because the 33 bus stops just outside, and it's a great way to get some gentle exercise and even a winning cup of tea.



# Food Glorious Food: Autumn

We were given a marvellous treat at our 'Foodies' meeting on 9 September when Dinah joined us and gave us an interesting talk on Autumn, the season of transition.

Many animals hibernate, trees lose their leaves and plants draw their energy inwards. We can mirror that by supporting our bodies with good nutrition and rest, our minds with practices that stay well and focused as the days get shorter and darker.

Autumn wellness comes with four anchors:-

**Light.** Nourish with colourful seasonal foods and key vitamins

**Stay connected:** with friends, family, art, music.

**Meditate** and practice mindfulness and gratitude.

**Movement.** Keep moving, for even a short time every day.

## Autumn Recipe

### Roasted Root Vegetable and Lentil Soup

2 parsnips or sweet potatoes, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 cup of lentils

1 tsp cumin

1 tsp turmeric

1 litre vegetable stock

Olive oil

Salt & pepper.

Serves 4.

Roast vegetables and garlic in oven at 200°C in a little oil for 20 mins, then turn into large pot.

Add rinsed lentils, spices and vegetable stock and cook on medium heat for 30 mins.

Blend or leave chunky.



## FOOD GLORIOUS FOOD

Please join us for  
our next session

**Tuesday 14  
October  
at 11am**

at Heather Shipley's home

(Ask your Scheme Manager  
for the address)

## Key nutrients to focus on in Autumn.

**Vitamin D:** as sunlight exposure drops, foods such as mushrooms and oily fish are important, and a Vitamin D supplement, Vitamin C and Zinc for the immune system. Found in citrus fruit, peppers, berries, nuts and pumpkin seeds.

**Magnesium:** good for sleep and mood. Found in dark green leafy vegetables, nuts, seeds and dark chocolate.

**Swap heavy carbs** for roasted roots, lentil stews, or soups with warming spices — cinnamon, ginger and turmeric.

**Prepare balanced meals** with various colour combinations; try to have at least three colours on a plate at every meal.

## Arts & Crafts

and

## Itch to Stitch

The *Arts and Crafts* and *Itch to Stitch* at Wright's Almshouses has now opened its doors again after the summer.

We would love to encourage more residents to come and join in by letting you all know that, as well as the usual arts and crafts, there's enough space to knit, embroider, crochet or sew.

The Terrace Room at Wright's Almshouses has enough space to accommodate you for whatever you want to create, just bring your own equipment and supplies and join the 'crafters' for a friendly get together or even just a cuppa and a chat.

If you've never been before, the address for Wright's Almshouses is **151 Heath Road, Twickenham TW1 4DS**. There is a bus stop virtually outside the front door, so it's easy to find.

If you are unable to use public transport we can, as advertised in the Monthly Events leaflet, provide transport for you.

When you arrive, just buzz the Terrace Room and someone will let you in.

***The door is always open!***

## Wellness Walking Sessions with Rosie

Rosie has very kindly agreed to take a slightly different approach to her usual Nordic Walking sessions by introducing Wellness Walks. Poles will not be needed for the walks, although for those of you who want to, Rosie will of course bring the poles as usual.

**Dates this year are:**

**Tuesday 16, 23 and 30 September**

**Tuesday 7, 14 and 21 October**

**Learn how to: walk to improve muscle strength in your whole body, improve posture and reduce tripping.**

**Walking outdoors can boost a person's mood by 30% and you will meet new people and enjoy a chat**

Please contact your Scheme Manager to book your place.  
Please let your Scheme Manager know if you would still like to use the poles and we will let Rosie know.



**Join in the festive fun!**  
**Ribbon Wreath making on**  
**26<sup>th</sup> November from 11:00 – 2:00**

TheCreationStation.co.uk

**CREATIVE**  
GET TOGETHER

**The session will be held in the Garden Room.**

**Spaces are limited to 10.**

**Please book a place via your Scheme Manager.**

**There is no charge for this event.**



## Film Club **One Life**

**Wednesday 29  
October  
at 2pm  
Chapel of  
St Francis**

The incredible, emotional true story of Nicholas 'Nicky' Winton, a young London broker who visits Prague in December 1938. In a race against time, Winton convinces the British Committee for Refugees in Czechoslovakia to rescue hundreds of predominantly Jewish children before Nazi occupation closes the borders. Fifty years later, Nicky is haunted by the fate of the children he couldn't bring to safety in England. It's not until the BBC show *That's Life!* re-introduces him to some of those he helped rescue that he finally begins to come to terms with the guilt and grief he carried.

Director: James Hawes

Actors: Anthony Hopkins, Helena Bonham Carter, Johnny Flynn

Rating: 12a Runtime: 1h 49m

IMDb: 7.5/10, Rotten Tomatoes: 91%

Refreshments during the interval.

**Singing Together...  
...is good for you!**

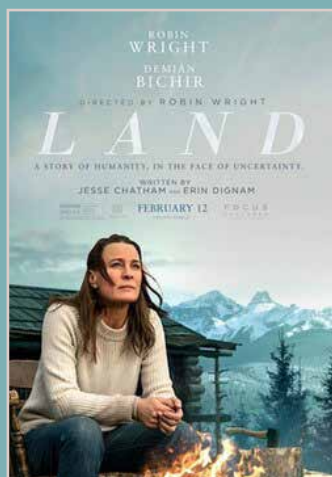
So come and sing

**With:** Other residents and children  
from Marshgate Primary School

**In:** Chapel of St. Francis,  
Hickey's Almshouses

**On:** Wednesday 22nd October  
**Time:** 11am to 12noon.

**See you there!**



## Film Club **Land**

**Wednesday 15  
October  
at 2pm  
Chapel of St  
Francis**

From acclaimed actress Robin Wright comes her feature film directorial debut *Land*, the poignant

story of one woman's search for meaning in the vast and harsh American wilderness.

Edee (Wright), in the aftermath of an unfathomable event, finds herself unable to stay connected to the world she once knew, and in the face of that uncertainty, retreats to the magnificent, but unforgiving, wilds of the Rockies. After a local hunter brings her back from the brink of death, she must find a way to live again...

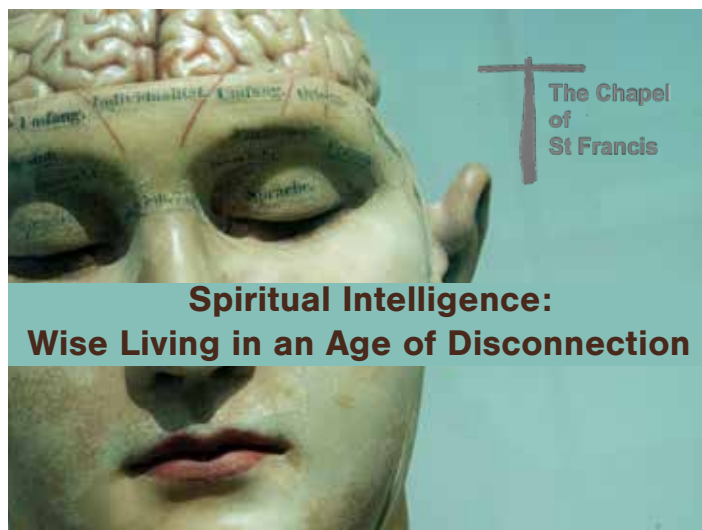
Director: Robin Wright

Actors: Robin Wright, Demián Bichir, Kim Dickens

Rating: PG -13 Runtime: 1h 29m

IMDb: 6.7/10, Rotten Tomatoes: 69%

Refreshments during the interval.



## **Spiritual Intelligence: Wise Living in an Age of Disconnection**

*Let's do this six-week course together!*

In an uncertain and divided world, Spiritual Intelligence can help us live well – deepening our spiritual lives and helping us become a healing presence in our communities.

Together, we'll explore how our brains seek meaning, and how practices like prayer, attention, movement, and imagination can help us grow in faith and flourish.

The course has been co-created by **GoHealth** and leading thinkers in science and theology.

For more info visit: [gohealth.org.uk/sic](http://gohealth.org.uk/sic)

### **Where:**

Chapel of St. Francis,  
Hickey's Almshouses,  
TW9 1XB

### **When:**

Week 5 & 6 continue on  
21 and 28 October.  
1pm for 1.30pm start.

### **Sign up:**

Contact Derrick:  
07796 619697.  
[d.thompson@richmond-charities.org.uk](mailto:d.thompson@richmond-charities.org.uk)


# Noticeboard

OUR COMMUNITY 9

## Chapel Schedule: October 2025


<b>Sunday 5 October</b>	<b>10.30am Festival of St. Francis</b>  <b>'Songs of Praise'</b> <i>followed by refreshments</i>
<b>Sunday 12 October</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion</b>
<b>Sunday 19 October</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion</b>
<b>Sunday 26 October</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion</b>

All are welcome to join us.  
Morning Prayer, most Tuesdays at 10am.  
For more information email  
Chaplain Derrick:  
[d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk)  
07796 619697



**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October at 10.30am**  
**at The Chapel of St. Francis,  
Hickey's Almshouses**

Songs of Praise – The life and hymns of St. Francis  
A service of hymns, songs, readings and images with a focus on St. Francis.  
Refreshments will be served after the service.



**Festival of  
St. Francis of Assisi**

The Chapel of St. Francis, Sheen Road, Richmond, TW9 1XB  
[d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk) 07796 619697



## Service of Remembrance


**Sunday 9th November 2025**

**Chapel of St Francis  
at 10.30am**

During this service of hymns  
and readings we will remember  
those who died during wars and  
conflicts with the sounding of the  
Last Post, a two-minute silence  
and the placing of poppies.

**Medals may be worn.**





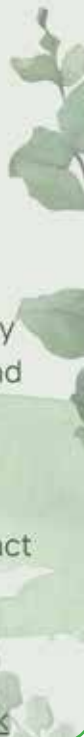
## Annual Memorial Service

**Chapel of St Francis  
Sunday 9th November at 4pm**

During the service there will be the  
opportunity to remember loved ones by  
placing their name on a memory tree and  
lighting a candle.

If you would like someone to be  
remembered in the service please contact  
Derrick, the Chaplain, on

**07796 619697 or**  
[d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk](mailto:d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk)



# Chaplains Chat

by Derrick Thompson

It is nearly forty years since Whitney Houston burst onto the music scene with her first single, *The Greatest Love of All*, which starts,

***I believe the children are our future***

***Teach them well and let them lead the way***

***Show them all the beauty they possess inside.***

Children are foremost in my mind currently as I am so looking forward to our new 'Singing Together' venture which starts this month, joining with children from Marshgate School to delight in the joys of singing. The combination of music and children is a great way to lift our spirits at a time when we can feel so overwhelmed with the daily bombardment of negative news.

I had always assumed that 'the greatest love of all' according to the songwriters, Linda Creed and Michael Masser, was in relation to some other person, a parent or a lover, for example. So, I was surprised to discover that they are talking about loving ourselves which reminds me of 'the greatest commandment' which, in short, says;

***Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself.***

It is a good thing to love our neighbours, and I would encourage us all to do that. However, we also need to love ourselves, caring for and looking after ourselves, and this is where I don't agree with the songwriters who describe this as 'easy to achieve'. I guess it depends on how, and if, we were taught and helped to love ourselves as children. Whatever our childhoods were like, the good news is that we can grow in loving ourselves and the child within us whatever our age.

When we mix self-love with Divine love and love for others then I think we will truly 'find strength in love', and that will help us face whatever each day brings.



## Festivals of Faith

by Derrick Thompson

### YOM KIPPUR – THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

**2 October, Jewish**

The holiest day of the year in the Jewish calendar, known as the 'Sabbath of Sabbaths', is marked by a total fast that lasts for 25 hours. Jews spend most of that time in prayer in the synagogue, asking for divine forgiveness for past wrongs and resolving to improve in the future. Before the festival they will have tried to set right any breakdown in their relationships with others.

### CONFERRING OF GURUSHIP ON THE GURU GRANTH SAHIB

**6 October, Sikh**

The day before his death in 1708 CE, Guru Gobind Singh declared that instead of having another human Guru, Sikhs would regard the scripture, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, as their Guru. The Granth is now central to all Sikh worship and is said to incorporate the living spirit of the ten human Gurus. The Guru Granth Sahib is installed in all Sikh places of worship known as 'gurdwara' ('house of the Guru').

### SUKKOT - FEAST OF TABERNACLES OR BOOTHS

**7 October, Jewish**

An eight-day long harvest festival which commemorates the 40 years the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. A temporary hut or booth (sukkah) is built outside the house each year at this time for eating meals and for visits and socialising.



## INTER-FAITH WEEK FOR WORLD PRAYER

**12 October to 19 October**

Prayers from the literature of several different world religions are published each year in a special leaflet. They are composed and used by many different religious communities.

## BANDHI CHHOR DIVAS/DIVALI

**20 October, Sikh**

A commemoration of the day Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru, was released from Gwalior prison in 1619 CE.

The day is known as Bandhi Chhor Divas (Prisoner Release Day) because 52 imprisoned princes (Bandhi) were released (Chhor) by him on this day (Divas). It is celebrated by both Sikhs and Hindus.



**BANDHI CHHOR DIVAS/DIVALI**

**21 October, Hindu**

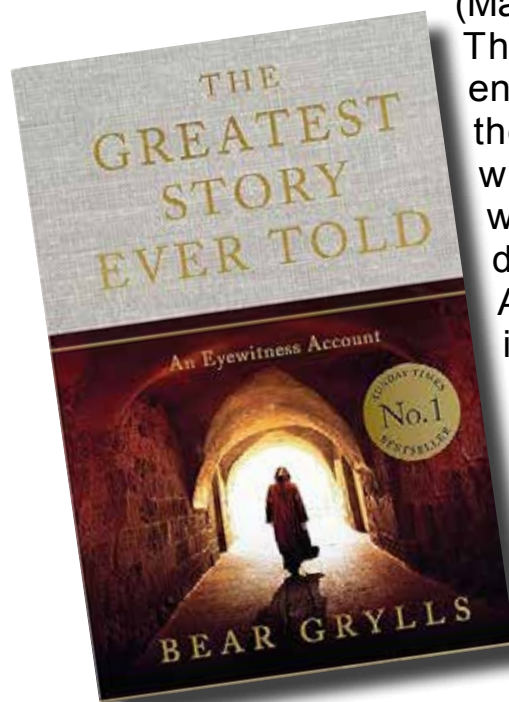
Diwali, the Hindu new year's day, is the biggest and the brightest of all Hindu festivals. This festival of lights, which is marked by four days of celebrations with different meanings in different Hindu communities, literally illuminates the country with brilliance and dazzles with joy!



## BOOK GROUP

### *The Greatest Story Ever Told*

With gripping storytelling and raw honesty, Bear Grylls retells the gospel through the eyes of those who knew Jesus best— Maryam (his mother Mary), Ta'om (Thomas), Shimon (Simon Peter), Yohanan (friend) and Maryam of Magdala (Mary Magdalene).



Their first-hand encounters bring the story to life with intensity, warmth, and deep reverence. At the heart of it all are Jesus' own words, taken directly from the Bible, letting the greatest story ever told speak for itself.

In each session we will watch a short video from Bear Grylls and Andrew Ollerton (Bible Society) and share in discussion about one chapter of this five-chapter book.

## Book Group Dates

at The Chapel of St Francis

4, 11, 18 November 2026

6, 13 January 2026

Time:

2pm to 3.30pm

Refreshments provided!

## Welcome to Julie, our new Scheme Manager



**Julie  
Morgan**

I joined as a Scheme Manager on 18 August and have already had the pleasure of meeting many of you. As a roving

Scheme Manager, I'll be supporting the team by providing cover and lending an extra pair of hands wherever needed.

Having lived in Kew for most of my life, I feel deeply connected to the area. I raised my now grown-up son here, and both of us attended Queen's School (now King's School), followed by secondary schools within the borough. This community has shaped much of my life, and I'm proud to call it home.

My career has been wonderfully varied—starting in office administration, moving through the civil service, and eventually transitioning into healthcare. I earned my BSc in Health Studies from King's College London, which deepened my passion for public health and community wellbeing.

I'm especially passionate about community first aid training. This stems from my volunteer work with both the London Ambulance Service (LAS) and St John Ambulance (SJA). As a LAS Community First Responder, I attend 999 calls for life-threatening medical emergencies in the local area. With SJA, I enjoy supporting local events such as the Barnes Food Fair (held this year on 13 September), as well as concerts and sporting events.

It's a real privilege to be appointed to a role for a wonderful charity and right on my doorstep!

## Trustee File

**Jeff Picton**



I joined as a Trustee in November 2024 and my very first meeting with some of you was at the Christmas Lunch in December last year—great timing and such a fun event.

I grew up in Buckinghamshire but have lived in London since 1980. My background is in finance—I was a partner at a large accountancy and consulting firm from 1991 to 2019. I worked with many clients—mostly in the banking and capital markets sector. I spent 3 years working in New York as well as time seconded to the Bank of England.

I retired in 2019 but have taken on some other roles—my wife has been insistent that I must be out of the house. I am the Chair of the Board of a regional building society—it has a real focus on serving the local community—not just in providing mortgages and savings but also through a lot of practical volunteering support. I am also the Member for Finance at my local golf club.

I have lived in the East Sheen and Richmond area for nearly 40 years and love the open, green spaces. I have always been intrigued by the beautiful Almshouse properties in the area, having walked past so many of them over the years. I was so pleased when the opportunity came up to become a Trustee and have been so impressed with the positive impact we are able to make.

I am really looking forward to meeting you and being part of such a vibrant local community. While we must always look at our heritage, it is also incredibly important we continue to modernise to meet your needs now and in the future.

# Beryl's Story (and the adventures of Jed).

Interview with Beryl Gray by Mike Townsin



*Sissy and Fred's Wedding*



*Beryl with her favourite teddy*



*Beryl, centre, with her mother Sissy at Brightlingsea*



*Beryl's parents, Sissy and Fred*



*Beryl, centre, with cousins*



*Beryl and Soda*

On April 8, 1928, at 223 Harwoods Road Watford, Beryl Katherine Norman came into the world, attended by family physician Dr Berry and a midwife. She was subsequently taken to Great Ormond Street for soft palette surgery and elocution lessons. By her birthday in 2025, Beryl had already become, at ninety-seven, our most senior resident and the one who had been with us longest, having made Church Estate her home with husband Gerald – aka Jed – circa 1979, initially as warden and then retiree.

She had first met future airman Gerald Gray when she was sixteen, and again a year later when they began their courtship. Jed joined the Royal Airforce in 1940 at the age of sixteen to train as a fighter pilot. In 1941, having completed training in the US, he was posted to North Africa but en route his ship was torpedoed; a fine swimmer, he survived and was taken to Gibraltar; he went on to serve in North Africa and Italy, during

which time he crash landed his damaged plane behind German lines with a bomb on board, was captured and was imprisoned in Germany. Jed ended the war as Flight Lieutenant Gray, having flown Spitfires and Gloster Meteors, Britain's first jet fighter and the Allies' only jet aircraft to have engaged in combat in WW II.

***He was, of course, as Churchill put it, one of the 'few': "Never was so much owed by so many to so few".***

As we shall hear later, Beryl and Jed wrote passionately to each other during the war years, after which Jed was stationed at RAF Heany, Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. Beryl joined him and became Mrs Gray in 1948, and they honeymooned at the Leopard Rock Hotel, nestled in the Bvumba Mountains in the eastern highlands. It was here that Beryl found her passion for travel, subsequently enabled by Jed's postings in Bahrain, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

# Beryl's Story (and the adventures of Jed) continued...

In 1949 they returned to Watford where their first child was born, and later were stationed at RAF Leuchars, Fife and RAF Linton, Yorkshire, although Jed had a number of unaccompanied postings elsewhere including Cyprus. His adventures continued when he broke his back and ankle ejecting from a Canadian Sabre; he had to eject again when his plane caught fire, receiving minor burns. Jed's wartime service and bravery were acknowledged in a Queen's Commendation in the New Year's

Honours and, in 1966, an MBE for services to the Queen

After Jed's retirement from the RAF in 1973, they became landlords of various pubs near London, after which they lived in the old quarter of Marseille and Var in the south of France, eventually returning to Richmond where Beryl

became a live-in warden at Church Estate, her home since retirement, for a total of forty-five years. Jed and Beryl were together until he passed away ten years ago; her living room, full of his photos, attests to their enduring love.



Beryl



Airman Jed Gray



United Services Officers Club, Mombasa



Jed at RAF Heany, Rhodesia



Beryl, Jed and Paula at Buckingham Palace for MBE



Beryl in Bahrain with Lucy and baby Mandy



Beryl and Jed



*Jed, centre*



*Jed's Spitfire crew*



*Jed on parade with General Montgomery, North Africa*



*Jed with General Montgomery, North Africa*

I was curious about Beryl early years, my impression during our interview being that she had been pretty feisty as a teenager, quietly rebelling against a loving though somewhat strict father; this she admitted, naming dancing, ice skating and riding as her main diversions. She also proudly mentioned a secret stash of love letters, tied with a red ribbon, from both the war years and other periods of separation from her beloved Jed. And from the age of eight she had a 'bestie' called Sylvia who now lives in Croxley Green, near Watford, whom she sees regularly.

Asked about hobbies and pastimes over the years, Beryl mentioned a love of historical novels, tennis, classical music including choral music, Bach, Mozart and, not entirely surprisingly, Glen Miller and Frank Sinatra; also, Shirley Bassey, Carrera, Placido Domingo. And she's a long-time dog lover: she told of Soda her pet dog which she bought as a child with pocket money from Watford market. But her biggest hobby is family – quote,



*Beryl and Jed in Spain*



*Beryl and Jed*

“family is everything”. She and Jed had four children – Paula, Jeremy, Mandy and Lucy – and there are now six grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and one on the way! They all visit regularly.

As we sat in animated conversation, with Paula, Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra sprang to mind – “Age shall not wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety” ...Beryl, your beauty and vitality are undimmed, it's been a pleasure.

# Home and Away

## New Zealand

by Maureen Bliss



## Part II

Having left Colombo airport for New Zealand, via 12 hour stop over at Changi airport in Singapore, I arrived at Wellington to be collected by my eldest granddaughter Sophie, whose marriage to Bede, was in 5 days time. I was driven to Palmerston North to meet my two great grandsons Oakley 4 and Georgie 9 months, to await the arrival of my younger son, Sophie's dad and his three children, the eldest, Evia, being the bridesmaid at the wedding. Still following?.....

Another member of the family arrived with her boyfriend so although most of the time nine of us travelled together, sometimes it was eleven ranging from 9 months to 80 yrs.

First stop, Wairama beach Hawkes Bay for swimming, fishing, and walks. Second stop, Haverlock North for the wedding at Black Barn vineyard — famous for its wine and stunning back drop, followed by a day at the wedding accommodation of swimming, jacuzzi, cricket, tennis and a huge BBQ. Third stop, at Sophie's parents' 5,000 acre Hunting Lodge in the hills, with red, fallow and sika deer; it accommodates twelve people who are mainly Americans looking to shoot twenty or so deer for their trophies.

Again, as in Sri Lanka, guests sit at a long table for up to twenty-four people and enjoy splendid food and drink reminiscing their successes. The land also has manuka trees, producing masses of honey for sale.

Fourth stop, the art deco town of Napier and its many vineyards. Fifth stop, back in Palmerston North, a very unremarkable town despite hosting Massey University and stock car racing. Only one old building of note, Caccia House. Sixth stop, Wellington via a very rough west coast. Wellington is made up of scenic views overlooking the bay but weather had turned by this time and was wet and windy. But we had been very fortunate to have enjoyed nearly two weeks of sunshine and so, saying goodbye NZ, we headed on home.

# This Beautiful World

by Steve Harbud

There are oceans and rivers far and wide,  
Mountains so high they touch the sky.  
Fields of gold beneath our feet, it's a masterpiece complete,  
A beauty that can never be denied.

But we traded it in for smoke and flames,  
Wars and missiles till nothing else remains.  
Too weak and tired to even dream, the hungry children scream,  
We turn or walk away from all the pain.

This beautiful world's falling apart,  
And we're the ones that's breaking its heart.

This beautiful world we're tearing down,  
Turning blue to grey and green to brown.  
We drill and burn or throw away, as if tomorrow owes today,  
And in our greed we're now starting to drown.

But every child will one day feel the cost,  
With every tree and forest that is lost.  
In the air and on the ground, there's pollution all around,  
A pathway that we always have to cross.

This beautiful world's falling apart,  
And we're the ones that's breaking its heart.

We have the stars, but cannot see the night,  
Blinded by our greed we lose the light.  
There's warnings that we face, but we'll soon run out of grace,  
Then one day we're going to lose the fight.

So just how many signs must we ignore,  
We cannot go on wanting more and more.  
The world we love and we enjoy, how much can we destroy,  
We've forgotten what living's really for.

How can we go on like this one day we'll have no choice.  
Mother nature's screaming but we never hear her voice.

But It's not too late — if we still try,  
To heal the wounds, to testify.  
Raise our voices, plant a seed, live with less and meet the need.  
Then we'll never have to question why.

This beautiful world can still be ours,  
But man can't sow what he devours.  
The stars are still above, they wait for us to rise with love,  
If we can step down from our ivory towers.

If we can change, if we just start  
We might just mend this beating heart,

Of this beautiful world we've torn apart.

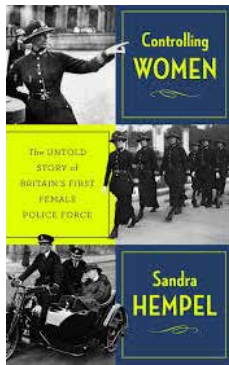
# Local News, Events & Information

This month's round-up of local news and events that are relevant to you.

## • FULL OF LIFE • FAIR

The annual **Full of Life Fair** – Richmond upon Thames' flagship event for celebrating older residents and carers – returns on Friday 24 October at Allianz Stadium, Twickenham. Event is free but you must register here: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

**Victorian History Walk.** Upper Concourse, Richmond. Richmond Heritage Guides bring to life a bygone age of cobbled streets, gaslight and horse-drawn vehicles. The coming of the railways. A picture of Richmond in Queen Victoria's reign. No need to book. Just turn up, buy a ticket from the guide - £5 cash. 11 October. 11am - 1pm. [www.richmondwalks.co.uk](http://www.richmondwalks.co.uk)



**The Untold Story of Britain's First Female Police Force** with Sandra Hempel. "Join us at *Books on the Rise* as

Sandra Hempel uncovers the story behind Britain's first female police force" **About Controlling Women** by Sandra Hempel: 9 October 7pm - 8.15pm

**Longer Monday Walk** along the Thames Towpath, from Richmond First Monday of each month. Monday, 6 October at 10:30am. The Ramblers Wellbeing Walks, The walk lasts for 1 to 1.5 hours. Meet outside White Cross Hotel, Water Lane, finish in Kingston. More info: [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)



**News from Richmond Council: Supporting our local habitats to thrive and grow:** "In the months ahead, we are undertaking woodland conservation and river restoration work to boost biodiversity and enhance the health of our local ecosystems. To support native trees, enhance woodland structure and encourage a richer ground flora, we are carrying out targeted conservation works across Crane Park, Mereway Nature Reserve, Hatherop Park Beveree Wildlife Site and Ham Common Woods."

**Hampton Court Palace — Free Gardens Open Day.** The gardens will be open for free entry on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 October. Entrance to the Palace and the Maze will still require a ticket.

## KIRTAN – come and chant.

Join Sarah, Bina and Nat (Sabinat) for a heart-opening evening of Kirtan – the ancient yogic practice of call-and-response chanting that uplifts the spirit, calms the mind and connects us through sound. Chanting is a wonderful way to reconnect to your true essence, one of heart-felt joy, peace and calm. This is the yoga of sound – meditation with music. No experience or good quality of voice required – if we can chat, we can chant!! The evening practice will end with tea and time to chat, so no rush to head off. Tickets £15

**Thursday 9th October**

**Thursday 13th November**

**Thursday 11th December**

To find out more [www.sarahgreenall.com](http://www.sarahgreenall.com) or go to the ETNA website: [etnacentre.org](http://etnacentre.org)



## Please Offer Me a Seat Badge *Freebie from TFL*

If you struggle to stand while using public transport, there is a free badge available to help you alert fellow passengers that you need a seat. We have **50** available for residents *Please ask your Scheme Manager.*

# And the Good News is...

Curated by Mike Townsin

• The world's most premature baby has celebrated his first birthday – and won a place in the Guinness World Records. He was born a year ago at the gestational age of 21 weeks and weighed only 10oz, about the same as a bar of soap. "He's just very determined," said his mother.

• A 96-year-old RAF veteran, Donald Elsom, has become the oldest contestant to appear on *Countdown*. He did not win but said he would cherish his appearance on the show which he had followed for decades. He marked his 95th birthday by walking 95 laps around a primary school, raised £5000 pounds for charity and was awarded Maundy Money by King Charles.

• Millions in Sweden tuned in to watch a 113-year-old church, in the northernmost town of Kiruna, hoisted onto a flatbed trailer and its 672 tonnes rolled, at 1 mph, to a new site three miles away. It was to avoid subsidence caused by iron ore mining. The whole town will be re-located in the coming years.



• The Timbuktu Manuscripts, 27,000 documents dating back centuries on everything from astronomy to Islamic theology, have been returned to the ancient city of Mali. They were spirited out of Mali by library staff who risked their lives when the city was occupied by Islamic militants 13 years ago; they had already destroyed 4,000.

# Wit and Wisdom

Curated by Mike Townsin

*The worst thing about not getting what you want, is someone else getting it. Roger Sterling in 'Madmen'*

*We learn most through failure. Sathnam Sanghera in The Times*

*There is nothing more medieval than to hate someone because of their faith...That this hatred is growing should shock us all. Jeremy Hunt*

*Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself. George Bernard Shaw*

*If you love life, don't waste time, for time is what life is made up of. Bruce Lee.*

*When I was a kid my parents moved a lot, but I always found them. Rodney Dangerfield US comedian*

*All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt. Charles M. Schulz US cartoonist*

*I'm not offended by blonde jokes because I know I'm not dumb...and I also know I'm not blonde. Dolly Parton*

*Just taught my kids about taxes by eating 38% of their ice cream. Conan O'Brien US TV host*

# Miscellany

Curated by Mike Townsin

- Trees sweat to cool down.
- Messages in the first sticks of rock included 'Do you love sprats' and 'Sir Robert Peel'
- The minty flavour of toothpaste comes from pine trees
- Tetley tea's chief tester has his taste buds insured for £1 million.
- 'Loitersacke' was 17th century slang for a 'slacker'.
- Liechtenstein only found out they had the same flag as Haiti when they both arrived at the 1936 Olympics
- A yule shard is someone who is still preparing for Christmas on Christmas Eve.
- Silent films had music to drown out the noise of the projectors.
- Queen Victoria owned a bullet proof umbrella.

## “With All Due Respect..” British ‘Polite-isms’ by Mike Townsin

“Let’s agree to disagree”.

*translation:* “You’re wrong but I’m fed up with arguing”.\*

“I won’t say anything more, but...”.

*translation:* “It’s the truth, but don’t say another word!”.\*

“There’s always one”.

*translation:* “I think he’s a pain in the butt”.\*

\* from Alan Shirley

“It could be worse”

*translation:* “It’s pretty much the worst thing that could have happened”

“No offense, but...”

*translation:* You won’t like to hear this..”

“Happy to discuss”

*translation:* “I’d like to postpone this indefinitely”

Send yours to me: [mike\\_townsin@yahoo.com](mailto:mike_townsin@yahoo.com)

### On This Day...

curated by  
Debbie Flaherty

1 October 1949 The People’s Republic of China was established.

3 October 1888  
The Haka was first performed. Wearing all black, the New Zealand team performed for the first time before an international match.

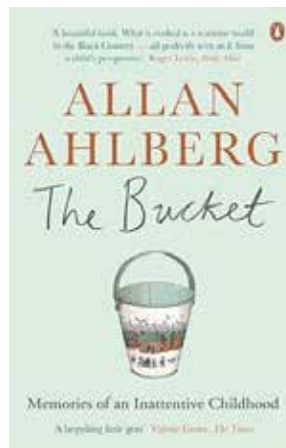
8 October 1945  
The first patent for a microwave oven was applied for by US Physicist Percy L Spencer.

15 October 1952  
US author E B White published the bestselling children’s book *Charlotte’s Web*.

24 October 1945  
The United Nations officially came into existence.

## Page Turner

*The Bucket* by Allan Ahlberg



Review by Kate O’Brien

I am on my third lot of children’s books – my children, my two (older) grandchildren and now two newer ones. An abiding favourite author is Allan Ahlberg, who died a few weeks ago. Who doesn’t love *Each Peach Pear Plum* and *Peepo!* (to name only a

couple – no space for more)? Even tiny babies can hear the rhythm, and older ones can spend ages looking at the pictures.

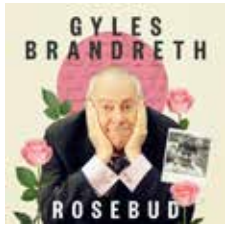
This is different — a book for adults which takes us through what he calls his “inattentive childhood” using poems, short stories, photos and illustrations. Ahlberg was adopted as a baby and the first poem in the book *Beginnings* is incredibly moving about his mother collecting him from the orphanage in Battersea in 1938 and taking him back to the Black Country. A series of beautifully written reminiscences — funny, sad, full of nostalgia. Stories about bacon slicers, clothes horses, Dinky cars, bread and dripping, Saturday Cinema Club ... and football. To quote but one:

*The match was played in Albert Park  
From half past four till after dark  
By two opposing tribes of boys  
Who specialized in mud and noise!*

I highly recommend it.

# Podcast Recommendations

by Chantal Richards



## SOCIETY AND CULTURE

**Gyles Brandreth** hosts *Rosebud* in which he talks to famous and fascinating people about

their first memories and experiences. My favourite episode so far is with Dame Kristin Scott Thomas who talks about her childhood, death of her father and step father and her French life as a mother and actress. And, if you fall asleep the podcast rolls gently onto the next episode of Gyles's diary!



## HEALTH AND FITNESS

You may have heard of the **Zoe App/** Programme — which provides a personalized nutrition program that

uses at-home gut and metabolic health tests to provide personalized food scores, dietary insights, and guidance on building healthier eating habits. Without signing up for the app (which is £300 sign up fee + £25 per month!) you can listen to the scientists and nutritionists on the *Zoe Podcast*. There are long (1 hour) and short (14 minutes) episodes and they cover a huge array of subjects including heart disease, vitamins, winter immunity, omega 3, high cholesterol, cooking oils; it's a long and comprehensive list. My favourite episode to date is *The Daily Step Count That Cuts Inflammation In Half* by Prof. Janet Lord. She talks about inflammaging, how to reverse it and do we actually need to be doing 10k steps a day! Fascinating listening.

You can listen to these podcasts on any of these apps: [Spotify](#), [BBC Sounds](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

# What's the Origin of..?

Curated by Mike Townsin

- **The devil to pay** means bad consequences for your actions. It was one of the punishments on a ship, the full 1783 phrase being 'the devil to pay and no pitch hot'. The devil was a seam above the ship's keel, and to 'pay' it was to fill it with pitch. When vessels needed this repair, it was hard to do before the tide turned, especially if the pitch wasn't hot enough.

- **Watch the birdie:** in the Victorian days of early photography people would have to sit still for up to two minutes or the photo would



be blurred. To help them concentrate a trained bird or a mechanical chirping bird would be placed behind the camera. The Birdie (above) was hollow and made of brass, and would move its tail and tweet when the photographer squeezed the attached rubber air bulb. It probably would have been attached to the camera.

- **To go berserk** or to go wild. It originates from the most brutal Viking warriors (not all were brutal) who wore clothing made of bear skin: the old Icelandic word 'berserk' referred to a 'bear shirt' which was a pelt with a bear's head still attached and worn as a hat.

- **To be sold down the river** means to be betrayed. During the slave trade it referred to owners selling black slaves who misbehaved further down the Mississippi river, onto the very hot deep south plantations.

If anyone has a saying they would like 'originated', email [mike\\_townsin@yahoo.com](mailto:mike_townsin@yahoo.com) and we'll do the research.

## Vitamin Alert

by Mike Townsin

Vitamins are essential nutrients that help the body function properly. The body can't produce enough on its own, so they must come from food. There are 13 vitamins.

### Calcium

**The main functions of Vitamin K:**

- Helping build bones
- Regulating muscle contractions and heartbeat
- Normal blood clotting

**Signs of deficiency:**

- Rickets in children
- Osteoporosis in later life

**The best food sources are:**

- Milk, cheese, dairy
- Green leafy vegetables
- Soya drinks with added calcium
- Bread
- Fish where you eat the bones e.g. sardines, pilchards



Did You Know: "sardine" refers to the young fish and "pilchard" to the mature fish of the same species

**Consult GP or pharmacy if in doubt.**

**Next month: Iodine**

## Why You Should Let Garlic Rest After Chopping

*The Secret to Unlocking Its Full Potential*

by Gennie Thompson

If you've been cooking with garlic for a while, you might have noticed that its flavour changes depending on how you prepare it. But did you know there's a secret to getting the most out of this powerful bulb? It's all about letting it rest!

When garlic is chopped or crushed, it releases



an enzyme called alliinase. This enzyme reacts with alliin (a sulphur compound in garlic) to produce allicin, which is responsible for garlic's signature aroma and many of its health benefits. However,

allicin is only formed if you wait 10-15 minutes after chopping or crushing before cooking it.

Cooking garlic immediately after chopping can destroy allicin and limit its benefits, so letting it rest for about 14 minutes is key to maximizing both its flavour and health properties.

### Here's how you can get the most out of your garlic:

1. Chop or crush the garlic.
2. Let it sit for at least 15 minutes.
3. Then, cook as usual and enjoy the full, rich flavour and health benefits!

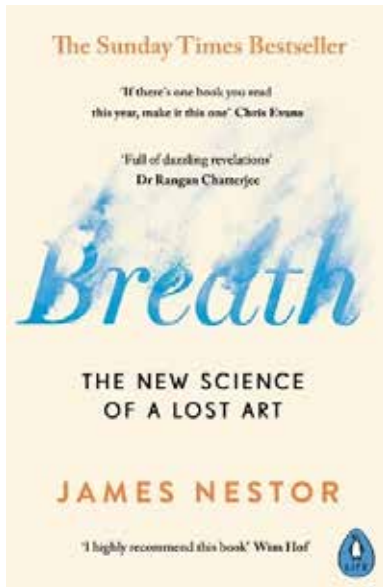
### Why it matters:

- Boosts immunity: allicin has antibacterial, antiviral, and antifungal properties.
- Supports heart health: garlic can help reduce cholesterol and improve blood pressure.
- Detoxifies: it supports the body's natural detoxification processes.

# Book Review:

## *Breathe* by James Nestor

Review by Gennie Thompson



When was the last time you thought about how you breathe? In *Breathe: The New Science of a Lost Art*, journalist James Nestor takes us on a fascinating journey into one of the most overlooked functions of our bodies. What he

uncovers is nothing short of life-changing!

Drawing from ancient wisdom, cutting-edge science, and personal experimentation, Nestor explores how modern humans have lost the ability to breathe correctly — and how this is silently undermining our physical and mental health. From mouth breathing and sleep apnea to posture and facial structure, the book connects the dots between how we breathe and everything from anxiety and allergies to metabolism and immunity.

What makes this book so compelling is that it doesn't just point out the problem — it offers powerful, accessible solutions that are easy to implement into life. Techniques like nasal breathing, slowing the breath and extending the exhale are simple but transformative. Nestor shares stories of people who have reversed chronic conditions simply by changing how they breathe.

Personally, reading *Breathe* has been profound. I realised I had been mouth breathing far more than I thought, especially when sleeping or under stress. Since making the conscious switch to nasal breathing and practising slow, rhythmic breaths throughout the day, I've noticed

a tangible improvement in my energy levels, sleep quality, face shape and even my mood. The “4-7-8” technique and box breathing have become part of my daily rhythm — tools I now rely on and have helped me in the most productive.

This book is a gentle reminder that simple changes can have profound, significant impacts and doesn't always have to be complicated. Sometimes, it's as simple as returning to the breath — and doing it better.

Whether you're looking to improve your health, manage stress, sleep better or just feel more grounded in your body, I genuinely believe *Breathe* is a must-read. It's one of those rare books that stays with you — every single inhale and exhale at a time.

## Debbie's LIFE HACKS

- Buy air-tight vacuum bags to store spare duvets, blankets and seasonal clothes that you're not using. Not only does it save astounding amounts of space, but it also protects them from moths.
- Add ½ cup (125 grams) of bicarbonate of soda directly into the drum of your washing machine for even fresher smelling clothes. It will also make whites whiter! Though don't use it with fabric softener – the two will neutralise each other.
- A solution of white vinegar and dish soap really works to remove hard-water stains – leave overnight if it's really stubborn.
- Throw a sterilising tablet in the loo and leave it in there overnight to keep your toilet bowl sparkling clean.

## Congratulations!



1. Sun
2. Table
3. Step
4. Sign
5. Room
6. Range
7. Whale
8. Apple
9. Base
10. Fly
11. Yard
12. Video

# Picture Quiz: Cakes!

*The Great British Bake Off* is back on TV! But do you know your cakes?



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



9



10.



11.



12.



13.



14.



15.



16.

**Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher!** Identify all 16 cakes. Please submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box **before Friday 17 October**. Name:

# Wordsearch: Influential Women 2025

*The most influential women across the worlds of politics, sports, the arts, media, business, fashion and activism*

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

Leah Williamson  
Charlotte Hill  
Aung San Suu Kyi  
The Queen  
Dame Sarah Storey  
Julia Donaldson  
Keely Hodgkinson  
Rachel Reeves

Debbie Crosbie  
Dame Sue Carr  
Zoe Ball  
Kate Winslet  
Taylor Swift  
Tracey Emin  
Claudia Winkleman  
Kate, Princess of Wales

Hetti Barkworth-Nanton  
Debbie Jevans  
Cathy Newman  
Mishal Husain  
Stacey Solomon  
Charli XCX  
Kemi Badenoch  
Gisèle Pelicot

For more details on all these women see *Independent Women 2025 – The Influence List*: [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)

**Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Find all 25 women** and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box **before Friday 17 October.**

Name:

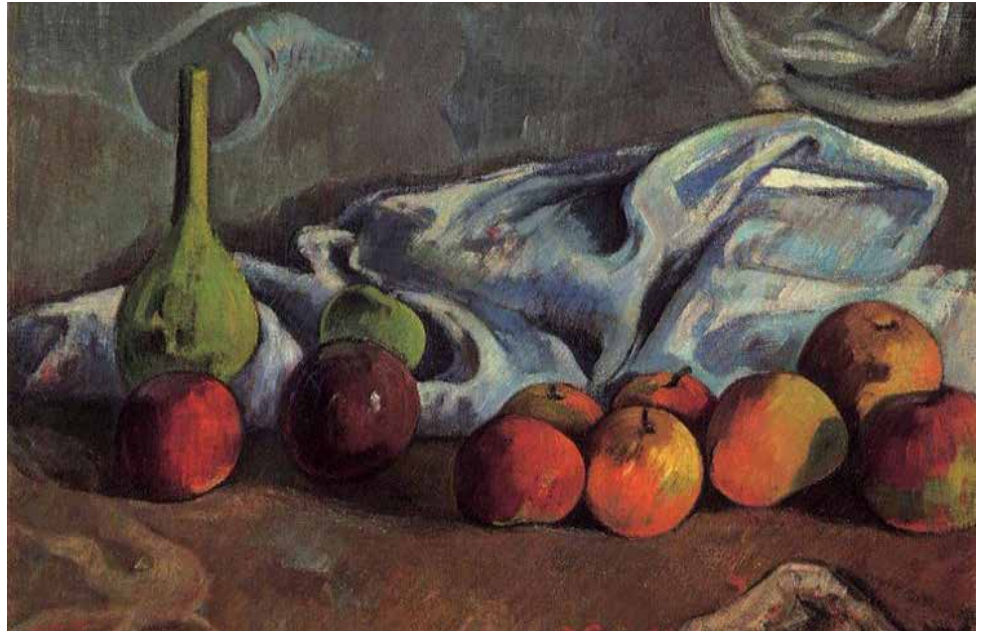
# Poetry Corner

by Nigel Davis

*Still life with apples  
and green vase*

Paul Gauguin

1890, France



There are some poems which are particularly good at conveying a sense of atmosphere. This poem, by John Drinkwater (1882-1937), is one of them.

The opening verses seem almost pictorial, although of course written as poetry — one can imagine an actual still-life painting of these moonlit apples by painters such as Gauguin or Cezanne, for instance. But the poem also provides a link between the apples — no longer on the boughs of a tree but stored in an attic — and the man and mouse occupied house below. And all the while the serene moon is casting its light from above, while everything is accompanied by the peace and quiet of night - time.

The simplicity of the poem is enhanced by the very careful, but very unobtrusive, rhyming structure. And I reckon that even Tennyson would have admired the phrase “dapples the apples”. A rather beautiful and mysterious poem.

## Moonlit Apples

by John Drinkwater

At the top of the house the apples are laid in rows,  
And the skylight lets the moonlight in, and those  
Apples are deep-sea apples of green. There goes  
A cloud on the moon in the autumn night.

A mouse in the wainscot scratches, and scratches, and then  
There is no sound at the top of the house of men  
Or mice; and the cloud is blown, and the moon again  
Dapples the apples with deep-sea light.

They are lying in rows there, under the gloomy beams;  
On the sagging floor, they gather the silver streams  
Out of the moon, those moonlit apples of dreams,  
And quiet is the steep stair under.

In the corridors under there is nothing but sleep.  
And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep  
Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep  
On moon-washed apples of wonder.



OCTOBER GETAWAY