

YOUR

FEBRUARY 2026

ALMHOUSE

MAGAZINE



Iris by Vincent van Gogh, symbol of love and
new beginnings in the month of St. Valentine

Your Photos



Top left: National Memorial Arboretum by Derrick Thompson.
Top right: Pen Ponds in Richmond Park by Marianna Davis.
Bottom left: The train line to Shepperton by Chantal Richards.
Bottom right: Sion Road, Twickenham by Becky Evans.



**Send in Your
Seasonal
and Local
Photographs**

We would love
to show your
photos on this
page. Send to:
Becky Evans
07386 667185
or Derrick
Thompson
07796 619697
via Whatsapp.

Welcome to our new resident:

Joy Birne,
Doughty's

Farewell
It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to:

Doreen Colbert,
Hickey's, RIP

David Baker,
Hickey's, RIP

Jackie Wheaton,
Hickey's, moving on.

Front cover:
Iris by Vincent van Gogh, a symbol of love and new beginnings

Back cover:
Winter by Vincent van Gogh

Editorial Committee and Content:

Mike Townsin

Editor

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Rebecca Evans

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Chantal Richards

Derrick Thompson

Gennie Thompson

Magazine Design:

Chantal Richards

Readers' articles and photos.

If you would like to contribute to our next issue, the deadline is **Friday 13 February**. As a guide on word-count, a half page is about 170 words. **Please submit your contributions and/or photos to your Scheme Manager.**



This magazine is recyclable.
Please feel free to share your magazine with others.

Dates for Your Diary

Monday 2 February

Zumba

11am. See page 11

Wednesday 18 February

Film Club

2pm. See page 7

Monday 24 February

Meditation

11am. See page 10

Wednesday 25 February

Virtual History Tour

2pm. See page 7

Wednesday 4 February

Bingo

1.45pm. See page 7

Forthcoming Out and About Group Days

Tuesday 10 February.

Visit to the **Orchid Festival in Kew Gardens**. Meet at Richmond Station at 10.45am

Tuesday 10 March

Japan House for Hyakko – a collection of 2,000 handcrafted items. Meet at Richmond Station 10am.

Magazine Survey

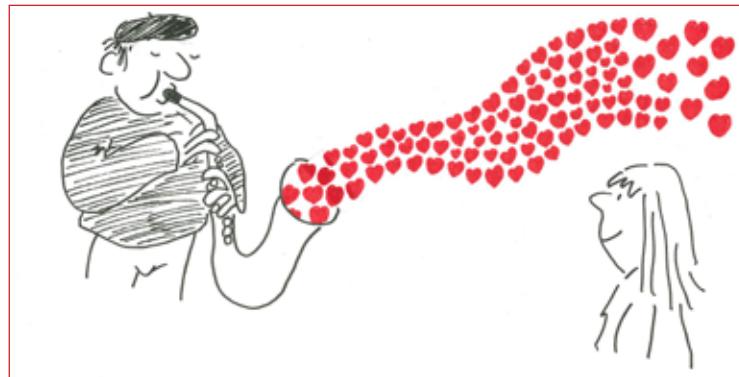
Dear reader,

We would like to know how you rate various items featured in magazine. To this end, please complete the survey leaflet included in this issue and return to your Scheme Manager **by the end of February**. To provide us with a full picture, please also refer to any back copies you have to hand, or from memory.

Many thanks. Ed.

Valentine Cartoons

by Ian Heath



Food Glorious Food: *Winter Warmers*

by Heather Shipley

This month, our Foodies group met at Margaret Goddard's home at Candler Almshouses. Margaret had made some delicious *Winter Warmers* including:

- Pea and ham soup
- Warming vegetable soup
- Caramelised onion and cheese bread (see *recipe below*)
- Bread and butter pudding



Recipe: **Caramelised onion and cheese bread**

Ingredients:

340g strong flour(12 oz.)
1 sachet of easy blend yeast
1 teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon sea salt
30g butter(1 oz.)
1 beaten egg
140ml milk(¼ pint)

Ingredients for the filling:

30g butter(1 oz.)
2 onions, halved and sliced thinly
140g grated cheese(5 oz.)
Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Place flour, yeast, sugar and salt in a bowl and rub in the butter. Mix in the egg and milk. Knead for 10 mins. Put into oiled plastic bag and prove for 1 hour until doubled in size.
2. Meanwhile make the filling. Melt butter and fry onions for 20 mins over medium heat until golden. Cool.
3. Lightly grease an oven tray with a rim.
4. On a lightly floured board roll out the dough to a rectangle 38cm x 22cm (15"x9"). Do not knock it back. Scatter onions over the dough and sprinkle with grated cheese. Sprinkle with black pepper, roll the dough tightly starting from the long edge, then form into a circle, tucking in the ends.
5. Transfer to a baking tray, and make deep cuts at 5cm (2") intervals. Cover and prove for 45mins.
6. Brush with milk and poppy seeds, bake in a preheated oven 200C for 25 mins. Cool on a wire rack.

Enjoy!



Our next *Food Glorious Food* event is

Wednesday 11 February at 10am

Please check venue details with your Scheme Manager

Out and About Day Trip to the Museum of the Order of St. John.

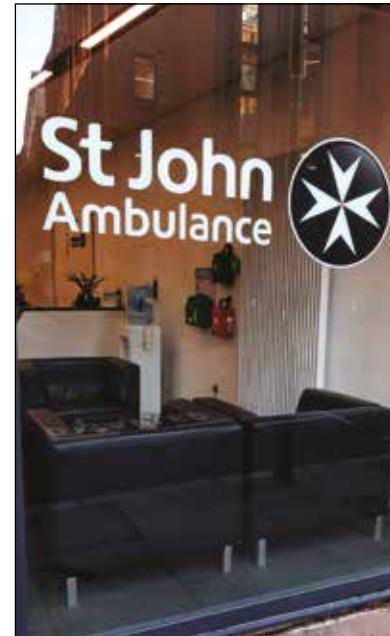
by Richard Yardley

The museum of the Order of St. John in Clerkenwell tells the history of the Venerable Order of Saint John from its roots as a pan-European order of Hospitaller Knights of St. John, from its foundation in Jerusalem during the Crusades to its present-day commitment to providing first aid and care in the community through the St John Ambulance brigade and running an ophthalmic hospital in Jerusalem.

It is based in St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, a 16th-century gatehouse in London that once formed the entrance to the Priory of Clerkenwell. From here Hospitaller Knights went out to the Holy Land and later to Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta. They served in hospitals treating pilgrims and fought to defend Christian interests in the Holy Land and the Mediterranean.

The museum completed a renovation in November 2010. The re-design has also revealed more of the wonderful Tudor building. Through the use of audio-visual displays everyone is now able to learn about and enjoy the heritage of the order of St. John.

St John Ambulance has a history spanning more than 125 years and covering over 40 countries worldwide.



Our next *Out And About* trip is to Kew Gardens - Orchid Festival
Tuesday 10 February
at 10am

Mobile Hairdressing Service

We are pleased to share details of a private mobile hairdressing service now available to The Richmond Charities' residents.

Samantha Roake is a friendly and experienced mobile hairdresser who can visit residents in their own homes, offering a comfortable and convenient way to enjoy hair appointments without the need to travel.



Samantha offers a wide range of services, including:

- **Haircuts**
- **Wash and blow-dries**
- **Perms and blow-dries (her specialty)**
- **Colours**
- **Gentle trims and styling**

She has particular experience working with people in their later life, taking time to ensure each appointment is relaxed, unhurried, and tailored to individual needs and preferences.

Samantha offers affordable prices, and her 2026 diary is now open for bookings.

To enquire or book an appointment contact:
Samantha
07955 837882

Debbie's Things to Do in February



February gardening is about gently preparing for spring. It's a good time to prune roses and fruit trees, tidy winter pots, and start chitting seed potatoes on a sunny windowsill. You can also sow sweetpeas, tomatoes and herbs indoors, ready to plant out later in the year.



February brings a mix of theatre, films, coffee mornings and Valentine's events. It's a lovely month for enjoying cultural activities, social gatherings and cosy afternoons out.



Use the quieter winter days to freshen up your home—washing curtains, airing bedding, organising cupboards and giving rooms a gentle clean ready for spring. Try clearing one drawer or cupboard at a time and enjoying the feeling of a tidy, comfortable space.



With Valentine's Day this month, it's a nice time to focus on kindness, friendships and feeling connected—whether that's writing a card, sharing a cup of tea, or spending time with others.



As the days slowly become lighter, February is perfect for planning the year ahead, choosing what you'd like to grow, and looking forward to the warmer months to come.



February is perfect for gentle outings such as coffee mornings, libraries, museums and local events. It's also a nice month to enjoy films, talks and social activities indoors when the weather is still cool.



Film Club *Friendly Persuasion*

**Wednesday 18 February
at 2.00pm
in The Chapel of St Francis**

The patriarch of a peace-loving Quaker family, Jess Birdwell (Gary Cooper), begins to question his pacifist values when the Civil War moves toward his close-knit Indiana community. Meanwhile, Jess's daughter, Mattie, is in love with a soldier, and her brother, Josh (Anthony Perkins), contemplates picking up arms to defend his home lest he be considered a coward. As Confederate forces draw nearer, the Birdwells must make some difficult, life-altering decisions.

Director: William Wyler

Actors: Gary Cooper, Dorothy McGuire and Anthony Perkins

Rating: U | **Runtime:** 2h 17m | **IMDb:** 7.3/10, **Rotten Tomatoes:** 83% | **Popcornmeter:** 81%

Refreshments during the interval.

**FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH
IN ST FRANCIS CHAPEL, HICKEYS
1:45PM SUGGESTED ARRIVAL | 2PM START**

BINGO

Prizes: Bag of grocery goodies and/or monetary voucher/s

£1 to play | Books and dabbers provided
10 games + Jackpot page
with Bill, our Bingo caller

Tea, coffee and biscuit break included
Bingo usually lasts up to 1.5 hours
Friends and family welcome too!



The Richmond Charities Almshouses

Join us on a virtual walking tour from Richmond Green to The Chapel of St Francis, Hickey's Almshouses.

Wednesday 25 February

Along the way we will visit seven of our Almshouses and find out more about how they came to be there and the people who founded them.



Virtual History Tour

Tea and cake at 2pm

Tour Starts at 2.30pm, finishing around 3.30pm

In the Chapel of St. Francis, Hickey's Almshouses.



We will also take note of the seven other Almshouses in The Richmond Charities' care.

All from the comfort of a cushioned Chapel chair!

Come along and bring a friend!



Chaplains Chat

with Chaplain Derrick

Just after the middle of this month, we will be celebrating Shrove Tuesday which is becoming more commonly known as 'Pancake Day'. It is a great time to dig out the frying pan to rediscover our pancake tossing skills, argue over whether to cook 'English' or Scots/Dutch/American pancakes before then deciding what to have with them!

Of course, all this only exists as it is the day before Ash Wednesday, the start of the forty days fast of Lent, and all the 'luxury' foods in the house have to be used up before then.

It has been interesting to note the growing attention to giving things up for Lent in recent years. A quick Internet search reveals that the three most popular things to sacrifice in Lent are: chocolate and/or sweets, alcohol



and social media! I wonder if you are thinking of giving up any of these, or something else, from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday?

There is another alternative for Lent though. Rather than giving things up why not take things up that will do you or your neighbours good? Perhaps try a new hobby, or start taking more exercise with a friend, or invite old and new friends in for a cuppa and a chat.

Lent is about preparing for Easter when we remember the crucifixion and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, a time of re-birth and new beginnings. So, rather than thinking about the negative 'giving something up' for Lent, why not take something up? Start doing a new thing or re-start doing something you have not done for a while and discover some new life!



The Chapel of St Francis

Service Times: February 2026

Sunday 1 February	10.30am Holy Communion Led By Revd. Elisabeth Morse Followed by refreshments.
Sunday 8 February	10.30am Holy Communion.
Sunday 15 February	10.30am Holy Communion.
Wednesday 18 February	11.00am Ash Wednesday Communion.
Sunday 22 February	10.30am Holy Communion.

All are welcome to join us.

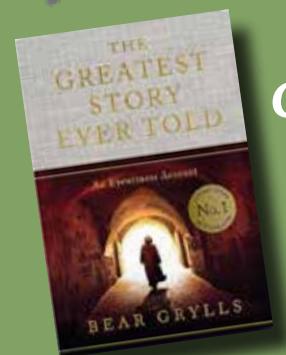
Morning Prayer, most Tuesdays at 10am.

For more information email Chaplain Derrick:
d.thompson@richmondcharities.org.uk
 07796 619697



BOOK GROUP

The Greatest Story Ever Told



Book Group Dates

at The Chapel of St Francis

Last session is on 10 February 2026

Time: 2pm – 3.30pm

Refreshments provided!

Trustee File



Paul Phillips

Hello, I am Paul Phillips and have been a trustee of Richmond Charities since 2022. I am also a member of the Finance and Property committees. I have been especially pleased to see us

build two new almshouse buildings with a total of 17 new homes in them since I arrived. Given the difficulty in finding places to build in our borough, that is quite an achievement!

I have lived in Twickenham since 1996, having moved back to the London area from Weston-super-Mare. I have worked as the Chief Financial Officer on a number of housing associations throughout my working life, most recently at Notting Hill Genesis. I finally retired in 2021, although my wife would say that I haven't retired at all as I do various work-like activities, such as Richmond Charities! I have three children and am very proud of what they have achieved with their lives. I also have two grandchildren who live in Canada with their mum, but we see quite a lot of them all the same.

Aside from visiting the family, my wife and I are members of the Strawberry Hill Community Choir and go to rehearsals every week. We also participate in their concerts twice a year. We also do ballroom dancing and I appreciated the dancers at the Christmas lunch this year – they were much better than us! We are, though, the proud joint-holders of the *Guinness Book of Records* award for the largest jive ever carried out (only slightly tempered by the fact that there are 998 other record holders!). The above picture was taken at the end of the event which took place on the promenade at Cheltenham.

I wish you a Happy New Year and hope to see you around in 2026.

The Importance of First Aid

by Julie Morgans



Many have or will witness an accident or observe someone suddenly becoming seriously unwell. Such moments can be extremely stressful and unsettling, but

possessing first aid knowledge empowers individuals to act and provide crucial aid until professional help arrives.

First aid is not merely a practical skill; it is an essential life skill that should be taught in schools and colleges and made accessible to everyone. There are several key reasons why first aid is so important:

- **Prevention of further injury:** Timely intervention can stop the situation from worsening and help prevent more harm to the person affected.

- **Stabilisation of condition:** Basic first aid can help stabilise the individual's condition until emergency services arrive.

- **Empowering action:** Having first aid skills gives confidence and encourages people to act, which can significantly improve the outcome for the person in need.

In some instances, simply contacting emergency services is the best course of action. However, there are situations where immediate intervention is critical. Failing to act, especially in cases such as severe bleeding, can result in life-threatening consequences, including shock and potentially cardiac arrest.

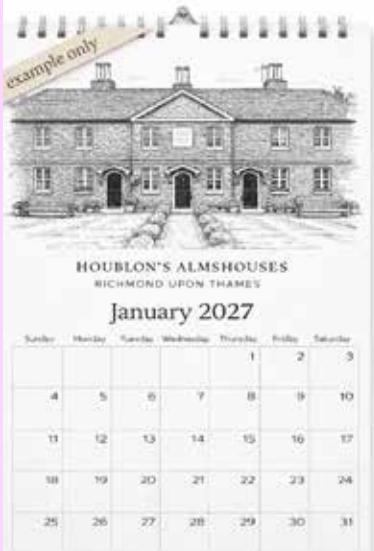
Richmond Charities has listened to residents' feedback and we will be providing first aid training.

Classes will be advertised in the coming months in this magazine and in the activities leaflet.

Calling All Creatives!

We are so organised this year that we are even starting to think about 2027!

Richmond Charities Calendar



This time next year we would like you all to be in possession of a **Richmond Charities Calendar** — something created for you, by members of our own community.

We will need 14 photographs or pieces of artwork — one for each month and a front and back cover. We would love it if the photographs and artwork came from you.

The theme is '**community**', and you can take a photograph or produce your own drawing or painting depicting what community means to you.

Entries should be shared with your Scheme Manager and will be judged by a panel. The 14 winning entries will be used to create our 2027 calendar.

Winning contributors will be treated to a special creative outing once the results are announced.

The small print:

- What we need from you: a photograph or piece of artwork depicting what **community** means to you. Any size.
- **Deadline for submission: 30 September 2026**

Rules:

- Your contribution must be your own work
- If you are taking photographs that include people you must have their written permission to submit the photograph to the competition
- If you are taking photographs of buildings, please respect the privacy of others by not taking close ups of windows and doors without the occupier's permission

Good luck!

And thanks in advance for helping us celebrate our community throughout the year.

Bridge Club

by Margaret Goddard



Do you like playing cards? Ever thought you would like to play Bridge? Or do you think it is too hard? If so, think about it.

Do you play a musical instrument? Or play a sport? Or even read a book? Do you remember beginning to learn these skills? Seemed hard didn't it? But with a little perseverance a whole world opened up!

It's a bit like that with Bridge. At the beginning there seems so much to learn. But it is worth persevering with!

It's a game. Of course you play to win — there would be no point in playing at all if you didn't! And there is always the element of chance — if you don't get at least some good (i.e. winning) cards, there is not much you can do about it! Doing the best you can with a poor hand is challenging in itself — and you are playing with a partner who may have some good cards! Although it is a game for four players, if we don't have a multiple of four we take it in turns to play and the others watch — we all learn a lot from watching.

Why not give it a try. We are a friendly group, and won't shout at you!

If you find it is not for you, fine. Maybe, like me, you gave up on musical instruments and sport! But give it a go first! You might surprise yourself!

Bridge Club:

Every Monday and Friday.
2pm in The Garden Room.

What is Zumba Gold?

by Clare Sheehan

Zumba
Instructor



Zumba Gold is a dance-based workout, with music and dance styles from all around the world.

It is for everyone, regardless of age or ability, as it is an adapted Zumba programme specifically designed for the *older or less active* adult.

Classes are fun and lively and not only include a wide variety of music, but also movement from many dance styles, including Salsa, Merengue, Cumbia, Soca, Bhangra, Belly Dance, Flamenco and Tango.

Dance moves are made accessible to all and can be adapted to suit different levels of ability and agility.

It is not about getting the moves right, but enjoying the music, moving, and having fun!

The class is very welcoming to all, and we love having new faces join us. You can start at any point and do not need to have any previous experience. We hope to welcome you to a class soon,

and please do feel free to just come and watch and see what it's all about for yourself. We promise you, it is a great way to spend a Monday morning!

The classes can also help to improve:

- **Co-ordination**
- **Balance**
- **Flexibility**
- **Posture**
- **Range of motion**
- **Muscle strength**
- **Cardiovascular capacity**
- **Cognitive function**

This is what regular participants have to say:

"Zumba classes are really working well for me. Each time I feel more energetic, more agile, and in a better mood. I enjoy them a lot and I notice they help me both physically and mentally."

"I've been going to Zumba for quite some time now and find it so enjoyable, doing something positive that gets me moving and mixing with a nice group of people."

**Zumba:
Monday mornings.
11am in The Chapel**



MEDITATION

with Deborah

The next Meditation session is:

**Tuesday 24
February**

at 11am
in The Chapel of St Francis, Hickey's

What kind of meditation?

The inner guidance, dedicated meditation sessions help promote health and well-being.

Sessions have been very successful with wonderful positive feedback from participants.

If you feel you would like to take part, why don't you come and join in with our next course in February.

Your journey begins from within.

Are you ready to join her?



Meditation:

Tuesday 24

**February at 11am
in The Chapel**

Home and Away: National Memorial Arboretum



by Derrick Thompson

It was the 26th November (our wedding Anniversary) when we woke up on a cold, crisp morning in Derby, having been visiting friends there. They pointed out to us that on the road back to Richmond we would be passing by the National Memorial Arboretum, which is at Alrewas, Staffordshire. As

we were passing so near, and had not planned anything else for that day, we decided to pay a visit there and were so glad we did!



It is a fascinating park of over 150 acres with a large variety of trees and plants, many of them still quite young. Within the park there are also over 400 memorials, mostly in connection with WW2 and conflicts since. The main one, the Armed Forces Memorial, sits on top of a mound like a small fortress. It has round walls and contains two poignant statues. In the two south walls are small gaps that allow the sun to shine through to illuminate the bronze wreath in the centre at 11am on the eleventh of November. The monument is engraved with over 16,000 names of Forces Personnel who have been killed in action since the end of WW2. What we found most moving was the empty spaces on the walls, knowing that one day they too would be full of yet more people's names.

With such a big site we decided that it was worth paying the £7.50 (especially as the Arboretum is free to get into) for the one-hour land train tour with commentary. That helped us get our bearings and find out about some of the more interesting memorials. After the tour we spent another hour and half walking around the site taking photos in the beautiful November sunlight.

Thankfully there is a large restaurant in the visitor centre where we were able to retreat to for lunch and to warm up before the journey home.

If you ever have an opportunity to visit the National Memorial Arboretum, we would highly recommend it!

“We Met on a TV Dating Show!”

Ruth and I met in 2017 on the Chanel 4 dating programme called *First Dates Hotel*; Ruth proposed herself, and my daughter-in-law proposed me, without my prior knowledge.

This long-standing programme was filmed in Italy near Naples and was subsequently aired on Chanel 4 some months later.

Ruth and I enjoyed an all expenses paid 3-day trip: we were introduced at the bar in the hotel, dinner followed with a myriad of wines and by the end of the evening we were clearly compatible and opted for the second date the following day.

That was over 8 years ago, and we are still together enjoying each other’s company.

The highs and lows of life have brought us to this *Happy Place*: Ruth adores her almshouse in Barnes, and I am extremely fortunate to have been welcomed with open arms into my new home in Elizabeth Doughty Almshouses.

Being residents within the almshouse umbrella, the feeling of security and worth is a welcome change for both of us; the sense of community brings warmth, and for all of these things will be forever grateful.

Brian and Ruth



“Ruth and I enjoyed an all expenses paid 3-day trip”



Seven Easy-to-Integrate Life Hacks

that will have a profoundly positive and lasting impact on your health:

by Gennie Thompson

In this cold season, it's ever important to take extra care of our physical and mental health. Cold weather, short days and limited sunlight can pose challenges, but we hope that these simple tips will help you make the most of the season whilst ensuring your well-being.

1. Move!: ensure you exercise enough each day, movement helps improve our sleep, flexibility, strength and balance, whilst also helping to manage chronic health conditions such as arthritis, that tend to worsen with weather changes. Walking is a great way to keep active; you could try joining a class or check the activities leaflet to join in with something running here. If you are unable to get out then try to incorporate some at home stretching, a light yoga routine or chair exercises.



2. Embrace vitamin D: sunlight exposure is limited in the winter month, so it's important to ensure your vitamin D levels remain sufficient. Consider taking a supplement or increasing foods plentiful in vitamin D like fatty fish, fortified dairy products and egg yolks. Recent research has shown stepping outside first thing in the morning can greatly improve your sleep quality and will help top up your vitamin D (providing the sun is out).

3. Spend two hours in nature each week to boost your mental health: a study completed by Exeter University shows that this is the minimum amount of time needed in nature to improve your mood and wellbeing. Fortunately, this does not have to be all in one go.



4. Stay hydrated: drinking enough fluids will help maintain your immune system and ensure your body is functioning at its best.

5. Prioritise Sleep: adequate sleep is essential for the body to repair and rejuvenate itself. Establish a regular sleep routine, avoid stimulants like caffeine before bedtime, and create a comfortable sleep environment to ensure a restful night's sleep.

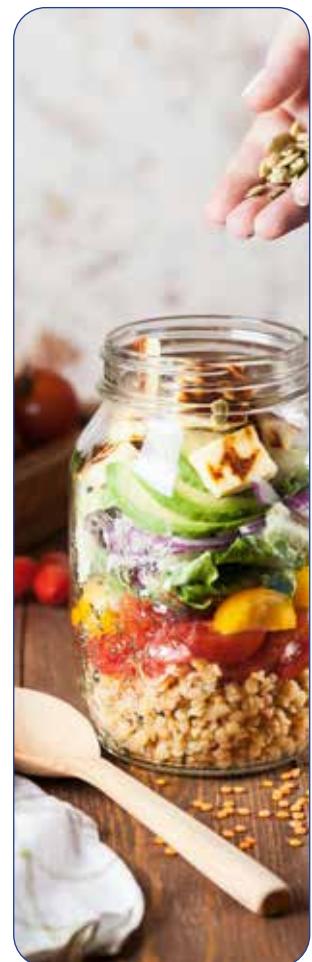
6. Listen to music more: music is not just for entertainment, it can also enhance performance, boost motivation, and minimize distractions. Not to mention make you feel good and maybe exercise your vocal cords!

7. Reduce drinking at mealtimes: although this is a normal custom for us, increasing amounts of research show that abstaining from drinking during mealtimes can have numerous benefits for our overall health and wellbeing, particularly if you suffer from digestive issues.

New Healthy Eating Group for The New Year

We are thinking of having a group meeting for tips and advice on healthy eating and would like to gauge interest from residents and see if this is something that would be of interest to you.

Please let your Scheme Manager know if you would like to take part.



Loneliness

by Gennie Thompson

You may have read publications regarding loneliness and be aware of its impact on people. Sadly, many factors of the modern world are causing loneliness to be considered a global health epidemic which is on the rise and affecting all age groups.

Research suggests that chronic loneliness can lead to increased stress levels, depression, cognitive decline, elevated blood pressure and even a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Therefore, it is crucial to address and combat loneliness to maintain a healthy and vibrant life. Fortunately, **our community and wider borough has plenty of opportunities** to help reduce this risk, below are some of the most effective ways to combat loneliness.



Stay socially active: Engage in activities that bring you joy and allow you to connect with others. Join local clubs or take up a new hobby and become a regular. Participating in group activities can help you build new friendships.



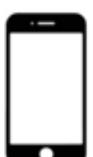
Volunteer, help out or give back: Whether its sitting with a neighbour, getting a few bits from the shop, joining an organisation as a volunteer or helping out somewhere in the community, helping others helps us.



Seek support: Reach out to those around you, family, friends, a scheme manager or support groups if you are feeling lonely. It may help strengthen your existing relationships. Talking about how you are feeling can help identify ways to improve things.



Practice self-care: Take time to look after yourself, make time to exercise, relax, get enough sleep and eat well. This will all only help you to feel good, as well as enjoying the little things.



Embrace technology: Utilise technology as a way to help create or maintain connections, why not try an IT session we are currently running? Whether using a device to communicate with loved ones whilst seeing them or researching the various activities and meet ups that happen locally, technology can help to bridge the gap when in-person connections are limited for whatever reason.

Crystal of the Month:

Amethyst

by Gennie Thompson

February's Birthstone

For those celebrating a February birthday, amethyst is your birthstone, a gem long admired for its beauty and for its meaning.



Amethyst is a purple sparkly crystal. (*Siberian Amethyst shown left*). Its name comes from ancient Greek, meaning “not intoxicated.” Historically and still today, it is believed to promote clear thinking, calm emotions, and protection from excess ideas that have endured for centuries.

From a spiritual perspective, amethyst is often associated with peace, balance, and inner strength due to it having a steady, gentle vibration and frequency. Many people believe it supports emotional wellbeing, helps quiet a busy mind, and encourages restful sleep. It has long been linked with wisdom, intuition, and a sense of spiritual clarity, making it a comforting stone during times of reflection or change. If you would like to cleanse or recharge your amethyst, place it on a windowsill or outside overnight, ideally on the night of the full moon.

Throughout history, amethyst has been highly regarded by royalty and spiritual leaders, worn to symbolise dignity, protection and insight. Whether worn in jewellery, displayed as an ornament or enjoyed for its colour and beauty, amethyst is a reminder that February, though often cold, rainy and quiet, carries its own special richness and beauty.



To Be Pacific

A poem by Brian Bilston

submitted by Alan Shirley

Why do you always go off on a tandem,
say goodbye without further adieu?
It's time you climbed down from your pedal stool –
this is not a phrase you're going through,

when antidotal evidence suggests
you've been three-wheeling right from the start.
Or rather, *from the gecko*, as you might say.
You're always upsetting the apple tart.

Now I'm not saying I'm above approach:
it takes two to tangle, I won't deny it.
But when push comes to shovel and all's set and done,
I need a rest bite. A little piece of quiet.

I'd love to curl up in the feeble position
but you pass me from pillow to post, you see,
with your Belgian whistles and semi-skilled milk –
they do not pass mustard with me.

I don't regard you as a social leopard.
You're no escape goat – just a hapless case.
But do be aware there may be reaper cushions
when you cut off your nose despite your face.

Wit and Wisdom

Curated by Mike Townsin

• When you go into court you are putting your fate into the hands of 12 people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.
Norm Crosby, US comedian

• The axe forgets, the tree never does. *African proverb*

• The trouble with having an open mind, of course, is that people will insist on coming along and trying to put things in it. *Terry Pratchett*

• Success seems to be a matter of hanging on after others have let go. *William Feather, US writer*

• If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs, it's just possible you haven't grasped the situation. *Jean Kerr, US writer*

• Old age is the most unexpected of all things that happen to a man. *Leon Trotsky*

• I always wanted to be somebody, but I should have been more specific. *Jane Wagner, US writer*

• When we ask for advice, we are usually looking for an accomplice. *Saul Bellow*

• Progress isn't made by early risers; it's made by lazy men trying to find easy ways of doing something. *Robert Heinlein, sci-fi writer*

A New Year Begins

A poem by
Steve Harbud



As a new year just begins, the world keeps turning,
The roads we walk are always clear and bright.
With every hope renewed to feel the soft winds
blowing,
A canvas fresh to face the morning light.

A time to rise with dreams and problems disappearing.
Doors that open and to hear the children sing,
A chance to build and change, a chance to carry on,
And a promise of what the new year has to bring.

Yet far too many shadows fall on other lands,
The bells of peace ring distant and so faint.
Where hunger children cry, as war still commands,
And we're haunted by the images we paint.

No one should ever wake to see the shattered skies,
While others feast and toast a bright new year,
The children's laughter lost, within their weary cries.
As they clutch at hope that probably won't appear.

So as the new year dawns, let every heart unite,
Although the world may still be torn apart.
For every dawn that breaks belongs to everyone,
A time to share with love and open heart.

Although the shadows linger, hope is always near,
Bringing comfort to lands that cry for more.
Let all kindness spread to shape the coming year,
And a chance to live in peace forevermore.

Miscellany

Curated by
Mike Townsin

- The first English reference to fish-and-chips called them 'a considerable source of nuisance'.
- The late Queen was a fee-paying member of the Jigsaw Puzzle Library.
- Alcohol helps you speak foreign languages better.



• A man in Rio has lived in a sandcastle since 1996.

- The phrase 'vital statistics' originally referred to births, marriages and deaths.

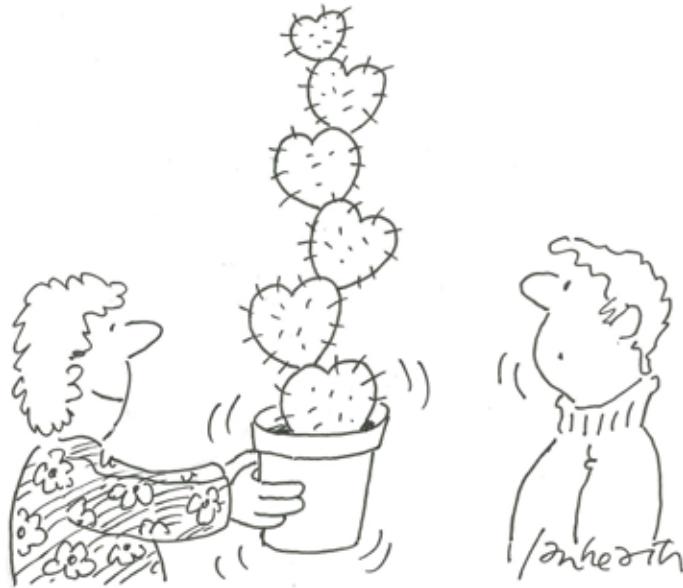
• The first eight Popes were all murdered.

• The word 'shampoo' comes from a Hindi word meaning 'to knead'.

• Hotmail is so named because it contains the letters HTML: it means Hyper Text Markup Language.



• When ducks sleep in a row the ones at either end sleep with their outside eye open, looking for predators.



And the Good News is...

Curated by **Mike Townsin**

• A bionic chip has been inserted in a Moorfields Eye Hospital patient's blind eye. The patient has been able to detect signals in her blind left eye thanks to a revolutionary new implant. She is the first UK patient to receive this new device, as part of a Europe-wide clinical trial.

• Jamie Hargreaves, a 23-year-old from Cheshire has cycled 15,534 miles from Derby to Sydney, retracing a route his father took at the same age in 1984. He set off in May, took a ferry to France, then headed across Europe to Turkey, cycled through Russia, the 'Stans' and Pakistan, visited Everest Base Camp in Nepal, before cycling through Southeast Asia – arriving in Sydney in mid-December.



Craig, believed to be one of Africa's largest super-tuskers – male elephants with ivory tusks weighing more than 45 kilogrammes each – making him a prime target for poachers, has died

naturally and peacefully, aged 54, in Amboseli National Park, Kenya, thanks to protection efforts. Craig was a tourist favourite and "deeply loved for his remarkably calm nature", said the Kenya Wildlife Service.

What's the Origin of...?

Curated by **Mike Townsin**

• **I've been snookered.** It is thought the game was invented in India in 1875, by Sir Neville Chamberlain, a British Army officer. 'Snookers' comes from the nickname given to first year cadets, studying at the Royal Military Academy Woolwich, implying that the cadet was confused about what was going on.

• **Run of the mill.** The textile mill was used to generate yards of fabric, known as 'run-of-the-mill'. It would then be taken to other machines to be cut, graded for quality or dyed into different colours. So run-of-the-mill became known as anything that was unrefined – the original fabric before being treated.

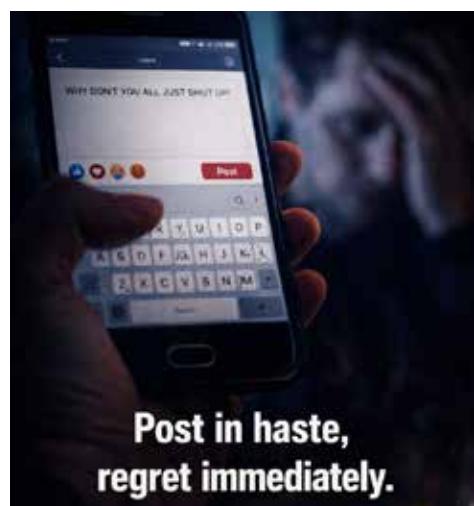
• **Win hands down.** In the 19th century It was observed that a horse would run faster if the jockey pulled hard on the reins, or slower if he loosened them. If a horse was leading by a long distance and the jockey's hands were nevertheless loose or 'down' it suggested he was confident of an easy win. In such cases it would be reported that the horse and jockey has won 'hands down' or easily.

• **Barking up the wrong tree.** When out hunting with dogs some game animals like squirrels and wild rabbits would escape from the dogs by running up trees, and would leave the dogs barking at the tree; sometimes the prey would jump into the branches of a neighbouring tree, unbeknown to the dog, which would be left 'barking up the wrong tree'

Modern Day Proverbs

Submitted by Alan Shirley

Starting this month we have a selection of Brian Bilston's *Modern Day Proverbs* which playfully update classic sayings with sharp, modern humour, poking fun at the quirks of contemporary life and our dependence on technology—for example, "A WhatsApp a day keeps your mother at bay."



On
This
Day...
curated by
Debbie Flaherty

11
February
1990. Nelson
Mandela walks
to freedom after
spending 27 years
in his tiny cell.

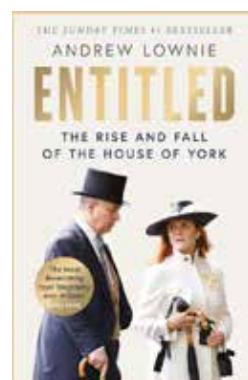
19
February
1878. Thomas
Edison takes out
a patent on the
phonograph, the first
record player that
can both record
and reproduce
sound.

12
February
1881 Ballerina Anna
Pavlova is born and
becomes famous for her
signature dance *The
Dying Swan*.

29
February
1288. Scotland
enshrines in
law the tradition
of Leap Year Day
marriage proposals
from women to men.
Any man refusing
the offer of marriage
would be required
to pay financial
compensation to
the rejected
party.

Page Turner

*The Rise and Fall of
the House of York*
by Andrew Lownie



Review by
Mike Townsin

If this astonishing biography of the Duke and Duchess of York wasn't so obviously well researched, one would scarcely believe the scale of their extravagant lifestyles, coupled with their arrogance, financial excess and sense of entitlement.

It takes us from Andrew's record in the Falklands, his subsequent dubious business activities, through his sexual habits and relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, to his recent final downfall – alternating with Sarah Ferguson's desperate quest to maintain the status and attention accorded by her position within the royal family, notwithstanding their separation after 6 years of marriage and eventual divorce.

There are some attempts to psychoanalyse the pair, even explain, their obsessions with sex and money, mostly put down to Andrew's spoiled upbringing and Fergie's insecurities but, ultimately, it's a tale of the danger of unchecked power, in this case afforded by that unique, protected institution we know as 'The Firm'.

It felt a bit long due to the relentless portrayal of scandal and greed, but if this is what fascinates you it's also unputdownable!



Brain Exercises:

Anagrams: African Animals

1. braze.....
2. choir snore.....
3. ale drop.....
4. haney.....
5. leap then.....
6. fear fig.....
7. bite slewed.....
8. photopia sump.....
9. each the.....
10. log rail.....
11. dakar var.....
12. along nip.....
13. de lo ricco.....

Competition Winners

Thank you to everyone who sent in entries for the January competitions.

Picked at random, our £10 M&S voucher winners this month are:

Connie Yorke – Television Quotes

Brian Myhill – Cryptograms

Congratulations!

Answer: Cryptogram. February Issue.

Well done if you managed to crack the code on the cryptogram!

The answer is:

The third time someone tries to put a saddle on you, you should admit you're a horse.

Answers: Anagrams. February Issue. Winter Warmers.

headline tooth =	knicker macho =
toad in the hole	chicken korma
gate poetic = cottage pie	ratten shopaholic =
feb sweet= beef stew	Lancashire hotpot
encashed mace =	belove upstage =
mac and cheese	vegetable soup
perished shep = shepherd's pie	sagas unashamed =
assuage escaroles =	sausages and mash
sausage casserole	hifi sep= fish pie
cello chinacrin =	claw= cawl
chile con carne	east nanobots= beans on toast
phoebe toft = beef hotpot	

Answers: Television Quotes. January Issue.

1. "It's goodbye from me and it's goodbye from him."
Prog: The Two Ronnies
Persons: Ronnie Barker and Ronnie Corbett

2. "Betty!"
Prog: Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em
Character: Frank Spencer
Person: Michael Crawford

3. "I don't believe it."
Prog: One Foot in the Grave
Character: Victor Meldrew
Person: Richard Wilson

4. "Lovely Jubbly!"
Prog: Only Fools and Horses
Character: Derek "Del Boy" Trotter
Person: David Jason

5. "Just like that."
Person: Tommy Cooper

6. "I've started so I'll finish."
Prog: Mastermind
Person: Magnus Magnusson

7. "Listen, I will only say this once." (French accent)
Prog: Allo 'Allo!

8. "Nice to see you. To see you nice."
Prog: The Generation Game
Person: Sir Bruce Forsyth

9. "I have a cunning plan."
Prog: Blackadder
Character: Baldrick

Person: Sir Tony Robinson

10. "It's a no from me"
Prog: Britain's Got Talent
Person: Simon Cowell

11. "Can I have a P please Bob?"
Prog: Blockbusters
Person: Bob Holness

12. "Get outta my pub!"
Pub name: Queen Vic pub
Programme: EastEnders

Character: Peggy Mitchell
Person: Dame Barbara Windsor

13. "Stupid boy!"
Prog: Dad's Army
Character: Captain Mainwaring

Person: Arthur Lowe

14. "Don't panic! Don't panic!"
Prog: Dad's Army
Character: Lance-Corporal Jack Jones

Person: Clive Dunn

15. "Ooh, you are awful but I like you"
Prog: The Dick Emery Show
Character: Mandy

Person: Dick Emery

16. "I'm free!"
Prog: Are You Being Served?
Character: Mr. Humphries

Person: John Inman

17. "The Bouquet
Residence. The lady of the house speaking."

Prog: Keeping Up Appearances
Character: Hyacinth Bucket
Person: Dame Patricia Routledge

18. "And finally."
Prog: ITV's News at Ten
Person: Sir Trevor McDonald

Here is the Tagline – Guess the Film!

1. "You'll never go in the water again." Film:	8. "Check-in. Relax. Take a shower." Film:	15. "Here's looking at you, kid." Film:	22. :He is afraid. He is alone. He is three million light years from home." Film:
2. "Who you gonna call?" Film:	9. "In Space, no-one can hear you scream." Film:	16. "Let the magic begin." Film:	23. "To enter the mind of a killer she must challenge the mind of a madman." Film:
3. "They were 7... and they fought like 700." Film:	10. "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away..." Film:	17. "17 year old Marty McFly got home early last night. 30 years early." Film:	24. "They'll never get caught. They're on a Mission From God"? Film:
4. "We scare because we care." Film:	11. "They're young, they're in love, and they kill people." Film:	18. "She walked off the street, into his life and stole his heart." Film:	25. "Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you're gonna get." Film:
5. "You'll believe a man can fly." Film:	12. "He's having the worst day of his life ... over and over ..." Film:	19. "His passion captivated a woman. His courage inspired a nation. His heart defied a king." Film:	26. "One ring to rule them all." Film:
6. "The mission is a man." Film:	13. "Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free." Film:	20. "The future will not be user friendly." Film:	27. "Never let your friends tie you to the tracks." Film:
7. "Houston, we have a problem." Film:	14. "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore" Film:	21. "Love actually is all around." Film:	28. "Are you in or out?" Film:

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Find all 20 countries and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box before Friday 13 February.
Name:



Wordsearch: Top 20 Coldest Countries!

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

Countries with average temperature in brackets

Greenland (-18.5)

Canada (-7.1)

Russia (-6.3)

Mongolia (-0.5)

Norway (0.8)

Heard Island and

McDonald Islands (2.4)

Finland (2.8)

Sweden (3.3)

French Southern and

Antarctic Lands (4.1)

Kyrgyzstan (4.2)

Saint Pierre and Miquelon

(5.7)

Tajikistan (5.7)

Estonia (6.3)

Switzerland (6.4)

Faroe Islands (6.6)

Latvia (6.87)

North Korea (6.9)

Kazakhstan (7.11)

Lithuania (7.3)

Austria (7.4)

The United Kingdom is the 33rd coldest country (out of 234)!

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Find all 20 countries and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box before Friday 13 February.

Name:

Poetry Corner

by Nigel Davis

As it is February, the month of Saint Valentine's Day, let's have a poem on the theme of loving relationships.

Shelley as a lyric poet has always been held in the highest regard by fellow poets and many others. I must say that he does not usually press too many buttons for me – all that high-flown language, all those “thees” and “thous”, all those exclamation marks. But he has endured over the years and anyway, of course, it is all a matter of personal taste.

Still, I like this poem. Rafi, one of our wonderful organists in the Chapel on Sundays (and the grandson of Jemima of Church Estate!), told me that his choir recently sang an arrangement of it at a choral concert; and I believe that it is still sometimes chosen as a reading at weddings. The poem was in fact written out in 1819 into the pocketbook of Shelley's great friend and promoter Leigh Hunt and then presented to an admirer called Sophia Stacey. You will notice that quite a few of the words are repeated – but somehow the poet gets away with it.

Love's Philosophy

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the Ocean
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one spirit meet and mingle.
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother;
And the sunlight clasps the earth
And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
What is all this sweet work worth
If thou kiss not me?



Springtime

by Pierre-Auguste Cot (French) 1873

This flirtatious duo in classicizing dress, painted with notable technical finesse, reflects Cot's allegiance to the academic style of his teachers, including Bouguereau and Cabanel. Exhibited at the Salon of 1873, the picture was Cot's greatest success, widely admired and copied in engravings, fans, porcelains, and tapestries. Its first owner, hardware tycoon John Wolfe, awarded the work a prime spot in his Manhattan mansion, where visitors delighted in “this reveling pair of children, drunken with first love... this Arcadian idyll, peppered with French spice.” (The Met Fifth Avenue, New York)



Winter by Vincent van Gogh