

YOUR

MARCH 2026

# ALMHOUSE

MAGAZINE

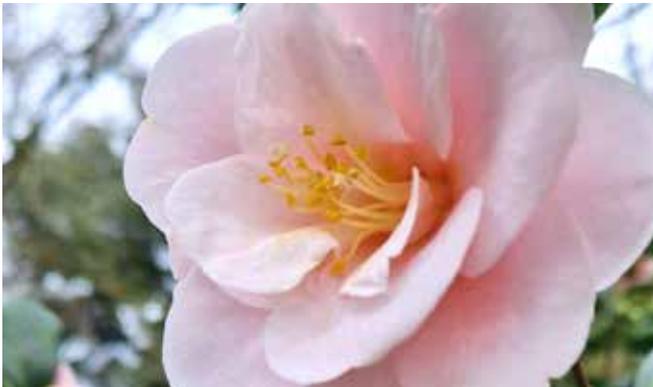


# Your Photos



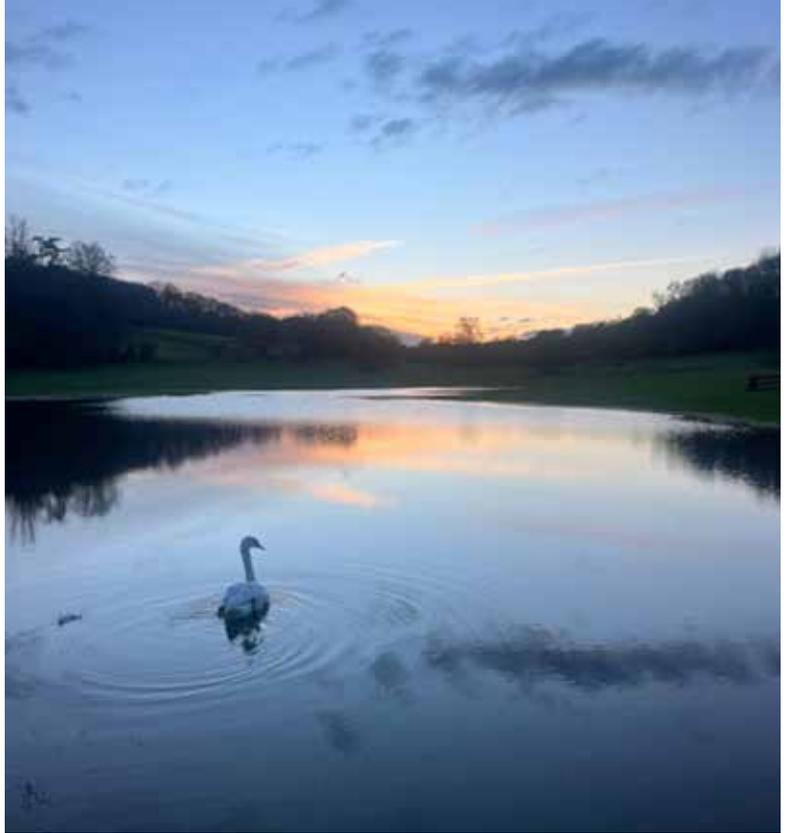
*Sunset over the lake, Kew Gardens, by Marianna Davis.*

*Mandarin duck by Nigel Davis*



*Crocus and snowdrops in the cemetery near Hickey's by Gennie Thompson*

*Camellias, daffodils, and iris all on display in Kew Gardens, by Derrick Thompson.*



*Snowdrops in St Mary Magdalene churchyard by Marylyn Edwards.*

## 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 Wroe,  
Hickey's

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

Jean Neil,  
Candler  
Almshouses,  
RIP

Front cover:  
**Mountain Hare**  
by Gary Bendig  
(Unsplash)

Back cover: **The  
Procession of the  
Months** (ca. 1889),  
by Beatrice Crane.  
Design by Walter  
Crane. (Public  
Domain Review)

**Editorial  
Committee  
and Content:**  
Mike Townsin  
*Editor*  
Emma Halford  
*CEO*

Lynsey Clements  
Rebecca Evans  
Debbie Flaherty  
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 March**. 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

**Wednesday  
11 March**  
Creation Station  
see page 9

**Thursdays  
5, 19 & 26 March**  
Thursday Fellowship  
see page 8

**Sunday 15 March**  
Mothering Sunday  
Cream Tea  
see page 9

**Wednesday 18  
March**  
Singing Together  
see page 9

**Wednesday 18  
March**  
Film Club  
see page 9

**Forthcoming  
Out and About Group  
Days**  
**Tuesday 10 March**  
Japan House  
for Hyakko – a  
collection of 2,000  
handcrafted items.  
Meet at Richmond  
Station 10am.



**“My 10th  
year!  
Thank  
you for  
the lovely  
cake!”**

Debbie Flaherty,  
Scheme Manager

Clocks will  
*spring forward* by one hour at  
**1am on Sunday 29 March**,  
marking the start of British  
Summer Time (BST).



*Dear Readers,*

As you know, we feature a lot of your photos in the magazine and are hugely grateful for your contributions – we need you!

But as in the case of any magazine or newspaper we sometimes can't include all the photographs we receive from readers due to space limitations on the page or reproduction issues. So please bear with us.

Also, we sometimes have to edit your articles (mine too!) if we don't have space on the page or pages. That's why we give word-count guidance. In these instances, we will alert you beforehand if you have not given us prior permission so that you can approve – or not.

But please don't let any of this deter you! We need and much appreciate your contributions without which this magazine would not exist.

*Mike Townsin*

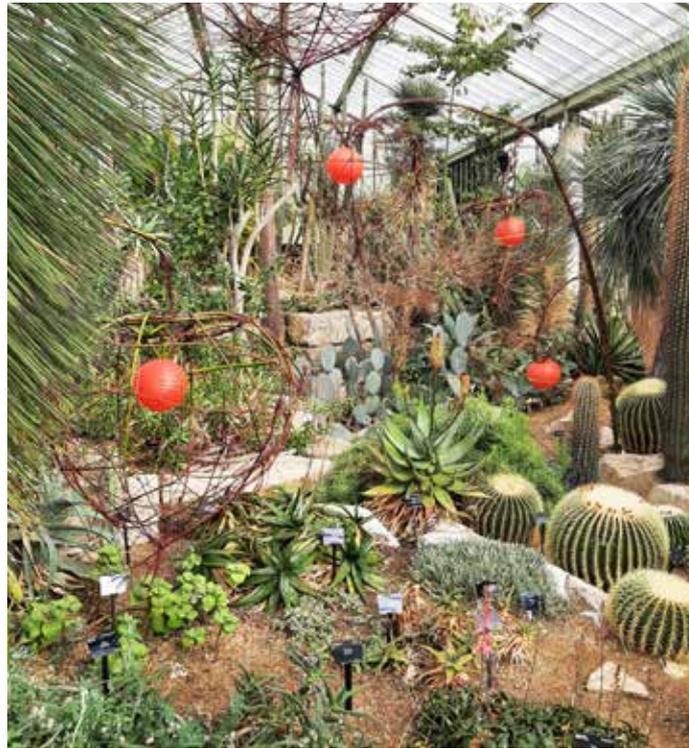
Editor (sometimes signed *Ed*. if I have an urge to make an editorial comment – normal practice in magazines).

# Out and About visit to Kew Gardens for the *Orchids from China* Festival.

by Richard Yardley

We set out from Richmond Station, missing the rain, and made our way to Kew Gardens on the 65 bus.

The 2026 Orchid Festival at Kew marked its 30th year, with *Orchids from China* full of colour. We enjoyed the dragons, lanterns and many other animals on display.



# Burns Night Supper

by Nick Taylor

It had been a wet and chilly day, but a queue grew quickly outside the Chapel before 5pm. Ticket holders for this sold-



out event were in bonnie attire, gathering to celebrate Robbie Burns, the Scottish poet and lyricist. At last, the door opened and we saw tables dressed wonderfully for the occasion, even with tartan napkins. Wine was poured before a wee whisky arrived too, for the toast to come.

We heard the sound of the bagpipes, before kilted 'McDerrick' delivered the Selkirk Grace; then addressed the Haggis in lilted Scottish Gaelic; before, to our horror, stabbing it with a knife – or was it a dirk? It was the moment to raise our glass of whisky to toast the Immortal Robert Burns

The choices of Haggis or the square Lorne sausage with neeps and tatties were then served with speed and accuracy and the event gathered pace. We ate, drank and were merry, as we joined hands together in singing Auld Lang Syne to the end.

With so many thanks particularly to Derrick, Linda and of course Emma for creating the event and making it happen.



## Review of Singing Together with Marshgate School

by Alan Shirley

What a pleasure it was to be at, and be a part of, Marshgate School's Singing Together with Rachel, their head of music, today in the chapel.



Among the songs were classics by *The Beatles* and *Abba*, with lyrics up on the screen to remind us all. Some of us, of course, not needing reminders at all!

It was great to see the children acting the parts out, including very animated 'air guitar', whilst singing at the tops of their voices.

Then to be able to talk face to face with the children in little groups and to hear their musical stories and witness their bubbling enthusiasm was just delightful.

No doubt Rachel has made copious notes for songs to feature in the next session now scheduled for **Wednesday 18 March**.

Let's have as many residents there as possible please.

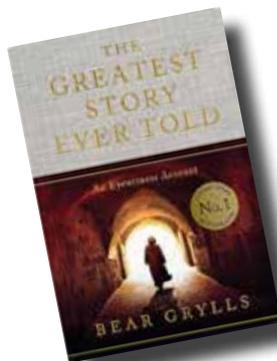
**Put the date in your diaries NOW!**

**See advert on page 9.**

## Review of Chapel Book Club:

### *The Greatest Story Ever Told* by Bear Grylls

Review by Margaret Goddard



It must be difficult to retell a story which is so familiar to so many.

The gospels were written by four people all with their own distinctive styles and personalities.

How about doing the same thing through different eyes? Those people who were closest to Jesus. About their fears, their doubts, their worries.

And how about giving people and places their Aramaic names instead of the European translations we are all familiar with – Yeshua, Myriam, Ta'om, Shimon, Yohanan, Yerushalayim, Beit Lechem.

And so, the story begins with Myriam, the Mother trying to understand all that is happening yet remaining trusting that God is still in control.

Then Ta'om, the Sceptic, picks up the story and tells of his coming to faith with many doubts but great loyalty.

Now Shimon, the Fisherman, takes up the narrative – his impetuosity and getting it wrong sometimes, yet repenting and struggling to trust and understand.

Next Yohanan, the Friend, takes us through the last week – tortured and harrowing – feeling guilt at letting down his Lord in Gad Smane and running away, but holding in there and finally standing at the foot of the cross.

And finally, Myriam of Magdala, loyal, devoted and almost afraid to believe. And – spoiler alert! – the first to see and believe the end and the beginning!

All of them finding the news too good to be true. Only it wasn't!

# Could You Write a Short Story of 50 words?

by Derrick Thompson

**Scottish Book Trust** Last year, The Scottish Book Trust arranged a competition inviting writers to submit a short story of no more than 50 words about friendship. Below is the winning entry, written by Barrie Baker, the brother of our resident Lynda Leslie.

Lit by a full moon one August  
I wandered anticlockwise  
around the park. Lost in painful  
memory of days long gone.  
She came clockwise, gazing at  
the moon. We spoke at once.  
Older souls past hesitating. We  
walked on together, clockwise,  
we still do. Friendship  
found, living rewind.

The story describes an evening in St James Park, Paisley, when Barrie met a new friend, Christine.

Barrie says, 'This was a major turning point at a time when I was really struggling physically and mentally and a wonderful gift of lasting friendship when I least expected it'. They continue to be firm friends.

Why not try your hand at writing a short story of no more than 50 words and send it to Your Almshouse Magazine – via your Scheme Manager – for inclusion in a future edition?

We would love to hear from you!



# Food Glorious Food Pancakes!

by Jemima Prasadam

This month's Food Glorious Food celebrated Shrove Tuesday early and was hosted at Adelaide Road.

Olha made traditional Ukrainian pancakes which looked like drop scones, served with cream cheese and apricots.

Heather made traditional pancakes and additional gluten free pancakes made with buckwheat, with cinnamon sugar and also

fruity plum jam or with lemon and sugar.

Jemima introduced several varieties of Indian pancakes which are called dosas – a fermented pulse and rice based crispy or soft pancake, served with peanut chutney, coconut and Daria dhal chutney powders, and also ghee to spread over the pancakes.



Traditional Ukrainian pancakes



Buckwheat gluten free pancakes

Our next event is on Thursday 5 March, 10:30 -12:30pm.

We will be testing traditional foods around Lent from different countries.

Please check with your Scheme Manager for the address.



Indian pancakes which are called dosas

## Thursday Fellowship for Lent



### The Lord's Prayer

Many of us will have been taught the words of The Lord's Prayer, 'Our Father, who art in Heaven...', as children in school or Sunday School. We might even still say those words in our private prayers, but do we know what they really mean, and what the implications of praying them are?

For five Thursdays during Lent you are invited to join us in the Chapel at 1.00pm for refreshments, prayer and a closer look at this most familiar prayer.

### Thursday Fellowship Dates and Times:

1pm - 2.30pm

on the following Thursdays in Lent:

**5 March**

**19 March**

**26 March**

## Chaplain's Chat

with Chaplain Derrick

I am sitting down to write my chat this month at a time when talk of forgiveness is in the air. Sir Keir Starmer has just admitted that he was wrong in a decision he made but does not have any plans to step down from his role as Prime Minister. I have found it interesting to observe that, despite those braying for his demise, there are those who are noting that he made a mistake, recognised it, admitted it and so should be forgiven.

As we spend the whole of March in the season of Lent, a time for reflection, now is a good time to consider forgiveness. In our Thursday Fellowship we will be studying the Lord's Prayer with the well-known lines 'forgive us our sins (trespasses) as we forgive those who sin against us'.

Forgiveness is too complex a concept to delve into in this short column: one day I may write a whole book about it. However, my mind is drawn to the end of Lent and Good Friday when we will recall one of the things Jesus said from the cross about those who were crucifying him: 'Father, forgive them for they don't know what they are doing'.

Forgiving those who hurt us is a high standard to try and put into practice, and forgiving is very individual and should never be forced. But may I encourage you this month to consider it? Forgiving others, letting go of the bitterness and anger of unforgiveness, can bring great release and an improvement to our own wellbeing.



### The Chapel of St Francis

Service Times: March 2026

<b>Sunday 1 March</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion.</b> <i>Followed by refreshments.</i> <b>Led by: Venerable Bridget Shepherd,</b> Archdeacon of Wandsworth
<b>Sunday 8 March</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion.</b>
<b>Sunday 15 March</b> <b>Mothering Sunday</b>	<b>10.30am Holy Communion.</b> <b>4.30pm Cream Tea.</b>
<b>Sunday 22 March</b>	<b>10.30am Healing &amp; Wholeness Communion.</b>
<b>Sunday 29 March</b> <b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>10.30am Palm Sunday 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  
07796 619697



## Film Club *La La Land*

**Wednesday 18  
March**

**at 2.00pm**

**in The Chapel of  
St Francis**

Winner of 6 Academy Awards and winner of a record-breaking 7 Golden Globe Awards, *La La Land* is more than the most acclaimed movie of 2016 - it's a cinematic treasure for the ages that you'll fall in love with again and again. Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling star as Mia and Sebastian, an actress and a jazz musician pursuing their Hollywood dreams and finding each other in a vibrant celebration of hope, dreams and love.

**Writer/Director: Damien Chazelle**

**Actors: Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling**

**Rating: 12**

**Runtime: 2h 8m**

**IMDb: 8/10,**

**Rotten Tomatoes: 91%**

**Popcornmeter: 82%!**

**Refreshments during the interval.**

## MOTHERING SUNDAY

Afternoon

## CREAM TEA

*For All!*

You are invited

**Sunday 15 March at 4.30pm  
at The Chapel of St Francis,  
Hickey's Almshouses**

**Scones,  
Cream  
and Jam,  
Simmel Cake,  
and other  
cakes.**

**Tea & Coffee.**

Come along to nibble and natter with neighbours and friends.



*Please let Derrick or your Scheme Manager know if you are going to attend so we can ensure a good supply of scones and cakes!*



## Papier Mache Easter Eggs Decoupage



**What: Papier Mache Easter Eggs Decoupage**

**Where: The Garden Room**

**When: Wednesday, 11 March, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm**



[TheCreationStation.co.uk](http://TheCreationStation.co.uk)

*sing!*

**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 18 March  
Time: 11am to 12noon.**

**See you there!**

*sing!*

# Homemade Fertilisers for Healthier House or Garden Plants

by Gennie Thompson

Here are some resident-endorsed excellent homemade fertilisers for your plants, that are easy to make using up everyday kitchen leftovers, enriching plants naturally while reducing waste and saving money.



**Banana skins:** best suited to outdoor plants, naturally rich in potassium. Chop the skins and bury them directly into pots, just below the soil near the roots of garden plants. Alternatively, place chopped banana skins in a clean jar, add water and shake — leave for a few weeks then pour around the base of plants.



**Dandelion fertiliser:** suitable for garden plants only, the flowers and leaves are rich in minerals that support growth and flowering. Place whole dandelions in a clean jar, add water, and leave for 1 – 2 weeks, dilute the liquid with at least 50% fresh water and pour around the base of garden plants.



**Eggshells:** suitable for both indoors and outdoors, rich in calcium. Rinse and dry your eggshells, then grind them into a fine powder and sprinkle on top of your plant.



**Vegetable cooking water:** gentle nutrient enrichment. Use your leftover cooking water for vegetables directly as a feed in both indoor and outdoor plants, once cooled and ensure unsalted/seasoned.

Advertisement Feature

## Join the Community Choir at St Mary Magdalene Church

Wednesdays 11am-12pm



Come and join our free Community Choir at St Mary Magdalene Church in Richmond Town

Centre. Fun, relaxed, and informal, no experience necessary! We will sing a wide range of music, from folk and traditional songs, to modern music, as well as music to mark the seasons.

More info, contact Seb on 07933024101.

Advertisement Feature

## The Wellbeing Kitchen Home-Cooked Meals Delivered with Care

The Wellbeing Kitchen is a local meal service providing home-cooked, hearty traditional English meals to people aged 60 and over, as well as younger adults who may be vulnerable or in need of extra support.

We offer seven freshly prepared meals each week for £50, with generous portion sizes and a strong focus on comfort, nutrition, and familiar home cooking. Meals include favourites such as cottage pie, shepherd's pie, toad in the hole, roast dinners, sausage and mash, and similar wholesome dishes many of us know and love.

This service can be a much healthier and more comforting alternative to ready meals, while also reducing the daily pressure of cooking. For many people, it provides not just good food, but reassurance, routine, and a real improvement in quality of life.

Deliveries can be set up to suit individual needs, and the service currently covers the Richmond borough. The approach is cosy, homely, and supportive and very much centred on wellbeing.

For more information:

email - [thewell.beingkitchen7@gmail.com](mailto:thewell.beingkitchen7@gmail.com)

call - 07311 788154

## Trusteefile: Richard Pyne



Hello, I'm Richard Pyne and I've served as a trustee of Richmond Charities since 2018. I was elected to Richmond Council in that year and I am the Council's appointed representative on the Trustee Board. My ward — North Richmond — includes Church Estate, Hickey's and Benn's Walk. The Council is keen to increase the range and variety of social housing in the Borough, so I was delighted to see new almshouses built and opened in the last year.

I moved to Mortlake back in 1988 to start a new career in management consultancy after a background in Human Resources management on Merseyside. In consulting, I worked on large change management projects in many sectors including finance and the nuclear industry, and spent a lot of time in the USA, Europe and the Middle East.

I live with my wife Helen in East Sheen and we have recently completed a year as the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough. With over 220 visits stretched over a year it was a busy time for us, but you get to see every part of the borough and meet hundreds of the volunteers who help run social and charitable organisations and make our part of London such an attractive and sociable place to live. We spent a few days in Richmond, Virginia with which our Borough is formally linked and we were treated with great kindness and hospitality there.

For the last 15 years or so, I have volunteered as a gardener at Kew Gardens. It's a great place to work and I've used advice from my professional colleagues to work hard on my own garden which we open every other year for charity. I also act as a judge for the annual gardening competition which so many of you take part in with such excellent results! I always enjoy chatting with residents and we gardeners are good at swapping tips.

Another hobby for me is quizzing. I've taken part in a few TV quiz shows including Mastermind, 15 - 1 and Eggheads, but my highlight was an appearance on The Chase where our team of four took on and beat Ann Hegerty – aka *The Governess* – and took away a share of a very nice pot of money.



## Advisory

**Council tax rises: an important announcement from Richmond Council.**

**by Mike Townsin**

“Rising demand for social care, large cuts from central government and ongoing pressures on household finances mean difficult choices for local authorities. To ensure we can keep providing essential services like waste and recycling collections, libraries, parks and leisure facilities, we're proposing a change in core Council Tax alongside our major transformation programme to deliver efficiency savings.

The increase will be 2.99% in core Council Tax alongside a 2% increase in the Adult Social Care charge.

For example, Band D will rise by 4.8%, or £114.03 per annum.

Residents needing help with Council Tax payments may be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Cost-of-Living Hub”

For further advice, call the Council on 020 8891 1411, or online at [richmond.gov.uk](http://richmond.gov.uk). Or contact your Scheme Manager.

**CENTRE  
STAGE**

# Richmond Festival to Return

**Save the date: Saturday 18 July 2026**

Following the roaring success of **Centre Stage** last year, the popular Richmond street festival will return this summer.

Richmond town centre will burst back into life on Saturday 18 July as Richmond council partners with Orange Tree Theatre and Richmond BID (*Business Improvement District*) to transform George Street and Whittaker Square into a day-long celebration of music, performance, food and family-friendly fun – all free.



### Centre Stage 2026 will feature:

- Live music, street performers, workshops and skateable art
- Family activities and an independent makers market
- Food stalls from local traders
- *Richmond Myths*, a new pop-up performance strand from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 July, reimagining legendary tales in shops, historic buildings and unexpected corners of the town.

## 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.**

# Home and Away: Australia

with Nick Taylor

It was 55 years ago that I first visited Australia with my pal Simon. We had hitch-hiked from America down to Panama where we caught a ship to Sydney. My farmer uncle and his family had already taken advantage of the £10 Pom ticket to emigrate to Oz with the ambition of doing better. I was excited about the possibility of seeing him, which I did do, before flying back to England.

I have always wanted to revisit the farm where I had helped put up the fencing to keep the kangaroos out. Sadly, my uncle died 12 years ago but my aunt is very much alive, aged 99 now. The prospect of watching some of the recent Ashes tour was the 'trigger' for a return trip.

So mid-November last I flew to Perth then Brisbane to watch four days of cricket — no more need be said! Then by internal flight down to Albany, to see the farm and visit my aunt and three cousins. Over 50+ years the farm has grown much bigger, is split up and now breeds and sells Aberdeen Angus cattle both internally and to China.

Then back to Sydney's old haunts and some Aboriginal art before a few beers and a long sleep on the flight home for Christmas.



# Arthritis: Lifestyle Tips to Help Manage Pain

by Gennie Thompson

## Listen to Your Body

Listen to your body – make sure you rest when you need to and do not push through arthritis pain as this can prolong the symptoms and worsen the impact.

## Balanced Diet

Eat a healthy, balanced diet – try adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet, which help to supply your body with many vitamins and minerals including calcium and vitamin D, essential for strong bones, alongside having a range of anti-inflammatory properties. Try adding a dash of turmeric and black pepper to meals, the black pepper releases the active ingredient curcumin in turmeric which is known to have anti-inflammatory properties that can ease arthritic pain. Increase the number of other herbs and spices you use: garlic, onions and leeks are known to strengthen bone cartilage and have anti-inflammatory benefits so are beneficial for our joints.

In the UK, over 10 million people live with arthritis, which is approximately one in six people, according to recent data from Arthritis UK.

## Good Quality Sleep

Poor sleep can worsen arthritis-related aches and pains. If you suffer from poor sleep, try avoiding caffeine and stimulating activities in the evening time such as ensuring no screen time at least an hour before bed, relaxation activities such as deep breathing, visualisation or a warm shower and making sure your bedroom is cool and dark.

### *Healthy Fats and Oils:*

Replace saturated fats with mono-unsaturated fats, which contain beneficial compounds like oleocanthal, an anti-inflammatory agent similar to ibuprofen. Examples: Extra virgin olive oil, rapeseed oil, and avocado oil.

### *Oily Fish:*

Excellent sources of inflammation-fighting omega-3 fatty acids. Aim for one to two portions per week. Examples: Salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, and herring.

### *Fruits and Vegetables:*

These are packed with antioxidants, vitamins, and fibre that help neutralise unstable molecules called free radicals which can damage cells. Examples: Blueberries, strawberries, spinach, kale, broccoli, oranges & carrots.

## Sitting Quietly

Sitting quietly – taking time out for yourself just to breathe and be mindful is also known to improve your body's immunity and ability to manage and cope with the symptoms of arthritic pain. Try for one week taking 5 or 10 minutes at some time in the day to sit comfortably, being aware of your surroundings and breathing deeply.

## Drink More

Drink more – ensuring good hydration is important so our bodies can defend themselves and function properly. Some herbal teas can be beneficial to helping reduce arthritic inflammation due to high levels of anti-inflammatory compounds and effects include turmeric, nettle, ginger, hibiscus and rosehip. The best fruit juices for joint well-being include orange, tomato, pineapple, carrot, grape and cranberry. Milk and fortified plant milks also deliver calcium, protein and vitamin D which are important supports.

Wear shoes with good cushioning and support.

# Your Pillows LOVE the Sun!

by Chantal Richards

Airing pillows in the sun for 2–4 hours on a bright, dry day is an effective, natural way to sanitize them, remove odors, and eliminate dust mites.

Place pillows on a clothesline or rack, flipping them halfway through, to allow UV rays to kill bacteria and evaporate moisture, effectively freshening down, wool, and memory foam without washing.

**Optimal Timing:** Best done around 11 a.m. to catch peak, intense sunlight.

**Method:** Remove pillowcases and place pillows in direct, bright sunlight.

**Routine:** Flip and fluff the pillows after 2 hours for even exposure.

**Benefits:** UV rays act as a natural disinfectant, killing bacteria, mould spores, and allergens.

**Caution:** Avoid leaving pillows out for too long in extremely harsh, direct sun to prevent degradation of natural fibers, and ensure they are fully dry to prevent lingering odors.

It is recommended to air out pillows weekly for a deeper, natural refresh.



## Crystal of the Month: Aquamarine

March Birthstone

by Gennie Thompson

Our birthstone this month is Aquamarine, a crystal revered since ancient times.



The name aquamarine literally means “water of the sea” in Latin.

Seafarers used it as a talisman for safe passage, in the belief it calmed the seas. Historically used as a remedy to soothe sore throats and as a respiratory system support. A belief that still holds true today in holistic health, as well as being used to calm and restore emotional balance.

Spiritually, aquamarine is linked to courage, soft communication, and clarity – often associated with restoration of the throat chakra.

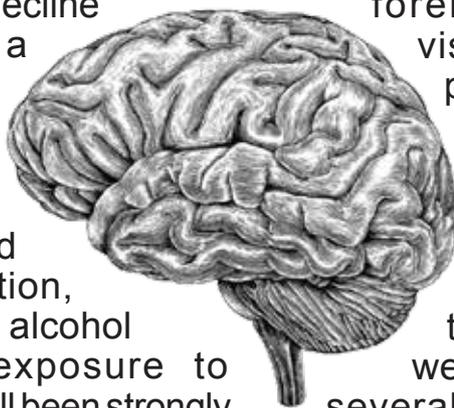
Today, many still value aquamarine for its calming impact and symbolic connection to renewal and serenity.

## Brain health

by Mike Townsin

There is, as yet, no known cure for dementia. But there is growing research evidence that cognitive decline caused by a variety of diseases can be delayed. Increasing exercise and social interaction, while reducing alcohol intake and exposure to pollution, have all been strongly linked to less likelihood of developing dementia. So has high quality sleep.

A new US study published in the journal *Neurology* provides further evidence that poor brain health is not an inevitable effect of ageing: living in an “intellectually stimulating



environment” can significantly defer memory loss, confusion and impaired judgement. Put simply: use it or lose it!

The study cites learning foreign languages, visiting museums, playing games and reading books and newspapers as examples of activities that enrich and protect the brain; that’s why we actively promote several of them in the *Charity*.

Even though you may have fallen out of the habit of embracing the kind of exercise and intellectual challenges of your younger days, research shows it’s never too late. In fact, you’re almost halfway there by reading this magazine...

# The March Hare

by Mike Townsin

“Mad as a March hare” originates from the 16th-century, when hares were described as erratic, boxing, due to their frantic mating behaviour during their breeding season which, in Europe, peaks in March.

The phrase is well documented in early English literature, appearing



*The March Hare.* Illustration by Sir John Tenniel.

*“The March Hare will be much the most interesting, and perhaps as this is May it won’t be raving mad – at least not so mad as it was in March.”* (Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*)

in John Skelton’s *Speke, Parrot* around 1500.

It was popularised much later by Lewis Carroll’s March Hare character in his *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* book, where he’s portrayed as eccentric and stuck forever in a tea party.

To the Celts the hare was a sacred animal – a symbol of abundance, prosperity and good fortune, with

mystical connections: they were thought to be capable of shape shifting and turning into human form. It was forbidden to eat them.

The Brown Hare was probably brought to Britain by the Romans – they appear in a fourth-century mosaic in Cirencester – for farming and food and were kept in enclosures called leporaria; baby hares are called leverets, derived from the Latin.

It’s no accident they have survived for so long: they can reach speeds of 48 mph, much faster than their natural predator, the fox.

# Wit and Wisdom

Curated by Mike Townsin

- Nothing changes on New Year’s Day. **Bono, lead singer, U2**

- Most things turn out less well than we hope, but less badly than we fear. **Max Hastings, British journalist**

- All you need to make a movie is a girl and a gun. **Jean-Luc Godard**



Jean-Luc Godard’s films frequently evoked the “girl and a gun” trope – often cited as his formula for cinema, famously attributed to D.W. Griffith – through crime-thriller narratives featuring Anna Karina or Jean Seberg. Great examples include *A Bout De Souffle* (*Breathless*) (1960), *La Chinoise* (1967) and *Made in USA* (1966).

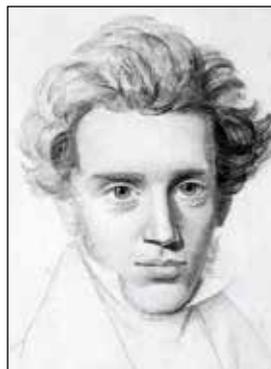
- People are only really experts if they agree with us. **Rod Liddle, British journalist**

- Knowledge comes but wisdom lingers. **Tennyson**

- People think I hate sex. I don’t. I just don’t like things that stop you seeing the television properly. **Victoria Wood**

- *I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours.* **Jerome K. Jerome, British writer**

- Change before you have to. **Jack Welch, US businessman**



*Søren Kierkegaard* c.1840. *La Biblioteca Real de Dinamarca*

- Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards. **Søren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher**

Søren Kierkegaard (1813 – 1855) was a Danish theologian, philosopher, poet and religious author who is widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher. He wrote critical texts on organized religion, Christianity, morality, ethics, psychology, love, and the philosophy of religion. This famous quote highlights that meaning is found through reflection on the past, yet life demands action in an uncertain future

## Live Music at *The Mitre* – next to Hickey's



Why not pop out for some live entertainment at The Mitre pub. Nathan and Katie will be playing eclectic repertoire covering everything from old time classics to modern day songs.

**Sunday 15 March. 7pm - 10pm. Free.**

The Mitre. 20 St Mary's Grove, Richmond TW9 1UY

## It's Just A Dream Away

Poem by Steve Harbud

Walking through the sunrise as the day begins,  
Wondering how the day would end.  
All the wrong we ever made could be put right,  
Maybe then the world could start to mend.

It's just a dream away, for all the love that's sleeping.  
A dream away, for a heart that really cares.  
A dream away, for everyone that's thinking  
of a world, that everybody shares.

When the children's laughter falls like summer rain,  
A world where hearts are always kind.  
A place we're never fearing in the darkest night  
Somehow I know one day we're going to find.

It's just a dream away, the quiet nights are sleeping.  
A dream away, where skies are bright and clear.  
A dream away, for everyone that's thinking  
of a world, that no one has to fear.

Gazing at the moonlight and the stars above,  
Wondering if God can hear my prayers.  
Wishing just for kindness in the words I say,  
A world of hope where everybody cares.

It's just a dream away, a future that we're facing.  
A dream away, when fighting has to cease.  
A dream away, for everyone that's hoping  
That the world will one day live in peace.

## Miscellany

Curated by  
Mike Townsin

- Without zero, modern electronics wouldn't exist.

- 'Time' is the most used noun in the English language.

- People who have had their frown lines removed with Botox find it harder to read difficult sentences.



- For the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Marmite brought out a special edition called Ma'amite.

- The word for the 'inside of the elbow' is chelidon.

- All Olympic curling stones come from an uninhabited island 10 miles from Glasgow.

- The Teabag Boys, Yak Balls, Cecil Otter, and Bus Driver are all names of professional rappers.

- The late Queen banned plastic straws from the royal estates.

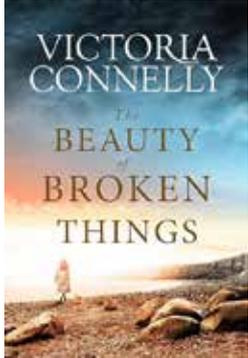
- The palm trees in Los Angeles are the result of a job-creation scheme in the 1930s.



## Page Turner

### *The Beauty of Broken Things* by Victoria Connelly

Review by Derrick Thompson



Helen and Orla are best friends via social media and have a shared love of photography, neither of them knowing the true identity of the other. When tragedy strikes, Helen's husband, Luke, traces Orla and a sometimes awkward, yet progressively healing, friendship develops between the two. This

friendship then grows to encompass the villagers who live around the Castle that Orla inhabits with her dog, One Ear, on the Suffolk coast.

This beautiful and captivating book is full of hope and the possibility of healing through new friendships in the face of some of life's greatest tragedies. I highly recommend it!

## Why English is Hard to Learn

A poem found by Alan Shirley

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes;  
But the plural of ox should be oxen, not oxes.  
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,  
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.  
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,  
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,  
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?  
If I speak of my foot and you show me your feet,  
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?  
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,  
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,  
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,  
And the plural of a cat is cats, not cose.

We speak of a brother and also of brethren,  
But though we say mother, we never say methren.  
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,  
But imagine the feminine: she shis and shim!

## What's the Origin of...?

Curated by Mike Townsin

- **Paint the town red:** in the 18th century the Marquis of Waterford, Henry Beresford, was well known for his wild partying and mischief. In one of his legendary rampages, he and some friends visited the town of Melton Mowbray. In a drunken prank they ended up painting several buildings red. This became widely known and that's how the phrase to "paint the town red" came to mean go out and enjoy oneself in an over-the-top manner.

- **No great shakes:** relates to something one is not impressed with and comes from throwing dice in a casino, not winning anything and feeling the way you shook the dice was to blame.

- **He's a bigwig:** in the 17th century, it was the fashion for men to shave their heads and wear



Nicolas de Largillière,  
Public domain, via  
Wikimedia Commons

wigs in styles that weren't attainable with natural hair. The hair used to make wigs was expensive so the size of a wig became a status symbol and a sign of wealth; less wealthy people who could only afford small ones began referring to rich men as "bigwigs".

- **One for the road:** there was a time in England when pubs were few and far between, so it was common for travellers to sink a final pint of beer before hitting the road because it would be a long time before getting another one. That's how the expression "one for the road" came about.

# And the Good News is...

Curated by Mike Townsin

- Ground penetrating radar has revealed the outlines of a large Roman complex in Glamorgan that archaeologists say has the potential to become “Port Talbot’s Pompeii”. The complex which was fortified and appears to have included a 572-square-metre villa with two wings and what may have been a meeting hall for receiving dignitaries.



- Austin Appelbee, his mother and younger siblings were swept out to sea soon after setting out on paddle boards and a kayak from a beach in Western Australia. Knowing the younger children couldn’t be left alone Austin’s mother asked him to paddle the kayak back to shore for help; but it quickly sank so he had to swim instead. It took him 4 hours to swim 2.5 miles and run a further 1.2 miles to find anyone. His mother had given up hope of ever seeing him again when, after 10 hours at sea, they were rescued.

- Peter Quinney, a 91-year-old RAF veteran has won two gold medals at a trampolining competition for the over-40s. He had previously won the British Trampolining Championships in 1960. He said “it’s very easy to slip into wandering around the garden and watching TV, but I like to continue doing what I’ve always done”

## On This Day...

curated by  
Debbie Flaherty

10

**April 1633:**

Bananas, never seen before in England, went on sale in a London shop.

28

**April 1770:**

English naval explorer James Cook arrived in Botany Bay, Australia, the first European to do so.

24

**April 1858:**

At the second attempt, the biggest bell in the world, Big Ben, is finally ready for hanging in the clock tower of Westminster Palace.

14

**April 1983:**

The first cordless telephone went on sale in Britain.

**30 April**

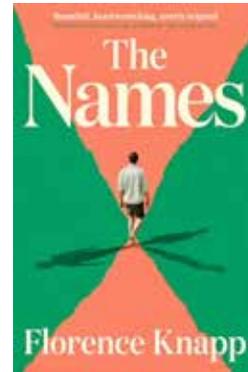
**1945:**

In his hideaway bunker in Berlin, Adolf Hitler shoots himself. His wife of 48 hours and former mistress, Eva Braun, took a cyanide capsule. In accordance with Hitler’s instructions both bodies were then burnt.

## Page Turner

*The Names*  
by Florence Knapp

Review by Kate O’Brien



This was a Christmas present and is only available in hardback, so you may need a trip to the library! It is a debut novel

which reflects on Shakespeare’s question: “What is in a name?” and it is a real ‘sliding doors’ story.

Following the great storm of 1987, Cora is taking her new baby, and his 9-year-old sister Maia, to register his birth. The decision made by Cora on what the baby is to be called will have a long-lasting effect on all their lives.

The book splits into three: the baby is called Bear (chosen by his sister for being both cuddly and strong), Julian (Cora’s preference for its meaning of ‘sky father’ according to her baby name book) or Gordon (the name his domineering father has insisted he be called, after him and his father before him).

The stories then head off in completely different, and in parts deeply tragic, directions depending on the boy’s name. We see each of the three boys, as it were, every seven years and follow the impact that the relatively simple decision of the choice of a name has not just on him, but his wider family and future relationships.



## Brain Exercises: The Doorway Effect



### “Why did i come in here?”

...The *doorway effect* is when you forget why you entered a room after walking through a doorway.

Scientists explain this as an “event boundary,” where the brain separates activities by location.

When you move to a new space, your brain clears information from the previous one to prepare for new tasks. It is more likely if you are distracted.

Although frustrating, this process helps the brain organize information efficiently and manage daily tasks.

### “How to overcome it”

**Stay Focused:** Maintain focus on your goal as you move between rooms.

**Mental Rehearsal:** Mentally repeat the task (e.g., “get the keys”) while walking.

**Context Reinstatement:** If you forget, walk back to the original room to trigger the memory.

### Answers: Film Tag Lines. February Issue.

- Jaws**  
“You’ll never go in the water again.”
- Ghostbusters**  
“Who you gonna call?”
- The Magnificent Seven**  
“They were 7... and they fought like 700.”
- Monsters Inc.**  
“We scare because we care.”
- Superman**  
“You’ll believe a man can fly.”
- Saving Private Ryan**  
“The mission is a man.”
- Apollo 13**  
“Houston, we have a problem.”
- Psycho**  
“Check-in. Relax. Take a shower.”
- Alien**  
“In Space, no-one can hear you scream.”
- Star Wars**  
“A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...”
- Bonnie And Clyde**  
“They’re young, they’re in love, and they kill people.”
- Groundhog Day**  
“He’s having the worst day of his life ... over and over ...”
- The Shawshank Redemption**  
“Fear can hold you prisoner. Hope can set you free.”
- The Wizard of Oz**  
“Toto, I’ve a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore”
- Casablanca** “Here’s looking at you, kid”
- Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone** “Let the magic begin”
- Back to the Future**  
“17 year old Marty McFly got home early last night. 30 years early.”
- Pretty Woman**  
“She walked off the street, into his life and stole his heart.”
- Braveheart** “His passion captivated a woman. His courage inspired a nation. His heart defied a king.”
- The Matrix** “The future will not be user friendly.”
- Love Actually** “Love actually is all around.”
- ET - Extra Terrestrial**  
“He is afraid. He is alone. He is three million light years from home.”
- The Silence of the Lambs**  
“To enter the mind of a killer she must challenge the mind of a madman.”
- The Blues Brothers** “They’ll Never Get Caught. They’re on a Mission From God”
- Forrest Gump** “Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you’re gonna get.”
- The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring** “One ring to rule them all.”
- Trainspotting** “Never let your friends tie you to the tracks.”
- Ocean’s Eleven** “Are you in or out?”

## Competition Winners

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

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

- Sue McAnena – Wordsearch**  
**Ron Bronks – Tagline Quiz**  
**Congratulations!**

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

### Answers: Anagrams. February Issue. African Animals

- braze = zebra
- choir snore = rhinoceros
- ale drop = leopard
- Haney = hyena
- leap then = elephant
- fear fig = giraffe
- bite slewed = wildebeest
- photopia sump = hippopotamus
- each the = cheetah
- log rail = gorilla
- dakar var = aardvark
- along nip = pangolin
- de lo ricco = crocodile

# Picture Quiz: TV Quiz Shows

Can you identify the name of the quiz show?



1.



2.



3.



4.



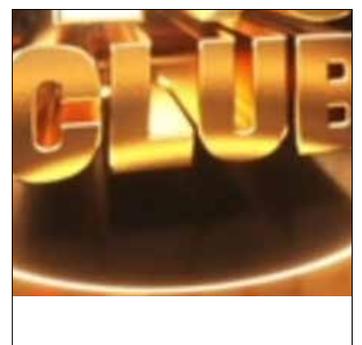
5.



6.



7.



8.



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11.



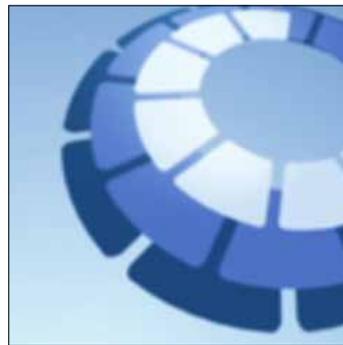
12.



13.



14.



15.



16.

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Answer all 16 TV Quiz Shows and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box before Friday 13 March.  
Name:

# Wordsearch: Oscar Nominees 2026

## Films, Actors and Supporting Actors



K E T H A N H A W K E R G J Å D R P S H R M W J  
 L Y J A C O B E L O R D I 1 D T Å K E B J W V Y  
 N E E A I N O G U B H M G G E H J G N E A G T G  
 N C E B U M Y T E P S N S E R E B M R H É B 1 Å  
 E É É R O L Y A T A N A Y E T Y K V Y P A M Y C  
 P E V S N I E R E T A N E R E N U L B L S S R G  
 N U K A S O M I M N U W E L C L S E E Y R E L B  
 A U P R M N G Å S P F M K N I U P O S H E N A O  
 E M G T 1 C T V N I V C M W U U U N O A N T T S  
 S D 1 U S Å O N V S U W H J V U F A R R N I R T  
 F O B N M 1 L J T B N Y O O N B R R É U I M A E  
 1 T I M O T H É E C H A L A M E T D J O S E I L  
 H E 1 S G É T I H M C 1 D O F F B O M M A N N L  
 E A D F K K S S G L M R É R T G N D A R C T D A  
 L J M I U S Y I W A O A A B S L J I O E N A R N  
 L O H N E H I O V J T N S U I L R C M N 1 L E S  
 E N A J E D É S B P K C U T O É É A N G N V A K  
 F O C W I T N L C E O S P G O B S P U A R A M A  
 A Å O P S I E I N L O U K I O N W R F W F L S R  
 N S E U P A A S E H S U D P H N E I I Y C U T S  
 N M G 1 H A T D E K A T E H U D S O N R V E K G  
 I Y Å C U E I J D E M E R P U S Y T R A M 1 P Å  
 N O I 1 I T N E G A T E R C E S E H T V S 1 É R  
 G M O N E B A T T L E A F T E R A N O T H E R D

Elle Fanning  
 Jacob Elordi  
 Train Dreams  
 The Secret Agent  
 Hamnet  
 Bugonia

Kate Hudson  
 Wagner Moura  
 Leonardo DiCaprio  
 Wunmi Mosaku  
 Sean Penn  
 Sinners  
 One Battle After Another

F1  
 Emma Stone  
 Rose Byrne  
 Michael B Jordan  
 Timothée Chalamet  
 Teyana Taylor  
 Stellan Skargard

Sentimental Value  
 Marty Supreme  
 Frankenstein  
 Renate Reinsve  
 Jessie Buckley  
 Ethan Hawke

**Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Find all 26 Oscar Nominees and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box before Friday 13 March.**  
 Name:

# Poetry Corner

by Nigel Davis

It seems that tramps were a very common sight in the late part of the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth century – destitute men walking from one place to another and sleeping rough, in pursuit of some kind, any kind, of work: or sometimes, perhaps, just because tramping had become the only way of life they knew.

Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962) was one of those poets writing in the first part of the last century who made a stand against the prevailing new wave of modernism, holding to traditions of simplicity of language and clear rhymes and metres and wanting his poetry to be accessible to all readers. This poem takes tramping as its theme. But it is not meant to be taken literally. Rather, it is an extended metaphor for the poet leading an aimless, unsettled and rootless existence; until, that is, he finds companionship and security. The metaphor is further extended at the end to the fire on the hearth – signifying not just a real fire but the warmth and heat of a loving relationship.

I dare say the modernists would have disliked and despised this poem. Personally, I rather like it!

## Home

by Wilfrid Gibson

So long had I travelled the lonely road,  
 Though now and again a wayfaring friend  
 Walked shoulder to shoulder and lightened the load,  
 I often would think to myself as I strode  
 No comrade will journey with you to the end.

And it seemed to me, as the days went past,  
 And I gossiped with cronies, or brooded alone,  
 By wayside fires, that my fortune was cast  
 To sojourn by other men's hearths to the last,  
 And never to come to my own hearthstone.

The lonely road no longer I roam.  
 We met, and were one in the heart's desire.  
 Together we came through the wintry gloam  
 To the little old house by the cross-ways, home;  
 And crossed the threshold and kindled the fire.



*Wilfrid Gibson (1878-1962), taken about 1913. Near Dymock, Gloucestershire.*



MARCH

The wind  
is rising high,  
To drive the  
mist away,  
And herald the approach  
OF MARCH, his mistress  
gay.  
She comes with eyes so wild,  
Quick rushing o'er the plain  
Her flying hair let loose,  
Not to be bound again.  
Her garments tinted green  
Flutter all loose & free,  
The wind so full of play  
Tosses the folds in glee.  
And as she comes along  
With eyes now full of mirth,  
The crocuses spring up  
Like flames from the dark  
earth.  
But now the wind grows still,  
She must depart she knows,  
And, smoothing back her hair,  
All quietly she goes.

THE VERSES BY BEATRICE CRANE  
THE DESIGN BY WALTER CRANE

**The Procession of the Months**  
(ca. 1889), by Beatrice Crane.  
Design by Walter Crane.