

YOUR

APRIL 2026

ALMSHOUSE

MAGAZINE



Your Photos



The Fur Babies: 'Miki' and 'Yuki'
by Mick Tinson



Helleborus Orientalis (Lenten Rose)
by Derrick Thompson



Migrating Toads in Ham
by Mike Townsin



Double Rainbow over Twickenham by Becky Evans



The Moon over Michel's by Alan Shirley



Barn Swallows by Mick Tinson



Early Rowers by Becky Evans

Welcome to our new residents:

**Robert and
Jacqueline
Greenwood,**
Elizabeth
Twining
Almshouses

Howard Price,
Church Estate

Front cover:
*Flowering Cherry
in Michel's
Garden* by
Alan Shirley

Back cover:
*Church Street,
Twickenham* by
Becky Evans

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Readers' articles and photos.

If you would like
to contribute to
our next issue,
the deadline is
Friday 17 April.
As a guide on
word-count, a half
page is about 170
words.

Please submit
your contributions
and/or photos
to your Scheme
Manager.

Dates for Your Diary

Wednesday 15 April
Film Club at 2pm
see page 8

SAVE THE DATE
Thursday 18 June
Papa George Band
see page 9

SAVE THE DATE
Tuesday 23 June
Broadstairs
Summer Outing
see page 9

SAVE THE DATE
Thursday 13 August
Summer Party
see page 9

Forthcoming *Out and About* Group

The next outing will
be on Tuesday 14
April travelling by
minibus, meet at
Hickey's Chapel
at 10am. Booking
required as places
are limited due to
minibus seating.
(It could be Tulips
in Hounslow, cost
about £10 entrance
fee; or the RAF
Museum, Hendon –
free). Will confirm as
soon as possible.



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magazine with others.

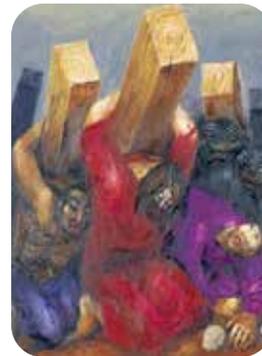
You are warmly
invited to our

Easter Services



Thursday 2 April
Maundy Thursday
**4.30pm Supper and
Service**

*A light meal recalling
Jesus' Last Supper,
including Communion 5.30pm. Watching in
Silence: 30 minutes of silent prayer as we
remember Jesus words to watch and pray.*



Friday 3 April
Good Friday
**2pm The Way of The
Cross.**

*A meditation on The
Stations of the Cross using
the art of Sieger Köder
and music from Taize.*



Friday 3 April
Good Friday
**3pm Communion
Service**

*With traditional Good Friday
hymns, readings
and moments of silence.
This service will be
followed by Hot Cross
Buns and hot drinks in
the Chaplain's House.*



Sunday 5 April
Easter Sunday
**10.30am Easter
Communion**

*With traditional Easter
Hymns, Candles,
Fanfare and...maybe
even Easter Eggs!*



Singing Together with Marshgate School

by Derrick Thompson

Residents were joined by pupils from Marshgate School for another uplifting session of Singing Together on Wednesday 18 March. This time the children also came prepared with some dance moves to teach us so we were able to exercise our bodies as well as our vocal chords!

We sang Abba's *Dancing Queen*, the Beatles' *Let it Be*, *Eye of the Tiger*, *Let's Go Fly a Kite* from *Mary Poppins*, *Happy* from *Despicable Me* and a new one to most of us, *Power in Me*. After the singing we shared in some great conversations with the children before they headed back to school for their lunch.

Look out for the dates of the next sessions of *Singing Together* after Easter!



Creation Station Decoupage

by Jo Davison

Much fun was had in the Garden Room in March making papier-mâché Easter eggs!



Food Glorious Food – A Lively Gathering!



by **Jemima Prasadam**

Our recent *Food Glorious Food* gathering was a very interesting event and, to our great delight, it was a full house. We welcomed a nutritionist and a care worker to the group, and everyone enjoyed sharing traditions about fasting and seasonal foods from different countries.

One of our Swedish friends told us that from late December until Shrove Tuesday they enjoy delicious seasonal cream buns called semlor – soft cardamom buns filled with almond paste and cream. On *Fat Tuesday* alone, around six million semlor are eaten in Sweden by a population of just ten million!

Our Polish friends shared that they celebrate *Fat Thursday*, enjoying large doughnuts before fasting begins, while our Italian friends described their wonderful custard-filled dessert buns.

Olga then gave us a lively cooking demonstration at Jemima's "mansion", singing, dancing and playing music throughout the session. Her apple fritters were a big success and filled the room with delicious aromas.



Above top: the spread of food at Jemima's house
Above: apple fritters

There will be no Food Glorious Food meeting in April due to Easter holidays.

The next Food Glorious Food meeting will take place on **Thursday 7 May** at Hackney Market. Meeting at Richmond Station 10am to 10.15am.

Olga's Apple Fritters

Ingredients

- 1lb cream cheese or cottage cheese
- 6 oz kefir
- 6 oz water
- ½ tablespoon sugar
- 1 egg
- 5 oz plain flour (sieved)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla powder
- 2 small apples, grated
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- A little oil for frying

Method

1. Beat the cheese in a bowl with a fork until smooth.
2. Gradually add kefir and water while mixing.
3. Add sugar and egg, continuing to mix until smooth.
4. Sieve in the flour and mix well.
5. Add vanilla powder and grated apples.
6. Stir in the baking soda, cover with a tea towel and leave for 15–20 minutes until the mixture bubbles.
7. Heat a frying pan with a little oil, then reduce the heat.
8. Spoon the mixture into the pan one spoon at a time, shaping into oblong "finger" fritters.
9. Cook for about 2 minutes each side until golden brown.
10. Place on a plate lined with kitchen roll to absorb excess oil before eating for the perfect taste.



Out and About Goes Italian and Japanese!

by Richard Yardley

Fourteen residents left Richmond for *Caffe Concerto*, 88 Kensington High Street which is a luxury Italian restaurant and patisserie offering an exquisite menu of authentic Italian cuisine.

We then crossed the road for *Japan House Kensington*, the cultural home of Japan in London. It presents the very best of Japanese art, design, gastronomy, innovation and technology. It deepens our appreciation of all that Japan has to offer.

The term Hyakko (literally 'one hundred makers') defines the creative power born from these countless everyday practices. It transcends any notion of tradition being immovable and embodies the fundamental energy of making itself.

This exhibition brings together almost 2,000 works by 123 makers, in clay, glass, wood, leather, metal and bamboo.

The exhibition is free and goes on until the Sunday 10 May.



Chaplain's Chat

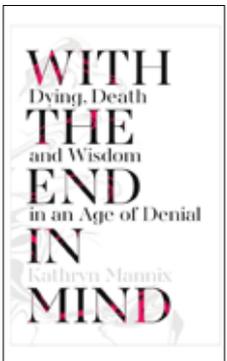
by Chaplain Derrick

As I type, I am imagining you are reading this during Easter weekend, the first weekend of April this year. It is such a beautiful time of year as Spring is now fully underway and we see signs of new life all around us.

Here in the northern hemisphere this fits very well with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that we celebrate on Easter Sunday. I find it hard to imagine celebrating resurrection in the southern hemisphere where it is Autumn and things are beginning to die down for the winter.

But here is an important reminder, we can only truly celebrate Jesus' resurrection if we also recognise his death, a subject that we all too often shy away from discussing, even though it, like taxes, is something that we will all experience.

I have just finished an excellent book, *With the End in Mind: Dying, Death and Wisdom in an Age of Denial*, which might sound terribly depressing, but it is the exact opposite!



Written by Kathryn Mannix, a palliative care Consultant, the book helps us to think about, talk about and prepare for death in very positive ways.

Each chapter is written as a story about someone Kathryn has cared for, and their families, as they prepared to die. Sometimes the stories are very sad but, overall, the book is very reassuring and uplifting! I thoroughly recommend it.

Going back to nature, I am reminded by something Jesus said, "unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels – a plentiful harvest". Death and taxes may be the two certainties in this life, but resurrection can also be a certainty for us all!

Mothering Sunday

Despite the sudden turn in weather late on Mothering Sunday there was still a good gathering of residents for a Cream Tea hosted by our Chaplain, Derrick, and his wife, Jan, in the Chapel. With some relaxing music in the background and a seemingly endless supply of tea and coffee, cakes, scones, jam and cream were enjoyed along with good company and conversation.



The Chapel of St Francis

Service Times: April 2026

Thursday 2 April Maundy Thursday	4.30pm Supper & Service with Communion 5.30pm Watching in Silence
Friday 3 April Good Friday	2pm The Way of the Cross 3pm Communion <i>followed by refreshments</i> <i>in Chaplain's House</i>
Sunday 5 April Easter Sunday	10.30am Easter Communion <i>followed by refreshments</i>
Sunday 12 April	10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 19 April	10.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 26 April	10.30am Holy Communion

All are welcome to join us.

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

Use Our Free Kew Gardens Passes To See...*



In April Kew Gardens will feature the peak of spring, with highlights including the *Sounds of Blossom* event offering immersive soundscapes alongside magnolias and cherry blossoms. Also expect vibrant displays of tulips, rhododendrons and bluebells.

Early April events include:

- ***Sounds of Blossom*** until 6 April 2026 .
- Spring blooms
- *Exhibitions until 12 April: **The Singh Twins** and **Flora Indica*** showcases 52 rediscovered Indian botanical illustrations in the Shirley Sherwood Gallery.



If you don't fancy walking there is always the option of the hop-on hop-off train to take you around the highlights of Kew Gardens.

The Kew Explorer Land Train is a relaxed and gentle way to explore Kew Gardens and learn about the diverse living collection.

The train is fully electric and the route typically includes the following sites:

Stop 1: Victoria Gate for Victoria Plaza Shop and Café, Palm House, and The Botanical.

Stop 2: Temperate House for the Galleries, and Tree Top Walkway

Stop 3: The Japanese Gateway for Lion Gate, and the Great Pagoda.

Stop 4: Holly Walk and King William's Temple

Stop 5: Princess Walk and Children's Garden

Stop 6: The Orangery for Kew Palace, the Orangery and Elizabeth Gate

Full tour of Kew Gardens takes 30 minutes but is **not** included in the free pass. Adults: £6.50. Essential carers go free. Space for one manual fixed-wheel wheelchair.

*** Contact your Scheme Manager to arrange free passes.**

Film Club



I Swear

Wednesday 15 April at 2pm

in The Chapel of St Francis

I SWEAR is the powerful true-life story of Tourette syndrome campaigner John Davidson. In a funny and moving account of his experiences, the story follows John throughout his adolescence and early adulthood and explores what was a little known and entirely misunderstood condition in 1980s Britain.

There is very strong language throughout this film. However, ALL of this is contextualised as it is a symptom of the main character's Tourette Syndrome.

Writer/Director: Kirk Jones

Actors: Robert Aramayo, Peter Mullan, Maxine Peake

Rating: 15

Runtime: 2hours

Critics Scores: IMDb: 8.4/10

Rotten Tomatoes: 100% Popcornmeter: 99%

Refreshments during the interval.



SAVE THE DATE
Summer Party

**Thursday
 13 August**

More details to follow



SAVE THE
 DATE!!

This year's summer
 outing will be to

**Broadstairs
 on Tuesday 23 June**

If you wish to go on the trip, please book your seat on the bus through your Scheme Manager.

Given that we now have more residents within our Almshouses with the opening of Elizabeth Doughty's, there will be fewer available seats for friends and family on the bus.

As in previous years, residents can of course add a friend or family member to the waiting list if there are any available seats.

If seats become available, priority will be given to those residents who need a carer to accompany them on the trip.

you are all invited

The return of

**THE PAPA
 GEORGE BAND**



**Thursday 18 June
 from 4pm
 on Hickey's Lawn**

Following the huge success of the last concert, The Richmond Charities proudly present The Papa George Band once again. Featuring: Peter Rees, on bass (our very own Almshouse resident), Derby Todd on drums and Papa George on guitar and vocal.

All residents, their families and friends are welcome.

Don't forget to bring a picnic, something to drink, something to keep you warm and of course something to sit on. We can supply a chair, although numbers are limited.

Transport can be arranged for residents who are unable to use public transport.

Please speak to your Scheme Manager if you require transport.

See www.papageorge.co.uk for more information on the band.



Home and Away: Krakow, Poland

by Maureen Bliss

Let me tell you about my brief but full-on trip to Krakow Poland!

Day One Arrived at Krakow airport early evening with no crowds. We called an Uber (previously recommended as much much cheaper than a taxi) to take us to our accommodation in Kazimierz area (Jewish quarter) of Krakow and only 15-20 minute walk to the Old City.

Our 3-star hotel perfectly located with a friendly reception, breakfast restaurant and bar area and our adequate twin-bedded room on the first floor was exactly what we (2 x 80-year-old ladies) expected.

Day Two A sunny day, not what we were expecting, and after a sumptuous breakfast, decided to take the tram to the Old City, as the tram stop was



Above: the iconic entrance to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, a former Nazi concentration and extermination camp located in Oświęcim, Poland. The central building is the camp's main gatehouse, often referred to as the "Gate of Death".



Above: Krakow is anchored by two main, historically rich, and adjacent areas: the Wawel Hill (Castle and Cathedral) to the south and the Old Town Square (Market Square and St. Mary's Basilica) to the north, both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

located just outside our hotel and 8 minutes later arrived at Wawel Castle surrounded by various interesting baroque buildings including the cathedral, which we visited, including seeing the huge bells in the tower.

Then explored the Old City, again in baroque style, the enormous square with flower sellers and the odd carriage and horses trotting by, "tourist traps" I call them, and of course St Mary's Basilica which houses the famous Triptych amongst other beautiful relics.

By this time it was well past lunchtime so we had the most scrumptious apple cake tea, hot chocolate and the best cheesecake I've ever tasted. A walk home was necessary to digest that tea and arrived back at our hotel for a well-earned rest before seeking a typical Polish restaurant nearby. We found exactly what we wanted, a Polish sausage dish with spinach dumplings washed down with Polish vodka!

Day Three Tour of Auschwitz and Birkenau (8hrs) with an excellent guide. The most sobering and humbling experience I've ever had and I do believe it should be for everyone to experience once in their lifetime. Our tour ended with the view of a 'worm moon' (blood red moon which could have been the result of the sands from the desert) overhanging the entrance to Birkenau..... quite impressive.

Another Polish restaurant, where we had breaded pork with mash and sauerkraut, my friend enjoying duck leg with sautéed potatoes and beetroot sauce, again washed down with Polish vodka!

Day Four Another sunny day and Tour of the Salt Mines (5hrs) and another excellent guide. Quite an extraordinary experience. We walked down 800 steps (140meters) below ground, along paths and walled corridors of salt resembling granite or even marble in places. Passing through closed chambers so as not to let in any outside air or humidity, otherwise the salt sculptures, of which there were many depicting the workers and their tools throughout the ages, would crumble. Passing lakes of salt water (water is used in forming the sculptures etc) we finally reached the lowest part of the mines arriving at the cathedral of salt and is so enormous it not only holds services there but concerts and weddings too.

The floor was remarkable as it truly resembled octagonal tiles that looked like polished marble. Even the chandeliers were made of salt! Quite spectacular. You will be pleased to learn there were lifts to take us to the surface.

Day Five Our warmest day yet and last day to explore the other side of Kazimierz, over the bridge and River Vistula (Wisla) to *Ghetto Heroes Square* (Plac Bohaterow Getta) and *The Eagle Pharmacy* owned by a Pole called Tadeus Pankiewicz who, apart from giving advice and medicines



Above: The Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland is a 700-year-old UNESCO World Heritage site near Krakow, featuring over 245 km of galleries, chapels, and statues carved entirely from salt. Operating from the 13th century until 1996, it is a major tourist attraction with highlights including St. Kinga's Chapel and underground lakes.

often free of charge, allowed the Jews to use it as a place of refuge sometimes escaping out of the back door.

From there we walked a short distance to the *Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory* where he employed Jewish Polish workers, using part of the profits of his business to give better food for his workers and protect them. Although Schindler was a member of the Nazi party he had to permanently bribe and gift Nazi officials with luxury items to protect his workers from concentration camps or certain death.

After a delicious lunch of potato rosti and mushroom sauce sitting in the warmth of the sun, set in a lovely small square in Kazimierz we made our way slowly back to the hotel to await our taxi ride to the airport and to say thank you, Krakow, for giving us such a wonderful experience.



Above: Ghetto Heroes Square
Below: Oskar Schindler's factory



Richmond Park FREE Minibus

A free, volunteer-run RP1 minibus service operates in Richmond Park on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from March to November 2026, linking major car parks, gates, and attractions. The minibus is free and fully accessible with a ramp and steps to aid access. Wheelchair users wishing to use the service should contact volunteering@royalpark.org.uk



RP1 Roehampton Estate – Pen Ponds – Isabella Plantation – Roehampton Estate (within Richmond Park and via Ham Common and Mortlake Station)

Monday, Wednesday and Friday – Service for 2026		16 March to 13 November 2026	
Roehampton Danebury Avenue	10:30	12:02	14:10
Roehampton Gate Car Park (café and toilets)	10:32	12:04	14:12
Robin Hood Gate Car Park (toilets)	10:36	12:08	14:16
Pen Ponds Car Park (kiosk)	10:40	12:12	14:20
Isabella Plantation Disabled Car Park (towards Kingston)	10:47	12:19	14:27
Broomfield Hill Car Park (for Isabella Plantation and kiosk)	10:54	12:26	14:34
Ladderstile Gate (for 85 and K3 buses on Kingston Hill)	10:59	12:31	14:39
Kingston Gate Car Park (kiosk and toilets)	11:03	12:35	14:43
Ham Gate Avenue (65 bus stop L by The New Inn)	11:09	12:41	14:49
Ham Common (65 bus stop K for Ham Parade)	11:13	12:45	14:53
Isabella Plantation Disabled Car Park (towards Richmond)	11:18	12:50	14:58
Pembroke Lodge (café, information centre and toilets)	11:25	12:57	15:05
Richmond Gate (inside gate by mini-roundabout and toilets)	11:30	13:02	15:10
Sheen Gate (out) (toilets)	11:37	13:09	15:17*
Mortlake Station (969 bus stop by Boutique Café)	11:47	13:19	15:27*
Sheen Gate (in) (toilets)	11:57	13:29	15:37*
Roehampton Danebury Avenue	12:02	13:34	17:14*

Gap in the minibus service is for the driver's lunch break

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.

Celebrate a New Era for the Historic Grove Gardens Chapel and visit The Fixery!



The 150-year-old Grove Gardens Chapel at the Old Burial Ground in Richmond has been restored!

Following extensive repair works by Habitats & Heritage with support from the Council, Historic England and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, this “architectural gem” has been brought back to life for the community.

Alongside community activities, it will host a new reuse and repair hub called **The Fixery**; it welcomes residents to repair, reuse and swap items, helping them

• **Connect with others** – Sit and relax at our on-site café with delicious coffee and snacks available for purchase

Opening times

Open Fridays and Saturdays, 11am to 4pm. All services will incur a small fee or expected donation.

Location

It's in Grove Road Gardens, Lower Grove Road, off Grove Road, TW10 6HP, a short walk from our Manning Place and Doughty's Almshouses, just off Queens Road, Richmond.

reduce waste, save money and strengthen community connections.

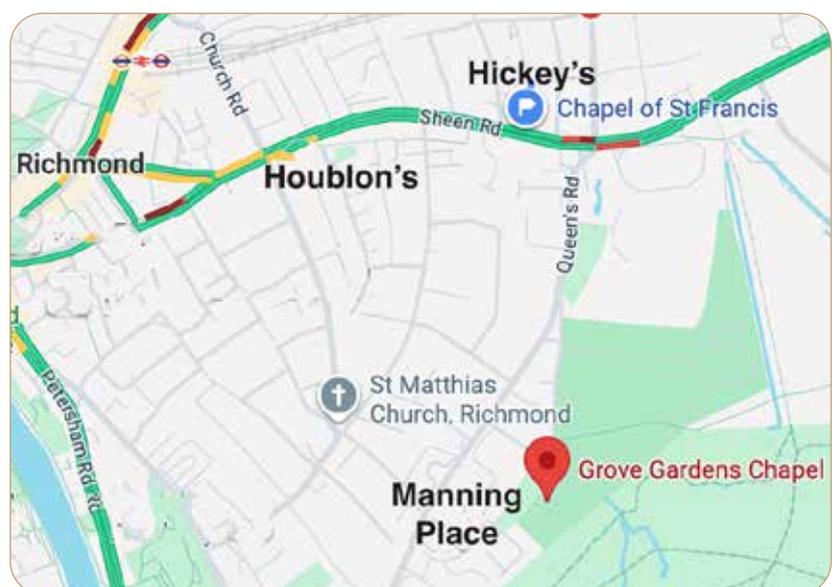
You can:

- **Repair it** – Repair bicycles, clothing or small electrical items
- **Swap it** – Swap clothes and refresh your wardrobe
- **Refill it** – Refill your empty household cleaning and laundry products
- **Purchase** pre-loved teddy bears or small craft materials – fabrics, buttons, ribbons, and more

Brand New Elleray Centre Opens

– as a modern hub for community connection.

Community organisations, Councillors, the Richmond Mayor, and local charity trustees gathered to celebrate the opening of the new Elleray Centre last month. Teddington's brand-new community hub replaces the 100-year-old Elleray Hall, providing an energy-efficient, fully accessible environment that will serve as a vibrant space for residents of all ages!



Happy Tears

by Mike Townsin

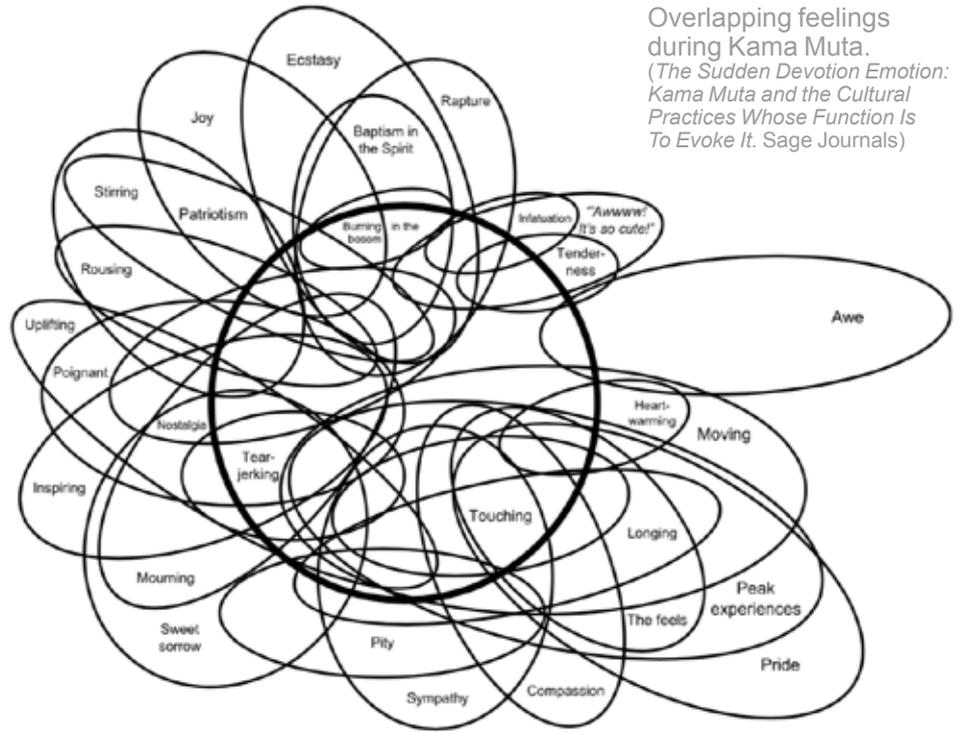
Ever shed tears of joy?

This extract from a recent *The Times* article explains why; it explores the emotion known as “kama muta,” a term coined by psychologists to describe the feeling of being deeply moved, often to the point of shedding happy tears.

Though officially identified only 13 years ago, kama muta is a universal human experience. The Sanskrit phrase means “being moved by love,” and it captures the warmth and connection people feel during moments such as weddings, reunions, acts of heroism, or even watching cute animal videos.



Researchers Alan Fiske, Thomas Schubert, and Beate Seibt began studying the phenomenon in 2013 after noting a gap in psychological literature: why do people cry during joyful events?



Overlapping feelings during Kama Muta.
(*The Sudden Devotion Emotion: Kama Muta and the Cultural Practices Whose Function Is To Evoke It*. Sage Journals)

Their studies revealed that kama muta is marked by distinct physical sensations, including tears, a lump in the throat, goosebumps, tingling skin, and warmth in the chest. These responses typically arise from a sudden intensification of social bonds, whether experienced directly or vicariously, such as watching a soldier reunite with family.

Although people frequently experience this emotion—on average twice a week—no language had a precise word for it. Participants often described feeling “moved” or “touched,” but these terms were insufficient. This led researchers to adopt the Sanskrit term.

Beyond its emotional impact, kama muta appears to promote altruism and social connection. Studies show that people who experience it feel

more motivated to express care and kindness.

Notably, a 2023 study found that Americans who watched a moving video about *Hurricane Harvey* volunteers felt greater warmth and trust toward political opponents. The emotion may also enhance wellbeing by fostering meaning in life and grounding individuals physically.

Ultimately, kama muta highlights the power of love and connection in everyday life.



Marmite: ‘Love it or Hate it’: Could it be good for you?

by Mike Townsin

This summary from an article in the *The Sunday Times* explores whether Marmite, the yeast extract beloved in the UK and debated elsewhere, is actually good for you.

Made from leftover brewer’s yeast and produced since 1902, Marmite is concentrated, low in calories and known for its distinctive umami flavour, which comes from naturally occurring glutamates formed during fermentation.



Nutritionally, Marmite’s strongest selling point is its high content of B vitamins, particularly B1, B2, B3 and B12. These vitamins help convert food into energy, reduce fatigue, and support the nervous system and red blood cell formation.

Vitamin B12 is especially significant because it can be difficult to obtain from plant-based foods, making Marmite appealing to vegans

“Marmite’s strongest selling point is its high content of B vitamins, particularly B1, B2, B3 and B12”

and vegetarians. A small 8g serving can provide a substantial proportion of daily B vitamin requirements.

However, Marmite is also classified as an ultra-processed food (UPF), largely because of how it is manufactured and fortified with added B vitamins.

While this label often carries negative connotations, being ultra-processed does not automatically make a food unhealthy. Marmite is described by a dietitian as a nutrient-dense condiment rather than a health food in its own right, meaning it can add nutritional value in small amounts but should not be relied upon as a major part of the diet.

Its main drawback is salt which can increase blood pressure but for most people, small amounts within a balanced diet are unlikely to be problematic.

How it is consumed also matters. Used sparingly in cooking as a flavour enhancer, it can be a useful addition. Spread thickly on buttered toast, it becomes more of an indulgence than a health food. Overall, moderation is key.

Crystal of the Month: Diamond

April Birthstone

by Gennie Thompson

Our birthstone this month is Diamond, a gemstone celebrated through the ages for its unmatched brilliance and strength.



The name “diamond” comes from the Greek *adamas*, meaning “unbreakable,” symbolizing purity, resilience, and eternal love.

Ancient civilizations believed diamonds were fragments of stars or tears of the gods, bringing courage and divine protection.

They were worn as talismans to enhance strength and victory in battle.

Spiritually, diamonds are associated with clarity, truth, and enlightenment—believed to amplify one’s inner light and align the mind with higher consciousness.

Today, diamonds remain a timeless emblem of love, purity, and enduring spiritual strength.

Miscellany

Curated by Mike Townsin

- Harrods used to sell pet leopards in the 1960s.



Before the 1976 Endangered Species Act, Harrods' famous "Pet Kingdom" in London sold exotic animals, including leopards, lions, and baby elephants, often as luxury, high-fashion pets for wealthy customers. Famous examples included *Michael the Leopard* and *Christian the Lion*, who was bought in 1969.

- There are 16 people in England with the surname Grinch.
- Postage was originally paid by the person receiving the letter, not the sender.
- The highest mountain on British soil is in Antarctica
- When New Year was moved in 1751 from 25 March to 1 January, there were only 282 days in the year.
- The thermostat controls in many hotel bedrooms don't work: they're rigged to save electricity.
- The Bayeux Tapestry is not a tapestry, it's embroidered cloth.
- Turkmenistan has a public holiday to celebrate melons.
- During the Second World War, Foyle's bookshop bomb-proofed itself by covering the roof with copies of *Mein Kampf*.

Wit and Wisdom

Curated by Mike Townsin

- Diplomacy is the art of telling people to go to hell in such a way that they ask for directions. *Winston Churchill*
- Television is an invention that permits you to be entertained in your living room by people you wouldn't have in your home. *David Frost*
- It's hard to get rich doing something fun. *Janan Ganesh. British journalist*
- It's good to do uncomfortable things. It's weight training for life. *Anne Lamott. US novelist*
- We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. *Epictetus. Greek philosopher*
- We are not makers of history. We are made by history. *Martin Luther king Jr*
- The only electoral advice that matters is 'pitch to the floating voter' and 'choose a good leader'. *Janan Ganesh*
- The good thing about Glasgow is that if there's a nuclear attack it will look just the same afterwards. *Billy Connolly*



T.S. Eliot, 1923 by Lady Ottoline Morrell, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

- Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important. *T.S. Eliot*

T.S. Eliot (born 1888 Missouri, USA—died 1965 London) was a Nobel-winning modernist poet, playwright, and critic renowned for the poem, *The Waste Land*. His insight that "Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important" (from *The Cocktail Party*) critiques how ego, vanity, and the desperate pursuit of significance drive global conflict.

Live Music at The Mitre

Why not pop out

for some live entertainment at The Mitre pub next to Hickey's.



Simon & Jon are a Gipsy jazz guitar duo that performs energetic, swinging tunes inspired by Django Reinhardt and The Hot Club of France, featuring music from the 1920s, 30s, and beyond.



Sunday 12 April.
5pm - 7pm. Free.

20 St Mary's Grove, Richmond TW9 1UY



Stormy Sunset by John Constable 1822

Just Hang On

Poem by Steve Harbud

When life isn't what it seems
You're hanging on to hopes and dreams,
And every silver lining has a cloud.
You're in a world that moves too fast
Between the future and the past,
The weight you carry's real and very loud.

But don't let go or lose that flame
There's beauty in the tears and pain,
Soon the storms will pass and skies will clear.
And every dream you thought had died
Will still live somewhere deep inside,
Just waiting for the storms to disappear.

A Short Story of 50 words



Last month we invited readers to send in short stories of up to 50 words about friendship, and got a great response. Here are two – keep them coming you writers! *Ed.*

Missing by Mary Bronks

Ruby (Bengal)

Her photo was on walls,
lamp-posts ...

We peered into cellars,
garages, calling through the
darkness, silence replied.

Nights passed, no warm
body purring peacefully.

Days passed, no news,
no trace, no hope...

Midnight. Plaintive mewing
at the window, a dark shadow,
soft padding of paws.

She's home.

Realisation by Alan Shirley

I awake - or was I still asleep?

This place looks so familiar, and the
people around me seem to know me.

Do I know them?

I'm not sure.

A walk along a fast-flowing riverside
path leads to a busy delicatessen.

How did I get here?

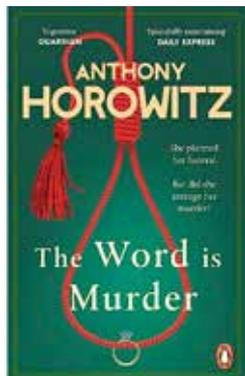
It's definitely real.

"Salute"



The Word is Murder by Anthony Horowitz

Review by Amani Orr Ewing



Anthony Horowitz writes brilliantly in several different genres, but this is a contemporary crime fiction novel with a new, interesting twist.

The author sets himself in squarely in the centre of the action. He writes about his experience when he inadvertently becomes the side-kick of a taciturn, disgraced former police detective turned private investigator, Hawthorne.

Hawthorne has his own secrets to hide and makes it clear he wants nothing to do with Horowitz, when Horowitz's own agent cajoles him into writing about the investigation. As time goes by Horowitz gets the distinct impression that he is playing the part of the slow witted stooge – a Watson to Hawthorne's Sherlock. Only Hawthorne doesn't want Horowitz around.

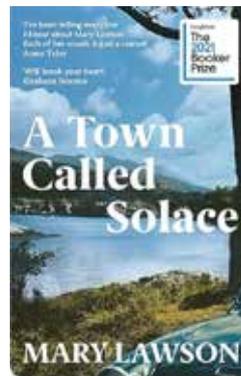
The plot revolves around the death of a wealthy woman, only hours after writing her will. There follows an intriguing, dangerous adventure. There are several red herrings and misdirection, and the plot is written very well with nothing that is unnecessary.

The other aspect of the book is that we see several aspects of the life of the 'real' Horowitz intertwined with the investigation. He is writing TV scripts and calling Hollywood directors. It is a clever format with lots of action, and keeps the story moving well.

This book is the first in a series of 5 (at present). Throughout the series, the relationship evolves between the two, and Horowitz digs deeper into Hawthorne's past to find out what his secrets are. They are all very entertaining and the plots are all very different, and equally imaginative.

A Town Called Solace by Mary Lawson

Review by Kate O'Brien



Mary Lawson is a recent find. A Canadian writer who was brought up in northern Ontario and now lives in Kingston (upon Thames!). She has only written four books, and this is her most recent.

There are three key protagonists: Clara, aged 7, whose older sister has run away from home; Elisabeth Orchard, her elderly neighbour, whose cat Clara is feeding whilst she's in hospital; and Liam, who unexpectedly moves into Elisabeth's house. They have very different stories which intertwine and the novel ranges over a number of years, although the 'current' day is in the 1970s.

Clara is traumatised by her sister's disappearance and insists on standing vigil at the window waiting for her to come home. Liam is recently divorced and struggling to come to terms with the end of his marriage. Elisabeth is reflecting on her life, and the choices she made when younger, as she lies in her hospital bed. Each of the, very different, voices is well written and the stories contain unexpected twists.

I'm currently reading Mary Lawson's first novel, *Crow Lake*, which I am also really enjoying. Several reviews reference Anne Tyler, and if you enjoy her books, you will enjoy these.

And the Good News is...

Curated by Mike Townsin

- A state sixth-form college in Newham, East London, where 62 of its pupils received Oxbridge offers – more than a quarter of its Year 13 cohort. It's a record for this high-achieving academy.
- Robert Aramayo a relatively little-known actor from Hull beat two Hollywood megastars – Leonardo DiCaprio and Timothee Chalamet – to win the best actor award at the BAFTAs for his role in the drama *I Swear* (see Film Club).
- It is announced that 13 new spots in England could be designated river swimming sites, pending public consultation. They include Pangbourne Meadow in Berkshire, which helped inspire *The Wind in the Willows*, and stretches of the Thames between Ham and Kingston (near Trowlock Island) which, if approved, will become London's first Thames bathing sites.



Aerial view of Trowlock Island.

- A toddler has won two Guinness World Records by becoming the youngest person to perform a pair of snooker trick shots. Jude Owens, aged two years and 261 days and barely tall enough to reach the table, pulled off a snooker double pot; a fortnight later he executed a pool bank shot.

On This Day...

curated by
Debbie Flaherty

1 April 2001

The Netherlands is the first country to legalise same-sex marriage.

5

April 1955

Buckingham Palace announces that the eighty-year-old Sir Winston Churchill is to resign as Prime Minister and will be replaced by Sir Anthony Eden.

7 April 1832

The last recorded case of wife-selling in England. Joseph Thompson of Carlisle leads his wife, Ann, to market in a halter and starts the bidding at 50 shillings. The lady is eventually sold for £1 and a Newfoundland dog.

10

April 1912

RMS Titanic sets out on her ill-fated voyage.

What's the Origin of...?

Curated by Mike Townsin

- **Heard it on the grapevine:** when Samuel Morse invented the telegraph in 1844, people observed that the telegraph wires resembled the tendrils of grape vines, and started to refer to word-of-mouth communication as “the grapevine telegraph”; so instead of saying “I heard a rumour” or “I heard through gossip”, they would say “I heard it on the grapevine”. And it stuck.
- **To go haywire:** hay-wire was originally a light-weight wire sold to farmers to tie up bales of hay. In the 1900s loggers started using it to repair logging equipment but it used to snap off causing injury or sometimes even death: as this kept happening the phrase “to go haywire” meaning “to go awry” or “out of control” took hold.
- **Armed to the teeth:** pirates would swing on ropes when attacking ships and carry as many weapons with them as possible, and when they ran out of ways to carry weapons on their person, they would hold an extra knife or sword in their teeth; figuratively, it has come to mean “to be heavily armed or equipped for something”
- **Push the envelope:** the term refers to the ‘mathematical envelope’, meaning ‘the point or intersection of consecutive curves’. In aviation, it means the upper limit or altitude at which an aircraft can fly safely. Aviators began referring to it as “pushing the envelope” and it became known in common parlance as “pushing the limits of anything”.

Test Your London Knowledge Answers in next months magazine.

1. In which London square would you find the statue of *Mahatma Gandhi*?
2. Which World War II Cruiser is moored on the River Thames?.....
3. The Austrian composer, Joseph Haydn, wrote *The London Symphonies*; but who composed *The London Symphony*?.....
4. When did the last execution take place in the *Tower of London*?.....
5. In *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens, London was one city. What was the other city?
6. Who famously lives at *Lambeth Palace*?.....
7. Who famously lived at *221b Baker Street*?
8. Who famously lived at *10 Rillington Place*?
9. Which London bridge is a combined bascule and suspension bridge?.....
10. Which artist/s have performed the most at the Royal Albert Hall? (a) Cirque du Soleil (b) Elton John (c) Cliff Richard or (d) Eric Clapton?.....
11. By what name is the skyscraper at 30 St Mary Axe better known? (a) The Cheese Grater (b) The Shard or (c) The Gherkin.....
12. Which London underground line has the most stations on it? (a) Central (b) District or (c) Jubilee
13. Approximately how many bus stops are there in London? (a) 13,000 (b) 15,000 (c) 17,000 or (d) 19,000
14. How many rooms does Buckingham Palace have? (a) 444 (b) 775 or (c) 910
15. Who said “When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life” ?.....
16. *The Old Bailey* stands on the site of which former prison?.....
17. Which London museum was originally called *The Museum of Ornamental Art*?
18. What event does *The Monument* commemorate?.....
19. What was Marble Arch originally designed to be?.....
20. Which seaside town also has a *Nelson’s Column*?.....

Wordsearch Answers. Oscar Nominees 2026. March Issue.

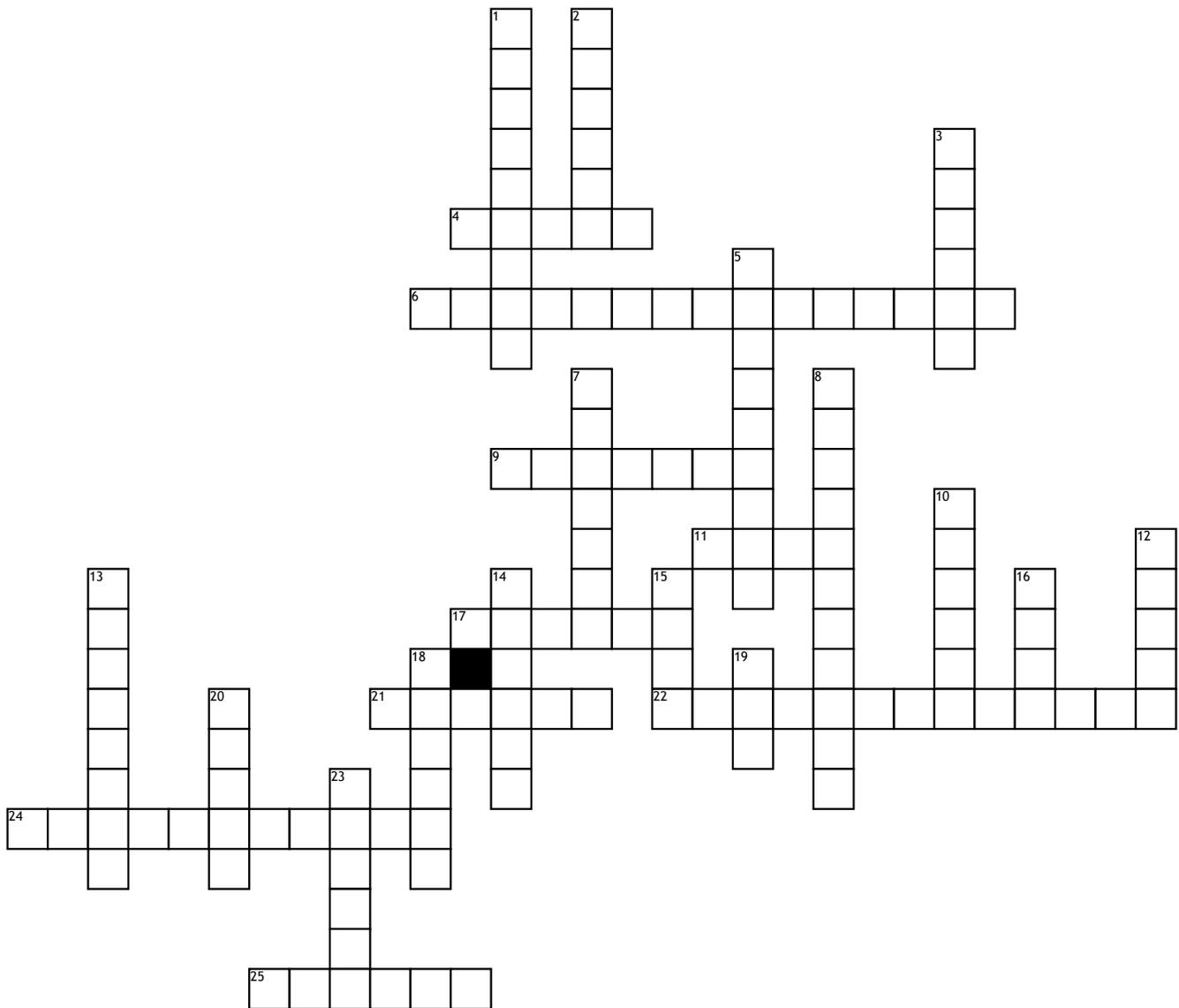
Competition Winners
 Thank you to everyone who sent in entries for the March competitions. Picked at random, our £10 M&S voucher winners this month are:
Olga Yemets – Oscar Nominees 2026 Wordsearch
Mary Bronks – TV Quiz Shows
Congratulations!

Answers: Picture Quiz. TV Quiz Shows. March Issue.

1. <i>Who Wants to be a Millionaire?</i>	9. <i>QI</i>
2. <i>Blankety Blank</i>	10. <i>Tenable</i>
3. <i>Catch Phrase</i>	11. <i>The Chase</i>
4. <i>Countdown</i>	12. <i>The Wheel</i>
5. <i>Limitless Win</i>	13. <i>Tipping Point</i>
6. <i>Lingo</i>	14. <i>University Challenge</i>
7. <i>Mastermind</i>	15. <i>Only Connect</i>
8. <i>One Percent Club</i>	16. <i>House of Games</i>

Crossword: Rain! Rain! Rain!

The average adult in the UK spends about nine minutes a day talking about the rain!



Across

4. Colour of the rainbow beginning with G
6. Who sang It's Raining Men in 1983
9. Very light rain
11. Colour of the rainbow beginning with B
17. Who sang about Purple Rain in 1984?
21. Colour of the rainbow beginning with Y
22. Who sang about Rainy Days and Mondays in 1971?
24. Which film is famous for its "tears in rain" monologue and constant dystopian drizzle
25. Colour of the rainbow beginning with V

Down

1. Rain, Steam and Speed - The Great Western Railway was painted by which British artist in 1844?
2. Colour of the rainbow beginning with O
3. A regional British term for a mix of mist and drizzle.
5. Who is the lead actor in Singin' In The Rain? (1952)
7. Which film starts Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise? (1988)
8. The rain it raineth every day. A phrase written by?
10. a great flow of water or of something that overwhelms
12. Part of the common British idiom "lovely weather for

13. Who sang Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head in 1969?

14. Informal British term for an umbrella
15. To rain heavily or strike repeatedly
16. Very light rain or atmospheric moisture
18. An area with very little rain.
19. Colour of the rainbow beginning with R
20. A violent disturbance of the atmosphere with rain
23. Colour of the rainbow beginning with I

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Complete the crossword and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box before Friday 17 April.

Name:

Wordsearch: Clouds

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

- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Enubilous | Kelvin-Helmholtz | Cumulus | Convergence |
| Contrails | Fallstreak Hole | Noctilucent | Lines |
| Lenticular | Asperitas | Orographic | Nacreous |
| Mammatus | Banner | Cirrostratus | Funnel |
| Cirrus | Virga | Altostratus | Cirrocumulus |
| Cumulonimbus | Nimbostratus | Stratus | Alto cumulus |
| | | | Stratocumulus |

Your chance to win a £10 M&S Voucher! Find all 24 clouds and submit this page to your Scheme Manager, or place in the suggestion box **before Friday 17 April.**
 Name:

Poetry Corner

by Nigel Davis

Poets have always written poetry about the seasons. As it is springtime, let's have a poem about spring.

I love this one – a sonnet – by Gerard Manley Hopkins. It shows such a delight in burgeoning spring, without being at all cloying or sentimental, before it changes in theme in the second stanza.

Spring, we are asked to understand, is just as wonderful now as it was in the garden of Eden in the days of innocence before Adam and Eve left in disgrace.

Don't let the disillusioned outlook of sinful mankind take that away – instead, grasp it.

It's a good message.

Spring

by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –
 When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
 Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
 Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
 The ear, it strikes like lightning to hear him sing;
 The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
 The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
 With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

What is all this juice and all this joy?

A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
 In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
 Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
 Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
 Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.



Thrush (*Turdus Musicus*) - from the book:
The Birds of Great Britain (1873).
 John Gould, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons



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