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March 09

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editor's View

Welcome to the March issue of *View*. We've brought you lots of treats this month, with three super, easy-to-enter competitions. So what's on offer? If you fancy taking a friend or partner to sample the relaxing delights of a pampering Champneys spa break, turn to page 10. Perhaps an exciting day out at the Hawk Conservancy Trust will appeal? Seeing these magnificent raptors up close, and learning how to handle them, is a fascinating experience that anyone would enjoy. If you want to be in with a chance, turn to page 40. And, finally, Thomson's Delicatessen has put together a hamper of delicious goodies, many locally sourced, that will get your taste-buds tingling. You'll find the tempting details on page 17.

Get your entries in, and best of luck.

Heidi



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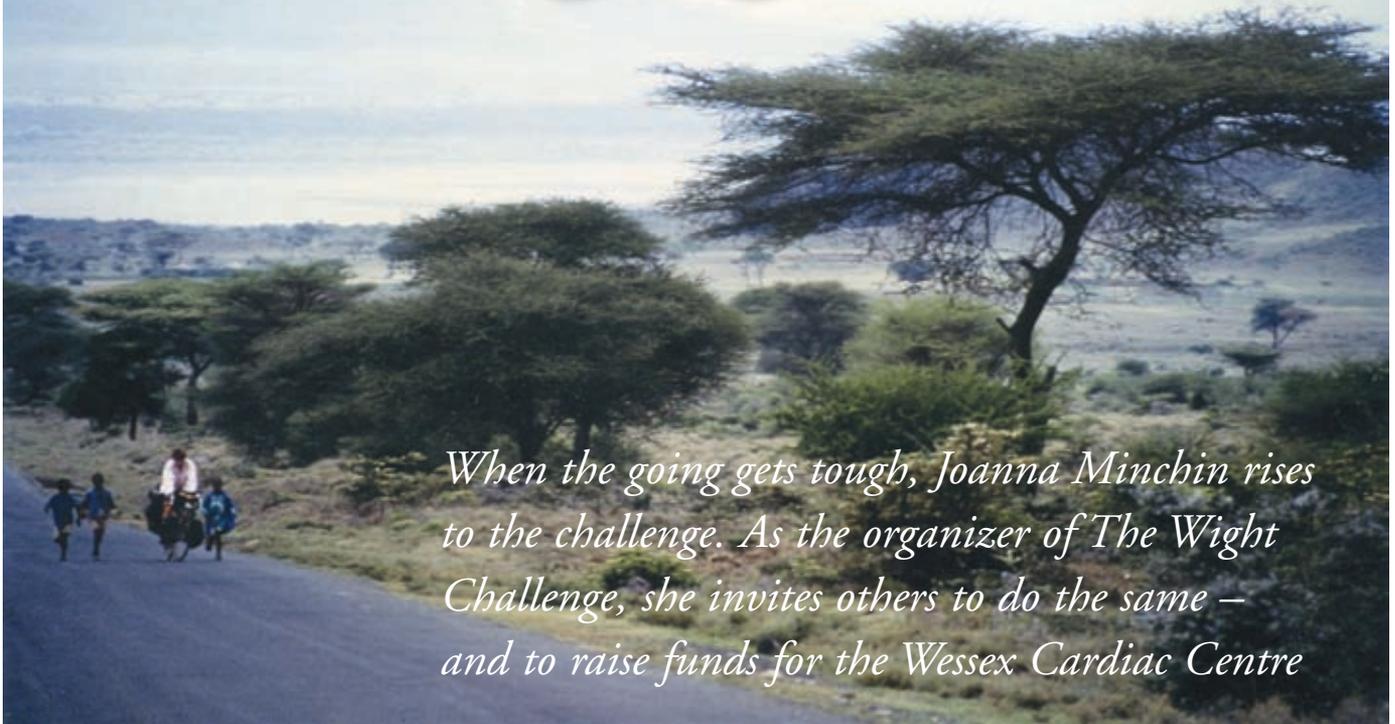
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Challenging *times*



When the going gets tough, Joanna Minchin rises to the challenge. As the organizer of The Wight Challenge, she invites others to do the same – and to raise funds for the Wessex Cardiac Centre

A backdrop of acacias as Joanna cycles through Tanzania on the 1991 sponsored ride that raised £7,000 for Save the Children

Growing up as a teenager on the Isle of Wight, Joanna Laird couldn't wait to experience more of the outside world. After an idyllic but rather insular childhood, she wanted to cast her net wide and embark on some of life's adventures. Over the ensuing two decades she rose to numerous challenges on land and sea, which would take her to far-flung corners of the globe.

Now, as married mother-of-two Joanna Minchin, she has settled back into island life and is the driving force behind The Wight Challenge, which not only flies the flag in promoting the island but also raises tens of thousands of pounds for charity. Joanna, who lives at Wellow with her husband Robin, a product designer, and their two children Harry (four) and Isabelle (two), is the organiser of this arduous annual test of physical stamina – now in its sixth year – which comprises a 20-mile mountain-bike ride, a three-mile open canoe, and an eight-mile run.

For the past five years the event has been held in aid of Dreams Come True, a charity that aims to turn into reality the dreams of terminally and seriously ill children. But this year, for the first time, the event is raising funds for Wessex Heartbeat, the regional charity that supports the work of the Wessex Cardiac

Centre at Southampton General Hospital. It is hoped that the total will surpass the £13,435 raised in 2008.

Competitors are a keen bunch. Registrations have already started coming in for this year's event on 19 September at Jersey Camp in Porchfield, as part of the Isle of Wight Council's Cycling Festival. 'There is always something to do surrounding The

'I remember the magic of a Christmas Eve carol service in Manger Square in Bethlehem – it was a wonderful trip and we were young with no ties, no plans and no worries'

Wight Challenge but I love the buzz of an event on the horizon and working towards it,' says Joanna. 'I love the planning, the build-up and on the day, seeing it all come together. I also have a passion for welcoming people to the island and seeing them enjoy it, because it's a great place to visit.'

She relies on a small army of marshals, time-keepers, first-aiders and general helpers, and acknowledges that The Wight Challenge also gives her a focus outside of being a full-time mum.

Joanna first moved to the island with her family when she was six: 'After I left school I had an overwhelming desire to break away from the island. I did a secretarial course in Oxford and was offered a job in New York, under the Mountbatten Internship Programme (the forerunner of the Mountbatten Institute), which offers young professionals educational and business opportunities around the world. I jumped at it and ended up working in an English law firm, swapping the island's scenery for the Manhattan skyline.'

Joanna returned from the US in 1991 and, together with her older brother Alexander, embarked on a 7,000-mile sponsored cycle ride



Joanna Minchin and her husband Robin, with Harry and Isabelle

from the Isle of Wight to Cape Town, South Africa, raising £7,000 for Save the Children. The brother-and-sister team set off in September for the nine-month expedition, which took them through such countries as France, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Israel, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and on to South Africa. 'I can still remember the magic of a Christmas Eve carol service in Manger Square in Bethlehem – it was a wonderful trip and we were young with no ties, no plans and no worries,' she recalls.

That epic cycle ride was to set the tone for Joanna's ability to rise to a challenge. In the years that followed she spent time working for the Ocean Youth Club (now the Ocean Youth Trust), an adventure sail training charity; sailed from Brazil to South Africa in a boat more suited to expeditions to Antarctica; lived and crewed on a charter yacht in Zanzibar, hitched a ride across the Atlantic on a private yacht and sailed to Antarctica as cook on the 54ft sailing yacht *Pelagic* in January to April 1998 with her brother Hamish as skipper. 'It was an experience that opened my eyes wide to a world that I'd only ever seen in pictures, and I still feel very privileged to have been,' she says. Joanna estimates that she has travelled more than 36,000 nautical miles – voyages that have inspired her to create the exciting, gruelling and quirky event that The Wight Challenge has become.

When she eventually returned to the Isle of Wight, Joanna worked alongside her brother Alexander, helping to put the finishing touches to the restoration of *Partridge*, an 1885 gentleman's racing yacht. She then honed her secretarial skills and took an office job at a farm on the island in November 1998. In June of the following year she found herself organising events for up to 120 people – including sailing days, a black-tie dinner and a charity cricket match at Yarmouth which was visited by former Essex and England cricket captain Nasser Hussain with his team.

'That really kick-started The Wight Challenge – I discovered that I loved the buzz of organising events, and started up my own business, Wight Ventures, in January 2000,' she explains. 'Clients included companies such as BP and Kentucky Fried Chicken who sent their employees over to the island.' Joanna subsequently sold the events business but has retained the organisation of The Wight Challenge. From the first event in 2004, it has gone from strength to strength and now has space for 40 teams of three people to compete. As well as boosting the coffers of the island's economy, thanks to competitors and spectators, it has also gained

'I even had a telephone call from the Falklands. I thought it was an April Fool...'



Surveying a great achievement, Joanna on China's Great Wall

international notoriety, with a team of yacht brokers from Monaco and entrants from Italy.

'I even had a telephone call from the Falklands,' recalls Joanna. 'I thought it was an April Fool when the voice said he was ringing from Port Stanley and had just received our flier. But it was an honest inquiry and a team of three soldiers come over during their leave and competed in 2005.'

And does Joanna harbour secret ambitions to do The Wight Challenge herself? 'I'm far too busy on the day,' she admits, 'but to be honest, although I absolutely love cycling around the island, I can't run.' ▼

For more information on The Wight Challenge go to www.heartbeat.co.uk/wight-challenge or www.designcatalyst.plus.com

Wessex Heartbeat was established in 1992, and has raised more than £11 million to enable the Wessex Cardiac Centre at Southampton General Hospital to become and remain one of the UK's leading centres of excellence for cardiac care. The Centre treats more than 20,000 people a year, including 1,000 babies and children.



Hot competition during the canoe section of last year's arduous Wight Challenge



Two different types of transport: Joanna meets camels and their riders in Egypt



Joanna and her brother Alexander celebrate dawn at the Pyramids on their 7,000-mile sponsored cycle ride from the Isle of Wight to Cape Town in 1991

The magical *m*

Benvenuti, willkommen, bienvenidos – Wiltshire resident **Steve Kemp** asks tourists what they really think of the Stones



All the way from Penang



Huang and Lichi from Hong Kong, the highlight of their tour



The Kalisz family from Poland, determined to see Stonehenge



From Japan, the Machimuras travelled from London by taxi

It's around 5,000 years old, a World Heritage site since 1986 and as well-known throughout the world as the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall. It's in Wiltshire. It has to be Stonehenge.

Cared for by English Heritage, the 'stones' are visited by over 700,000 people each year. That's a few less than Windsor Castle, but more than the Roman Baths. Just over half of that number come from abroad. Having paid an entry fee of up to £6.50, selected one of the audio headsets available in ten different languages from Japanese to French, Mandarin to Russian, what do they really think of the Stonehenge experience?

A Malaysian family from the island of Penang have travelled over 6,000 miles to be here. Hamid and his wife, with their two sons, are not leaving without a family photograph of them all in front of the stones. I duly oblige. Hamid says it was a memory he would definitely take home. Many people in his country had heard of and read about Stonehenge. It was exactly what they had expected; the only disappointment was the weather.

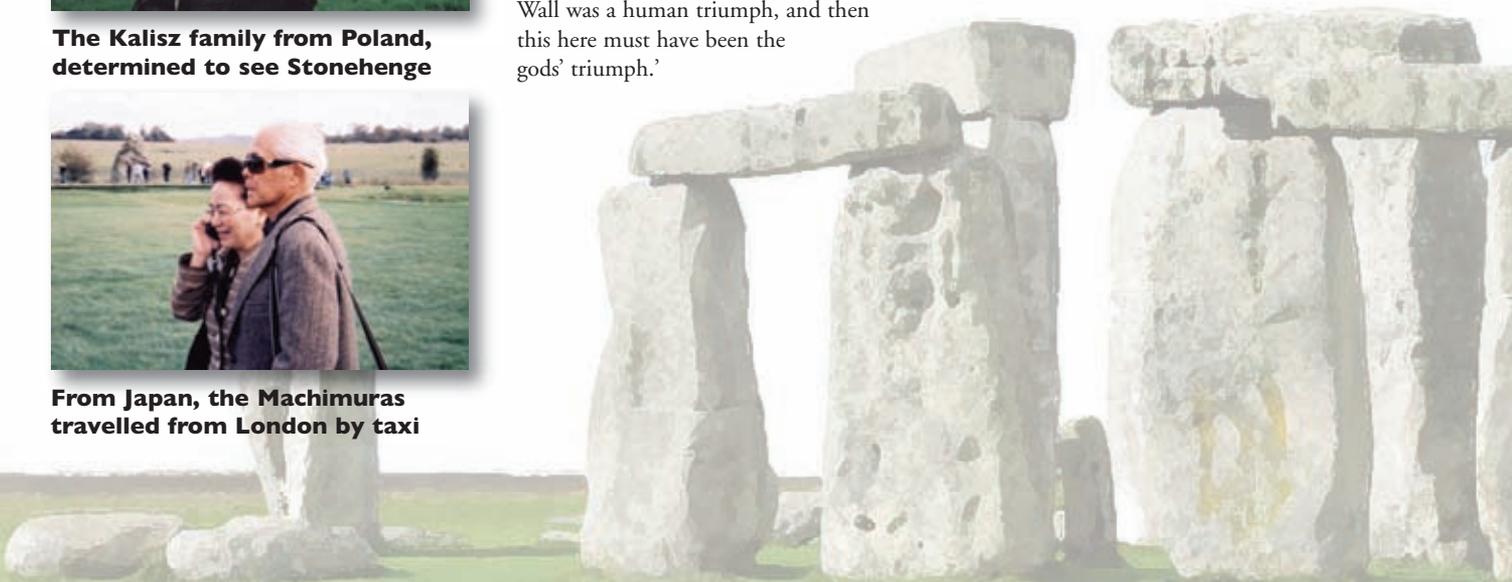
Huang and his girlfriend Lichi, from Hong Kong find the whole experience to be the highlight of their tour to England. 'It's just like being in the middle of magic, a mystery,' says Huang. 'I hope the life of Stonehenge remains that way. The Great Wall was a human triumph, and then this here must have been the gods' triumph.'

Apart from visiting friends in Trowbridge, the Kalisz family from Poland were determined to see Stonehenge. They, too, had seen many pictures and read so much about the place back home. One of the girls wants to know why it had not been built by the sea, and would it be possible to put all the fallen stones back up again? Another felt a bridge over the road would be better, rather than a dingy old tunnel.

'We don't understand what this circle of stones is for. In Japan everything has a reason'

One Japanese couple, the Machimuras, have travelled by taxi from London at a cost of several hundred pounds. I think they are a bit confused as they thought the stones would be more spread out. Perhaps they're thinking of Avebury. 'We don't understand what this circle of stones is for. In Japan everything has a reason, here I just can't see what it is,' says Mr Machimura. 'Yesterday we went on the London Eye and that was very good.'

Pranab and his wife Natwar are on a three-week visit from Mumbai, India. They are both quite taken aback by the aura that the stones are, in their words, throwing at them both. 'I don't see the stones as a



mystery tour

structure; I see them as energy, fulfilment and mystery. Ignore all the cars speeding past, concentrate on thought and well-being,' says Pranab. 'We want to leave something of ourselves behind here.' They walk three times around the designated footpath before leaving to catch the tour bus back to Salisbury railway station.

Many of us will remember visiting the stones in our childhood, cars parked on the field, walking up to and touching the monument. The first tourist must have enjoyed this experience. In British archaeologist Christopher Chippindale's book *Stonehenge Complete* (Thames & Hudson 2004), he traced the first tourist back to 1562. A Swiss chap, by the name of Hermon, escaping religious persecution, took refuge at the Bishop of Salisbury's residence. With time on his hands, he asked the bishop to take him to 'something which will astound me'. The bishop duly obliged with a day out at Stonehenge, at that time owned by Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford.

A German couple, from Munich, are doing tour number 27, Winchester – Stonehenge – Roman Baths. They both hold views on the stones, views which must have been made a long time before actually seeing them: 'We believe this to be a structure, a very early engineering feat, with a lot of help from people who travelled from what is now Germany, Austria and

'... a very early engineering feat, with a lot of help from people who travelled from what is now Germany'

'Euro Disney is enough, and far better'

Switzerland. Whoever thought this up was the first genius.'

It's not difficult to find the French here, all well wrapped-up against the cold wind with high-tech cameras dangling around their necks. 'Why do you have it fenced off?' asks one. Another hopes that what she is hearing on the audiotape is true, and that this whole thing is not one massive con-trick or hoax. After all, she points out, aren't we supposed to believe something about squashed cornfields and aliens? I ask her if she would like the stones set up outside Paris? 'No thanks, Euro Disney is enough, and far better,' she says, rather strangely.

On the way out, after having to stand aside for a throng of 80 or so youngsters from the Czech Republic, I notice Arthur Pendragon, the Senior Druid, with his petition. Banners hanging over the fence, display his views on the thousands of foreigners visiting the stones.

'It's such a pity they never see the stones in their proper setting,' he says. 'This should be a walking experience from a mile away. No cars, roads, ugly Portakabins, fences. At the present time we are simply not showing the stones in their majestic glory.'

I think Arthur has a good point, one that is recognised by many. In the meantime, and for tomorrow, another seven or eight hundred people from around the world will walk around the stones, just as you and I did. ▼



Visitors from Munich who believe that Germans helped build Stonehenge



Pranab and Natwar from Mumbai, India, taken aback by the aura of the stones



A long way from home: an Indonesian family wrapped up against the cold



Senior Druid Arthur Pendragon, who wants to sweep away fences, roads, cars and Portakabins

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Singin' the BLUES

Blue is the colour, and the 80s are back. Teresa Walsh looks forward – and back – for new-season fashions

Now that spring is just around the corner, it's time to look at our wardrobes, dust off our warm weather clothes and think about updating them for the season ahead. Spring and summer clothes have been in the shops for a while now (even when we needed to buy snow gear), but here are some tips on the newest looks for the coming months.

One of the hottest colours for this year is blue – bright, bright blue, such as royal or cobalt. Designers are going for the head-to-toe blue look but if you think it's a touch too much, choose a statement piece instead. Shades of nude, from off-white to gold, are also colours to look out for – again, worn top-to-toe if you can.

Last year's nautical look is still here, but larger than life. Look for bold stripes, motifs and accessories to match. African and tribal influences are everywhere. As well as the usual animal prints, batik patterns in bright, bold colours look fabulous. Try mixing patterns and fabrics for an up-to-the-minute look. One of the easiest ways to try out this look is through the use of accessories. Large ethnic bracelets and necklaces will do the trick and embellishments such as beads, leather, shells and even feathers will further enhance this look.

It's been threatening for a while but finally the 80s have arrived again, from 'relaxed tailoring' through 'jumpsuits' to 'big shoulders' – it's all here. The relaxed tailoring look means slouchy jackets and trousers or shorts in soft fabrics, giving plenty of movement (and, yes, you can roll up the sleeves again!). Jumpsuits can be worn casually during the day and dressed up in silk or suede for the evenings. Bright touches of colour are also important to this 80s look, so have some fun. ▼

For specialist style advice or to buy a gift voucher for a present with a difference, contact Teresa at Style Confidence on 07799 648620 or email her at teresa@styleconfidence.co.uk

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Cabbages *are king*

Not your favourite vegetable? Hilaire Walden has ways to help you enjoy cabbage

Last month I wrote about a much-maligned fruit, prunes; this month the focus is on a similarly derided vegetable, cabbage. Cabbage's problem lies as much, if not more, with cooks as with the vegetable itself. Cabbages contain a number of compounds, including hydrogen sulphide, which give off a pungent smell when the vegetable is cooked. In the case of hydrogen sulphide, it's the rotten egg smell. All vegetables contain and give off substances when cooked but those in cabbage are unusually copious and pungent.

There is nothing the poor cabbage can do about this but proper cooking can mitigate the problem. The hydrogen sulphide output doubles between five and seven minutes of cooking so, either cook cabbage quickly, in about five minutes, or leave it to cook slowly in the French and Italian manner, for long enough for all the chemical changes to take place and the less favourable smells and flavours to be driven off. When braised very slowly in a well-sealed pan for an hour or so, in its own juices with a knob of unsalted butter, dull white cabbage is transformed: it develops a soft, nutty, mellow flavour.

Being quick and easy, and no more smelly to cook than other vegetables, are not the only reasons why I suggest you make good use of cabbages: they are also cheap, nutritious, versatile and readily available.



In common with other brassicas, cabbages guard against the onslaughts of cancer. They are excellent sources of vitamins A, C, the B vitamins thiamine, riboflavin and niacin, and vitamin D. They contain useful amounts of iron, potassium and calcium, and are excellent sources of fibre.

There's at least one type of cabbage available throughout the year. So-called hard white, or Dutch, cabbages, which are really pale green globes, are the most ubiquitous. They are robust, crisp textured, mild flavoured and equally suitable for long slow cooking or eating raw.

'In the case of hydrogen sulphide, it's the rotten egg smell'

Crimped, crinkly, colourful Savoy cabbage, which is generally considered to be quite the best-flavoured variety, is available in the winter. It has beautiful, deep blue-green outer leaves that are loosely wrapped around a pale green, quite firm head. It is crisp textured and, for all its crinkliness, quite firm, but less sturdy than hard white cabbage, and needs less cooking. It is the best variety for stuffing.

January King cabbages, with their heavily veined leaves that are edged with purple and bronze, are another winter variety and fairly similar to Savoys.

Spring greens are un-hearted cabbages; don't worry about this lack of heart, it is just that they haven't had time to develop the firmness associated with later varieties. The outer leaves of true spring greens should be tender. Very good greens can be cooked like

‘To staunch the bleeding, cook the cabbage with an acid ingredient such as fruit, vinegar or wine’

spinach, just washed then wilted in its own juices. As when buying spinach, you’ll need much more than you think, as it similarly collapses when cooked.

Some early green cabbages have pointed heads and, again, are quite tender, but as the year progresses green cabbages become tougher. They do, however, have more pronounced, firmer hearts.

Red cabbage is the hardest, toughest variety so, not surprisingly, takes longer to cook than white or green cabbages. The colour has a nasty habit of ‘bleeding’ when exposed to even slightly alkaline conditions, for example hard water. The cabbage loses its red colour, turning mauve, then slate blue and finally dirty green during cooking. To staunch the bleeding, cook the cabbage with an acid ingredient such as fruit, vinegar or wine, as most traditional recipes specify.

When preparing cabbage, depending on the way in which it is to be used, cut off the bottom of the stem and any coarse outer leaves. If shredding, cut the cabbage into quarters, cut away the central core and the tough ribs of the leaves, and then shred with a large, sharp cook’s knife, a mandolin or food processor. If you are going to stuff the leaves, cut the bottom off the core and gently peel away the leaves from the head. Cut out any large ribs and then blanch the leaves in boiling water for about a minute, drain and rinse in cold water before stuffing. ▼



A Few Ways With Cabbage

- Make bubble and squeak: fry with potatoes and onions
- Try colcannon: combine cooked, finely shredded cabbage with buttery mashed potato
- Fry with bacon, preferably smoked, and garlic. Strips of salami or chorizo are also good
- Cabbages go well with Oriental flavours: fry shredded cabbage with ginger and garlic, and toss with sesame oil and lightly toasted sesame seeds
- Combine cooked cabbage with a lemon and mustard dressing
- Toss steamed slim wedges with lemon juice and zest and shavings of Parmesan
- Roquefort also goes well with cabbage, especially hard white cabbage
- Make a warming cold-weather dish of braised cabbage, mushrooms and green or brown lentils
- Cut into very fine shreds and deep fry twice to make crisp strands in emulsion of Chinese so-called seaweed
- Stuff cabbage leaves or a whole cabbage with a chestnut and sausage-meat stuffing. Pack individual leaves in a single layer in a dish and cover with tomato sauce

BUTTERED CABBAGE

Some people like to include some cream, *crème fraîche* or soured cream with the final knob of butter. For a more Germanic dish that is particularly associated with pork, change the lemon rind to caraway seeds.

about 30g unsalted butter

1 Savoy cabbage, core and ribs removed and finely shredded
finely grated lemon rind, to finish

Melt a little of the butter in a large, heavy pan. Add the cabbage and a splash of water. Cover with a well-fitting lid and cook the cabbage over a moderately high heat for about 4 minutes until the cabbage has wilted. Shake and toss the pan occasionally.

Drain the cabbage, return to the pan and toss with the remaining butter, and seasoning. Serve with lemon rind sprinkled over.

Serves 4-6

Hilairé’s ingredients are kindly supplied by Waitrose Food & Home, Salisbury



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View **food**



table talk

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What is the most popular dish on the menu at The Fish Inn? It would have to be a toss-up between beef and Stilton pie, which is slow cooked in a rich gravy with a flaky pastry crust, served with fresh vegetables, or our fresh cod with its home made salt-and-vinegar batter.

What is your favourite ingredient of the moment? Fresh herbs from my mum's garden. Nothing smells or tastes better than freshly picked herbs.

Which celebrity would you most like to welcome to your restaurant – and why? Rick Stein – maybe he could give me a few tips on how to actually catch the fish to start with!

Who has had the biggest influence on you in your work? Rick Stein, because he likes to experiment with fish and fresh local produce.

What would you do with a million pounds? Open a beachside fish restaurant overseas.

You must work very long hours so what do you do to relax? I relax on the riverbank hoping to catch some fish...

What would you choose to have as your last meal on earth? Paella made with freshly caught Mediterranean seafood.

The View review

Annie Bullen *misses the Valentine specials, but loses her heart to Da Vinci*



A view of the interior across the bistecca alla pizzaiola

Da Vinci • 68 Castle Street • Salisbury • SPI 3TS • 01722 328402

It's not often you meet a chef so enthusiastic about what he does that he's keen to share his recipes and ideas. Karl Regan left his native Ireland when he was a teenager to become a chef and now, about three decades later, is still as excited about food as he was then. You wouldn't guess it from his name, but his parentage is Irish-Italian and he's followed the latter influence in his cooking, taking classic Italian recipes and refining them until he's completely happy that they will satisfy his customers.

Karl opened the classy Da Vinci in the middle of last year and, despite the tough times we find ourselves in, says business is good. When we visited I spotted a few tiny silver hearts on the floor – reminders of the hectic Valentine's night when rose petals were strewn on the pavement outside and Karl cooked his heart out with dishes such as monkfish stuffed with caviar and asparagus.



Chef patron Karl Regan

Everything about the restaurant is comforting. Pleasant light terracotta-coloured walls, crisp and spotless table linen, good-sized sparkling glasses and the impression of plenty of space. The menu is not huge – always a good sign when you want to know that the food is freshly prepared and cooked to order.

A well-made minestrone soup, with even cubes of fresh vegetables, pasta and, sometimes, beans, is a test of a careful chef but it's also very filling. So I was grateful to my partner for choosing the soup for his starter, allowing me to go for *gamberoni* – king prawns with a crisp jacket of batter, served with a light salad and a sweet chilli dip. Karl explained that he makes a tempura batter, with rice flour, for this dish, and the result is delicious. The fat, juicy prawns were sizzling hot, the batter thin as lace with a wonderful crunch and I think I could happily have eaten them all night. The tender salad had a sweetish dressing, which went nicely with the chilli dip. I pinched some of my partner's bread to mop up the rest of the dip, then tasted his soup, which was rich and satisfying with a curl of spaghetti at the bottom of the bowl.

For years I've made it a rule not to eat veal because of the conditions in which the young animals are kept. But Karl buys his from a small farmer at Bowerchalke where they are



Karl's home-made tiramisu

reared humanely – so I opted for *saltimbocca*, which translates roughly as 'jump in the mouth'. Wafer thin slices of veal, so tender you could eat it with a spoon, topped with prosciutto and served with a cream and sage sauce was the nicest main course I've eaten for a long time. That and my fellow diner's sirloin steak came with a dish of gratin *dauphinoise* potatoes, lightly cooked broccoli and mange tout. The *bistecca alla pizzaiola* had been gently fried with black olives and capers and covered with a thick tomato sauce.

Karl makes his own *tiramisu*, the delicious coffee and chocolate cake beloved of Italians. The name means 'pick me up' but it left me feeling contented. A couple of cups of coffee and a pleasant evening came to an end – and we didn't even see the friendly ghost alleged (in a very Italian way) to pinch bottoms. ♥

Our meal, without drinks, came to around £50

What we could have had

Starters include garlic mushrooms and prawns (all mushrooms come from a small company based near Stockbridge), sardines with a tomato and chilli sauce, scallops (collected by divers), pan-fried and covered with a light tomato and cream sauce, mussels, smoked chicken and avocado salad and a mixed-leaf salad with smoked salmon and prawns.

Mains include a good range of steak dishes (again Karl uses locally produced meat) including the very popular and rich *bistecca paesana* which is a fillet, stuffed with Dolcelatte, char-grilled and served with a cream and Dolcelatte sauce. There are three veal dishes, chicken, duck, risotto and fish. There is also a good selection of pasta with a range of meat and tomato sauces.

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What are you waiting for?

Hearts of oak

Do you love it or loathe it? Sally Easton looks at oak and the art of white-wine making

Oak comes in many forms for winemaking. The main influence of new oak is either to add a bit of vanilla or bacon-fat toasty flavour at the everyday end of the market, or to add structure and texture at the top end, as well as adding, usually, a better quality of vanilla toasty flavour.

Old oak barrels, both smaller and larger, don't so much offer a flavour addition, but do soften the angles and edges of a wine, creating a softer profile. This can be a good thing in a mid-priced red, and mid-to-top-quality white, which have some complexity, but wouldn't necessarily benefit a crunchy young red or white where the vibrancy and punchiness of primary fruit flavours provide the core of the wine's being.

'They're all delicious, and a comparative tasting can be fun'

The use of oak is a more obvious divider of preference with white wines, when it is new and therefore flavour-imparting. Un-oaked wines are easier aperitif wines; they tend to be 'simpler', more fruit-focused, and, indeed, some grape varieties, such as riesling, most sauvignon blanc, muscadet, pinot grigio, pinot blanc, really do best without any oak influence at all. It simply detracts from those juicy, fresh-fruit flavours, and palate-refreshing acidity. But some people love the oaky flavour even for an aperitif.

Wines matured and sometimes fermented in oak, especially oak barrels, are usually better food wines. The thing is, flavour and occasion are inextricably entwined, so while an un-oaked white will make a delicious aperitif, it may not have the weight and structure to stand on its own with food.

Other grape varieties pair well with oak, which gives a whole new taste and flavour experience. The recommendations right are oaked and un-oaked chardonnays, all from France. They're all delicious, and a comparative tasting can be fun.

I'm keeping all these suggested wines as chardonnay to eliminate marked flavour differences from different grape varieties. Also, quite a few people say they don't like chardonnay, but quizzing often reveals a dislike of oak, so this could be a good way to find out whether the grape variety is being maligned, or oak is really the culprit. You decide. **V**



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Sally Easton MW (Master of Wine) is a wine educator and freelance writer. She teaches consumer classes and runs corporate seminars via her wine school. www.winewisdom.com



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Great buns



Hot cross buns are one of the great tastes of Easter, says Sally Place

Hot cross buns have long been associated with Easter and are a symbol of Good Friday, although no-one really knows when the tradition began. The sweet, mildly spiced buns get their name from the cross on top, dividing it into quarters.

One popular belief is that the Anglo Saxons originally made hot cross buns as part of their spring festival honouring the goddess Eostre. The pagan version had the symbol of the ox horn on top to represent Eostre. When the Christians adapted the festival, they replaced the horn with a cross to make it a more acceptable part of Easter.

Another possibility is that they date back to 1361 when a monk, Father Thomas Roccliffe, put the cross onto buns to honour the Day of the Cross, now known as Good Friday. Traditionally, Good Friday was a day of fasting and these holy buns were the only food permitted. The sweet taste would have been welcome relief to the usual daily diet of coarse wholemeal bread.

There is also the theory that hot cross buns were first baked by a widowed mother, who promised her sailor son that she would bake him a bun each Good Friday he was at sea. Sadly, he never returned, but she continued to hang a bun with a cross in her window as a sign of her faith. When she died the village continued the tradition.

Whatever their origin, these sweet, sticky buns became part of English life and the nursery rhyme, 'One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns' recalls the cries of street traders, who would shout 'Hot cross buns!' to drum up custom for their oven-warm offerings.



In the 16th century, religious practises were banned during the Protestant Reformation, but despite dire threats of punishment hot cross buns were still made. In the end, Queen Elizabeth I had to pass a law to allow them to be baked just for occasions like Easter.

Today, they are available all-year-round, although Waitrose keeps to Easter traditions, stocking most of its hot cross bun varieties from January to Easter. The quality supermarket sells nearly 10 million buns during the season but sees sales increase by more than 60 per cent during Easter fortnight.

'Sadly, he never returned, but she continued to hang a bun with a cross in her window as a sign of her faith'

Waitrose sources its hot cross buns from Salisbury-based Nicholas and Harris, a bakery renowned for its delicious, fresh, crusty breads, succulent morning goods such as scones, muffins and teacakes, and crafted traditional artisan breads. Nicholas and Harris's commitment to quality has seen its 25-year relationship with Waitrose go from strength to strength. The aims of the two companies are similar – to produce the best-tasting, premium products using traditional baking methods. No mass production or preservatives and flavour enhancers here.

The Wiltshire company is proud of its long, 150-year history. Founded by Messrs Nicholas and Harris, the bakery was based in Salisbury and Tisbury, delivering to their four shops by horse and cart. Now one of the area's main employers, many members of its staff have long years of service behind them. Director of New Product

Brent Glover of Salisbury-based baker Nicholas and Harris, who pipes the cross onto 40 buns every ten seconds. Once hand-glazed, the buns are on Waitrose shelves in under 24 hours

Development Mick Darlow has been with the company for 30 years, while his colleagues, Paul Brown and Liam Marshall, add another 30 years. Their experience is invaluable because when Waitrose bakery buyer Jo Skelton asks the team to develop new recipes, they can do it quickly.

'We carry out a lot of work to develop products and to get their flavour exactly right,' explains Jo. 'One of the keys to a good hot cross bun is the spice mixture and it is important that there is a balance of clove, citrus, sweetness, mixed spice and cinnamon flavours. Nicholas and Harris understand Waitrose customers and, together, we are breaking new ground in producing some of the best bakery products available in this country.'

According to Mick, time and high-quality ingredients are the secrets to good baking. 'We make 98 products daily and each one is made with a huge amount of care and attention to detail by our highly skilled bakers. All use different processes and recipes to guarantee authenticity, great taste and texture. Many of our products are organic too.' Nicholas and Harris produces a range of hot-cross-bun varieties for Waitrose. The Richly Fruited, Apple and Sultana, Cinnamon and Raisin, and Date and Cranberry hot cross buns are sold in packs of four. There is also a pack of six buns.

Waitrose's hot cross buns are made in small batches enabling the quality of each bun to be tightly controlled. The flour, yeast, water, spices and fruit are mixed in a giant mixing bowl and after being cut and shaped into small balls are taken to a prover, rather like a steam bath, to rise. After about 40 minutes, they are ready for the oven. The crosses are applied by Brent Glover, who pipes on a pancake batter-like mixture, managing an incredible 40 buns every ten seconds. Once out of the oven, they are hand-glazed, packed and taken to Waitrose stores, where they hit the shelves less than 24 hours after being made.

Delicious with butter, they are for many Waitrose customers the taste of Easter and the knowledge that they have been lovingly made using traditional methods makes them all the more special. **V**



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Not just for pop stars, helicopters are an exciting, stylish way to get to your reception or onwards to your honeymoon or airport. Brides with big hair take note: headsets to cut down noise are provided but you don't have to wear them.

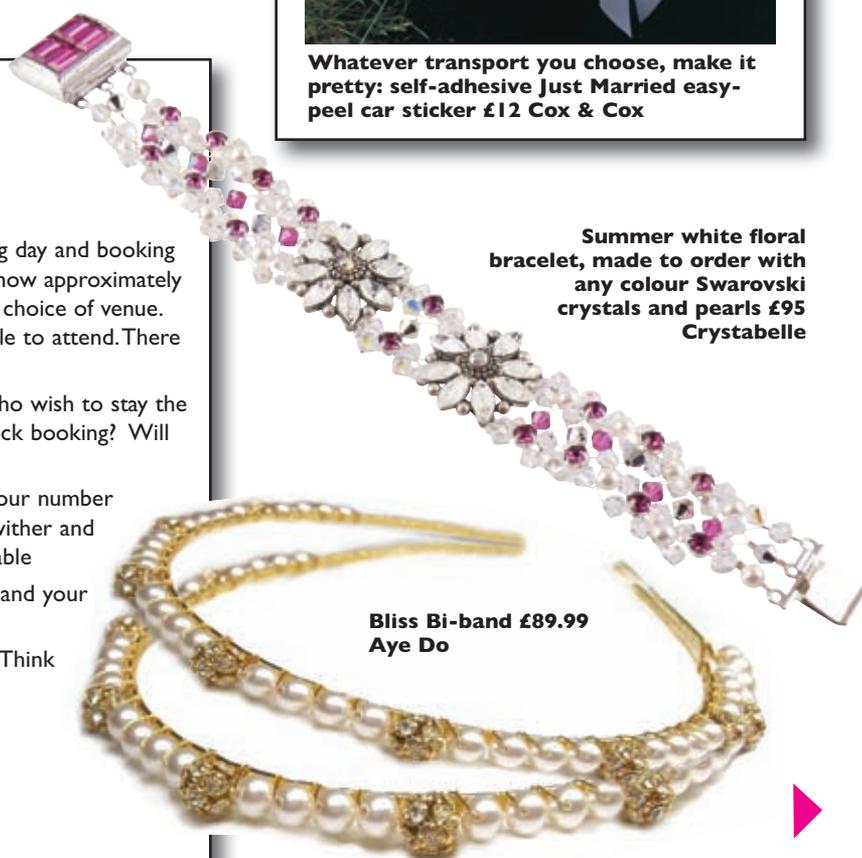


Whatever transport you choose, make it pretty: self-adhesive Just Married easy-peel car sticker £12 Cox & Cox

Location, location, location

Ideally, planning should begin 12 months before the big day and booking your reception venue is a priority. You will need to know approximately how many guests you'll be inviting before you make a choice of venue. Usually, around 20 per cent of invited guests are unable to attend. There are lots of points to consider, including:

- ♥ Will the venue be able to accommodate guests who wish to stay the night and will there be a discounted rate for a block booking? Will your own room be included in the package?
- ♥ Does the venue have a reception room that fits your number of guests? Too large a room and your party will wither and die. Too small and your guests will be uncomfortable
- ♥ Can the venue accommodate the number of cars and your own mode of transport
- ♥ If children are on the guest list, will they be safe? Think balconies, pools, ponds, roads, etc
- ♥ Will it be able to accommodate your choice of music/entertainment?
- ♥ Are disabled facilities available if required?
- ♥ Can they offer a secure place for wedding gifts?



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Flower astrology

More than any other accessory, fabulous flowers will help you to create your dream wedding. When you're choosing blooms for your bouquets and decoration, you can opt for your favourite colours, evocative fragrance, even seasonality. But what about matching them to your star sign? If you don't like the blooms that the stars have allotted to you, 'borrow' from your partner's sign...

Fire Signs

Aries: passionate, enthusiastic, adventurous
Colour: red

Flowers and plants: celosia, thorn-bearing shrubs, red roses, tulips, red peppers, amaryllis

Leo: extrovert, faithful, larger than life
Colours: golden yellow, orange
Flowers: safflower, marigold, gerbera, crocosmia, clivia, sunflower

Sagittarius: straightforward, optimistic, playful
Colours: royal blue, deep purple
Flowers: eremurus (foxtail lily), lisianthus, liatris, carnation, crocus, muscari, berried plants, allium

Earth Signs

Taurus: home-loving, conventional, gourmand
Colours: pale pink, green, blue
Flowers: sweet William, scented stock, fruit-bearing trees, lavender, lilac, aster, lily of the valley and sweet pea



Lilac

Virgo: practical, modest, perfectionist
Colours: navy, chocolate
Flowers: monkshood, chrysanthemum, eucalyptus, violet, ivy, thistle, veronica

Capricorn: hard-working, ambitious, respectable
Colours: grey, dark green
Flowers: statice, holly, African violet, ivy, snowdrop, jasmine

Air Signs

Gemini: talkative, lively, intellectual
Colour: yellow
Flowers: winter cherries, ranunculus,

maidenhair fern, solidago, acacia (mimosa), daffodil, nut-bearing trees



Ranunculus

Libra: elegant, diplomatic, romantic
Colours: all shades of green
Flowers: chinchinchee, bells of Ireland, Cymbidium orchid, gardenia, tea roses, tuber rose, freesia, gladiolus

Aquarius: forward looking, unconventional, independent
Colour: turquoise
Flowers: eryngium (sea holly), arum lily, bird of paradise (strelitzia), protea

Water Signs

Cancer: secretive, protective, caring
Colours: silver, metallic blue, stone, pearl
Flowers: cornflower, Queen Anne's lace, delphinium, fern, plumbago, passion flower, hydrangea, iris



Iris

Scorpio: sensual, determined, dangerous
Colours: maroon, blood red
Flowers: love lies bleeding, red-hot poker, hibiscus, peony, anthurium

Pisces: intuitive, humorous, compassionate
Colours: white, silvery green
Flowers: madonna lily, euphorbia marginata, stephanotis, jasmine, lilac, narcissus, gypsophila

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Viewpoints



Who, what, where?

Don't miss... **Phill Jupitus** and **Marcus Brigstoke** in *Totally Looped*, a hilarious film-themed show featuring Britain's top comedians, at Kings Theatre, Southsea, 5 March (023 9282 8282 www.kings-southsea.com) ... Mock the Week's **Andy Parsons** with his new show *Citizens* at Salisbury City Hall on 20 March (01722 434434 www.cityhallsalisbury.co.uk) and Basingstoke Anvil on 25 April (01256 844244 www.anvilarts.org.uk) ... Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*, 26 February – 21 March at Salisbury Playhouse (01722 320333 www.salisburyplayhouse.com) ...



Andy Parsons

Poles Apart, an evening of Polish culture, customs and comedy, 17 March at Salisbury Arts Centre (01722 321744 www.salisburyartscentre.co.uk) and *The Vagina Monologues* on 14 April at Swindon's Wyvern Theatre, with Anthea Turner, Wendi Peters and Sue Holderness (01793 524481 www.wyverntheatre.org.uk).

Call to choirs

Salisbury International Arts Festival is calling choirs to perform at this year's festival in a project called Sing For Water, to be presented in the Cathedral Close during the festival (22 May – 6 June). Choirs from Wiltshire, Avon, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Somerset are invited; each will prepare a short programme then unite to sing one song. There is no charge for each choir's involvement but it is anticipated that each individual singer will raise a minimum of £50 sponsorship for Water Aid. Application forms available online www.salisburyfestival.co.uk

Competition winner

Congratulations to the winner of the AV World Competition in the January issue of View, Samantha Clarke of Bedhampton, Havant, Hants, who wins a Toshiba 32" LCD television.



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Beware of the dragons in the Year of the Ox

Dragons were spotted at Sherborne House School, Chandler's Ford, on 26 January, in celebration of Chinese New Year. Even the four- and five-year olds knew that it was a special day in China and they spent the afternoon making and decorating their unique concertina dragon and dancing it around their new playground for all to admire. It didn't stop there; they set to writing their names in Chinese, making Chinese lanterns, fire-crackers and good-fortune money envelopes. Not wishing to be outdone, the five- and six-year-olds had also lovingly created their own special mythical creature in both creative writing and in their art class, but the assembly given by the seven-year-olds, with fortune biscuits to sample, was a definite highlight to the start of the week.



Assembly, with dragon and fortune biscuits



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A four-year-old with her concertina dragon



Making the dragon

New parent and toddler group to open at Portsmouth High School

Following the success of an 'outstanding' Ofsted report last summer, the Portsmouth High School Nursery is starting its own Parent and Toddler group on 2 March – and it's free. The Nursery and Reception classes at the Southsea independent school were awarded 'outstanding' in every category during the recent inspection, with inspectors stating that '... children attending the provision are offered an exceptional quality of education'.

The Parent and Toddler group is a new initiative for the Nursery, and an excellent way for parents and their children to find out more about the Nursery provision and to see the Early Years Building. 'We are really looking forward to running the Parent and Toddler group,' says Clare Mills, Nursery Leader. 'There will be a wide range of activities on offer for the children: art and music; opportunities to explore our garden and secure outdoor play area; free play and story-time. Refreshments and an opportunity for a chat will be available for the adults too.'



The Parent and Toddler Group will start on Monday 2 March and run every Monday thereafter. Please contact the school on 023 9282 4916 or email junior.head@por.gdst.net



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Tel: 01264 710766
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Email: office@farleighschool.co.uk
www.farleighschool.com

'Outstanding' evaluation of Farleigh School



Farleigh School, the Catholic prep school of 400 boarders and day pupils near Andover, was recently assessed by the Validators of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and found to be 'outstanding' overall, and in the majority of areas reviewed. The outcome highlighted in particular the school's strong and purposeful ethos, which '... permeates all aspects of school life and provides many opportunities that contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual and moral development. Respect, care and value of and for the individual are key features of the life of Farleigh'.

The Validators praised other key strengths of the school: the consistently good common entrance results to senior schools; the excellent standards of behaviour; the strong commitment to Christ being at the centre of all it does; the value the children place on the importance of prayer in the school; the variety of teaching styles employed across the year groups to engage the pupils in their learning; the involvement of pupils in supporting a range of worthwhile causes; the environment of respect for one another. They added: 'The children clearly love their school and value the support and care given to them by the staff.'

The findings of the report can be found on the school website, www.farleighschool.com under About the School (Inspection Reports).

Reception children celebrate Chinese New Year



Children in the Reception classes at Rookwood School, Andover, celebrated Chinese New Year in style at their very own authentic Chinese restaurant. During the course of the week they learnt about Chinese traditions and customs associated with the festival, which this year is the Year of the Ox. To complete the celebrations, they decorated the classrooms with lanterns, made Chinese hats and painted a special restaurant sign. The children had great fun at their Chinese feast trying to eat with chopsticks! 'This was a lovely way for the children to learn about other cultures and the Chinese restaurant really brought the subject alive,' comments Mrs Jan Ibbotson, Head of the Rookery Nursery and Pre-Prep Schools.

Pupils to work with one of Britain's best-loved children's poets

Junior Girls at Portsmouth High School will have the opportunity to learn from one of Britain's best-loved children's poets, Brian Moses, as he visits the Southsea independent school as part of their annual Poetry Week. All girls in the school will have the opportunity to work with Brian, who will perform some of his famous poems such as *The sssnake hotel* and *Walking with my Iguana* before delivering a workshop to help the girls write their own poetry. Brian has performed his poetry in over 1,000 schools, animating his stories and poetry to entertain pupils and teachers alike.

It is not just pupils at Portsmouth High School who will have the opportunity to work with Brian; their families will also be able to join in as Brian will be running a family workshop after school. 'Brian is such a lively and energetic character and has the ability to inspire through his performances,' says Helen Parrott, Poetry Week organiser. 'I know the girls are going to absolutely love working with him and I'm looking forward to reading their poems at the end of the session.'

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Public speaking at West Hill Park, Titchfield



Once again, West Hill Park students have impressed the Mayor of Fareham and the Rotarians with their poise, enthusiasm and eloquence. In January, six public speakers from Years 7 and 8 distinguished themselves at the Fareham Rotary *Youth Speaks* Public Speaking competition held in the Council Chamber.

Team Two consisted of the Thorp twins – Nick (chair) and Alex (voter of thanks) – and Edward Slawson (speaker). Their chosen topic was ‘Messing about in Boats’ and Edward extolled the virtues of sailing while pontificating upon our ‘Island Nation’ and the ‘Dunkirk Spirit’.

However, it was Team One’s 15-minute presentation on Campaign Cottonwool that secured first place and the coveted trophy. Olivia Adam (chair), James Broadley (speaker) and Ella Jonas (voter of thanks) articulately deplored the march of the ‘jobsworths’ and the decline in enjoyable games occasioned by over-rigorous enforcement of Health and Safety rules. Olivia commanded the proceedings with charm and flair, while James waxed lyrical upon the demise of the pastimes of yesteryear. Ella was singled out by Chief Judge, Heather Carling, for being the best voter of thanks in the whole competition. Strangely, but coincidentally, both Ella and the newly elected President of the United States used the same words on the same day in their momentous speeches: ‘Pick ourselves up, dust ourselves down and start all over again.’



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South African Exchange

Two pupils from Salisbury Cathedral School are currently studying in South Africa. Lucy Bache and Sam Herring are on an exchange programme with two pupils from Union High School in Graaf Reinet which is west of Port Elizabeth in South Africa. Sam and Lucy are thoroughly enjoying their time in the South African summer benefiting from the outdoor life. This exchange has been running for over 15 years and is a well-established programme. The Union High students will be coming back with Lucy and Sam in April ready to spend a summer term at Salisbury Cathedral School. The South African pupils often return to the school years later as school gap students – they must have enjoyed their exchange.



Year 1’s Flashing Lighthouse



Year 1 at Salisbury Cathedral School are studying islands for their topic this term. Pre-Prep staff have built a fabulous flashing lighthouse for the children in their classroom. Ruben Mallalieu, one of the school’s gap students, has been telling the pupils all about the island he comes from, New Zealand. Not surprisingly, the children have found the topic fascinating. Story time under the flashing lighthouse is definitely something not to be missed.

Stanbridge Earls School rated as 'Outstanding'

Stanbridge Earls School, Romsey, a day and boarding school offering pupils aged 10 to 19 help for dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and other specific learning difficulties, proudly received Ofsted's recent assessment of 'Outstanding' in all Care Standard categories. This adds to Stanbridge holding CreSTeD's highest rating for meeting dyslexic pupils' educational needs and being in the top five per cent value-added schools in Durham University's measurement of improvement in pupils' performance. Stanbridge offers first-rate academic and practical courses with facilities that are second to none.

'Pastoral care is a high priority at Stanbridge, exemplified by the excellent news that Ofsted has summarised Stanbridge Earls School's quality as Outstanding in all categories, with no areas needing improvement following a very recent Ofsted Care Standards Inspection,' says Geoff Link, Headmaster. 'Stanbridge's day pupils receive the benefits of boarders, while living at home with their family, without the cost of boarding fees. Plus, children can choose to stay on after school to do their homework, supervised by specialist staff.'

To enhance the education provided, a major school development plan is under way with many new facilities opened or planned. Recently opened is a Cisco Academy, which enables pupils to achieve IT engineering qualification, and a Music Cottage, where a wide range of instruments can be studied, incorporating a state-of-the-art composing room with Sibelius composing software.

Parents can experience Stanbridge's way of special education at the Open Day on 7 March. For further information please contact: 01794 529400, or visit: www.stanbridgeearls.co.uk



Years 7 to 8 boys in the sports hall with Olympic gold medallist Paul Goodison



A Cisco Academy pupil in the Networking room



A student using the Sibelius composing software in the Music Cottage

Salisbury Cathedral Scholarship Day

Salisbury Cathedral School is holding its Scholarship Day on 6 March. Scholarships will be awarded to children for academic, musical, sporting, artistic and dramatic achievements. The Cathedral School is one of the oldest educational establishments in the world and educates boys and girls between the ages of two-and-a-half and 13. Situated in extensive grounds, within the Cathedral Close, the school has strong traditions of academic, sporting and musical excellence.

To discover more, come and meet Paul Greenfield, the Head Master. Please call Ann Vos on 01722 555305 to arrange an appointment.

Colts A Kit

Members of Salisbury Cathedral School's Colts A rugby team are very proud of their brand new kit, made possible due to generous sponsorship by Salisbury jewellers, W Carter & Son. The new kits have proved to be a good luck talisman for the boys; despite a slightly shaky start to the season, they went on to achieve some terrific results. The boys are now working really well as a team and are going from strength to strength. Thanks again to Brian and Tad Holmes from W Carter & Son.

Victorian day for Leehurst Swan pupils

Year 2 children at Leehurst Swan, Salisbury, stepped back to 1893 when they recently visited Sevington Victorian School. From the moment they arrived, the children stayed in role, learning the 3 Rs (reading writing and arithmetic), using slates and a copy book for writing on. Lunch was eaten in the parlour, authentically prepared by their parents, and play-time was enjoyed by all as the children were able to use hobby horses, hoops and similar Victorian toys. It was a wonderful experience, but everyone was relieved to return to the 21st century.



Pupils' view

A series that gives pupils the chance to say what aspects of school life they enjoy

The spotlight this month is on **Forres Sandle Manor**



Pupils
view

BOARDING

'Our boarding is awesome! Whether you are a full or a weekly boarder it doesn't matter - there are always lots of others in at weekends but you can go out if you want to. Sundays are the best day of the week: yummy breakfast in pyjamas, followed by an outing - the best one recently was to Paultons Park - picnic lunch and then roast dinner with all the trimmings. There are always lots of teachers about at weekends and during the evenings, so if you want to talk to someone - or just have fun - you can always do so. We have special Wednesday nights, too. Sometimes we have a Theme Night where we all dress up. Our favourites were Harry Potter and Indiana Jones, but the girls are looking forward to High School Musical - FSM style! It really is the best boarding house in the world and we love it.'

Charlie and Tilly

TEACHING

'It doesn't matter if you find lessons difficult or if you are seriously brainy (which I'm not): the teachers seem to care about everyone and make sure that work set is right for you. We go on lots of outings - to galleries and museums and things like that - but we work really hard, especially as we get older.'



SPORT AND ACTIVITIES

'Our new "astro" is seriously cool. Most people love sport (two years ago we were National Hockey Champions) and I love playing matches against other schools. But FSM is a school where you can do so many sports and other activities, from Shares Club to cooking, riding to brownies, horrible science to robotics. My favourite is Warhammer Club. There is something for everyone, but you can also chill out and play with your friends in the woods or the Play Zone. Ragabout is the best part of the week: last term we made a massive dam in the bamboo woods.'

Tom



PROJECT WEEK

'Every year I cannot wait until June because we get to choose from a list of exciting activities and the chance to go away with our friends for a week. Last year's choices included cycling in Devon, beach activities in Cornwall, pony trekking in the Brecon Beacons, and even a trip to Iceland.'

Annabel

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High flyers

For a perfect day out, try winging it



The perfection of nature: Whisky the barn owl at Hamptworth Estate

Days out – perhaps even in the sun – are on the menu again as we bid a heartfelt goodbye to the winter. It doesn't matter what's going on elsewhere: we can all enjoy our wonderful countryside and the many attractions waiting to welcome us. From walking (with the reward of a delicious pub lunch), sport and stately homes to museums, zoos and tempting farm shops, the attractions and events available in Hampshire and Wiltshire are legion.

One activity that's becoming increasingly popular is the exciting sport of falconry. The 3,000-acre **Hamptworth Estate** on the edge of the New Forest offers half and full-day falconry experiences for adults and children with resident falconer Bob Dalton. Wild raptors, of course, have legal protection and all the magnificent birds of prey that form the Hamptworth Falconry team have been aviary-bred in the UK, including eagles, hawks, falcons and owls.

The day begins with an introduction, covering the characteristics of the birds and their hunting habits, followed by meeting the birds, instruction and the opportunity to don the gauntlet and fly an owl and a harris hawk. Participants will then watch as Bob works various birds, followed by lunch. The full-day experience then features a trip onto the estate to fly a falcon in natural surroundings.

The **Hawk Conservancy Trust**, Andover, is set in 22 acres of grounds and has three spectacular bird-of-prey flying displays a day. All visitors can hold a British bird of prey and can either walk or take a tractor ride around the beautiful wild flower meadows, while children can enjoy the fun of ferret and runner-duck racing and complete the Raptor Passport Trail and nature trail. Adults also have the opportunity to fly a harris hawk.

Both of these centres offer a memorable experience centred on the magnificent birds of prey that are so exciting to watch and handle. ▼

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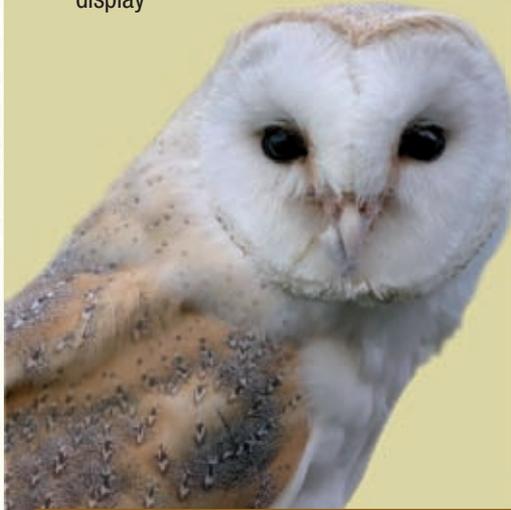
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Closing date for entries: Friday 27 March 2009

The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. This competition is not open to employees of View Magazines or the competition promoter or their families. View Magazines and the competition promoter will not make your details known to any third party.

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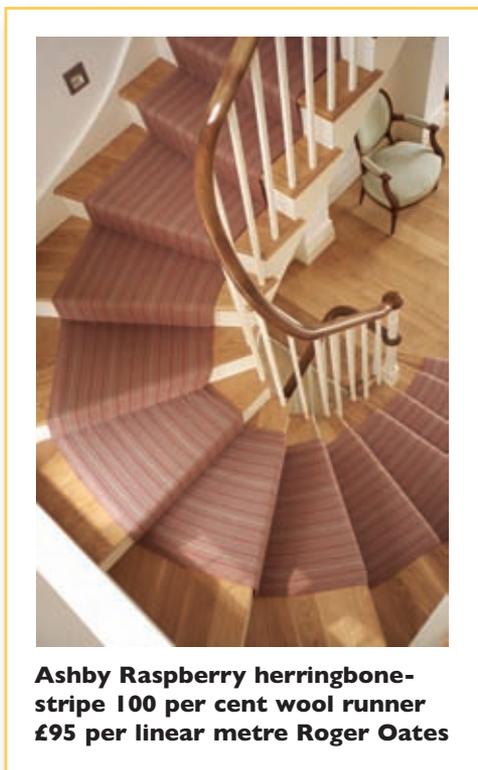
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Band of Gold

Nothing trumpets the spring like the golden daffodil. **Annie Bullen** selects her favourites



By Annie Bullen, a nurserywoman and gardening journalist living in north Hampshire

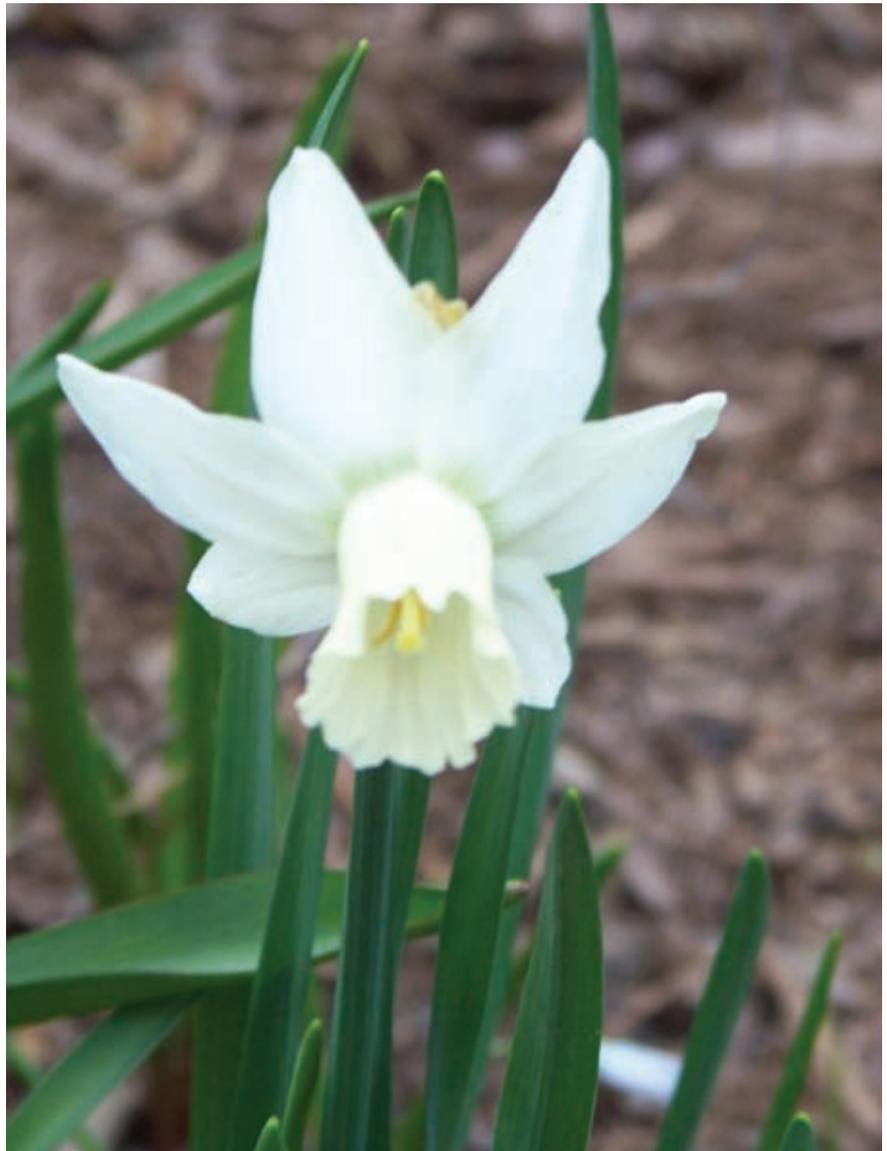
When the poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy were strolling through the wood beyond Gowbarrow Park on the shore of Ullswater more than 200 years ago, they were stopped dead in their tracks by a winding band of gold.

Dorothy Wordsworth recorded the 'long belt' of little wild daffodils, the width of a country road, twisting their way along the lake shore, in her journal for that early spring day in 1802.

'...(they) tossed and reeled and danced and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind... they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing...' she wrote. Brother William put pen to paper too, but of course you know about that.

What the poetic pair saw were our little wild daffodils, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, which once threw their cheerful golden mantle over every field, wood, churchyard and country lane. Now, alas, they are much less common in the wild. But we gardeners still have a bewildering variety of little golden wonders to choose from to brighten up our March days.

I have a particular weakness for small daffs – the little narcissi that bend and twist but never break in the often-bitter winds. The most reliably early is the aptly named *N* 'Rijnveldt's Early Sensation' AGM, a nice egg-yolk yellow with a flared cup,



Most elegant of all: *Narcissus cyclamineus* 'Jenny' AGM is a must-have daffodil

sometimes in bloom around Christmas and certainly in January and February. At just 10-inches (24cms) high, it holds its head high through most storms.

Because there are so many types, horticulturists have classified daffodils into 13 separate divisions, using features such as double petals, trumpets, large cups and so forth, as guidelines. Division 6 is where all the *cyclamineus* cultivars live and where a lot of the most beautiful daffodils are found.

Narcissus cyclamineus itself has petals so swept back they look as if they've been blasted by a gale. Its deep yellow flowers

with their slender, slightly waisted trumpets, looking like tiny Christmas crackers, grow on six-inch (15cm) stems. This, unlike most of the cultivars derived from it, must have moist, acid soil.

The whole *cyclamineus* family has inherited the streamlined look. It is the reflexing of the petals, swept back like those of cyclamen, that give the name to the species.

From this big group *N* 'February Gold' AGM is a yellow daffodil, growing to about 12 inches (30cm). It's optimistically named, being more likely to bloom in March.

Photograph courtesy of the National Trust



Daffodils at The Vyne, a National Trust property near Basingstoke

There's the large-flowered ivory and yellow 'February Silver' too and the delicate 'Dove Wings' with small milky petals and lemon trumpets. 'Jack Snipe' AGM is another *cyclamineus* favourite, a little like 'Dove Wings', but smaller with rich yolky-yellow cups.

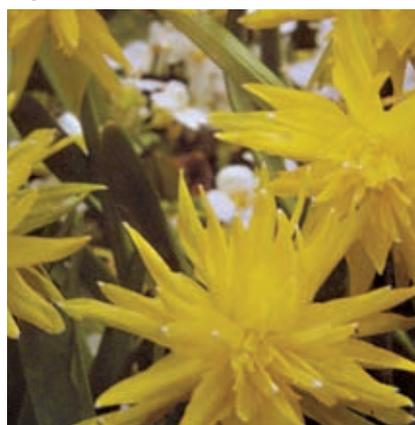
The dramatically named 'Jetfire' AGM has large gold petals sweeping away from a bright red-orange trumpet. But most elegant of all is 'Jenny' AGM, a must-have daffodil with long-lasting swept-back ivory-white flowers and delicately crimped pale-lemon trumpets that gradually fade to creamy-white.

Most parts of the British Isles are too cold for the tender, gorgeously scented *N* 'Soleil d'Or', but we can all grow its tougher second-generation offspring, including the two hugely popular miniatures, *N* 'Jumble' AGM and *N* 'Tete-a-Tete' AGM. 'Jumble', coming in at eight inches (20cm), bears two or three apricot-cupped clear yellow flowers on each stem while 'Tete-a-Tete', a couple of inches smaller, is pure gold. Both are lovely in pots and their slightly reflexed petals give you the clue that their other grandparent is *N cyclamineus*.

The International Daffodil Register says that there are 26,000 species and cultivars,

so you're bound to find one or two ragamuffins. One of these I find enchanting, although at first glance it looks nothing like a daffodil. *N* 'Rip Van Winkle' (otherwise known as *N minor* var *pumilus* 'Plenus') is a shaggy-headed urchin, six to eight inches (15-20cms) tall, with a tousled mop of curved, green-tinged golden petals. It will bloom cheerfully in early March and I love it dearly although heavy rainfall will weigh down the petal-filled heads. ▼

Rip Van Winkle



'We have a bewildering variety of little golden wonders to choose from to brighten up our March days'

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- Plant bulbs in late August/September to give them time to make good root growth
- Most cultivars will increase naturally. Split clumps every four years, ideally a couple of months after flowering
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- Most are fully hardy and prefer well-drained soil in part sun/part light shade.
- The exceptions are the fragrant Tazetta cultivars such as 'Minnow' or 'Silver Chimes' which need a sunny sheltered site
- A little feed during flowering will give a boost to the bulb. Deadhead after flowering and allow foliage to die back naturally

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New in *View*



Porsche Panamera

It's a Porsche, all right, but not as we know it. Count the doors. Count the seats. Yep – four of each. It's a fully-fledged grand tourer but it's got the unmistakable Porsche DNA coursing through it.

The Panamera takes its styling cues from the curvaceous 911 and its sexy offspring and is light years away from Porsche's gigantic Cayenne, a grotesque gas-glugger that so cocks a snook at restraint and moderation in these trying times.

Built from head to toe in Germany, Porsche's latest work of art gets its power from a range of V6 and V8 engines, has rear-wheel or optional four-wheel-drive and will later be offered with a more economical hybrid engine.

The Panamera will be starring on Europe's catwalks this spring and in the showrooms by late summer. By then they will have told us the prices. **DE**



Nissan 370Z Coupé: Nissan's latest two-seater Z-Car, with its 3.7-litre engine, 7-speed automatic box, curvy lines and admirable heritage, looks a fine car and a classic example of unfortunate timing. It will be on sale here in April.

MINI Convertible: Half a century on from the Mini's seismic debut, the latest offering to possess the name is a sporty soft-top version of BMW's 21st-century model. It comes with guaranteed performance, frugality and image and will illuminate showrooms in late March.



Suzuki Alto: the antidote to the Lamborghini. The smallest member of the Suzuki stable is aimed squarely at today's penny-watching motorist. It may look like an insect but its three-cylinder, 1-litre engine does 63 miles on a gallon, kicks out ultra-low emissions and tootles along at close to a ton.

Lamborghini Gallardo LP 560-4 Spyder: fed up with your old Lambo's puny performance? Well, the all-new Gallardo Spyder may hit the mark. Its 5.2-litre V10 will reach 60mph in four seconds and top 200mph. Not for those on a budget, perhaps.



Spring *clean*

It's been a long winter. Rachel Heathcote suggests it's time to give yourself a spring clean

Spring is just around the corner: the days are getting lighter, the warmth of the sunshine creeps through, and we start to see signs of new life with many young shoots pushing through the soil. To me, spring always feels like the beginning of the true new year and is a great time to give your body a spring clean.

Our bodies are actually 'detoxing' all the time. Those amazing organs, the liver, kidneys, bowel, skin and lungs, are continuously eliminating toxins from our system. I don't believe in harsh and extreme detox regimes which can put a lot of stress on the body, but what can be useful at this time of year is to support your body's own natural cleansing processes, which can easily be done with a few simple dietary changes and the support of medicinal herbal extracts.

When you overindulge with the wrong foods or drink, a build up of toxins in the body not only affects how you feel emotionally, but possibly also your physical well-being. You may be left feeling low, tired, sluggish, and experiencing symptoms such as nausea, headaches, skin problems, constipation and bloating. Be kind to your body and try the changes suggested below for just two weeks to cleanse and revive your system and put a spring back into your step.

Firstly, increase your water intake to one-to-two litres daily. Taking a bottle to work helps. Cut out caffeine by replacing coffee and tea with alternatives such as barley cup, red bush tea or herbal teas. Alcohol has to go, unfortunately. It's only for two weeks,

just to give your liver a break. Take herbal teas or tinctures to safely cleanse the body, and book an appointment with your local nutritionist or herbalist for an in-depth health check and personalised health programme to put you on the path to regaining your vitality.

Alcohol has to go, unfortunately. It's only for two weeks, just to give your liver a break'

As part of any good cleansing plan it is important to use herbs with bitter properties for improving liver and digestive functions. Milk thistle seed and dandelion root are both very valuable in this way and I would recommend taking a mixed tincture, 5ml two-to-three times daily, diluted in water, for up to four weeks for best results. Milk thistle contains the active constituents silybin and silymarin, which are proven to have both protective and restorative effects on the liver cells. Bitter herbs like these also stimulate the production of digestive juices and gut movement. So, if you are suffering with a hangover, nausea, headaches, skin problems (such as acne, eczema, psoriasis), or are feeling constipated and bloated, try these two herbs to eliminate toxins from the system.

Nature gives us a helping hand at this time of year. Keep an eye out for the young, new, fresh nettle leaves and cleavers in the



hedgerows. These herbs can be picked and used fresh to make a detoxifying tea: I suggest drinking two-to-three cups daily to stimulate cleansing via the kidneys and lymphatic system. For a quick, easy option try the mixed tincture of these two herbs taking 5ml three-times-daily, diluted in water to help with fluid retention, swollen glands, and skin problems.

If scouring the hedgerows or garden isn't for you, the Detox Kit from Neal's Yard Remedies contains everything you need to get started, including Dandelion and Burdock Tincture, Dandelion and Red Clover Herbal Tea Blend, Courage Flower Essence, and Detox Toning Body Oil. Get your colleagues, friends and family on board so you can motivate each other for a healthy and refreshing beginning to spring. ▼

If you are taking prescribed medication, have a chronic health problem or are pregnant please consult a medical herbalist or GP before taking natural remedies.

Rachel Heathcote is from Neal's Yard Remedies, 27 Market Place, Salisbury (01722 340736)

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Wedding and Special Occasion Fayre

Salisbury's best local independent businesses are pulling out the stops yet again with their next Wedding & Special Occasions Fayre on 15 March at Salisbury Arts Centre, where the exhibitors will be ready to assist you in making your special occasion a time to remember.

The exhibitors have a common goal – to raise money through a silent auction for the UK's leading children's cancer charity, CLIC Sargent (www.clicsargent.org.uk). Each exhibitor is donating products or services to the auction. Richmond Soul will be singing live throughout the day, and a welcoming smile and glass of bubbly will greet you.

Visit www.sallyedwardsphotography.co.uk for a full list of exhibitors and details of the auction.

What's on at the Concorde

The Concorde Club & Hotel in Stoneham Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, offers a packed and diverse entertainments programme including on 4 March an evening with Rosemary Squires as she celebrates her career of 60 years of song. Described in a recent review as 'a national treasure', Britain's first lady of song is still topping the bill and is as much the darling of her army of fans as ever.

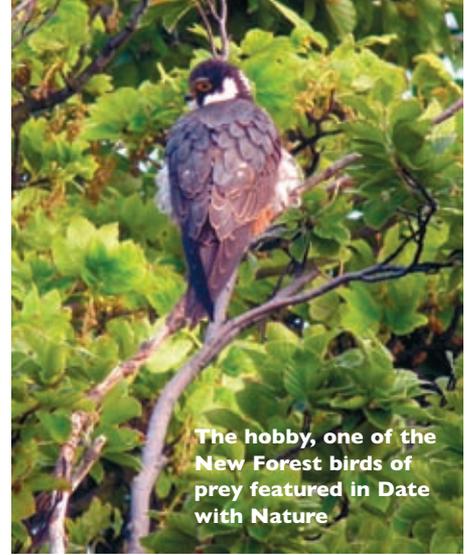
Non-members welcome 023 8061 3989
www.concordeclub.com

View points

Top organist visiting Andover

Music-lovers can look forward to a special event at St Mary's Church, Andover on 21 March at 7.30 pm, a concert by the world-renowned organist, Welsh-born Dr Carol Williams, who has performed worldwide. The concert has been initiated by the Weyhill Electronic Organ Society, organising the event in association with the Mayor of Test Valley's Charity Appeal. Carol is being sponsored by the society and all proceeds will be donated to the appeal, with the hope of around £1,000 being raised for the various charities, including The Countess of Brecknock Hospice. The concert will comprise a selection of light music, including a few classical pieces.

Tickets, £6, from the Mayor's Assistant, Beech Hurst, Andover (01264 368022) or from Waterstone's in Chantry Way, Andover. Information about Carol can be found on her website: www.melcot.com

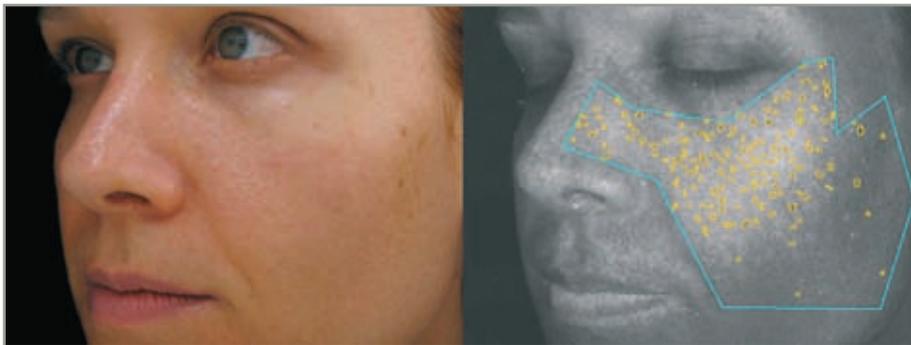


The hobby, one of the New Forest birds of prey featured in *Date with Nature*

Love the New Forest? The RSPB needs you

The RSPB is appealing for volunteers to help in the New Forest. From April, the RSPB, the New Forest National Park Authority, the Forestry Commission and Carnyx Films, will be beaming footage from birds of prey nests into the New Forest Reptile Centre, near Lyndhurst for its *Date With Nature* programme. The conservation charity is looking for people of all ages and backgrounds to help, and is appealing for anyone with a love of nature to come forward. 'You don't have to be a bird expert to volunteer, as we offer full training,' says Dan Parkinson of RSPB South East.

Contact David Rowling
davidrowling@btinternet.com
or call 01273 775333.



New skin-care technology

New technology uses multi-spectral imaging and analysis to score key aspects of complexion health for optimal skin care. Vive Life Care in Salisbury has VISIA Complexion Analysis, the first skin-care photographic imaging tool that provides clinical measurement of surface and sub-surface facial skin conditions and is now available at New Hall Hospital.

'VISIA is a new technology that makes it possible for a client to receive facial rejuvenation and skin-care treatments designed specifically for their unique complexion profile,' says Stephanie Fear, Lead Cosmetic Aesthetic Practitioner of New Hall Hospital. In use by cosmetic surgeons, dermatologists and other medical and skin-care professionals, the VISIA Complexion Analysis system is a self-contained unit that captures multi-spectral photos of the face, examining the complexion for wrinkles, spots, pores, texture, porphyrins (evidence of bacteria in pores), UV spots, pigmented spots and acne. Additionally VISIA grades an individual's skin features relative to others of the same age and skin type. VISIA imaging and analysis helps medical and skin-care professionals develop more targeted treatment programs, communicate more effectively with clients and better track treatment outcomes.

Vive Life Care, New Hall Hospital: 01722 435149 www.vivelifecare.co.uk

Turn unwanted clothes and curtains into cash

It makes sense to turn unwanted fashionable items in good condition into cash by using a dress agency. Chain Reaction in Salisbury accepts clothing, soft furnishings, accessories, etc, and gives the owner 50 per cent of the selling price. Proprietor Marysia White says that her customers, aged 16 to 90, are discerning and would prefer to buy a good second-hand garment than an inferior, new, cheaper one.

The resale curtain department sells good-quality lined and interlined curtains for a fraction of their original cost, accepted for resale on a 50/50 basis. 'There is a fashion in soft furnishings just as in clothes and it is interesting to see the style of curtains that are most popular and we try to accept only those that we know are likely to sell,' says Marysia. The Menswear Department also accepts good quality men's clothing on a 50/50 basis.

Chain Reaction, 15 Fisherton Street,
Salisbury SP2 7SU 01722 326201
www.chainreactionagency.co.uk

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Eclipse
by **Nicholas Clew**
Bantam Press £20

Epsom Downs, 3 May, 1769: a chestnut with a white blaze scorches across the turf towards the finishing post. His four rivals are so far behind him that, in racing terms, they are 'nowhere'. Among

the crowd are two men who, according to the tradition of the Sport of Kings, should not be associated with the horse who will become its greatest exponent. One, Eclipse's owner, is a meat salesman. The second, who wants to own Eclipse, is an adventurer who has made his money through roguery and gambling. While this man will remain an outcast to the racing establishment, Eclipse will go on to become the undisputed, undefeated champion of his sport.

This is a vivid portrait of high and low life; of princes, paupers and prostitutes; an era of passionate sport, ferocious gambling and uninhibited sex. It's the story of the horse that became a national icon, whose influence, 200 years later, is transcendent.

The Three Trillion Dollar War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict
by **Joseph Stiglitz, Linda Bilmes**
Allen Lane £20

The Three Trillion Dollar War is a devastating reckoning of the true cost of the Iraq war – quite apart from its tragic human toll – which the Bush administration estimated at \$50 billion, but Stiglitz and Bilmes show underestimates the real figure by approximately six times. They expose the gigantic expenses that have so far not been officially accounted for, the cost of caring for thousands of wounded veterans for the rest of their lives. With chilling precision, they calculate what the money spent on the war would have produced had it been further invested in the growth of the economy, in the US and around the

world, and in infrastructure. Stiglitz and Bilmes write in simple language, which makes the details they present, and the sums they add up, all the more disturbing.

RHS
Encyclopedia of Garden Design
by **Paul Williams**
Dorling Kindersley £25

This book helps you to learn to plan, build and plant your perfect garden with the experts at the RHS. Guiding you through the whole creative and gardening process, learn to visualize your ideas, choose a style, develop plans, plot, build, landscape, select the right plants, and apply the finishing touches to make your garden the ideal reflection of your tastes and creativity.

A look at 'inspirational gardens' will give you lots of ideas for things to create. Whether you want to plan a major project or focus on a particular area, this is the complete guide: don't design without it.

The Great European Rip-off: How the Corrupt, Wasteful EU is Taking Control of Our Lives
by **David Craig, Matthew Elliott**
Random House Books £8.99

In this EU election year, it's time for people across Europe to look at what really goes on in Brussels in our name. The EU costs us over £700 billion a year – an incredible £1,500 for every man, woman and child in Europe. So what do we get for our money?

Using their extensive network of insider sources, David Craig and Matthew Elliott smash through the secrecy and disinformation that are the Brussels hallmark to reveal what our European rulers

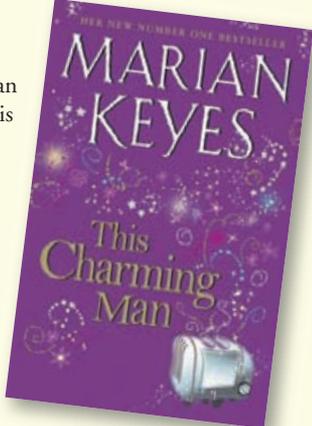
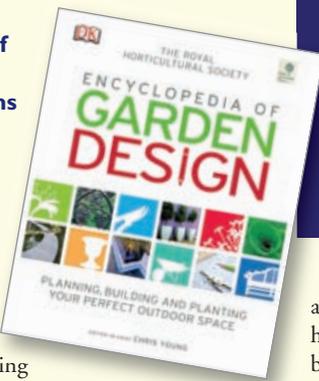
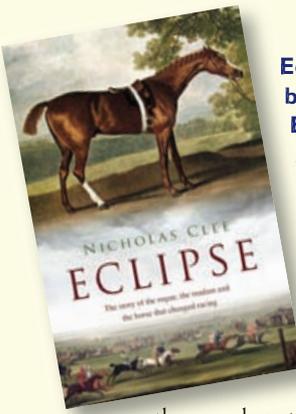
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are really getting up to. The result is a horrifying story of how a once-noble ideal is being destroyed by hypocrisy, kleptocracy and bureaucracy – and how we are all suffering as a result.

This Charming Man
by **Marian Keyes**
Penguin Books Ltd £12.99

Lola has just discovered that her boyfriend - charismatic politician Paddy de Courcy - is getting married. To someone else. Heartbroken, Lola flees to a seaside cottage. But will Lola's retreat prove as idyllic as she hopes? Journalist Grace wants the inside story on Paddy de Courcy's engagement and thinks Lola holds the key. Grace knew Paddy a long time ago. But why can't she forget him? Grace's sister, Marnie, might have the answer but she also has issues. Her husband and daughters are wonderful, but they can't take away memories of her first love, Paddy de Courcy. What will it take for Marnie to move on? Alicia Thornton is Paddy's wife-to-be. Determined to be the perfect wife, Alicia would do anything for her fiancé. But does she know the real Paddy? Four very different women. One awfully charming man. And the dark secret that binds them all.

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