

April / May '24

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P16



P20



P22

Wednesfield magazine

Contents

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6. Editor's Welcome | 26. Wednesfield High Academy |
| 8. Oak Meadow Primary | 30. National Trust |
| 10. Crossword | 32. Get Ready for Spring |
| 12. Volunteering | 36. Kids Puzzles |
| 14. Wildlife in Wednesfield | 39. Ray Fellows |
| 16. Wednesfield Bowling Club | 42. 13 Doors |
| 18. Finance Advice | 46. Useful Telephone Numbers |
| 20 Gary Barlow | 47. Crossword Answers |
| 22. Canal Festival | |

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to the April/May issue of the Wednesfield Magazine.

The theme for this issue is giving (no, I don't want any money from you!). Actually, it is my birthday on 24th March, but no, seriously, a card will do.

When I say giving, I mean doing things for nothing. People much older than me – sorry Mom and Dad! – talk about when we had a proper community, when people helped each other without wanting something in return. To be fair, I know that still happens, but almost certainly not to the degree that it used to.

I very much appreciate that it's tough out there for many people, with the cost of living etc. but there are a lot of people who have time on their hands and could contribute more to society.

When people think of volunteering, they probably think of working in a charity shop. That's a start and I know a few of them need people to help out, but there's so many more things you can do. I've written a piece in this magazine to expand on this. Please read it and see if there's anything you fancy.

In the last magazine, I mentioned my new healthy regime and promised an update. Well, I managed to go 42 days without an alcoholic drink after New Year's Eve and since then, I've kept to having a few drinks on a weekend and have been a regular visitor to the gym and even managed to reduce my cheese addiction, so, all in all, I think I'm on track for a David Hasselhoff body for the summer – we'll see...

I've also been along to see the lovely people at Wednesfield Bowling Club, who meet twice a week at a hut in Wednesfield Park. They're a lovely bunch of people and they're looking for a few new people to enjoy the sport with them. You don't have to have any experience, so like me, why not pop over and see if you enjoy it. I promise they'll give you a very warm welcome.

Due to the increasing cost of print, more than ever, our advertisers are vitally important to the to the continuation of this magazine. Please have a look at their adverts and if you do purchase anything from them, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU SAW THE ADVERT IN THE WEDNESFIELD MAGAZINE!

The next issue will cover June and July (hopefully, we'll have a good summer!) and will be out on 28th May so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 10th May.

Enjoy your read!

Simon



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Oak Meadow Primary Scoops Prestigious Artsmark Gold Award

A Wednesfield school has scooped the prestigious Artsmark Gold Award



A Wednesfield school has scooped the prestigious Artsmark Gold Award.

To achieve the award, Oak Meadow Primary School demonstrated to Arts Council England throughout the two-year assessment process how arts and culture forms a key part of its broad and ambitious curriculum.

The school, in Ashmore Park, has embedded creativity across the whole curriculum alongside its extra-curricular provision, addressing school improvement priorities to ensure every child can access a diverse, high-quality cultural education.

Interim Head of School Paul Lane said: "Artsmark is the only creative quality standard for schools that is accredited by Arts Council England. The award we have received recognises settings that celebrate the arts and cultural education across the whole curriculum by bringing learning to life for children and young people. Our everyday ambition is to unlock our children's potential, building their confidence, character and resilience.

"I am bursting with pride for the school following this national recognition; from the diverse and creative lessons children receive daily to our stellar enrichment events such as 'A Million Dreams', this accolade showcases our magnificent work and the

high standards we have built with the support of all stakeholders and our partnership with St Bartholomew's CE Multi Academy Trust."

Councillor Jacqui Coogan, the City of Wolverhampton Council's Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work, said: "The arts encourage self-expression and creativity, enriching the experience of pupils at school and helping them prepare for adult life.

"Artsmark empowers teachers with the skills they need to embed arts, culture and creativity across the whole curriculum, and schools are recognised for their exceptional commitment to creativity with this award. As it is the only award for arts and culture provision in England, this is fabulous recognition for Oak Meadow Primary School."

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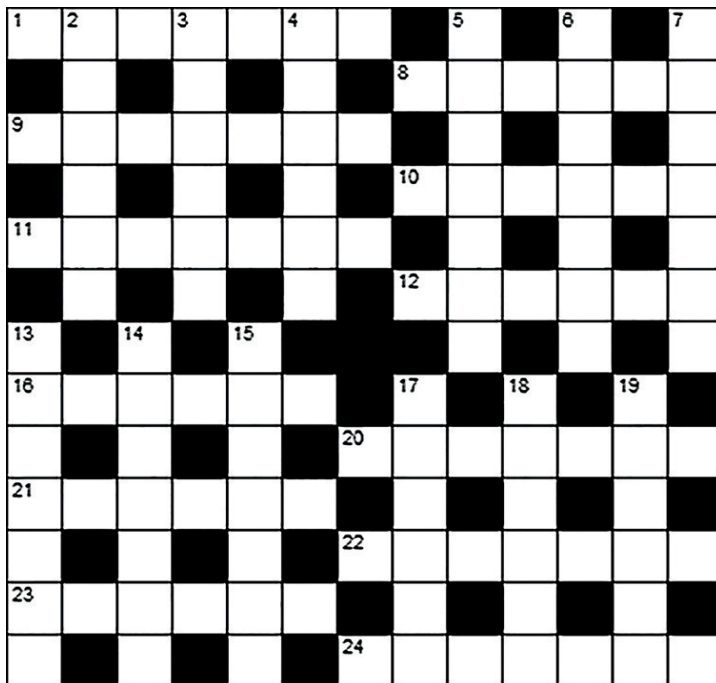
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Crossword

Please see answers on page 47



Across

- 1 Herbaceous perennial with edible stalks (7)
- 8 Itsy bitsy, teeny weeny, yellow polka dot _____ (6)
- 9 The Moor of Venice, Shakespeare play (7)
- 10 Type of biscuit (6)
- 11 About-face (7)
- 12 Picked, selected (6)
- 16 Composer of Fantaisie-Improptu (6)
- 20 Sang A Perfect Day and Walk on the Wild Side (3, 4)
- 21 Tropical lizard (6)
- 22 Andalusian town (7)
- 23 Pollen-producing part of a flower (6)
- 24 Aerial, signal receiver (7)

Down

- 2 Enmity, contempt (6)
- 3 Infused, fermented (6)
- 4 Appreciate, enjoy (6)
- 5 _____ West, Dalton and Spall (7)
- 6 Bystander, spectator (7)
- 7 Explanation of how the universe began (7)
- 13 Astronomical event, can be solar or lunar (7)
- 14 Beloved, favoured (7)
- 15 Innovator (7)
- 17 Anne _____, second wife of Henry VIII (6)
- 18 Contusion, blemish caused by injury (6)
- 19 UK's smallest bird of prey (6)



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Volunteering

By Simon Archer



Have you ever done something for nothing? You probably have. Maybe you've put the neighbours' bin out while they're away, or done their shopping when they're ill.

That's really all volunteering is. Being a good person. Helping someone or some people to make the world a slightly better place.

Surely, that's what we all want, isn't it?

Bizarrely, when I was growing up, I was led to believe that volunteers were not to be trusted....Do-gooders was a name I often heard them called. How strange that people who help others should be thought of detrimentally.

I've since realised that those giving out the negative labels were the ones that didn't want to do anything for anyone except themselves and just wanted to deflect their laziness onto others with a bit more community spirit.

Furthermore, when we do these good deeds, we all get a sense of satisfaction (especially if the recipient shows their gratitude).

You'd probably be surprised how many people do volunteering work. Almost a third (30%) of people over 16 years old volunteered with a group, club or organisation at least once per year.



Of course, many of you might struggle with commitment, with work and family obligations, but a lot of volunteering roles might allow for this.

I used to help at a local foodbank and we managed to come up with a rota system that enabled everyone to do what they could, when they could.

Time is also an issue, so perhaps something that doesn't require a huge amount of work, but enables you to get involved and use your skills and/or knowledge, might work best.



Being a school governor doesn't require you to do something every week, or even every month for that matter and you don't need to have worked in education to be a school governor.

I know a few schools that need people to step up, so give your local school a call. They might just be pleased to hear from you.

If you live alone or are retired, your local community centre could be an option. Pop in and ask if they need volunteers. You will find they're usually very welcoming and being involved might widen your circle of friends.

Wolverhampton Volunteers have over 200 organisations registered and between them, they offer over 400 unique volunteering opportunities covering every aspect of community life.

Anyone interested in volunteering can visit and register on www.wtonvolunteers.org or alternatively, call on 01902 328980 to arrange an appointment.



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Wildlife in Wednesfield

Goodness me! Hasn't it been the wettest, warmest February and March on record? The aquifers underground are all full and the water table is at the highest point I can remember, with a relatively small amount of rain causing flooding all over the place. I drive down to South Wales regularly and the daffodils along the M50 and adjacent woodlands are all in flower and the verges are festooned with primroses – spring has already sprung, albeit a wet beginning!

Very shortly we will start to see the annual passage of migrant birds from points south reaching our shores to breed. I've written previously about the ones we all know and love, such as swallows and the songster warblers, but this month I want to focus on four of the lesser known ones, all of which I've seen locally.

The Wheatear is a lovely little bird with a black cheek. In flight it shows a white rump and a black 'T' shape on its tail. It's about the size of a robin and doesn't breed locally, but I see them almost every year as they pass through to their high hill and mountain breeding areas further north. If you should be walking along the Essington ridge or across the Linthouse fields, or indeed on a day trip through the Welsh mountains, keep an eye open for these delightful birds. They tend to perch in the open, or on fences so are quite easy to notice.



Another bird that breeds in similar habitats to the Wheatear and also passages through this area is the Ring Ouzel. Ring Ouzels are slightly smaller and slimmer than a Blackbird. Males have distinctive black plumage with a pale wing panel and striking white breast band. I've only ever seen one in these parts, but friends have seen them several times and six appeared on one memorable occasion! Like the Wheatears, the Ring Ouzels have been seen in the horse and pig fields in Essington, between Black Cat Wood (where they've been known to roost) and the fruit farm.

A bird that I have seen in Wednesfield for pretty much every year for as long as I can remember, is the Yellow Wagtail. The Yellow Wagtail has similar habits to the familiar and prolific Pied Wagtail but is yellow.



Yellow Wagtails aren't the most common of birds and can be confused with Grey Wagtails, which are grey on top and yellow underneath. The best place to see these gorgeous, water loving yellow birds is along the canal towpath and for me it's the stretch between Devil's Elbow Bridge and Broad Lane North bridge that's been most productive.

The quieter times of day have produced the best results, but they're not birds you can really 'plan' to see.

The fourth bird I want to mention is one that you're unlikely to see, but may well hear; the Grasshopper Warbler. I had to wait until my late 40s to see one of these frustratingly difficult birds to see, although I'd heard them dozens of times.

The quintessential 'little brown job' the Grasshopper Warbler is so called because its call sounds exactly like a grasshopper, but louder. With a characteristic rounded tail and heavy dark streaking, it is readily identifiable, but its call is the most telling sign. Frustratingly, these birds run along the ground under the bushes where they generally sing fairly low down and can be impossible to spot. It's easy to think there are four or five of them in one bush when there is only one!

Well, that's it for this issue, so don't forget to look up, look down, look all around and keep enjoying our wildlife.

Dave H – wildlifeinwednesfield@google.com

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Wednesfield Bowling & Social Club

By Simon Archer



For those of you who have never tried crown green bowling, but have often thought about it, now might be a good time to start.

I recently visited the lovely, friendly people (men and women) of Wednesfield Bowling & Social Club.

Chairman, Ken Bonser had invited me along, so I know they were in Wednesfield Park, but as this seems to be Wednesfield's best kept secret, I struggled to find their hut – it's next to the skateboard park, in case you wondered.

They meet twice a week, for a catch up and a game of snooker, when it's not the bowling season.

The club has been running for over 70 years and as Entertainment Secretary, Alison White, puts it, "It provides a few retired people with something to do on a Monday and Wednesday afternoon".



There are two members in their 90s; Brian Clitheroe (91) and Brian Coley (90), with Mr Coley having been a member for 28 years.

They have two teams (A & B) that compete in Division 4 of the Wolverhampton Senior Citizens Bowls League and Ken says they like that league as it's more friendly and less serious than the divisions above.

The 2024 season gets underway on 10th April and they will begin practise sessions from late March, when the grass is ready.

They also have in-house competitions with trophies handed out at their presentation night in December).



As well as Ken, the club is run by Alan Brookes (Vice Chair), Bill Pain (Secretary) and Michael Hill (Treasurer).

Matches start at 1pm and they have a break for refreshments (sandwiches etc) at half time. If they're really lucky, Alison brings her much sought after bread pudding, which I have been promised a bit of, when I return.

Anyone wishing to have a go – newcomers are made very welcome – should just turn up around 12.30 – 1pm on any Monday and Wednesday from 1st April onwards. No need to worry about having a set of bowls as they have a few sets they can lend to newbies. Just wear flat shoes/trainers. For more information, please ring Bill Pain on 01902 759340.

I've promised to drop some of these magazines off to them, so I'll be certainly having a go. I may see you there – don't pinch all the bread pudding though please!


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Willenhall Based Will Writer Jim Stanistreet, from BensonWilliams, Shares a Few Thoughts on Lasting Powers of Attorney



I owe Martin Lewis a pint. Whenever he features estate planning on one of his shows he is a massive advocate of advising people to make “Lasting Powers of Attorney”, and invariably I get a spate of incoming calls from people following up on his words of wisdom!

It has to be said that he isn't wrong. Scary statistics but in The UK every three minutes a new case of dementia is diagnosed. The condition currently affects over 700,000 people and it is estimated this figure will rise to one million by 2025. One in fourteen people over sixty five are affected, and one in six over eighty. A fairly obvious comment, but the numbers are rising dramatically as we are living longer.

If somebody loses capacity to make decisions and no forward planning is in place the road forward is expensive, stressful, and time consuming. An application to The Court of Protection has to be made for somebody to become a “Deputy”. This takes several months, the person who has lost capacity has no say over who is appointed, and the cost will typically be over £2,000, followed by ongoing annual supervision and indemnity charges of around £500.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 enables people to plan ahead for this by creating a Lasting Power of Attorney. This is a document that a person (the Donor) creates whilst they still have capacity to make decisions, in which they appoint somebody else (an Attorney) to act on their behalf if they lose capacity. Three big advantages of an Attorney over a Deputy are there are no time delays (the power would already be in place before the person loses capacity), the Donor gets to choose the Attorney(s) themselves, and the court and professional fees are a fraction of the costs stated above.

This doesn't interfere with a person's right to act for themselves and make their own decisions. The Mental Capacity Act creates a “presumption of capacity” meaning that everybody retains the right to make their own decisions until it is proved that they can't. Attorneys must be seen to support a Donor in making their own decisions for as long as possible, must act in the best interests of the Donor, and must be able to demonstrate that anything they do is the least restrictive course of action based on the Donor's basic rights and freedoms.

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Is Barlow back... for good?

Following last year's release of their chart-topping album *This Life*, Take That are ready to return to the stage with a show that promises to enthral. Naturally, their chief songwriter, Gary Barlow, couldn't be more excited.

In June 2023 the iconic pop group Take That announced a grand return to the stage with *This Life On Tour* – a spectacular 29-date journey across 15 cities, marking their first major outing since their hiatus between 2019 and 2023.

All is set to begin in April with three opening nights in Sheffield and symbolises something of a renaissance for the band. Gary Barlow, the band's esteemed songwriter of 13 UK number one singles, shared his enthusiasm.

"There's an electric feeling about going back on tour, especially after such a relatively long break. *This Life On Tour* isn't just about performing our new songs; it's a celebration of our journey, our fans and the music that has been part of so many lives," he said.

The tour is named after their current and ninth studio album *This Life* and to celebrate a fourth decade of music since they first appeared on the scene with 1991 debut single *Do What U Like*.

Featuring the lead single *Windows*, the album showcases a matured sound

reflecting the band's evolution over the years. Barlow describes it as being "filled with our experiences, hopes and memories. It's deeply personal yet universal. We've poured every bit of ourselves into this album."

The tour will not only cover major cities like Leeds, Dublin, London, Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham but also includes several other UK landmarks, such as Plymouth, Swansea and Nottingham.

After the final UK date in Bristol on Saturday June 8th, the boys will move on to a series of shows in key European cities, including Berlin, Rome and Madrid.



Reflecting on the band's journey and the excitement of touring again, the 53-year-old enthuses: "Every time we step on stage, it's a new adventure. The thrill of performing live, the energy from the crowd – it's irreplaceable. This tour, with our new music, feels like we're starting a fresh chapter and we can't wait to share it with everyone."

Known for their dynamic live performances and a string of hits dating back to the 1990s, they are expected to deliver a mix of new tracks from *This Life* along with their classic hits, offering a full spectrum of their musical journey.

As Barlow puts it: "It's not just a tour; it's a thank you to our fans, a nod to our past and a toast to the future."



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Calling all musicians! Don't miss your chance to showcase your talent at the Wednesfield Canal Festival 2024!

Wednesfield Canal Festival returns on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th August, so make a note in your diaries.

This will be the 10th anniversary and organisers are looking to make this one the biggest and best yet.

Last year, the crowds turned out to enjoy the festival, next to the Nickelodeon in Bentley Bridge and despite a couple of light showers, the weather was fairly favourable and allowed visitors to enjoy the fun fair, canoe trips, music, food, drink and an array of market stalls with arts and crafts, tombolas and an airsoft shooting range.

A Canal Festival wouldn't be the same without boats and over a dozen turned up for the event, selling; slates, jams, chutneys, breakfasts, mugs, pet accessories and much more. James Clarke, Chair of co-organisers Hands on Wednesfield, said, "Last year was probably our best Canal Festival to date. The weather certainly helped, as did all the volunteers who worked on the day and in the months leading up to the event. We're now looking forward to this year which will be our 10th anniversary since the first festival."

There will be live music from 12pm on both days and the organisers are keen to hear from



local bands and singers, who would like to showcase their talents at the event.

If you are interested or know someone who might be, please visit <https://wednesfieldcanalfestival.co.uk> where there's a link to a short application form.

There's also a link for traders and community groups to apply for a stall, applications for both close on Tuesday 30th April.

Last year's attendance was over 10,000 and with better weather and more attractions, it's hoped that this year there'll be even more people attending.

Organisers are pleased to announce that this year's event will be sponsored by Tomato Energy.

Tomato Energy is a community-led energy provider, with plans to invest a minimum of £4bn in the rollout of rooftop solar panels and energy storage across local communities, including the Black Country. The company empowers local people to play a key role in the energy system and live more sustainable lives. For more information on Tomato Energy and to discover fixed price energy tariffs, visit www.tomato.energy.

The logo for Tomato Energy, featuring the word "tomato" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "o" is replaced by a stylized red tomato with a green stem and leaf. The word "energy" follows in the same font.



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Wednesfield Academy

Wednesfield Academy has seen another busy term in the lead up to the GCSE and A-Level examinations. Whilst taking time to ensure our pupils are prepared, we have also had lots of trips and events happening this term.

Tour De Wednesfield

On Friday 15th March, over 350 of our pupils took part in a virtual cycle of 430 miles - the distance from Wednesfield to Paris. The purpose of the cycle was to raise money for Comic Relief. Pupils signed up to represent their house as part of a competition to see which house could contribute the most miles during the day.

Pupils starting cycling at 8.40am, completing 10 minutes of cycling each before tagging another member of their house team in. We started off the morning with a head start for Kenilworth and Tamworth houses. This was later rivalled by the efforts of the pupils from Warwick and Dudley houses.

At 3.10pm on Friday 15th March, we hit our 430-mile target for the virtual cycle to Paris. The house competition results are in:

- 1st place = Dudley 113 miles
- 2nd place = Kenilworth 110 miles
- 3rd place = Warwick 108 miles
- 4th place = Tamworth 99 miles

Well done to all our pupils and staff who took part in the organisation or the cycle itself. Please see our website and social media pages for photos of this event. We would like to extend a special thank you to our reception staff for their help with the running of the day - you did a superb job!



National Breakfast Week

Wednesfield Academy have been proudly supporting National breakfast week. Our house mascots have attended breakfast club to demonstrate the importance of breakfast in fuelling pupils for success and a great start to the day.

Thinking Forward: Careers Update

March has been a busy month for careers with both National Careers Week at the start of the month, Year 10 visit to Aston University as well as our whole school Careers Fair on the 21st March. National Careers Week saw activities in both form time as well as in lessons with a focus on understanding more about the world of work and the different career paths available. Pupils played careers related games such as Guess the Job and Wages Higher or Lower, as well as trying to guess which other jobs their teachers had had. We were fortunate enough to have Dudley College, Walsall College and Sandwell College join us in assemblies.

During the Careers Fair, over 25 external providers were in school talking to Years 7 –13 about transferable skills and different routes in different careers after GCSEs or A levels. The providers commented on how focused and interested the pupils were and their behaviour throughout the event was impeccable.

There are lots of future plans focusing on careers provision in school. If this is something that you would be interested in supporting with, please contact postbox@wednesfieldacademy.co.uk

World Book Day Celebrations

At Wednesfield we know how life changing reading can be. We are working hard to ensure that reading is not a barrier to pupil progress and lots of work has started with supporting the pupils who need it most to improve their reading levels.

As part of this drive staff across the school dressed up for World Book Day; we had Hagrid leading the school, a set of crayons supporting the pastoral team, characters from Jurassic Park teaching science as well as Snow White and her Dwarves teaching maths!

Wednesfield Out and About

Bonnie and Clyde at The Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

Our Year 10 GCSE Drama pupils and some talented Year 9 pupils took a trip to The Wolverhampton

Grand Theatre on Wednesday 6th March to see the award-winning musical Bonnie & Clyde. Pupils were discovering what elements are considered when putting on a performance such as the actors, costume, set, lighting and sound (in this case a live orchestra!).

All pupils were fantastic representatives for the school and enjoyed discussions with members of the public about the performance. We can't wait to reveal what the next theatre trip will be.

Duke of Edinburgh Update

40 Year 9 pupils have now been enrolled on the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. They have started their three sections, and we look forward to seeing their progress through the rest of this academic year.

Pupils must complete physical, skill and volunteering activities over the course of the next 3-6 months and will then take part in an expedition at Cannock Chase in June. A reminder to all participants that they can take part in volunteering activities in school by volunteering with Food Club (for more info see Mrs Savigar), Sports Clubs (for more info see Mr Parson) and pupils can even take part in an opportunity to paint a mural for the local care home (for more info see Miss Edwards).

Year 7 Twins Supporting in the Community

It is always amazing to hear about how active our pupils are in the community.

Two of your Year 7 pupils and their family have been organising street parties to help bring their community together and to support with wellbeing. The family have closed the street to cars for several years now and have provided free food and entertainment so that neighbours can enjoy each other's company.



Next up...

During the summer term, we are looking forward to our annual sports day, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and our Wednesfield Friends group have some exciting dates coming up so please look out on our social media pages for more information.



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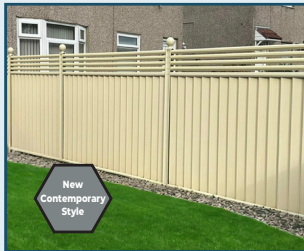
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Step into Spring at National Trust Properties in the West Midlands

With the arrival of warmer weather and sunnier days, National Trust gardens and parks are a lovely way to spend time surrounded by nature. There's a wealth of properties across the West Midlands, and beyond, all with something different to offer. For visiting information and inspiration: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury

See the estate spring to life with vibrant colours across the garden and parkland. Hyacinths, tulips, fruit tree blossom, apple blossom, daffodils and bluebells will all be in bloom at times during spring. In late spring the national collection of camassias will be in bloom. Towards the end of May we'll also see the rhododendrons, laburnum, azaleas in colour in the woodlands.

Biddulph Grange Garden, near Stoke-on-Trent

Explore the hidden treasures around Biddulph Grange Garden from quirky design features of Egyptian pyramids grown out of yew to tunnels, stepping stones and a trickling stream running through a Himalayan inspired Glen and the centrepiece of a Victorian Chinese Garden complete with golden buffalo, dragon sculptures and exotic plant collection.

Finish a visit with a traditional tea and scone in the former billiard room and pick up a plant to remember your visit from the plant centre.

Clent Hills, near Stourbridge

In spring, the Clent Hills burst to life with the sights, sounds and smells of nature. Bluebell valley becomes blanketed with an enormous number of flowers, blossom appears on trees and you can spot wildlife off the beaten track at Walton Hill. Take in the panoramic view from the four stones.

Dudmaston Estate, near Bridgnorth



Dudmaston comes to life in spring as blossom adorns the fruit trees in the orchard while spring flowers create a changing rainbow of colour in the Dingle. Spring is a time to enjoy the garden and to explore nature at Comer Woods.

Join a wellbeing walk through the trees or take part in the Trust 10, a 10k run through the woods. Dudmaston Hall and Galleries have recently reopened, offering a journey through some of the most iconic works of the British Modern Art Movement.

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses, near Stourbridge

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses are beautiful to visit in the spring. The cottage garden comes to life and an array of daffodils and snowdrops takes over. The informal garden boasts beautiful apple blossom on the dwarf apple trees in the orchard and the vegetable garden starts flowering.

The unique Holy Austin Rock Houses, carved into the sandstone ridge, are restored and offer a glimpse into the lives of the former cave dwellers.



Hanbury Hall, near Droitwich Spa

From beds of colourful tulips to buds of delicate blossom, Hanbury's gardens are finally waking up. This year, the Ribbon Border is back in the Parterre.

The explosions of stunning, bright colour are carefully planned with thousands of bulbs planted in autumn ready for the following spring. With a colourful array of tulips, daffodils and hyacinths the Parterre is sure to be filled with impressive colour and scent.

Moseley Old Hall, near Wolverhampton

Whether you wander amongst the bluebells or

race through the trees to the top of the treehouse, spring at Moseley Old Hall is a truly wonderful time. Nestled outside of Wolverhampton, Moseley is a natural sanctuary for both people and nature, offering space for all to relax, unwind and connect to the outdoors.



Shugborough Estate, near Stafford

Shugborough Estate comes alive in spring, with beautiful bulbs and blossom, a kaleidoscope of colour, there's plenty to see as the gardens wake up for the new year.

Wander through the arboretum and along the river to see a dazzling display of daffodils, or head to the walled garden where you will see preparations for a productive year.

The Mansion has reopened offering visitors the chance to discover the story of the Anson families travels around the globe. Down on the farm you can meet new arrivals including Tamworth Pigs, and newborn South Down Lambs.



Top Tips to Get Your Home Spring Ready This April

It's now nearly April, and we are all looking forward to the warmer months, but how do we get our homes ready for spring? Here are some top tips.

We have weathered the long, dark winter months and now we are looking forward. It is time for all of us to come out of our hibernation and embrace the warmer weather of spring and look forward to summer.

Whilst getting out of doors to enjoy the fresh air will be a priority for many of us, we can also make the indoors feel optimistically springlike too!

Top tips to help you get your home ready for spring

Let there be light!

Now is the time to open your windows and introduce some long-awaited clarity into your home's atmosphere.

Who wants to go outside during winter to wash their windows? It is cold, wet, and your windows become dirt magnets. But now it is getting warmer the time has come to put an end to this! Clean your windows and make them sparkle, allowing natural light to enter your home.

What about changing your curtains during the warmer seasons too? Pack away the heavier, darker curtains and put up lighter coloured ones.

Go floral!

What could be more springlike than using plants and flowers to inject some life and vibrancy into your home? Why not grow your own flowering plants inside, cut some blooms from your garden or take a trip to your local florist?

And why not go floral around the house too with floral cushion covers and bedding?



Spring clean and clear out!

We all accumulate stuff over winter, in no small part due to Christmas. Why not review everything in your cupboards and wardrobes and clear out any unwanted or unneeded items? Decluttering your home is liberating. Why not recycle or donate anything you don't want?

Have a rearrange.

By simply moving one chair or sofa it can make a massive difference to how your home feels and it might even make it feel brand new. Have a shuffle. And don't be afraid to change it all around again. Rearranging your furniture is about finding the layout that works for you.

Go colourful!

Springtime is about light colours so why not embark on revamping the colour scheme in your home? Look in your garden for inspiration. See what is in bloom and utilise that colour in your interior colour scheme, then you will be bringing spring colour into your home.

Why not think about what flowers are going to bloom next and utilise those colours so you can even get ahead of the inevitable advance of the season?

Why not try some or all these top tips? Each in their own way offer quick, easy and affordable ways to get your home spring ready this April.

Rob Bullock <https://robbullockauthor.blogspot.com>

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Kids' Page

Try this test on your friends and family. First ask them to say the WORDS below and see how fast they do it. THEN ask them to say the COLOURS of the words and see how much harder they find it. This difficulty we have naming the actual colour when it is used to write the name of a different colour is called THE STROOP EFFECT!

blue green yellow brown
 grey pink black white
 red purple beige orange

Now can you find all the colours in the list above inside the word grid?

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

IF YOU DROP A YELLOW HAT
 IN THE RED SEA, WHAT DOES
 HAPPENS TO IT?
 IT GETS WET!



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

Word Grid Solution

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OF THE YEAR
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Memories of Our Wednesfield



Local Historian Ray Fellows shares a letter from Pam and Keith Stanton, where Pam Stanton (nee Wagstaff) tells us about her school days spent in Wednesfield.



The old Wood End infant School built 1875

"I started school after the Easter holidays in 1948 when I was just five years old. My mum took me to Wood End Primary School the first day, but I was expected to make my way there and back from then on, as well as come home for lunch. I didn't mind at all as I was always very independent.

I did have a couple of worries about the journey though and they were a motorbike and a naughty boy! The motorbike used to come out of the houses on Wood End Road just before the Castle pub but on the opposite side of the road. I used to cross over as I was scared he would run me over as he sped down his drive to the road. It was so loud! Then I had to cross back before I reached the Old School which seemed to curve round the bend.

This lad used to wait round this bend and strike matches to throw at the girl's legs as they went passed. I was so glad when he went to the "Big School"

I loved that school. I remember the large grass playing field and the side one behind the cloakrooms and the reception classroom.

This one had a huge grassy mound all across it. I think it was the air raid shelter during the war. The school was an E shape but the middle bit was the only covered in corridor and was at the side of hall. During my time there the hall was divided by a curtain and used as two classrooms. I can't remember many teacher's names but I think the reception was Miss Huddleston. There was a Mr Willis who took the first class of the juniors and a Mrs Davenport who took the top class. Mr Shannon was the headmaster and he was lovely. In fact, I liked all of my teachers at Wood End and I was sorry to leave.

My Secondary School was in Woodgreen, Wednesbury so I had to go by coach. We had to wait by the bus stop where the trolley buses turned round. If you missed the coach, it was three buses to get to school, via Willenhall and Walsall with a long run through Willenhall and an even longer run through Walsall to the bus station for the Wednesbury bus.

I took to going on my bike after the first year whenever I missed the coach. Because I was out of the village during those years I didn't get to know as many people as my two brothers. They both went to Ward's Bridge School and kept in touch with many school friends long after they grew up.

I read some memories from a lady called Sybil who lived in Lewis Grove. I did wonder if her maiden name was Alexander as we lived at number 4 and an Alexander family lived opposite. The eldest girl was named Sybil. Lewis Grove is a cul-de-sac of 22 houses and I have been trying to remember who lived there in the 40's and 50's. I know the Thomas family lived at number 3 as their



Lewis Grove preparing for the Silver Jubilee

little girl, Janet, was my bridesmaid when I got married in 1966 at St Thomas's Church in the village.

The Terry family lived at number 5 and had a girl a bit older than me called Rita. A bachelor named Mr Johns lived at number 6 and at number 7 there was a lad called Bruce. He often played with my brothers and sometimes we played in his garden. Number 8 housed the Prince family and I was good friends with their daughter Jackie. I was very upset when they left to go to live in Corby.

At number 12 was a family called Saunders and their youngest lad worked for the Council on the dustbins. Number 13 had a blonde girl about my age and then we came to number 14. These last few houses had really wide back gardens as they fanned out around the circle at the top of the cul-de-sac. I remember number 14 so well because when I was 8 the Newell family moved in. They had one daughter, Anne. We have been good friends ever since and still see each other regularly. Anne's dad was a good gardener with lovely lawns and flower beds and a vegetable patch. He also had an aviary with a lot of budgies. Their garden was hedged at the bottom but with a gap which led into a grass 'no man's land' which led down to the canal. Anne and I used to play in this patch for hours and used to sail oxo tins as boats on the canal! No health and safety then!

Number 17 housed the Martin family and although there were several children I can only remember one name and that is Peter. Then came the Alexanders, Sybil was the eldest and the youngest was Kenny. The only other names I remember were the Westons at 22.

Mr Weston was a keen gardener, his wife, a sweet lady, out lived him by several years. The Habberley family lived on the opposite corner to the Westons. Carol was in my class at school and the others were Roy, Pete and Joy. Pete and my brother Graham were good friends for years".

Thanks Pam for some really interesting stories about your school days and Lewis Grove.

Wood End Junior School opened in September 1938 and in 1954 the infants and junior departments merged to form Wood End Primary School.

To win a £20 Sainsbury's gift card, just answer the following question;

What year did Pam Stanton start school?

Please send your answers to 24 South Avenue, Wednesfield WV11 1QL.

Or email me at **fellows.raymond@yahoo.co.uk**

Entries must be received by Monday 22nd April.

The winner of the last competition was Rita Nicholls.

If you have any stories or photo's you want to share, just send them to the above address.

Wednesfield History Society and AiM, (Archaeology in Mind) have teamed up to put an event on that will be Wednesfield History and Archaeology Fair. The event takes place on Saturday 27th April at St Thomas's Centre, Church Street. Open to the public from 10.00.am till 2.30.pm.

There will be photographs and display boards and artefacts about our History and Archaeology surveys. Tea and Coffee will be available at a small cost. Please come and support our joint venture, we are sure that you will find some interesting facts about the History and Archaeology of our village.



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Real-Life Spooky Stories Inspire Author of Chilling New Novel By Black Country Journalist



A chilling new supernatural thriller by an award-winning former Black Country journalist has been inspired by real-life ghost stories from the region.

13 Doors, by G J Phelps, tells the story of a reporter who sets out to spend the night in thirteen genuinely haunted locations, with terrifying consequences.

And the author – real name Gary Phelps – has drawn on actual local ghost stories that he collected over a 30-year career in newspapers to create the book.

Gary, who used to edit the Walsall Advertiser and covered news in the Black Country for many years, said: “All newsrooms have odd, unexplainable stories, where a member of the public has brought in a tale which the journalists just couldn’t explain.

“After working in news for years, I’ve collected them – particularly from around the West Midlands – and when I came to write 13 Doors, I thought it would be interesting to weave them into the story.

“For example, there’s a story based on an interview I did with the manager of haunted pub in

Sutton Coldfield, back when I was a reporter, and a fantastic story about a local van driver who ran over a ghost.

“Another chapter in the book was inspired by the mine at the Black Country Living Museum.” 13 Doors is also largely set in the region, with locations like the Victorian cemeteries in Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter playing a key part in the story.

In the supernatural thriller, news reporter Joe Baxter sets out to stay in 13 genuinely haunted locations, finding them through his contacts at newspapers across the UK.

Author Gary explained: “I have always been a devotee of horror and supernatural fiction and, as an Eighties kid, grew up watching classic movies of the time.

“I wanted to write a book that paid homage to those influences, while adding something new and different to the genre. Most of all, I wanted to write a horror novel that was rooted in my journalistic background.

“So, while 13 Doors is fiction, there are a handful of stories and anecdotes in it that are based on real stories – stories that journalists couldn’t explain.”

13 Doors by G J Phelps is published by the Book Guild Publishing, priced £9.99 and is available from all good book shops and can be ordered on Amazon.



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Low Hill	01902 552312
Wednesfield	01902 552218

Local Councillors/MP

MP Jane Stevenson	01902 722026
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Cllr Phillip Bateman	01922 403960
Cllr Rita Potter.....	01902 654599

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Cllr Ciaran Brackenridge	07890 964296
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Long Knowle

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Cllr Val Evans.....	01902 861498
Cllr Christopher Burden.....	07971 843811

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Flood line.....	0845 9881188
Gas emergency.....	0800 111 999
Police/Fire/Ambulance	999
Police (non emergency).....	101
(Out of hours emergency)	01902 552999
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Heath Town Medical Ctre	01902 456211
Mayfield Medical Centre	01902 351666
New Cross Hospital (switchbrd)	01902 307999
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The Surgery, Woden Road.....	0845 0724628
Tudor Medical Ctre	01902 384999

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St Gregory's C of E	01902 783342
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Crossword Answers

From page 10

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