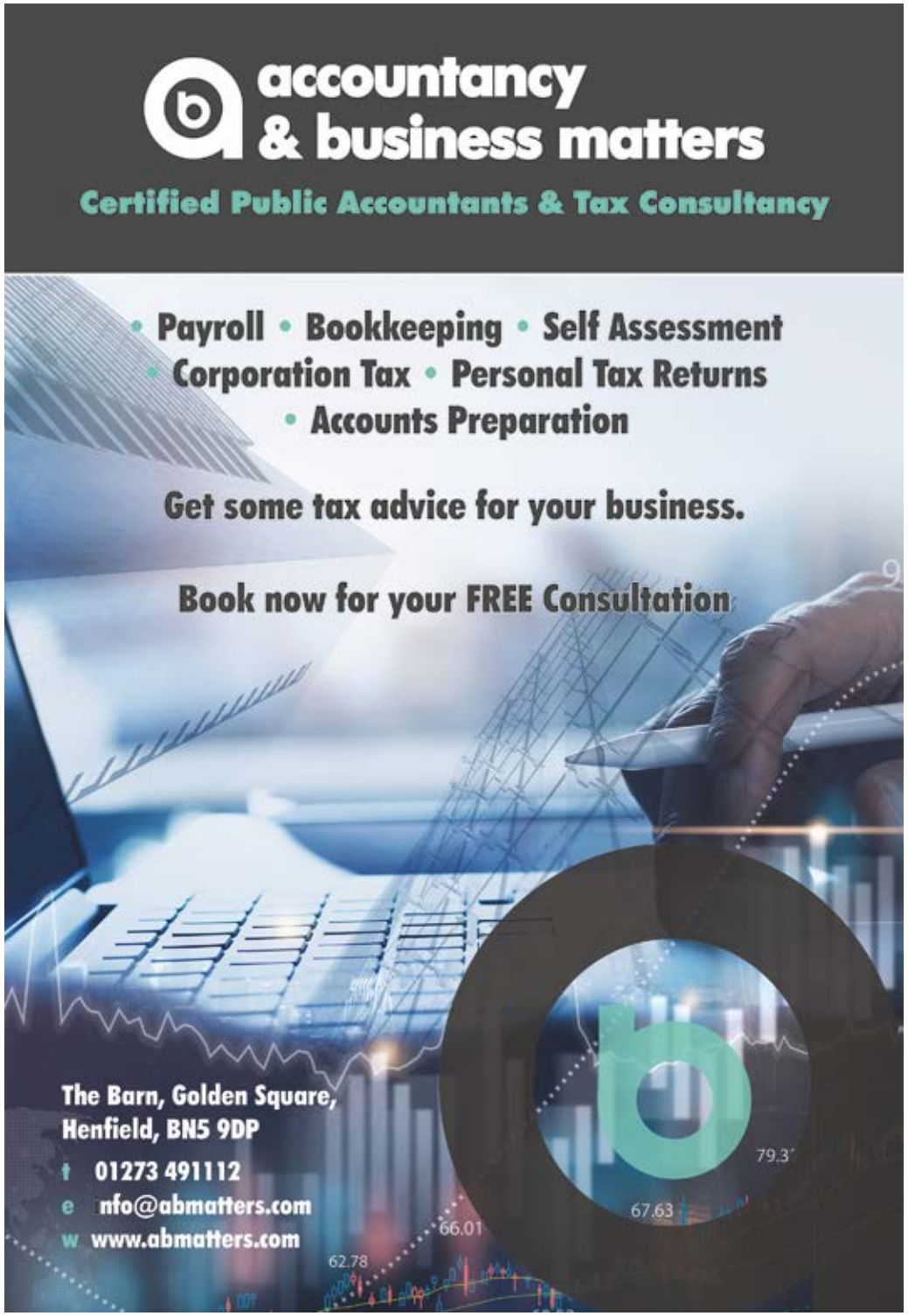
Your Mag

Steyning | Bramber | Upper Beeding

March 2026



yourmag.co.uk



March feels like a practical turning point. The days are longer, the weather starts to shift, and life locally picks up pace again after winter.

This issue reflects that change. We're back out on the Downs with the Steyning Downland Scheme, highlighting what to look out for as spring begins, while our environmental features continue with A Badger's Brave New World, exploring how changes to land use and habitats affect wildlife closer to home.

We're also looking at a very different kind of change. Artificial Intelligence is now part of everyday conversation, and in this issue, we ask whether it should be seen as a friend or a foe. With Greening Steyning hosting local author and AI ethicist Calum Chace later this month, it felt like a timely moment to look at the opportunities, risks and wider implications of rapidly developing technology.

As always, our diary pages are full, with talks, concerts, exhibitions, clubs and community events taking place throughout Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding. It's a good reminder of just how much happens locally, and how much of it relies on people giving their time and energy to make it work.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to, advertises in and supports Your Mag. I hope this issue gives you a useful snapshot of what's going on locally as we head into spring.

Mel
Editor, Your Mag

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AI: Friend or Foe?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly evolving, promising transformative advancements across nearly every sector. From revolutionising healthcare and manufacturing to optimising energy grids and agricultural practices, the potential for AI to drive progress and solve complex global challenges is immense.

Imagine AI systems that can precisely monitor and manage natural resources, develop sustainable materials, or predict and mitigate the effects of climate change with unprecedented accuracy. These applications offer a glimmer of hope for a more sustainable and prosperous future.

However, alongside this promise lies a significant shadow of peril. The rapid development of AI also raises profound ethical, societal, and environmental questions. Many express understandable concerns about job displacement, data privacy, and the potential for AI to be misused.

Furthermore, the environmental footprint of AI itself is a growing concern. The immense computational power required to train and run sophisticated AI models consumes vast amounts of energy, contributing to carbon emissions. The manufacturing of AI hardware also has its own environmental impact.

Calum Chace, a leading voice in the field of AI ethics and futures, is uniquely positioned to guide us through this complex landscape. His Green Drinks talk on 25th March will explore these dual aspects of AI – its exhilarating potential to address pressing global issues and the crucial challenges we must navigate to ensure it serves humanity and the planet responsibly. He will touch upon how AI could be a powerful tool in developing renewable energy solutions, optimising resource allocation, and fostering greater environmental stewardship. Conversely, he will also address the risks, prompting us to consider the safeguards and ethical frameworks necessary to prevent unintended consequences.

Green Drinks Talk - AI: Friend or Foe?
Wednesday 25th March at the Steyning Centre

Doors and bar open at 19:30 – talk starts at 19:45. Tickets cost £5 (free for students) and can be booked online from: www.greeningsteyning.org/events

As we stand on the cusp of an AI-powered future, understanding its multifaceted implications is not just an academic exercise – it's a necessity for informed citizenship and effective advocacy. Calum Chace's talk offers an opportunity to engage with these critical issues, to foster a deeper understanding, and to contribute to a thoughtful dialogue about shaping a future where AI is a force for good.



And in case you were wondering – this article was written entirely by AI – Google's Gemini 3 to be precise! It took a few seconds to produce, and a few more minutes to top and tail. The image was generated by ChatGPT5. If you have not tried these tools they are both incredible and scary – the subtext for the whole talk!

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On the Downland: What to see in March

Primrose: After a long, wet winter, Primroses (Primula vulgaris) are some of the first calls of spring to see on the Downland. Look for their lemon-yellow flowers along our woodland footpaths and damper field edges. They like cool, humus-rich soil that stays moist but not waterlogged, in light shade (beneath deciduous trees or along a north-facing bank).

Primrose flowers feed bees, and their leaves are food for the caterpillars of the rare Duke of Burgundy butterfly.



Duke of B Robin Johnson

People once gathered primroses for *'spring tonics'*, though it's best admired rather than eaten! They were also used in folk medicine for coughs and mild aches, and in folklore were *'keys'* that opened the door to summer, and were woven into May Day garlands.
Primrose is widespread around the lanes,



Primroses on the Sectre Garden

woods and field boundaries here in Steyning but hot, dry summers can knock it back. You can encourage wild Primrose in your garden by adding leaf-mould, skipping herbicides, and letting plants self-seed into rough, shady corners.



SDS- Matthew J Thomas

To know more about the Steyning Downland, its gems, and the charity taking care of it, find us, **The Steyning Downland Scheme** at the **Farmers Market on 8th March**.

Plus we've just launched a whole new year long programme of events, including Woodland Singing, Bushcraft and pond dipping for youngsters, Glow-worm safari, and Butterfly spotting with Michael Blencowe, Botany surveys, and much more...

Woodland Singing
Saturday 14th March 14:00-16:00
Singing in the woods at the foot of the Downs with professional singer and vocal coach Rebecca Askew. A chance to enjoy the countryside and learn a song or two.
Book online: steyningdownland.org/sdsevents

Easter Egg Rollathon. All the family.
Saturday 4th April 13:30-15:30.
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FOR WHATS ON in March (early April) section

ConsVols - Wednesday 4th March 2026 & Saturday 21st March 2026.
SDS Gateway, Steyning

Please note: Booking for this event **closes on Thursday Monday 2nd March at 17:00** to give the team leaders time to plan the day.

To join the **SDS Conservation Volunteers** for the Wednesday **4th March 2026** or **Saturday 21st March** volunteer day you will need to have and know the following:

a) Health and Safety:
• **Risk Assessment:** By attending the volunteer day you confirm that you've read, understood and agreed to the **Risk Assessment**.
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b) Other:
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• Please ask them to give your name when they book.
• Note that it is your responsibility to notify the team leader on arrival, if you have a medical condition that may effect you while volunteering with us.
• If you're new, you'll need some basic health & safety training before you can volunteer with us. If there are enough team leaders available, we'll train you on the day. Otherwise you are still welcome to come along and meet us!
• Please introduce yourself to the team leader when you arrive and we'll take it from there.
• Remember to wear tough boots with strong soles and good grips, (no sandals or plimsoles please!), plus clothing suitable for the weather, drinking water and some packed lunch if you're planning to stay for the whole day.
• In spring and summer please be tick aware - ideally wear long trousers tucked into socks.
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To connect with a therapist, call: 01903 879032

Briony: BACP-registered psychotherapeutic counsellor



For the past few years, I've run my counselling practice in Lewes, where I live, and have recently expanded into Steyning as I have family connections here. It is a wonderful town and I'm excited to be working here, in the Sakala counselling room.

My professional background is with the NHS, where I worked as a Speech and Language Therapist for over twenty years. I had a clinical specialism in Autism and Social Communication, and worked for years within a Neurodevelopmental/Autism Diagnosis service.

In 2018 I qualified as a counsellor, with a BACP-Accredited Diploma in Humanistic Integrative Counselling. Alongside my private practice, I have worked for organisations offering counselling to clients with a wide range of experiences, including bereavement counselling at St. Wilfrid's Hospice, and the Survivors of Suicide and Youth Service at Sussex Community Counselling.

I now work with adults and young people 18+, in-person and online, who seek counselling for a variety of reasons, including relationship dynamics, grief and loss, depression and anxiety. I keep up to date with developments in the fields of therapy and Autism, and my extensive experience as a Speech and Language Therapist equips me to work with neurodiverse clients and those with a range of communication profiles and challenges. I'll be offering couples therapy from summer 2026, on completion of a CPCAB-Accredited Diploma in Couples and Relationship Counselling

You can learn more about me at:
www.brionylambert.com

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March 2026: Diary Events

The following nonrecurring events are also in the What's On section on the Your Steyning, Bramber & Beeding website at: www.yourmag.co.uk

Sunday 1st March
Steyning Town Football Club
14:00 – 16:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial Ground, The Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex

Steyning Town Women v Sevenoaks Town FC

Come down and see our Women take on Sevenoaks Town in the L&SERWFL. It's always a good atmosphere. Kitchen and Bar open. L&SERWFL Admission: General £5, Concessions/ U16s Free. Contact us via our website
E: secretary.stcfc@gmail.com

Monday 2nd March
Little Stars Bumps Babies & Toddler Group
13:00 – 14:45
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Toys, crafts, singing and lots more. Cake and coffee for parents, carers and grandparents. There are two sessions of Little Stars! each week: Mondays 13:00-14:45 and Thursdays 9:30-11:30.
Forthcoming dates:
Mondays - 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 March
Thursdays - 5, 12, 19, 26 March
Note: Little Stars! will not meet on 2 or 6 April.
Contact: Gary 01903813276

Wednesday 4th March
Community Film Night
19:30 - 10:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND

This charming, laugh-out-loud funny film stars Carey Mulligan and features the comedic genius of Tim Key and Tom Basden. Eccentric lottery winner Charles dreams of getting his favourite musicians, McGwyer and Mortimer, back together. His fantasy becomes reality when the bandmates agree to play a private show at his home on Wallis Island. But old tensions resurface as Charles tries desperately to salvage his dream gig. 'a lovely, very British comedy' ★★★★. Tickets £6.00 to includw tea or coffee during the interbval. Please purchase tickets in advance from the office at The Steyning Centre. Contact: Tessa Eckert 01903812042
E: tessa.eckert@steyningpc.gov.uk

Friday 6th March
Vintage Years Club
14:00 – 16:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Crossing the Taklamakan Desert

Doors open at 13:45. Our meeting starts with a brief Annual General Meeting. Following this, we are delighted to welcome Caroline who will entertain us with her illustrated talk. Refreshments will be served from 15:15 and we will celebrate March birthdays and draw the raffle. Entrance fee is £3 (£5 visitors). Annual membership fee of £10 is due next month in April. Always contact Bev Francis-Hills before attending for the first time/returning after a long break, for transport needs or any other information:
Contact: Bev Francis-Hills 01273493894
E: vintageyears2012@gmail.com

Saturday 7th March
Kaleidoscope Singers & Brighton Chamber Choir
18:00 – 19:30
St Andrew & St Cuthman Church,, Steyning

Choral Concert

Come and support your local chamber choir The Kaleidoscope Singers (conductor Zoe Peate) and the Brighton Chamber Choir (conductor Ruth Kerr) who collaborate in an all acapella programme of classical gems, gospel and a little bit of popular! Tickets £15 adults £5 under 18yrs available www.ksticket.co.uk and Steyning Bookshop.
Contact: Ms Zoe A Peate 01903812662
E: zoe@middlemead.plus.com

Sunday 8th March
Wealden Railway Group.
10:00 – 16:30
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Steyning Model Railway Exhibition

The annual model railway exhibition run by the Wealden Railway Group. A chance to pick up ideas, and maybe a few items for your model railway hobby. Maybe a chance to start off in the hobby. Either way, do please ask questions of the exhibitors. All of the layouts are constructed by either members of the Wealden Railway Group or other "home modellers" and have been invited to attend. The layouts on show are varied in approach, size, scale, prototype, and country modelled. Apart from the layouts themselves we have a bevy of modellers demonstrating their craft in a variety of materials. Lots of chances to

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WHEN	DAY IN WEEK	PICK-UP	TO	FARE
Every	Tuesday	9.00am	Storrington/Worthing/Pulborough (rotates) - shopping	£4
Every	Friday	9.00a.m	Steyning village	£3
02-Mar	Monday	1.00pm	Holmbush	£4
04-Mar	Wednesday	9.00am	Holmbush	£4
04-Mar	Wednesday	1.00pm	Horsham	£5
05-Mar	Thursday	9.00am	Henfield village	£4
05-Mar	Thursday	1.00pm	Horsham	£5
06-Mar	Friday	1.00pm	Vintage Years	£3
09-Mar	Monday	1.00pm	Findon Garden Centre	£5
11-Mar	Wednesday	1.00pm	Holmbush	£4
12-Mar	Thursday	9.00am	Holmbush	£4
17-Mar	Tuesday	1.00pm	Horsham	£5
18-Mar	Wednesday	9.00am	Holmbush	£4
18-Mar	Wednesday	1.00pm	Worthing	£4
19-Mar	Thursday	9.00am	Henfield village	£4
19-Mar	Thursday	1.00pm	Holmbush	£4
23-Mar	Monday	1,00pm	Haskins Garden Centre	£5
25-Mar	Wednesday	1.00pm	Worthing	£4
26-Mar	Thursday	9.00am	Holmbush	£4

* Annual Membership of £12, or, Day Membership of £1

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chat and pick brains for ideas. Refreshments are available, and theer is a club sales stand for your perusal. Contact: Andrew Knights 07714 101015 E: wealdenrailwaygroup@gmail.com

Friday 13th March
Good Grief Cafe
14:00 – 16:00
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning

Those who have experienced any sort of loss are welcome to join us for tea or coffee, biscuits and a listening ear. Second Friday of each month. Contact: Judie 01903813276
E: care@steyningparishchurch.org

Saturday 14th March
Repair Cafe & Home Energy Helpdesk
14:00 – 16:00
Beeding & Bramber Village Hall, High Street, Upper Beeding

Don't bin it - let us help you fix it! Bring along your items to repair, and anything you'd like sharpened. If you aren't sure whether we can help please email Robin at repaircafe@greeningsteyning.org for advice. You can also speak to one of our Helpdesk volunteers about how to save energy at home. Contact: Greening Steyning
E: greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Saturday 14th March
Steyning Town Football Club
15:00 – 17:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial Ground
The Shooting Field, Steyning, West Sussex

Steyning Town v Crawley Down Gatwick FC

Crawley Down Gatwick are our visitors. Get some friends and family together and enjoy an afternoon watching SCFL Premier Division football. Kitchen and Bar open. Up the Barrowmen. SCFL Admission: General £10, Concession £5, Under 16s Free. Contact Us via our website. E: secretary.stcfc@gmail.com

Sunday 22nd March
Sussex Pathfinders Rambling Cl
10:00 – 14:00
Wiston Recreation Ground, Hole Street, Wiston, Steyning

Walking from Wiston

8.5 mile walk starting at 10:00 through woods, lanes and farmyards. Meet at Recreation Ground car park, Hole Street, Wiston. Entrance opposite large brown corrugated iron shed. Full walk details: https://sussexpathfinders.org.uk Finish time is approximate. Contact: Sussex Pathfinders Rambling Cl 07842792962
E: diann.clarke42@outlook.com

Sunday 22nd March
Dr Janet Pennington
10:00 – 12:30
Steyning Centre Car Park, free, Church Street, Steyning

THE STEYNING SCANDALS WALK

Secrets of a Sussex Market Town, 1547-1947 - with Dr Janet Pennington. Discover who did what, where and with whom! Steyning's attractive timber-framed buildings and flint cottages hide many secrets from the past - come and discover some of them if you dare. We will be exploring the streets and twittens of Steyning with many scandalous stories, all researched through local documentary sources. Dogs on leads are welcome. No need to book, just turn up in good time for prompt 10 a.m. start. Fee payable on the day £5 (cash only please). If you are easily shocked, this is not the walk for you. The walk is NOT suitable for children. Contact: Dr Janet Pennington 07703133952
E: jpsussex@icloud.com

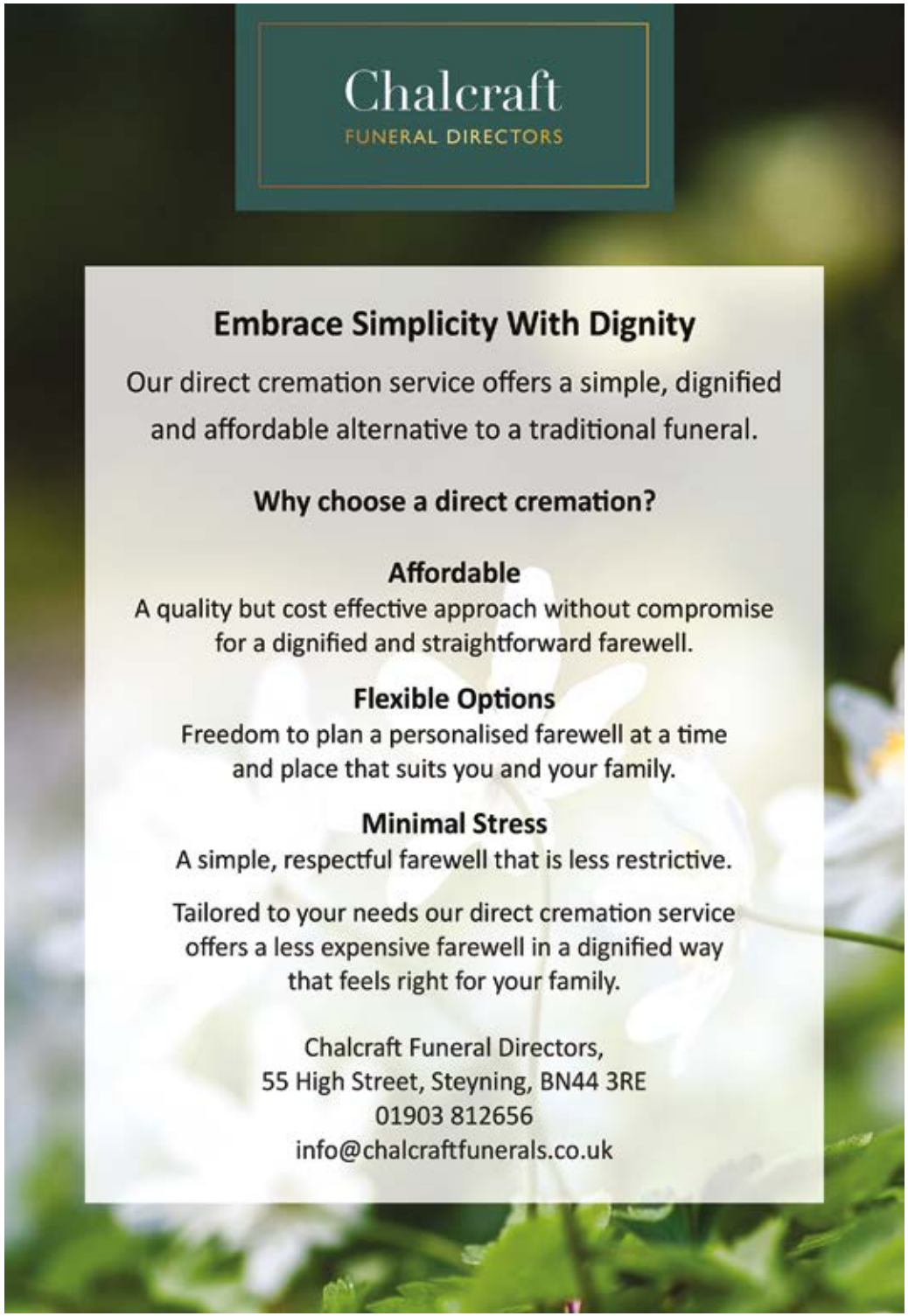
Sunday 22nd March
The singing pupils of PENNY JENKINS
15:00 – 17:30
Steyning Centre, Fletcher's Croft, Steyning

'Halleluiah'

The singing pupils of PENNY JENKINS come together to celebrate her life in a varied programme of songs that were dear to her, from Opera Arias and Choruses - through to Close Harmony and solo Art Songs - there will be something for everyone to enjoy. The audience will even be encouraged to join in with some well-known songs from the shows - which would certainly have delighted her. Contact: Neil Jenkins 01903879591 E: neil@neiljenkins.com

Monday 23rd March
18:00 – 21:00
Penfold Hall, Church Street, Steyning
Board Game Cafe Evening Edition

Join us for a once a month night filled with board games, card games and endless laughter! Bring a game with you or join in with one that's already here. Hot drinks will be available throughout the evening. Fourth Monday of each month. Contact: Gary 01903813276



Wednesday 25th March
Steyning & District Flower Club
19:30 – 21:30
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

'Magical March'

We have a "Magical March" of floral designs in store when we welcome the accomplished floral artist, Gill Homer, to demonstrate this month. Gill has a life long interest in flower arranging and is not only a teacher and demonstrator but also a writer on the subject as well. Do come a join us for an evening of creativity with the opportunity to win one of Gill's arrangements in evening raffle. Doors open at 19.00 for 19.30. Members free and visitors £7.00 on the door which also includes refreshments. Contact: Valerie Hodges 07870 982699 E: val.hodges@yahoo.co.uk

Wednesday 25th March
Greening Steyning
19:30 – 21:00
Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning

Green Drinks - AI: Friend or Foe?

For Green Drinks in March we are taking a dramatically different tack; we're delving into the promise and perils of Artificial Intelligence. Our speaker is Calum Chase, a well known author and leading voice in the field of AI ethics, who just happens to live in Steyning. He'll be helping us get our head around this daunting but hugely important topic. Tickets cost £5 (free for students) and can be booked at www.greeningsteyning.org/events. Contact: Greening Steyning E: greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Saturday 28th March
Steyning Bowls Club
10:30 – 13:00
Mill Road, Steyning

Coffee Morning

Steyning Bowls Club are holding our pre-season coffee and cake morning with an opportunity to try your hand at Petanque. Come along, meet our members and see what our club has to offer for all ages and abilities. Contact: Mary Cotton 01273 887953 E: marycot@hotmail.com

Saturday 28th March
10:30 – 12:00
The Castle Inn, The Street, bramber

Climate Cafe

A regular event on the 4th Saturday of every month except December, the Climate Cafe at the Castle offers a warm and inclusive space, to share friendship and mutual support for those holding questions and worries about the climate crisis and how it will affect us all. Whether you are feeling helpless and fearful about the future, or feeling positive and motivated to bring about change – you are not alone. So why not join us at 10.30 for a chat over coffee. Contact: Greening Steyning greeningsteyning@gmail.com

Sunday 29th March
Steyning Parish Church
09:30 – 10:30
Vicarage Lane, Steyning

Palm Sunday Service

Palm Sunday Service with outside palm procession and sung Holy Communion to mark the beginning of Holy Week. Contact: Parish Office 01903813276

Sunday 29th March
Steyning Town Women Club
14:00 – 16:00
Peter Humphreys Memorial, Shooting Field, Steyning

Steyning Town Women v Montpelier Villa

Come down and see our Women take on Montpelier Villa in the L&SERWFL. It's always a good atmosphere and we would love you to join us. Kitchen and Bar open. L&SERWFL Admission: General £5, Concessions/U16s Free. Contact: Contact Us via our website. secretary.stcfc@gmail.com







March 2026: Steyning for Trees



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Lets listen to the message from Dame Prof. E. J. Milner-Gulland, being positive about nature and biodiversity locally. She is coming to talk to us again at the Festival about local people having their say about what happens where they live. Her talk will be in the Penfold Hall on Saturday, 23rd May at 19:30. She was a pupil at Steyning Grammar School and now not only is she Prof. of Biodiversity at Oxford University. but, represents the UK on many international committees on climate change.

Looking at the Positives:
This year has brought a number of rare sightings in Sussex , including a red tailed shrike.

A Caspian tern, the world's largest tern , was seen at Rye Harbour, .Lets hope, the petition we all signed against the plastic bio-beads, works. They escaped from Southern Waters Treatment works and so devastated SWT at Rye Harbour.

Good news for butterfly lovers, one of the UK's rarest , the Wood White, has reappeared in several locations in Wales. Conservationists have been rearing new orchids, which were propagated at Kew Garden's laboratory and planted them into former haunts.

These are the positives and show species can recover with help but, unfortunately the abundance of individual species studied in the UK has declined by an average of 19% since 1970. While nearly 1 in 6 species are threatened with extinction. We are part of this eco-system, what happens to us if they all go!

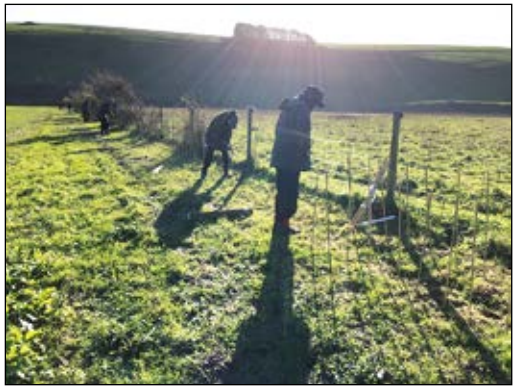


Operation Turtle Dove
Advisers are helping farmers in Sussex and the South East to recreate the right conditions for these beleaguered birds. Derek Crush still has them nesting on his farm in the summer. At the moment they are out there enjoying the sunshine in South Africa. Thanks to so many they now have a fighting chance in this country. With guidance on the hedges they need, high, untidy, protective and with Old Man's Beard (clematis), pond and a food source.



Did you see on the BBC NEWS announcement that one of England's most beautiful landscapes, the SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK has a major new strategy plan, its Partnership Management Plan focussing on nature, climate and placemaking. It will be a place of hope for nature, restoring 3,300 hectares by increasing its tree canopy. etc.

Come and see Peter Owen Jones's film, made for the BBC about this place which we all know and love. The Penfold Hall, Tuesday 26th May. For the Festival by SFT.



Hedgehogs Hints:
Drains: Keep drain holes covered. This stops both leaves and hedgehogs blocking the drain. Check uncovered drains, bean trenches, holes for footings etc. and garage inspection pits daily to make sure no hedgehogs are trapped . Provide escape routes if possible e.g., plank with batons.

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March 2026: A Badger's Brave New World

The Badger is a UK icon. Our largest predator, this monochrome mustelid is a star of the classics; Wind in the Willows, Beatrix Potter, and a certain well-known charity's logo. Often misunderstood, they are also loved by many, and some would argue there's not much better than a Badger, except perhaps, a Badger cub.

Deep in the sett, the Badger burrow has cosy chambers lined with vegetation collected by the females. Cubs are born around February, but tiny stripey noses don't peek out for 12 weeks, when they emerge in spring. It's a big new world to explore, and stranger than it once was.



Their ancestors would have trundled about in acres of ancient woodland; towering veterans and thick, sheltered understorey. Ventures into wildlife-rich farmland would have been commonplace for plentiful omnivorous feasts of insects, fruits, and juicy worms slurped from thick, fertile soil. Without trying, children may have spotted these Badgers for real, on summer evenings humming with biodiversity.

For these new cubs, it's a different story, where invertebrates are often scarce, soil hard, and movement restricted. Seasons have shifted, weather is more erratic, and precious habitats rarer. It's a story where thousands of their kin come to undignified ends on our busy roads, pesticides kill off much of the food, and the future of the family sett is unsure.



But the former isn't a fable, it's a reminder.

It is possible that these cubs, tumbling unexpectedly out of woodland boundaries, might not be met with hot, confusing concrete, but buzzing wildflower road verges; a heads up for the danger ahead. They might cross these risky highways via green wildlife bridges. They could travel with confidence through well-connected gardens and urban green spaces, staying safe along dense hedgerows and taking respite in deliberately dark nocturnal pockets.



They might once again take advantage of a bulging buffet, in our unmown and pesticide-free parks and lawns, in deep field-side buffer strips and in reinvigorated sickly-sweet native Bluebell woodland.

We could better appreciate and understand Badger behaviour and needs, engage and connect communities, and inspire a younger generation. Their habitats could be fiercely protected, and their setts saved.

It sounds idyllic, but it doesn't have to be fiction - it's achievable and in reach. We can reset our expectations, recreate those lost habitats, and rewrite the story for our Badgers.

By Kerry Williams:
Communications Officer - Conservation
Sussex Wildlife Trust is an independent registered charity caring for wildlife and habitats throughout Sussex. It's easy to join online at:
www.sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/join
or T: 01273 497532
Badger © Hugh Clark FRPS
Badger in the Bluebells © C Tomlinson
Badgers © Darin Smith

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Lucy - Upper Beeding

'I would highly recommend Tom. Two other decorators let us down and then Tom was recommended to us. His work is exceptional, he is polite, trustworthy and reasonably priced!
Becky - Steyning

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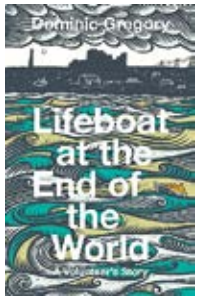
March 2026: Book Reviews

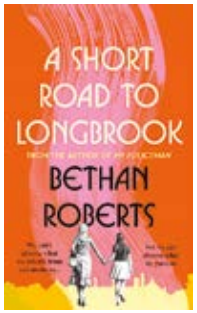
Adult books:



Confessions by Catherine Airey
Penguin £9.99 paperback 5th March
Our bookseller Alice really enjoyed this compelling debut novel about 3 generations of women, linked by a house full of secrets....
It is late September in 2001, and the walls of New York are papered over with photos of the missing, amongst them Cora Brady's father, the poster she made taped to columns and bridges. Her mother died long ago and now, orphaned on the cusp of adulthood, Cora is adrift and alone. When a letter arrives from an estranged aunt, offering a home and fulfilling a long-forgotten promise, Cora jumps at the chance to seize a new life, out on the ragged edge of Ireland, in the town where her parents spent their youth. There the story of Cora's family is hidden, and in her presence will begin to unravel.
Full of twists and revelations, this is an elegantly written novel with a page-turning mystery at its heart.



Lifeboat at the End of the World: A Volunteer's Story by Dominic Gregory
HarperCollins £18.99 hardback
A fascinating first-hand account of Dominic Gregory's experiences as a volunteer on the Dungeness lifeboat.
Dungeness is not much more than an expanse of shingle jutting into the English Channel, overshadowed by its nuclear power station and made famous by Derek Jarman's flotsam garden. An insignificant place – but one that in recent years has found itself at the centre of a political storm, as inflatable dinghies overloaded with people arrive on its shores, and the lifeboat crew face their greatest tests – sometimes in the face of public censure! The Dungeness lifeboat station has a 200-year history. Like all lifeboat stations in the British Isles, it is led by a coxswain and staffed by volunteers, a dedicated group of remarkable yet ordinary men and women, who serve as shore crew, boat crew, keep the records or just brew the tea! All give up their time, livelihoods and safety to brave wind, tide and storms. This is their story.
A beautifully written book which vividly portrays the boredom, terror and unflinching bravery of these fearless volunteers.

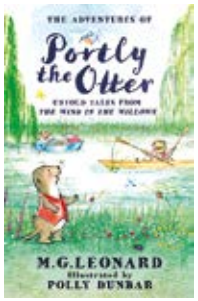


A Short Road to Longbrook by Bethan Roberts
Vintage £18.99 hardback
Lillian Wells dreams of going to art college, but how can she ever leave her mother. Winnie? It's just been the two of them for as long as Lillian can remember. Ernie pops round once a week, but they never go to his house. As Lillian grows older, she has questions about Ernie, about her missing father, and about Winnie's life. But Winnie doesn't like to talk about the past.
This is an engrossing and moving story of mothers, daughters, love, secrets and mental illness.

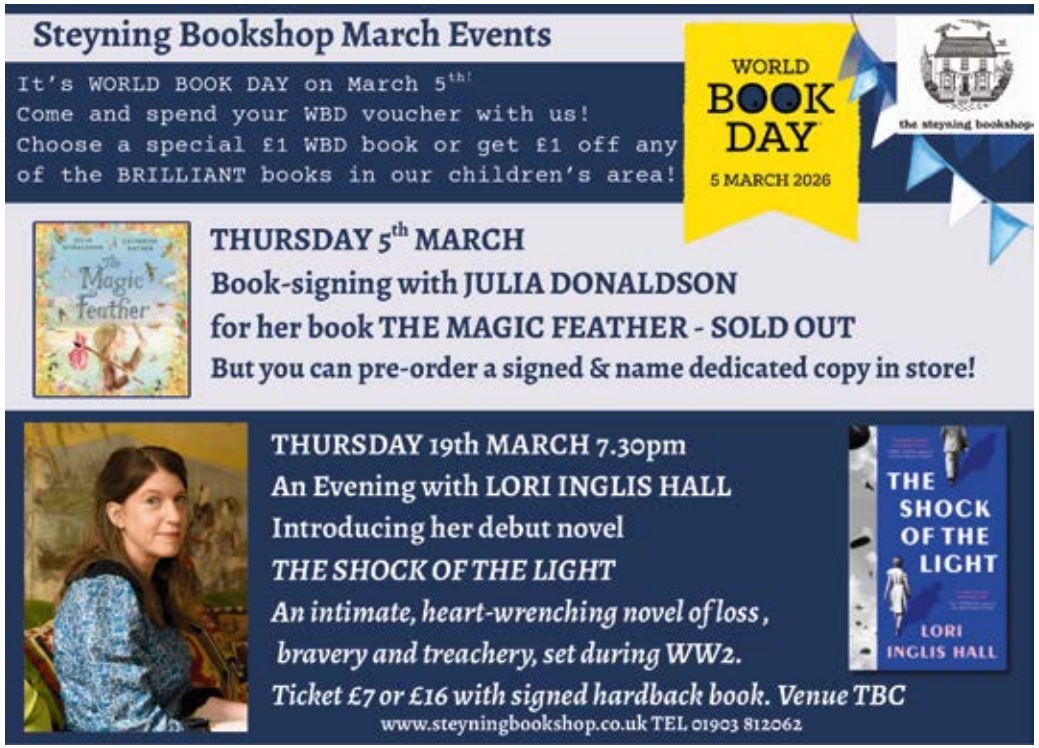


Children's Books:

Magic Feather by Julia Donaldson
Macmillan £12.99 hardback
We are all VERY excited about Julia Donaldson's new picture book, her third avian collaboration with artist/ illustrator Catherine Rayner, whose delicate yet dazzling illustrations also grace The Go-Away Bird and The Bower Bird.
Imagine if you could speak to birds ... that's just what happens to one young girl when she is given a magic feather that transforms their trills and twitters into words - and she discovers that they need her help! Join her as she embarks on an amazing journey across the sea to save their nests from the queen's woodcutters.
A gorgeous rhyming fairy-tale adventure about the magic of nature and caring for our environment. We are taking pre-ordersf or signed and NAME DEDICATED copies of the Magic Feather in store and on our website.



The Adventures of Portly the Otter by MG Leonard
Harper Farshore £14.99 hardback 26th March
This gently exciting children's novel about a young otter called Portly is inspired by the Wind in the Willows- but you don't have to be a WIW fan to enjoy it - it works perfectly well as a standalone story for modern children! It's gorgeously illustrated in full colour throughout by award-winning illustrator Polly Dunbar. Meet cheeky, adventurous Portly as he learns to swim, battles a large trout, rescues a human girl, and outwits the weasels and stoats of the Wild Wood. Then, join him as he goes on an incredible odyssey which ends with him sleeping in the care of the god Pan - a scene familiar to readers of the original book, re-imagined and explained for the first time!
MG Leonard is a master-storyteller, her prose sparkles with wit and charm, joyfully blending nostalgia with a modern, funny sensibility to create a perfect story to share with children aged 6-9.



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Aching Upper Back?



Unpacking Pain Between the Shoulder Blades – and Simple Ways to Ease It

Ever felt that nagging ache right between your shoulder blades? It's a common gripe that can make sitting at your desk, driving, or even sleeping a real chore. This upper back discomfort – medically known as **interscapular pain** – ranges from a dull throb to sharp twinges, sometimes spreading to your neck or arms.

Interscapular refers to the region between the shoulder blades (scapulae) on the upper/middle back. This area contains key muscles like the rhomboids and trapezius, serving as a vital connector for the neck, shoulders, and thoracic spine.

The good news? It's often down to everyday habits rather than anything serious, and targeted care like chiropractic can bring relief

Here Are the Top Everyday Culprits Behind the Pain:

1. Slumped Posture from Screen Time.
Hours hunched over laptops, phones, or steering wheels round your shoulders forward, overloading muscles like the rhomboids and trapezius. Recent studies show "tech posture" is behind more upper back woes than ever, as we crane our necks to stare at tiny screens.

2. Stiff Mid-Back Joints.
Your thoracic spine – where ribs attach – isn't built for much twisting. When joints get sticky from sitting too much or poor movement habits, nearby muscles strain to pick up the slack, sparking pain.

3. Neck Problems Radiating Downward.
A dodgy disc or tight neck joints can pinch nerves that "refer" pain straight to your shoulder blades, fooling you into thinking the issue is lower down.

4. Stress Knots and Trigger Points.
Tension from work or life tightens upper back muscles into painful lumps (trigger points). Press on them, and they ache constantly – a vicious cycle of stress and stiffness.

5. Everyday Overuse.
Lugging heavy bags, repetitive sports swings (think golf or tennis), or even sleeping awkwardly can tweak the area. Weak core or back muscles make it worse.

How Chiropractic Care Steps In:
Chiropractors specialise in fixing spine and joint glitches using gentle hands-on techniques to:

- **Free up stiff joints** with precise adjustments, easing nerve pressure and restoring smooth movement.
- **Knead out muscle knots** using soft tissue massage or tools to boost blood flow and relax tension.
- **Spot posture pitfalls** and provide simple exercises to strengthen your upper back for the long haul.

Most people feel looser after initial targeted treatment and can prevent recurring episodes with the advice given.

When to Get Checked – And Red Flags.
If pain lingers over a week, limits arm movement, or comes with numbness, rule out worries (chest pain, fever, sudden weakness) with your GP first.

For personalised relief, clinics like Well Adjusted Health offer expert chiropractic care.

If you have a specific question regarding any pain or problem areas, or would like to book a free 15-minute consultation for you or your family, please call Well Adjusted Health on 01903 892171.

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March 2026: Gardening Journal

Article by Alex Bell
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March breathes new life into the garden after the long dormancy of winter. Trees and shrubs begin to stir from their seasonal slumber, while bulbs push through to form carpets of colour beneath the canopies of mature planting. For gardeners, it's one of the most rewarding times of year. As temperatures rise, time spent outdoors becomes less demanding, and the promise of the months ahead provides just the motivation needed to tackle those last lingering jobs on the list

Plant of The Month – Spirea Snowmound / Spiraea 'Snowmound'

is one of those quietly dependable shrubs that never shouts for attention yet always earns its place in the garden. In late spring and early summer it lives up to its name, arching under the weight of countless small white flowers that sit along the stems like fresh drifts of snow. It's a classic, unfussy plant with a long history in cultivation and a well-earned reputation for reliability.

Spiraeas have been grown in gardens for centuries, with many species originating in Asia and eastern Europe. 'Snowmound' is a modern cultivar of Spiraea nipponica, selected for its graceful habit and particularly heavy flowering. Like many spiraeas, it became popular in the twentieth century as gardeners looked for shrubs that were hardy, floriferous and easy to manage, without the need for constant pruning or cosseting.

In terms of cultivation, Spiraea 'Snowmound' is refreshingly straightforward. It prefers a position in full sun, where flowering will be at its best, but it will tolerate light shade without complaint. Almost any reasonable garden soil will suit it, provided it is free-draining; heavy, waterlogged ground is about the only thing it truly dislikes. Once established, it is drought tolerant and remarkably resilient, making it a good choice for low-maintenance gardens. Pruning is minimal—simply remove a few older stems after flowering if the shrub becomes congested, allowing fresh growth to develop for the following year.

At around one to one and a half metres tall and wide, 'Snowmound' has a naturally elegant, arching shape that makes it easy to slot into mixed borders. Its fine green foliage provides a soft backdrop through the summer before turning subtle shades of yellow in autumn.

In planting schemes, Spiraea 'Snowmound' works beautifully with other spring and early summer performers. It looks particularly good alongside spring bulbs such as alliums, late tulips and camassias, which rise through its branches as it comes into flower. Perennials like geraniums, nepeta and Alchemilla mollis echo its relaxed habit and soften the base of the shrub. For contrast, try pairing it with darker-leaved plants such as Physocarpus, purple Heucheras or the smoky foliage of Cotinus.

Unpretentious, generous and long-lived, Spiraea 'Snowmound' is a shrub that proves good garden design doesn't always need drama—sometimes quiet consistency is more than enough.

Jobs to be done in March:
Ornamental Garden:

- A general fertiliser could be applied over borders if felt necessary. If leaves look yellow on shrubs then give them a folate feed (liquid feed via watering can).
- Aerate lawn with a wire rake if mild and not waterlogged.
- Remove any dead, diseased or damaged growth from trees and shrubs.
- Finish mulching if not done in Autumn.
- Put manure / rose feed around all roses and check for dead, diseased or dying shoots.
- Deadhead bulbs regularly.
- Now is a good time to plant new Perennials and summer-flowering bulbs. Re-pot or top-dress all containers.
- Weed regularly.
- Edge / define all borders if not done already.
- Plant Roses.
- Sow hardy annuals for summer colour.
- Repair damage to lawns if necessary.
- Harden off hardy annuals sown under glass.
- Cut back any remaining growth from herbaceous / grasses left over from the winter.
- Divide summer flowering perennials like astrantia, hemorocallis, hosta etc.
- Coppice dogwoods / willows etc if not done before now.

Vegetable Garden:

- Prune Gooseberries and red and white currants. Remove deadwood and then spur prune all sides hoots back to 2 – 3 buds from the base. Shorten branch tips by one quarter.
- Direct sow shallots and onion setts.
- Harvest the last of the winter crops and compost any none diseased debris.
- Sow aubergines, cucumbers, tomatoes and chillies in an indoor heated propagator.

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Article by: Chris Tod - Steyning Museum.

More Thoughts from the 1790's and Later

It is fifteen years now since I first wrote an article for Your Steyning (now called Your Mag) and, 165 articles later, I know that the oomph needed to do the research for fresh topics is becoming increasingly hard to find. So, this will be my last regular monthly article.

It will be hard to say goodbye to the stories of Steyning's past which I have been telling for so long and in this, my final article, can do no more than touch on one bit of research which I did some twenty-five years ago. The research was into Steyning in the 1790's, incorporating one or two of my favourite stories and some which touch on topics not mentioned before.

The first is about the churchwardens and the sparrows. We have told this story before but it speaks to us about Steyning's concerns in the past and is worth repeating. The sparrows had clearly become a pest, nesting in the tower, leaving their droppings on the churchyard paths and the pews and probably disrupting the smooth flow of the Rev. John Penfold's rhetoric as they swooped around the Church. The churchwardens offered 3 pence for every dozen sparrow-heads brought to them as proof of their extermination and by the end of 1795 had paid out for 620 sparrow heads. They had even gone to the lengths of paying the Town Cryer £1 to publicise the offer. It was, no doubt, a major nuisance curbed, but was somewhat at odds with the biblical warning that 'Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground, but your Heavenly Father knows it'.

One of the more curious documents which the Museum has is a record of corrupt voting practices identified by a House of Commons committee, which sat for 15 days in 1791 to check the voting record of Steyning people during the election of 1790. They were looking to see whether the houses in which the electors lived, were or were not *'ancient Burgage houses or built on the site of ancient structures'*. Whilst doing so the status and dates of more recent structures had also been identified.

On the north side of Singwell Street, for instance, were the recently built Norfolk Cottages. These had been constructed on the site of old stables. Whether their occupants should have had the vote was unclear. If they had been built on the footings of an old house they would have qualified. But old stables! The committee was undecided.

They did though have no doubts about the ten houses of New Row, in what used to be called 'Back Lane' (now Tanyard Lane), at the other end of Steyning. When master builder, Daniel Easton strolled down there with his wife *'to have a look at these houses not one of them was then occupied'*. As they had been built in 1789 *'where rooks had previously nested in tall elm trees'*, with no sign of an old house, their occupants, indisputably, did not get the vote.



Church in oval

Complicated. Yes. But the old men had good memories. They knew how the different parts of the town were organised. William Peckham even knew that *'the stocks near the Poor House* (Workhouse Cottages) *were Hundred stocks, not Borough stocks'. 'How do you know they were Hundred stocks'* he was asked. *'Because'* he replied, testily, *'the Hundred people* (those brought before the Hundred court) *were whipped there'*.

As the decade approached its end, on December 6th 1799, several detachments of soldiers marched from Horsham to Steyning. With them came 8 waggons with blankets and camp equipment together with a carriage (presumably with better springing than a waggon) for the ammunition. There is also a note to show that these troops got a special allowance for fire and candles. It was one of the coldest couple of years in our history: harvests failed and inflation rocketed whilst wages stagnated. Fuelled by the fear of French invasion, troop movements close to the South Coast increased.

By 1804 there were so many troops in Sussex that a regular barracks had been built in Steyning – just to the north of Castle Lane – run by a barrack sergeant and the innholder of the barrack canteen. Over the next 10 years anything up to 1000 men would be stationed in the barracks at any one time – so, from time to time, the population of the town would effectively double. The two storey barrack blocks of timber, built on brick foundations, accommodated not only the men but, in many cases, their wives and children as well.

I suppose it is a little unlikely that Jane Austen had Steyning in mind when she wrote Pride and Prejudice. But she could have had. In it the younger Bennet girls occupied their minds with thoughts of the soldiers stationed in the neighbouring town of Meryton. Moreover, her book was published in 1813 – a time when troops were indeed in the barracks on the edge of what must have been the rather similar town of Steyning.

Moreover, in the same way that there was a Ball at Meryton which the Bennets and some officers attended, there was also a Ball in Steyning in April 1808. It was held in the 'White Horse rooms', an occasion which *'was attended by upwards of fifty of the principal inhabitants of that town* (Steyning) *and neighbourhood and by several officers of the Garrison there.'* There is a particular mention of a Lieutenant Hamilton who, apparently, *'had greatly endeared himself by his urbanity of manners and gentlemanly demeanours'*. It does sound so very like Willoughby in Pride and Prejudice. It is where speculation and history could perhaps become pleasantly intertwined.

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Copy Deadline for the **April** issue is **12th March, 2026**
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Your Steyning, Bramber & Beeding is published monthly in the UK by Barawood Publishing Ltd. It is delivered to 3200 homes in Steyning, Bramber & Beeding. Printed on FSC accredited paper from managed forests using vegetable-based inks.

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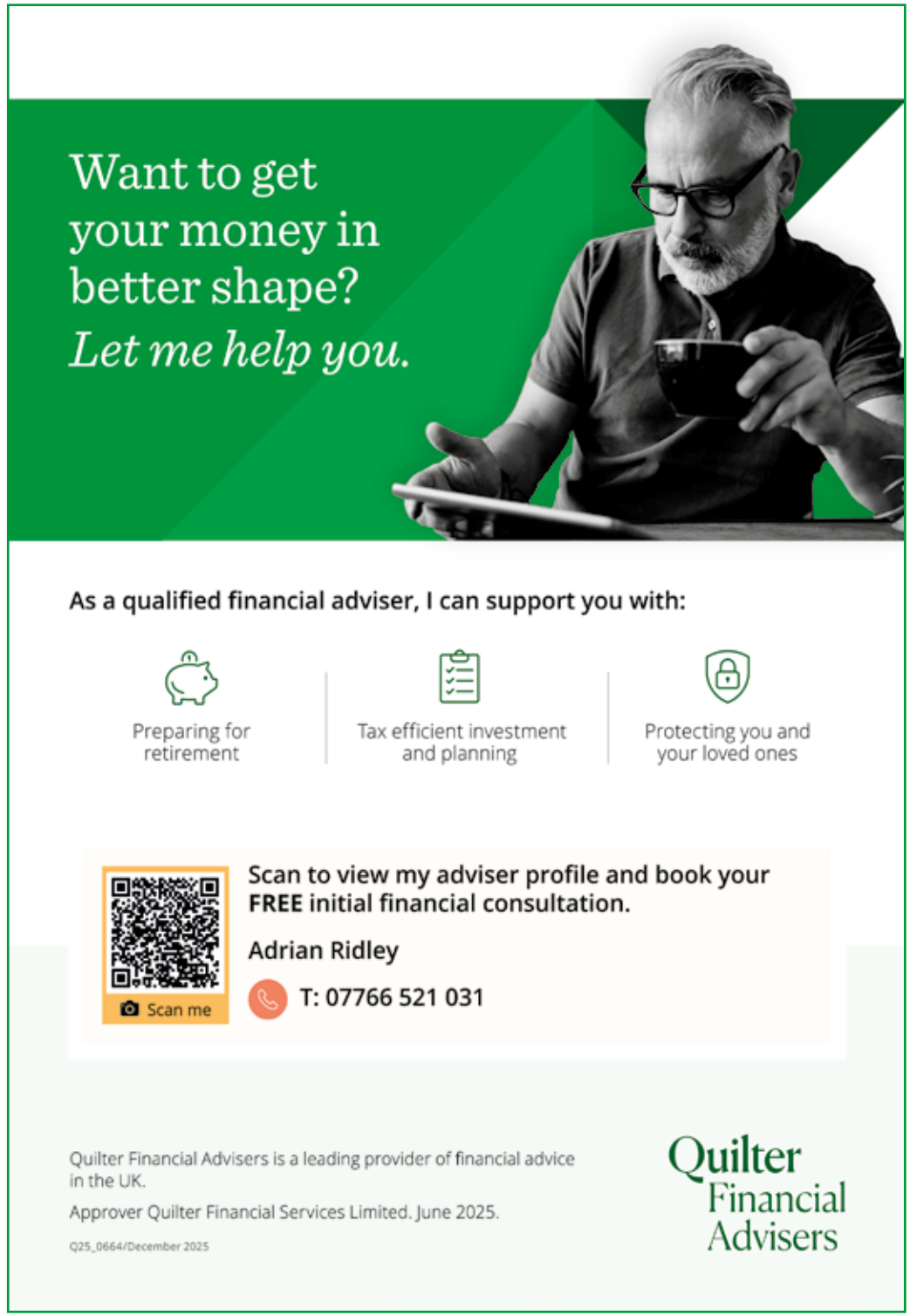

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