

The Villager

Minsterworth News



By Paul McHale

May 2021

Edition 222

Dear readers,

Another busy month with more new features and the second instalment in Julian Oxley's excellent feature on Gloucestershire's railways. See June's edition for the third. We're up to a massive 32 pages, hope you enjoy them!

As ever contributions from villagers are very welcome.

All items for consideration to:-

Paula Ruffley, Editor The Villager

Tel: 01452 751226

E-mail: thevillagerminsterworth@gmail.com

Responsibility is not accepted for the accuracy of submitted items nor the content of advertisements.

KERBSIDE RECYCLING MAY 2021

GREEN & BROWN bin & caddy
(landfill) (garden)

Tuesday 11

Tuesday 25

BLUE bin & caddy
(recycling)

Wednesday 5

Tuesday 18

Please put your recycling bin & caddy out by 7am.

The Village Hall Car Park

May we please take the opportunity to clarify ownership and usage of the Village Hall land and car parks? The Hall, surrounding land (fields behind the hall) and car park immediately in front of, and behind the gates, are the property of the Village Hall Trust. The over-flow car-park is owned by the Karger family and leased to the Hall. None of the land is public. To this end, responsibility for maintenance and security of the land lies with the Trustees.

Unfortunately, we have had several incidences of trespassing onto the land causing damage, as well as unwelcome visitors using the car park for recreational drug-taking. We have remained vigilant particularly in the last year when bookings have been at a minimum. We would welcome the support of all residents in keeping a close eye on the Hall, letting us know of any concerns you may have.

There may be occasions when the village will need access to the car park; in the event of village lanes being closed or flood alerts to give just two examples. If this is the case, notice will be given via the WhatsApp group, Facebook and Mailchimp and the gates will be unlocked. At other times, if you need to make occasional use of the car park in front of the gates for your own personal use please contact us with your details. We will then be able to advise on whether there are any bookings that day, or maintenance work scheduled.

We trust this clarifies the situation.

Andrea Holder: Chairman 07804 033838

Sarah McHale: Vice Chairman 07900 984281

Our Parish Council clerk is changing

Roger Blowey

Due to increasing family and other commitments, our Parish Council clerk, Fiona Wallbank, wishes to step down. Fiona has been the Minsterworth PC clerk for 15 years, a period which includes the 10+ years that I have been involved with the Parish Council.

Fiona has been an invaluable guide to us as a Parish Council, and to me as I have slowly but steadily become familiar with PC protocol; we are all very grateful for all the help, support and advice she has given.

The Clerk position will be filled by **Paul Bell**. Paul lives in Highnam and started in post on 1st April. All email correspondence to the email address clerk@minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk will now be received and answered by Paul. If you prefer the phone or text messages, please contact Paul on 07963 115870. Paul has had extensive experience of clerking, minute taking and protocols from his time in the Armed Forces, so I think that we will be well looked after in the future, and we are all looking forward to working with him. It's just a shame that our first few meetings will probably have to remain 'virtual'!



PLANT SALE

THE HARVEY CENTRE
OLD SCHOOL - MINSTERWORTH

SATURDAY 8TH MAY - 12 NOON TO 4PM

EVENT TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN

REFRESHMENTS - TEA, COFFEE AND CAKE WILL BE AVAILABLE

ALPINES, HERBS, GERANIUMS, HOSTAS, MARIGOLDS, COWSLIPS,
HEUCHERAS, LUPINS, BEDDING PLANTS, TREES, SEEDS AND
MUCH MUCH MORE WILL BE AVAILABLE

LIMITED TOURS AVAILABLE TO VIEW THE RENOVATIONS OF THE OLD SCHOOL PLEASE
CALL OR TEXT DAWN ON 07577-287005 TO BOOK

**If you have any plants you can donate to the plant sale
then please pass to Sharon Ingham, Anne Cowdrey or
Dawn Ricketts - we can collect!**

If you don't reach for the top you'll never see
what's on the other side
- Jim Steiner

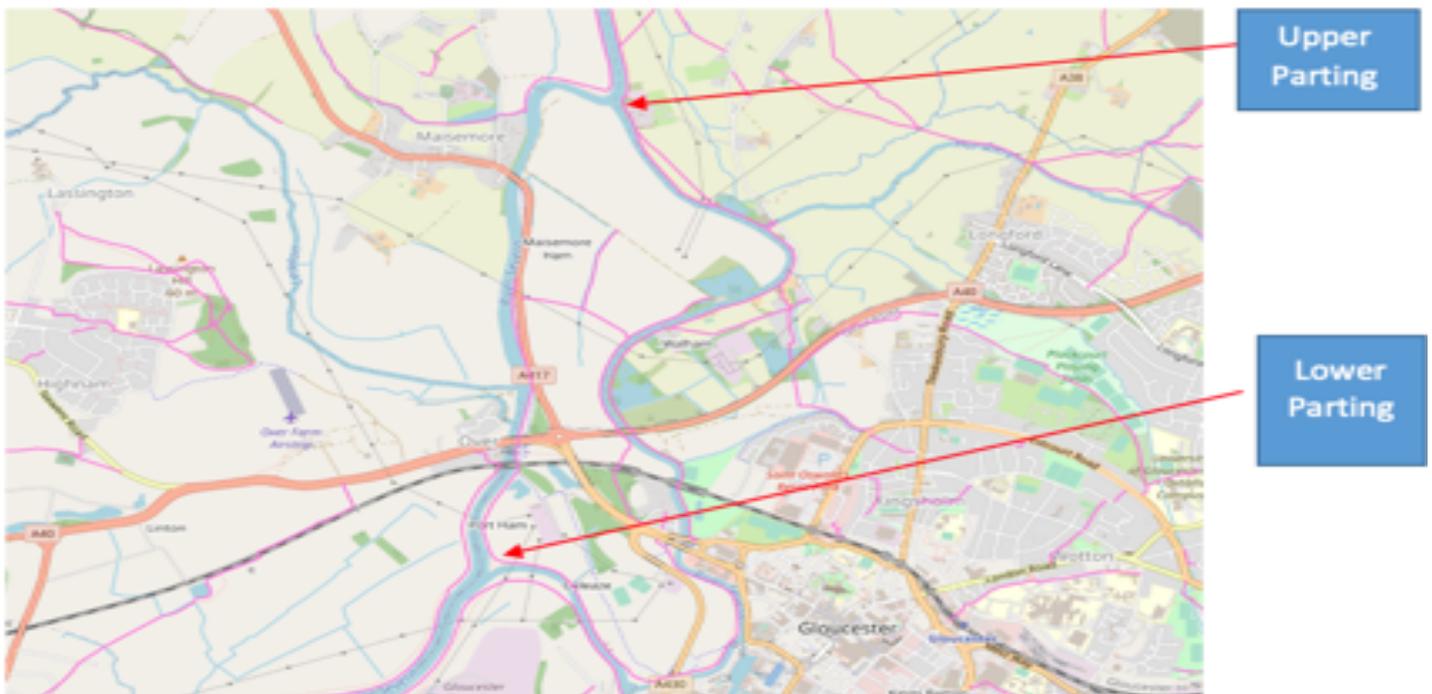
Watching the Bore at The Lower Parting

Roger Blowey

I had been in Gloucester for many years before I knew that the current route of the River Severn is relatively new. The original route was the now much narrower channel that runs from Maisemore Lock ('Upper Parting'), through Sandhurst, down past Westend Terrace, along the quay, past the old prison, and then rejoins the current 'main channel' at The Lower Parting, which is the southern tip of Alney Island.

Apparently it was not until the mid 1600's that the river took the current more direct route from Maisemore to Over and on to Minsterworth. It is said that on one occasion when Gloucester was being attacked from the west, the attackers reached Over but could get no further because the whole of the current Alney Island area was flooded (nothing new in that!). When the flood eventually subsided, they found that the river had changed its course and gouged out a new channel to run under the current bridges at Maisemore and Over.

The Lower Parting is certainly a good place to watch the bore. The river is very wide here, but also quite shallow, so when the bore comes up though there is a dramatic rise in the water level. If you stand at Lower Parting, on the tip of Alney Island, the bore is coming straight at you! It must be good, because it was at this point on 18th October this year that some 12 surfers and paddle boarders tried to get onto the wave and ride on up to Maisemore.



DARREN FISHER

We would like to thank everyone for their kindness, cards, flowers, cakes and messages of condolence following the loss of Darren, so much care and support that we will always remember. We would also like to thank everyone for the tribute paid to Darren on his final journey from our family home at Minsterworth.

Our family is also very grateful to the Rev Sarah Hobbs for her kindness and support to us and for taking the service at the Forest Crematorium. We also wish to thank Mike and Sue Matthews (M S Watkins and Son) for all their help and guidance in undertaking the funeral arrangements.

Bruce, Julie, Ian, and Stacey

Parish Council Annual Parish Assembly

Each year the Parish Council (PC) are required to hold a meeting where members of the parish can express their views and ask questions of the PC. There was no meeting last year due to COVID, and it looks as if there will be no physical meeting this year either.

We therefore intend to hold a **Parish Assembly via Zoom at 7-30pm on Monday 10th May 2021**. This will coincide with the AGM of the PC when officers are re-elected. Details will be sent out at a later date. To attend can you please register with the clerk, who will send you a link to the Zoom meeting clerk@minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk

May Fish & Chips

Thursday 13th May at the Village Hall

Serving from 5pm to 8pm

www.madewithoutgluten.co.uk

Fish and chips will continue every second Thursday of the month until further notice



The Harvey Centre

The trustees of the Harvey Centre are delighted to report on the excellent progress being made on the complete refurbishment of the Centre, including the external areas, so that the Centre can be opened for use within the next few months.

Community members will be aware that upon the closure of Minsterworth Primary School, the school premises were returned to the trustees of the school at the end of October 2020. There was much work required on the building and external areas to address significant deterioration to the building and outdoor space since the closure of the school in 2017. Through the massive dedication and commitment of members of the local community, the spaces being created at the Harvey Centre will facilitate a range of activities for children and adults residing in Minsterworth and surrounding areas.

Voluntary contribution to the refurbishment of the internal and external spaces has totalled over 250 volunteer work days. This has enabled the following:

- Internal repair, refurbishment and decoration across the Centre
- External removal of overgrown vegetation and replanting
- New planting of trees and shrubs
- Essential Health and Safety works

Plans are in place to make available activities and provision for local community members which will include:

- Book and CD exchanges
- Creative crafts
- Arts and Music
- Gardening and horticulture
- Healthy living and eating
- Meet and share interests and learning

Users and visitors to the Centre will be able to enjoy coffee, cake and snacks using our refreshment Café area.

Once the Centre is opened, there will be a schedule of events published monthly. We anticipate that the Centre will be open during the day allowing flexible access to the provision at the Centre. Over the next year the trustees are looking to appoint/contact two part –time Centre co-ordinators to ensure that the activities on offer run safely and smoothly.

Thoughts and ideas on activities that you feel should be made available from the Harvey Centre would be most welcome. Please contact any of the trustees below:

- Farzana Aldridge
- Roger Ingham
- Jo Stait
- Anne Cowdrey
- Ian Brooks

Blossom Walk Along the Severn

Ruth Thomas

This is an easy circular walk of about 3 miles, which starts out along the riverbank and then circles back inland. It's relatively flat, easy walking but there are a number of stiles along the way.

The walk starts by the Severn Bore pub. There's space to park just outside the pub.



With your back to the pub, set off left along the road in between the pub and the garage/outbuilding. Opposite a house, turn left into a patch of ground that has a number of old cars in it. There is a Public Footpath sign but it's not easy to spot. Walk across the ground around the back of an old marquee, and head for a kissing gate in the far right hand corner. Go through the gate and follow the path straight ahead. You are now on the riverbank and you are basically going to follow this for one and a half miles. You'll walk into an open area which sweeps along the riverbank, and where the poplar trees mark the boundaries of bygone fishing plots, you'll then go through a gate to The Noards and pass some interesting tumbledown houses on your right.

And further on, over another stile you'll start to walk through fields that are a mass of apple blossom in spring.

After approximately 3/4 of a mile from the Noards, you climb over a stile that takes you past a big house where they are constructing a new wooden building in the garden. After this you go through a field and then through a gates into another field that sometimes has a digger in it, over to the left, and there's a small pile of building rubble. Just past the rubble you meet a gravel track. Turn right up the track. If you come to a roofless house, you have gone too far!

At the top, as you meet a road, turn right. Follow the road for about a quarter of a mile until the road bears sharp left and there's a house opposite with a glass fronted deck. Here take a track off to the right. Pass the 'deck' house on your left and then another house on your right.

Just after the second house you can choose to turn right, following the Public Footpath sign across two fields back to the riverbank and simply retrace your steps. These fields often have

Continued on p9

Continued from p8

Soay sheep in them are they very curious about passers- by, so don't be surprised if they come near to say hello.

Alternatively carry on along the track through two gates past some farm buildings. Once past the buildings you cross one field and then into another. In this second field you do a little dog leg halfway across the field, going through a gate on the right and then immediately left onto another track. It's sometimes a bit boggy just here. Follow the track straight on until you meet a fence with a stile which takes you into another field. Go straight ahead across the field to another stile



in the left hand corner of the field. This will bring you onto a small road. You now pass some houses on your right and shortly the road brings you out near the house where you first started.

Adam Shayle Tree Services



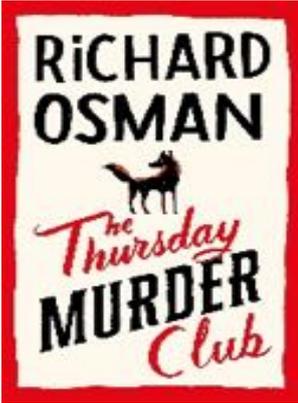
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Minsterworth Reading Group



The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman.

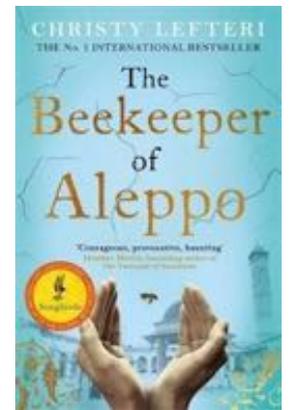
TV presenter Richard Osman's debut crime fiction novel. Four residents of an up-market retirement village form the Thursday Murder Club held in between Art History and Conversational French. Each has a good education and a sharp intellect and gather in the Jigsaw Room on Thursdays to discuss cold cases from the "borrowed" files of a former member who was an Inspector in the Kent police for many years.

Until they stumble on a live murder case, disturbingly close to home.

The four elderly members of the Thursday Murder Club, Elizabeth (an ex-intelligence agent), Ibrahim (ex-psychiatrist), ex-nurse Joyce and ex-trade union leader 'red' Ron, formerly at the top of their varied professions, soon find themselves in the middle of their first live case. They get down to solving the mystery, often ahead of the local police force, sometimes feeding information to them and at others withholding evidence.

This was an amusing tale with Richard Osman's easy writing style, though not laugh out loud funny and the plot lacked a bit of pace with factfinding overseas trips by members of the TMC slowing it down.

We already know that there are sequels as Richard Osman builds his portfolio.



Our next book is **The Beekeeper of Aleppo**, by Christy Lefteri.

See the list below of future books and review dates. Should you wish to join the Book Group and join our monthly Zoom reviews please email vicki.hewlett@googlemail.com.

Always the first Wednesday of the month at 7.45pm. Newcomers are welcome.

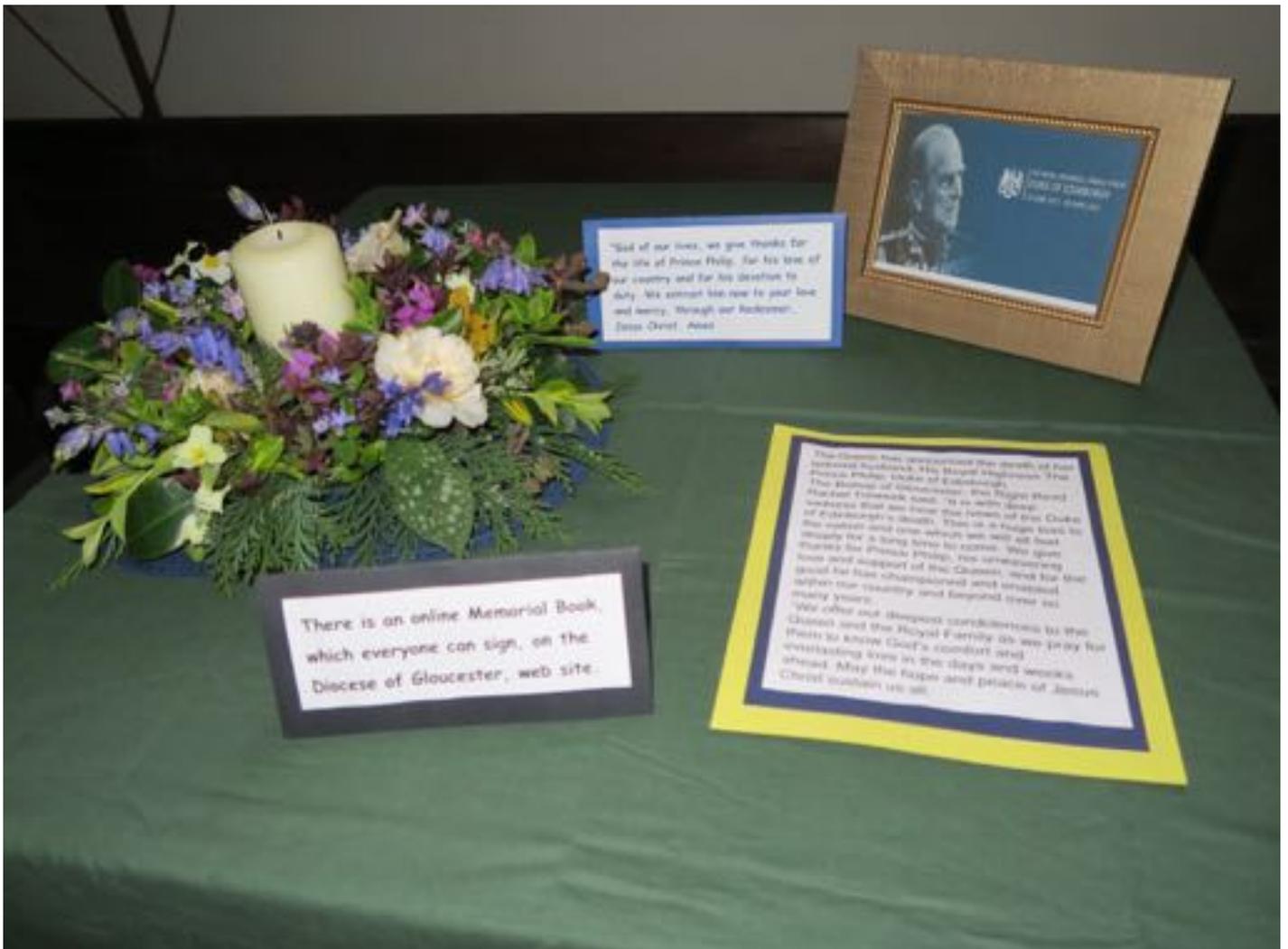
5 th May	The Smallest Man	by Frances Quinn
2 nd June	September	by Rosamund Pilcher
7 th July	The Glass House	by Eve Chase
4 th August	The Sentinel	by Lee Child

A Personal Memory of Prince Philip

Julian Oxley

From 2004 to 2009 I was chairman of a national charity supporting some 13,000 parent-teacher organisations around the country.

The charity had been founded in 1956 with HRH an early patron, and in June 2006 he invited us to use Buckingham Palace for a 50th anniversary lunchtime (12.00-2.00) celebration with some 200 invited parents and supporters. After making a brief speech he spent well over an hour mingling with everyone (he had just turned 85). Then, at exactly 1.55.p.m, I felt a tap on my shoulder, with the words "Well, I'm off now, Julian". Marvellous! – I shall never forget it – and thereafter a family catchphrase!



"So I phoned up the spiritual leader of Tibet, and he sent me a large goat with a long neck. Turns out I phoned Dial-a-Llama."
- Milton Jones

Minsterworth's Desert Island Discs

Sarah McHale

Another initiative for our brilliant magazine! **Roger Ingham** has kindly agreed to share his playlist of music that holds personal significance. And while I know Roger's passion for music and appreciate his selection, I enjoyed just as much his reasons for his choices; a very reflective response. Thank-you Roger. If you'd like to listen to the playlist, please access The Villager digitally via the website to follow the link.

If you would like to feature in Minsterworth Creatives, Minsterworth Lives or Desert Island Discs (or perhaps nominate somebody?) please email me on sarahliv.mchale@btinternet.com.

Eight tracks:

Kites - Simon Dupree and the Big Sounds

In the grand scheme of things this is perhaps not an obvious choice because as a track it has perhaps not stood the test of time despite being a big hit when it was released. It was the first single that I bought and played to death on the red Dansette record player I had at the time. Amazed that such machines are now retro classics and that you can still pick them up on EBay.

Child Star - Tyrannosaurus Rex

I used to be an avid follower of the John Peel radio show back in the day. Back in 1968 John introduced me to the world of Marc Bolan and Tyrannosaurus Rex and whilst for many he was an acquired taste I was fascinated by the bohemian nature of the band. Was I disappointed when the band morphed into T Rex and became teen sensations? At the time yes but looking back the songs they produced are pop classics. My book of Marc Bolan poems is a treasured possession.

Tubular Bells Pt 1 - Mike Oldfield

Incredibly, it is 50 years since this album was released. Mike Oldfield was a genius who played all the instruments on the album. It is a great piece of music for relaxation. Be sure to wait for the introduction of the Orchestra by the late great Viv Stanshall of the Bonzo Dog Do Dah Band.

Starman - David Bowie

Torquay 1972 - One of those gigs that will forever live in my memory. These days you cannot just turn up at a venue and expect to get good tickets on the front row. Starman was the song that really shot David Bowie to stardom and we were drawn to Torquay because of it. Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars blew us away that night.

Time - Pink Floyd

One of the classic tracks from Dark Side of the Moon, an essential part of many a record collection back in 1973. I never tire of listening to it and it remains as fresh today as it did back then.

Continued on p14



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Open Weekdays 8:30am - 5:00 pm

Saturday 9:00am - 1:00pm

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COVID -19 Restriction are in place. Only two customers in store at any time. We ask that you wear a mask/face covering (unless exempt). Use the hand sanitizer provided at entrance. Orders can be placed over the telephone for collection.

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Keep on Rockin' in the Free World – Neil Young *****

I have always been a big fan of Neil Young right from the days of After the Goldrush. I think that this track sums up his approach to music perfectly and if you get a chance watch the recording from the Glastonbury Festival of 2009 11.41 mins of greatness. Can I take the video with me? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFw7q-BLxLA>

Tequila Sunrise – Eagles

Part of the soundtrack to my final year at Bath University. The Eagles produced a series of classic albums that were never far from the turntable. This is one of the standout tracks from the album Desperado.

Jubilee Street – Nick Cave

Sometimes you need a song to tell a story and I think that Nick Cave is a very emotive storyteller who puts real passion into his music and lyrics. He is a great poet but perhaps an acquired taste. This track fits the bill perfectly.

To hear my playlist go to:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6WIHj5E9xbO6ZrHWWhnZASI?si=lzNqVxKLQ2KSe6hQhTxmmQ>

Book:

I am not an avid reader unfortunately but there is one book for any self-respecting Leicester City Fan, it is “5000-1 The Leicester City Story: How We Beat The Odds to Become Premier League Champions” Never in my lifetime did I expect the team that I have supported since I was a boy achieve such a feat. A season I will always remember.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEVx7Rhqk6I>

Luxury Item:

Provided there is a charging point I wouldn't want to be too far away from my Ipad

- “The English are not a very spiritual people, so they invented cricket to give them some idea of eternity”
George Bernard Shaw
- “The English are not happy unless they are miserable”
George Orwell
- “The sun doesn't live in England; it comes here on holiday when we're all at work”
Benny Bellamacina
- “The readiness of the English to apologise for something they haven't done is remarkable”
Henry Hitchings

REFLEXOLOGY

Nicky Milligan

REFLEXOLOGY - WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT? All our bodies have a self-healing mechanism...we all know that when we've been feeling off colour a day will usually come when we think "I'm on the mend now ". All complementary therapies tap into this self-healing, and Reflexology is one route, and as I've said many times these therapies do not replace medical science and never should. Another name for it is Zone Therapy..... if you image a line running up your body from your big toe, that is one zone, then imagine another line running up your body from the next toe .. that is the next zone...and so on.



EGYPTIAN REFLEXOLOGY TREATMENT

Evidence of early 6th dynasty about 2-330 BC is found in wall painting in the tomb of Ankhmahor (highest official after the King) at Saqqara and is known as the Physicians tomb. The translation reads "don't hurt me" and the practitioners reply "I shall act so you praise me"

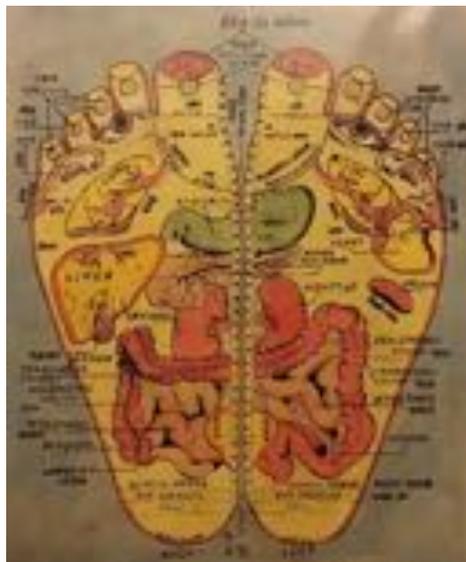
This picture shows neatly seated people but

nowadays we face our client who reclines in great comfort on a lounger... it's so relaxing that I do swaps with a colleague and we both get a treatment that way...ok, naturally with a pleasant lunch in between times.

The picture below shows the areas which in practice are not actually rigidly separated...I can feel with my touch" grainy bits "which tell me that all, is not well. In other words I read the feet and if that's not possible, it works brilliantly on the hands. I would never work on both hands and feet, it's hands or feet.

You can see in this picture the inside of the feet above, they correspond to the spine, and if someone has bunions they will very probably have upper backache or pain, which you can see in the foot. It's all a bit like a body satnav! It took me 2 years of training to qualify and that included a lot of paperwork, case histories, and an exam at the end.

In my Health Visiting days I asked permission to work for a short spell in the special care baby unit. When I was training (a long time ago) most premature babies died, and in fact we could baptise them if time was too short for anyone to get there. I wanted to see the how and why these babies survived nowadays, and I had an amazing week on the unit and was



allowed by the end of it to give treatments under supervision... and I noticed reflexology charts up on some of the walls. I was told that one of the nurses was a qualified Reflexologist and was allowed to treat certain babies, with of course parental and medical permission after all the medical and nursing treatments were given. I rest my case!

I also heard that years ago reflexologists could turn breech babies by working on feet at one of the big teaching hospitals in London. I never saw it in practice but have no reason to disbelieve it

Apricot Tart

Liz Duff

This is a delightful combination of apricots and ground almonds which is a family favourite. I use tinned apricots – halved and a loose bottomed tart tin.

For the pastry:

225g plain flour 2 tbsp caster sugar
¼ tsp salt 165g cold butter

Mix the flour, sugar and salt in a bowl. Then grate in the cold butter. Rub in the flour then add just enough cold water to bring it into a dough. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes.

Heat the oven to 200C, grease a 25cm tart tin then roll out the pastry large enough to line the tin, then line the pastry shell with baking paper & pulses and bake for 15 minutes. Remove paper & pulses then bake for about 7 minutes. Remove from the oven and turn heat down to 180C.

For the Frangipane:

110g butter 110g caster sugar
2 eggs 110g ground almonds
25g plain flour ½ tsp baking powder Zest of ½ a lemon
10 apricots 20g flaked almonds

Cream the butter and sugar until fluffy then beat in the eggs. Fold in dry ingredients, lemon zest and pinch of salt.

Spoon frangipane into pastry shell then arrange the apricots on top and bake for about 30 minutes until golden. Scatter the almonds about 10 minutes before the end.

Leave to cool before removing from the tin.





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ALTERATIONS:EXTENSIONS:PAINTING & DECORATING:ROOFING:PLUMBING:BUILDING REPAIRS

Established in 1965, L Coward & Son Ltd has been offering a first-class building service for domestic customers in Gloucester and Cheltenham. From house extensions to complete home improvements, we can handle it all.

We recently completed updating the kitchen at Minsterworth Village Hall

BEFORE



AFTER



Minsterworth 200 Club

The result of the April draw was as follows:-

£50 No. 188 William East

£20 No. 008 Felicity Hockaday

£10 No. 017 Rona Martin

This month sees the end of another 200 club year and the annual subscriptions are now due. Should you like to become a member, please contact Liz Savage on 750401. There is an annual subscription of £12 and an annual prize of £100 plus the monthly prizes as shown above.

Flower Rota

2nd May Sarah McHale

9th & 16th May Beverley Robinson

23rd & 30th May Kate Oxley

Your Church – St Peter's, Minsterworth



Open every day for prayer and contemplation; for a sense of peace and history. There has been a church on this site for 800 years. The current building is beautiful, loved by many and very well looked after. However to maintain Christian ministry in Minsterworth through this building costs about £65 a day. Could you help by placing your loose change in a church money box?



All contributions, however small are greatly appreciated.

For a box – the contents of which are collected 3 times a year – please contact Liz Savage – 01452 750401.

Neighbourhood Watch - What's it all about?



It's all about being a good neighbour and keeping our village a safe and pleasant place to live.

If you are a member, you will receive updates via email so please do remember to let us know if you change your email address to ensure that you receive them. Incidentally, there have been reports of problems with some BT and Yahoo accounts not receiving emails from Gmail accounts. If it has gone a bit quiet over the last few months it may be worth contacting your provider!

Community Alerts are also sent by Gloucestershire Police to warn of criminal activity in our area and provide advice on crime prevention. You can register at www.yourcommunityalerts.co.uk

Although Minsterworth Matters WhatsApp group and Facebook page are not linked to Neighbourhood Watch, they have proved an invaluable additional resource for villagers in recent months. These are however open forums so please do be mindful when posting comments.

Summer is nearly here and time to throw open the doors and windows. It certainly is a pleasure to do this after months of cold, short, dark days but please do still be mindful of security. Open doors and windows are tempting for opportune thefts and your house insurance may not cover you if your house or car are targeted while unsecured.

Enjoy your summer in our beautiful village and thank you for your continued support,

Minsterworth Neighbourhood Watch.

Email: 64Lettie@gmail.com

Remember:

- *If you are under serious threat or a crime is in progress, always call 999.*

- *If you are suspicious of anyone carrying a weapon in a public place e.g., catapults, air rifles, knives these are classified as offensive weapons - call 999 immediately.*

- *For all crime or concerns after the event please call 101 or report via the website on www.gloucestershire.police.uk or report confidentially at <https://crimestoppers-uk.org> or by telephone 0800 555 111*

"I've learnt that saying "Oh, this old thing?" isn't an appropriate way to introduce an elderly relative." Glenn Moore

"I bet there's never any workers' strikes at a stress ball factory." Ian Smith



Minsterworth & District Royal British Legion

At the time of writing the copy for this month's magazine we are still unable to hold our monthly meetings. There are many items waiting to be actioned when allowed.

As indicated previously if there are any matters regarding the R.B.L. please do not hesitate to contact your representative.

Take care everyone.

Terry Bourne – President
Minsterworth & District R.B.L.

Military History

8 th May	1945	V.E. Day
9 th May	1941	German Enigma machine captured
20 th May	1941	Invasion of Crete
21 st May	1982	Landings in San Carlos
22 nd May	1982	Landings at Ajax Bay
24 th May	1943	Germans call off Battle of the Atlantic
27 th May	1941	Bismarck Sunk
31 st May	1916	Battle of Jutland



Sharks love Jazz, say Australian scientists

Scientists at Australia's Macquarie University Fish Lab say they have made a new discovery: Sharks are sophisticated evil geniuses who like nothing more than kicking back with a bit of Herbie Hancock while they quietly plot our destruction. Apparently, they associate the sound of jazz with food, meaning they clearly prefer the taste of goatee beards.

Mike Shephard



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Gloucester
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**Branch Practice
83 Windermere Road
Longlevens
Gloucester
GL2 0LZ**

Gloucestershire's Railways: Then and Now

Julian Oxley [part two, part one in April]

Actually 2nd part of part 1 first (that I missed!, sorry Julian) plus part 2

There were two lines running down the Wye Valley, from Ross to Monmouth and from Monmouth to Chepstow. Like the Forest Branch, these were hugely scenic, travelling through tourist spots such as Symonds Yat and Tintern, and were immensely popular in Victorian times. As with the Forest Branch, their tracks often found areas far away from any road. I travelled on them as a child but was unable to revisit them later as they both closed in January 1959 due to lack of patronage; an atrociously wet summer the previous year didn't help.

The principal line through Ross was the branch from Grange Court (Northwood Green) to Hereford, opened in 1855. This too was scenic and heavily engineered, having three tunnels, and crossing the Wye four times between Ross and Hereford. It was unusual in directly connecting two cathedral cities and county towns, yet despite strenuous efforts to save it fell to the Beeching axe in 1964. The passenger services ran from Gloucester to Hereford, with all trains stopping at Oakle Street. (The photo shows a Gloucester-Hereford train leaving the main line at Grange Court in 1963). It would be interesting to know to what extent Minsterworth folk used it, as it would have been a great way to get to Ross or Hereford, and just as quick as the roads are even now.



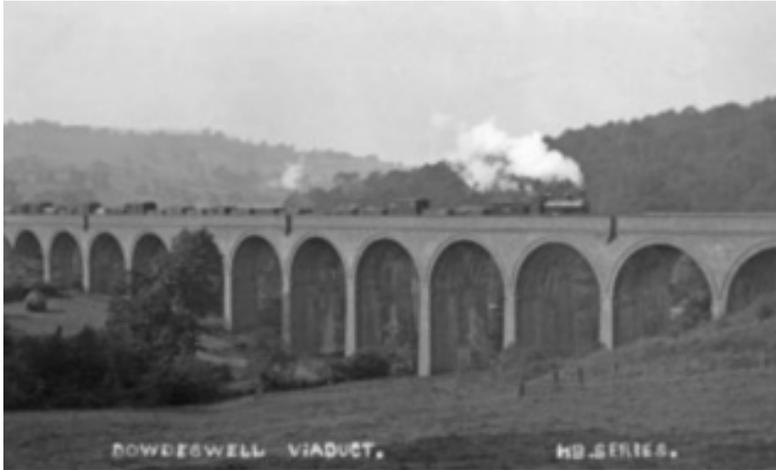
Another pre-Beeching casualty was the branch from Gloucester to Ledbury via Newent, closed in 1959. This was a pretty line which hugged the Leadon Valley for much of the way, was an early user of diesel railcars, and also relied heavily on the daffodil trade. When I was about ten I pestered my father to take me on it one morning all the way to Ledbury and back, and remember there was hardly a spare seat on the return journey. When we reached Newent the guard let me have a (highly unauthorised) trip in the cab all the way to the junction with the main line at Over – a memorable treat! Near Newent the track bed was subsequently used for the by-pass. The station buildings at Barber's Bridge are still there, in private ownership.

In the Cotswolds there were two scenic branch lines where sadly passenger services ceased pre-Beeching. The one I knew best ran from Cheltenham (Lansdown Junction) to Kingham (just into Oxfordshire) via Andoversford and Bourton-on-the-Water. It was a useful alternative for travelling to Oxford rather than the circuitous mainline route via Swindon and Didcot. This line climbed steeply from Cheltenham (with stations at Leckhampton and Charlton Kings) up to its summit at Notgrove (see photo above).

Continued on p23

Continued from p22

Connections with the main lines at Cheltenham (Malvern Road) and Kingham were always pretty good. It closed in October 1962. In the previous year another line closed that left the junction at Andoversford for Cirencester and Swindon, eventually reaching the Southern main line south of Winchester, and much used during WWII by wartime and D-Day traffic down to the South Coast. Both these lines showed off the Cotswolds to good advantage and had they survived would surely have been popular with tourists today, especially as they followed different routes from the road network.



In 1967 the double-track viaduct which had carried the line up from Cheltenham through the Dowdeswell Valley (see photo), and over which I had travelled just five years earlier, was intentionally blown up, making a fine Sunday morning spectacle for a crowd of Cheltenham people. The structure would have cost a fortune in money, toil, and probably lives, to construct, but was gone in a few

seconds. Surely it could usefully have been retained as a walkway and cycleway, and might even have seen “heritage” trains again?

And then there was the Great Western Railway’s final main line, opened from Stratford to Cheltenham in 1906. As recently as the 1960s it had seen express trains such as The Cornishman (Wolverhampton to Penzance via Birmingham Snow Hill), and in 1966 there was a non-stop railcar service from Stratford to Gloucester! And although passenger services ceased in the late 1960s it was not condemned by Beeching but continued as a freight line until 1976 when much damage was caused by a goods train derailment near Winchcombe. In 1979 it was taken over by the Gloucestershire & Warwickshire Railway heritage line, and now over 40 years later a single track operates from Cheltenham Racecourse to Broadway. At least the track bed has been preserved (except fatally in the actual town areas), but I cannot help harking back to the late 1950s and early 1960s when you could travel (as I did) from Cheltenham to Stratford in some forty minutes, faster than you could drive today. And again, as with the Gloucester-Hereford line, with hindsight the closure of such a direct and effective route between the two tourist and cultural hubs of Cheltenham and Stratford seems senseless. It was also a useful alternative to the crowded and hilly route via Bromsgrove.

Part three in June

Gloucestershire Views

Blaize Bailey

Roger Blowey

This is definitely one place that needs a minimum of an annual visit!

Follow the A48 towards Newnham and then turn right at Elton Corner, taking the A4151 to Littledean. Go past Littledean Jail on your right, and enter the narrow street (Church Lane), then take the first left at the mini roundabout. This is Silver Street. There is an old milk stand with milk churns on the corner. Follow up here for approximately half a mile, until you have passed all of the houses on your right. Just before you start the descent towards Newnham, take the right turn at a grass triangle, where there is letter box on your left and a signpost saying 'no through road'. Immediately ahead of you is a small triangle of grass. Park here for your first glorious view down across the Severn Basin. I often get out here and walk up the footpath in the adjacent field. With few trees in front of you, the view from the field is just superb.



Turn right here



Park on this grass triangle. The footpath & stile are on the right of the gate

Continued on p25

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Continued from p24

Leaving this grass area, drive slowly up the narrow lane until you come to a hamlet of houses surrounding a small village green. You can park here. Take the track to your right towards Blaize Bailey Cottage and enter the Forestry Commission area behind the vehicle barrier. Follow the footpath signs along wide forestry track to your left and keep bearing left as you walk up a slight incline, over the ridge and begin a descent. The stone semicircle of the Blaize Bailey viewpoint is immediately in front of you, just 5 – 7 minutes from your car, and once more gives stunning views of the Severn Basin.



Go past this barrier and keep left



The stone circle gives superb views over the Severn Valley



In winter (photo Ian Brooks)



In spring

For those who prefer a little more exercise before their viewpoint, instead of turning right along Silver Street at the mini roundabout in Littledean, drive on towards Cinderford for a further 200 metres until you see the fish n chip shop on your left (the food is excellent!). Turn left here, along Grange Road, and drive approximately one mile until you see Soudley Ponds free car park on your left. Park here and take the left hand track up through the Forestry woodland until you reach the viewpoint.



Entrance to Soudley Ponds car park

Resting Spots

Sharon Ingham



Hopefully, during March or April you will have had opportunity to use one of the four benches that the Parish Council have had placed around the village.

Anne Lewis and Norma Blowey were the first to sit on the one placed on Church Landing, next to the Bore Information Board.

The benches were funded through successful grant project applications rather than the precept.

The project was called 'Resting Spots' and designed to provide opportunities for the infirm or elderly to get out more by

providing benches where they can rest before moving on and help prevent isolation during lock down.

Of course, everyone is invited to use the benches!



We needed to do a little clearing on the park before the second bench went in.



The third bench is located at the Village Hall, looking out towards Gloucester and should get plenty of use from villagers and when there are lettings.

The fourth bench is located on common land known as Calcotts Green looking across its length. This is a lovely calm place and we think will be shaded by the trees in the summertime. If you walk your dog on the green, which is Parish Council common land, please pick up any mess as when the grass is cut it is lifted for animal feed or bedding.





Save the Date
Saturday 24th July 2021
Village Social
Minsterworth Village Hall

May's word search

Some Counties of
England

Cornwall
County Durham
Devon
Essex
Gloucestershire
Kent
Middlesex
Norfolk
Northumberland
Somerset
Surrey
Worcestershire
Yorkshire
Sussex

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



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- How does an attorney sleep?
First he lies on one side, then he lies on the other side
- Will glass coffins be a success?
Remains to be seen
- She had a photographic memory but never developed it
- I wasn't originally going to get a brain transplant, but then I changed my mind
- I saw an ad for burial plots, and I thought: "That's the last thing I need!"
- The guy who invented the door knocker got a no-bell prize
- Need an ark? I Noah guy



Garden Services

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HELPFUL COMMUNITY LINKS

Minsterworth Neighbourhood Watch - join by emailing 64lettie@gmail.com



The Parish Council website - agenda, minutes, councillors etc
<https://minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk/>

The Village Hall website - www.minsterworthvillagehall.org bookings, recent events

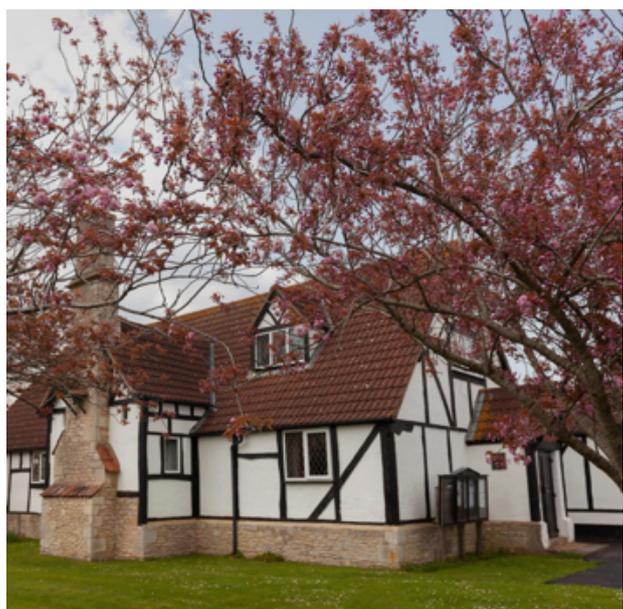
Minsterworthmatters Face Book website – news, local produce etc
<https://www.facebook.com/MinsterworthGlos/>

St Peter's Church - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14101/> services, events

Minsterworth Matters App - join by texting Roger Ingham, 07525330364 immediate village interests

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Welcome to Minsterworth Village Hall

Why not plan your next event with us?

The village of Minsterworth can be found on the A48 to the west of the city of Gloucester, on the north bank of the River Severn nestled between the Cotswold Hills and the Forest of Dean.

At the heart of the village is Minsterworth Village Hall.

This website is for Minsterworth Village Hall activities, clubs and events.

www.minsterworthvillagehall.org

e-mail minsterworthvh@gmail.com

Tel: 01452 750492