

The Villager

Minsterworth News



May 2022

Edition 234

Dear readers,

Still reeling from Putin's aggression, Minsterworth continues to support Ukraine by (amongst other things!) having its flag on the front cover of The Villager.

In the light of the situation in Ukraine Julian Oxley has penned an item on the history of Ukraine's relationship with Russia on p17 as well as the final part of his fascinating Crossing the River series on p12.

See also a summary of our Platinum Jubilee plans on p7 with more on how you can contribute on the following pages and on p26.

Why not apply for the critical role of Clerk to Minsterworth Parish Council p26? The closing date for applications is 31 May 2022.

Paula

All items for consideration to: -
Paula Ruffley, Editor The Villager
Tel: 07905 694612

E-mail:
thevillagerminsterworth@gmail.com

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

KERBSIDE RECYCLING MAY 2022

GREEN & BROWN bin & caddy (landfill) (garden)		BLUE bin & caddy (recycling)	
Tuesday	10	Wednesday	4
Tuesday	24	Tuesday	17
		Tuesday	31

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

Small electrical items now collected alongside your blue bin in a standard carrier bag (**not** a bag for life)

Minsterworth Parish Council - Chairman's Annual Report May 2022

Roger Blowey

It was good to be back! Although COVID case numbers remain high, our vaccine protection meant that we were able to return to physical Parish Council meetings at the Village hall from June 2021 onwards. We managed with Zoom, but physical meetings are undoubtedly much better. This is especially the case as the new AV system in the renovated Village Hall means that we can display the agenda and other documents on the screen for all to see, making the meetings much more inclusive. We are grateful to the loyal band of residents who support Parish Council meetings.

Residential developments continue in the village, with relatively few planning applications being refused. This is because Tewkesbury Borough Council does not have an adequate 'reserve land supply' for future housing, and consequently applicants can use this as a reason for an appeal against any planning refusal. The proposed 4000 house development extending across Churcham and Highnam has gone quiet. Through our recently established inter-parish group meetings, we are aware that the Forest of Dean are now favouring 'dispersed development', i.e. adding the additional houses to existing villages, rather than building a whole new community. The lack of mains drainage in Minsterworth remains an issue, with some of the recent developments having to spend significant sums on drainage systems. It is good to see new arrivals in our village however, and we are especially grateful to those who get themselves involved with village activities.

The largest project currently being undertaken by the Parish Council is the formulation of a request for improving road safety measures. We have undertaken road traffic surveys and used this information as a basis for improvements. The document is available to Minsterworth residents on the Parish Council website. When we have your comments from a **public meeting on Monday May 9th** (6-00pm in the Village Hall) we intend to formally submit our requests to Highways. Please do attend this meeting and give us your opinion.

Traffic flow over the past 6 months has been disrupted by the Severn Trent roadworks, replacing the water main. There had been several emergency repairs over the previous 5 years, so the work did need doing. The traffic lights were annoying, especially when the management team appeared to be unable to adjust the timings of the lights to account for peak flow. The Village WhatsApp group was invaluable in reporting issues of excessive delays! Severn Trent did respond quite quickly to requests however, and I think that the contractors were generally respectful of properties when working at their entrances.

Minsterworth remains at risk of flooding, and the Parish Council submitted a detailed document outlining their concerns to Highnam PC with regard to the potential effect that the proposed new Highnam development might have on increased flow of water across our parish. There were also concerns about potential tidal flooding in March, when a combination of high winds and a high tide posed a risk of the Severn over-topping. Fortunately, this did not happen.

Paul Bell, our new clerk, replaced Fiona in April 2021. His good nature and high level of competence has provided the Parish Council with an excellent service, so we are especially

Continued on p4

Continued from p3

disappointed that for personal reasons he has recently submitted his resignation. I hope we will be equally lucky with his replacement.

Things do not happen in our village without a good deal of effort, so I would once again like to thank all of you who keep verges and hedges outside of their properties trimmed and tidy, and to those who collect litter and plant flowers. The playground at Minsterworth Park continues to be well used, so thanks to all who have done hedge trimming, tree planting, equipment repair and all the other things that are needed to maintain its use. If we can get a longer lease we would apply for more play equipment.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors, Tewkesbury Borough and County Councillors for their input into the running of the Parish Council. It is a huge commitment, and we hope that residents are satisfied with the work done. It is your village, so please do send us suggestions for improvements.

Roger Blowey
May 2022



FISH 'N' CHIPS & FILM

**FISH 'N' CHIPS AND MYSTERY FILM
NIGHT WILL CONTINUE IN THE
AUTUMN.**

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that." – Martin Luther King

"Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it" – James Baldwin

"The things that make us different, those are our super-powers." – Lena Waithe



Minsterworth Village Hall Committee

Following the recent AGM we are sorry to lose Joanne Stait and Julie Fisher from the committee. Both ladies have made a significant contribution to the Hall's work particularly in the past two years when we have kept the place running while

faced with the challenges of the pandemic. On behalf of the Village we would like to thank both Jo and Julie for all they have given during their time on the committee.

We need to recruit new committee members as soon as possible and would encourage any villagers interested to please consider stepping up. Minsterworth Village Hall is in a very healthy situation financially thanks in part to generous grants from TBC during lockdown which have funded extensive renovation programmes. We are now in a position to be able to plan a diverse programme of events. But we are always looking for new ideas in addition to ensuring the Hall operates smoothly on a daily basis.

We particularly need representation from the Church, as well as somebody interested in taking on the role of secretary.

For more information on becoming a trustee please chat to any of the current committee, or message:

Andrea Holder (Chair) – andreaholder3@hotmail.com

Sarah McHale (Vice Chair) – sarahliv.mchale@btinternet.com

Another Friday Another Comedy Night

It was brilliant to have a second successful Comedy Night at the Hall on Friday 8th April. Compered by Ryan Gough who set the scene for a great night by immediately homing in on Simon, our resident undertaker apparently. We enjoyed three quite different acts starting with Darius Davies, then Charmian Hughes, and finishing with Pierre Hollins.

Always difficult to convey live stand-up humour in words but we all had a good laugh and enjoyed the real ales from The Bespoke Brewery at Littledean. Welsh gin available too. Highlights (Simon the Undertaker aside) – the usual comments about the average age of the audience (we do need more younger villagers to buy tickets in September!) and just how middle class is Minsterworth when one table brings an entire cheeseboard with them, and we have a meat raffle?!

Huge thanks to Lucy and Malcolm Ball at Luma Holdings in Pound Lane for the very generous donation of the meat hamper. And to The Bespoke Brewery for donating a brewery tour (one villager left a very happy fella!).

Another good fund-raiser for MVH. Thanks to all who came along and pop the date in your diary for **Friday 9th September**



St Peter's Church, Minsterworth

Anne Cowdrey

We have a new noticeboard! Have you noticed it? If not, then pause outside of our village church, the next time you are passing and take a look.

Our previous noticeboard has stood for many a year, sharing church news, service times and future events, however it was probably time for it to be replaced! Margaret Lawtey's husband, Alan, made the wooden one, I am

sure he would have been pleased with the length of time it has served us and served us well!

Our new metal noticeboard was custom made, thank you Terry Moore-Scott for helping with the design planning. Thanks too, to Dr Anthony and Paula Lynch, for their contribution towards the purchasing of the new board. Anthony and Paula used to live in the village, and they worshipped at St Peter's Church from 1978 to 2018.

Minsterworth Open Gardens

Saturday 25th June 2022

1pm – 4pm

Come and enjoy sharing the rich variety of gardens in our village.

Park for free at St Peter's Church where you can also collect your garden map and refresh yourself with tea, coffee and cake. All donations will be gratefully received in support of the church.

Please get in touch if you would be willing to open your garden or help in any other way.

Alison Raeburn 01452 751191



Minsterworth Village Jubilee Plans



There are lots of things planned for the Jubilee Bank Holiday, so grab your diary and make a note of all the events happening in the village to help us commemorate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.

Thursday 2nd June: The Parish Council are funding a Jubilee Beacon which will be lit on the field behind the Hall at 21.50 in line with other beacons being lit across the nation. The Hall will open from 20.00 to serve burgers and we hope to have The Bespoke Brewery from Littledean operating a pop-up bar. This promises to be a wonderful evening for the whole family and a great launch to the celebrations. You may wish to bring picnic furniture.

Sunday 5th June: The Hall will be open from 2pm 'til 5pm for an afternoon of fun including a tea party. You are very welcome to bring along a picnic, chairs or a blanket. From 3pm we will be serving 'Tea on Us' with tea and cake and hope to have 70 cakes to choose from (and you know how wonderful our village bakers are!) There will be children's activities including a treasure hunt and spot prizes for any children (or adults) who'd like to design and wear a Jubilee crown or dress up in red, white and blue! There'll be music too. Please do drop in, meet your village neighbours and friends and enjoy the hospitality on offer. Should we not be blessed with fine weather, we will hold the tea party inside.

St Peter's Festival of Flowers: The Church will be decorated with a range of fabulous floral tributes in red, white and blue. Please do call in to see them over the weekend. The Church will be open from 10am to 7pm every day.

Commemorative Art Projects: It is very exciting to see two projects running in the village that will result in legacy works that can be enjoyed by villagers for years to come. The Harvey Centre are creating silk panels featuring village surrounds. And the Church will have a new altar frontal for the Lady Chapel, as detailed in last month's Villager magazine. We will let you know once both projects are complete and you can pop in to see the results. We are very fortunate to have so many talented villagers involved in creating these projects. They are being supported by a successful Arts Council Jubilee grant. If you wish to be involved please contact Annie on 07864 970615 for the altar cloth, and Arlette on 07926 986247 for the Harvey Centre

And: As if the above isn't enough to help celebrate, there are more plans still to be revealed! A couple more competitions and even a free gift! Do look on www.minsterworthvillagehall.org and social media for details.

Over to you – how can you help Minsterworth have a great Jubilee weekend?

- Are you able to bake cakes or biscuits for the Tea Party? A traditional Victoria sponge or a batch of scones? Please message Sarah on 07900 984281 if you can help, we need at least 70 for 70 years!

Continued on p8

Continued from p7

- Let's make the village a riot of colour with bunting and flags. Please decorate your house and garden. Bunting available from Amazon and Ebay and not too expensive.
- Finally, please do call in to the Hall on Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon and support the activities

Let's make the Jubilee a memorable event for Minsterworth!

Lady Chapel Altar Frontal Design 2022



Would you like to be involved in working on this Jubilee commemorative project? We welcome your help in creating simple stitching for a vine leaf border. There are two sessions at **The Harvey Centre** where all materials will be provided along with tuition if needed. Do drop in or call Annie on 751295 for more details:

Wednesday 4th May at 1.30 pm AND

Wednesday 4th May at 7.00 pm

The aim is to complete the frontal in time for Her Majesty's Jubilee in June.

The more nimble fingers the better! Do pop along, see the design and progress to-date and get involved.



JUBILEE TEA AT THE VILLAGE HALL

SUNDAY 5TH JUNE: 2PM 'til 5PM.

TEA AND CAKE FROM 3PM

CALLING ALL VILLAGE BAKERS!

We'd like to serve 70 cakes to celebrate seventy years! Can you help bake cakes, scones or biscuits? This will be a free event for the village but relies on your support. Please contact Sarah on 750914 or via WhatsApp Minsterworth Matters if you're able to help.





Good News! The Harvey Centre is delighted to have secured a grant from The Arts Council to create some Legacy Art in celebration of The Queen's Jubilee. The grant will fund the creation of a new alter frontage cloth for St Peters Church. Original design and central panel painted by Sarah McHale with embroidery by talented villagers.

A series of silk paintings will also be created to reflect the village including The Village Hall, St Peters Church, The School / Harvey Centre and The River Severn. This project will be overseen by Jackie Cox and the art group but we would also welcome local residents to be involved in the paintings. Please do get in touch if you would like to take part in either of the above projects. **Call 07926 986 247**

Food Bank: Donations of tinned and dried goods always welcome. These can be dropped off at the centre during café or opening hours and are collected weekly and transported to The Gloucester Food Bank.

Computer Skills: 5 weeks starting Thursday 28th April from 10am to 12noon

Have you got a computer, iPad or tablet and are still unsure how to use it?! This course is designed for people of any age who would like to improve their basic computer skills.

The course includes: Email; Sending, adding/attachments, filing, phishing etc. Photos, Online shopping / banking, security and lots more...

Can you afford not to attend?! £5 per session (£25 total) 2 places remaining

For further information call 07926 986 247

Basic First Aid: Thursday 9th June and Thursday 16th June from 10am to 12noon

This 2-part course offers an opportunity to learn or refresh your first aid skills and build confidence. **£5 per session (£10 total)**

For further information call 07926 986 247

Community Café and playdates: A warm welcome awaits as do delicious home-made cakes! The children's play area with lots of toys available - parental supervision required.

Memory Café: Run in conjunction with Artspace Cinderford. Safe space for Dementia patients, their partners or carers to enjoy coffee, crafts and lunch. **Call 07926 986 247**

Monthly from Tuesday 24th May 2022.

Coming Soon!

Little Church: Sessions will be run by Owen Westall, Highnam & Leadon Vale Children and Families Worker

9.30am to 11am Tuesday 17th May 2022. Tuesday 28th June 2022 and 28th June

- Forest School and Program of Summer Holiday Families/ Children activities including Indoor and Outdoor Crafts, Nature Hunt, creating Bug Hotels etc.

Can you spare an hour once a month or you would like to become more involved in helping with the memory café or another service?

We would love to welcome you to our growing band of volunteers. Please either pop into the community café and talk to one of the Trustees or call Arlette Lane on 07926 986 247.

*The Harvey Centre, Main Road Minsterworth, Gloucester, GL2 8JH
Charity number: 311648*

Every week:

The Harvey Centre Calendar – May 2022	
MON	Tan House Choir 7.00pm to 9.00pm Telephone 01452 750128 to find out more...
TUES	Basic Computer Skills – Main Hall. 5 weeks from 28th April 10am – 12noon Telephone 07926 986 247 to book
WED	Community Cafe including Book/DVD/ Audio Book exchange. Weekly from 10.00am to 12.30pm Main Hall: Strength, balance and mobility class 10.00 to 11.00am Telephone 01452 234005 or email info@farrphysio.co.uk leave mobile number/email address. A member of the team will then contact you to arrange. Café and Main Hall: Parents/carers and toddler “Play Date” Parental supervision required - 11am to 12.30pm
THUR	Memory Café Tuesday 24th May 2022 11am – 1.30pm Safe space for Dementia patients, their partners or carers to enjoy coffee, crafts and lunch. Call 07926 986 247
FRI	Art for Wellbeing 10.00 to 12.30pm Please pop along or call 07926 986 247 Book/DVD/ Audio Book exchange 9.30 to 10.00am

CROSSING THE RIVER – part 4 Down from Gloucester

Julian Oxley

This is the final part of Julian's 'Crossing the River' series.

In June 1996 a Second Severn Crossing was opened by the Prince of Wales, after whom it was named in 2018. The central section crossing the main channel is a cable-stayed bridge, and it marks the point at which the Severn becomes the Bristol Channel. It has three lanes in each direction and has carried the M4 since its opening. Both Severn Bridges started life as toll bridges, with tolls removed in 2018.

The Prince of Wales Bridge closely follows the line of the Severn Tunnel, a rail tunnel whose construction took thirteen years up to its opening in 1886. Before then all rail traffic from London and southern England had to travel through Gloucester. For many years it was the longest main line rail tunnel in the world. From 1879 its construction was plagued by flooding from the Great Spring on the Welsh side, and even today some 50 million gallons of water are pumped out every day by several pumping engines on that side. The whole tunnel is four miles and 624 yards long, just over half of which is actually under the river. To this day it remains one of the most memorable feats of Victorian engineering in the whole country, saving a detour of over fifty miles, and now with overhead line equipment installed for electric traction. As a child I travelled through it many times to visit elderly relatives in Bristol, the journey from Newnham (with a change at Severn Tunnel Junction) taking about an hour and a half.

Noble Failures

I hope I've included all crossings in the County, but if I've missed any I would be very interested to hear of them. And here are some others which were proposed and sometimes started but then failed.

In 1810 construction began of a pioneering attempt to build a tunnel from Newnham to Arlingham. The prime purpose was to transport coal to avoid the heavily taxed bridges at Gloucester. After progress of just over 200 yards on the Newnham side, in 1814 the tunnel was breached by a spring causing loss of life, and the project was abandoned.

In subsequent years there were proposals for bridges, one of which would have left the Newnham side from Church Road, adjacent to the churchyard. Again, these came to nothing.

In 1844 the South Wales Railway proposed a line from Standish to cross the river at Hock Cliff near Fretherne over to Awre and then on down to Chepstow and beyond. The crossing would be via bridge or tunnel, but in 1846 both options were rejected by Parliament, so the company ended up using the longer route via Gloucester.

Finally, in 1948 building began of a vehicular ferry from Newnham to Arlingham using hexagonal metal caissons, or "lily pads", bolted together. Apparently this was originally promoted in 1939 by one Enoch Williams, owner of the Old Passage Ferry Company. The "lily pad" idea was inspired by trials during World War II of floating airfields in the north of Scotland. The intended extent of these structures across the river and what permissions were acquired from the County Council or river authorities are not clear. Anyway, the strength of the tides

Continued on p13

Continued from p12

was seriously underestimated, and one stormy night in March 1949 the Bore came up and ripped the lot apart, whereupon the project was abandoned. I've been unable to find any archival information about all this, but as a schoolboy at the time I remember it well, and some years later there were still a few caissons littering the shore. A case of "we told you so"!

Wellbeing - Aromatherapy

Nicky Milligan

Samples from a Medieval Herbal.... probably not a good idea to try these at home!!



RUE (*Ruta graveolens*)

1 if blood flow from the nose, take this wort, which is named Ruta, and by another name like that Rue, apply frequently to the nostrils, it wonderfully staunches the blood from the nostrils.

2 for bloatedness, take this same wort rue, give it so green, in pieces, to be eaten or swallowed in drink.

3 for sore of eyes and swelling, take this same wort rue, well pounded, and lay it to the sore, also the root pounded, and smear therewith it well amended to the sore.

4 for headache, take this same wort, give it to be drunk in wine, again pound the same wort and wring the ooze into vinegar, then smear on the head therewith. It is also beneficial for carbuncles.

GARLIC (*allium sativum*)

Take a clove of garlic, prick in 3 or 4 places in the middle, dip in honey, and insert in the ear, covering it with some block wool. Let the patient sleep on the other side every night leaving the clove in the ear for 7 or 8 nights unchanged. It will prevent the running of the nose and restore the hearing.

From The Physicians of Myddfai, 13th century.

Perhaps not a good idea to try this one, but interestingly big pharma has been trying to chemically copy garlic to make a product to treat colds.

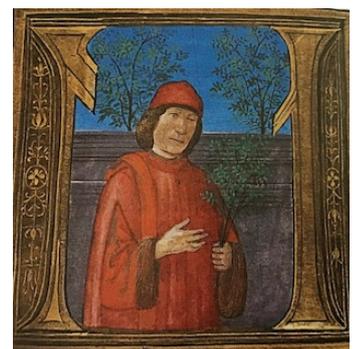


SOUTHERNWOOD (*artemisia abrotanum*)

To Cure One Who Talks in his Sleep...

Take Southernwood, and pound it well, and add thereto some wine or old mead, strain well, and let the patient drink a portion thereof night and morning.

From The Physicians of Myddfai, 13th century.



Friendship

“Things are never quite as scary when you’ve got a best friend” – Bill Watterson

“A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out” – Walter Winchell

“Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down” – Oprah Winfrey

“Real friendship is when your friend comes over to your house and then you both just take a nap” – Anon

“Friendship is born at that moment when one person says to another, ‘What! You too? I thought I was the only one.’” – CS Lewis

SIR PETER SCOTT TALK

**FRIDAY 20TH MAY 2022
AT 7.30 P.M. IN
MINSTERWORTH VILLAGE HALL**

IN AID OF MINSTERWORTH VILLAGE HALL

THIS ENTERTAINING TALK AND SLIDE SHOW WILL BE GIVEN BY JACKIE HARRIS WHO WORKS AND IS A VOLUNTEER AT WWT

COVERING THE LIFE OF SIR PETER SCOTT, AN ORNITHOLOGIST, CONSERVATIONIST AND PAINTER

FOUNDER OF THE WWT AT SLIMBRIDGE AND HELPED ESTABLISH THE WWF

TICKETS £10 EACH including tea/coffee – book tickets on the Village Hall website www.minsterworthvillagehall.org





Minsterworth & District Royal British Legion

Due to a number of commitments and Health & Safety matters we decided not to hold our meeting in April and the new meetings will now be held quarterly. As always these will be held on the second Wednesday in the months of:

January – April – July – October starting at 7pm. Please do come along and consider becoming a member of our branch. Please contact your local R.B.L. member with any Legion matters.

MILITARY HISTORY

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

Hopefully we may see you at our Quarterly meetings.

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

Senior Humor

An older lady was standing at the rail of the cruise ship holding her hat so that the wind wouldn't blow it away in the wind.

A gentleman approached her and said, "Pardon me, madam, I do not intend to be forward but did you know that your dress is blowing up in this wind?"

"Yes, I know," said the lady. "But I need my hands to hold onto my hat."

"But madam, he said, "you must know that you're derriere is exposed!"

The woman looked down, then back up at the man and said, "Sir, anything you see down there is 85 years old, but I just bought this hat!"



- "People rarely succeed unless they have fun in what they are doing." ...
- "Even though you're growing up, you should never stop having fun." ...
- "Reclaim your curiosity, your sense of adventure and have some fun. ...
- "Enjoy life. ...
- "A person must never cease striving to enjoy life.

Life is like a 10 speed bicycle.



Most of us have gears
we never use.

-Charles Schulz

Riddle: What starts with T, ends with T, and has T in it?

Answer on p28



07976896255

adamshayletreeservices@outlook.com

Professional Tree Surgeon

- Tree felling/removals
- Crown lifting, thinning and reductions
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- Pruning
- Forestry
- Planting
- Site Clearance
- Hedge Trimming
- Fencing
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- Digger Work
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UKRAINE: A THOUSAND YEARS OF CHEQUERED HISTORY

Julian Oxley

The historical background to the Russo-Ukraine conflict is complex but helps explain how we have war in Europe yet again.

In the ninth century Swedish Vikings sailed along eastern European rivers to Ukraine and established a powerful state there with its capital at Kyiv, converting to Christianity in 988. But in 1240 Mongol leader Batu, grandson of Genghis Khan, took over the south and east of the country. The north and west remained independent for another two hundred years until taken over by Poles and Lithuanians. The Mongols were gradually driven back but still held Crimea. In the 16th century some Polish serfs broke away from their Polish landlords and settled in Ukraine, forming self-governing communities and a Cossack (=Freeman) state under a Hetman (=General). In the 18th century Russian empress Catherine the Great absorbed most of Ukraine into Russia and in 1783 conquered Crimea and also founded Odessa. Later it took Russia decades to recover from its defeat in the Crimean War (1853-56) although this proved a catalyst for reform of its social and military institutions (just as here in the UK).



Five years after the 1917 Russian Revolution Russia forced Ukraine to become one of the founding republics of the USSR. To start with Ukrainian language and culture were allowed to flourish, but in the early 1930s under Stalin's collectivism policy the country suffered a devastating famine (the Holodomor) which left as many as seven million Ukrainians, mostly peasants, dead. Then from 1937 to 1939 Stalin unleashed a series of purges which killed many more. In 1941 the Germans invaded, murdering yet more millions, until they withdrew after

Stalingrad, with the Red Army recapturing Kyiv in November 1943. At the end of the War Ukraine was one of the founding members of the United Nations, and after Stalin's death in 1953 there was a national revival, brought about by Ukrainian Nikita Khrushchev. He had been chief of the Ukrainian Communist Party since 1938, and now held the same position for the whole USSR. And in 1954 Crimea was transferred from Russia, which made geographical sense.

Following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine started to embrace a market economy. After initial recession the economy boomed until the global financial crisis in 2008. There ensued preparations for implementation of an "association agreement" with the EU, but these were suspended by pro-Russian president Yanukovich. After mass protests in 2014 Yanukovich was impeached, which was the signal for an immediate Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea. This conflict also involved parts of eastern Ukraine, including the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk, heavily populated by Russian speakers. It continued sporadically for the next eight years with much loss of life on both sides. Finally, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022.

Continued on p18

Continued from p17

So for the last thousand-plus years Ukraine has had a chequered history, suffering much warfare and hardship. And it's hardly the fault of the population that, like Poland and others, the land is such a fatal victim of its geography.

But now Russia is the aggressor, so we must look there to shed more light on the underlying causes of the present shocking events. When the USSR collapsed there was a general belief that there would be a simple transfer from communism to liberal democracy. How wrong we were! Russia (and especially its autocratic leaders) has always been belligerent, militaristic, harsh, nationalistic, xenophobic – and above all life is cheap. The tsarist era was totalitarian and authoritarian, and the communist regime which followed it just the same, if anything even more corrupt and an even greater failure. Even now its social structures remain seriously flawed, and the concept of democratic freedom is just not understood. It has a quasi-medieval delusion of Empire, and it will take generations to bring about a lasting change in attitudes to everything which we in the West take for granted. Yet it is the West (Clinton, Obama, Merkel, many others) that has proved so naïve and weak in dealing with Putin – which he of course has recognised. Consider what Putin got away with in Syria, notably in Aleppo – surely the signs were all there? His ambitions could and should have been nipped in the bud when he annexed Crimea in 2014.

But now we're left with a conflict which Ukraine will struggle to win and the West can't get seriously involved in for fear of World War III. And a puzzle: if you're going to steal a car, surely you don't trash it first? That Putin is doing just that to Ukraine and its people is surely the best illustration of his warped mindset.

What has a bottom at the top?

Answer on p25

May and the Poets

Leigh Hunt

There is May in books forever;
May will part from Spenser never;
May's in Milton, May's in Prior,
May's in Chaucer, Thomson, Dyer;
May's in all the Italian books: –
She has old and modern nooks ...

Vegan One Pot Pasta with Spinach and Tomatoes

Sharon Penn

Super easy to make, incredibly healthy, packed with flavour and so delicious!

Ingredients:

1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 cups uncooked rigatoni (or any pasta to your liking)*
2 teaspoons red curry paste
1 1/2 teaspoons curry powder
3 cups canned diced tomatoes
1 cup canned coconut milk
2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
3 handfuls fresh spinach
Black pepper & salt to taste



Method:

Heat some oil in a large pot and sauté the onion for 2-3 minutes

Add garlic and cook for 1 more minute

Then add the remaining ingredients except for the fresh spinach and cherry tomatoes

Cook for about 13 minutes* stirring regularly

Add the cherry tomatoes and spinach and cook for 5 more minutes

Season with salt and pepper, best served immediately

*Depending on which type of pasta you use, you may need some extra water or tomato juice to keep the pasta from sticking

Virtual fencing

Paula Ruffley



Examples of Conservation grazing are increasingly seen in Gloucestershire, for example on Rodborough Common, where cattle grazing has helped the proliferation of Fragrant Orchids and Cowslips, Small Blue Butterflies and Skylarks (do go up there to have a bracing walk & look down on the Stroud Valleys below - Winston's ice-cream shop is also a draw).

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) is trialling virtual fencing in the Forest of Dean to graze Highland cattle without the use of fencing or boundaries. The system uses solar-powered GPS collars around the cows' necks which track and map their movements. The reserve managers install a virtual boundary that the cattle are trained not to cross. As they approach the boundary a series of beeps are emitted from the collars which increase in volume and pitch the closer to the invisible boundary they go. If the boundary is crossed an electric pulse is transmitted.

Training is carried out over a few days but usually the cattle understand how the collars work in a day or so. There are several safety mechanisms built in and after 12 months' trial virtual fencing seems to be working well.



Minsterworth Reading Group

Minsterworth Reading Group meets the first Wednesday of each month, so 4th May.

In May we will be reviewing: Still Life by Sarah Winman

In April we Read *The Girl Who Died* by Ragnar Jónasson, a Scandi noir set in the remote Icelandic fishing hamlet of Skálar. Una answers an advert for 'Teacher Wanted at the Edge of the World', having been unable to find a job in Reykjavik. She has only two pupils and hears that the house she is living in has ghostly connections not previously disclosed. Una fails to connect with Skálar's few residents and is certain she has seen the resident ghost.

When one of her pupils unexpectedly dies Una feels increasingly isolated as the intrigue builds and a sense of dread and foreboding gathers.

The group felt the story was implausible at times but it certainly provoked lots of lively discussion – the purpose of a book club, after all.

Paula Ruffley



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Gardening by the Severn

Sharon Ingham

This month we are visiting Sunnymead a relaxing and interesting new garden which has been zoned to fit in with the family interests, particularly eating healthy fresh food. Emma and Nigel are always keen to share and swap seedlings.

How big is your growing area?

We've got about 0.7 acres in total. Our plot layout has meant we've created different zones around the garden, including a kitchen garden, chill out area, socialising space and outdoor adult play areas! Nigel plans to use some of our outdoor space for his new business which includes reclaiming our natural ability to move.



When did your love of gardening start?

Not until I was in my thirties. Up to that point I'd always thought gardening was for old people and didn't realise the therapeutic benefits of it. Prior to Sunnymead, we lived in houses that did not have big gardens and most of our gardening was in limited pots and the odd flower bed.

Kitchen garden

What significant changes have you made to the garden since you bought the property?

Loads!! For a long time, we looked like we lived on a building site as so much work was going on. There was an old sunken path that led to the original front door that we filled in to create part of the kitchen garden. We've also put paths around the property, added a patio, more hedging and made lots of gravelled areas to keep weeds down, including 22 tonnes of it to redo the drive. We love wildlife too so try to make sure there is a balance for nature, whilst keeping down some of the maintenance where we can.



Old sunken path



New path

Which plant/flower could you not live without and why?

I love loads of flowers, but my particular favourite are cone flowers (Rudbeckia and Echinacea). I love the colours and that when they flower they last for ages so you are not continually dead heading them! Pollinators love them too.

Continued on p22



Is there a significant person / gardener that has influenced your ideas in the garden?

My stepdad has probably been the biggest influence. He used to do my pots for me every year until I started to do them myself. He can make pretty much anything grow from a cutting. I was always being reminded to deadhead the flowers and water the pots so that is instilled in me. I very nearly deadheaded my first tomato plant as I didn't know that was where the tomato grew from - good job I checked! 😊

You grow lots of vegetables. How do you decide what to grow?

I grow a big variety of veggies and dedicate some beds to those that we use a lot of, such as tomatoes and onions. Every year I also grow a few veggies that I haven't tried before. This year I am seeing if I can grow mangetout, peas and aubergines. I try to use heritage varieties of plants, grow organically and aim to save as much of my own seed as possible. I also grow quite a few herbs and fruits, such as strawberries and blueberries. There is something very special about popping out in the garden to pick your own fruit - and tastes so much better than the shops.



Kitchen garden

Do you have a favourite part or area in your garden?

I love the whole garden for different reasons. My particular favourite is the kitchen garden. I think because I put so much of my own energy into it. I also grow lots of flowers around the veg beds so it's a pleasant area to spend time in and also attracts the pollinators.

Thank you, Emma and Nigel, for sharing with us how you have developed your garden.

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Minsterworth Photographic Club

We're Back!



We are a small, friendly photographic club that meets to gain insights and understanding to refine our art. If you are a complete novice, but want to learn more, or have been taking images for some time and want to improve your skills, our club could be just what you're looking for! A recent new joiner said, "I was nervous before coming but this is a great club, I've learnt a lot already!"

Why not see if we can help you too? We are open to all ages and abilities. For more information, why don't you visit our website at www.minsterworthphotoclub.co.uk or email us at minsterworthphoto@mail.com – we'd be delighted to see you!

Q: What did one ocean say to the other ocean?

A: Nothing, it just waved.

Q: When does a joke become a 'dad' joke?

A: When it becomes apparent.

Q: What kind of knickers do clouds wear?

A: Thunderpants



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- Hand poured, fragranced candles from the Forest of Dean Candle Company, are available in store.

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Weekdays – 8.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Saturday – 9.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Closed Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays

We are located on the A48, travel from Minsterworth through Westbury on Severn, down the hill, on the left-hand side before the garage.

Answer to riddle on p18

Your legs

JOB VACANCY: Clerk and Finance Officer to **Minsterworth Parish Council**

Minsterworth Parish Council (MPC) is looking for a new Parish Council Clerk & Finance Officer. We are a friendly Parish Council, with good resident support for our ongoing activities. We meet monthly on a Monday evening, although the Clerk's duties require additional work spread throughout each month. The main duties are:

- Completing the administrative arrangements for the monthly MPC meetings, including the drafting and publication of the Agenda and Minutes.
- Handling all incoming and outgoing correspondence on behalf of MPC.
- Managing the MPC budget, including the payment of invoices and the monthly reconciliation of the online bank account. This also includes producing the annual budget estimate, providing forecasts of expenditure, and submitting the accounts for external audit.
- Coordinating MPC's response to planning applications.
- Maintaining the MPC website (using the WordPress software) to provide regular updates and access to information.

The hours of the post are 8 per week which can be worked flexibly other than attendance at the meetings which is fixed.

The post will be paid in accordance with the National Association of Local Council pay scales, likely to be around Scale Column Point 11 (currently £11.50 per hour) dependent upon experience and qualifications.

The post holder will be expected to undertake relevant training which when agreed will be funded by the Parish Council.

Applications for the post should be submitted via a covering letter and a CV to the following e-mail address: clerk@minsterworthparishcouncil.org.uk. Please use the same email address for any questions about the role.

The closing date for applications is **31 May 2022**.

Interviews will take place on the evening of **14th June 2022**.

Church Cleaning

May 19th 2022 between 0930 - 1230

Any help and amount of time will be appreciated to clean the Church before the Jubilee celebrations.

Refreshments provided.

Turn up on the day or contact Jo Stait, Churchwarden

NORTHWOOD GREEN GARDENING CLUB

PLANT SALE



**Saturday May 14th and Sunday 15th
10:00 - 2:00 pm**

The Glen, Adsett Lane, GL14 1PH

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Wildlife - Weasels

Paula Ruffley

Weasels get a bad press – weasel words, characterised as evil in *The Wind in the Willows*... but they're just trying to make a living in a difficult world. *Mustela nivalis* is a very successful little thing, living in a wide variety of habitats, rural and urban and is widespread throughout Britain. The weasel is our smallest and most numerous native carnivorous mammal but is absent from Ireland and most off-shore islands. They are less common where their prey is scarce, such as at higher altitudes or in dense woodland with sparse ground cover.



Weasels are constantly hunting. They are ruthless killers. There are hundreds of thousands of them about. They specialise in hunting small rodents. Their small size is perfect for searching tunnels and runways of mice and voles at any time of day or year. In fact, their dens are usually nests of former prey, lined with their dinner's fur. They do not hibernate and can hunt even in deep snow. They may also eat birds, eggs or young rabbits.

They are solitary; males and females live in separate territories – they have several – male ranges being larger.

With ginger to russet brown fur and a cream underside, the Weasel does not change colour in winter, unlike the Stoat. It has a long slender body, short tail with no black tip. Body length of 17-22cm and tail length 3-6cm. The Weasel is smaller than the Stoat.

Breeding: Usually only one litter of 4-6 young are born per season, but two litters in years when field voles are abundant. Young are weaned at 3-4 weeks and can kill efficiently at 8 weeks; in a good vole year, young females can breed at 2-3 months old. Family groups split up at 9-12 weeks.

I remember once as a child being driven towards the nearest town and seeing a mother weasel and her 1 kit crossing the road. We stopped and watched the mother pick her kit up in her mouth to lift it onto the kerb when it couldn't reach by itself. This left me with an affection for them and now that I know they are much more effective at keeping the mouse population down than our cat, who gets bored when the mouse doesn't move, I like them even better. More Weasels please!

Answer to riddle on p16

Teapot

MAY FISH & CHIPS
THURSDAY 12TH MAY
at the Village Hall

Serving from 5pm to 8pm

For menu see www.madewithoutgluten.co.uk

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

Minsterworth Parish Council meeting

9th May 2022

Village Hall

6pm Public Meeting A48 Road Traffic Proposals

7pm Annual Parish Assembly

Followed by abridged monthly Parish Council meeting

How do you measure a snake?

In inches, they don't have feet.

You heard the rumour going around about butter?

Never mind, I shouldn't spread it.

Why were they called the Dark Ages?

Because there were a lot of knights

Why don't Teddy bears want to eat anything?

Because they're always stuffed

At over 29,000 feet tall, Mt. Everest is the highest point on Earth, but it doesn't compare to the deepest point on Earth, the Mariana Trench, which is over 36,000 feet deep—nearly seven miles—in the Pacific Ocean.

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For further information contact Ash:

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Things said by nearly all Brits during March 2022's warm spell

1. "I can't believe how nice it is!"
2. "There's people outside in shorts!"
3. "It makes such a difference, doesn't it?"
4. "We could eat outside"
5. "Actually, it's not that warm"
6. "Shall we go in?"

Minsterworth 200 Club

The result of the March draw, which is drawn at the whist drive, was as follows:-

£50 No. 123 Roger Parham
£20 No. 128 Joy Samuel
£10 No. 097 Denise Williams

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.

Whist Drive

The result for Church Funds from the April whist drive was £78. Thank you to all who helped and to those who gave some prizes. The next whist drive is on the Bank Holiday 2nd May.

Church service times and flower rota

Date	Time	Service	Flowers
1 st May	11am	Family Service	Anne Pearson
1 st May	5pm	Evening Worship	Anne Pearson
8 th May	11am	Holy Communion	Gill Payne
15 th May	11am	Morning Prayer	Gill Payne
22 nd May	9.30am	TBA	Liz Savage
29 th May	10am	TBA	Liz Savage

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

Contents May 2022

Page Item

2	Recycling	
3	Minsterworth Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2022	
5	MVH recruitment	
5	Comedy Night	9 th September
6	St. Peter's church has a new noticeboard!	
6	Minsterworth Open Gardens	25 th June
7	Platinum Jubilee plans	
8	Lady Chapel Altar Frontal – get involved	4 th May
9	Jubilee Tea – CALLING ALL VILLAGE BAKERS!	5 th June
10	The Harvey Centre	
12	Crossing the River part 4	
13	Wellbeing – Aromatherapy	
14	Sir Peter Scott talk	20 th May
15	Minsterworth RBL	13 th July
17	Ukraine	
19	Recipe	
20	Minsterworth Reading Group	4 th May
21	Gardening by the Severn	
24	Minsterworth Photographic Club – We're Back!	
25	Gluten free fish & chips	
26	Job Vacancy – Minsterworth Parish Council	31 st May
26	Church cleaning for the Jubilee celebrations	19 th May
27	NGGC plant sale	14,15 th May
29	Parish Council meeting and Annual Parish Assembly	9 th May
29	Gluten free Fish & Chips	12 th May
31	200 club, Whist Drive, Church Services	
31	Helpful community links	



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