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Award Winning

Parish Post

Miserden, Whiteway,The Camp
Sudgrove & Wishanger

Spring 2023



Surely, Spring is coming…

It is pleasing to see sheep on the hillside at Whiteway. This field must have been grazed in the past but I haven't seen livestock there in my 25+ years in the area. Keeping more crop cover will surely help to reduce soil erosion on this steep slope.

In this issue of the Parish Post we have ponds, bats and willow as well as dogs, cats and sheep. We also celebrate libraries, trees and the life and works of Alan Evans, the leading craft blacksmith.

Looking forward to the Spring!

The Editor

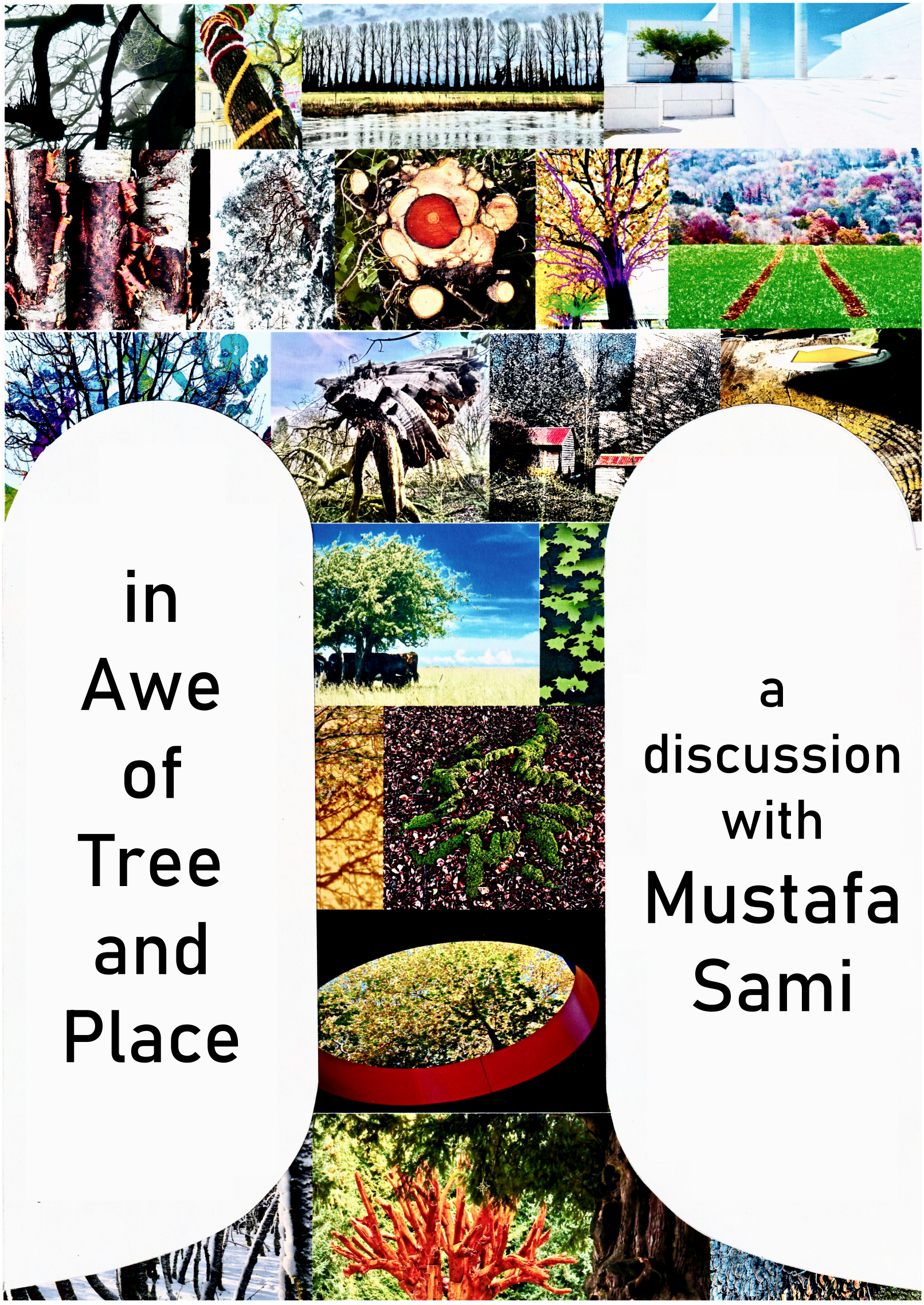
YOGA
MISERDEN HALL
MONDAY
18:15-19:15

Classes are suitable for all levels.



BOOKING ESSENTIAL:
www.bookwhen.com/sambullinghamyoga

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Awe of Tree and Place

in

a discussion with Mustafa Sami

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I have known Mustafa Sami as a Whiteway Colonist and as a designer of the built environment for years, but I didn't know him as a photographer. He recently put on an exhibition ***In Awe of Tree and Place*** at The Exchange in Stroud so, intrigued, I went to see it and was very impressed with the beauty and majesty of his photographs of trees. I thought it would be great to share some of them with readers of the Parish Post - hope you enjoy them and the chat between myself (DH) and Mustafa (MS) about the background to the photos.

David Harris

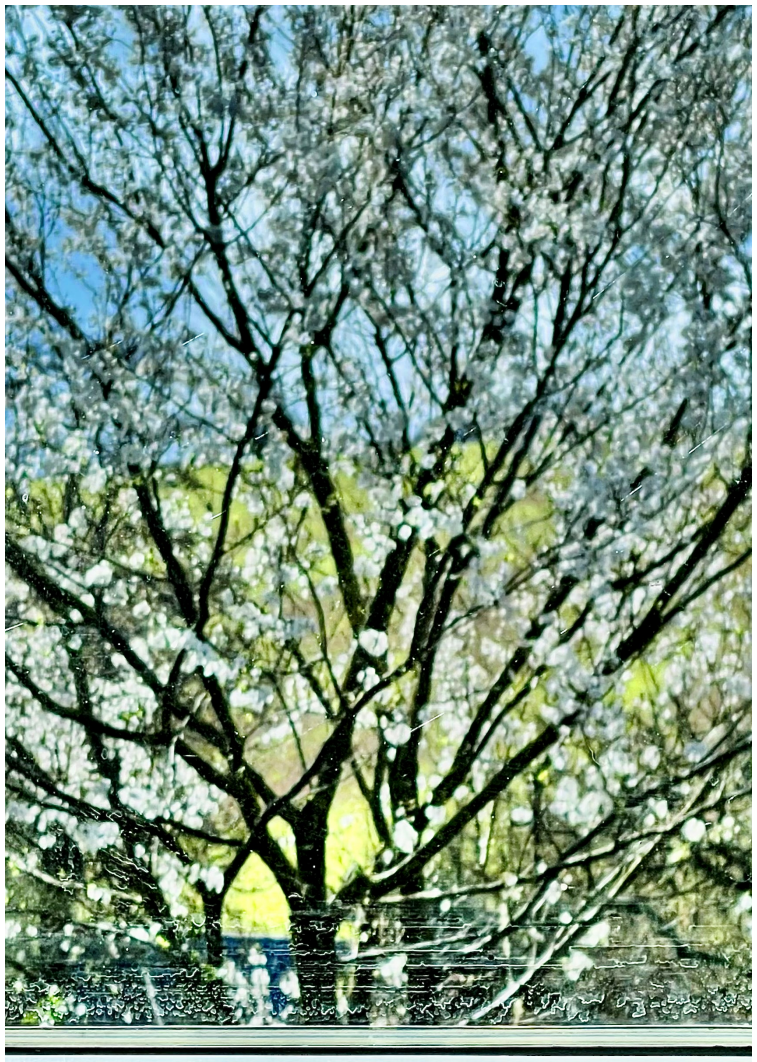
DH: Mustafa, tell me, where did the idea for this exhibition begin?

MS: After a lifetime's career in design, I have come full circle - taking time to focus on my passion for photography that started when I was at college in Brighton. I dropped out of architecture studies and took a new course on "visual communication". I had an inspiring tutor who said to me "you have a choice in how to use this course: spend 3 years learning how to get a job, or 3 years training your eye in what makes a great image". I did the latter.

DH: What has this choice to focus on a great image led to?

MS: I am passionate about photography - taking images and, just as important, sharing them. It is a great thrill to take at least one photo a day (and share it) - it feels the same to me as taking a vitamin pill! Ironically (given my choice regarding the course) photography has paid for several journeys - for example I funded a trip to India by selling my photos for use in a book.

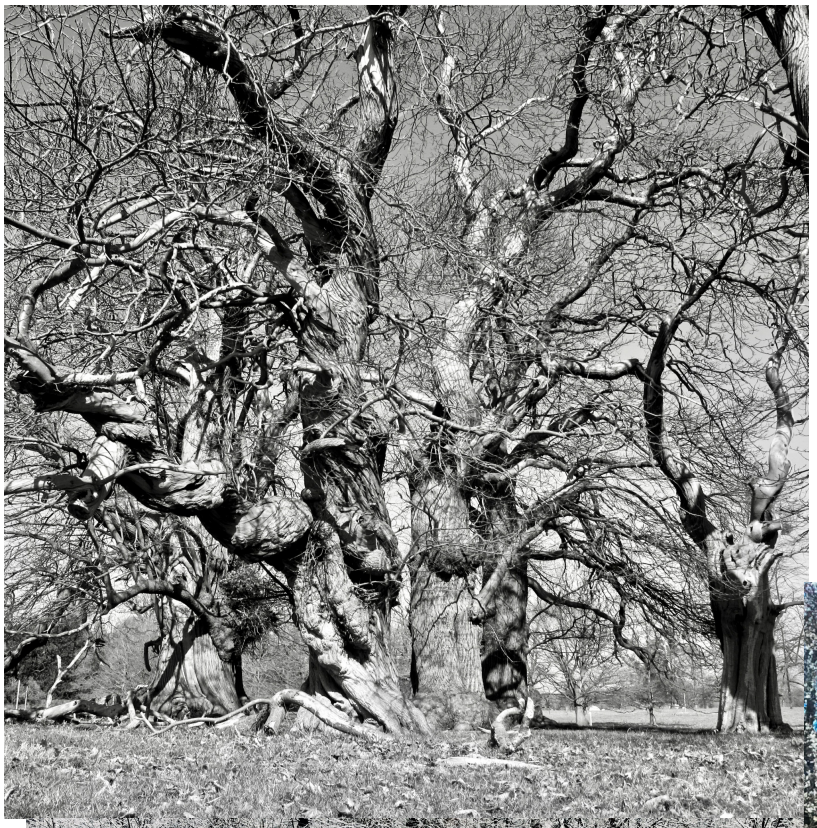
DH: What gave you the idea to focus on Trees for this exhibition?







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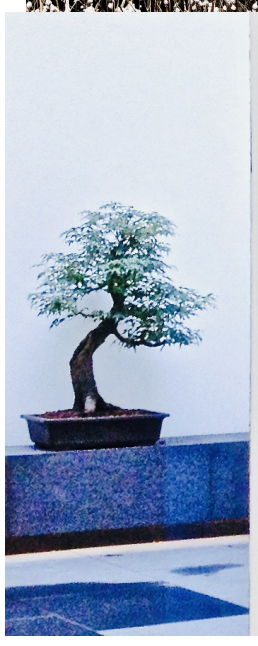
MS: This goes back to when I was getting to know Susie *(artist Sue Rae: now Mustafa's wife of over 40 years - Ed.)*. I would spend time with her at her parent's place in Oxfordshire, and we took long walks in Crowsley Park where I was struck by the sight of the massive old horse chestnut trees *(see photo to the left)*.

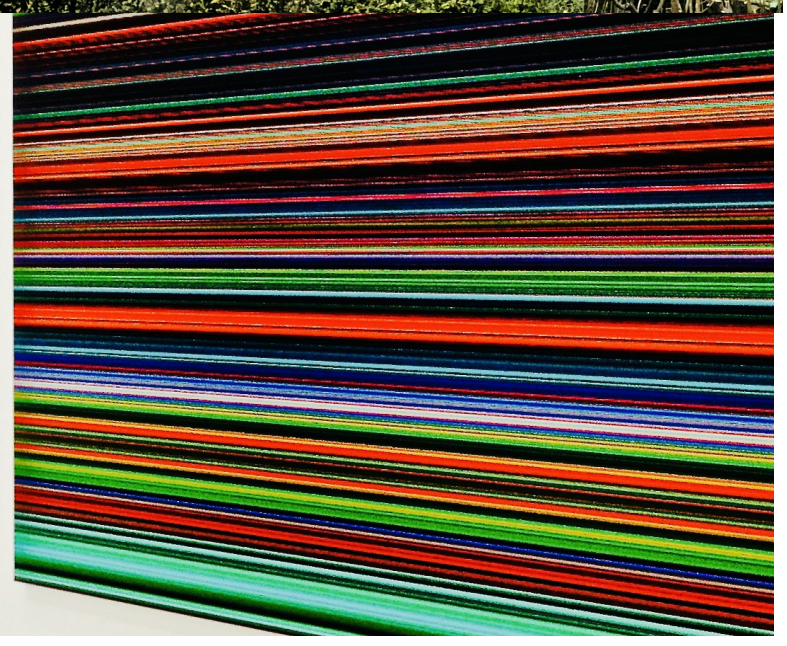
DH: Trees are associated with a very important time if your life then?

MS: Yes, and these huge trees also reminded me of Kenya where I lived as a child. We drove from Nairobi to Mombasa every year for holidays and I









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would see the huge Baobab trees (with their distinctive "bottle shaped" trunks). Since a young age I have been in awe of trees.

DH: Awe is obviously a key word: some collections of tree photographs have a botanical focus (by species for example) and others I have seen catalogue trees that are remarkable in themselves (their age or size…) but I sense you are reaching for something else here?

MS: Yes, this body of work is not a catalogue or identity focused, it is a "side-on" glance at them in situ - the surroundings set the context. Trees are so much larger and longer lived than us which makes us think of things greater than ourselves and reflect on other themes - in my case our place in the world - and our impact on its ecology.

DH: And in Miserden parish we are very lucky to have so many trees around us…

MS: Yes, Susie and I take many walks locally. One of the photos was taken 2 or 3 years ago on a frosty winter's day and captures the spirit of the place wonderfully. One thing we all know for certain is that without trees we cannot survive - they are as essential to life on earth as the air we breathe - irrespective of just how magnificent or seemingly insignificant they are.



WORKSHOPS AT MISERDEN






We are now offering a variety of lovely workshops in our beautiful vintage glasshouses just outside the Garden at Miserden. Working with local artists and craftspeople our workshops cover a wide range including floristry, jewellery making, watercolour painting, cookery, ceramics, mosaics, painting using plant based paints, woodwork, copper bowl making and children's workshops - with more being added throughout the year.

Private workshops can be arranged for groups and parties and the venues, including the Glasshouse Café and the quaint old school room in the centre of the village, can also be hired for events or as temporary exhibition space.

For full details visit **www.miserden.org** or email **hello@miserden.org**





The Glasshouse Café and The Garden at Miserden winter opening hours - open Saturdays and Sundays 10am - 4pm

Subscribe to our mailing list to keep up-to-date with events, workshops and latest news by visiting our website **www.miserden.org**

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Do you know someone on a state pension who struggles to make ends meet? Or perhaps a couple? What if they could get a boost to their income?

Too good to be true? A lot of other state pensioners certainly think so: a third of those who are eligible miss out. That's a million older people scrimping and saving and going cold when they don't need to.

This pension boost is called 'Pension Credit'. It not only provides extra pension income: **it can also cover or reduce a host of other costs - rent, mortgage payments, council tax, energy and utilities, TV licence, dentists and opticians and more**. Overall, the effects really can be transformative to pensioners who are struggling.

How to qualify? State pensioner households may be eligible if income is less than £182.60 per week for single people and £278.80 for couples. Pensioner households with higher income may be eligible in some circumstances - for instance if there is a carer in the household or a disability.

So, have a think: do you know someone who may qualify? If in doubt, search for Pension Credit online, ring the Pension Credit Helpline - **0800 99 1234** (8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday), or get in touch with us at Citizens Advice Stroud and Cotswolds, **0808 800 0510** (10am-4pm Monday to Thursday, 10am-1pm Friday) where we can check you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. Don't hesitate - Pension Credit can make a big difference.

Stroud and Cotswold districts Citizens' Advice



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Supporting Role
Gardening by Sue Spielberg

Last week I spent a very satisfying practical day at a workshop near Bath learning how to make supporting structures for the garden using foraged, hedgerow material. As longer, warmer days will soon be upon us, with the inevitable flush of tender wayward growth surging skywards, I thought I might pass on some of the most useful tips I gleaned from my time there so that we can all create beautiful, useful and sustainable supports to keep our plants where we want them throughout the summer.

- Hazel and willow are the most commonly used materials for garden structures, though depending where you are in the country, sweet chestnut, birch, beech and lime also make excellent subjects for bending and manipulating.
- Even long prunings from the garden such as wisteria, vines or honeysuckle make excellent material for weaving and binding. Even bramble looks lovely when made into a circular hoop - though I may not be trying that one any time soon!
- Traditionally canes and rods were cut any time between November and March before the sap started to rise, but with climate change it is better to complete gathering by the end of February.
- For many structures where you want smooth curves such as circular hoops, the most useful material is the long slender one year-old growth at the top of hedgerows before farmers have flailed, or the sucker-like growth arising from the base of shrubs. Typically these will only last a season before being consigned to the compost heap or dry hedge.
- Two or three year-old growth will be more robust with twiggier side branches. They can be used as they are, simply inserted into the ground with the branches woven in, around and through each other to make an upturned basket shape. These will serve their purpose for about two years.
- Three or four year-old growth with thick bases will make much sturdier structures like arches or wigwams that will last about four years before they finally rot in the ground and need to be replaced.
- Growth is most pliable soon after harvesting so if you are not using it straightaway, store in bundles in a cool out of the way place such as a hedge bottom out of direct sunlight and rain.



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- Where the ground is hard, make a hole with a metal bar first so that you can push the material at least 30cm (12in) below soil level.
- Young willow or cornus stems are very good for binding and tying and make a lovely alternative to string.
- It is advisable to seek permission from the landowner before helping yourself to foraged material.
- https://coppice-products.co.uk is a good place to find coppice suppliers if you can't find what you want locally.

As well as simply pushing foraged material into the ground and interlacing it to make various shapes, one of the most useful techniques to learn is how to make a multi-stranded hoop as this can be fixed to upright poles to make more specialised supports for peonies, dahlias, delphiniums etc.

1: Start by working the rods across your knee as this will help give them a 'memory', and they will start to bend in the right direction.

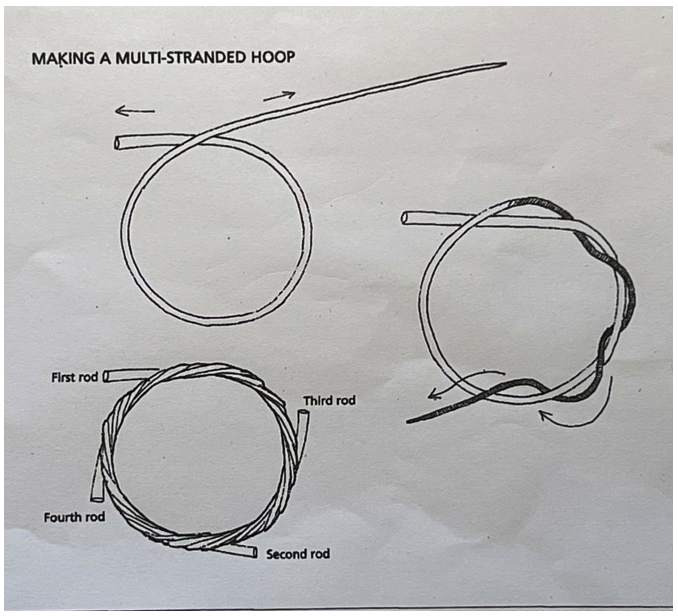


2: Take one rod and curve it into a hoop, gently wrapping the tip end around it.

3: Take a second rod, laying the butt end inside the hoop directly opposite the butt of the first, and gently wrap the whole length around to build up the hoop structure.

4: Add a third and fourth rod for rigidity, aiming to end up with the four butts equidistant from each other, rather like the 12, 3, 6 and 9 on a clock face.

5: For best effect, always wrap the material in the same direction. If in doubt, lay the butt end alongside your very first rod, move it round a bit and start weaving from there.



6: Depending on what material you use, you should have a strong hoop after weaving four rods. The butts or tail ends can then be trimmed down with secateurs, ready for use in your chosen structure.



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Interlocking arches create a neat but sturdy support



A combination or hazel hoops and uprights



Low parallel hurdles were created to support broad beans



Hazel supports look great in pots and containers too



Woven hazel support, ideal for tall herbaceous plants

These photographs show just some of the supports we made at the workshop. For ease we practiced on the grass, though obviously you will be creating these in your borders or containers.

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Flourishing Floodplains by Tom Uridge

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) are working in partnership with the green recovery fund to improve and restore the wetland habitat found in the Severn and Avon Vale floodplains.

The flourishing floodplains project aims to create a wildlife rich network of ponds and waterways across 4000 hectares of farmed landscape whilst restoring existing derelict ponds across further landscape's within the catchment.

Waterways and ponds are amazing spaces for wildlife, stretching this vision over an entire landscape not only increases connectivity allowing species such as Curlew and eel to thrive but it returns the countryside to a more biodiverse, rich space, as it once was. Where there is water there is life!



Curlew: (image by dpexcel from Pixabay)

The intensification of farming which started during the first world war has seen hedges grubbed out and ditches filled in, along with farmland ponds. Our farmed landscape would have once looked very different with agriculture and wildlife existing side by side.

Ditches were originally created to intermittently flood the land, farmers would have created a series of channels running away from a main watercourse in a grid like fashion, the flow of water into these ditches would have been controlled by a series of sluice gates installed across the network.

In the spring when the weather warms up the sluices would have been opened and the ditches flooded allowing the water to spill on to the surrounding farmland. The idea behind this was to encourage the growth of the grass effectively speeding up natural processes meaning that farmers were able to release their livestock on to the land sooner, where fresh green grass would await. Unfortunately as farming machinery got

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larger the wildlife rich waterways were filled in to increase productivity and to accommodate the larger turning circles of modern-day tractors.

The WWT wish to reverse the Severn and Avon vale's fortunes by creating and restoring wetland habitat, Miserden estate being within the Severn catchment was approached by the WWT last year and asked if we would like to take part in this recovery project, of course we obliged.

Initially maps were looked over by project leaders to establish if there were any historic ponds that were fit for restoration, many were found across the estate but it was decided that two were appropriately situated and would benefit from being restored. As well as two restoration projects it was decided that we had the available land to create a new large pond.

Over the autumn months outside contractors were brought in to begin the works, vegetation was cleared, trees were felled along the margins and the existing ponds were excavated. The two restoration ponds still had their original clay lining so this line was followed, clay was brought in and smeared along the base of the new pond creating a seal to stop water from escaping.

In time all three sites will revegetate around the margins, this habitat should attract farmland birds, newts, insects and bats to name a few. Carbon storage, soil improvement and flood alleviation are all factors that will be positively affected by this project and Miserden estate has been very happy to work with the WWT to help them achieve their goals.

Footnote: One of the ponds is viewable from the public footpath that runs from Bull Banks road up to the ram field, another is by the Manor House front entrance and the final one is at Clements farm



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Badger Face Texels by Sue Andrews

When I suggested to Points West they might like to come and see our early lambing flock of relatively rare Badger Face Texel sheep, I wasn't quite prepared for the enthusiasm we evoked.

Local reporter Steve Knibbs, with photographer Mark, arrived at our farm at eleven in the morning as arranged. While Mark set up by the lambing pens, Steve chatted to us about the breed and our involvement with it.

The Badger Face Texel, or Dassenkop, is a medium sized, well-muscled carcass breed, just like any other member of the Texel family. The novelty value is the lovely dark wool colouring with cream accessories, such as eyebrows, chin marking and legs. They are closely related to Blue Texels, of which we already have a sizeable flock.

I had to admit that during lockdown in 2020 I got a little carried away bidding at an online sale that replaced face to face markets at the time. Buying online, never having seen the animals is always a risk, but we were only purchasing from a fellow breeder in Northern Ireland whose stock we know well. A two year old ewe, Apricot, was advertised with her twin lambs, Chillie, a male and Cherry a female, and we purchased her plus four doses of semen to a very good ram of the same breed.

Later that year we also bought a further ewe lamb, Crocus, who looked really lovely. Realising I could get rather carried away with online sales, Aub had put a strict lid on the price we could pay for her, but when he came in for coffee and I told him she gone past that figure, he said 'well, don't miss her for fifty quid!' Three hundred pounds later she was ours, but we've not regretted it.

Apricot's son Chillie sold to a pedigree flock in Scotland last autumn, and her last year's ram lamb, Dudley, is now a stock ram with another local breeder. We don't usually lamb this early, but last year put twenty four Badgerface and Blue Texel ewes to the rams, and fifteen held, so very pleased. January is not their usual time to lamb!

We had Apricot, Cherry and Crocus all due to the Irish ram. Trying to persuade the ewes to lamb at a set time, especially if cameras are involved, is never easy and both Cherry and

Photo of Sue and a Badger Face Texel lamb above courtesy of Adam Hughes Photography

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Crocus had already lambed before Steve and Mark arrived, but aware this could happen I'd been instructed to video the births if possible and this footage was transferred from my phone so they could use it.

Mark filmed the two ewes in their pens with their lambs, Cherry with two and Crocus with three, and some footage of me holding one of the triplets while Steve interviewed us. It was then decided they would return at six o'clock that evening to hopefully catch some 'lambing live' for the evening programme.

During the afternoon Apricot was looking most uncomfortable, although not actually indicating that she was starting to lamb, until about 5 pm when she pushed out a waterbag. I rang Steve to suggest they hurried up, and he said they would hopefully be with us in forty-five minutes.

When they arrived Aub already had Apricot on her side and was kneeling down investigating whether she had a problem. Once he managed to put his hand inside, he realised she had both lambs coming together, never good. I plied camera man



and reporter with coffee then retook my position at Apricot's head, soothing and persuading her that now was not a good time to get up.

After five or so minutes, although it seemed much longer, Aub looked up at Mark and said he hoped he wasn't still filming live! Eventually, after an incredibly difficult manoeuvre, Aub managed to bring one lamb forward and both were delivered successfully. Two healthy ram lambs, named David and Ian by Steve, after the Points West presenter and weather man!

While filming had not actually continued to be shown live the whole time, Richard, the programme editor in Bristol had watched all of it. He rang me the following day, very impressed with Aubrey's skill, saying he felt he needed a nurse alongside wiping his brow. He also said there had been so much interest in the piece they did show that he'd had numerous calls from both their internal office and the general public, wishing to know how Apricot and her lambs were.

He requested I took a thirty second video clip of the family, which I did, and this was shown the following evening. Points West visited for a further 'Lambing Live' on Monday February 13th, arriving just after nine am and not leaving until seven in the evening. Luckily, we did have one ewe lamb during the day, and there were plenty of lambs for them to see. They are aiming to return just prior to Three counties Show in June, to see how the sheep are prepared for shows and then at Malvern for the showing. It should be fun. This time I'll let everyone know on the village app.



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Warning! Books can be seriously addictive!

Miserden Parish Community Library continues to recover and grow following the disruption of COVID closures.

Miserden School are now visiting regularly, and we have made good use of Gloucestershire County Council's 'Build Back Better' grant to buy some new titles suggested by the children. We're also beginning to develop a dyslexia-friendly collection which will help ensure all readers can find books they'll enjoy.

The GCC grant took the pressure off the need to fund-raise, although we shared the running of the bookstall at Whiteway Colony Fete last September - a great way of 'moving on' some of our stock, as well as raising a useful sum for purchasing new books. We are very grateful for the donations of pre-loved books which have kept our stock fresh and interesting.

If you think you've already read every book in the library that you want to read - come and check out some of the 'new titles'.

That's the good news. The challenge is that new volunteers are urgently needed. Two of the library's long-serving volunteers have had to stand down, because of caring commitments at home. This may be temporary, and in the short term other members of the team can cover the duties, but in the long term we need more people to volunteer to help run the library. Could this be you?

What's involved? The library is open every Wednesday, 2.30-4.00 p.m., in the attic room in Miserden Village Hall. Volunteers arrive 10



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minutes beforehand to open up. We work in pairs, and new volunteers would be paired with an experienced team member.

You might find yourself: welcoming small groups of children from the school with their teacher; welcoming other borrowers, and checking books in and out; tidying the shelves and ensuring the books are in the right places; sorting through book donations and accessing those that are suitable additions. Full training and guidance will be given.

What skills do you need? A love of books, but no special expertise. A friendly and welcoming approach to people of all ages. An ability to think alphabetically is handy when reshelving fiction books! If you think you might be interested, get in touch with Julie Nelson on 07920 253157 or rev.julienelson@googlemail.com.

Some of our volunteers are also our best borrowers. Spending time with the books when 'on duty' means they see all the lovely titles that can be borrowed. They swap recommendations with other borrowers. It's a bit like an informal book club or reading group (without the wine…).



Book browsing and borrowing is addictive, and can lead you on unexpected journeys. I recently borrowed *The Librarian of Auschwitz*, intrigued by the title. It's by Antonio Iturbe and is based on the incredible true story of Dita Kraus. It was fascinating, sad, harrowing, inspiring… One of the handful of books in Dita's secret library was *The Good Soldier Svejk* by Jaroslav Hasek, a book that made her laugh and probably helped her survive.

I kept thinking, where have I heard of that book before? And then I realised. We have a copy in Miserden library! So I've borrowed *Svejk*, and it's next on my pile to read, once I've finished Margaret Attwood's *The Year of the Flood*. That's a dystopian novel about a pandemic that wipes out most of the people on earth. I think I'll need a laugh to lift my spirits after that. And if I don't find *Svejk* as funny or interesting as expected, well that's OK.

Libraries enable you to take risks with your reading. Instead of buying, you can borrow and try.

Libraries make knowledge, learning and entertainment available to all, whatever their income - so vital as we all struggle with the 'cost of living crisis'. And borrowing books from a library, rather than buying, reduces your carbon footprint too! Three good reasons to support your local community library.



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Pets Corner
by Claire Coles-Jones

It's probably a little known fact that at the Hospital that I work at, two of the vets are highly allergic to cats and rabbits. Yet despite this they have continued with their chosen career path in the Veterinary world, albeit with streaming eyes and sneezing! Allergy medication is always at hand for them, and we try to remember who is allergic to what when booking appointments! Around 10-20% of the worlds population suffer from allergies - and cat allergies are twice as common as dog allergies.

Myth - Cat and dog hair cause allergies **Fact** - They don't - it's actually the 'dander'. Dander is the material shed from our bodies, and from other animals that have fur, hair or feathers. It is microscopic, and transported in the air. It settles in our houses, in our bedding, furniture and carpets, where it is feasted on by dust mites…

Myth - you can buy 'hypoallergenic' breeds of cat and dog. **Fact** - Despite popular belief, hypoallergenic cats and dogs do not exist. However the reason some cats are recommended over others for allergy sufferers is due to how many proteins they produce (in their saliva etc). It can also be because they have less saliva, or are hairless, or don't shed as much fur, which means that there is less saliva soaked fur/hair in the home. Some people choose to use prescription medication to help with their allergies. However, if you'd like to avoid this there are some steps you can take to help reduce your allergic reaction to cats.

1. Grooming your pet on a daily basis can help reduce the amount of fur that they shed around the house. Less fur means less dander around your house! Plus, your cat will enjoy the social bonding time with you.
2. Carpets and floorboards have a habit of collecting lots of fur, so a daily clean/hoover can make a huge difference
3. Air purifiers have been known to help reduce allergens floating in the air
4. As people spend a lot of time in the bedroom and come into contact with bed linens which can harbour dander, keeping cats out of the bedroom should greatly reduce your reaction

The good news is that research suggests that some people build up a natural tolerance for their cat over time - and evidence shows that children brought up with animals are less likely to suffer with allergies than those in a very 'sterile' environment. Obviously this is not always the case - but it's reassuring to those of us who detest cleaning and love our pets!

Why does my cat hunt when she has plenty of food?

Domestic cats hunt because they are finely tuned to respond to sensory stimuli which signals the presence of prey. The signals are both auditory and visual. A domestic cat will be motivated to hunt if and when she receives the correct sensory stimulation - be it a mouse in the undergrowth, or your toes under the duvet cover! They simply cannot help responding!

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If a cat relied upon being hungry before they hunted it would place them in a vulnerable position because they would be weaker than normal. This is why they are motivated to hunt because of specific sensory cues.

Playing with your cat can lead to a frustrated feline if you are not careful…its good for the cat to be able to catch and bite it's 'prey' (string, ball or feather on a string) from time to time. If you really want to satisfy your cats 'stalk, pounce, kill, eat' sequence, then tying a little bit of ham on the end of some string is a really simple way to indulge her. Drag it around, make it tricky - and then allow her to 'catch kill and eat'. It fulfils the whole cycle and causes less frustrated behaviour.

Unusual items that cats bring home.

1. Leaves
2. Caterpillars
3. Underwear/washing/socks
4. Children's toys
5. Sponges

The reason they bring them home is to try and teach you to hunt. What they'd really like you to do (IF they present it to you - NOT if they take it under the bed or hide away…they don't want to share if they do this!) - is for you to practice your stalk - slowly, slowly, soundless movements on all fours - pounce (put your bum in the air and wiggle before you pounce!) and then bite it and kill it… Many of us indulge our cats but I've yet to hear of anyone that does this…!



The Dog Show is back at Whiteway Fete!

This year, I am pleased to report that The Clockhouse Vets will be sponsoring the dog show at Whiteway Fete - and therefore helping me!

There will be a Vet attending, plus a Vet Nurse or two - come and say hello, they are an awesome bunch of people and will be really happy to meet you and your furry friends!

Whiteway Fete will be on **Sunday 3rd September** from 12 noon onwards. As well as the Dog Show there will be a BBQ, beer, teas and cakes and much more!

Claire x

Would you like to work on the Parish Post?

We are looking for a volunteer Co-Editor to help source new writers and articles, liaise with contributors and even write from time to time.

You will work in cooperation with me (David), the existing editor. I will continue to do the graphic design and production of the magazine.

If you are interested
contact:editor.parishpost@hotmail.co.uk

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Alan Evans: that was a man

Alan grew up in Whiteway Colony, the son of Joy and Peter. Both parents were active in the life of the Colony, both were craftspeople who worked in wood. They led a simple, often frugal life in the Quaker tradition of integrity, equality, community, peace and the care of our earth.

Alan's mother Joy (nee Robert) was herself born at Whiteway after her family moved there in the 1920s after being invited to set up a craft economy and a school. Alan's father Peter was a furniture maker and both Peter's work and and Joy's wood carving were firmly in the tradition of the Arts and Crafts Movement

As a child in Whiteway of the 1950s, Alan roamed the fields and woods with his sister Ros and their friends, only returning home for tea. Ros remembers "one day the whole gang of us strayed into a field of free-range pigs they were quickly alert and intent on chasing us, so we all sprinted for the hedge and struggled through, Alan was last bravely acted as a rear-guard defending us from of the fearsome tusks of the boar."

Alan went to Quaker boarding school (Sibford Friends School) - lifelong friend from school days Kevin McGeoghegan recalled "an example of Alan's strong character was when he got to the top of the school, he wouldn't bully juniors as had happened when we were at the bottom of the school. He objected to it and the distress it caused. Alan went on to become Head Boy in his last year and because of his outlook he made many friends in the lower years".

Alan moved on to a Teacher Training course at Shoreditch "where they specialised in handicrafts and he started to follow in the footsteps of his father, by enrolling on the furniture making course. He had, however, been exceptionally good at metalwork while at school and at Shoreditch he went full circle having been bitten again by the metal bug. Alan did the teaching practice stints which were woven into the course but didn't take to that aspect and he decided on a life as an artist blacksmith" said Kevin.

Alan then worked for blacksmith Alan Knight, a member of the Worcestershire Guild of Designer Craftsmen. Knight was by then in his 60's, and was clearly glad of Alan's youth and energy, acknowledging Alan's help with the heavy work as they produced many traditional ecclesiastical commissions. Knight also had the skills of a silversmith, something that would also influence a young Evans but in truth Alan had fallen in love: with the weight of a hammer in his hand, the heat and the heart of the forge, and creating something of beauty from what seems such an intractable material.

Returning home to Whiteway, he converted a wooden shed into a workshop and launched his career. Mary Greenstead (writer and former Keeper of Museums at the Cheltenham Art Gallery

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and Museum) writes of Alan's craft and legacy: "Alan set up his forge at Whiteway in 1978 - an exciting time to be starting out as the craft was being revived by the newly founded British Artist Blacksmiths Association (BABA). He quickly built up a reputation for designing architectural pieces for specific sites, working almost exclusively in iron and steel, and was selected for the Craft Council's Index of Makers in 1980".

By good fortune Michael Roberts (a founder member of BABA) was a mere hammer's throw away in Miserden at his Anvil Barn Forge and it would be one of many enduring friendships that Alan would find in the blacksmith world. Alan was chosen by the Crafts Council for the prestigious commission of Treasury gates for St Paul's Cathedral in London in 1981 *(pictured below)*. Mary writes "The commission established him as one of the foremost artist blacksmiths in Britain - technically excellent, inventive and with a passion for design - a maker who was interested in developing new forms rather than adding a contemporary twist to traditional approaches". Mary booked a touring exhibition of work by the new artist-blacksmiths for Cheltenham Art Gallery and recalls



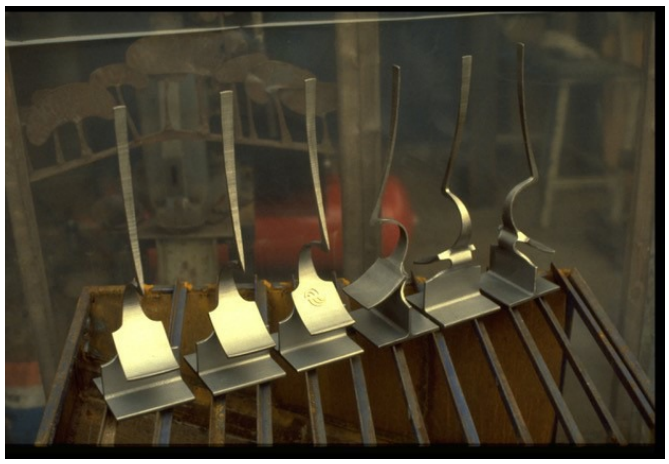
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Alan leading a Master Class "Forging on the River" at the Memphis Museum of Metalwork USA March 2019

"As the local maker, Alan took a leading and hands-on role in organising and setting up the show. We worked together. It was hard work but fun and I noticed how serious and careful Alan was in ensuring that each blacksmith's work was shown to its best advantage".

Many other commissions large and small followed, notably a grille to mark and enhance the entrance to the extended Cheltenham Art Gallery in 1988, a 7.5 ton cross and finial for the dome of the new City Church at Milton Keynes in 1991, screens at Broadgate in the City of London in 1990. Then in 1995 entrance gates and railings for the new Public Records Office at Kew and gates for Bigg Market in Newcastle upon-Tyne in 2006.



RSA: Waste Abatement Trophies 1995

Fellow blacksmith and friend Andy Rowe said "for many of these projects Alan was able to rely on the support and help of his blacksmithing family. It worked both ways, many of us including myself gained invaluable experience as assistants on various large-scale projects with Alan and he too in return, assisted us on some of our projects. He was a very confident designer and maker but humble to the core". Alan's last major commission, the Gateshead Big Gate, was completed in 2007.

As recalled by long time friend Neil Spencer, Alan met his future wife Lesley in 1984: "When Lesley met Alan at the Air Gallery in London, she had already singled out his work from the Craft Council directory and rather deftly, I think, initiated their relationship by wiping some bird poo from his new shorts. A year later they bought the Old Police House in Bisley. Alan had plenty of work through the nineties but restrictions on noise and working practices at his Whiteway workshop were a bind, so in 2000 they celebrated the millennium by moving to Catswood as it could provide large vegetable garden for Lesley, and space, it was hoped, for a workshop with a more liberal working environment."

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Neil continued "Alan was deeply attached the Cotswold countryside that he grew up in. His first springer spaniel, Holly, was a present from Lesley on his 50th birthday, and provided him with a companion to take beating. The boundaries of the garden at Catswood are largely open and attracted deer. Lesley's frustration at the disappearance of her broccoli and runner beans in 2011 was the impetus for Alan to consider culling and led to him getting himself trained both in shooting and butchering. Animal welfare was always his priority and campaigned for the abolition of lead bullets, to which end he started to make his own out of copper. He greatly enjoyed stalking and would spend many a happy hour just watching the wild-life and taking photographs rather than shooting."

Faced with a diagnosis of terminal pancreatic cancer last year, Alan set about putting his affairs in order. Donald Workman spoke at Alan's funeral: "It was only January the 22nd when Alan called me down to Catswood saying *Could you help Lesley organise my funeral*, that day we spoke for most of the afternoon. Alan being his normal clear thinking self generally directed the conversation, and I learnt that I was a small part of his plan. Then just a week later Alan had gone".

Donald continued "Alan had set in train the disposal of workshop, and many of the things that gave his more recent life meaning, he faced his death with the same approach he used in his work practice: meticulous planning and determined endeavour". In December Alan and Lesley, a partnership in so many ways and for many years, were married in Cheltenham.

Final words: Jason Page of the Deerstalkers online forum "Alan was a remarkably kind man… he won the respect of everyone in this community". George Breeze retired Director of Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery: "Mary Greensted and I were so grateful to have the opportunity to say farewell to Alan: One of the great Artist-Blacksmiths of the Twentieth Century."

Alan Robert Evans; born 18 June 1952; died 31 January 2023

Note: this article was compiled by the editor from speeches made at Alan's funeral: thanks to his widow Lesley for permission to use them and the accompanying photos.



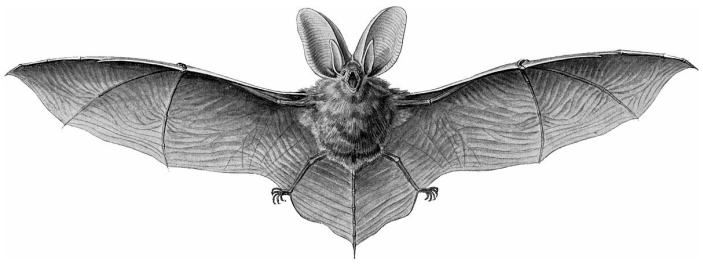
Alan on holiday on Isle of Arran 2022 with Poppy his dog



On his death, friends left flowers on his Cheltenham cycle trail series of commissions

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A Bat's-eye view



The countryside charity

Light pollution impacts our view of the night sky but can also have a serious effect on wildlife.

Here, Joanna Ferguson from the Bat Conservation Trust explains why light pollution is such a big problem for these animals.

There are two main reasons artificial light makes life challenging for the 17 types of bats that breed in the UK: avoiding predators, and finding enough flying insects to eat.

Avoiding predators: We think that bats avoid light as it increases their chance of being caught by birds such as peregrine falcons, which have been seen hunting them in our too well-lit cities.

The severity and type of impact of light pollution depend on where the light is falling, the species of bat and the kind of lighting involved. For example, all bats are vulnerable when they are emerging from their roosting sites, the places where they spend the daytime.

A light at a bat roost entrance can not only cause disturbance to the extent that the roost is abandoned, but that bats may also become trapped within it as they're unsure when the night is falling and therefore when it is safe enough for them to go out and feed. Lighting a roost is an offence under the laws that fully protect all UK bats.

Away from the roost, the threat of being caught by predators is more of an issue for the slower flying species, such as long-eared bats.

Finding food Apart from the location and intensity, the colour of the light being used is also important. Many night-flying insects are attracted to light, especially those light sources that emit an ultraviolet component or have a high blue content. This means that there is a potential double impact on our slower flying bats. They're unable to hunt for food such as moths in the light and at the same time, the insects they're looking for are attracted away from darker areas where they normally feed, through what is known as a 'vacuum effect'!

Even where fast-flying bats are seen feeding at lights, it is likely they do this at a risk to themselves. They're in danger of being eaten by predators and in higher competition with other fast-flying bats feeding in the area.

Starting to understand these impacts, and therefore what we can do to mitigate them, led to the Bat Conservation Trust in partnership with the Institution of Lighting Professionals and Clarkson and Woods ecological consultants publishing 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK' in September 2018.

The guidance suggests: only using light where absolutely necessary avoiding light spill to keep habitats suitable for bats in darkness (such as hedgerows, woodland and waterways) where light is required, only having it on when people need it (for instance using triggered or dimmed solutions), and using warm white LEDs.

This guidance is an important step in raising awareness of the negative impacts of artificial lighting and how we can all do our bit to avoid or reduce them. Do take a look and see how you can make life easier for your local bat population.

Note: this article was originally published by The Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). You may have recently taken part in the annual Star Count. CPRE campaigns to reduce light pollution so we all have a better chance of experiencing the wonder of our starry night skies - an essential experience in the countryside. The Star Count helps to raise awareness of the issue of light pollution

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Parish Council News
By Martin Ractliffe, Chairman

Dates for the diary: The **Coronation of King Charles the third** will take place on Saturday May 6th. To celebrate this event locally, there will be a Street Party held in Miserden Village on Sunday May 7th. This will be similar to the party held last year which celebrated Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, and was such a successful, happy occasion.

At the time of writing, we have received no guidance from the Palace as to the protocol for the weekend, so the only thing that I can say for sure is the Street Party, and that there will be no Beacon. More will be publicised on the WhatsApp group.

The **Parish Annual Meeting** will be held on May 10th in Whiteway Colony Hall. An event to which you are all invited. The Guest speaker will be announced later.

Grateful thanks are due to our enthusiastic and efficient Cotswold Warden, Nick Mann. After the Parish Council pointed out to Nick a short but steep and slippery, dangerous stretch of footpath through a wood at Sudgrove, he quickly sought permission from the landowner to install a flight of steps and erect a handrail along the path. Then, at Nick's request, a team of volunteers turned up and, in atrocious conditions, happily carried out the work to a very good standard.

The Cotswold Warden is a voluntary position working under the guidance and funding of Cotswold National Landscapes, based at Northleach, with the aim of protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment. Nick tells me that he has walked every footpath and bridleway in this Parish, erecting waymarkers where necessary and has also arranged for replacement of a couple of stiles, in the same way as the aforementioned steps.

Too late for publication was the **study one evening in February of the night sky**, and in particular the counting of the number of stars visible in the Constellation of Orion. This event was carried out in conjunction with the annual Star Count organised by The Council for the Protection of Rural England and is designed to monitor the growing problem of light pollution throughout the Country.

We can not call ourselves a "dark skies" area here, but would almost qualify. I would urge everybody to turn off any unnecessary external lighting to help protect this status.



Nick Mann and a team of volunteers install the steps at Sudgrove

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PARISH POST CONTACT DETAILS
Email: editor.parishpost@hotmail.co.uk

Please could anyone intending to submit an article, advert or announcement to the Parish Post that is not a regular item, let the editor know as far in advance of the deadline as possible . The editor will acknowledge receipt of all articles, so if you do not hear back chase it up. **The deadline for the next Parish Post will be May 19th**

It's your Parish Post!

The Parish Post is created from stories written by our readers. We have great regular contributors but we would love to hear from more writers.

Stories, photos and memories are all welcome. Your friendly editor is always willing to help get the article into shape if you are not used to writing.

The Editor

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PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS
These are held on the last Wednesday of every month at 7.30 pm. All members of the Parish are welcome to attend. Participation is at the discretion of the Chairman.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS
Plans of any applications for property in this Parish may be viewed by appointment with the Parish Clerk.
Tel: 01285 821 871
Email: clerk.miserdenpc@hotmail.co.uk

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