

HENLEY

life

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October 2025

THE Henley Literary Festival

Food for thought with
Mariella Frostrup
and Belles Berry

Featuring

New school experiences, 8-page supplement

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Mariella Frostrup and
Belles Berry
Photo: Dan Jones

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HENLEY
Life

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HENLEY
Life

Free monthly lifestyle magazine for local residents, businesses and visitors.

CIRCULATION INFORMATION

10,000 copies are hand-delivered to homes in South Oxfordshire and Berkshire each month and into high footfall areas and outlets by our professional team. Another 1,000 copies are available to pick up in many establishments across town and are also available at most Henley events.

We can also deliver on request to an out of area business/event.

Pop into the office at 1 Station Road, Henley, for your copy.
Don't miss out as they go fast!

OCTOBER see's the return of the Henley Literary Festival, which moves to 10 days this year, putting it among the biggest events of its kind.

Our cover feature is an interview with the daughter of Dame Mary Berry, Belles. She has combined forces with Mariella Frostrup to create a cookbook for women in midlife.

The pair will be in conversation with Steph Douglas at Henley town hall on October 11 as part of the festival.

With literature in mind, Amanda Stewart speaks to author Paul Waters, who has penned a warm and witty mystery set in India.

With children firmly back into the swing of things at school, we have an eight-page education feature, New School Experiences. Seven local independent schools talk about their approaches to teaching and how they nurture their pupils.

Natalie Aldred interviews Adriana Bec, first violinist of the Neruda String Quartet, which is playing in the Northend Concert series and, as ever, we have our comprehensive list of events for your diary

It's World Menopause Day on October 18 and our women's health columnist, Dr Shilpa McQuillan, tells what you need to do for a "midlife reset".

Warren Kerley, the founder of Tank2, the design and marketing agency, is the subject of My Henley Life.

Finally, new for this month, we have a recipe feature, brought to you by the Crooked Billet in Stoke Row, which tells you how to make its sticky toffee pudding. So why not make a batch and, like the magazine, we hope you enjoy!

The Henley Life team



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CROOKED BILLET October Kitchen

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01491 681048



FOR that extra hour of day light, clocks go back in October announcing autumn, shifting cravings from light summer dishes to warm, satisfying comfort food. Skinny latte to spiced pumpkin latte. Gazpacho to leek & potato.

Chefs love October's transition. Cooler autumn seas, Britain's seafood at it's best. Mussels, crab, oysters, sole, turbot, cod & hake. Cuttlefish, quid & octopus.

October's falling leaves & crisp air welcome the bounty of root vegetables, brassica, squashes & mushrooms. October is pumpkin season where something in our DNA switches from hankering raspberries to sticky toffee pudding, crumbles & custard.

When clocks go back, steamed steak & kidney pudding, a popular Crooked Billet crowd pleaser. Rich, unctuous gravy, parsley carrots, buttered cabbage. March clocks go forward. Easter

Sunday we're eating lamb. Born in spring, benefitting from summer's lush grazing, lamb arrives at your butchers succulent & delicious in October.

As October leaves fall, golden bronze & rich red ochre, enjoy log fires, autumnal new specials, Cornish octopus, steamed steak pudding at The Crooked Billet.

'The Thomas Crown Affair' movie theme song 'Windmills of Your Mind' has the line, 'the autumn leaves were turning to the colour of her hair'. Beautiful. Tony Christie covered the song, performing at The Billet on October 7th & 8th — catch the autumn leaves plus Christie's hits '(Is This the Way To) Amarillo', 'Avenues & Alleyways' & many more.



CROOKED BILLET Sticky Toffee Pudding, Sticky Toffee Sauce and Devonshire Clotted Cream

Sticky Toffee Pudding

- Pour 160ml boiling water over dates. Soak for 30 minutes, mash them up a bit with a fork
- Electric mixer bowl, beat butter, demerara, vanilla essence, & bicarbonate together, then gradually beat in eggs & treacle.
- Use spatula, gradually fold in flour & milk. Then fold the dates in.
- Pour batter into a buttered, floured rectangular tray bake tin (needs to be 1.5L, approx. 28cm x 16cm x 8cm)
- Bake in pre-heated 180°C oven for 25/30 mins until risen & firm
- Remove the pudding from oven, rest for 10 minutes, use a palette knife to loosen well from sides of tin, turn out onto a board & cut into portions.

Sticky Toffee Sauce

- Put muscovado & butter in saucepan, medium heat with half the cream, bring to a simmer until sugar dissolves. Stir in the treacle, simmer for 2 minutes, add the rest of cream.
- Generously pour over the pudding portions. Accompany with dollops of clotted cream.

For the pudding

- 220g stoned, chopped medjool dates
- 85g unsalted butter
- 140g demerara sugar
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 1tsp bicarbonate soda
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2tbsps black treacle
- 175g self-raising flour
- 100ml full fat milk

For sticky toffee sauce

- 175g muscovado sugar
- 22ml double cream
- 50g butter cut into 6 chunks
- 1tbsp black treacle
- Clotted cream to serve

Diary Dates

OCTOBER 2025

THURSDAY 2ND OCTOBER

Sherlock Holmes and The Sign of Four — a radio play live on stage

KENTON THEATRE



Former Doctor Who stars Colin Baker and Terry Molloy reunite in a second Sherlock Holmes radio play, complete with sound effects. This time, Mary Morstan is

trying to solve the mystery of her father's disappearance and why she receives an annual gift of a pearl. A map of the Agra Fort may provide answers... Tickets for the show, which starts at 7.30pm, cost £27.75 adults, senior citizens and Friends, £26.75 students and children.

For more information, call the box office on (01491) 525050 or visit thekenton.org.uk

TUESDAY 7TH AND WEDNESDAY 8TH OCTOBER

Tony Christie

CROOKED BILLET, STOKE ROW



Best known for (Is This The Way To) Amarillo, singer and entertainer Tony

Christie came out of retirement 20 years ago when the song reached No 1 in the charts and stayed there for six weeks for Comic Relief. He is coming to the gastropub in Newlands Lane with his band for a night of chart-topping hits, including I Did What I Did for Maria, Happy Birthday Baby and Don't Go Down to Reno. The gig has a £50 music cover charge.

For more information, call (01491) 681048 or visit www.thecrookedbillet.co.uk

TUESDAY 14TH OCTOBER

Pasadena Roof Orchestra

CROOKED BILLET, STOKE ROW



Bringing the hot dance, jazz and swing music of the Twenties and Thirties to Stoke Row, the band's founder Duncan Galloway and his Hotsy-Totsy Gang will play songs such as Puttin' On the Ritz and the music of Jeeves and Wooster. There is a £33 music cover charge.

For more information, call (01491) 681048 or visit www.thecrookedbillet.co.uk

TUESDAY 21ST OCTOBER

Nettlebed Folk Club presents Chris While and Julie Matthews with Megan Henwood

THE VILLAGE CLUB, NETTLEBED

Clocking up three decades on the music scene, Chris (vocals, guitar, banjo, dulcimer, bodhran and

percussion) and Julie (vocals, piano, guitar, mandolin and bouzouki) are a timeless musical duo. They will be supported by Megan Henwood. Tickets



for the show, which starts at 7.30pm, cost £19 in advance, £20 on the door.

For more information, call 01628 636620 (between 10am and 8pm only) or visit www.nettlebedfolkclub.co.uk

WEDNESDAY 22ND TO SATURDAY 25TH OCTOBER

Henley Players present An Ideal Husband

KENTON THEATRE



First performed in 1895, Oscar Wilde's play covers issues of reputations, integrity and politics which still apply today. The Henley Players cover the story of Sir Robert Chiltern and his wife, whose idyllic lifestyle and marriage is threatened by the scheming Mrs Cheveley, when she digs up past secrets. Tickets cost £20 adults (£19 conc) Wednesday and Thursday at 7.30pm, £22 Friday and Saturday at 7.30pm, with a "pay what you want" (minimum £7.50) for the Saturday matinée.

For more information, call the box office on (01491) 525050 or visit thekenton.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 22ND OCTOBER

Nine Below Zero

CROOKED BILLET, STOKE ROW



The rhythm and blues band from South London, fronted by Dennis Greaves and Mark Feltham, return to the gastropub with their bluesy tunes.

Formed in 1977, they were the first band to appear on The Young Ones and Mark played blues harp on the theme tune for The Old Grey Whistle Test.

For more information, call (01491) 681048 or visit www.thecrookedbillet.co.uk

SUNDAY 26TH OCTOBER

Northend Concerts present The Neruda String Quartet

NORTHEND VILLAGE HALL



The Neruda String Quartet, comprising Adriana Bec and Mark Leung (violin), Mina Mazur (viola) and Jim Goss (cello), will play Beethoven's String Quartet No. 6 in Bb major Op. 18 and Dvorak's

String Quartet No. 13 in G major Op. 106 at the latest concert in the series. The concert is from 3pm to 4pm and tickets cost £20. For more information, visit northendconcerts.co.uk

ONGOING EVENTS

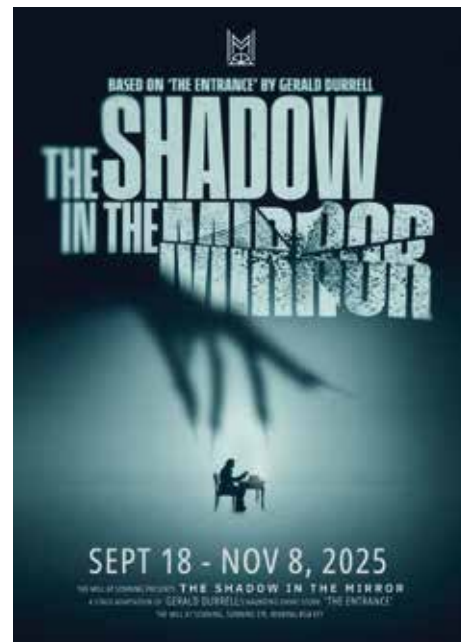
TO SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

The Shadow in the Mirror

THE MILL AT SONNING

Director Dugald Bruce-Lockhart has written a stage adaptation of Gerald Durrell's chilling short story The Entrance. A bookseller who is staying in an old French chateau uncovers a hidden doorway, with something terrifying beyond. As the threshold between the living and the dead is blurred, unknown forces come to light.

For more information, call the box office on 0118 969 8000 or visit millatsonning.com



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Quartet who met on musical speed date to play Northend

BY NATALIE ALDRED

The members of the Neruda String Quartet, the next musical group to play in the Northend Concerts series, met in a thoroughly modern manner.

Comprising Adriana Bec (first violinist), Mark Leung (second violinist), Mina Mazur (viola) and Jim Goss (cello), the four were introduced to each other at the Royal

Academy of Music in London. Adriana, 19, who is Romanian but grew up in San Antonio, Texas, says: "It's actually very funny, at the academy they have something for incoming students, it's an event called chamber music speed dating and it's very much as it sounds.

"You have about a 15 to 20 minute slot with a certain group of people and then you play with them and then they bring in

'We just enjoy playing together so much and we have a really great connection'



Left to right, Mark Leung (second violin), Adriana Bec (first violin), Mina Mazur (viola) and Jim Goss (cello)

new people and then you play with those people. “Then, by the end of the evening, you write a list of all the people that you enjoyed playing with and the people that you didn’t enjoy playing with and you send it to the organiser.

“It’s a lovely lady, her name is Mariah Johnston and she’s an incredible violinist and so she organises it. From there she takes everyone’s ‘pros and cons’ lists, I guess you could say, and then compiles groups from there.

“There is still flexibility allowed after that but it’s like, ‘alright, here’s a preliminary start, start with this group’. So that’s what we did, we got put together.

“I don’t think that we probably would have chosen to play with this formation, but it’s really turned out to be probably one of the best things in my life right now. We just enjoy playing together so much and we have a really great connection and it has just been a very unexpected but wonderful thing.”

Adriana started playing violin age four. “I started the piano at two and then switched to violin at four because I wanted something that I was able to actually play and it was kind of reduced down to my size.

“It got really frustrating because the piano is so big, it was just too intimidating and so I switched to violin. I started with Suzuki and then left

Suzuki when I was about nine and just started playing conventionally. I had several orchestra performances and competitions as a middle school high schooler.

“Long story short, I’ve gone professional during my career and then I came to the Royal Academy of Music on a scholarship last year.

“Since being at the academy I’ve won the violin concerto prize that happens every two years in November and I also performed the Tchaikovsky violin concerto with the Academy Symphony Orchestra.

“I was selected for that, to play with the orchestra with John Wilson conducting in February so that was a very unexpected highlight, that was really incredible.”

In January, the quartet was invited to represent the academy at an international orchestral symposium at the Tianjin Juilliard School in Tianjin, near Beijing, but things didn’t go quite to plan.

“What that entailed was playing in an orchestra comprised of the top three to four players from the top conservatoires around the world.

“There were I believe more than 20 conservatoires, so it was a really interesting concept, it was bringing together students from all over the world as kind of a collaboration across the borders, let’s create this orchestra and do some concerts around China.

“So, we gave two concerts, one was at Juilliard Tianjin and then one was at the National Centre for Performing Arts in Beijing, which is called the Egg, I highly recommend looking at a picture of the venue. It’s absolutely fantastic, it has a lake around it and the gardens are incredible.

“The one problem was that we ended up having a visa issue for our second violinist Mark and Jim, our cellist, and so they actually weren’t able to come so our concerts had to get

cancelled. Luckily Mina, our violist, and I were still able to go but that kind of drew a wrench.

“China didn’t end up being exactly what we were expecting or wanting, but it was still an incredible experience and Mark and Jim were super understanding. They took it so much better than I would have taken it, so big props to them.”

For the Northend Concert, the quartet will play Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 6 in Bb major Op. 18 and Dvorak’s String Quartet No. 13 in G major Op. 106.

“We actually started the Dvorak a little bit earlier this year. This one doesn’t get played very often which is quite a shame, I think it’s one of my favourite quartets from his whole cycle. It’s a very interesting quartet because it was the first one that he wrote post his two-year residency in America so he went to America for two years, came back and this is the first one that he wrote.

In a letter to his friend Alois Göbl, he wrote: ‘I am basking in God’s nature and I am contentedly idle, I am not doing anything, which will probably surprise you, but it’s true, it really is, I’m just lazing around and I haven’t touched my pen.’ It is ironic that during this period of “inactivity” he was writing his quartet in G major.

“It’s really incredible, the second movement for me

personally in a 21st century mindset, the second movement sounds like a movie soundtrack for me.

“Beethoven’s Opus 18 is obviously a classic quartet. It was his homage to Haydn and Mozart.

“As the quartet goes along, the first movement is very Haydnesque, but once you get to the last movement, you really start to see some of later Beethoven, you can kind of see the transition between Haydn and then where Beethoven will end up going, as obviously we have his later music as well.”

The organiser of Northend Concerts, Phil Cashian, is head of composition at the Royal Academy of Music. He founded the music series, at Northend village hall, three years ago.

Phil says: “Set up with some money generously donated through crowdfunding, Northend Concerts has now put on 20 concerts since May 2022.

“The Neruda Quartet concert next month will be the fourth string quartet to visit, an ensemble that seems to be the most popular with audiences.

“A previous highlight, however was the Mëla Guitar Quartet with their stunning arrangements of orchestral works for four guitars. Other highlights have included mezzo-soprano Lotte Betts-Dean and acclaimed pianist Huw Watkins.

“Variety is very much an aim of the series and with no piano at the venue has become a necessity. We’ve had a viol and voice duo, brass quintet performing a reduced version of West Side Story and a concert of music for cello and harp. Highlights for me have been performances of pieces by Piazzola, Debussy, Birtwistle, Radiohead, Purcell and Stravinsky.”

Northend Concerts present “A Study in Scarlet” at Northend village hall on Sunday, October 26 at 3pm.

‘For the Northend Concert, the quartet will play Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 6 and Dvorak’s String Quartet No. 13’

Tickets cost £20. For more information, visit northendconcerts.co.uk

Menopause campaign cooks have great taste

BY NATALIE ALDRED

WHEN Belles Berry and Mariella Frostrup first met, they immediately realised they could combine forces to create a cookbook for women in midlife.

They will be talking about their resulting book, *Menolicious: Eat Your Way to a Better Menopause*, which is on the Sunday Times bestseller list, at Henley town hall next month as part of Henley Literary Festival.

Broadcaster and journalist Mariella, 62, who lives in Somerset, says: “We met in Parliament Square, both of us with our little Suffragette-style placards, campaigning for the single prescription charge for hormone-replacement therapy.

“Belles sort of bounced into my life in a bundle of energy and optimism and joy and went, ‘why don’t we do a cookbook?’ and it seemed like the best idea in the world, that’s my brief account of it. Belles?”

A trained chef and the daughter of Dame Mary Berry, Belles, 51, who lives in Nettlebed, adds: “Yes, well, I didn’t know that Mariella is a cookbook addict, so actually it was serendipity.

“I think we both felt that through our menopause journey there wasn’t a cookbook out there with just recipes and so it was a no-brainer really for both of us. This is a dream come true and I think I’ve got another cookbook of recipes actually, because I’ve always written recipes and I love doing it.”

The cookbook covers everything from breakfasts and smoothies, energising and nutritious lunches, soups and snacks to breads, sweet treats and cocktails.

It provides a toolkit on how to create quick, tasty meals without feeling deprived, to boost energy levels and help with fluctuating hormones.

Mariella says: “There were three test points, if you will.

“One was obviously the sort of nutrition that



Mariella Frostrup and Belles Berry will be in conversation at the Henley Literary Festival

our body needs particularly in midlife but to be honest really all our lives at some level. So we wanted these to be very specifically midlife supplementing.

"We wanted them to be easy, we're very conscious of the fact that very few of us have got three hours to prepare a meal, so we tried to keep everything under half an hour. Belles and I compete over how quickly we can do them. I think I'm the fastest but she's better.

"The other was just we wanted them to be affordable and tasty and bring in other ingredients to recipes in an arena that you might be used to working in. It's just introducing new nutritious elements that are easy to have in your store cupboard and frankly anyone can rustle up."

From freshly ground pesto to the "Queenager" cocktail, there are plenty of classics.

"Mariella's lemongrass and mint mojito is made with honey," says Belles. "The margarita has a bit of sugar, but the kombucha paloma is a winner and that's just got two tablespoons of honey.

"Sunshine in a bowl is a vitamin D soup, it contains quite a lot of mushrooms which have got the vitamin, because going through to winter we all need to up our vitamin D."

Mariella adds: "The kombucha is a really good example of another part of our ethos, which is that we're not expecting everyone to walk around totally puritanical. What we're saying is reboot, add some things that really are good for you, shake it up a bit.

"The soup is one of those things you can make at the weekend at your leisure and sip it, eat it all week rather than just responsively grabbing what your body at any moment feels like."

Belles says: "Weekend batch cooking is brilliant to do. It's cost-effective and you don't waste food, which is a big one."

"Absolutely," says Mariella. "I think the trouble in midlife is that so much of it feels out of your control when it comes to perimenopause symptoms.

"It feels like a really confusing and intimidating time and I think cooking is one of the very few things that you can actually take control of. What you feed yourself is so important, it's as important for your brain health as it is for your body.

"I think that this book really marks yet another watershed moment in the whole menopause campaigning sphere. We very much want this book to be a celebration of what's great about middle

age and onwards and how, with just a little bit of input, you can feel better and embark on brand-new times. I mean, Belles is a brilliant example, she has wanted to do a cookery book all her life and here she is, achieving that dream in her fifties.

"The narrative around menopause might be gloomy and doomy but once you gen up and take control of the things you can, then it's one of the most liberating, fabulous, energising periods of your life.

"You don't want to be the sad person sat there moving a lettuce leaf across your plate while everyone else is eating a feast. These recipes, my son loves the firecracker beef stir fry, my daughter's obsessed with the cocktails and the smoothies, I think she only likes food in liquid form.

"My husband, after his initial reservations — and he can be



Daughter of Dame Mary Berry releases health recipe book

quite stubborn — eventually once he understood that he wasn't going to 'catch' menopause by eating food in Menolicious, now cooks from it all the time. He tries to hide it under the kitchen counter when I walk into the room, so he pretends he's knocking up something out of his own imagination, but obviously I recognise our own recipes!" Was there any pressure over the baking recipes, given Belles's famous mother?

"I've tried to steer a bit away from the baking because I think if you are a serious baker you'll buy a baking book," says Belles.

"I think Mum can have the baking world and I'm

proud of her for it."

Mariella adds: "Also I'm the world's worst baker, so the porridge bread is pretty much the sum of my baking skills."

Belles says: "Mum's coming to watch on October 11, she's on at 6pm and we're on at noon so I'm going to watch her and she's coming to watch us so that will be lovely."

Mariella says: "Maybe we can do a very badly behaved lunch in-between..."

Belles Berry and Mariella Frostrup will be in conversation with Steph Douglas at Henley town hall on Saturday, October 11 at noon. Tickets cost £12.50. Menolicious: Eat Your Way to a Better Menopause is out now.

For more information, visit henleyliteraryfestival.co.uk

'We very much want this book to be a celebration of what's great about middle age and onwards'

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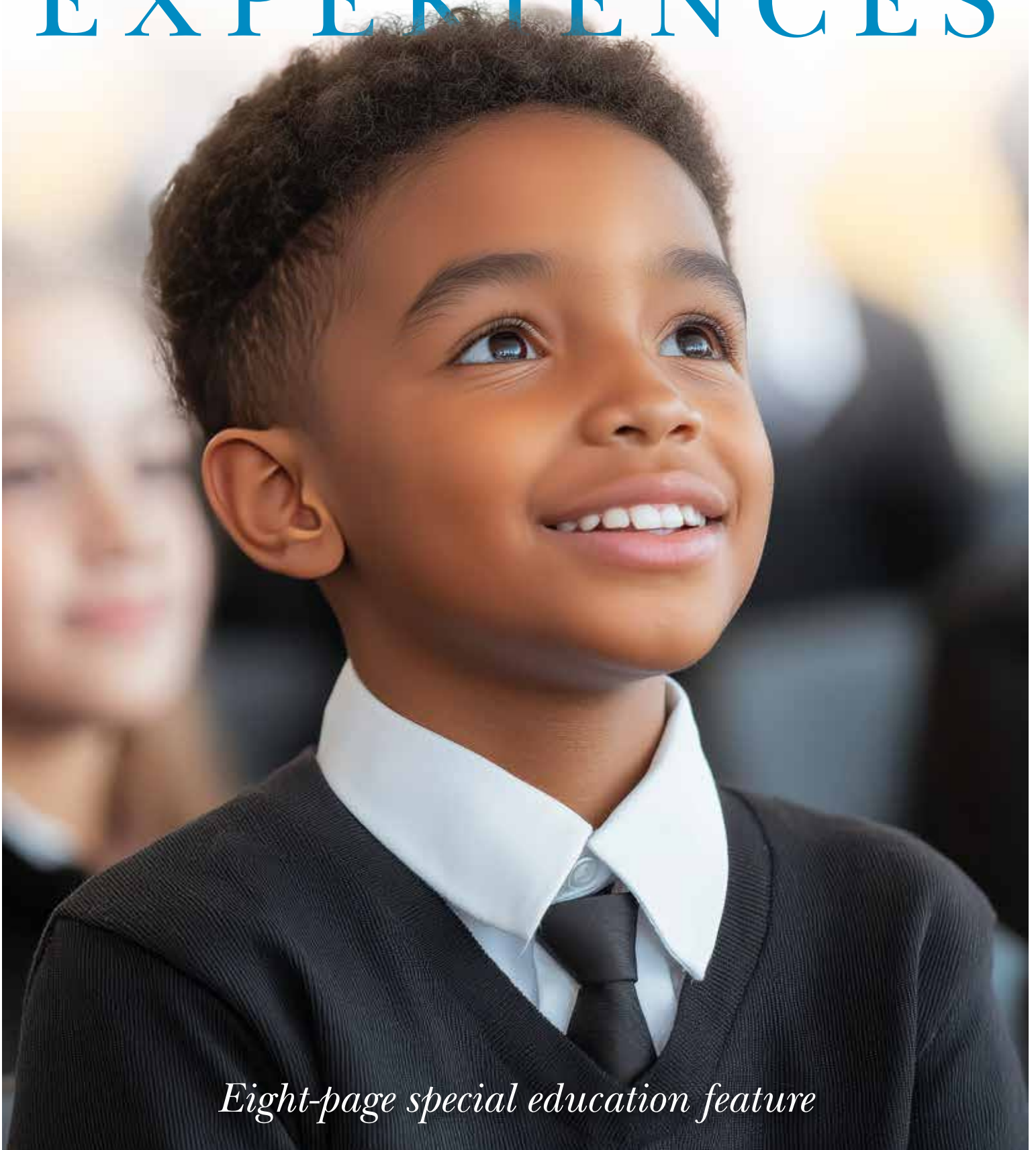
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EXPERIENCES



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Back to school magic at The Abbey Junior School

By Mrs Beccy Newton (Headteacher)

THE first day back at The Abbey Junior School was nothing short of magical.

From the moment the gates opened, pupils were welcomed with bubbles, music, and a surprise appearance by the PE team dressed as inflatable unicorns — much to everyone's delight. Staff handed out colourful 'Welcome Back' stickers as excited girls skipped into their new year groups, wide-eyed and smiling. Inside, the magic continued. Fairy-lit book corners and brand-new books created a warm, inviting atmosphere. Students explored their new classrooms and met their teachers, each receiving a personal welcome, a reflection of the school's strong sense of individual care and community. The energy and confidence of an all-girls environment were clear. From the outset, girls were encouraged to speak

up, be themselves, and embrace leadership. Within hours, School Council campaigns were underway, with speeches, posters, and even homemade badges. Excitement grew around a trip to Parliament and a special mayoral tea — democracy in action! Lunchtimes brought a buzz of their own, with girls eagerly signing up for co-curricular clubs. Whether exploring new interests or deepening existing passions, the wide variety of clubs reflects The Abbey's holistic approach to education. Outside, the playground came alive with new toys and equipment: ride-on animals, tunnels, and bridges sparked laughter, creativity, and teamwork. The first assembly brought everyone together in song, a joyful celebration of the year ahead.



At The Abbey, it's about more than just academic excellence. It's about fostering curiosity, confidence, and connection in a place where every girl is empowered to shine.

The Abbey welcomes mid-year admissions and invites families to book a visit. To learn more, contact our Admissions Team at admissions@theabbey.co.uk

Why all-girls?

WINNER
Independent Girls' School
of the Year 2024



Find out at one of our **Junior School**, **Senior School** or **Sixth Form Open Events**



Scan the QR code for
upcoming events

theabbey.co.uk/events



Putting Girls First

The Abbey



A culture of co-education

Cranford School prides its self as a fully co-educational through-school where boys and girls thrive.

REGARDED as one of the UK's leading small independent co-educational schools, Cranford is renowned for its strong focus on pastoral care and consistently attaining high academic results while building supportive relationships between pupils and staff. As an already established fully co-educational school, pupils thrive where the attention to each pupil and their teaching and learning needs is second to none.

With unbeatable pastoral care and superb facilities for sport and the performing arts, Cranford's pupils enjoy educational excellence. Regarded among families as one of Oxfordshire's best kept little secrets, the school rated "Excellent" in all areas is a warmly welcoming, independent day school for boys and girls aged 3 to 18.

"Cranford enjoys a strong reputation for both teaching excellence and for maintaining a focus on each individual pupil's progress that ensures everyone achieves their full potential. An atmosphere of academic endeavour is at the heart of school life, but a Cranford education offers much more than simple academic success. Ensuring each

child feels safe and supported is key to building their growing confidence in their own abilities. Visitors to our school comment on the happy atmosphere, while our students describe Cranford as a family community where everyone knows and supports each other. Our aim is to ignite every individual's curiosity and interest and I am delighted to say that the scope of our students' accomplishments is exceptional." Headmaster Dr James Raymond.

The excellent quality of education on offer for each and every Cranford pupil is a hallmark, where academic pursuits are supported by an opportunity rich and extensive co-curricular programme. Beyond the classroom, these opportunities offer pupils ways to expand learning, build confidence and explore their sense of curiosity. With over a hundred different engaging, fun and inclusive clubs on offer, the variety allows each pupil from Reception through to Sixth Form to choose their own mix of interests whether that be cooking up a storm in Food Tech or picking up a Lacrosse stick for the first time.



Discover what a Cranford education can offer your child.

Whole School Open Morning
Saturday, 11 October (9:30am-12pm)
Headmaster: Dr James Raymond
Size: 581; Day/Boarding Type: Day
Religion: Church of England; Ages: 3-18
Willow Court Lane, Moulsoford
Wallingford OX10 9HT
01491 651218 cranfordschool.co.uk




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Open Morning

Saturday 11th October 9:30am - 12:00pm

This is a great opportunity to experience first-hand our vibrant and opportunity-rich education. Guided tours will be available from Pre-School through to Sixth Form. Book: www.cranfordschool.co.uk
Excellence in Independent Education for Boys and Girls aged 3-18 Moulsoford, Oxfordshire OX10 9HT



CRANFORD
SCHOOL

Kindness is key

'Heart speaks to heart' was the message to pupils in assembly

THE best way to help young people feel less anxious when starting a new school is to 'Be Kind'. This was the key message from Oratory Head Master, Matthew Fogg, as he addressed pupils in assembly:

"Be the one who takes pupils along with you. Include everyone. Allow people to sit with you. Be the one who's brave enough to check someone is ok. In this way, we can live out our Founder Saint John Henry Newman's motto 'Heart Speaks to Heart', respecting and caring for everyone as an individual."

The Oratory's small community is a benefit. Our teachers spend more time with our pupils than at the whiteboard. In games, our coaches spend equal time with those on elite pathways and those that simply enjoy sport. The result is that those who struggled

to achieve take-off previously, can fly high with us. Academically and in all fields of endeavour.

This year's exam results reflect this, with The Oratory placed in the Top 25% of schools nationally for value-added at GCSE and A Level, and in the top 10% for girls at GCSE. We are not, and do not aspire to be an academic hothouse. Think of our school as more of a greenhouse, where growth and flourishing happen naturally.

In sport, The Oratory regularly punches above its weight against much larger schools. Our 1st XV rugby team won the County



Cup and our 1st XI hockey team have won their league four times in a row. The sport programme is further strengthened this year with an All-Weather Pitch and Padel Courts.

Discover more about Oratory life with a personal tour — just contact our friendly Admissions team: admissions@oratory.co.uk



THE ORATORY

MORE GREENHOUSE

(than hothouse)

We are not, and do not aspire to be an academic hothouse. Think of our school as **more of a greenhouse, where growth and flourishing happen naturally.**



Be you. Become more.

INDEPENDENT BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS & BOYS AGED 11-18

**SENIOR SCHOOL
EXPERIENCE DAY**

THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER



BOOK YOUR PLACE
oratory.co.uk

WOODCOTE, OXFORDSHIRE

A September full of firsts

WHEN our son came home today, he was literally grinning from ear to ear and has not stopped talking about how much he has enjoyed his first day at OPS. We are thrilled that he has taken it in his stride so well.

That first day feeling can be nerve wracking but at The Oratory Prep School we pride ourselves in making that transition easy for pupils and for parents. September is a whirlwind of new faces and new routines but by the end of the month, pupils can navigate our 65 acres without getting lost

and they already know which are the best trees to climb!

There have been first swims, first forest school lessons and first matches in OPS colours and it's not just the pupils trying out



new things. We offer swimming, football, hockey, tennis and a choir for parents to join in with every week. The result? Children who run into school with a smile and parents who feel part of a real community. This is exactly what we want: happy, confident pupils who are ready to learn and squeeze every last drop out of what The Oratory Prep School has to offer.



Open Day
3rd October



**THE ORATORY
PREP SCHOOL**

Award winning independent school for ages 2 - 13 with fantastic wraparound care, flexi-boarding, scholarships & extensive bus routes

www.oratoryprep.co.uk

Building confidence from stage to STEM at Queen Anne's

Starting secondary school can feel like a big step, but the new Year 7 students at Queen Anne's have already made a fantastic start thanks to three exciting induction days designed to help them settle in and make new friends.

Their first experience was a Performing Arts Day, led by Divergent Drama. Pupils embraced the magic of *The Greatest Showman*, learning circus skills before moving on to singing, dancing, and creating their own dramatic scenes inspired by the musical. Working in groups, they built confidence, showcased their creativity, and finished the day with lively performances for their classmates.

Day two was all about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths), delivered by Hyett Education. In the morning, pupils worked in small teams to design, build and program robots, testing their creations by

setting them tasks and challenges. The afternoon brought an innovative workshop on artificial intelligence, where students explored design thinking through the humble paper airplane - testing different shapes and movements to discover what worked best.

The third induction event will take place later this month. While the rest of the school takes part in team-building activities, Year 7 will be heading to Go Ape for their



Outdoor Activities Day. This promises to be another fantastic opportunity to develop resilience, cooperation, and friendship in a fun and memorable setting.

With such a positive start, Year 7 are already showing they are ready to thrive.



QUEEN ANNE'S
CAVERSHAM

www.qas.org.uk/visit









Kind Hearts | Fierce Minds | Strong Spirits

Visit us to discover why we are an award-winning school →



First experiences at Reading Blue Coat that last a lifetime

STARTING school is a milestone filled with first experiences that shape a young learner's journey. At Reading Blue Coat, we believe those "firsts" should continue well beyond primary school, opening up opportunities that inspire, challenge and build confidence for life.

Our students are encouraged to step outside their comfort zones and embrace a wide range of first experiences through our extensive co-curricular programme. Adventure Education is a particular highlight – whether it's the thrill of paddle boarding, the teamwork of climbing our high ropes course, or the resilience built through expeditions, students discover new strengths in themselves and in one another.



Academically, we pride ourselves on offering specialist subjects that many young people encounter for the very first time at Reading Blue Coat. From the study of Geology to both GCSE and A Level, to the exploration of Politics, Business, Economics and Psychology in the Sixth Form, we give students the chance to develop passions that



could shape their future studies and careers.

We know that first experiences stay with us. They foster courage and create memories that last long after school days are over. By offering such a breadth of opportunities, both within and beyond the classroom, we ensure our students leave with not only outstanding qualifications, but also the confidence, independence and joy that come from embracing the new.

At Reading Blue Coat, first experiences really do last a lifetime.

Open Morning - Saturday 4 October, 9.30am-12.30am. For more information, visit our website rbcs.org.uk



OPEN MORNING Saturday 4 October

Founded in 1646, Reading Blue Coat is situated in a picturesque 46-acre campus along the River Thames. The school offers a welcoming community where academic excellence and a rich array of co-curricular activities allow our students to flourish.

We warmly invite you to explore the opportunities available for your child.

A co-ed independent day school
for students aged 11-18

Watch



Website



Heartwarming responses of first day experiences

THE 54 new Year 7s at Shiplake College were all asked to submit the best things from their first day or week at school. The responses were heartwarming and brought smiles to all the staff who saw the answers — there were some very clear themes!

One of the most popular answers was the capsize test (part safety-related as the school is located by the river but also a great shared experience!). Archie Neal stated this was his best thing as it was “Exhilarating”, and B Parker thought it was “Enjoyably shocking”, with Sabrina Verano Luri adding “It’s really cool that Shiplake does a tradition and now I’m part of that tradition”.

Food was mentioned a lot, with breacktime toast quickly becoming a favourite (C Jefferies “The toast because its soooooooyummy and scrumptious”), Lucas Robinson “it is really good you have a lot of options and you also can get jelly”, Freya Nicholson “it’s really good and I’m always full up and can

focus on lessons”, and L Amos-Yeo “I really enjoy the lunch/dinner because it’s healthy and delicious”.

Making friends (Charlotte Arnold “Making new friends because everyone is so nice at Shiplake”, Otilie Ellis-Jones “Making new friends because I was a bit nervous at the start but when I started to be more confident I realized that everyone is so nice and I have made lots of friends”), and meeting the teachers (Alexander Green “I enjoy the lessons and the teachers are really nice”, Grace Perkins “My favourite thing was meeting my teachers because they were so kind and welcoming”) were listed many times!

Sport was another very strong theme. S Bignell “I have enjoyed the sport because it is so fun and the staff and the amazing facilities



make it even better”, E Macdonald “The best thing was definitely my first match with Shiplake. I loved this because I really got to work with my new friends as a strong team.”

Other reasons given included from Grace Barratt “The dogs because they are so furry and fluffy and cuddly” and J Falle “The bus because the drivers are nice and I can hang out with all my new friends.”

We hope the year group continue to enjoy life at Shiplake!



SHIPLAKE COLLEGE

HENLEY-ON-THAMES



Year 7 September 2026 Entry

Taster Days: Autumn 2025

Deadline for Registration: Monday 1 December 2025

Assessment Days: January 2026

Find out more at
[**www.shiplake.org.uk/year7**](http://www.shiplake.org.uk/year7)

Pictured: Year 7 Joiners 2025

School that's rooted in history and focused on the future

NESTLED in 46 acres of picturesque riverside grounds in Sonning, Reading Blue Coat has been shaping young minds for nearly four centuries.

Founded in 1646 by Richard Aldworth, the school began as a charitable foundation to educate “twenty poore male children” in Reading. Since those humble beginnings, Blue Coat has grown into a thriving, modern co-educational day school for students aged 11 to 18, combining academic excellence with a dynamic programme of co-curricular opportunities.

The school's journey has been one of constant growth and renewal while holding firmly to its historic values. From its original location in the heart of Reading, through its move to Brunswick House in 1852 and then to the magnificent Holme Park estate in Sonning in 1947, Blue Coat has adapted to the changing needs of each generation.

A significant milestone came in 1970 with the arrival of the first female student. By 1987, the sixth form was fully co-educational, and in September 2023, the school entered a new era, welcoming its first Year 7 girls.

By 2027, Blue Coat will be a fully co-educational school — a historic transformation embraced by staff, students and parents alike.

Reading Blue Coat has a well-earned reputation for academic achievement. Expert teaching, small class sizes and excellent facilities support students to achieve outstanding results and progress to top universities in the UK and beyond. However, the school firmly believes that it is how this is achieved that matters just as much as the results themselves.

Students are encouraged to take intellectual risks, develop independence, and learn how to learn — skills that serve them long after examinations are over.

At Reading Blue Coat, education is not confined to books and classrooms. The school's extensive co-curricular programme offers opportunities to explore new interests, gain life skills and build friendships that last a lifetime. Music, drama and sport all thrive at Blue Coat, while an offering of more than 100 clubs and societies ensures there is something for every passion.

A distinctive feature of life at Blue Coat is adventure education — a programme that pushes students beyond their comfort zones and into new environments. From paddleboarding on the Thames to climbing on our high ropes course, and Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions, students learn resilience, leadership and teamwork in ways that cannot be replicated behind a desk. These experiences build confidence and independence, equipping students for life far beyond school.

This term marks the beginning of an exciting new era for the creative life of the school. Construction is now underway on

Reading Blue Coat's state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre (PAC). Due to open in 2027, the PAC will provide a modern and inspiring home for music, drama and performance, with superb facilities to support both curriculum teaching and co-curricular productions.

The PAC is more than just a building project; it is a symbol of Blue Coat's commitment to combining tradition with innovation. As work progresses, students will have the chance to learn from the project itself, with opportunities to meet architects, engineers and designers and to take part in site tours. In this way, the PAC enriches not only the arts but also students' understanding of design, construction and sustainability.

Speaking about the centre, headmaster Mr Pete Thomas said: “The Performing Arts Centre represents an extraordinary investment in the creative future of Blue Coat. We are proud

of our long history, but we are equally excited about the opportunities this project will bring to current and future generations of students.”

For those interested in joining the sixth form, the sixth-form open evening from 5pm on Tuesday, October 14, offers an in-depth look at A Level options

and student life, including student-led tours and talks from the headmaster and director of sixth form.

Reading Blue Coat remains a school rooted in history yet firmly focused on the future, with the transition to full co-education, a strong academic reputation, a wide-ranging Co-curricular programme, as well as the transformative investment in the Performing Arts Centre.

If you are seeking an education that combines excellence in the classroom with opportunities to grow in confidence, creativity and character, come and see us to find out more

www.rbc.org.uk, email admissions@rbc.org.uk
or call 0118 933 5806.



WOMEN'S
HEALTH

By Dr Shilpa McQuillan,
accredited menopause
specialist, GP and
community gynaecologist

World Menopause Day: Your midlife reset

18
October
World
Menopause
Day

This year's World Menopause Day is all about lifestyle medicine — and for good reason. The choices we make every day — what we eat, how we move, how we rest — can profoundly shape our experience of menopause and beyond. Regular movement, nourishing food, good sleep, and stress management don't just ease symptoms like hot flushes, brain fog, and low mood; they also protect our heart, strengthen bones, support brain health, and boost chances of living well for longer. Think of it as investing in your

future self — small consistent changes can lead to big benefits.

Start with Your Plate

So, where to begin? Often, the simplest and most powerful place to start is with your nutrition. Food isn't just calories; it's fuel and nourishment for the whole body. A Mediterranean-style approach works brilliantly: colourful vegetables and fruits, wholegrains, beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, olive oil, and oily fish. This combination supports bones, brain, and heart, while also helping to steady mood.

Our gut plays a big role too. Home

to trillions of microbes, it influences everything from hormone balance and weight to digestion, bloating, and even how calm or anxious we feel. As oestrogen dips, this balance can shift — leading to bloating, stubborn tummy fat, sluggish bowels, and low mood. To keep our gut happy, pack in a variety of fibre-rich plants, prebiotic vegetables like onions and broccoli, and fermented foods — such as kefir, live yoghurt, or sauerkraut — to help this ecosystem thrive. A healthier gut means better oestrogen recycling, which can ease symptoms like hot flushes, night sweats,

‘What we eat, how we move, how we rest can profoundly shape our experience of menopause and beyond’



and brain fog. And if you're on HRT, research shows it may help your gut stay closer to its pre-menopause balance.

Small tweaks to eating habits make a big difference as well: eat slowly, chew well, sip water throughout the day, avoid heavy meals late at night, and cut back on alcohol, fizzy drinks, and ultra-processed snacks. They can trigger bloating, slow digestion, and contribute to weight gain, low mood and sleep disruption.

Most nutrients come from a varied diet, but there are a few key exceptions. In the UK, vitamin D (around 1000 IU daily) is recommended through winter. And if you struggle with sleep or muscle tension, some supplements such as magnesium may be helpful.

Every little movement counts

Exercise isn't just about the scales — it's a cornerstone for our bones, muscles, heart, and even our gut. Regular movement can ease bloating, get sluggish bowels moving, and boost metabolism. Strength and weight training protect the skeleton and help preserve muscle mass, which naturally declines with age.

Balance and flexibility become increasingly important in midlife and beyond. Yoga, Pilates, or Tai Chi can improve posture, reduce the risk of falls, and even support digestion by keeping things moving internally.

Aim for a mix each week: some strength, some cardio, and a bit of balance work. Most importantly — make it enjoyable. Consistency with small, regular movement will always win over the occasional big effort.

Sleep is our superpower

Sleep is the time our body repairs and resets. Yet hot flushes, digestive discomfort, frequent bathroom trips, and a busy mind can all get in the way.

A simple routine can make a real difference: going to bed and waking at consistent times — even on weekends; keeping your bedroom cool, dark, and calm, and include a gentle wind-down stretch or breathing exercise. Cutting back on caffeine and alcohol, avoiding late meals, and stepping away from screens can also help your body switch off more easily. If your mind is racing, a relaxation app like CALM or Headspace can help you drift off.

If sleep problems persist, speak with your doctor. Around menopause, hormone changes and shifts in body



composition can contribute to issues like snoring, sleep apnoea, joint issues and restless leg syndrome, which may need further support.

Work on stress:

We often underestimate how much stress can magnify menopause symptoms. When we are tense, our body produces fewer digestive enzymes, making bloating and indigestion worse — and set off our nervous flight or fight system, increasing flushes and sweats. Mood swings, irritability, and anxiety are also direct effects of both stress and the hormonal shifts of this stage.

The good news? Small, daily resets really add up. Try journaling, a gentle walk, a relaxing bath, mindfulness, or simple breathing exercises. You may also find guided meditation, breathwork, or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) helpful. Apps like Breathwrk can guide you through quick, calming techniques.

Stay Connected

Don't underestimate the power of connection. Menopause can feel isolating — especially if symptoms leave you tired or low. Sharing time with others — whether it's a walk with a friend, a hobby group, or even a quick coffee catch-up — can lift your mood, ease stress, and remind you that you're not going through this alone. Many GPs now recommend social prescribing — joining local activities, walking groups,

or community classes — not just for company, but because meaningful connection is proven to support both mental and physical health.

Consider HRT

HRT remains the most effective option for menopause symptoms and long-term health benefits such as bone and heart health. But it's not the whole story, and it isn't for everyone. Some women prefer to manage their symptoms without it, while for others it may not be recommended. It doesn't have to be an either/or decision. HRT often works best when combined with a supportive lifestyle — what you eat, how you move, how you sleep, and how you manage stress all play a big role. And if you do choose HRT, doses, types, and timings can be tailored to you.

My take home message

With a balanced lifestyle — nourishing your gut, keeping active, getting restorative sleep, calming your nervous system, and staying connected — you can navigate menopause not just coping, but truly thriving.

Dr Shilpa McQuillan leads the Berkshire Menopause Clinic in Henley and is an accredited menopause specialist, community gynaecologist and women's health GP.

For more information, email info@berkshiremenopauseclinic.com or visit www.berkshiremenopauseclinic.com

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Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9RS

Family ties and love inspire the setting of author's warm and witty mystery

BY AMANDA STEWART



WEIRD and wonderful cultural and personal connections between Henley and South Oxfordshire and Ireland and India have been revealed by author Paul Waters as he researched his latest book.

Paul this month releases *Murder in Moonlit Square*, which is described as a warm and witty mystery set in Delhi where a streetwise nun and a hotelier take on murder and mayhem.

The setting for the book is a long way from Henley, but Paul, who grew up in Belfast during the Troubles and settled just over the border in Buckinghamshire twenty years ago, explains: "I fell in love with India when I fell in love with my wife, Aneysha, who I met in London.

"She urged me to set a book in Delhi, where she grew up, because we are there a lot. I was a bit hesitant, because obviously I'm not Indian. But then I discovered more about my own family links to the country, especially through one of my aunts.

"She spent her career as an Irish nun teaching in India and amazingly in her first posting taught Aneysha's mother.

"That wonderful and bizarre coincidence got me going."

So much so that during the eighteen months that it took to write the book Paul, who says he is "speeding up for the sequel", uncovered the remarkable close links that the area has with his wife's native country and "even between our families".

"Henley may appear at first glance to be the quintessential English town, but it has surprising historic and celebrity links with both India and Ireland.

"After we were married, it also emerged that my aunty, the Irish nun, had hobnobbed with Indian political leaders and celebrities while running one of the country's most prestigious colleges."

Paul, 59, a father of two children in their twenties Aidan and Erin, adds: "It's been the same with Henley – surprising links and celebrity connections to both India and Ireland. "You may

or may not know this one, but before George Orwell became the author we know of today, he grew up in Henley and Lower Shiplake.

"Back then he was plain old Eric Blair. But Eric was actually born in Motihari in pre-independence India, where his father Richard was a civil servant overseeing the production of opium for sale to China.

"After school George returned to what was then British India, as a member of the Indian Imperial Police in Burma. It was there that he acquired a pencil moustache, tattoos on each knuckle, dengue fever, and inspiration for his short stories."

The tattoos on the knuckles were said to protect a person against bullets and snake bites, but obviously not dengue fever, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, or bullets as years later Orwell was injured in the throat by a sniper's bullet during the Spanish Civil War.

Paul's journey next alights on the singer Dusty Springfield, who died in Henley in 1999. He says: "The real name of this swinging Sixties icon was Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien. Her parents were both Irish immigrants. After Dusty's funeral at St Mary the Virgin in Henley, her ashes were scattered in the town and at the Cliffs of Moher in Co Clare on Ireland's west coast."

Paul adds: "Of course another Henley-based global musical icon, George Harrison, brought the music and spirituality of India to the town.

"He recorded music and filmed videos at his Friar Park estate, including *Chants of India*, an album by his friend, the Indian musician Ravi Shankar. It came out in 1997 and featured Vedic and other Hindu prayers set to music."

The connections to India continue with Paul recalling the time in 2017 when Henley was rebranded Bollywood-on-Thames during the filming of *Khido Khundi*, which means hockey, by Rohit Jagraj Chauhan, the Punjabi director. "The film is a romantic comedy with scenes shot on Station Road

and by the River and Rowing Museum,” Paul says.

He also notes that Sue Ryan, the founder of the Henley Literature Festival, was born in Rajahmundry, now Rajamahendravaram, near the Bay of Bengal in India.

“She moved to Kolkata, which was then Calcutta, where she learnt to ride horses,” Paul says. “She has since celebrated what she calls a ‘technicolour country’ at the literature festival with authors like Amit Chaudhuri and Vaseem Khan.”

Paul, who still freelances for the BBC World Service, brings in another connection to Henley from Ireland.

“The composer James Lynam Molloy from County Offaly lived in Henley from the 1880s onwards and died in the town in 1909. He collaborated with WS Gilbert - half of Gilbert and Sullivan.”

Paul adds: “A little further back in time and a few miles up the road, many people in Henley and South Oxfordshire and beyond will know of the gilded elephant standing on top of a Victorian well at Stoke Row.

“It was donated by an Indian prince. The Maharajah of Benares (now Varanasi) paid £400 for the well to be dug after hearing about problems the villagers had getting clean, fresh water.”

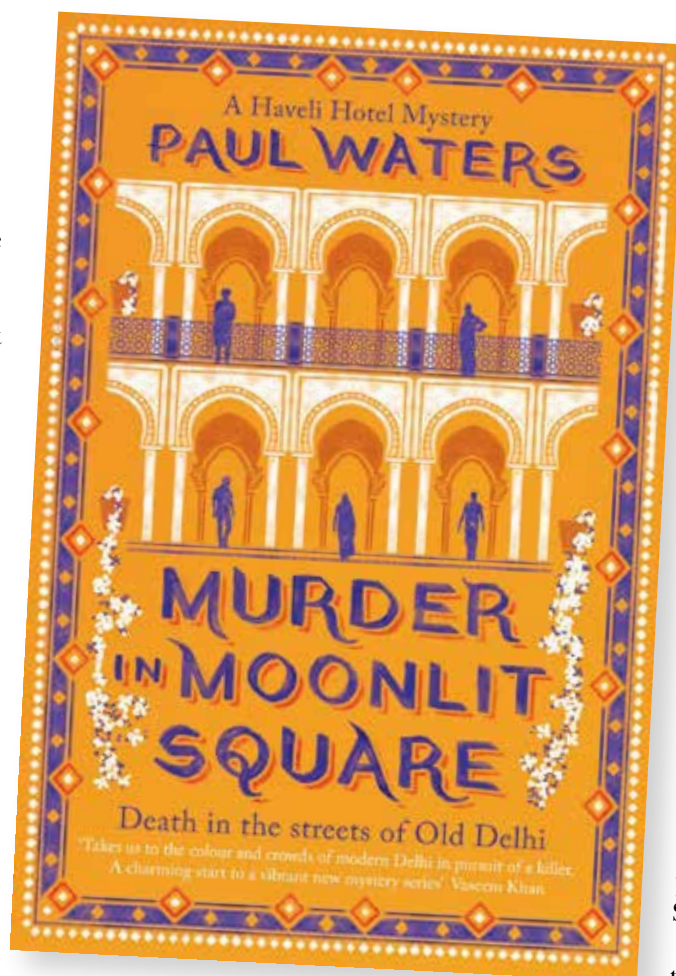
A colourful life in the media and travelling give Paul a healthy bank of memories to refer to for his writing. His previous book, a 1950s crime thriller called *Blackwatertown*, is set on the Irish border – of course a long way from Delhi.

Among his exploits working across the world is an episode when he smuggled a satellite dish into Cuba during the Fidel Castro era.

“I was working at BBC Radio 5 Live and we concocted a plan for the presenter Rhod Sharp to broadcast the first ever long-form BBC radio programmes from Cuba.

“It took a long time to persuade the Cuban authorities, but eventually they gave us permission to enter and to use local studios. But as the producer, I didn’t trust their assurances and sneaked in a satellite dish to ensure we would be able to broadcast no matter what.

“It was very risky, because Cuba had just jailed two Czech journalists having accused them of spying. Luckily the security people checked every bag except the one concealing the satellite dish. It was a tense moment, but I had to appear



‘They get caught up in a murder mystery before Christmas in the historic Chandni Chowk [Moonlit Square] district of Delhi’

grandmaster Nigel Short on the programme from somewhere in central Asia.

“I had noticed a newsflash about a plane crash in New York, and began feeding the presenter Alex Brodie information he could talk about on air. I remember finding it frustrating that colleagues were staring open mouthed in shock at the televisions in the office as the second plane crashed into the

World Trade Center – in other words behaving like normal decent human beings.

“My attitude from growing up and later working as a journalist in the Northern Ireland Troubles was focus on the story first, before phone links to America

were cut off. Our usual one-hour show carried on live for 13 hours.

“Alex Brodie displayed great composure that day. I still meet people overseas who heard our broadcast. The BBC World Service is such a valuable part of Britain’s place in the world.”

Murder in Moonlit Square features the characters Sister Agatha and Indian hotelier Avtar. They get caught up in a murder mystery before Christmas in the historic Chandni Chowk [Moonlit Square] district of Delhi.

Paul says: “I love visiting Chandni Chowk’s alleys and cafés, and it’s been wonderful to find connections to both Ireland and India closer to home in Henley.”

Murder in Moonlit Square is available at Bell Street Bookshop or via Amazon

completely relaxed.

“I was doubly lucky to get away with it, to avoid jail or deportation, because the promised studios did not exist and our trip would have been a waste of licence payers’ money had we not had a cheeky back up plan.”

Paul and his team were able to broadcast five days of live and recorded interviews, including ones with political dissidents, and provide a notable window into life in Cuba.

“I also got to see Castro speak,” he says. “That was another piece of luck because he was notorious for long-winded speeches that often went on for hours. This time his speech lasted only 20 minutes.”

Paul was also caught up in the unfolding news of the attack on the World Trade Center in New York. “I was editing for the live Newshour programme on the BBC World Service on September 11, 2001.

“I was pleased that I had managed to overcome some tricky logistical challenges to get the British chess

Blandy & Blandy's Residential Property Team

welcome Denise Stradling as a partner



recently welcomed Alexa. Having worked in and around Henley for many years, Denise's significant experience will be of great benefit to our clients and contacts."

Reasons to Review and Update Your Will

Partner Caroline Casagrande, in Blandy & Blandy's Wills, Probate, Tax & Trusts team, explains.

A Will is an important legal document that sets out how you would like your estate to be handled in the event of your death. Yet, according to widespread research, around half of adults in the UK do not have a Will. If you die without making a Will, your estate will be administered in accordance with the Intestacy Rules. This will often lead to the administration being

more complicated and could result in your estate being passed to down to people you do not wish to benefit from your estate.

You may be among the group of people who do already have a Will in place, but even so it is essential to ensure that your Will remains up to date, particularly when significant life events occur.

For example:

- if you have any children and/or any arrangements made for them change over time.
- to make provision for any new or existing grandchildren.
- upon marriage/civil partnership or divorce/dissolution.
- if an executor and/or beneficiary dies in your lifetime.
- if there is a change to your financial position.

Please visit www.blandy.co.uk or call 01491 572 323 for further information or to arrange an appointment

LEADING Thames Valley law firm Blandy & Blandy has welcomed Denise Stradling as a partner in its growing Residential Property team.

Based in the firm's Henley-on-Thames office at 24 Thameside, Denise has more than 15 years' experience in advising on all aspects of Residential property, having worked at several well-established firms in Reading and Henley-on-Thames.

Denise said: "I am delighted to have joined Blandy & Blandy as a partner, at an exciting point for the Residential Property team and our Henley-on-Thames office. I look forward to working with our clients, leading estate agents and other professional contacts in the area and to supporting our continued growth."

Blandy & Blandy also recently welcomed Alexa McQueen-Turner as a partner in the Residential property team, following the firm's acquisition of the business of Henley-on-Thames based McQueen Turner Solicitors.

Partner and team head Manisha Bhula added: "It is fantastic to welcome Denise to our busy team, having also

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Warren Kerley

FOUNDER OF TANK2 DESIGN AND MARKETING AGENCY

WARREN KERLEY is the founder of Tank2, a creative design, digital marketing and web agency based in the River & Rowing Museum in Henley.

Warren has lived near Henley for more than 30 years, is married to Joanne and has two children, Jamie (pro golfer) and Elliot (actor). Warren is also an abstract artist, creating texture art. His other personal interests include golfing around the UK and experimental cooking.



Alan at the Henley Distillery, these guys are awesome and have such a vibrant business that is growing at a rapid rate. The distillery is a must visit, go and say hi anytime, a warm welcome awaits and a tippie or two.

1 What brought you to the Henley area and why do you stay?

Henley by the river is a very special place, so we decided to move the creative business Tank2 to the studios at the River & Rowing Museum. It's a fabulous place to be creative and build our business and make new relationships.

2 What would you change about Henley?

I would turn the roads into water ways and have ice cream shops on every corner, Henley could become a mini English Venice!

3 How do you spend your leisure time locally?

Dog walks around the stunning countryside and river. I love to visit the fabulous restaurants and the local golf clubs; Henley, Badgemore and the stunning Caversham golf clubs are top of the list.

4 What are your top three local haunts?

I love a trip to Pavilion Foods, Micha and the team have created a great atmosphere and they do a fabulous job with the use of local produce, it really does make a difference. Also, a bite to eat and a beer or two in the Three Tuns with a special trip when we can to Orwells, just fabulous food from Ryan and Liam.

5 Do you have a favourite song?

It would have to be *Forever in My Life* by Prince, just such a captivating song with lyrics that have resonated with me for many many years.

6 Which film or play has inspired or moved you the most?

Stand by Me, the American coming-of-age film directed by Rob Reiner, based on Stephen King's 1982 novella *The Body*. This film blew my mind growing up and has that nostalgia feeling for me these days.

7 What do you treasure most about life in the UK?

We are so spoilt with the beautiful countryside, I treasure the peace and tranquillity the water brings, the rolling countryside and the way the UK's landscapes carry both beauty and history. They constantly inspire my art and give me a sense of belonging.

8 If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would it be?

I like to visit many countries for their unique qualities but I could not live anywhere else but here! Home in the UK is where the heart is and that's where I shall stay.

9 Is there anyone, or anything in the area that you particularly admire, would recommend or think deserves a mention?

I admire many people around Henley but have much admiration for Jacob and

10 What did you want to be when you were a child?

I have always wanted to be a creative, graphic designer and artist, so I have never swayed and followed my dreams. I have been creative designer for more than 20 years and I'm also a successful artist.

11 Which things do you wish you had known when you were younger?

I'm constantly learning, the world is changing rapidly so I guess it's best to have an open mind, smile and be kind as you navigate your way through each experience.

12 Which three people would you choose to have dinner with, if you could?

Prince, just the most intriguing outstanding person and musical talent, Rick Stein for his fabulous fish and travel stories and Pablo Picasso so I could get all art quizzical.

13 Where do you like to travel to on holiday?

I love a trip to Scotland many golfing trips to St Andrews and other fabulous golf courses over the years with a must visit to Edinburgh, such history and magnificent scenery. Also, I love a coast hop with the family to Portugal.

14 What are your ambitions?

To watch my family grow and enjoy the life left in front of me, keep chasing my dreams and have as much fun as possible. I might create an art piece or two along the way.

15 Do you have any regrets?

No regrets at all.



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