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McMillan
Photographer

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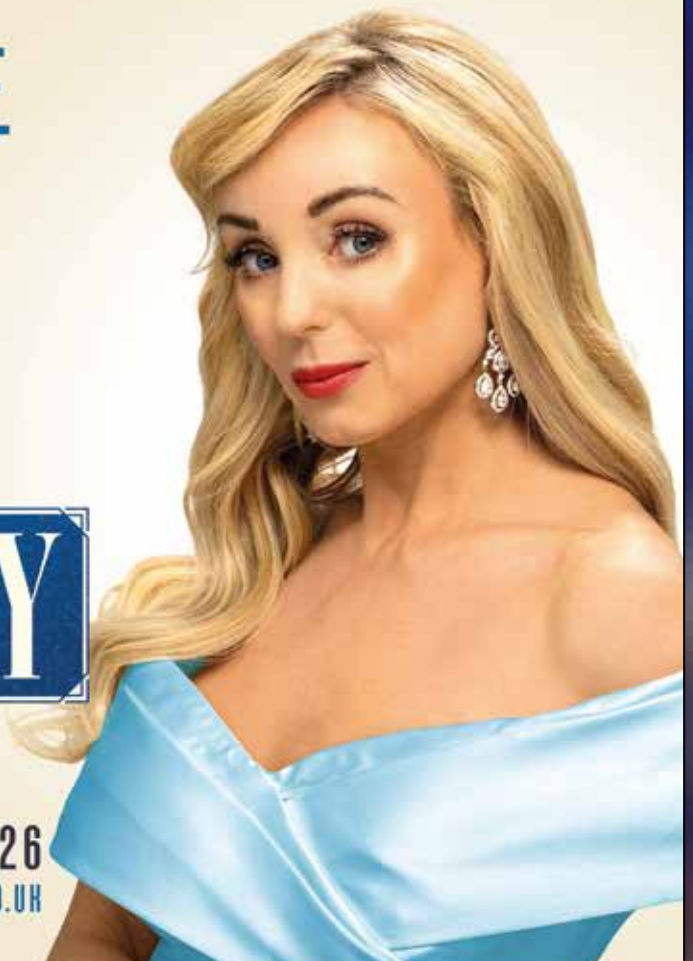
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HENLEYLife Contents

March 2026

10 Henley Youth Festival

6-7 DIARY DATES

What's on in March

8-9 EASTER ENTERTAINMENT

Things to do at Easter time

10-12 HENLEY YOUTH FESTIVAL

Fountain of youth

14 FOOD & DRINK

Crooked Billet March Kitchen

15-17 INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

Strong Women's Club

18-19 HEALTH Endometriosis

20 WOMEN'S DAY

Inspirational women

21-23 INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

High-flying photographer

24-26 HOMES & GARDENS

Outdoor & home improvements

28-29 ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

Twelve schools awarded

30 MY HENLEY LIFE Sarah Pye



COVER PICTURE:
Gabrielle McMillan
photographer page 21

HENLEYLife

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Free Consultations with lapd Architects

ON the 11th of April, lapd Architects will be offering a day of free one to one consultations at the Kings Arms Barn in Henley. Whether you're planning a renovation, extension, commercial upgrade, or a complete self build, this is a chance to get professional guidance and turn your ideas into a clear plan.

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Visit: www.lapdarchitects.co.uk

Book your free consultation by scanning the QR code,
or contact the lapd team directly to reserve your
preferred time slot.

Welcome

15 Strong Women's Club

HENLEY *Life* WE'VE GOT HENLEY COVERED

Henley Life is the free monthly lifestyle magazine for Henley

Our professional distribution team delivers 11,000 copies each month, with a copy to every home in Henley. In addition *Henley Life* is distributed to households in Caversham, Sonning Common, Wargrave, Shiplake and Nettlebed.

Copies of *Henley Life* are available to be picked up from high footfall establishments and outlets in Henley including:

Waitrose | Tesco | Catherine Wheel | Kenton Theatre | Town Hall | Relais Hotel | Henley Leisure Centre | Nubodi Gym | Menza Café | Hotel Du Vin | Daisy Love | Hot Gossip | Spoon | Picturehouse Henley | Bell and Heart Surgery | Library | Henley Golf Club | D:two | Henley Train Station

Out of area deliveries available on request.

For a full distribution list please visit: www.henleylife.co.uk

SPRING is finally here which heralds the moment when the Henley events cycle really kicks into gear.

With that in mind, we preview this year's Henley Youth Festival, which comprises two weeks of events for children who live and go to school in and around the town. John Jacklin dives into the festival's history and tells of how this unique event came about.

As Easter is on the horizon, we provide a comprehensive guide on what there is for all ages to get up to, from adventure trails and river cruises to the performing arts, alongside our usual dates for your diary.

With International Women's Day falling this month, we feature some inspirational women. This month's cover star is Gabrielle McMillan, a wedding photographer, who became a part-time stewardess to enable her to follow her dream of starting a business.

We talk to fitness mentors at the Strong Women's Club about how they have created a female-only gym community, as well as Lisa Anacora, who has run Val Wyatt Marine for 15 years, and the "STEMinists" at Leighton Park School.

Our women's health columnist, Dr Shilpa McQuillan, tells how to spot the signs of endometriosis, as an early diagnosis can make all the difference.

Paul Clerehugh, chef/proprietor of The Crooked Billet, visits Gabriel Machin butchers in Henley to help create the "Henley Hot Pot" and he tells you how to make it. (Perhaps that's one less thing to worry about this Mother's Day?)

Spring also means a fresh start and so we also provide a "Homes and Gardens" guide to local tradesmen and suppliers.

Finally, artist Sarah Pye, from Henley, is the subject of this month's My Henley Life. We hope you enjoy.

The Henley Life team



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Who gets the property when unmarried couples break up?

When couples buy a property, they usually assume a rosy future together. They do not want to discuss the grim prospect of a property dispute on splitting up.

However, when a dispute between cohabitees reaches the courts, the judge may infer or impute (legal terms the court likes to use!) that the couple had a 'common intention' at the time they moved in. The judge looks at the subsequent actions as evidence, eg, if cohabitee A is the sole legal owner but cohabitee B paid all the mortgage repayments, cohabitee B may be granted a beneficial interest in the property.

Property held in sole name of one cohabitee

A cohabitee whose name is not on the legal title has a more up hill challenge to claim a beneficial interest in the property. They will only succeed if;

- a) There is a declaration of trust in writing confirming their share
- b) They contributed to the purchase of the property, or
- c) There is evidence that the couple had 'common intention' to share the ownership and that, crucially, they acted to their detriment on this basis.

Property held in joint names

In this case, the couple clearly intended to share in the ownership, but in what proportions? How do you know?

1. The first step is to look at the TR1 signed when the property was bought. Section 10 may confirm the beneficial interest of each joint owner.
2. Next steps are to seek an agreement, and
3. seek legal advice on the possibility of a claim under the Trusts of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996 (TOLATA).

If you are unsure of your legal position or need guidance on resolving a property dispute, the team at Mercers are here to help — please contact Justine McCool or Megan Wood on 01491 572138.



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Managing Partner

Diary Dates

MARCH 2026

SUNDAY 8TH MARCH

Henley and District Organ Trust concert

HENLEY TOWN HALL

Henley Organ Trust's latest concert welcomes Chris Stanbury, with the show beginning at 3pm (doors open at 2.30pm). From West End shows to Big Band, Sixties and Seventies music, Chris is a versatile keyboard player who is also an examiner for the London College of Music and a passionate and committed teacher. Admission £10 (cash at the door) includes refreshments.

For more information, call David Rusman on 0118 972 4988 or visit www.henleyorgantrust.org.uk



TUESDAY 10TH MARCH

Angela Barnes – Angst

KENTON THEATRE



One of the stars of Live at the Apollo and Mock the Week, stand-up comedian Angela Barnes admits to being a worrier. Following the success of her last tour, Hot Mess, she will discuss stories of failure, her lack of wisdom and her attempts to learn German, alongside lots of jokes. Tickets cost £19.75 and the

show starts at 7.30pm.

For more information, call (01491) 525050 or visit thekenton.org.uk

WEDNESDAY 11TH MARCH

Budapest Café Orchestra

CROOKED BILLET, STOKE ROW



Founded in 2009 by composer, violinist and teacher Christian Garrick, this four-piece – Christian, Eddie Hession, Kelvin Cantlon and Adrian Zolotuhin – play traditional Balkan, Russian, Hungarian and Romanian gypsy and folk music with their own influences and arrangements. Tickets cost £30 as part of a music cover charge.

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

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH

Henley Symphony Orchestra spring concert

READING CONCERT HALL

Henley Symphony Orchestra will welcome violinist Hyeyoon Park for a concert conducted by Alexander Walker. Music includes Gershwin's An American in Paris, Korngold's Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35, Barber's Adagio for Strings, Copland's Fanfare for the Common Man and Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from West



Side Story. The concert starts at 7pm.

For more information, visit henleysymphonyorchestra.co.uk

TUESDAY 24TH MARCH

Glitch — The True Story of the Post Office Scandal

KENTON THEATRE

In the biggest miscarriage of justice in English legal history, between 1999 and 2015, more than 900 subpostmasters and subpostmistresses were wrongly prosecuted for accounting errors, of tens of thousands of pounds, that came about as a direct result of using faulty Horizon software, something the Post Office denied knowledge of for years. Pam Stubbs, at Barkham post office, near Wokingham, was one such subpostmistress and her evidence became a crucial part of the Post Office trial. Tickets for RABBLE Theatre's production cost £22.75 or £26.75.

For more information, call (01491) 525050 or visit thekenton.org.uk



FRIDAY 27TH MARCH

Opera Prelude lecture recital — “Hai già vinta la causa? The scheming baritone unmasked”

CHRIST CHURCH, HENLEY

Baritone Hector Bloggs will explore the world of opera's most cunning and charismatic baritone characters. The lecture recital will look at the wit, power and psychological complexity of the schemers, manipulators and masters of intrigue in operas such as Le nozze di Figaro and Don Giovanni. Tickets cost £30 and the lecture recital runs from 11am to 1pm.

For more information, visit operaprelude.org



MONDAY 30TH MARCH

Nettlebed Folk Club presents Steve Knightley

THE VILLAGE CLUB, NETTLEBED

Former Show of Hands frontman and founding member Steve Knightley returns to Nettlebed with songs from his latest album in addition to revisiting some of his best-known music. The West Country singer-songwriter and musician crafts songs with a deep sense of place, traversing from historical folk through to contemporary themes. Tickets for the show cost £22 in advance or £23 on the door and the show starts at 7.30pm.

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



ONGOING EVENTS

TO SATURDAY 4TH APRIL

Cash on Delivery

THE MILL AT SONNING

Written by Michael Cooney, son of Mill supporter Ray, this fast-paced comedy is packed with mistaken identities and cover-ups. Eric Swan has taken thousands of pounds of fraudulent DSS money, helped by uncle George, but wife Linda remains oblivious. DSS Inspector, Mr Jenkins knocks on the door and meets lodger Norman Bassett. From this point on, nothing is straightforward, as an undertaker, bereavement counsellor, psychiatrist, mysterious Ms Cowper and a washing machine enter the scene.

For more information, visit millatsonning.com



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HEXAGON

Things to do for all ages this Easter time

BY NATALIE ALDRED

THERE are lots of activities planned, both indoors and outside, at various venues over the Easter holidays. Get the kids to run off some steam on Easter trails or enjoy a boat ride or music events.

Running from Saturday, March 21 to Saturday, April 12, Easter Adventures at Greys Court does not require booking.

The trail will take place from 10am to 5pm (last entry at 4pm), for families to explore the beautiful parkland and gardens. Each trail costs £3.50 (admission applies) which includes an Easter trail sheet, bunny ears and a dairy or vegan or Free From chocolate egg. Collect a sheet at reception and head to trail point 1 to start, wear clothes and shoes suitable for walking in the outdoors.

The ground is uneven and muddy so not always suitable for

wheelchair users and some lightweight prams.

For more information, call (01491) 628529, email greyscourt@nationaltrust.org.uk

Easter Adventures at Basildon Park also runs from Saturday, March 21 to Saturday, April 12, between 10am and 5pm (last entry at 4pm). There will be a smaller Easter spotter trail throughout the pathed pleasure grounds for those unable to access the parkland. For more information, visit nationaltrust.org.uk

From Saturday, March 28 to Sunday, April 12, Easter at Tumblestone Hollow, the woodland adventure playground at Stonor Park, includes an Easter trail, craft activities and storytelling sessions. The Rumble Hut will be selling refreshments, including wood-fired pizzas, American-style milkshakes and Italian gelato ice cream.

Tickets cost £12 adults, £13 children aged five to 16, £11 children aged three to four and free for children two and under and carers (there is free on-site parking).

For more information, call (01491) 638587 or visit stonor.com

Caversham Court Garden's annual Easter trail will be held on Saturday, April 14, from 2pm to 4pm.

The Friends of Caversham Court Garden will host a quiz with a theme of nature. All young competitors will win an Easter egg prize or a non-dairy treat.

Entry is free (donations appreciated) and all children must be accompanied by an adult. The tea kiosk will be open for refreshments all afternoon.

For more information, email friends@fccg.org.uk or visit www.fccg.org.uk

Hobbs of Henley's Easter Sunday lunch cruise takes place on Sunday, April 5 from 1pm to 4pm. A two-course lunch will be served aboard the Waterman. The three-hour cruise costs £45 adults, £32 children, which includes a drink on arrival (a glass of wine, Hobbs gin and tonic, beer or a soft drink). The cruise is subject to river conditions.

For more information, visit hobbsofhenley.com/product/easter-sunday-lunch-cruise

Reading Operatic Society is performing an Easter treat in the form of **Seussical at the Kenton Theatre, from Wednesday, April 1 to Saturday, April 4**.

Telling the story of some of Dr. Seuss's favourite characters, including Horton the Elephant, the Cat in the Hat, Gertrude



Easter at Tumblestone Hollow, Stonor Park



Reading Operatic Society Easter Treat, Seussical at the Kenton Theatre



Caversham Court Garden's Annual Easter Trail



Easter Adventures Trail at Greys Court

McFuzz, Mayzie LaBird and Jojo (the child with a big imagination), they go on a journey from the Jungle of Nool to the Circus McGurkus and on to the invisible world of the Whos.

When Horton discovers a speck of dust containing Whos, including Jojo, he has to protect them from danger as well as guard an abandoned egg. This is a tale of the values of friendship, loyalty, family and community.

The shows are at 7.30pm on the Wednesday and Thursday and at 2pm and 7pm on the Friday and Saturday. Tickets cost £24.75 adults, £18 students and under-16s.

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

Following the Easter weekend, music lovers can listen to hits from the Fifties to present day via **Marty Wilde**. He will be performing with the Wildcats — Neville Marten (guitar/vocals), Eddie Allen (guitar/vocals), Callum Houghton (bass), Adrian Nash (keyboards) and Neil Robinson (drums) — at the



Marty Wilde and the Wildcats playing at the Crooked Billet

Crooked Billet in Newlands Lane, Stoke Row.

With his 87th birthday coming up, the singer, who has had eight decades of hits, will also be releasing a new album, *Let's Rock This Place*, in a collaboration with Darrel Higham and the Enforcers.

Marty Wilde and the Wildcats play the Crooked Billet on Tuesday, April 7. Tickets cost £45 as part of a music cover charge.

For more information, call the gastropub on (01491) 681048 or visit thecrookedbillet.co.uk

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HEXAGON

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whatsonreading.com

Fountain of youth

Unique annual jamboree for young people in South Oxfordshire returns bigger and better

BY JOHN JACKLIN

PREPARATIONS for the Henley Youth Festival come to fruition across the town this month as the event returns with another chock-a-block programme for a celebration that organisers believe is one of a kind.

The festival has gone from strength to strength since it was first staged in 1994 with more than 1,500 young people, aged five to 18, participating in almost 40 mixed events and activities from March 2 to March 14.

After the programme of school workshops, a fun run at Henley Rugby Club and Swiss Farm marks an escalation and

more public focus of the festival, which is a showcase for the achievements and skills of young people but also aims to give them a taste of activities that they may not come across but for the festival.

Michaela Clarke, the chairwoman of the festival, says: "We hope that the theme for 2026 of Amazing Animals will inspire the young people to go 'wild' with their imagination whether that be in their performances or their entries for competitions.

"After taking over as chairwoman for 2025, which was a consolidation year, we've recruited some new volunteers and we have had a longer time to plan an expanded programme. I remember when my children were younger, they couldn't wait to find out what was new in the Henley Youth Festival programme and workshops booked booked out quickly. I'm delighted to bring back the chess tournament as my

son enjoyed competing in that and add to the sports programme this year. We hope that the photography competition, back after a few years' break will be popular — we're looking for images of amazing pets. We know lots of people have dogs now so perhaps we'll get photos of dogs in a bath reading a book?"

Michaela, who lives in Henley, took over as chairwoman from Laura Matthews who

spent three years in the role and had previously helped organise the event. "I was on the steering committee of the festival organising out-of-school workshops when my children were younger, between 2006 and 2012. When

I heard that they were struggling to find a new chairman or chairwoman, I put my hat back on and I was delighted to return."

Michaela, who has lived in Henley with her family for more than 35 years and has run 1st Henley Brownies for 20 years, said: "I came back because it's such an amazing festival and an opportunity for children to get involved in things that they wouldn't otherwise be able to, such as performing on stage at the Kenton Theatre."

The festival is open to all young people who attend or live in the catchment area for schools such as

The Henley Youth Festival steering group, trustees and event co-ordinators

Michaela Clarke, chairwoman; Alison Flower, trustee; Anna Parslew, music makers; Charlene Brown, art, film and photography competition; Clint Botha, Henley Youth Festival run; Daniel Sadler, school workshops; Denise Williams, trustee; Elizabeth Crowdy, young reporter; Ellen Cooper, PR/social media and young reporter; Gemma Gove, school workshops; Gik Silsaveekul, art, film and photography competition; Jo Dickson, trustee and sponsorship; Julia Carey, art, film and photography competition; Kate Swinburne-Johnson, trustee;

Katie Campbell, young variety; Nick Horne, gig night; Laura Law, performing arts; Sally Mowbray, clerk to the trustees; Sarah Bell, writing competition; Sophia Palmer, creative brick challenge; Steph Maxwell, senior variety; Tim Hoskins, trustee.

'The festival is unique, I don't know of anything like it in Britain'



Badgemore, Bishopswood, Kidmore End, Nettlebed, Peppard, Sacred Heart, Shiplake Primary, Sonning Common, Trinity, Valley Road, Gillotts, Chiltern Edge or go to St Mary's, Rupert House, Shiplake College and Henley College. Spaces are sometimes available for people who live outside the Henley area.

Michaela says: "The secret of its success is the festival is unique. I don't know of anything like it in Britain that offers young people the opportunity to enjoy art, music, performance, sport, shows, workshops and competitions.

"The festival would not be successful though without the



enthusiasm for it from the young people and the volunteers who help put it on each year. I am delighted that we have recruited some new volunteers for this year including some that, not long ago, took part in the festival themselves.

And the goals for the future "will be led by the young people as to what they want and we're trying a few new things this year. We want to create a buzz around the programme with what's new. We want to continue to recruit and build our volunteer base to bring fresh ideas to the table."

She adds: "The fondness for the Henley Youth Festival for me is to see the smiles on the young peoples' faces whether that be on the stage at The Kenton or enjoying a school workshop or show.

"We hope that the young people take those special memories too. For some, the Youth Festival is just the beginning - the

first step to performing on a bigger stage or exhibiting their art to a wider audience." The new sports this year will include a mixed netball tournament organised by Henley Hawks Netball Club for Years 4-8 and an after-school club fencing workshop in partnership with VF Fencing Club for Years 6-11 at Gillotts School.

There will be three nights of shows for young people to perform on The Kenton Stage and Music Makers for younger children at Rupert House. Anything goes for Young or Senior Variety on March 11 and 12. March 13 is Gig Night for bands or soloists.

School workshops and shows involve birds of prey, art, photography, circus skills, science shows, African dancing and drumming, animal-inspired flamenco dance, Explorerdome science shows and the Globe Theatre will perform What You Will, an introduction to Shakespeare plays for Years 5 & 6 and An Inspector Calls for Gillotts students Years 10 & 11.

The Creative Brick Challenge (LEGO), chess tournament,

photography, popular writing, young reporter, art and film are topics in the competitions part of the festival.

The finale on Saturday March 14 is an animal-themed Farnyard Fun day at Badgemore School where children can feed and see various animals at close quarters.

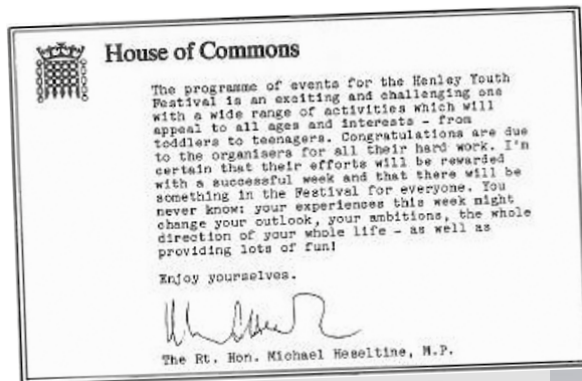
The festival is run entirely by volunteers with a steering group of 20 members. There are several sub-groups and specific roles involving a further 40 or more helpers, of which school representatives have a vital role to play in liaising with the staff and pupils and

Cont'd

'I am delighted that we have recruited some new volunteers for this year including some that, not long ago, took part in the festival themselves'

encouraging the children to take part.

The festival traces its roots back to 1993 and grew out of a desire to bolster the image of young people and to try to counter a negative public perception of them at the time and gained the backing of Michael Heseltine, who was the MP for Henley.



KATHRYN FELL, 49, a professional photographer who runs creative workshops at the festival, says: "I have been involved for seven or eight years now. I was approached to, well in fact one of the trustees came to speak at a business network event I helped run, to speak about the importance of the event.

"I'm all for being involved in the community and trying to give back where I can, and it really appealed to me.

"I fly the flag for the arts and the creatives that often get cutbacks and are not necessarily seen as

a credible career path. I teach digital photography in primary schools.

"The festival has a different theme each year. This year it is Amazing Animals, so I adapt my digital photography workshops to fit that theme. Last year was friends, so I concentrated more on portraits."

Kathryn, who lives in Sonning Common with husband Richard and two sons aged five and 12, adds: "I talk a bit about how to edit on the children's mobile phones, but sometimes children today can teach you things because they just know everything technical-wise, so I make it a proactive, interactive session for them, and the idea is just to help them get creative.

"So I've been asked to judge the photography competition, and I'm really looking forward to that."

Part of the reward for Kathryn is the feedback. "I have had people come up to me and say their child ... is really enjoying photography, and that's really lovely.

"If I can spark interest in a hobby, or they just be a bit more mindful and slow down on a holiday or a day out and notice things, or enjoy being in nature and noticing how light is at the hour after sunrise and hour before sunset, I talk a lot about that, I could bore people all day about light, but that's often sort of quite a nice thing for children, because the next time they go away out for the day, you can help them sort of enjoy it a bit more.

"I just love being involved in the festival and sharing my passion with like-minded people."



Founders aimed to redress a poor press for youngsters

ALFIE HAY, a co-founder of the festival and a former headmaster of Trinity School in Henley, says: "In 1993 two parents, Felicity Rutland and Janine Voss, who was mayor at that time, joined me to discuss a way to improve the existing negative attitude in the press towards young people.

"There had been several articles denigrating them and, especially as we had children in this age group, it concerned us. In the previous summer, I had led an event on the Henley Festival site, called the Thames Pageant, that involved all the local schools. This seemed a good model. The aim was to involve children in as many ways as possible to celebrate their skills and achievements.

"First we invited them to design a motif for the festival, which in the early years gained more than 100 entries each year. The first event was the music makers, which still features, with the idea that children should perform music together in small groups, including bands. (There already was a competition for solo musicians run by the Rotary Club)."

Mr Hay, 80, a composer who lives in Bix, says: "We aimed to publicise and celebrate activities such as sport and the arts which children already achieved, and we included excerpts from shows from the Kenton featuring children. We also brought all the schools together for a choral work that I composed called Henley Seasons.

"In the following years, more and more activities were included, often depending upon the skills and enthusiasm of volunteers. Increasingly, we built a platform of sponsors so that we could seek out professional groups such as the Young Shakespeare Company to give wider horizons to children.

"There has been no area of art, sport or science which has not been explored. This all depends upon the magnanimity of local people who have adopted this festival as their own and it is run entirely by volunteers with great enthusiasm.

"One area which we have had to restrict is the bringing together of large numbers of young people for singing together. The last time we did this was when we performed in the Hexagon at Reading with 400 children. We need a large auditorium in Henley, which could also meet the needs of the Henley Symphony Orchestra and Choral Society. Anyone up for converting the River and Rowing Museum?

"The festival feeds on the energy of our young people channelled into new events each year."

He adds: "And we always need additional volunteers."

School of the month



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Saturday 9 May

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Putting Girls First

CROOKED BILLET

March Kitchen

PAUL CLEREHUGH, CHEF/PROPRIETOR, THE CROOKED BILLET, STOKE ROW. 01491 681048



ST PATRICK'S on Tuesday 17th March, there's a Hooley at The Crooked Billet. Ceilidh band: tin whistle, Uilleann pipes, accordion, bodhran & fiddle. Menu stuffed with Irish specials — Dublin Bay Prawns, Coddle, Galway Oysters & of course the ubiquitous Irish Stew.

St George, St David & St Andrew all claiming they created the famous stew recipe. Wales has cawl: lamb or mutton braised with spuds & veg. Welsh lamb enjoys protected geographical indication status — they're rightly proud of their delicious sheep.

Scotland's Hotch Potch & also Stovies: same ingredients as cawl & Irish stew — vegetables, potato (why did the potato go to the doctors? It wasn't peeling well).

England's Lancashire hot pot: identical shopping list. (St George famously fought the dragon & named his pub after it. St David put the dragon on his flag to look tough).

All four versions of this everyday peasant pot stew are basically the same. Lumps of lamb, holy trinity of leek, carrot & onion braised in water, sometimes with a stock cube, left in the pot for 3 or 4 hours to do its thing.

Henley Hot Pot — the potholes, I've never known our roads to be so suspension knackeringly bad. Potholes the size of saucepans. The economy's squeeze on pub profits. I'll apply to re-train in a tyre centre.

I'll make culinary amends to those cavernous potholes with Henley Hot Pot.

Irish Stew, Hot Pot, Cawl & Hotch Potch diced up in their stewed state, the colour of muddy water, whiff of charity shop clothes rail. We'll punch some enthusiastic flavour into Henley Hot Pot, stealing inspiration from other countries' slow cooked mutton recipes.

France spoons persillade (parsley, garlic, olive oil) onto Navarin of lamb. Sri Lankan's mutton curry accompanied with fragrant coconut sambal. Tunisian lamb tagine & harissa. Tuscan stufato d'agnello with a greedy salsa verde dollop, Indonesia's mutton rendang — lime pickle.

Henley Hot Pot. Melt in the mouth mutton braised with white wine, lemon & herbs under a crispy potato shell. Green dynamite sauce to electrify your taste buds. Butcher Barry at Gabriel Machin's in Henley has the mutton.



CROOKED BILLET

Henley Hot Pot

Ingredients (serves 4)

Marinade

- Juice of 2 lemons
- 4 garlic cloves
- 250ml Sauvignon Blanc
- 250ml olive oil
- 16 best end mutton chops

The Hot Pot

- 4 small onions
- 2 medium leeks, trimmed
- 4 medium leeks, peeled
- 8 peeled garlic cloves
- 400g waxy potato e.g. Desiree
- Olive oil, sea salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 16 salted (brown) anchovy fillets
- 2 unwaxed lemons cut to 1cm slices
- 2 heaped tbsp pearl barley
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs thyme
- Bottle of Sauvignon Blanc
- 250ml chicken or lamb stock

Green Sauce

- Bunch flat leaf parsley
- Handful of picked mint leaves
- Small bunch chives
- 6 salted (brown) anchovy fillets
- 1 tbsp capers
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Method

- Place marinade ingredients in dish, add chops. Wrap in cling film. Leave in fridge for 12 hours.
- When chops have marinated, pre-heat oven to 200°C.
- Cut onions in half, diagonally slice leek & carrot into 3cm slices. Peel & slice potatoes 5mm thick.
- Place large, heavy based frying pan on hob – moderate heat.
- Remove chops from marinade. Sit chops in pan on their fat sides to render & brown the fat.
- Stack chops together in pan to prevent from falling over.
- After 4 or 5 minutes when the fat has started to render & colour, seal each fleshy side of chops in rendered fat. 1 minute per side.
- Remove chops from pan. Season with sea salt & freshly ground black pepper. Reserve on a dinner plate. Place anchovy fillet on top of each chop.
- In same pan (don't clean it), add a little olive oil to mutton fat. Seal leek, carrot & onion. 1 minute per side to colour. Add garlic cloves in final minute.
- Select an oven proof pot, large enough to accommodate all ingredients. Decent top surface area for a decent top crust of potato.
- Evenly layer chops, anchovies, vegetables & barley in a pot. Tuck in the bay & thyme.
- Spread the sliced potatoes over the top. Be creative, nice artistic overlapping pattern.
- Place stock & wine in a saucepan, bring to simmer. Add simmering stock to lamb pot, sufficient as to just cover the potatoes.
- Cover dish with lid or a double layer of foil. Place in the centre of a pre-heated 200°C oven. After 20 minutes, turn oven down to 160°C & cook for a further 90 minutes. Remove lid or foil.
- Turn heat back up to 200°C & allow potatoes to brown & crisp up. Then serve, accompanied with Henley green sauce.
- Green sauce — simply blitz all ingredients together in a blender.



ST PATRICK'S DAY

Tuesday 17th March, Crooked Billet, Stoke Row. 01491 681048

Two great Irish bands, acoustic traditional Ceilidh Group. Also, the Zac Schulze gang playing Tin Lizzy, Van Morrison, Us, Rory Gallagher... Full of Irish specials respecting St Patrick. The traditional Irish Stew recipe





GIRL POWER

gives weight to women's health

BY JOHN JACKLIN

Fitness mentors draw strength from life experiences to establish female-only gym community

TWO fitness coaches who met on a kettlebell training course eight years ago have established a mission base to change the way women feel about exercise, strength and their bodies.

Natalie Higley, 43, from Caversham, and Nichola Stevens, 55, discovered a shared passion for helping women — and lifting heavy weights.

The pair spotted a gap in the fitness world triggered by Nat's experiences with her weight and health, and Nicky's with injury and menopause. They believed that there were no spaces dedicated to the needs of women, training styles and support for them.

And so the Strong Women's Club in Church Street, Caversham, the site of the former offices of Nationwide Building Society, came into being in October 2022.

Nat and Nic say: "We wanted to create something different — a place where women felt empowered, supported, and genuinely excited about movement. Our mission has always been to change the way women feel about exercise, strength, and their bodies. Our space in the heart of Caversham is

vibrant and so much more than a gym. It's a community built by women, for women — a safe, welcoming environment where every member feels seen, supported, and appreciated."

The partners offer one-to-one and four-to-one training sessions and a six-week foundation course is designed to support women who are unfamiliar with strength training.

"We grow stronger together — sharing knowledge, building confidence, and forming friendships along the way. Whether your goal is fitness, health, or simply connection, we're here to help women become the strongest, healthiest, happiest version of themselves."

They say: "Strong Women's Club was created to give women a place where they feel at home in their training. Whether someone has never lifted before or has years of experience, they are welcomed with the same care, respect and support.

"Beginners feel safe to start, and experienced lifters feel challenged to grow with no intimidation, no assumptions, and no judgment.

'Beginners feel safe to start, and experienced lifters feel challenged to grow with no intimidation, no assumptions, and no judgment'

"Being a women-only space isn't about exclusion; it's about meeting the needs of women with expertise. We have built an environment where women from all backgrounds, ages and religions can train feeling safe, comfortable, and understood.

"Members often tell us they feel like they can breathe, feel free to learn, play, try new movements and share their

Cont'd



experiences without fear of judgment. We're not a cold, black-box gym. Our space is warm, calm and intentionally designed by women for women. Women feel looked after from the moment they walk in. We train hard, but intelligently.

"Life does not stop at the gym door, we support women through work stress, family demands, health challenges, injuries and major life chapters. Meeting each woman exactly where she is and working with her to feel a sense of achievement.

"Our focus is long-term health: visceral fat, bone density, metabolic health, muscle mass, gut health and confidence. Strength helps life become more capable and empowering. And we believe you can begin strength training at any age.

"We're a team of five highly-qualified female coaches, with expertise spanning GP referral (including high blood pressure, autoimmune conditions, diabetes, osteoporosis and lower back pain), strength training, Olympic lifting, menopausal exercise support, GLP-1 support, youth strength, yoga, kettlebells, suspension training and more. This helps us support women, meet their needs just as confidently as we support complete beginners.

"Our vision is simple: to help as many of women and girls discover their strength and feel empowered in their bodies at every stage of life."

NAT'S STORY:

Nat used to work in finance before she retrained as a coach: "I'm a normal woman who fell in love with lifting weights and helping other women feel at home in their bodies. I wasn't a sporty child. I left school at 15, became a young mum, and spent years battling body image issues, disordered eating, and the endless cycle of fad diets.

"In offshore finance and investments, I specialised in relationship management. I loved getting to know people and

helping them find solutions, but after being made redundant and having my third child, I knew I didn't want to spend my life behind a desk. Something had to change.

"My first steps into fitness were running and yoga. Running got me moving, but I never really loved it. Yoga gave me calm, balance and space to breathe, and I qualified as a hatha yoga teacher.

"But something still felt missing, and then I discovered strength training. Lifting weights lit me up in a way nothing else had. It gave me focus and taught me to celebrate progress instead of punishing myself.

"The first time I managed a push up and pull up I felt proud instead of ashamed, I had found my path.

"That was the moment I decided



STRONG WOMENS
CLUB





to change careers and retrain as a coach. I live with an underactive thyroid, polycystic ovary syndrome and early menopause. These conditions have challenged me, but they have also shown me how powerful muscle and strength really are for the body and mind.

“That lived experience drives my passion to help women discover what their bodies are capable of, no matter their starting point. I know exactly what it feels like to be a complete beginner, nervous, fearful and with zero knowledge, and that’s why I coach the way I do: with compassion, humour and patience.

“My fascination with the human body and how it responds to movement keeps me learning. I hold qualifications in advanced personal training, exercise referral for supporting clients with clinical conditions, instructing children’s fitness, kettlebells, circuits, suspension training, qualified level 3 hatha yoga instructor and nutrition coaching.

“My continued development includes hypopressive breath work level 1, coaching skills, squat and posture analysis, menopause and female health with Well HQ, Girls In Sport with Well HQ, Understanding GLP1 CPD and the David Grey Lower Body Rehabilitation Course.

“I’m committed to staying ahead of the curve and cutting through the noise of misinformation, so I can be a trusted, science-backed sounding board for the women I work with.

“Over the years, I’ve loved exploring movement personally in all sorts of ways, pole, acrobatics with silks and hoop, crossfit, bodybuilding competitions, photo shoots, climbing the national three peaks [Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon] and walking 100km in 24 hours for charity. But one thing has always stayed consistent: strength training.

“It’s the foundation that makes everything else easier, and it’s why I’ll never stop.”

Natalie is proud to say that at Strong Women’s Club: “I coach women who never felt like they belonged in fitness.”

NIC’S STORY:

“I’m mum to two gorgeous boys, a wife of 26 years, and a proud dog mum to our handsome Australian Labradoodle, Buddy. It’s definitely a sporty house. “I love cooking for family

and friends, spending time by the sea, and curling up with a good book for some much-needed downtime, oh and strength training obviously.

“My journey into fitness began back in college, where I qualified as a gym and aerobics instructor in the 1980s - the Reebok high-tops and leg warmers era. Fitness was part of my health and beauty qualification, alongside sports massage.

“I worked in a gym while studying and instantly fell in love with the atmosphere and energy but eventually followed a career in beauty therapy for 30 years — always staying connected to movement through the gym and martial arts.

“At the age of 48, everything changed. After a hip injury, surgery, and a long rehabilitation, I lost confidence — physically and mentally. But that setback reignited my passion for fitness and inspired a career change.

“I retrained as a level 2 gym instructor, level 3 personal trainer, and have continued adding to my qualifications ever since. I became fascinated by the mechanics of the human body and how movement underpins every aspect of health and wellbeing.

“What drives me most now is helping other women overcome the fear of starting — especially those who feel nervous about stepping into a gym.

“The beginning of my physical training career was spent working in a prestigious spa and gym, putting my learning into practice and supporting men and women of all ages and all abilities.

“When I reached perimenopause, I experienced first-hand the physical and emotional challenges it can bring — fatigue, joint pain, anxiety, and low mood. Through education, lifestyle changes, and the right support, I found what worked for me. That experience inspired me to keep learning and to help other women navigate this stage of life.

“Lasting change comes from consistency, professional support, and a realistic approach that fits your lifestyle.

“I want women to take control of their fitness, move with confidence, and become their fittest, happiest, and strongest selves.”

WOMEN'S
HEALTH

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

Endometriosis – The diagnosis too often delayed

IT'S Endometriosis Awareness Month — a moment to shine a light on a condition that remains under-recognised despite being one of the most common gynaecological conditions. Affecting around 1 in 10 women, it's t's surprising how few people truly understand what it is or why it matters. That gap in awareness is exactly why this conversation is so important, and why spotting the signs early can make such a difference.

SO, WHAT ACTUALLY IS ENDOMETRIOSIS?

Endometriosis occurs when tissue similar to the lining of the womb (the endometrium) grows outside the womb. Most commonly, it's found within the pelvis, affecting areas such as the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other layers of the womb. But it can also involve the bowel, bladder, or vagina. In rare cases, it can appear in surgical scars or even distant organs like the lungs. During a typical menstrual

cycle, the lining of the womb thickens and is then shed as a period through the vagina. In endometriosis, however, tissue deposits found elsewhere in the body respond to hormonal changes in the same way — thickening and bleeding each month, but with nowhere for that blood to go. The result is inflammation, scarring, and sometimes blood-filled cysts affecting nearby organs.

These changes can lead to a wide range of symptoms, which vary hugely from person

‘Why spotting the signs early can make such a difference’



to person. Common symptoms include pelvic pain; pain when opening the bowels or passing urine (often worse around your period); pain during sex; pain that radiates into the back or down the legs; heavy or prolonged periods; bloating; and nausea. For some women, symptoms are mild. For others, they can be overwhelming.

WHY DOES EARLY DIAGNOSIS MATTER SO MUCH?

If left untreated, this monthly cycle of inflammation and scarring can cause long-term, sometimes irreversible damage. One of the most talked-about concerns is fertility. While most women with endometriosis will conceive naturally, the condition is found in around 25% of women undergoing fertility investigations. Many of these women do go on to become pregnant — but early diagnosis is crucial so that fertility support can be offered promptly if needed.

In my work, I see women whose physical health, emotional wellbeing, and overall quality of life have been deeply affected. That's why recognising symptoms early is so important — before life starts to feel dominated by pain and uncertainty.

I'm a firm believer that endometriosis, being the common, chronic condition it is and one that can start as early as the teenage years, makes it so important that we don't wait until it becomes a fertility crisis in a woman's thirties.

SO WHY DOES DIAGNOSIS STILL TAKE SO LONG?

On average, it takes over seven years for someone to receive a diagnosis. One reason is that symptoms are incredibly variable — both in type and severity — making them difficult to piece together. The severity of symptoms doesn't always match how advanced the disease is either. Some women with extensive endometriosis have very few symptoms and are only diagnosed incidentally, for example during scans or fertility assessments.

Pain is also subjective, and because symptoms often worsen around periods, they're frequently dismissed as "normal" bad period pain. When endometriosis affects the bowel or bladder, symptoms can closely mimic conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome or painful bladder syndrome, adding another layer of confusion.

GETTING THE RIGHT SUPPORT

If you suspect endometriosis, start by listening to your body. Keeping a symptom diary can be incredibly helpful in



identifying patterns and giving your doctor a clearer picture. If something doesn't feel right, seek advice early, it's always better to ask the question.

Your GP may refer you to a gynaecologist for scans or further tests. The only definitive way to diagnose endometriosis is through keyhole surgery, although even this "gold standard" test doesn't always detect it. For women with typical symptoms, it's often reasonable to start treatment without surgery, especially if symptoms improve. Surgery also carries its own risks, including inflammation and scarring, which can sometimes worsen symptoms.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Treatment should focus on improving your quality of life. Whether that's managing pain, supporting fertility, or both. It needs to be personalised for you, with regular reviews to make sure it's still the right fit.

Because endometriosis is driven by hormonal changes, particularly oestrogen, and much of the pain comes from inflammation, most treatments aim to reduce both. Options include simple pain relief and anti-inflammatories, hormonal treatments such as the pill, injections, implants, or an intrauterine coil, and medications that temporarily suppress ovarian oestrogen production. Surgery to remove endometriosis tissue may also be considered, either alone or alongside hormonal therapy.

For women whose symptoms are difficult to manage despite multiple treatments, referral to a specialist endometriosis centre can be invaluable, offering access to dedicated teams who provide targeted care.

Lifestyle approaches can also play a supportive role. Reducing inflammation through stress management techniques such as yoga, meditation, or cognitive behavioural therapy; regular exercise; and dietary changes, such as limiting dairy,

ultra processed food, and excess sugar, may help ease symptoms and support overall wellbeing.

ENDOMETRIOSIS AND MENOPAUSE

Many women notice an improvement in endometriosis symptoms during menopause, as oestrogen levels naturally fall. Some treatments even induce an early menopause for this reason. While this can feel like light at the end of the tunnel, it isn't always straightforward.

Menopausal symptoms can be severe, and hormone replacement therapy (which contains oestrogen) is often the most effective treatment. However, in women with a history of endometriosis, HRT can sometimes reactivate symptoms.

It's a common misconception that having endometriosis means you can't have HRT. That said, menopause treatment still needs to be personalised, taking careful account of your individual risks and benefits.

MY TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Endometriosis is common. For many women, symptoms are manageable, but for others, it can be a chronic, life-altering condition. Early recognition and treatment can make a real difference, improving both quality of life and fertility outcomes.

Support organisations like Endometriosis UK (www.endometriosis-uk.org) are an invaluable source of guidance and reassurance. And if you're concerned, you don't have to face it alone. Speaking to a menopause specialist early can help you feel more informed, supported, and in control, we're here to help.

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@berkshirermenopausedclinic.com or visit www.berkshirermenopausedclinic.com

Leighton Park STEMinists



STEMinists at Leighton Park School

LEIGHTON PARK School's STEMMinists Club was launched by a scientifically-minded group of Year 10 girls keen to encourage younger girls to get involved in STEM careers and appreciate what interesting and engaging opportunities exist for women in this field. Now in the Lower Sixth, Ella, Alice, Eva and Daisy are tackling their latest challenge; the Davidson Inventors Challenge organised by the University of Cambridge. This annual competition seeks submissions that combine creativity and passion for biotechnology and chemical engineering into groundbreaking solutions that could one day change the world. The school offers a variety of co-curricular clubs, trips and opportunities to nurture students' enthusiasm for science including Drone Club, STEAM Projects, Engineering Club and Dissection Club.

Ella explained: "We have come up with this prototype design for a luminescent solar panel that quickly and sustainably harnesses photons from the sun to power CO2 monitors in classrooms. Because of Covid, CO2 levels were being monitored a lot more and it has been proven that high levels have a strongly negative impact on students' learning in lessons and in examinations. We wanted to help schools to more cheaply and sustainably monitor CO2 levels so they can know when to ventilate the room or, in exam situations, when to give special consideration to candidates, because of the air quality."

The girls have their own STEM ambitions with their collective sights set on careers in medicine, quantum physics and marine biology. The variety of science subjects that they share, in addition to Music and Art specialisms, across their A Level and International Baccalaureate Diploma Programmes gives them a wealth of ideas and scientific insight. Ella concluded: "It's a project that you definitely have to do as a team and it's so rewarding. We are all very interested in our areas and I think we work well together to share the information that we each bring."

Discover more at Leighton Park's next Open Morning,
Friday 13th March, 9.00am. Book now at
www.leightonpark.com/visit-leighton-park

Lisa Anacora

On-going supporters
of women in the
marine world



NOW in her fifteenth year as owner and Managing Director, Lisa Anacora's leadership of Val Wyatt Marine feels refreshingly different in a traditionally male dominated industry.

Her people first approach creates a warm, values led environment where women feel genuinely welcome — whether joining the team, choosing their first boat, or discovering life on the water.

As part of its commitment to supporting women in the marine world, Val Wyatt recently acted as lead sponsor for an inspirational trio of women who successfully rowed across the Atlantic.

Lisa hopes her path and the Val Wyatt ethos encourage more women to find their place in the industry.

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High-flying photographer focuses on positives not negatives

BY JOHN JACKLIN

Former air stewardess Gabrielle McMillan came to appreciate Henley after travelling the world

PHOTOGRAPHER Gabby McMillan travelled the world and became an air hostess after leaving Henley as a prelude to her career taking off.

Gabby, 48, believes moving away from the town made her appreciate where she grew up and has invigorated her professional life in commercial and wedding photography.

She says: "I was brought up in Henley but went to school at Cranford House, in Moulsoford, near Wallingford, and then sixth form at The Henley College.

"Then I went to Maidenhead Art College, which isn't there now, to do a foundation art course, I wasn't really focused on photography at that point, I was focused on art, on painting.

"But unfortunately, I just could not get what was in my head out onto paper and that was when I chose the camera.

"I'd carried a camera since I was a child. I was really lucky

that my parents had given me one that I could take on holidays and document everything. The foundations were there — I just hadn't realised it.

"Once I got to university, I realised that the darkroom was my home and I spent four years there. One year at Maidenhead College and then I went to Southampton University and took a degree in photography. I loved it — processing film was magical.

"I was still using photography as a medium to create art and I did a few exhibitions but I needed to make a living. So, I went into photographing weddings and more commercial work. It was mainly weddings and family portrait shoots and such like that I put my own stamp on."

Gabby wanted to set up her own photography business so she could invest in new equipment but needed the funds to do so. That's when she became a stewardess with British Airways.

She recalled: "I went part-time at British Airways and gradually worked my way up. Behind the scenes, while I was flying, I was setting up the business. I left when I started my

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family and I've been a full-time photographer ever since."

Gabby now has two daughters, Tulla, 12, and Berrie, seven. "Growing up in Henley was great," she says. "I loved it but you don't realise how lucky you are growing up in Henley until you go away."

"I was brought up in Valley Road, near The Henley College, and I worked in local pubs as a teenager. The Angel on the Bridge, the Copper Kettle, which is Villa Marina now, and down the regatta on the land gang, painting regatta posts and things such as that."

"I wish my children could be as lucky as that but I just don't think there are the opportunities now for young teenagers to do the things that I did. It was the best place to grow up with the so much freedom."

"When I left Henley to travel I thought I was never coming back. I saw a lot of the world and soon realised I was so privileged to have been brought up in Henley and South Oxfordshire."

"I had loads of friends in Henley, many of whom I still have, which is how my business got started. One would recommend me, then another and that's how my business still works today — by recommendation — and for that I am very grateful."

She adds: "It was good to get out of Henley for a while. It was good for my photography to be overseas and shoot different things, different scenes, different everything, to know what I actually really wanted to do as well."

Gabby graduated from Southampton with a first-class honours degree and married "quite young" before going travelling. "My husband is Kiwi, so we went to New Zealand

and Australia. We mainly did just Australia, New Zealand and Thailand as well after that."

Gabby met her husband, Graham Butler, a chef, when she had been working at the Angel on the Bridge, where she was a waitress. They returned to Britain after their travels and Graham started work at the Baskerville Arms, in Shiplake.

"That's when I started working for British Airways," she says. "We bought a small house in Henley and, after a few years, moved to Marlow. So not very far away."

Gabby sings the praises of the beauty and settings to be found in Henley and the surrounding areas. "We've got beautiful wedding venues all around," she says. "You couldn't want for a better place as a photographer, really."

"What is my favourite venue? Oh, gosh, no, I'm not telling you that. Because they're all lovely. I love all of them. They have all got different aspects about them. For instance, the town hall in Henley is so pretty. Henley is so gorgeous."

"It doesn't matter about the weather, doesn't matter about anything. That backdrop of the town hall to have photos outside is just perfect, as are the chamber rooms and the massive hall inside."

"The list is endless. There are so many inspiring places to do weddings here."

One of Gabby's priorities, especially for weddings, is to make sure her clients are as at ease as possible. "People always ask me about the Bridezillas," she says. "I'm not joking when I say I have not had any. All my couples are just so relaxed and just so lovely."

"My style is relatively relaxed and more documentary style."



I don't want to be intrusive or try to make things happen on people's wedding days. It's much, much more natural and that's why I attract the couples that just want someone to document the day in a relaxed manner.

"They want time with their friends and not to be spending the whole day doing photos and I'm 100 per cent totally on board with that."

"I'm a mixed bag when it comes to weddings. I do a few high-end weddings but am very happy to do smaller, much more low-key weddings."

As to the high-end weddings Gabby concedes she has done "one or two", but further details about the names she has worked for are not forthcoming. She says: "I can't tell you any more, sorry."

Gabby believes all couples just want a wedding day that is free from stress so they can just enjoy it. "That is my main purpose for them," Gabby says. "Just to have the best day of their lives. That's what I want them to have."

A vital part of the wedding process, for her, is that she gets together with the couple so they know beforehand who they are getting.

She says: "It allows me to get to know them, which is a most important thing, so I'm not a stranger turning up on their wedding day."

"We go through the itinerary — the running order of the day — so I know exactly what is happening and when. They will tell me what group shots they want and I will be real with them and say how long the whole process is going to take. If the couple think that it will take too long, we cut the timings down. "I very much work around my couple and what they

want. But we've done all the hard stuff, essentially, in the meeting prior to the wedding day. So, on the day, I know what's happening and they know what's happening. It takes the stress out of the whole thing as well."

Gabby says weddings are challenging and that your photographer needs to be a "people person".

She says: "I think my time at British Airways definitely helped. I met and worked with so many different characters from all walks of life, which enabled me to adapt and be more mindful of people needs and situations, a skill which I have been able to transfer into my photography work."

"A wedding is a big occasion, you need to navigate the emotions of the couple, as well as their family and friends. It's important to be aware of everything that is going on so you can capture the day respectfully and authentically."

"It's a privilege to be part of a wedding day, it's actually addictive being able to witness the love between two people and their friends and families. It is something I will never take for granted — I am very, very lucky."

'My style is relatively relaxed and more kind of documentary style. I don't want to be intrusive or try to make things happen on people's wedding days'

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From full redesigns to refined planting schemes and ongoing maintenance, RJ White's dedicated team delivers craftsmanship, reliability, and a meticulous attention to detail. Clients often describe

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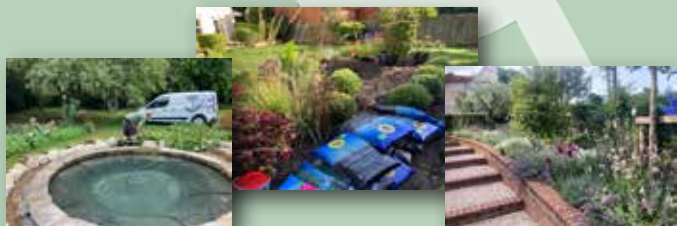
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Expert Tips for a Fresh, Functional Space

THE kitchen is often called the heart of the home — a place for cooking, gathering, and making memories. Whether you're planning a full renovation or simple upgrades, these tips from our kitchen consultant Gary Evans of G D Evans Interiors is here to help you create a kitchen that's both beautiful and practical.



1. Maximise Storage and Organisation

- Install pull-out storage solutions and drawer organisers to make the most of your cabinet space and for ease of access.
- Consider open shelving for easy access to everyday items, store cookery books, display your best crockery and a modern look.
- Use vertical space by using tall wall units and adding top cupboards if space permits.



2. Upgrade Lighting

- Layer lighting with overhead fixtures, under-cabinet lights, and task lighting to brighten work areas.
- Choose energy-efficient LED bulbs for long-lasting, cost-effective illumination.

3. Refresh Surfaces

- Replace old worktops with durable materials like quartz or granite.
- Update backsplashes with tile, glass, or worktop matching quartz or granite.
- Repaint or refinish cabinets for a fresh look without the cost of replacement.

4. Modernise Appliances

- Invest in energy-efficient appliances to save on utility bills and reduce your environmental footprint.
- Look for smart features, such as programmable ovens or refrigerators with touch screens.

5. Enhance Functionality

- Create a kitchen island or breakfast bar for extra workspace and seating.

- Add a pull-out waste bin and recycling center to keep waste organised and out of sight.
- Consider a boiling water tap, some can also provide chilled and sparkling water for convenience.

6. Personalise Your Space

- Choose colours, materials, and décor that reflect your style and make the kitchen inviting.
- Incorporate plants or herb gardens for a touch of greenery and fresh flavours.

7. Plan for Safety

- Ensure proper ventilation to reduce smoke and odours.
- Install slip-resistant flooring and check that electrical outlets are up to current regulations.

Final Advice Before starting any project, set a realistic budget and timeline. Consult professionals for major renovations, but don't underestimate the impact of small changes. With thoughtful planning and creative touches, your kitchen can become a more enjoyable and efficient space for years to come.



If you require any further assistance, contact Gary Evans of G D Evans Interiors who are your local experts in kitchen, bedroom and bathroom design supply and installation on Henley 01491 244244 Reading 01189 474744 or email gary@gdevansinteriors.co.uk web www.gdevansinteriors.co.uk

AKG
MEN'S GROOMING

The best barber in town, now at a new location

TUCKED inside the professional surroundings of the Regus building in Henley-on-Thames, AKG Men's Grooming is quickly becoming one of the area's most talked-about destinations for modern men's haircare. Since opening its doors in 2016 and moving to a new location in December 2025, the shop has built a reputation not just for precision barbering, but for delivering an experience that keeps clients returning.

At the centre of the brand is founder Ashley, whose journey into barbering began remarkably early — at just 14 years old. What started as cutting school friends' hair soon evolved into a makeshift barbershop in his mum's garage, where he honed his craft and developed a passion for the trade. After completing a

a barber who instinctively adapts his approach to make each person feel comfortable. Families are especially well catered for. Ashley's natural rapport with children helps turn what can sometimes be a stressful experience into an enjoyable one, complete with a small reward of a lollipop for younger clients after a successful haircut.

The shop also blends classic service with modern convenience. An easy-to-use online booking system via its website ensures appointments are simple to arrange, while complimentary tea and coffee create a friendly, unhurried environment. With 30 minutes of free onsite parking available, visiting is as convenient as it is enjoyable.

Over the years, Ashley's skill has attracted notable clients, including the



hairdressing apprenticeship and working his way up to assistant manager at the Barbershop Group, he fulfilled a long-held ambition by creating a space of his own. Now, with over 20 years of experience behind the chair, he started his first barber shop at the Henley self storage in 2016, in this time he has managed to build a great clientele over the 9 years. He now has brand new shop set up in the Regus building in Henley, his dedication to quality and customer care remains as strong as ever.

AKG Men's Grooming specialises in sharp, contemporary styles, particularly skin fades, taper fades, and burst fades — cuts that demand both technical precision and artistic attention to detail. Yet what truly sets the shop apart is its welcoming, relaxed atmosphere. Clients often describe the experience as traditional yet fun, with easy conversation and

late Paul Daniels, as well as personalities such as Calum Best and Jason Manford — a testament to the trust placed in his craft.

Operating strictly by appointment to maintain a high standard of service, AKG Men's Grooming welcomes clients of all ages seeking a professional cut in a friendly setting. With a growing local following and a strong reputation built on skill, personality, and consistency, this Henley barbershop is proving that great grooming is about far more than just a haircut — it's about how you feel when you leave the chair.

AKG Men's Grooming

Regus building Newtown Rd, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1HG

For enquiries contact Ashley:

Tel: +44 7879 557 242 or Email: ashley.akg@gmail.com

For bookings visit: www.akgmensgrooming.com

Twelve schools awarded for approach to nature

BY ALEX CARTER

TWELVE schools in and around Henley became the first recipients of the Green Futures Awards. The accolade, established by Greener Henley, recognises clear, measurable action on climate, nature and resilience by supporting and celebrating schools that embed climate and nature initiatives and education into their everyday learning and operations.

The awards follow a three-tier programme. Bronze recognises engagement and communication, silver supports practical climate action and curriculum integration and gold rewards strategic leadership through comprehensive climate action planning and long-term resilience.

Sonning Common Primary School received the programme's

first gold award, Gillotts School in Henley was awarded silver and 10 schools achieved bronze status.

The judging panel commended the Sonning Common school for excelling in every aspect of its application, demonstrating a whole-school commitment to sustainability.

Over the years, it has transformed its grounds into a thriving habitat through extensive tree planting, an enlarged wildlife pond, wildflower areas and dedicated spaces for birds, bees and hedgehogs.

Its composting and water collection reflect thoughtful environmental stewardship.

The school has also taken practical steps to build climate resilience by planting for future shade, installing shelters to manage overheating, harvesting rainwater to protect habitats and proactively addressing flood risks.

It also has a long-established, pupil-led eco-council and a nationally accredited Forest School, placing nature at the heart of learning,

Kate Oldridge, executive director of Greener Henley, believes the school's sustained action and leadership make it a deserving recipient of the gold award.

She said: "We are delighted to present our first awards to schools that are leading the way in our community."

"This programme is unique in two ways: it is rooted in the local community — linking to initiatives such as our annual



Learning: pupils at Badgemore Primary School in Henley at the annual science fair last year organised by Greener Henley.

‘The practical support from Greener Henley for us to play our part in taking action to meet one of the greatest challenges of our time is invaluable’

Science Fair and our Nature Squared campaign, with volunteers on hand to advise. Unlike national awards schemes, it supports schools in preparing for escalating climate impacts.

“We anticipate that it will help our local schools deliver on their



Students with headteacher, Catharine Darnton at Gillotts School Green wall.

ambitions faster and more easily than they would do alone.”

Rachel Salmons, headteacher of Sonning Common Primary School, said: “Schools play a vital role in shaping environmentally responsible young people who understand their power to protect our planet.

“The Green Futures Awards help turn that learning into real, meaningful action, inspiring pupils to create a healthier, more sustainable future.”

Gillotts School was praised for championing sustainability and taking proactive steps to create a greener, climate-ready school. Sustainability is embedded throughout the school community through initiatives such as green careers week, staff sustainability training and an established eco-committee.

It has completed carbon footprint calculation, developed a climate action plan and strengthened resilience by conducting risk assessments for active risks, such as overheating and flash

floods. Headteacher Catharine Darnton said: “We see our involvement with Greener Henley and, in particular, the Green Futures Award, as integral to our Climate Action Plan.

“The award structure helps us decide on ‘what next’ and recognises and rewards what we have achieved.

“The practical support from Greener Henley for us to play our part in taking action to meet one of the greatest challenges of our time is invaluable.”

Schools awarded bronze were Badgemore, Trinity, Sacred Heart and Rupert House in Henley and The Henley College, Emmer Green, Frieth, Kidmore End and Shiplake primaries and the Oratory Prep School in Woodcote.

The awards programme is open to any school in Henley and the surrounding areas and is supported by Oxfordshire County Council and the Henley Educational Trust.

For more information, visit GreenerHenley.org.uk/school



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Sarah Pye

PROFESSIONAL LOCAL ARTIST

SARAH PYE is a self-taught artist, who's lived and worked in Henley for the majority of her life. She spent fifteen years as a gardener prior to painting professionally and these years spent outdoors have undoubtedly played a large part in her inspiration to paint wild gardens, meadows and woodlands. Her views of the sea are inspired by her early years living in Devon and subsequent family holidays to both Devon and Cornwall. Sarah's large impressionist paintings are created freely and intuitively, only an idea fired by an exquisite view, image or days remembered. She exhibits mainly across the south of England in galleries and different shows throughout the year and has collectors both at home and abroad.

1 What brought you to the Henley area and why do you stay?
I moved from Devon to Henley when I was nine years old. The move was due to my father's job at the time being based in London. I think Henley appealed to my parents as it was a commutable distance and because it's on the river, which is the next best thing to the sea.

2 What would you change about Henley?
My children always joke with me, saying that Henley is in its own little bubble. I feel lucky to have grown up here. My parents and children all still live locally. I'm not sure I would change anything. I love Henley and its different events throughout the year. Places do change over time, but then that's life.

3 How do you spend your leisure time locally?
We have a Cocker spaniel called Elvis, and I love walking in Harpsden woods or by the river with him. We also enjoy the cinema and The Kenton Theatre too.

4 What are your top three local haunts? A good meal out, especially at the Golden Ball in Assendon. We also love the Crooked billet at Stoke Row, where there's fabulous music and food. The Kenton theatre is wonderful and great to have their shows just a stone's throw away.

5 Do you have a favourite song?
If I'm honest, I'm not very knowledgeable about music, but I know what I love and the one I always turn the radio up really loud to is 'Mr Blue Sky' by ELO. It's just massively uplifting and positive. Oh and anything by Queen at top volume too!

6 Which film or play has inspired or moved you the most?
I recently saw the new release 'I Swear'. I was incredibly moved by the story. John Davidson had the most incredible strength and power to forgive. How he survived all the adversity in his life amazes me. There were also heart-warming moments too.

7 What do you treasure most about life in the UK?
I Love the seasons. Spring is full of energy, blossoms, bluebells. Summer is relaxed, ever green with the promise of the sun on your face. Autumn is the time to wind down and soak up the colour of the changing leaves with woodland walks, and winter, though often grey and wet is the time to hunker down and appreciate being cosy inside. It's the simple things that I love about life in the UK.

8 If you could live anywhere else in the world, where would it be?
I'm not a great traveller, I'm a bit of a 'home bird', so for me, it could only ever be the UK. I could never move away from England and my family.

9 Is there anyone, or anything in the area that you particularly admire, would recommend or think deserves a mention?
As a local artist, I genuinely admire both the Henley Guild of Artists and the

Henley Arts Trail. Both organisations are run by artist volunteers and offer local artists the opportunity to exhibit their work, attend workshops and be a part of the local wider artistic community.

10 What did you want to be when you were a child?
I don't remember wanting to be anything specific as a child, but as a teenager I definitely wanted to be a hairdresser and that's how I started my post school life. I trained at Oxford college of FE and did my city and guilds in wig making, ladies and men's hairdressing, beauty and art and design.

11 Which things do you wish you had known when you were younger?
How quickly the years go by and that you shouldn't worry what other people think. I wish I'd realised that to do well at something isn't always about being the best, but it's about never giving up.

12 Which three people would you choose to have dinner with, if you could?
I'd love to have dinner with Tom Hanks, Freddie Mercury and David Attenborough.

13 Where do you like to travel to on holiday?
Devon and Cornwall. You can't beat England on a warm summer's day. I also love Italy as the food is delicious and the old cities like Bologna and Venice are beautiful. Sardinia was also lovely.

14 What are your ambitions?
I believe one continues to grow and evolve as an artist. For me every day is a school day. I find myself hoping that as I grow, the people who enjoy my work will grow with me and enjoy my journey as much as I do.

15 Do you have any regrets?
No — regrets are a waste of time and energy, just re-evaluate, learn and move forwards and if necessary sideways a bit.

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