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FEBRUARY 2019
Issue 24

Monthly Business & Community magazine delivered in & around Chester



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Cover Photograph
Grosvenor Bridge - Chester



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We are celebrating our 2nd birthday this month... I can tell you that it has come around so quickly!

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Best Wishes
Maxine & Mike



Circulation of this **FREE** magazine is distributed to Chester and its surrounding villages.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

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PHOTOGRAPHER STACEY FROM BLACON SHORTLISTED FOR TOP AWARD

Stacey Oliver
Photographer

THE work of a photographer has been brought in to sharp focus after a wedding shot she took was shortlisted for a prestigious UK-wide award.

Stacey Oliver, a mum-of-two, who is originally from Blacon and now lives in Sealand, has reached the finals of the Guild of Photographers Image of the Year Competition, for a wedding photo she took at The Belsfield Hotel, Windermere, in Cumbria's Lake District National Park.

The Guild of Photographers is a highly respected UK based association for photographers which has members from all over the UK and overseas.

It runs an on-line monthly photographic competition, judged by internationally respected judges with awards given to the best of the thousands of entries it receives. During 2018, around 12,000 entries were received overall.

At the end of each year, a top ten is selected for various categories with a winner picked from each who are then in the running for the overall Image of the Year top award.

Stacey's eye-catching picture has been selected in the top ten images for the wedding category which has earned her an invite to the Image of the Year final.

The winners of each category will be announced at a glittering ceremony at Crewe Hall in Crewe, Cheshire, on February 2 next year, along with an overall winner who will take the Image of the Year top title.

Stacey, 41, a former newspaper photographer who set up her own business, Stacey Oliver Photography, just over two years ago, said: "I am thrilled to have made the top ten for the wedding category. It feels like such a privilege to have made the finals of such a prestigious awards which are entered by so many brilliant photographers.

"I have had a really busy year, photographing some amazing couples on their special days so to receive this news has been the icing on the cake."

The former Blacon High School student said: "It's given me a real boost and if I get no further than the top ten then I will still feel

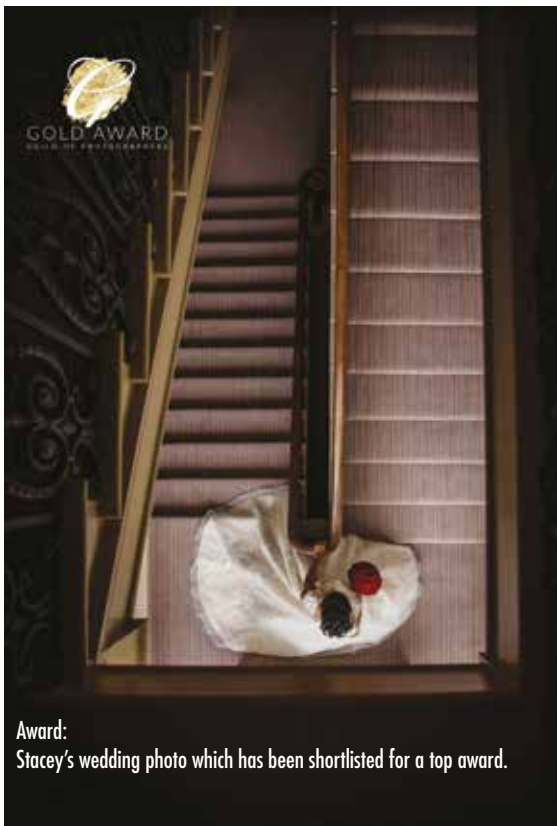
very proud that other people have judged my work and thought it worthy of making the finals. It's a fantastic compliment."

Guild Director Lesley Thirsk said "One of the Guild's aims is to drive standards and creativity amongst photographers. Our competition certainly does that, for the standard of the entries we see each month is quite staggering.

"To have an image recognised by the Guild in the monthly competition is difficult enough, so to have an image selected as being one of the best in a category for the end of year Final is without doubt an incredible achievement, and shows just how talented photographer, Stacey Oliver, is."

To find out more about Stacey Oliver Photography, go to www.staceyoliverphotography.co.uk

To find out more about the Guild of Photographers and their competition visit their website www.photoguild.co.uk



Award:

Stacey's wedding photo which has been shortlisted for a top award.

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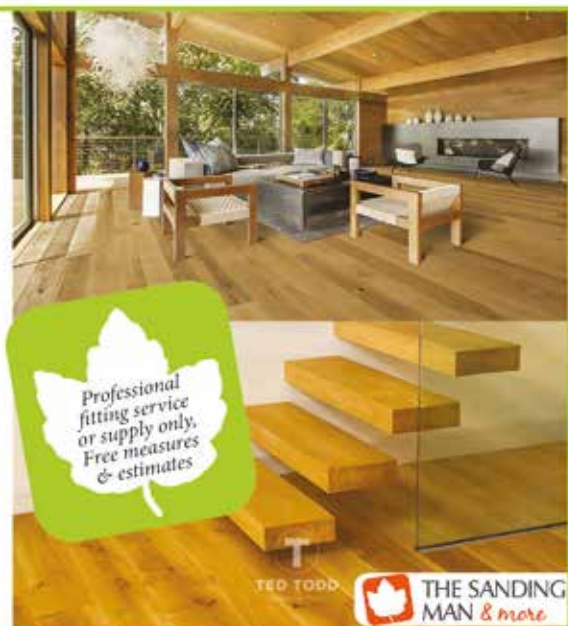
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COMMUNITY NEWS

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ChAPS expand into Warrington

A charity which works to support people with autism and their families has extended their services into Warrington with a variety of activities on offer in the community.

Cheshire Autism Practical Support (ChAPS) already supports people of all ages across different parts of Cheshire, and, with thanks to a confidential donation, has now been able to branch out into Warrington. "We are delighted that our ChAPS activities are now officially up and running in Warrington, and Manager Julie Gerke has been overwhelmed by the warm welcome from existing service providers," says ChAPS Managing Director Jo Garner.

"We are very much looking forward to working in partnership for the benefit of all of our families, and would love to support as many people as possible across Warrington."

Activities up and running include a play session at Warrington Sensory Centre on the first Wednesday of the month (4pm-6pm) and Street Dance at Stage Pro Academy on the first and third Mondays of the month (5pm-6pm).

Bowling takes place at the Tenpin Centre on the second Monday of the month (5pm-6.30pm) and multi-sports and family swim at Lymm Leisure Centre on the fourth Sunday of the month from 12.15pm-2.30pm.

A parents' meeting will also take place on the second Friday of each month at the Walton Lea Project Café from 10am-noon.

Julie is also finalising details to run a fortnightly Kidz Club at the Warrington Sensory Centre and Youth Club at Daresbury Village Hall. Other activities which could follow include go karting, horse riding, animal therapy and climbing, as well as extending the current training and therapies for both adults and children which take place on a rotational basis in Runcorn, Ellesmere Port and Northwich.

Autism remains the fastest growing condition in the world, affecting one person in 36, and ChAPS has already benefitted thousands of people of all ages who are on the autism spectrum.

Anyone wishing to find out more about ChAPS membership should visit www.cheshireautism.org.uk to register online. For help completing the application, please call 0344 850 8607.



DEVA CANOE CLUB is Chester's only adult recreational canoe club based alongside the River Dee on Lower Park Road in Handbridge. We are a group of passionate paddlers and all share a common interest in encouraging adults of all ages to experience and enjoy this exhilarating sport. We paddle throughout the year on sea, rivers (flat and white water), lakes and canals throughout the North West and welcome new members (beginners or experienced) at any time. You don't need to own a boat to participate as we have a wide range of craft for you to try. To find out more, please visit our website www.devacanoclub.co.uk or email devacanoclub@gmail.com



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DO YOU KNOW?

1. In 4 of the 5 largest cities in the U.S., it's cheaper to rely on Uber than to own a car, a 2018 report found.
2. Lighting hasn't brought down a plane since 1963, due to careful engineering that lets the electric charge of a lightning bolt run through the plane and out of it.
3. For many Icelanders, WW2 is actually known a "the blessed war" because the country has the war to thank for its independence.



4. An Ikea in the Netherlands had to cancel their 1 euro breakfast special because it attracted too many customers and caused traffic jams on the highway.



5. Spinraza, a drug for spinal muscular atrophy, has a list price of \$750,000.
6. All Bran breakfast cereal is only 87% bran.
7. General Electric is the only company remaining from the original Dow Jones index of 1896.
8. As global temperatures rise, flowers are emitting less scent.
9. After just under a year in space, astronaut Scott Kelly's gene expression changed significantly and it's different to his identical twin brother's DNA.

10. Amazon's largest warehouse is the size of 17 American football fields.


11. All galaxies, regardless of size, rotate once every billion years.

12. Dynamite was originally going to be called 'Nobel's Safety Powder'.



13. A report found that the free weights at the gym have 362 times more bacteria than a toilet seat.

14. When you first meet people it is common to forget their names - a phenomenon called the 'next-in-line' effect. This is because people are too worried about themselves, and what they'll say next, to focus on remembering the names of people they're introduced to.

15.  Until 1948, 7-Up contained "lithium citrate", a mood stabilizer used to treat bipolar disorder.

16. Actor Frankie Muniz suffers from long term memory loss and doesn't remember being on Malcolm in the Middle.



17. In the late Middle Ages, books were so valuable that libraries would chain them to the bookcase. This was widely practiced until the 18th century.
18. The first woman to cycle round the world learnt to ride a bike a few days before she set off.



19. When Czechoslovakia split, it split not only the country, but also the national anthem, which had verses both in Czech and Slovak language.



20. Three of the four members of Metallica divorced their wives during the recording of The Black Album due to its troubled production.

21. A cyberchondriac is someone who scours the Internet looking for details of their illnesses.

22. Cologne was originally produced as protection against the plague. It was widely believed that bad-smelling air spread the disease.

23. Installed in 1410, the world's oldest astronomical clock still in operation is in Prague.

24. The world's most expensive perfume is Clive Christian No 1 Passant Guardant. It costs \$143,000 for 30ml and comes in a flask studded with 2,000 diamonds.



25. Ben & Jerry learned how to make ice cream by taking a \$5 correspondence course offered by Penn State, because one of them couldn't get into medical school and the other couldn't sell enough pottery.

26. Dostoevsky wrote "The Gambler" to pay off his gambling debts.

27. Sweden has a ski-through McDonald's.





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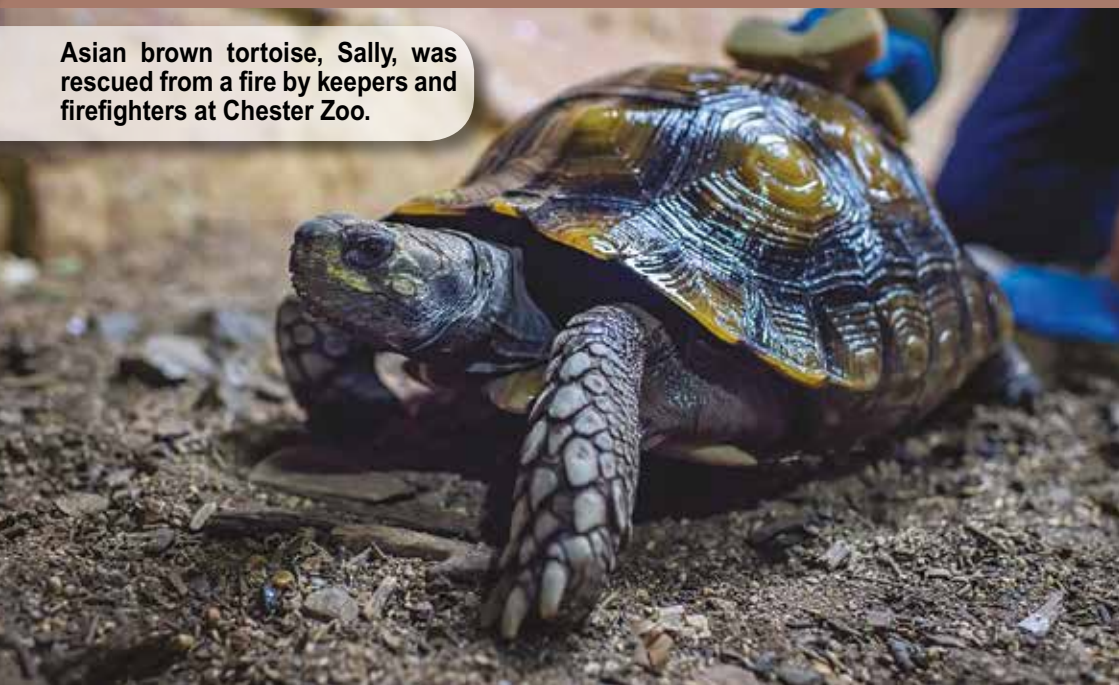


OUR ZOO

What's happening at Chester Zoo.

The Chester Zoo animals safe after the fire

Asian brown tortoise, Sally, was rescued from a fire by keepers and firefighters at Chester Zoo.



Conservationists at Chester Zoo have released the first images of animals safely settled in new habitats, after they were rescued from a fire in the zoo's Monsoon Forest last Saturday.

During the incident, a huge range of animals were led away from the fire to safety by zookeepers with the help of firefighters.

These included all the mammals in the building, such as critically endangered Sumatran orangutans and Sulawesi macaques, as well as a range of other species, from lizards to tortoises and birds.

Conservationists have since worked round the clock to relocate all the animals within the zoo's 125 acres of habitats. Now, six days on from the incident, the first images have been release of the species safely settled into their new homes.

Remarkably, some - such as the Sunda gharial crocodiles, turtles and fish - will remain in the Monsoon Forest building, where their habitats have been undisturbed. The zoo's vets and keepers have been conducting thorough checks of the area to ensure it remains suitable for these species.



OUR LATEST NEWS & EVENTS



Mike Jordan, Animal & Plant Director at Chester Zoo, said:

“Everyone has pulled together and worked incredibly hard to relocate the many wonderful species whose homes were affected by the events of Saturday.

“Our animal experts will now be keeping a very close eye on each and every one of them – helping them to fully settle in to their temporary accommodation and ensure they have everything they need.”

Meanwhile, a conservation fundraising page, which was set up in response to a deluge of offers of support, as visitors asked how they could help or donate, has now topped £140,000. The Monsoon Forest habitat was home to

threatened wildlife from South East Asia, so the fund will go towards the zoo’s charitable mission of preventing extinction for those species.

Jamie Christon, Chester Zoo’s Chief Operating Officer, said:

“Knowing how much people are behind us has made this terribly difficult time a little easier to bear and we really have been bowled over by all of the support.

“We’re a conservation charity, working to prevent extinction and the overwhelming generosity of our supporters will enable us to deliver an incredible amount of conservation work for threatened South East Asian species, both here in Chester and around the world.”



FRESH TAKES ON KID'S FAVOURITES

As the kids head back to school, there's no better time to make a fresh start in the kitchen, too.

Substituting nutritious ingredients such as sorghum in your favourite grain-based foods is an easy way to upgrade your family's menu this autumn.

Some of the traditional snacks kids love most – such as cakes, cookies and doughnuts – can all be prepared using sorghum, a gluten-free cereal grain grown throughout the world. This highly versatile ingredient is naturally high in fibre, iron and protein, and can be used

in a wide range of preparations. In fact, white food-grade sorghum can be milled directly into whole grain flour to produce foods such as brownies, pizza dough, pastas, cereals, pancakes and waffles.

Whether it's a power breakfast to fuel the day, a sweet lunchbox treat or a tasty after school snack, these recipes showcase how simple it can be to give your kids' favorite treats a nutritious makeover they'll be thrilled to sample.

For more nutritious back to school recipes and tips for cooking with sorghum, visit www.HealthySorghum.com.

Sorghum Pancakes

Recipe provided by Barbara Kliment

- 1 3/4 cups sorghum flour**
- 1/4 cup cornstarch**
- 3 teaspoons baking powder**
- 2 teaspoons sugar**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1/2 cup powdered buttermilk**
- 2 eggs**
- 3 tablespoons melted butter**
- 1 1/2 cups water**

Heat oven to 200°F. Combine dry ingredients. In separate bowl, beat together eggs, melted butter and water; add to dry ingredients and mix just until well blended. Heat large skillet or griddle over medium-low heat. Spray pan with cooking oil. Wet fingertips under faucet and shake them over hot griddle.

If water droplets "sizzle," heat is right to begin making pancakes.

For large cakes pour 1/4 cup of batter into pan; for small use 2 tablespoons of batter. Cook until bubbles form on top; flip and cook until golden brown on bottom. Transfer to baking sheet and keep warm in oven while making rest of pancakes. Serve warm with butter and syrup.

Chewy Oatmeal Toffee Cookies

Recipe provided by Kate Lange

- 1 cup butter, softened**
- 2 eggs**
- 2 cups light brown sugar**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- 1 cup sorghum flour**
- 3/4 cup unbleached white flour**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- 1/8 teaspoon allspice**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon**
- 1/8 teaspoon cloves**
- 3 cups oatmeal**
- 1 cup coconut flakes**
- 1(10-ounce) package of almond toffee bits**

Heat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease cookie sheet. Cream butter, eggs, brown sugar and vanilla in large bowl until light and fluffy. Mix flour, salt, soda, allspice, cinnamon and cloves; add to butter mixture. Beat until well blended. Stir in oatmeal, coconut and toffee bits with spoon. Drop by rounded teaspoons about 2 inches apart onto prepared sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool 1 minute; remove to wire rack.



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COMMUNITY NEWS

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Three community projects in Cheshire West get a helping hand from police commissioner this year.



Three projects which support vulnerable people in west Cheshire have been awarded funding from Cheshire's police and crime commissioner to help them make a difference in their community.

David Keane has awarded grants from his Safer Communities Fund to west Cheshire based community organisations Cheshire Autism Practical Support, Queensberry Alternative Provision and Chester FC Community Trust.

The commissioner's Safer Communities Fund supports local residents and communities to get involved in the prevention and reduction of crime in their area. Community groups or organisations can bid for up to £5,000 for projects which support crime prevention.

David said: "I'm pleased to have been able to award funding from my Safer Communities Fund to even more organisations which are working tirelessly to make Cheshire even safer.

"We've seen unprecedented interest in this year's fund with a whole raft of applicants committed to delivering projects which prevent crime and anti-social behaviour or support victims and vulnerable people.

"This fund is about empowering local people, giving support to local projects and making our local communities safer. The support of our community partners and local people is helping police tackle issues at their root-cause."

Queensberry Alternative Provision is being awarded the full grant amount to deliver their 12 Rounds programme in Northwich which addresses issues such as knife crime, criminal exploitation and anti-social behavior through a boxing club for young people.

Paul Cooper, who set up the project, said: "Having recently completed our pilot scheme and seeing the huge impact the intervention has had, this funding will enable us to offer further support to young people at risk of exclusion from school and continue to address local issues.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the commissioner and his team for all of their support and we look forward to showing the positive impact the funding has had over the coming weeks and months."

Another west Cheshire based sports project set to benefit from the commissioner's Safer Communities Fund is Chester FC Community Trust. They'll use their grant of just over £4,000 to deliver a new project which uses football to tackle anti-social behaviour in the Upton and Newton areas of Chester.

Jim Green, from Chester FC Community Trust, said: "We are thrilled to be awarded funding for our Chester FC Safer Community Kicks project and are really looking forward to working in partnership with local policing teams to ensure its success.



Queensberry Alternative Provision 12 Rounds boxing club

"This project will harness youngsters' passion for football with a range of activities and sessions, allowing for increased engagement and education, helping to reduce anti-social behaviour in our communities and creating positive pathways in sport for young people."

Frodsham based charity Cheshire Autism Practical Support will receive £2,500 from the Safer Communities Fund to roll-out their Autism Attention Card to more people across Cheshire. The card flags an individuals' diagnosis to emergency services so they can get the support they need.

Cindy Seiler, business manager at Cheshire Autism Practical Support, said: "Thanks to this generous grant from the Safer Communities Fund, Cheshire Autism Practical Support will be able to extend their invaluable Autism Attention Card to another 200 people.

"This card ensures carriers receive the support they need at a potentially difficult time. Card holders have told us it has proved to be very effective, and gives families a real sense of peace of mind."

Cheshire Autism Practical Support, Queensberry Alternative Provision and Chester FC Community Trust are just three of 13 projects across Cheshire which received Safer Communities Funding in the commissioner's latest round of funding.

To find out more about the Safer Communities Fund, please visit <https://www.cheshire-pcc.gov.uk/what-im-doing/safer-communities-fund/>

For further information, please contact Caroline Tozer caroline.tozer@cheshire.pnn.police.uk or 01606 364011.



HOLIDAY DESTINATIONS

LAS VEGAS

MIAMI, COZUMEL & HAVANA

Jet to **LAS VEGAS** and enjoy an exhilarating stay for 3 nights and see the attractions. Las Vegas has a skyline like no other city. The Strip's neon glow can be seen from across the valley. And with views this spectacular, it'd be a shame not to feast your eyes on the best places.

Las Vegas, in Nevada's Mojave Desert, is a resort city famed for its vibrant nightlife, centred around 24-hour casinos and other entertainment options. Its main street and focal point is the Strip, just over 4 miles long. This boulevard is home to themed hotels with elaborate displays such as fountains synchronized to music as well as replicas of an Egyptian pyramid, the Venetian Grand Canal, and the Eiffel Tower.

You could always squeeze into your 3 days a trip to the Grand Canyon West Rim and Hoover Dam Tour from Las Vegas with Optional Skywalk for only £111.57.

MIAMI

This will be your second stop. There are so many sights to see and places to go in Miami. From world-renowned museums to their beautiful parks, beaches, and cultural centres, there is something sure to please the kid in everyone. In fact, you won't believe how many fun things are absolutely free. Miami near perfect weather makes it the ideal place to create great childhood memories during every season of the year.

COZUMEL

Will be your third port of call, one of the top diving destinations in the world for its bright storybook coral reefs, the island of Cozumel is also home to a variety of natural beaches. Choose a beach with soft

white sand for relaxing, or snorkel off a rockier vista. A destination for both adventure and romance, Cozumel has a year-round Caribbean climate, untrammelled jungle and abundant nightlife.

becoming a stopping point for treasure-laden Spanish galleons returning to Spain. King Philip II of Spain granted Havana the title of City in 1592.



HAVANA - CUBA

The most common method of transportation to the island is by boat. There is a ferry service that connects Cozumel to Playa del Carmen for pedestrians, and a ferry out of Calica.

The ferry connecting to Playa del Carmen runs quite frequently, there are three ferries on duty.

If you fly into Cancun, take either an airport-shuttle to Playa del Carmen, or a bus from the airport to Cancun City, and then a taxi to Playa.

From Playa del Carmen you can take the ferry to Cozumel. Once in Cozumel, there are lots of places within walking-distance, or you can take a cab, rent a car, or even a scooter.

HAVANA - CUBA

The city of Havana was founded by the Spanish in the 16th century and due to its strategic location it served as a springboard for the Spanish conquest of the Americas,

Havana is no longer frozen in time, at least not completely. With Cuba's guarded openness to private enterprise grabbing hold, classic American cars and salsa singers now share the cityscape with new and inventive offerings in food, culture, night life and hospitality. This confounding capital, a mix of past and present, freedom and restriction has come alive.

Your holiday will finally finish back in Miami, giving you enough time to take in a few more sites.

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Gardening in February



What to do in the garden in February

Everyone knows gardening is seasonal, but the variations in our weather, and range across the UK means the rules about what to do when in the garden are not hard and fast rules. Gardening advice has to be moderated by the weather. No two Springs are ever the same and the weather can make a big difference.

February is a pruning month, although it is always best done in a mild spell. What to do in the garden in February depends where in the country you are gardening. If you garden in the south of England or have a garden which is sheltered, more can be done earlier, but northern gardeners, especially those with exposed plots, may need to leave tasks to late February or Early March. All gardening calendars are just a guide it depends on the weather.

Pruning in February

February is pruning month for two tricky climbers: Clematis and Wisteria.

Getting Wisteria to flower is more reliable if it is pruned correctly. How to make Wisteria flower is one of the most frequently asked questions.

Before pruning a clematis, it is first necessary to work out to which pruning group the Clematis belongs and then check out how to prune it.

If it's characterised by large flowers in the mid summer, it needs only a light prune. If it flowers bloom from mid to late summer, it's a harder prune. The words "pruning" and "Clematis" are scary but here is how to make it easy. Do not prune the early flowering Clematis at all, which are those which flower between February and May, they are varieties such as Clematis Montana, Alpina, Armandii.



These types of Clematis, because they flower shortly after this time of the year which is early in the growing year, if you were to prune now you would cut off the branches carrying the flower buds. They only need pruning if they get out of control. These images left show the axil buds which you need to identify whether you are pruning either group.

What to sow in February

To germinate seeds early in the year a warm, benign environment is needed. Very few gardeners can afford the luxury of a heated greenhouse which means bringing seed trays into the house, not ideal, or using a heated propagator mat and site the seed trays in a porch or unheated conservatory. Seeds will need to be placed into a sealed propagator to create a warm atmosphere which will not dry out, and once germinated, removed and kept frost free. Light levels are very low in February so seeding is not easy and plants need to be turned regularly to keep even growth.

The benefits of seeding in February is if it goes well, the plants will mature earlier. Sowing in March and April is easier because of the extra light and warmth.

Suitable for seeding in February: Aubergines, Beetroot, chillies, courgettes and cucumbers, french beans, lettuce and rocket and tomatoes. Flower seeds, many of the popular garden plants such as Ageratum, Antirrhinum, Calendula, Cornflower, French Marigolds, Nigella, Rudbeckia, Salvia, Scabious and Zinnia.

Sow half-hardy annuals





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SEAT Arona SE Technology Lux 1.6 TDI 115PS 6-speed manual



This month's road test puts me into a car that many of you probably don't even realise exists! This is a car that sits very quietly in the shadows of many other cars on the road, and I doubt that some of you have ever seen it on the road yet. Well the reason for this is that while most of you will go with what's currently in fashion, and what's hip, there are some of you out there like me that need a car to do exactly what it says on the tin – and the new Seat Arona is exactly that sort of car – so get your head down and read on.

28

Power and Efficiency:

The Arona I currently have on test is powered by a 115PS, 1.6 TDI - four-cylinder diesel engine with a 6-speed manual gearbox and a respectable top speed of around 115mph, plus a 0-62 time of 10.3 seconds. Fuel consumption is also very good with a combined figure of 65.7 mpg.

On the road:

I like the way the Arona handles – it feels very well balanced. Also, when the road gets twisty it's more than capable of holding its own. The steering also feels light and agile – and when you hook all this up to its fantastic 6-speed gearbox – you really can't go wrong, and it's no exaggeration for me to say that I think the Arona is the better car here when you compare it to some of its rivals.

Interior & Technology

As with all Seat's, the interior is of a good standard – but, as I have said many times, Seat is a part of VW group, so it will last for years. The seating is actually rather good even after a long journey, and the dials and switches are laid out very well and are very clear and precise.

Some of the standard equipment across the range includes; Bi-colour roof, Halogen front headlights, Front fog lights with cornering, Function, LED Daytime Running Lights (DRLs), LED taillights, Rear fog lights, Black roof rails, Body-coloured door handles, Electrically adjustable door mirrors, FM/AM radio, DAB (digital audio broadcasting) Six speakers, Bluetooth, Colour: 6.5" colour touchscreen + USB port + Aux-in, Dimming interior rear view mirror, Interior ambient lighting, Interior Chrome Pack, Air conditioning, Electric front and rear windows, Cruise control, Auto-headlights, Comfort suspension, Driver and front passenger airbags, Front side and curtain airbags, Active front head restraints, Anti-lock brake system (ABS), Electronic Stability Control (ESC) with Emergency Brake

Assist (EBA) and Hill hold control.

Plus it doesn't stop there either – as this is the SE Technology Lux version, you also get additional features such as; Beats Audio: 300w subwoofer, 18" space-saving spare wheel, Luggage compartment lining, Heated front seats, Heated washer nozzles, Adaptive Cruise Control and KESSY (Keyless Entry and Go)

To sum up:

I'm going to give the Arona five stars in this test (which is rare for me), not only because I like it a lot - but because I believe it's worth every penny. Next time you are out looking for a new compact SUV, try looking that little bit harder because as I have shown here today, the Arona is a brilliant buy.

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A winter's walk



The winter months bring with them shorter days, sometimes rain, icy winds or that dreaded white stuff! Hazards like boggy footpaths and slippery stiles need to be trodden with care or the unwary hiker won't stay upright for long. However, one recent day out with Chester Rambling and Hill Walking Club took us into the lower Llantysilio hills near Llangollen, on an unseasonably mild, dry day with barely a flutter of a breeze. There was hardly any mud around, either, thanks to very little rain the previous week.

We'd started off from the National Trust car park above the River Dee at Llantysilio Green. It's always good to stop here for a moment to admire the glorious Horseshoe Falls gushing below, before beginning our ascent into the hills. This is quite a steady climb and many of us soon realised we had one too many layers of clothing on for the mild temperature! We took a breather half way up, making the most of a few moments of sunshine, and some wonderful views looking back to the Dee Valley and across to Velvet Hill. Numerous tracks traverse these hillsides but our route took us onto the moorland above the Horseshoe Pass. Although not too far from civilisation, these moors are remote and peaceful, and a world apart from the busy A542, out of sight in the valley below. This area was once a hive of industrial activity, with slate mining dominating the local economy. Reminders of this history are still evident in the landscape, with inclines and spoil heaps cropping up along the way. The nearby Berwyn Slate Quarry still operates, but is a far smaller concern today than it was in its heyday at the end of the 19th century.

But enough of slate! Dropping down to the Horseshoe Pass, we continued through the woods at Oernant before starting our descent towards the Eglwyseg Valley. Herons can often be spotted here, waiting to pluck an unwary fish from the river. On that particular day, the one heron we saw stayed above tree level, clearly viewing our booted and rucksacked group as a threat. Little did he know that we'd only just devoured our packed lunches and the contents of the Eglwyseg river were his for the taking.

From there we headed south west across fields to join up with a prominent track that forms part of the Clwydian Way. Leaving this after a mile or so, we took a footpath that passes close to the Pillar of Eliseg. This diminutive 6ft column is all that remains of a stone cross erected in memory of King Eliseg back in the 9th century. A once imposing monument, it gives its name to the river, the limestone escarpment overlooking the valley, and the nearby Abbey.

Then onwards to the delightful footpath that skirts the lower

slopes of Coed Hyrddyn, aka Velvet Hill. From this vantage point, walkers can appreciate the best view in the area of Valle Crucis Abbey. Built in 1201, it fell into disrepair after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1537, although there's enough of the original structure left to grab the full attention of anyone passing by. Continuing along the path, a similarly imposing ruin comes into view on a distant craggy hilltop to the left. This is the 13th century Castell Dinas Bran, much visited for its superb views over the Dee Valley and surrounding hills.

For today, however, we had the fading daylight of a winter's day to consider, so we huffed it back to the car park and the nearby hotel for a convivial drink before heading home.

The map we used for our 8 ½ mile walk is Ordnance Survey Explorer SJ 256 Wrexham & Llangollen.

Fancy digging out your walking boots and joining us? Check out what we're up to during the coming weeks by visiting our website: www.chesterwalkingclub.com
Maria Owen, Press Officer, Chester Rambling and Hill Walking Club.

CHESTER RAMBLING & HILL WALKING CLUB

We are a Chester-based walking club, offering up to 3 grades of walks on Sundays, and alternate Wednesdays, and a programme of short summer rambles on Tuesday evenings. The summer season also sees a flurry of camping activity, when we pack up our tents, hook up the caravans, book B & B's and cottages, and head off to destinations slightly further afield for a few days.

Led by experienced leaders, our Sunday and Wednesday walks last approx 6 hours, so bring picnic, flask and water. These hikes cover Snowdonia and North Wales, Cheshire, Shropshire, Lancashire and Derbyshire. Sorry - no dogs or under 18s allowed on our walks.

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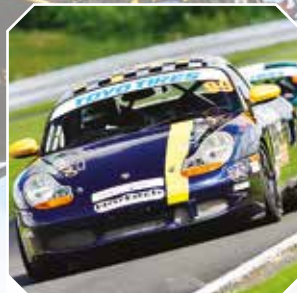
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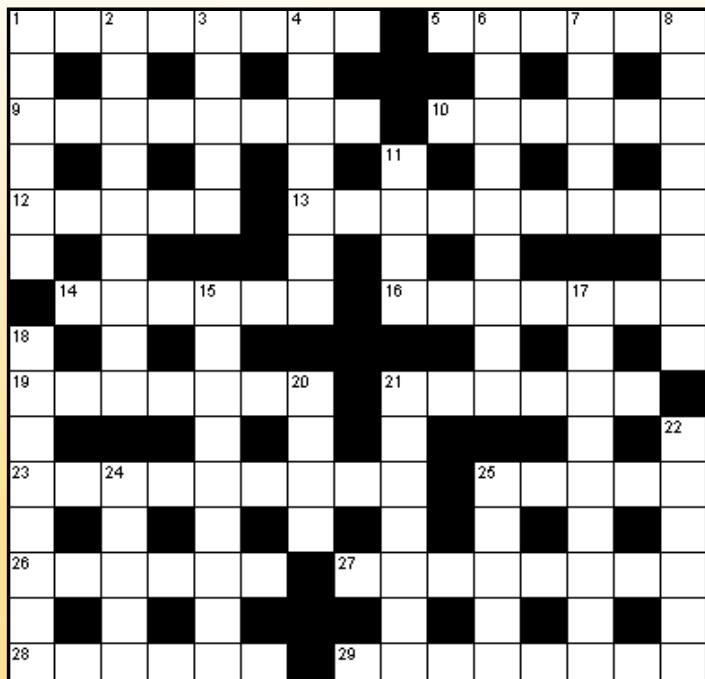


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Down

1. Hurting (6)
2. Extremely funny (9)
3. Suite (5)
4. Temporary housing (7)
6. Scenery (9)
7. Desert plants (5)
8. On tenterhooks (8)
11. At peace (4)
15. Attaché case (9)
17. Profitable (9)
18. Counsel (8)
20. A girl's toy (4)
21. Ask someone to marry you (7)
22. Canadian two dollar coin (6)
24. Reddish (5)
25. Ruler or chieftain (5)

Across

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. A short pithy saying (8) | 14. Terrorist (6) | 26. Vampires (6) |
| 5. Locations (6) | 16. A childhood disease (7) | 27. Funny guy (8) |
| 9. Sacred (8) | 19. Annul (7) | 28. An armless couch (6) |
| 10. Noshes (6) | 21. Sermonize (6) | 29. Backside (8) |
| 12. Geeks (5) | 23. A large, flat, thin case (9) | |
| 13. Occur (9) | 25. San Antonio fort (5) | |

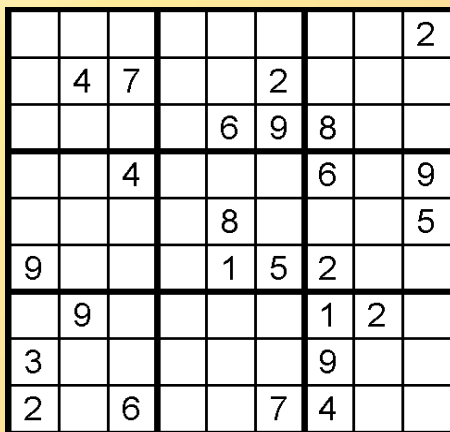
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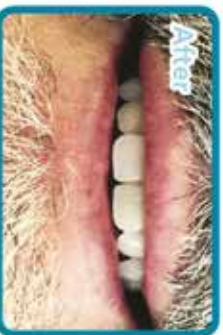
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