



Your **FREE**,
quirky,
local magazine!

Winter 2025

**MID
BORDER
NEWS**

**KNIGHTON
PRESTEIGNE
KINGTON
KNUCKLAS
EARDISLEY
NEW RADNOR
LEINTWARDINE
KNIGHTON
PRESTEIGNE
KINGTON
KNUCKLAS
EARDISLEY
NEW RADNOR**

Christmas Shopping Special

CONTACT DETAILS

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FRONT COVER

Icicles mirror the corrugated iron on this shed in Whitton.
© CJR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks as always to Annie Vickerstaff for her continuing help, support and contributions. Thanks also to Julia Rafferty for Caring Corner and the work that goes into this feature. Austyn Hallworth from Hergest Croft Gardens deserves a mention for helping with production ideas and being a sounding board.

**ADVERTISE WITH US TO
REACH YOUR TARGET
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**WE COVER KNIGHTON,
PRESTEIGNE, KINGTON AND
SURROUNDING AREAS. WE
ARE CURRENTLY EXPANDING
OUR COVERAGE TO
LEINTWARDINE AND BEYOND.**

SEE CONTACT DETAILS.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR



Where has this year gone? It was just the other day that I agreed to take on the MidBorder News for a year and this is my fourth issue already! And what a lot I have learnt about the vitality that our community groups and events bring to this area. Kington has been recognised with the equivalent of a charity MBE for its Kington Walks and Knighton Community Car scheme is back up and running despite a rocky patch in the summer.

There are lots of talented artists on these borders and I was delighted to bump into the photographer Laura Shepherd volunteering at the Judge's Lodgings and we discussed the photographs she had already submitted to the magazine – see pages 19-20.

Talking of talented artists, the gift section in this edition showcases some of the gorgeous presents and food that can be bought at a variety of our independent shops in our local towns – presents for everyone as the season of goodwill comes upon us and many that have been hand crafted by local artists and crafts people.

All that is left is for me to wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! If we receive enough support, I shall continue to produce and edit this magazine into 2026 and let's see what the next year will hold.

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EARLY BIRD ADVERTISING SPECIAL OFFER

Book your advertising space before the end of January and enjoy up to a 10%* discount.

*10% discount when you book for the whole year – 3% on one advert, 5% on two adverts, 7% on three adverts. Adverts must be booked and paid for by 31st January.

DEADLINES

**10th February for Spring issue coming out in March.
10th May for Summer issue coming out in June.
10th August for Autumn issue coming out in September.
10th November for Winter issue coming out in December.**

email info@midbordernews.com

PRIZES FOR GLORIOUS GARDENS AND TEAROOM

Herefordshire's Hergest Croft Gardens and Maples Tearoom honoured with VisitEngland Quality Food & Drink Accolade.

Prestigious national award celebrates exceptional visitor experience and local hospitality excellence in Kington

Hergest Croft Gardens and Maples Tearoom in Kington, Herefordshire, have been awarded a 2025 VisitEngland Quality Food and Drink Accolade, recognising the outstanding standards achieved across both the gardens and the tearoom.

Accolades were awarded to 78 English attractions covering all aspects of what makes an outstanding visitor experience. Presented annually to participants in the VisitEngland Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme, the accolade is based on a combination of factors, including VisitEngland's annual quality assessment, assessor observations, direct visitor feedback and online reviews. Hergest Croft Gardens and Maples Tearoom were commended for their exceptional food, service and visitor experience, described by the assessor as "truly deserving of recognition."



in serving the very best local produce and providing genuine service with a smile. Well done, Team Maples!"

Austyn Hallworth, Head of Marketing and PR at Hergest Croft Gardens, said:

"We are absolutely delighted to receive this national accolade from VisitEngland. It's a real testament to the dedication of our team and the warm welcome that visitors experience throughout the gardens and tearoom. Last year, we were awarded "Hidden Gem" status by VisitEngland and so to win yet another prestigious accolade is exceptional. We take great pride in offering outstanding food and hospitality within such a beautiful, historic setting."

Owned by five generations of the Banks family, Hergest Croft Gardens span over 70 acres and feature more than 5,000 rare and unusual trees, plants and shrubs, including 130 champion trees. The gardens are home to one of the finest plant collections in the British Isles and form the second largest privately owned arboretum in the UK. Its six distinct gardens and parkland include the National Collections of Zelkovas and Maples. Internationally renowned among horticultural enthusiasts, the award-winning gardens

VisitEngland Director Andrew Stokes said:

"These accolades put England's outstanding attractions in the spotlight as they recognise the amazing visitor experiences available across the country. They acknowledge the people who give the warmest welcomes, provide the most mouth-watering food and tell the stories that delight visitors, making them jewels of our tourism offer."

Mell Lloyd, the franchisee for Maples Tearoom, added:

"We are absolutely thrilled and delighted to be the recipient of this prestigious award. The hospitality industry is facing huge challenges at present and therefore this accolade is a real ray of sunshine for us! We have a wonderful team at Maples and this award is a true reflection of their hard work and dedication

are a highlight of the Herefordshire countryside and a much-loved destination for visitors throughout the region.

Hergest Croft Gardens, Kington, Herefordshire are open seasonally to visitors, offering spectacular displays across spring, summer and autumn. The on-site Maples Tearoom serves freshly prepared meals, cakes and refreshments made with locally sourced ingredients. For further details, please visit www.hergest.co.uk.



Hergest Croft Gardens is a member of MWT Cymru, an independent organisation representing more than 600 tourism and hospitality businesses across Powys, Ceredigion, Southern Eryri (Snowdonia) and the Welsh Marches. Maples Tearoom is also the recipient of the Visit Wales Food and Drink Accolade for 2025.

Congratulations also go to Jaqui Simcock who won the competition to win a pair of season tickets to this award winning attraction.

This Christmas, why not visit Arrow Mills Garden Centre, Kington

You will find:
Christmas Trees & Wreaths
Holly & Mistletoe
The largest selection in town of
Decorations & Lights
Christmas gift ideas
for all the family and pets,
even the wild birds!

Your local animal feed merchant



Arrow Mills, Kington, Herefordshire, HR5 3DU
01544 230 536 | www.arrowmills.co.uk

WINTER OPENING HOURS

DUE TO BUILDING MAINTENANCE, OUR OPENING HOURS ARE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT OVER WINTER 2025/2026

KINGTON PARISH HOUSE

Every Thursday
10:30am - 3:00pm

We will be serving:
• Sandwiches
• Cakes
• Tea & Coffee
• Luncheon club (pre-booking essential)

MAPLES TEAROOM

Every Saturday and Sunday 10:30am - 3:00pm

We will be serving:
• Light Lunches
• Special Days
• Sunday Roasts (Pre-booking essential!)

TO SEE OUR LUNCHEON CLUB MENU, SPECIALS AND ROAST DAYS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE [HTTPS://WWW.HERGEST.CO.UK/MAPLES-TEAROOM/](https://www.hergest.co.uk/maples-tearoom/) OR PHONE US ON 07970 595420

Caring Corner

Send your thoughts to Julia at: j.m.rafferty1@gmail.com and she will anonymise them or provide different initials to your name.

When Mum first moved here, one of her carers would bring her a paper full of angry hate-filled views she didn't agree with. When I asked the careworker (kindly) not to bring it again, she was upset and handed in her notice. I know how mum feels about hatred and othering: her dad was an immigrant and she remembers the prejudice her family faced during and after WW2. Now she has dementia, I thought it would be easy for her to absorb hateful ideologies charged with emotion and division. The careworker likely didn't realise the harm that choice of paper might cause or how deeply it might affect mum. Many who've lived through such adversity hold strong feelings about inclusion and supporting everyone in the community, regardless of culture or religion.



Are you a care worker, or unpaid carer, or sandwich carer (unpaid carer and parent)?
How do you cope with caring?

We'd love to hear about your experiences and tips for switching off. Writing them down and sending them in really helps to think through problems so it can be a therapeutic process.

When I saw her reading and laughing hard at the hate-filled newspaper articles, she said, "Julia, come and read THIS twaddle!" I knew I had done the right thing by asking the carer to take away her paper because despite her dementia, mum can see clearly the harm that stirring hatred brings.

Entertainment and information links

Instagram & YouTube accounts

Guidance on how to talk to people with dementia @dementiasuccesspath

Caring from a carer's point of view @thehonestcarer11

Guidance on how to talk to your wife @jimmy_on_relationships

Linsey Burrows Who Cares for Our Carers?

Book: Take Care, by Lindsey Burrows a caring account of love and family and never giving up. It's so heart-warming, alarming and funny.

ITV Tonight 1/02/25 'What is the cost for those who take on care?'

BBC Sounds

If you haven't listened to Radio 4's Mary Bouke Who Cares? Please do. It's lots of comedians talking about their experiences as carers.

Turn2Us

<https://www.turn2us.org.uk> or Google Turn2Us
Their home page has the benefits calculator (incl carers allowance) and the PIP helper as well as the link to their grants section.

Facebook

The Unpaid Carers Support Group is there if you need to speak to other unpaid carers. There are also ones based in the UK.



CarersUK

<https://www.carersuk.org/> or search for CarersUK. Visit the Carers UK website for helpful information for unpaid carers, and latest news of their campaigns and research. Carers UK also offers a range of online meetups for carers to connect, share experiences and enjoy relaxing activities. Find out more at go.carersuk.org/meetups. You can also join their online discussion forum Carers Connect at forum.carersuk.org

If you'd like to share your accounts of care, we'd love to hear from you. Send your stories to Julia: literacy@ymail.com

Different Power Balance stories

The following emails were sent in by readers of Caring Corner:

"I care for my wife who has had surgery. When she was in hospital she needed a lot of different types of care. She had a nurse come in daily in the morning. I gladly took over writing to family and friends, and doing all the cooking, and cleaning. I did this for her. She even joked that the tables had turned and now I was doing everything. But two years on, and fully recovered, she still expects me to do some cooking and cleaning. She doesn't seem to understand that I don't have time to dedicate to my hobbies anymore. I am a classic car enthusiast and have a Daimler and an MG from the 1960s with shows to attend. How do I speak to her?"

Julia says . . .

So the tables turned and now you're the one short on hobby time? If your wife has been doing most of the cooking and cleaning for years, she's earned a pit stop! Have a chat about how you both want to spend your time; maybe she'd like a hobby or even find a shared hobby? Chores are dull, but they're quicker with two in the garage. After all, equality means both engines get to rev.

See Me, Hear Me, by Jim

When you see me put my hands over my ears and look at you with imploring eyes, that's me saying, "I'm not deaf!" I mime it because you're bellowing at me and you wouldn't hear me say it in words. Ironic isn't it? You are the one unable to hear, not me.

And when you eventually accept this fact and dial down to something closer to normal volume, please don't announce that you haven't been here before, and in a voice that implies I wouldn't already be aware of that. After all, I don't recognise you - your face, your shape, your size, your voice. All the usual suspects. This is your first visit. I know. My brain still functions. I may be 75, in a wheelchair, need care support three times a day. Yes. But my problems are physical, not cognitive. My brain is alive and kicking. And, by the way, my soul is now screaming!

I haven't always been like this, 'this' being 75 etc. I've been young, had a life, had a career that's been interesting and with a lot of responsibility and requiring a host of skills. Basically, I'm learning how to be 75 just like you're learning to be 30 or 45. I'm learning how to be disabled just like you're learning to be a working mother with teenage children. I'm learning how to be dependent on others for things I used to do with ease, just like you're learning how to balance your work with the rest of your life. We're all

making it up as we go along. So we are not that different actually, when you think about it.

My name is Jim. You know that. It's on your rota. I call you by your name every time. Why do you call me "Darlin" or "Lovely" or, and this is the worst, "Babes"? When you do that, you erase me, you sweep aside my needs as an individual and I become generic, a type. Get to know me! Ask me questions. By all means tell me about yourself. That's why I ask you every time you come here "How are you?" You tell me, sometimes in great detail. That's fine. I am actually interested. After all, you're in my home, you're my guest. I just wish you would ask me how I am, rather than say "You alright?" That's a stock greeting which means "Hello". The result? I know so much about you but, unfortunately, you know next to nothing about me.

Please, read my notes! It took a lot out of me to work through the questionnaire that was part of the assessment process prior to my care provider deciding to take me on as a client. I even came out as gay. The only other time I've done that is to my parents. It explains why I don't have a wife or children. It saves a lot of questions being asked over and over.

My name is Jim and my front door is a magical portal into another world. Step inside and ordinary behaviours are thrown off like a coat that's no longer needed, and a new set is put on like an invisibility cloak. Literally.

Caring Corner



Brilley Flicks in the Sticks

Thursday 4th December at 7.30: **Bridget Jones. Mad About the Boy (15), £5**

Bridget Jones, now a widowed single mother, navigates the challenges of parenthood, work, and modern dating with the support of her friends, family, and former partner, Daniel Cleaver. As she re-enters the dating world, she finds herself pursued by a younger man while also forming an unexpected connection with her son's science teacher.

Thursday 1st January at 7.30: **The Ballad of Wallis Island (12A), £5**

Estranged folk band duo Herb and Nell are unexpectedly thrown back together for a gig. Unknown to them, the audience is just one man: Charles Heath, a wealthy and delightfully quirky recluse. Charles has used his considerable resources to orchestrate a private reunion of his favourite musicians at his home on a remote British island. The musical duo share a romantic and professional past, but haven't seen each other in years. This peculiar event forces them to confront old memories, unresolved regrets and long-dormant feelings. Tom Basden and Carey Mulligan as Herb and Nell share a subtle, lived-in chemistry, making their moments of tension and tenderness feel all the more authentic. As they reminisce and reconnect, the film gently unravels the emotional threads of their shared past.

Advance booking only - please book and pay for your tickets online at pay-brilley.co.uk, and check here for our other autumn films.

Brilley and Michaelchurch Village Hall (HR3 6JG), doors open at 7pm - don't forget to bring your own refreshments!



KINGTON COMMUNITY CAR SHARE CLUB



IF YOU ONLY NEED TO USE A CAR 2 OR 3 TIMES A WEEK YOU COULD HALVE OF YOUR MOTORING COSTS (most members save much more)

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION with KLEEN*
Fossil Fuel-Free Electric Driving

MEMBERSHIP - one-off joining fee & monthly subs
INCLUDES - Tax, Insurance, Recovery & Repairs

Online Booking - Monthly Billing

INTERESTED IN JOINING?

Email: kingtonkleen@gmail.com
VISIT: kingtonkleen.org.uk

* KLEEN = KINGTON LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY NETWORK

The Joy of Singing: A Natural Boost for Mental Wellbeing

In the rolling towns and villages along the Wales-England border, community life often thrives on connection – and few activities bring people together quite like singing. Whether it's in a local choir, at a pub gathering, or simply humming along while cooking dinner, singing offers powerful benefits for mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Firstly, singing releases endorphins – those "feel-good" hormones that help lift our mood and ease stress. When you sing, your breathing deepens, your heart rate steadies, and tension melts away. It's a natural form of mindfulness that helps you stay present in the moment. Even ten minutes of singing can have a calming effect, similar to a short session of yoga or meditation.

Beyond the physical response, singing also creates connection. Many people in small towns can sometimes feel isolated, especially after retirement or when families move away. Joining a local choir or singing group is a wonderful way to meet new people and feel part of something bigger. Shared music builds bonds quickly – there's something about blending voices in harmony that creates instant friendship and belonging.

In fact, studies have shown that singing in a group can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. It encourages teamwork, improves self-confidence, and gives a real sense of purpose. Even if you don't consider yourself "a singer", the act of joining in can be deeply therapeutic. You don't need to perform perfectly; it's about the joy of participation.

Singing also taps into our cultural roots. From Welsh male voice choirs to English folk traditions, this part of the country has a long history of musical expression. Keeping that tradition alive not only enriches our communities but reminds us of who we are and where we come from.

Perhaps the greatest gift of singing is that it's free and accessible to everyone. You don't need equipment, lessons, or a stage – just your voice. Whether you belt out a tune in the car, join a local choir in Herefordshire, or sing along at a community event in your town, you're nurturing your mind as well as your spirit.

So next time you feel the weight of the day, try singing. You might just find your worries fade, your shoulders lift, and your heart a little lighter.

Christmas is coming...

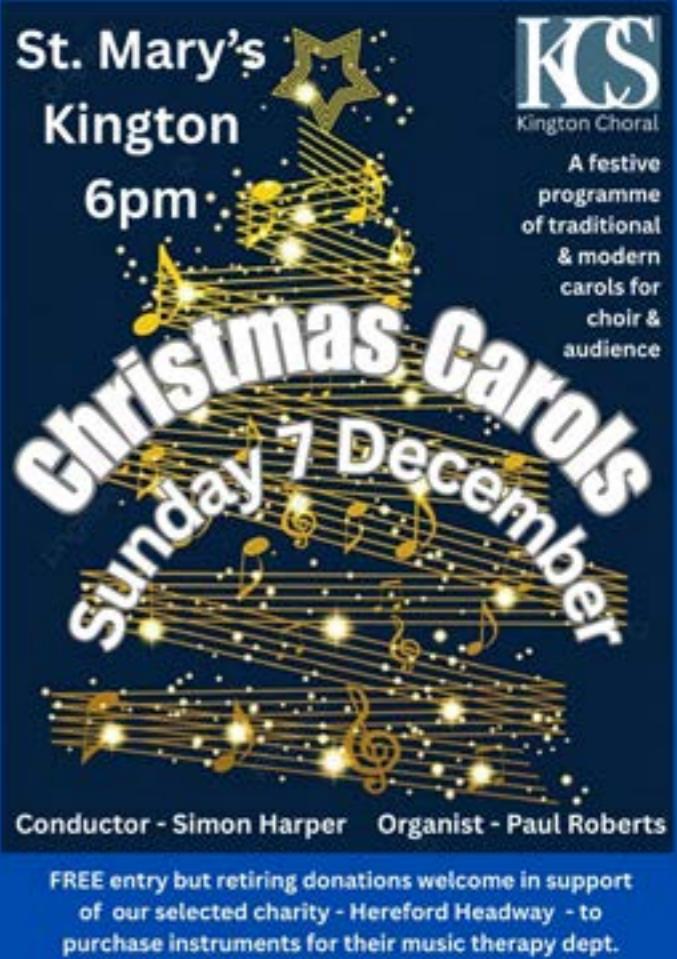
Kington Community Choir

invite you to our seasonal repertoire and join in the carols

Thursday 18th December
Burton Hotel, Kington at 7.30pm
Free admission. Seasonal raffle



Supported by Kington Town Council



SHOP LOCAL THIS CHRISTMAS AND SUPPORT OUR INDEPENDENT RETAILERS



Tinto Deli - Presteigne
Skyborry Cider - £12.00
Fine selection of cheeses
Crackers £3.45
Roll of Marzipan - £3.40



Prince and Pugh - Knighton
Gardeners collection - £13.75
Matches in a jar - £14.95



Tower House Gallery - Knighton
Radical tea towels - £14.00
Jigsaw by Lizzie Spikes - £25.00



Presteigne Pharmacy - heart sponge £7.99



Walkmill - Knighton
Basket - £40.00
Tractor tree decoration - £6.50



Salty Dog - Presteigne
Smoked salmon - prices as marked
Cwmwhitton potatoes - in a sack £7.50 or loose
Local Weobley Ash Apple Juice - £3.95



Rhos Organics - Knighton
Panforte Di Siena Sinatti - £11.90
Organic Christmas Cake - £13.00



Collaborative Crafts - Kington
Showcasing crafts from local artists.
Something for all starting from as low as £1.
Beeswax flowers in a jar - £15



Restorella - Knighton
Christmas trinkets and gifts - prices to suit all budgets.



Studer Fine Art - Presteigne
Hand made vases - prices start at £29



Bees Knees Cook Shop - Knighton
Wallace and Gromit cracker barrels - £35
Butter dish - £37.50



Flock Gallery and Shop - Knighton
Hand-made pottery by Jo Raven Burnard
Mug - £20
Jug - £20



Showcasing the work of over 50 local Artists and Crafters.

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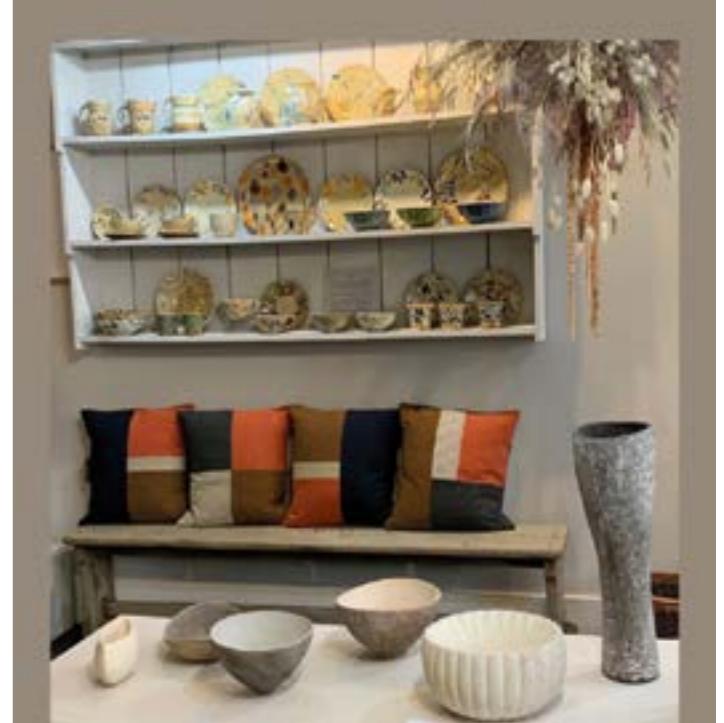
Textiles

and much more.



Lots of ideas for Christmas gifts

Come and visit us.
We are open Monday-Saturday
Details on our Facebook page



FLOCK

Gallery & Shop

Open Tuesday to Saturday 10am-4pm
12 Church Street, Kington, HR5 3AZ.



FESTIVE FOODS FROM THE BORDERS

KINGTON
WINTER FOOD FESTIVAL
KINGTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SATURDAY DECEMBER 6TH 9:30AM TO 3:30PM

Join us for Kington's annual **Food and Drink Festival**, celebrating the very best of the Borders! Over 90 **handpicked stalls** bursting with artisan delights – from charcuterie, patisserie and chocolates, to preserves, oils and unique gifts. Feeling peckish? Treat yourself to **Beefy Boys'** burgers, **Mae Via's** fresh pasta, or wood-fired pizzas from **The Pizza Box**, Hay. Raise a glass with gins from **Penrhos, Wildjac** and **Hay Distillery**, or warm up with hot ciders from **Orgasmic** and **Pip's**. Prefer ale? Try local brews from **Antur** and **Lucky 7**. Meet top artisan producers like **Brecon Chocolates, Bringer Goats Cheese, Duggan's Patisserie, Alex Gooch Breads** and **Pompedio's Devious Pies**. Enjoy live music, local choirs, and the magic of Christmas all day long. This year's event is proudly sponsored by **White Heron Drinks**, serving their signature cocktails and bottles to take home.

9.30am-3.30pm Saturday 6th December
Free entry, parking & park & ride (from Kington Surgery to the festival heart).

Don't miss this festive feast of flavour!

[@KingtonFoodFest](https://www.kingtonwinterfoodfestival.co.uk)
[kingtonwinterfoodfestival](https://www.kingtonwinterfoodfestival.co.uk)



KINGTON ZERO WASTE FOOD PROJECT
FIGHTING FOOD WASTE. FEEDING OUR COMMUNITY.

Local businesses in Kington are donating surplus food – and we're giving it away to anyone who wants it. No forms, no fuss, no cost. Just good food, freely shared.

ALL ARE WELCOME. EVERYTHING IS FREE.

LOCATED AT ST MARY'S PARISH HALL FRIDAY 10-12 MONDAY 12:30-14:00

Foodie Heaven

Join us for Kington's annual **Food and Drink Festival**, celebrating the very best of the Borders! Over 90 **handpicked stalls** bursting with artisan delights – from charcuterie, patisserie and chocolates, to preserves, oils and unique gifts. Feeling peckish? Treat yourself to **Beefy Boys'** burgers, **Mae Via's** fresh pasta, or wood-fired pizzas from **The Pizza Box**, Hay. Raise a glass with gins from **Penrhos, Wildjac** and **Hay Distillery**, or warm up with hot ciders from **Orgasmic** and **Pip's**. Prefer ale? Try local brews from **Antur** and **Lucky 7**. Meet top artisan producers like **Brecon Chocolates, Bringer Goats Cheese, Duggan's Patisserie, Alex Gooch Breads** and **Pompedio's Devious Pies**. Enjoy live music, local choirs, and the magic of Christmas all day long. This year's event is proudly sponsored by **White Heron Drinks**, serving their signature cocktails and bottles to take home.

9.30am-3.30pm Saturday 6th December
Free entry, parking & park & ride (from Kington Surgery to the festival heart).

Don't miss this festive feast of flavour!



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- Fresh Bread (Boulanger Artisan Bread)
- Meat (Watsons Family Butchers, Rhayader)
 - Fish
 - Groceries
 - Free range eggs
 - Cooked meats
 - Fresh Pies
- Wide range of fruit & veg (John Morgan Veg)
- Milk (Edwards Dairies)
- Kindling/wood/coal
- Newspapers/magazines (daily and local)
- Vegetarian products
- Gluten free products
- Alcohol

You will be surprised what we stock, call in and see.

Opening Times
MON, TUES, THURS, FRI 8-1
then 3-5.30 WEDS & SAT 8-1

[Find us on Facebook](#)

THE OLD TOWN HALL BROAD STREET
01544 350619

Why Turkey and Mince Pies Rule the Christmas Table



a while for the rest of the country to catch on — turkeys were expensive and rare. By the 17th and 18th centuries, however, as turkey farming spread, the bird became more affordable. By Victorian times, the turkey had firmly taken the crown as Britain's Christmas favourite. Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* sealed the deal when Scrooge, newly reformed, sends a "prize turkey" to the Cratchit family. If Dickens says it's festive, it's festive.

Now, onto the sweet side of things — mince pies. These little treats have a history that's even older (and spicier) than turkey dinners. Back in medieval England, mince pies were actually made with meat — yes, real minced meat — mixed with fruits and spices like cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. These exotic ingredients were symbols of wealth and the East, brought back by returning Crusaders. The pies were originally oval-shaped, meant to represent

the manger where baby Jesus lay.

As time went on, sugar became cheaper and the recipe evolved. By the 18th century, the meat was mostly dropped in favour of dried fruit, suet, and brandy — the "mince" in mince pies becoming more about tradition than ingredients. The Victorians again played a big part in shaping the pies we know today, turning them into a sweet, festive indulgence that no Christmas would feel complete without.

So why do these traditions stick around? Probably because food is such a comforting way to connect with the past. Every slice of turkey and every warm mince pie links us to generations who've celebrated Christmas before us — even if their version of "traditional" might have looked a little different.

So this Christmas, as you tuck into that roast turkey or sneak a mince pie with your afternoon tea, remember: you're taking part in a centuries-old story. One full of exploration, innovation, and a healthy dose of festive cheer.



KINGTON LOCAL FOOD & CRAFTS MARKET
every Friday 9-1
KINGTON MARKET HALL



KINGTON ART & CRAFT MARKET
QUALITY WORK BY LOCAL ARTISTS AND CRAFTERS

XMAS MARKETS
1ST DEC
20TH DEC
First Market of 2022
18TH APR

3RD Saturday of the month (Apr. - Dec.)
KINGTON MARKET HALL. 9.30 - 3.30.



Kington Town Council are delighted to be able to support the MidBorder News magazine and help to share the details of local events and information.

Kington Walks receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service



As part of the King's 2025 Birthday honours, Kington Walks has been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. It marks a very significant achievement. Over 100 volunteers support Kington Walks in a variety of ways, enabling visitors to the town and local people of all abilities to enjoy and benefit from walking.

Council News

It has been an interesting time for the council recently and one in which we feel a few positive steps are happening. A meeting with The Leader of Herefordshire Council, The Chief Executive and another senior Herefordshire officer gave us an opportunity to outline our concerns over lack of action and communication by Herefordshire council. This meeting I have to say was successful, with an immediate response getting the public toilets cleaned and repaired in time for the walking festival. We know they are still far from perfect and they remain a concern but at least some action was taken and assurances gained regarding ongoing cleaning. A further positive from this meeting is that the repairs to the Market Hall and the Coach House roof are on the list for completion. We understand listed building consent has to be obtained and once this is granted the repairs can get under way. We think it will be in early 2026.

Another good piece of news is that Kington has the opportunity to benefit from some funds to be used for public realm projects such as roads, footpaths, traffic etc. We have a meeting in town at the end of the month but are considering such things as some traffic calming, further pavement improvements, street lighting on the bridge in Bridge Street. Again early days but good to see things that can improve our town for residents and visitors*.

Most of you will know that the proposal for 110 houses off Kingswood Road has been refused. We know there were many objections to such a large development and whilst there may be further attempts for planning on this site in the future we will keep a watching brief.

Finally, the Town Council is considering applying for a 20MPH zone through the town. We feel our narrow streets and pavements would benefit from such improvements. It would slow traffic down in places such as Victoria Road and Church Street and of course has environmental benefits as well, cutting pollution levels and noise. In a town where many homes open directly onto the roads this can only be a positive move.

Martin Woolford
Deputy Mayor

*The council may be able to receive £200,000 of public realm funding, but there's a tight deadline before which the money must be spent: the end of March 2026. The council quickly set up a working group to investigate projects that can be completed in time: to continue the recent new paving into Church St, Mill St and Bridge St; to create traffic calming, such as chicanes, along Church St and Victoria Rd; to install solar powered lighting on the bridge over the Arrow; to create a "town square" by laying coloured tarmac around the Market Hall. These ideas were sent to Herefordshire Council by the submission deadline of 3 October.

The council is considering the possibility of twinning with a similar sized town in Ukraine. Hereford could be twinned with a Ukrainian "county" area; within that scheme, our market towns may be able to forge links with Ukrainian ones.

The Chamber of Trade is organising a litter-pick before the town's famous food festival and hopes to make this a quarterly event. If you'd like to take part in keeping our little town neat and tidy, watch out for further information on the usual socials (Kington Chat and What's On Kington?! Both on Facebook).

Wednesday 3rd November, 10am-12.30pm. Sunflower Social at Places of Welcome. A hidden disabilities support group and network, meeting in The Oxford's barn on the first Wednesday of the month during our regular Places of Welcome opening hours. Free.

Thursday 4th December, 6.30-8pm. Café Mortel. Try our new death café—a friendly and supportive space to talk about life, death, and everything in between, with the support of a Death Doula. Cakes and refreshments provided, parking on-site. Free.

Saturday 6th December, 11am-3.30pm. Kington Festive Foods from the Borders. The Oxford joins the celebrations of Kington's winter food festival. We'll have Japanese food available from Miniyaki's, Whitton Voices will be singing festive favourites, our barn will host Friends of OAK craft workshops and stalls, and our bar will be open throughout serving tipples of the season. Free.

Wednesday 10th December, 10am-12.30pm. Dementia Matters at Places of Welcome. Support group and network for people affected by dementia, meeting in The Oxford's barn on the second Wednesday of the month during our regular Places Of Welcome opening hours. Free.

Wednesday 31st December, 6-10pm. New Year's Eve at The Oxford. We'll be open for drinks and festivities; more details to follow. Check our website and socials for the latest updates.

Regular opening hours in December:
Places of Welcome at The Oxford Arms, every Wednesday morning until the 17th December, 10am-12.30pm

Wednesday 7th January, 10am-12.30pm. Sunflower Social at Places of Welcome. A hidden disabilities support group and network, meeting in The Oxford's barn on the first Wednesday of the month during our regular Places Of Welcome opening hours. Free.

Wednesday 14th January, 10am-12.30pm. Dementia Matters at Places of Welcome. Support group and network for people affected by dementia, meeting in The Oxford's barn on the second Wednesday of the month during our regular Places Of Welcome opening hours. Free.

Saturday 24th January, from 6pm. Burns Night at The Oxford. We'll have live music to lighten the January gloom, more details to follow. Check our website and socials for the latest updates.

Regular opening hours in January:
Places of Welcome at The Oxford Arms, every Wednesday morning in January, 10am-12.30pm

Details for all events on our website:
openarmskington.co.uk
Tel: 07301081444,
email info@openarmskington.co.uk



Events @ The Oxford Arms



December
03-09 Bleddfa Church
10-16 Kington-Marines Twinning Association
17-23 Special Educational Needs – Growing Together
24-31 CLOSED
January
01-06 CLOSED
07-13 Community Shop Fundraiser
14-20 St. Mary's PCC
21-27 TBC
28-03 Friends of Gladestry School FROGS
February
04-10 Luctonians U-14 Rugby SA Tour
11-17 St. Bede's Church Kington
18-24 Wales & Border Harness Racing
25-03 Radnor & West Hereford Pony Club



Geese flying up the Wye Valley taken by Susan Warne.



Sleeping Dragon in the Teme taken by Anne Ridley.



Laura Shepherd's photos (above and below) can also be found at www.laurashepherdlensphotography.com



Frost covers the leaves in this shot by Jess Tillier.



Laura Shepherd Photography



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www.williamgeehealer.com

A Clear Start: The Health Benefits of Giving Up Alcohol After Christmas

After the festivities of Christmas and New Year, many people across the UK border find themselves reaching for a fresh start. The decorations come down, the last of the mince pies disappear, and thoughts turn to restoring balance. One of the simplest and most rewarding ways to do that is by taking a break from alcohol.

Whether you join "Dry January" or simply decide to cut back, giving up alcohol – even for a few weeks – brings a surprising number of benefits for both body and mind. Within days, your sleep often improves. Without alcohol disrupting your natural sleep cycle, you're more likely to wake feeling refreshed and alert. Many people also notice clearer skin and better digestion as the body begins to recover from the rich food and drink of the festive season.

There's a positive impact on energy levels too. Alcohol is a depressant, meaning it slows the nervous system and can leave you feeling sluggish or low in mood. Once it's out of your system, your body can focus on restoring natural energy and balance. For those living busy lives, that extra boost can make winter chores, walks, and community activities feel easier and more enjoyable.

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 by Alcohol Change UK

Mentally, the benefits can be even greater. Many people report feeling calmer and more focused after giving up alcohol. It's easier to think clearly, and your mood often becomes more stable. The link between alcohol and anxiety is well known – while it may provide temporary relaxation, regular drinking can actually increase stress and irritability in the long run.

There's also something deeply empowering about making the choice to pause. It's a reminder that you're in control of your habits, not the other way around. Some find that taking a month off helps reset their relationship with drinking altogether, leading to healthier, more mindful choices throughout the year.

Perhaps most importantly, going alcohol-free can reconnect you with the simple pleasures of winter – crisp morning walks, clear-headed conversations, and evenings spent enjoying good food without the fog of a hangover.

So as the new year begins, consider giving your body and mind the gift of a break. You might just discover that life looks a little brighter – and your step feels a little lighter – without that extra glass.

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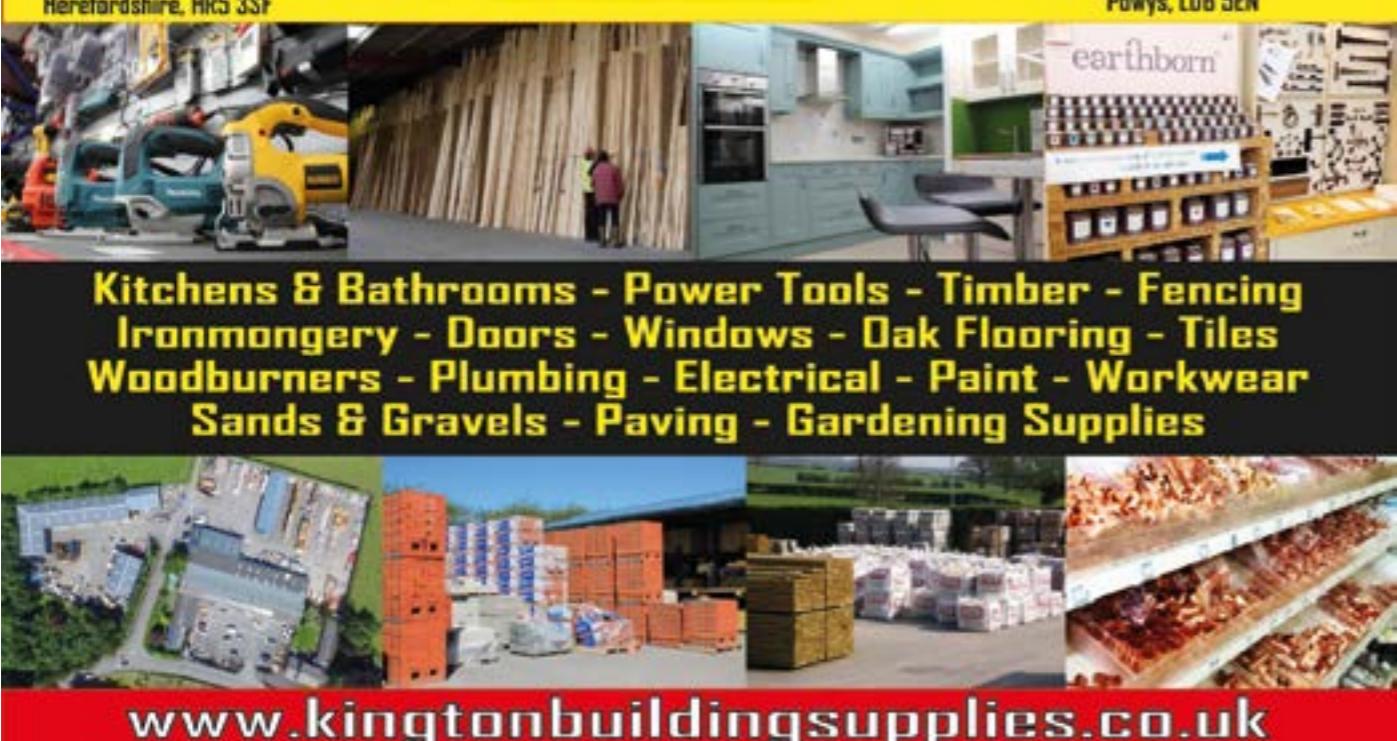
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