

The background of the cover is a photograph of a village scene. In the foreground, there is a stone gate with a dark wooden frame and a small stone tower on the left. To the right, a large tree with pink blossoms is in full bloom. In the background, a tall, pointed church spire rises against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant day in a rural setting.

village

April/May 2011

Connect

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PLUS: Village events, Easter activities for the kids, family days out, diary dates, gardening tips, computer advice & more

From the editor

Hello Readers



What a lot of holidays we've got coming up at the end of April and beginning of May. Good news for us all, or is it?

If you're a gardener, the extra days off work will give you time, weather permitting, to make headway with tidying up and planning new projects, plantings, etc. See page 8 for Helen's tips and pages 9 and 10 for information about gardens you can visit.

And if you've recently got engaged, the 'royal wedding' bank holiday could get you thinking about how you'll celebrate your own special day. If so, our articles on pages 4 and 5 might help.

If you're parents, on the other hand, the longer than usual Easter holiday may leave you wondering how you'll keep the kids amused. Take a look at pages 6 and 7 for activity ideas. Some are even free!

May sees the start of all kinds of outdoor events in the villages over the summer (see pages 3 and 10). You can now follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/connect_leics), Facebook and our relaunched blog (villageconnect.blogspot.com) to keep up to date with what's going on in the area. We also have a late entry 'events' page on our website. Let us know what's happening in your village!

Cover page photograph:

St Mary Magdalene Church, Waltham on the Wolds
© Copyright Mat Fascione

Louise

Diversifying your business

by Gill Riley of Tranquil Therapies



Many of us running small businesses realise we need to diversify to stay profitable in the current economic climate. As I see it, there are three ways to do this: 1. Create new, related products/services for existing customers; 2. Look for new markets for existing products/services; 3. Develop new products/services for a new market.

Clearly, the easiest option, and the one for me, is to expand on what you already do, rather than starting from scratch with something else. Adapting something you sell for another market is also worth considering; if you own a restaurant, for example, you could offer a takeaway service to attract new customers. On a bigger scale, turning disused outbuildings into accommodation, offices, party venues etc is proving lucrative for many in the farming industry (see page 5).

Whichever way you choose to go, it's important to weigh up the benefits against the risks before committing to a new venture.

Thorough **market and customer research** is vital. This will help you understand what your customers want, find out about your competition and whether what you offer is likely to work.

Prepare a new **business plan and strategy**; this may include testing your new product/service for a short period before investing further time and money in it.

You should also think about whether the launch of your new product or service involves taking on more **staff** and whether your existing **premises** meet the needs of your new venture.

If you do choose to diversify, it's important that you do not damage your core business and your reputation. And it's worth remembering that what works for someone else today may not work for you tomorrow.

BEWARE THE COMPUTER VIRUS WARNING – IT COULD BE A HOAX!

But don't panic, says computer trouble shooter **Dave Rowe**, who has this advice on how to protect your computer from unwanted downloads. If you receive a warning on your computer from a program you don't recognise, or appears to be from Windows, do the following.

- 1. Disconnect from the Internet immediately.** Switch off your wireless connection or unplug the cable connecting the PC to the router or modem. I suggest you work out the best and quickest way beforehand and inform all users how to do this.
- 2. Check which program is giving the warning.** This will appear in the title bar at the top of the window, to the left of the red close (x) button. If it appears to be from your antivirus or Internet security program, follow the instructions it gives as if it is genuine. It will not need an Internet connection to resolve the problem (do not reconnect if it asks you to do so). If it is from any other source, then shut down the computer normally without clicking on any of the warning message buttons. If it won't shut down, hold the computer's 'ON' button in for 7 seconds; this will override the software and close the computer.
- 3. Pause for thought.** Write down the name of the program that gave the message and brew a cuppa.
- 4. Restart the computer.** Check it's running as normal then run a virus scan. If all seems ok, reconnect to the Internet and check that's running ok too. If it's not, switch off and seek advice.

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Village events

Art on show

The 30th Annual Exhibition of the **Kirby Bellars Group of Artists** will take place, as usual, over the May bank holiday weekend (**30 April -2 May**) 10am-5pm in **Kirby Bellars Village Hall and Church**. The group includes both professional and amateur artists; several of them, including the President David Weston, are well-known nationally. They will be presenting work in a variety of media – oils, pastel, acrylic, watercolour and mixed media. Admission is free, and refreshments will be available.

On **7 May (10am to 4pm)**, the more recently formed **Burton Lazars Arts & Crafts Club** will be holding an Open Day in **Burton Lazars Village Hall** to show and sell a selection of their work. Light refreshments will be provided.

May fairs

The May Day celebrations in **Quorn** on **Sunday 1 May** start at 1.30pm with a parade from Church Lane to Stafford Orchard, where the entertainment (from 2pm) will include maypole dancing, a dog show and a duck race, a farmers market and plenty of stalls.

For details, call **01509 827468**.

Dove Cottage Day Hospice's major annual fundraising event is its Annual Summer Fete which this year will be held on **Sunday 15 May**. Lots of stalls, music and other entertainment including maypole dancing in the lovely grounds of the hospice which is on Canal Lane in **Stathern**.

For more information about Dove Cottage and the fete, call **01949 860303**.



The Old Church, Llanwrchwyn - David Weston

The group began in 2007. It has around 40 members who meet in the village hall on Thursday afternoons to practise a range of crafts including painting, drawing, calligraphy, embroidery, patchwork and quilting, graphics, card making and knitting.

All proceeds from the club's open days go to charity. Over the last three years £3000 has been raised for the Air Ambulance, Rainbows and Alzheimer's Society. This year the club will be supporting the Pancreatic Cancer Charity.



Finally, **Wymondham May Festival** will be held on **Saturday 21 May** at Sedley Field from 11.30am to 5pm. All the usual attractions and side shows will be on offer, plus this year they have a new event, the Wymondham Chicken Run; villagers will be bringing their fastest chicken to take part in races to determine the Wymondham Speediest Chicken!

For details, visit www.wymondham-may-festival.co.uk or call **01572 787605**.

Drama at supper time

The **Frisby Players'** programme for the spring will begin with two one-act plays to be staged on **Thursday 7, Friday 8 and Saturday 9 April**, starting at 7.00pm (curtain up 7.30pm) in the Village Hall, **Frisby on the Wreake**.

A cheese-and-wine supper will be served in the interval and a bar will be available. Tickets are £10 (£8 for children) to include a glass of wine, or soft drink, and the light supper. Tables of up to 10 can be reserved when buying your tickets.

The two plays being performed are:

'Nasty things, murders' by **Arthur Lovegrove**: The four ladies in the Home for Retired Gentlewomen are upset when their TV breaks down at the climax of a real life murder drama.

'Last panto in Frisby' by **David Tristram**. (Slightly adapted from 'Last panto in Little Grimley'). This is the long overdue sequel to the tremendously popular 'Last tango in Frisby'.

Tickets are available from Frisby Post Office. Alternatively, call **01664 434084** or email tickets@frisbyplayers.co.uk.



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Quenby Hall is such a beautiful, private and unique wedding venue – no question. Despite being hidden away and one of the county's best kept secrets, Quenby is the finest Jacobean country house remaining in Leicestershire, set in 1600 acres of organic farmland and park. And it's on our doorstep. Yet it's the expertise and warmth of the friendly team that really makes a wedding at Quenby such a special experience. It's still a family home, and the personal touch is everywhere.

From the earliest planning stages you know you're valued as individuals, and in the most helpful hands. The Quenby team have enabled one bride to include her faithful Labrador as 'matron of honour', stage-managed theatrical smoke as a vampire bride made her entrance, organised a pair of carriage horses and carriage from village church to front door, croquet in the dark and co-ordinated multiple bridal costume changes and two ceremonies in one day (Hindu and civil). In spite of their experience you'll still catch them with tears brimming during each ceremony. "That's what makes all the effort worthwhile – every time. It's such a privilege to help people with the most important day of their lives," says Sarah the wedding manager.

For heavenly delicious food they've got together with another family team, sisters Rosie and Nancy McCartney, who share these same values of care. Taking the concept of 'home-made' to the next level, there's the option of award-winning Quenby Stilton on the menu, and you'll be driving past their organic English Longhorn beef herd along the drive. Champagne, classic home-produced beef fillet, vintage china cream teas, bangers and mash by candlelight, raw vegan cuisine and curry feasts – what's your vision?

Every detail is thought of, from the four-poster Pomegranate Suite for bridal preparations in the morning to locally-sourced ingredients for your menu, the well stocked bar and dance floor late at night, and designer brand handwash in the loos.

It's hard to believe that this treasure of a venue has remained such a secret. The spectacular house is a breathtaking sight as you round the bend on approach. Two rooms for your civil ceremony leave you torn over which to choose – is it to be the elegant Brown Parlour with its Jacobean-carved panelling, or the country style Old Dairy, with its high exposed oak beams and hunting trophies? The elegant new Garden Pavilion marquee enables you to enjoy the most of the setting while you dine and dance the night away. If it's a May wedding, the wisteria will be in bloom; in July the garden avenue of pink roses and lavender is a scented spectacular. In autumn, the beech trees turn magnificent shades of russet and gold. In winter, you melt into the warm embrace of crackling log fires, jewel colours and warm oak panelling. What about that eternal tyrant the English weather? At Quenby it's not an issue!




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Secrets of a great wedding

by Stuart Hollis, wedding photographer

I've attended many weddings in Leicestershire, the UK and around the world. I've photographed weddings on the beach in California, in the crypt at St. Paul's Cathedral, a forest in Belgium and the swankiest hotel in Singapore.

But some of the best weddings have nothing to do with the location, how expensive the car is or the size of the diamonds on the engagement ring. What makes a great wedding is love! This means how much love has gone into the wedding: the planning, the needs of the guests and the love of the couple.



© Stuart Hollis

Weddings have changed a lot since I took my first wedding photograph in the late 1980s. In those days, they were mostly the same: a church, some hymns, some fixed group shots, a few of the couple under a tree and the faked cake-cutting shots at the end. Most photographers used a heavy large format camera, which meant that photographs had to be staged, causing lots of fixed smiles and 'cheeses'! I created a stir when I started doing 'reportage' weddings and created a new kind of modern, natural folio. I captured the little details, the spontaneous moments, which my clients loved.

What's so wonderful now is that no two weddings are the same. Couples are getting married later and having the wedding they've always dreamed about. I've photographed a medieval wedding banquet where all the guests wore costumes from the BBC wardrobe department (I was dressed as a court jester!) I've photographed grooms arriving at church on tandem bicycles, brides in campervans, weddings in fields and forests, and couples running straight into the sea after the ceremony!

So my tips for planning a wedding? Close your eyes, think of your most beautiful dream and make it come true! Be realistic, but hold on to your vision of your perfect day. And don't forget to pick a good photographer to capture it all!

A selection of Stuart's wedding photographs can be viewed at www.hollisphotography.com

New use for an old barn

Anne and Tim Palmer's decision to turn a disused barn on their farm into a small events venue is already paying dividends.

Although the final stage of the conversion has only recently been completed to give an extra gallery floor, **The Barn at Manor Farm** in **Rearsby** has already hosted a wedding reception, an arts and crafts fair, children's workshops and a sellout music gig. The lovely old red brick building sits in the farmyard of the 18th century farmhouse in the heart of Rearsby and next to the village's landmark seven-arch bridge.

"It's a lovely setting and the ideal place for small gatherings of up to 100 people" said Anne who is planning more music events over the coming months. The Poozies, (an all female band of which Kate Rusby was once a member), are booked for **7 October**.

Manor Farm is a fully working arable farm, and also has B&B accommodation for up to four guests.



Call 01664 424239 to speak to Anne about hiring the Barn for an event or to book accommodation at the farmhouse (you can see photos of the bedrooms at www.rearsby.net/manor),



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Holiday fun for the young

A few ideas for keeping the kids busy over the Easter holidays. See next page for family day out suggestions.



Happy
Easter

Art & craft workshops

At **Charnwood Museum in Loughborough** children aged 3+ can try their hand at making a rabbit on **19 April** and Easter cards on **21 April**. The following week there will be two workshops (also for children aged 3+) to tie in with the major 'Birdsong' exhibiton running at the museum until June. On **26 April**, they'll discover what a Victorian animated thaumatrope is and how to make one, and on **28 April** they'll create a rocking bird. All workshops last an hour and run at various times during the day. They cost £2.50 per person and should be booked in advance. To book, call **01509 233754**.

At the **Melton Carnegie Museum in Melton Mowbray**, 5-12 year olds can take part in Easter craft activities, including basket making and egg decorating, on **21 April**, and the following week (**28 April**) they can try some leaf printing and bark rubbing. These sessions (four on each day) are free but must be pre-booked. To book, call **0116 305 3860**.

Mythical beasts

Several libraries will be running drop-in sessions in which 5-11 year olds can find out more about mythical beasts and legends through stories and crafts. Although the sessions are free, pre-booking is required. The venues and times are:

Loughborough Library, 20 April, 2.30-4pm. Tel: 01509 212985.

Birstall Library, 26 April, 10.30-11.45am. Tel: 0116 305 8756.

Mountsorrel Library, 28 April, 2.30-3.45pm. Tel: 0116 305 5892.

For more ideas, pick up a free Events Guide from your library (you can also download a copy from www.leics.gov.uk/events) and/or visit www.goleicestershire.com.

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Animal handling

On **27 April** children will have the chance not only to learn about animals, but also meet them face to face at **Charnwood Museum**. There are several 45 minute sessions throughout the day, which must be booked in advance. They are suitable for children aged 3+ and the cost is £2.50 per person. To book, call **01509 233754**.

Egg hunt

Watermead Country Park's annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Easter Monday (**25 April**); a fun event in this lovely setting. Places are limited so book early by calling **0116 305 5434**. The cost is £3 per person (plus car parking).



Right: King Lear's Lake, Watermead Park

Free workshops for 11-18 year olds

Every Thursday evening (5-8pm) until Easter, **Pedestrian Arts in Leicester** will be holding creative workshops for young people aged 11-18 at their studio space, **34-38 Rutland Street**.

Each week covers a different art form to include art, drama and dance. These sessions are completely free and will also provide an opportunity to get involved in the planning of Pedestrian Arts' Easter workshops.

For more information, contact Jo at jo@pedestrian.info or call **0116 262 7308**.

Family days out

Great Central Railway, L'borough

Once part of a mainline railway from Sheffield to London, this 8-mile stretch of track runs from



© Copyright Ashley Dace

Loughborough to Birstall. It is the UK's only double track heritage railway, with steam trains running every weekend, bank holidays and daily in the summer. Special events are run regularly.

From **22 to 25 April**, two adults and up to three children can ride all day for just £20 and take part in Easter activities along the way.

For enquiries and to book, phone **01509 230726** or visit www.gcrailway.co.uk.

Belton House, Grantham

A great place for the whole family. Aside from the magnificent 17th century house, there is a huge park and an adventure playground to explore. Plus, on **23 and 24 April** there will be an Easter trail in the garden, a mini chick trail for younger children and craft activities in the Discovery Centre (12.30-4.30pm). The trail will cost £1.50 on top of the normal ground admission.

Call **01476 566116** for details or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beltonhouse.

Pedestrian Arts, Leicester

The Made in England event hosted by Pedestrian Arts (**34-38 Rutland Street, Leicester**) on **23 April (11am-5pm)** will showcase the work of UK jewelry makers, glassworkers, textile makers and many other creative people. With activities for young people through the day, it should make an interesting day out for the whole family.

For more information, contact Jo at jo@pedestrian.info or call **0116 262 7308**.

White Post Farm, Farnsfield, Notts

This popular East Midlands' visitor attraction gives you the chance to get up close to thousands of friendly animals, like chicks, llamas, rabbits, cows and pigs. There's also a lake, an indoor play area, a show barn and a shop.



For more information and to find out about Easter activities, call **01623 882977** or visit www.whitepostfarmcentre.co.uk.

Exploring the world through music

... animals and a whole lot more

Never work with children or animals, said comedian W C Fields. Well, children's entertainer Vanessa Balkwill (aka Ticked Skink) does both - and so far has no complaints!

Vanessa runs music and singing sessions with children of all ages. And wherever she goes, a small menagerie of animals go with her. But these are not, as you might expect, sweet little bunny rabbits and guinea pigs; they're far more exotic creatures such as boas, giant African millipedes and geckos.

"For some time I had been looking to offer something different", said Vanessa. "Because of my daughter's interest in animals, we had already amassed a range of pets at home, so I started taking them with me to parties. It was then a short leap to developing a series of habitat-themed sessions, which would feature songs, stories and activities around the animals from the different habitats. Our animal collection has since grown as I have bought more to suit the themes I have created."

The family has acquired the animals in a variety of ways. "Some we've bought, some we've bred and the odd one, like our ancient leopard gecko, has been given to us."

As well as running regular pre-school sessions in Oadby and Countesthorpe, Vanessa travels across Leicestershire to nurseries, schools and birthday parties with her Ticked Skink roadshow; a whole host of colourful props (including puppets and instruments) support her and the animals to bring action-packed fun to every session.

Vanessa has a degree in drama, and is a trained Montessori teacher and musician. She writes many of the songs she uses in her sessions.

The themed sessions: Rainforest, Desert, British Countryside, Garden, Sea, African Safari, Caves, Christmas, Easter

The animals: Columbian rainbow boa, leopard gecko, Chilean rosetarantula (to view only), bearded dragon, cornsnakes, giant African millipedes, giant leaf insects, giant African mountain snails, Sinaloan Milk Snake and Madagascan hissing cockroaches

You can contact Vanessa on **07951 853204** and should call her before attending her pre-school sessions in Oadby and Countesthorpe.



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In your garden

by Helen Osborne of Church View Nursery

There don't seem to be enough hours in the day at this time of year; there is so much to be done, particularly after a mild spring. Everything in my garden is coming to life, including the weeds!

If you haven't already done so, cut back summer flowering perennials, although if there is no sign of growth at the base by now, then I doubt they will come back. It's an ideal time to plant new shrubs and perennials; take a trip to a nursery to get some fresh and different replacements.

Turning to the vegetable garden, if you grow broad beans they should be well away, but carrots, beetroot, radish and lettuce can be sown directly in the soil now. Make sure the soil is broken down and free of weeds and cover over with a cloche to warm the soil. Read the seed packet to make sure you sow the seed at the correct depth, cover with soil and water. If you have a very small plot, crops like radish and spring onions can be planted in between different plants. If you don't have a veg plot, vegetables like potatoes, carrots and lettuce can be grown in pots. Remember to water them regularly.

A freshly mown lawn makes a difference to the garden. Feed the lawn now, and treat with selective weed killer, if you have a problem weed. I like to see my lawn looking green, not so long that I lose my two dogs in it, and the edges clipped!

It is an ideal time to sow bedding plants, if you have space in your greenhouse, or a windowsill in the house. Before you go for the same plants you grow every year, see what your local nursery has that is different. If you don't want the hassle of germinating the seed yourself, you can find a range of seedlings already germinated for you at nurseries.

We're expanding!

This is an exciting time for us at Church View Nursery. The move into our new shop on the land next to our original site marks our fifth anniversary. We now have lots more space for growing and presenting our stock to customers. Thanks to all who have supported us over the last five years. We look forward to seeing you in our new surroundings!



Spring-flowering
Dicentra

Woodland walks for the spring

by Helen Swann of the Woodland Trust

Spring is the perfect time to go walking in Leicestershire's woodlands. The weather is warmer, birds are singing louder and the once bare trees are coming into bloom – as are an abundance of other flora species. The most famous is the bluebell. During April and May, woodlands are illuminated by breathtaking displays of bluebells spreading like a blue carpet across the ground.



Swithland Wood has one of the best displays of bluebells in the country. Other local woods include **Burroughs Wood, Ratby** (pictured above), **Bluebell Woods** at **Ulverscroft Nature Reserve** and **Jubilee Woods**, the **Outwoods** and **Martin's Wood** in **Charnwood**. To find one near you, visit www.VisitWoods.org.uk.

If you fancy something more active, why not join the 'Bluebell Walk & Ride' at **Rutland Water on Sunday 1 May** and help raise money for Crohn's and Colitis UK. There is an optional fancy dress theme of 'Fairies, Pixies and Pirates' and a choice of two walking/cycling distances to suit all abilities. The routes will take you through the stunning, bluebell-filled Barnsdale Woods. Registration is 10am-12pm at Barnsdale car park. For full details, call **0835 130682**.

For a fuller version of this article, see our blog – www.villageconnect.blogspot.com

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A new wood for Wymeswold

With help from the **Woodland Trust**, local arboriculturalist/tree surgeon **Sam Berg** and members of the local community, a new native woodland has been planted in **Wymeswold**.

Kathy Simpson decided to give over two acres of land she no longer had use for to the 750 trees to “enhance the environment and leave something for the future”.

Kathy has owned the land for over a decade and has used it for horses and occasional sheep. “As I was never going to farm the land, I could afford to give some of it over to trees, which in turn would enhance the village scene” she explained. The land is on the top of a rise and the tree tops will eventually be seen from the village.

Sam Berg (from Loughborough) was especially pleased to be involved in this project. Despite having the job of cutting down trees, Sam has taken it upon himself to ensure that for every tree he cuts down, another is replanted. Sam’s ‘tree for tree’ idea has led his company, CO Arb, to work in collaboration with the Woodland Trust on a number of projects, and his expertise and enthusiasm has enabled Wymeswold and many other areas to benefit from having new native woodland.

“There are many projects where tree plantings are required” says Sam. “I keep a tally of all trees removed and in the spring and autumn I go out and plant. I stick to native British species mainly oak, ash, beech, hawthorne, field maple, silver birch, wild and bird cherry and many more. I am the first in the UK to do this but am hoping to set a standard for all companies.”



Gardens open for charity

There are plenty of gardens to visit over the next couple of months. The following are participating in the NGS Gardens Open for Charity programme (see Diary for times). The NGS Yellow Book is available in garden centres, or visit www.ngs.org.uk for more details and more gardens open near you.

Parkside, Gaddesby (10 April). A 1¼-acre garden and woodland evolving from original planting.

Dairy Cottage, The Lodge & 8 Manor Lane, Barleythorpe (1 May). An interesting mix of cottage-style, walled and kitchen gardens including water and woodland features.

Goadby Marwood Hall (21 May). A chain of five lakes and several walled gardens all interconnected. Redesigned by the owners in 2000.

88 Brook St/Cradock Cottage, Wymeswold (22 May). Although designed in contrasting styles, both gardens provide fine views of the village and surrounding countryside

Ridgewold Farm, Wymeswold (25 May). A 2½-acre garden around a new farmhouse set in a rural landscape.



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Spring Events

Saturday 7th May 10.00am - 12.00pm

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Saturday 21st May 10.00am - 12.00pm

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April

6 **Woodhouse Eaves Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Hank Wangford & Brad Breath (country music duo). 'No Hall 2 Small'. Tel: 01509 890721.*



6 **Waltham on the Wolds Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Hank Wangford & Brad Breath (country duo). 'No Hall 2 Small'. Tel: 01664 464115.*

7,8,9 **Frisby on the Wreake Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Two one-act plays with a cheese-and-wine Supper (during the interval). See page 3.

9 **Rearsby Village Hall Playing Field**, 8am. Car Boot. Gates open for booters at 7.30am. Tel: 01664 424427.

9 **South Croxton**, 9.45/10am. Big Brunch Walk. Bus hop to Great Dalby for 6 mile walk or local 5 mile walk. 50p plus bus fare if applicable. Brunch (to purchase) served at 12.30pm in the village hall. Tel: 01664 840272.

9/10 **St Leonard's Church, Swithland**, 10am-4pm Open church and art exhibition. Coffee/tea and cakes, art work from Swithland School and Birstall & District Art Society. Books for sale. Tel: 01509 211567.

10 **Parkside, Gaddesby** 11am-5pm. Garden open. £3 (children free). Tel: 01664 840385. See page 9.

11 **Long Clawson Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Long Clawson Centre Screen Film: 'Made In Dagenham' (15 cert). Tel: 01664 823295. Email: alan.woodhouse@longclawson.com.

16 **Kirby Bellars Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Hot Fingers featuring Thomas Langham, Malcolm Sked & Danny Blyth (vintage acoustic string trio). Tel: 01664 813938.*

16 **Tilton Village Hall**, 11am-3pm. Family Fun Day. Inflatables, games and stalls. BBQ. Free. Tel: 0116 259 7494.

17 **Oakham-Melton CiCLE Classic**. The 105 mile cycle race from Oakham to Melton will pass through a number of local villages. For details, visit www.cicleclassic.co.uk.

23 **Pedestrian Arts, 34-38 Rutland St, Leicester**, 11am-5pm. 'Made in England'; local artists showcase their work. See page 7.

30 **Old Dalby Village Hall**, 7.30pm. The Opera Dudes: The Godfathers of Croon. Tel: 01664 822603/820100.*

30 **Kirby Bellars Village Hall**. 10am-5pm. 30th Annual Exhibition of the Kirby Bellars Group of Artists. See page 3.

SEE PAGES 6 & 7 FOR EASTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

May

1/2 **Kirby Bellars Village Hall**, 10am-5pm. Art Exhibition. See page 3.

1 **Rutland Water**, 10am. Bluebell Walk & Ride. See page 8.

1 **Barleythorpe, near Oakham**, 2-5pm. Three gardens open. £4. See page 9

1 **Stafford Orchard, Station Rd. Quorn**. 2pm. May Day Celebrations. See page 3.

2 **Hambleton Village Hall and Church**, 10.30am-5pm. Hambleton Open Gardens plus Art Exhibition. Tel: 01572 722439 or 723576.

6 **Burton on the Wolds Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Jon Boden (of Bellowhead) in concert. Tel: 01509 881369.*

7 **Rearsby Village Hall Playing Field**, 8am. Car Boot. Gates open for booters at 7.30am. Tel: 01664 424427.

7 **Burton Lazars Village Hall** 10am-4pm. The Burton Lazars Arts & Crafts Club Open Day. See page 3.

7 **Twyford Village Hall**, 7.30pm. R&B Music: Mike Ridgeway's Mojo Hand. Tel: 0116 246 4097.

8 **Belvoir Castle Estate**, 9.30am. Sponsored horse ride in aid of Macmillan cancer support. Tel: 01664 822324 or 840663.

9 **Long Clawson Village Hall** LE14 4NA, 7:30pm. Centre Screen Film - The King's Speech. **Please telephone for confirmation.** £4.50/3.50. Contact: Alan Woodhouse 01664 823295, alan.woodhouse@longclawson.com.

11 **Long Clawson Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Hell Said the Duchess (accordion trio) in concert. Tel: 01664 822247.*



15 **Brook Street, Wymeswold**. 11am-4pm. Wymeswold Waddle & Duck Race. Tel: 01509 881664.

15 **Dove Cottage, Stathern**, 1.30-4.30pm. Annual Summer Fete. See page 3.

19 **Hoby & District Village Hall**. 7.30pm. The Daniel Smith Blues Band. Tel: 01664 434120.*

20 **Wymeswold Village Hall**. 8pm. The Daniel Smith Blues Band. Tel: 01509 880277.*



21 **Hungarton (Black Boy Inn)**, 10am. Start of Hungarton/Quenby Country walk. 2½ hours (4 miles). Dogs allowed. £2 (under 16s free). Booking essential. Tel: 0116 305 7655.

21 **Goadby Marwood Hall**, 11am-4pm. Garden open. £4. See page 9.

21 **Twyford Village Hall**, 7.30pm. Badapple Theatre Company presents 'The James Herriot Story' (one-man show). Tel: 01664 840352.*

21 **Long Clawson Village Hall**, LE14 4NA 7.30pm. James Hickman & Dan Cassidy in concert (folk and roots duo). Tel: 01664 822247.*

21 **Wymeswold**, 11am-4pm. Two gardens open. £3. See page 9.

22 Start of **Rutland Walking Festival** (until 5 June). Programme available from www.discover-rutland.co.uk.

25 **Ridgewold Farm, Wymeswold**, 3-9pm. Garden open. £2.50. See page 9.

June

4/5 **Frisby on the Wreake**, 11am-5pm. Open Gardens weekend. 12 gardens open plus art exhibition, lunch, cakes, produce, plants etc. £4, children free.

To get your event listed free of charge, email details to louise@villageconnect.co.uk or use the online form at www.villageconnect.co.uk. Send details of events that have missed the print deadline to louise@villageconnect.co.uk or post them on the VC Facebook page

While every effort is made to ensure information in the Diary is correct, Village Connect cannot be held responsible for any errors it contains

Making the most of your living space

Staying put and improving our homes continues to be favoured by many of us over the expensive business of moving. And while an extension is the most obvious way of going about it, it's by no means the only option for improving the quality of our living space says **Syston-based** carpenter **Kev Taylor**.

Kev has been involved in many home improvement projects, the main focus often being the kitchen. "The kitchen is the most important room in the house. It can make a huge difference to the value of your property, but as long as you're still living in it, you need to make it work for you. Things like good storage and making the most of what space there is are now high priorities for many people looking to making changes in the home.

"Multi-function rooms are getting more and more popular. Quite a few jobs I've worked on recently have involved knocking down walls to create kitchen diners. A kitchen lounge is another option and a great alternative area for the family to spend time together. It's amazing how much space you make if you take away a wall!"

Kev works on all kinds of home improvements, big and small and not just kitchens. With a reliable team of tradesmen such as plumbers, electricians and plasterers to call on, he is able to manage projects from start to finish, including small extensions.



Two become one: losing the wall in the bottom right-hand picture opened up a huge space for Kev to install a brand new kitchen diner (top picture).

To speak to Kev about your home improvement plans, see the advert below for his contact details.



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