



### **Chair's Blog**

We've finally made it to spring, so throw off that extra duvet and start searching for the key to the garden shed. There are chores galore if you have a garden, and if you are anything like me there's a stack of things to do indoors as well. It's not called spring for nothing.

I always like to keep members up-to-date, so Sweet Potato Day is on 1st April (no, truly it is). There's also something else on 1st April at the back of my mind, but don't fuss me, it will come to me in due course.

We celebrate International Pillow Fight Day on 6th April, so pencil that into your diaries, and you needn't do any housework on 7th April. We look forward to the end of the month when it is National Sense of Smell Day. You think I'm teasing you, don't you. Really, It's all true, April is turning out to be a thoroughly crackers month.

We have a Woodpecker Walk in Keynsham led by Colin on 14th April, with an exciting book sale at the Rainbow Cafe on the day before. There's a lot to pack into April and we've only got 30-days. So, come along everyone, we've got a great deal to do.

**Michael Reid**



## **Tarot Cards**

I first became interested in tarot after reading the Salt Path by Rainer Winn, in which the author describes having an impromptu tarot reading during a journey around the Cornish peninsula which predicted a most unlikely outcome which came true. This reminded me of the only tarot reading that I had back in 1991 which correctly predicted how my future might unfold, if only I had paid more attention at the time to the men shown on those cards.

I enrolled on a course at the London School of Astrology, based at the Rudolph Steiner institute in London, which immediately connected me back to my time as an undergraduate where Steiner was required reading, leading to a visit to his Goetheanum in Switzerland.

I learned that the first tarot cards appeared in 14th Century Italy as playing cards. They were immensely popular across Europe and slowly became used for fortune telling. A tarot deck is remarkably similar to conventional playing cards with ace to ten pip cards, king, queen etc. court cards, but additionally major arcana cards, the archetypes.

For a reading, the querent poses a question, shuffles, and cuts the cards so that the reader can lay them down in a specific order, the spread, structured to provide insight into the question. The most common subjects for a reading relate to family, money, work, romance, and health. General guidance spreads are popular too.

Like most forms of divination, the readings are not always clear and much depends on the level of participation of the querent. The cards do not predict the future but reveal general trends as where things are going. There is rarely a yes or no answer, and a reading does not tell you what to do.

My tutor explains that 'we are not Polly Anna' so the message should not be sugar-coated, but helpful, insightful and improve understanding. Most of the time the querent already knows the answer to the question that they are asking, so that the images on the cards simply enhance that knowledge by providing visual expression to their situation.

Last year I had a stall at Swindon & Wiltshire Pride as a tarot reader, where I was overwhelmed by the amount of interest involving a multitude of readings covering all kinds of subjects, including many about romance. It was a valuable experience and although very exhausting I felt privileged to be of some help. I hope to be able to repeat the exercise again this year to put into practice my further learning.

At the most basic level, a Tarot reading is the concoction of a story from a set of random picture cards woven together to provide insight and perspective into a particular question. On another level the cards are a mystical and spiritual manifestation of all innate human knowledge learned over millennia and manifested in the cards.

A great friend once told me that the world is signposted, and that if we could only see and understand those signs the journey ahead could be less arduous. Tarot can be one of those signposts that simply reminds us of what we already know in our heart-of-hearts.

**Michael Gray**



**The Bath Operatic & Dramatic Society (BODS)**

At the Theatre Royal in Bath, we have seen several of this group's productions including: *Crazy for You*, *Legally Blonde*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *My Fair Lady* and others. It is a leading amateur group and as such presents superb entertainment that is colourful, tuneful and very impressive.

I was weaned on London's West End theatre, and these local productions are comparable to professional presentations. So, not fully aware of Dolly Parton's musical attributes, I booked to see the "9 to 5" stage show, which was an adaptation of the 1980 film, with no less than eighteen musical numbers.

I must say that I was totally won over with the obvious care with which this show had been produced. Sheer joyousness wafted over the footlights. I thought it was all gorgeous, with its highly improbable plot, its lively songs, its classy choreography and witty dialogue - it was an absolute delight.

When the tap-dancing sequence began, I (almost) stood on my seat and cheered, it was truly brilliant. So, altogether, another slick, top-class show and one I would have been sorry to have missed.

Future productions include *Blithe Spirit*, and in 2025, *Oklahoma*, for which I can hardly wait.

**Valentino**



### **Naked Beauties**

When plant hunters of the 18th Century ventured into the foot-hills of the Himalayas in spring the sight of magnolias flowering must have been breathtaking and full of wonder.

Magnolias are a fossil plant, they have existed on this planet more than 90 million years and are one of the earliest flowering plants to evolve. As these plants appeared before pollinating insects such as bees, it's thought that they were pollinated by beetles.

Magnolias can be found from north to south America, but are mainly in central Asia (China, Japan, Sikkim, Nepal). There are in excess of 300 species and the hybrids made from these are countless.

Magnolias like slightly acidic to neutral soils and prefer a sheltered full sun to light shade to grow in. Although most are medium sized shrubs or small trees, all can be pruned to keep their size. There's a house in Wells who has them pleached, round the front of their garden, or they can also be trained up a wall. Most are free-standing plants.

These days practically any magnolias are available according to the price you wish to pay for them. The most common found in our garden centres and nurseries are Magnolia Grandiflora - large dinner plate flowers in summer, which grows into a substantial tree and is evergreen. Magnolia Liliiflora, with lovely slender dark pink flowers. Probably the best is Magnolia Liliiflora "Susan". Magnolia Soulangeana - the most common of all large and many pale pink-and-white saucer flowers, and not forgetting Magnolia Stellata - a most attractive small magnolia for the garden with its beautiful starry white flowers.

**Stephen Lee's website: [www.gardening-coach.co.uk](http://www.gardening-coach.co.uk)  
email: [gardencoach2022@gmail.com](mailto:gardencoach2022@gmail.com)**



### **Mocha-and-Rum**

I met a sailor on the quay of the Bristol Harbourside and we started talking. He said his name was John Cabot and he had come over from the Americas on his wooden boat *The Matthew*. That's a long way I thought, and you can see from the photo he looked exhausted. I said "Would you like a coffee?"

He looked thoughtful, "A kaw-fey, that's a new invention." He sucked his teeth for a few moments and said "I'll have a large Mocha-and-Rum."

So there we were sipping our kaw-feys, telling me all about his voyage and how he had discovered a place called New-Found-Land. I thought what a boring name to give new territory. Why not a romantic name like Bristoliana, or Canada has a nice ring to it.

He said, "Would you like to come back and see the boat?" Well, if there's one thing I know it's sailors, I'm not daft. You can get on the boat, no problem - but can you get off again. I said I was only here for the afternoon and that I was going on up the Art Gallery.

He said that *The Matthew* don't officially open until next week and he was going to do short tours round the harbour.

I wished him well and said I'd tell my friends, then wandered back into the twenty-something century. [www.matthew.co.uk](http://www.matthew.co.uk)

**Michael Reid**

**Note from the Editor:** Those of you of a more discerning nature, might have spotted a different look to the Newsletter. Just be patient, it's a work in progress and can only get better.

### Snippets - aka hot juicy gossip

In 1852 the first 'Gents' toilets opened on London's Fleet Street, followed on 11th February by the first 'Ladies', just off the Strand. They were dubbed Public Waiting Rooms.

"So baby girl" - we do like to keep members up-to-date with the latest expressions. Someone who is "So baby girl" is extremely sexually attractive with a good personality. Primarily, a man who is so attractive that you want to provide for him.

We try to avoid politics but couldn't resist this one: More Generation Z Americans identify as LGBT than as Republicans. A demographic tsunami is heading for U.S. politics, after a survey revealed that younger people are more LGBTQ+ and less Republican than any previous generation.

The 2024 Olympics will be held in Paris, and the French have lifted a sex ban introduced during the Covid pandemic. 300,000 condoms will now be available to athletes this summer - that's two each for every day of the sporting events. A director of the Olympic Village is quoted as saying "Conviviality here in Paris is something big."

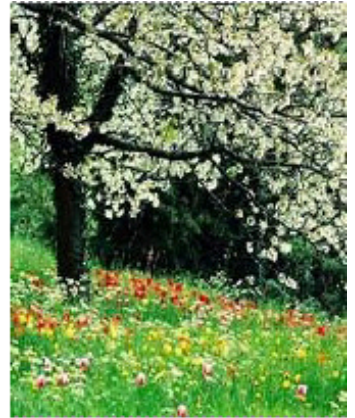
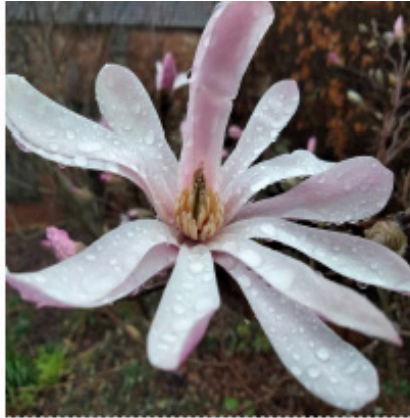
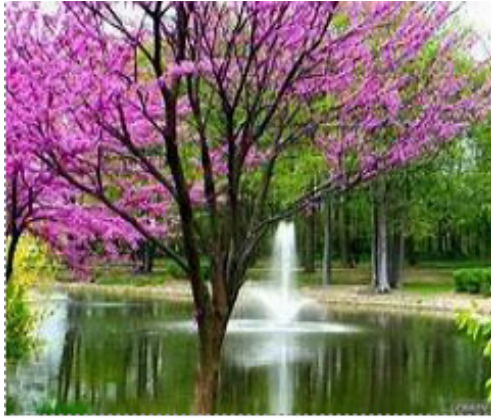
### Reminders:

Our Monthly Night Social at the Lodekka in Brislington will be on Wednesday 10th April from 7.30 pm

The Woodpecker Walk, led by Colin, will be on Sunday 14 April, starting at 11.00am from 30 Woodpecker Close BS31 2FU

The Hot Book Sale will be on Saturday 13 April at the Cafe.

***Images of Spring - which is the odd one out?***



And in case you were wondering where it was:

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***A Very Happy Easter to all our members***