

NEWSLETTER

The Leafington Society

Registered Charity
516078



Pedestrians Only. Painting by Kevin Parrish.

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- Murals in Leafington Spa
- Local Spotlight: Country Market & Café Desa
- New Facebook Group: Rumour Control

**EVENTS -
see page 3**

Chairman's Notes

It is this time of year again: back to school, back to the new season with The Leamington Society and many other wonderful local organisations. Plenty to choose from in town whether you are into gardening, theatre, arts, culture etc.

We are between summer as depicted on the painting by Kevin Parrish on the front cover and winter as depicted by him on the back cover - well, with a bit of travel in time involved too. Pop in to see his and other local artists' works in the LSA Studio in Royal Priors (free), then stroll down Parade for a last-minute visit to 'A Different View' exhibition, on until 5th October (free). Whilst you are at the Pump Rooms, enquire about the new programme of events put together by Friends of Leamington Art Gallery and Museum - they have some fascinating topics to be discussed.

Ah, The Royal Spa Centre has produced a programme of its events too, as usual. One underused asset worth mentioning is their cinema, recently upgraded, and delivering a rather pleasant cinematic experience and a diverse selection of films.

Markets will soon be back on Parade on Sundays. Every Friday morning, Dale Street Methodist Church market is open - read more about it further in the newsletter. Markets are less tangible than retail stores but perhaps that is one of their key attractions, this fragility and

ephemerality. It might seem quite a stretch but to me there is something in common between markets and murals in their nature - both are public, open, and accessible. They are also temporary, more so than brick-and-mortar stores and artwork destined for the cosiness of art galleries.

Our own programme of events started on 10th September with my talk on Leafy Leamington. This will also be our campaign for the coming year (and beyond) as we'd love to see more street trees. They should help us have a more pleasant urban environment with cooler temperatures, more vibrant colours, and fresher air. This campaign, of course, involves lots of preparatory work, planting, but probably more importantly it will require commitment to regular maintenance. We could see how fragile new trees are when a dry summer comes. Many local residents look after street trees in their vicinity and it would be amazing if even more of us followed their lead. We'll talk about it in future newsletters.

Our next event titled 'Masterplan for Christchurch Gardens' is on 8th October, do come along: Friends of the Gardens have created a very robust plan which can now move into the implementation phase. And last but not least, do engage in the Conservation Recognition Scheme (p.4).

Ignaty Dyakov-Richmond, Chair

Leamington Society Programme of Talks 2025-2026

All talks are held at 7.30pm

at The Oddfellows, 22 New Street, Leamington Spa CV32 1HP

Everyone is welcome. Members - free, non-members - £3.

2025

Oct 8: **Masterplan for Christchurch Gardens** - Alison Chantrey (Friends of the Gardens)

Nov 12: **Improving the water quality of the River Leam** - Sioban Bray (Severn Trent Water)

Dec 10 Christmas meeting. **The story of Shire Foods** (plus buffet) – Kevin Newey (tbc.)

2026

Jan 15 (Thu): **Burns Night celebration** - joint meeting with the Leamington Literary Society and Society of Authors Warwickshire (£8 entry)

Feb 11: **The History and Future of Silicon Spa** – Andrew Oliver (Panivox)

March 11: **All Saints Living Labyrinth** – Lucie Titchmarsh (ARC)

April 8: **The role of Virtual Reality today** – Alex Harvey (Rivr)

May 13: **AGM** - Update on developments in Leamington town centre (details tbc.)

Friends of Christchurch Gardens

Sep 20, Nov 1, Dec 13 (Sat): One-hour tidy-ups at 11am

Sep 20: **The Leamington History walk** led by Paul and Jenny Dickins

at 11am (Sign up via

Eventbrite: [https://](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/leamington-history-group-68599114813)

www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/leamington-history-group-68599114813)

Dec 21: **Carols in the Gardens** (time tbc).



Christchurch Gardens guides, Jenny and Paul Dickins, waiting to welcome people to the Friends' history walks

Friends of Leamington Station

Every Sunday at 10.30am (with a stop for coffee at 12noon). Meeting in the Station Garden.

Certificate of Recognition Initiative to Celebrate Care for Our Heritage

Our town's historic and listed buildings are what give our streets their unique character and charm. Sadly, many of these special places are at risk from changes and alterations that don't respect their history. Sometimes it happens because owners aren't fully aware of the rules that protect listed buildings, or of the guidance available to help them carry out work in a sympathetic way.

To turn this around, the Society wants to celebrate the people who do take the time and care to look after their heritage property properly. We believe that good examples speak louder than rules, and that sharing positive stories can inspire others to follow suit.

That's why we are launching our new Certificate of Recognition scheme. If you're a homeowner, business, or landlord who restores original features, repairs your building in a thoughtful way, or carefully brings a heritage property back to life, we'd love to recognise your efforts. Recipients will receive a certificate from the Society, marking their contribution to the town's heritage.

Even better, those who receive certificates will also be put forward for our biennial Leamington Society Awards, where we celebrate outstanding contributions to the local built environment. It's a chance not only to be recognised, but to inspire others to protect and cherish the history that surrounds us.

Heritage buildings are treasures that we hold in trust for future generations. By shining a light on sensitive restoration and the care that goes into it, we can encourage more people to do the same — and make sure our town remains a place where history and community sit side by side.

Call to Action - as you go about our town, please take notes and photos of any such works, no matter how minor, and submit them to us via email contact@leamingtonsociety.org.

Bruno Eurich



*Network Rail Volunteers Day at
Leamington Station 19th June, 2025*

The Leamington Society has submitted our response to the consultation on the future of Parade. Rather, it was a compilation of opinions, ideas and concerns raised by Committee members and at the event we hosted in July. We are looking forward to the results of the consultation and will update you at the earliest opportunity.

A view from the Gardens

The Friends are continuing their work on the masterplan for Christchurch Gardens. The focus has moved towards implementation and attracting the necessary funding. We've had some very productive conversations and our first, of what is likely to be many applications, has been submitted.



*Flo Ellis and Pip Burley of
LAMP Learning's Senior Leadership
Team
with their Art Box exhibition*

We were delighted to be invited back to the Audley Binswood Summer Fair in July. This provided us with an opportunity to raise the profile of the Gardens with members and to share with them the masterplan. It was lovely to meet people who remember Christ Church before it was demolished.

Meanwhile, the Friends are continuing their collaboration with Leamington History Group, delivering history walks in the Gardens. The last for the current season is part of Heritage Open Days and will take place at 11am on Saturday 20th September. If you'd like to learn more about the Gardens, please do join us. It's free, but please register your interest [here](#) so that we know how many to expect.

The current exhibition in Art Box is a five year retrospective of Art & Design and Photography work by students of LAMP Learning. LAMP is a specialist education provider, established in 2013, dedicated to supporting young people with autism and high anxiety who may struggle in mainstream educational settings. It provides a wonderful variety of creativity that's well worth taking a few minutes to explore.

Our next tidy-up in the Gardens, to which all are invited, takes place at 11am on Saturday 20th September. We provide hi viz, gloves and tools, coffee and cake, with support from Holy Trinity Church. There's no need to book, just show up dressed appropriately for the weather and join in for this hour-long opportunity to meet like-minded members of the community and make a difference to this much loved green space.

As always, if you'd like to keep up-to-date with the Friends' work, you can follow us on Facebook at Friends of Christchurch Gardens, Leamington Spa and Art Box, Leamington Spa.

*Alison Chantrey
Chair, Friends of Christchurch Gardens*



Flourishing Community Projects with ARC

This year ARC has seen two new community projects grow and flourish.

The Community Garden at The Crest

At the base of Eden and Southorn Court flats in Lillington, ARC has supported a group of local residents to transform their shared space into a thriving garden. Volunteers have planted fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers, and meet every Wednesday from 10am–12pm to tend the beds together. The garden is becoming a vibrant hub of community life. You're invited to visit and support the project at "Crest Fest", a free community event, on Saturday 13th September, 12–4pm, CV32 7PU.

The Living Labyrinth at All Saints Churchyard

Meanwhile in Leamington, the Living Labyrinth in All Saints Churchyard has been alive with bees and butterflies all summer. The five-circuit labyrinth was inspired by the church's rose window and has become a beautiful space for meditation, peace and reflection.

Volunteer gardener and filmmaker Dominic Day has created a short film telling the story of how the labyrinth came to life. You can watch it at

vimeo.com/1113688003

The labyrinth group continues to meet weekly on Tuesdays, 10am–12pm, to care for and nurture this special space.

Both projects are always looking for new volunteers and supporters – come along and be part of these growing community spaces. Find out more at <https://arccic.co.uk/> or email info@arccic.co.uk.

Lucie Cox, ARC



The Leamington Society new leaflets are now available from key locations around town.

Please help yourselves to them and pass them onto those who might be interested in joining the Society.

Murals in Leamington Spa

On a recent walking tour of murals, Tim Robottom, our Guide, Artist in Chief, aka Lord Numb, showed us a selection in Old Town, where most of them are. We met by the Elephant Wash, where the ugly scribble on the electric box has been replaced by Tim's delightful portraits of our three famous circus elephants (and has been free of scribble ever since). We walked through the Court Street industrial estate, across and along the canal past Eagle foundry to the Eagle Recreation ground and to the edge of Hitchman's Arboretum, along streets and alleyways unfamiliar even to those of us who have lived here for years.

Murals are painted in strange places – under bridges, high up on walls, in nooks and crannies – and are easy to miss. There is intense competition – a new creation is often followed by another nearby or “tagged” by a competitor with scribble to spoil it. Maintaining your creation is a constant struggle. As well as human interference, there is sun and rain and the natural decay of building materials. In an underpass celebrating same-sex marriage the beautiful faces of the partners are eroding with the brickwork. The double-garage door featuring two fine swans is threatened with the demolition and redevelopment of the whole block.

Spencer's Yard Peregrine falcon has become a window and its huge rainbow-breasted pigeons covered with grey paint. The Crown Building's subtle

multicoloured tribute to the Camoufleurs of WWII has suffered the same sad fate.

Tim is very much a local man and told us the stories behind the murals. The two swans were commissioned by the garage owner who found two dead swans in the canal. The Lady of Shrubland Street, occupying the whole end gable wall of a two-storey Victorian terrace, is a tribute to his friend, the late Janet Alty, an active Leamington Society member, taken from a photo of her, young and hopeful, on her way to America – in a roundel inspired by the brickwork crest on Shrublands School. It was funded by Art Friends Warwickshire, featured on the BBC, and we should be proud of it. Another end gable painting on a house originally built by Hitchman as a school on the edge of his Arboretum shows a track through a forest of huge trees – a memorial to trees cut down.

It is a relatively new decorative artform, made famous by Banksy. There are National and International competitions of mural art. The paints are specially made in a graded colour spectrum, quickly sprayed onto prepared surfaces – taking a few days at most. The art is easily accessed on the web, but you miss the impact of the size and scale by not seeing them “for real”. Murals are ephemeral – so catch them when you can, with the help of the free guide, part-sponsored by the Leamington Society available in VIC.

Should the Leamington Society do more to protect them?

Marianne Pitts



One of the endangered murals: 'Swans' by Peachzz in Althorpe Street.



Have you seen these free leaflets available at the Pump Room Visitor Centre?

The first is a guide to the Trees of Jephson Gardens - a map of where most of them are, and what they are called.

The second will introduce you to the street art of Leamington. Use it to take yourself on a tour.

Sidney Syson



*One of the most recent murals by Brink in Acacia Rd.
Photo: Ignaty Dyakov-Richmond*

Leamington Country Market

Leamington Country Market is a member of Country Markets Ltd., a non-profit trading organisation in England and Wales that grew out of the Women's Institute after legislation changes made homemade goods sales inappropriate to the WI organisation. We are a not for profit social enterprise and we work cooperatively.

All goods on sale are made by members of the Leamington Country Market, who are also the volunteers who set up and run the weekly event at Dale Street Methodist church hall. Prices of goods on sale are determined by the cost of the ingredients or contents plus a mark up to cover production costs.

Goods for sale range from homemade bread and cakes to wooden egg cups via jams and chutneys, marmalades, locally produced fruit juices and honey, seasonal fruit and vegetables, hand made greetings cards and other craft items, savoury pies, and other baked goods. Most food items are suitable for freezing, all are produced in members' kitchens or workshops.

Producers, the term used to describe the members who make and sell their sale items, are all enthusiastic local people with a passion for using their knowledge and skills to make and sell their items and wholesome fresh food from, in the main, locally sourced ingredients. We're always on the lookout for new Producers who might wish to try adding their skills to what's on sale in the market.

A further important part of the market is providing a weekly venue for tea/coffee and chat for anyone. The centre of the hall is arranged as a round table to encourage everyone to stop and have a natter. Tea and coffee is priced at 50p a mug! We're dog-friendly, many visitors bring their canine companions along too.

All food producers are registered with Environmental Health and kitchens are inspected too. Please note that as foodstuffs are produced in home kitchens there may be some traces of allergens in food sold at the market.

So why not come along and give us a try? We're in the hall at the Methodist Church towards the lower end of Dale Street Fridays from 10am to 12noon. Look for green signs and a large banner on the hall front window. You'll be welcome!

Erica Moody

Just another cafe?

I founded Café Desa in 2022 after retraining as a Nutrition and Lifestyle Coach during the pandemic. Nutrition and food have always been a big factor in my life. Having moved to England from Indonesia when I was a teenager, I struggled with the food choices available and was overwhelmed with the amount of processed convenient food.

Our mission at Café Desa is to make healthy eating delicious, simple, and accessible. We believe that we have neglected to listen to cues in our body,

due to the vast amount of noise surrounding nutrition. My aim is to encourage people to eat healthily, simply - to eat a variety of food using natural ingredients to ensure nutritional diversity.

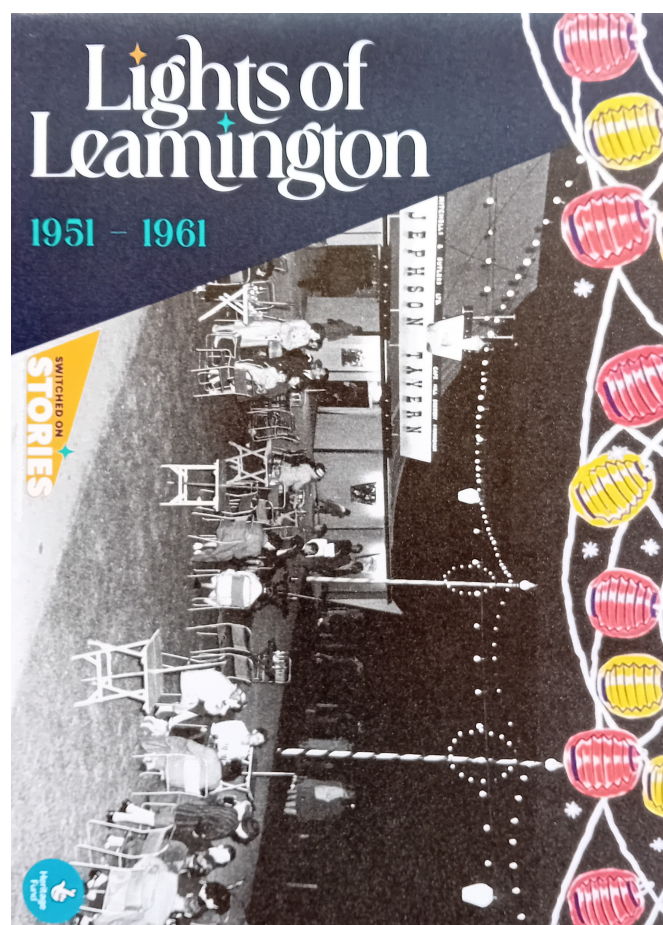
Food brings people together and *that* connection is as vital as nutrition is for your overall wellbeing. That's why we are happy to host events that are centred around community- a monthly Book Club led by the Social Thirties, a monthly Supper Club with a wellbeing guest speaker led by the certified Health and Wellbeing coach Harriet Saxton and Lexi's Spoonful and the fortnightly run club led by the local Grove Run Club.

We have also been running a Kids Eat Fresh Campaign this summer. Our mission is to get children to eat a rainbow of colours at our café at smaller portions to minimise the pressure on both the children and the parents alike. Alongside this, we have run a couple of Kids Eat Fresh workshops whereby we provide children aged 7-11 years old with a range of ingredients for them to taste and discover while giving them a basic knowledge on nutrition. The workshops include making a healthy snack and a salad using whole ingredients.

We have other exciting events coming up- collaborating with BANT registered Intuitive Eating Coach and Nutritionist Sarah Grant on our Autumn Meal Planning and Meal Prep Workshop in October and running our very own Fitness and Wellness Retreat in the beautiful Cotswold Countryside with the main goal of encouraging movement and inspiring people to go outdoors to work out for their mental wellbeing.

Desa means *village* in the Indonesian language. It's the coming together of family, friends, and community. My vision is to gather family and friends together around delicious, nourishing food and replenishing drinks, to create a space that feels just like an extension of home.

Cynthia Tamraz



There is one other interesting brochure available at The Pump Rooms Visitor Centre that looks back to The Lights of Leafington: a guide to the past, with a map of the lights, photographs and website details of Switched on Stories with people's memories and a wonderful 20 minute film. - Sidney Syson

A new kind of community group for Leamington

Many of us enjoy keeping up with what's happening locally through social media groups. But sometimes, the endless stream of posts, adverts and trade requests can feel overwhelming — like trying to drink from a firehose!

The Leamington Society felt there was room for something a little calmer and more useful: a “low-noise” community space where the focus is on what really matters to residents.

Our new Facebook group is designed to:

- Share content that's genuinely relevant to local people, with no business advertising.
- Give charities, voluntary organisations and community groups a place to promote events, ask for help and connect with others.
- Encourage reliable information, so that members can find verified answers to questions and avoid the spread of misinformation.
- Maintain a friendly, respectful and constructive tone.
- Allow for potentially sensitive matters to be discussed via anonymous posts.

To keep things welcoming and helpful, the group is private and moderated, with clear rules based on principles from academic research on misinformation prevention that are proven to work well elsewhere.

We resisted calling it the “Royal Leamington Spa Low-Noise, Ad-Free,

Community, Non-Profits, Charities, Anti-misinformation and Be Nice” group... and instead, you'll find it under the rather snappier name:

[Leamington Spa Rumour Control](https://www.facebook.com/groups/learmingtonsparumourcontrol/)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/learmingtonsparumourcontrol/>

We'd love you to join, share your questions, ideas, offers of help — and of course, your friendly rumours!

Bruno Eurich

The Handkerchief Tree, *Davidia involucrata*

I have been asked more than once if there is a Handkerchief Tree in Jephson Gardens. There is, but it is not on the tree map. You will find it behind the toilet



block by the ramped footpath leading down to the lower lawn. Alas it is not yet old enough to display the white handkerchiefs, two large, white bracts, the lower almost twice the size of the upper, surrounding a purplish-red flower head.

There is also one in Mill Gardens. As you come in from Mill Bridge entrance keep walking straight on past the boat house and as you come up to the field it is on the left-hand side near the lake.

Sidney Syson



Snow in Bath Street. Painting by Kevin Parrish
 Kevin Parrish is a local artist regularly exhibiting in various galleries. He is also a member of Friends of Leamington Station. Kevin has kindly given his permission to use some of his artwork in our new leaflet available in key locations around the town.

The **Leamington Society** is a registered charity. It is a member of the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association and the National Organisation of Residents' Associations. We are working with others to enhance the built and green environment of our town whilst supporting new developments to improve the quality of life locally.

Charity No. 516078. Postal address: 11 Dormer Place, Leamington Spa CV32 5AA

Officers and Committee

Chairman: *Ignaty Dyakov-Richmond*

Hon. Secretary and
 Membership Secretary:
Margaret Begg

Treasurer: *Brian Wall*

Committee Members:
Bruno Eurich, Barry Franklin, Gary Jones, Sidney Syson

We would like to welcome new members: Adam and Emily Cox,
 Dumitru-Cosmin Florica, Nicholas Martigny Roberts, Andrew L Paine & partner
 To join the Society visit www.leamingtonsociety.org/join-us

Unless otherwise indicated, views expressed in the Society's newsletters are the contributors' own and not necessarily the view of the Society.