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COMMUNITY NEWS AND LOCAL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

May 2013



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It's amazing the affect a few warm days can have on one's spirits. I think we can safely say the snow has had its day(s) and spring has truly sprung, if only a little later than usual. Hence, our cover features our favourite frolicking wooly creatures.

The bluebells are a bit behind schedule too. On p.10 we reveal the best places to find them in the area.

Cath Bromwich waxes lyrical on p.8 about sorrel for all our foodies and foragers, including a tasty recipe for sorrel and tomato soup. Let us know how you like it. We've been told the St.George's tart we published last month was a hit; in fact it won a prize at a local community gathering!

Dare I mention DIY? Traditionally Easter signals the big push on decorating projects...We have put a green spin on it this year, p.26 Have a great May!



Liz Barker, editor @LocalGlobalGirl

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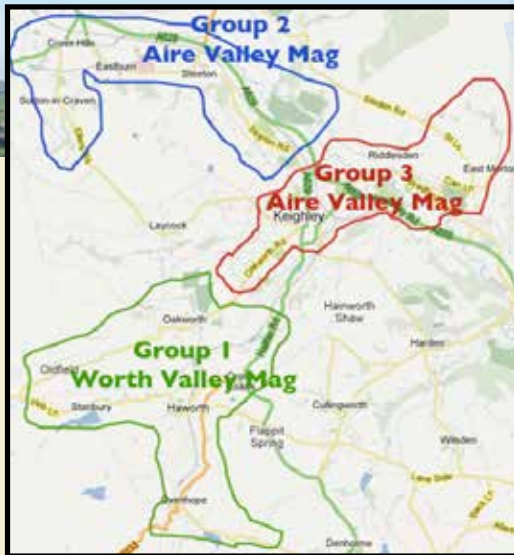
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Cherry Blossom
(by Jo Longbottom)

Have you seen the cherry blossom
Blustering off the branches?
Fluttering and flurrying,
Confetti bridesmaid dances.

Have you seen it twirling
Up towards the cloudy skies?
Swirling like blown snowflakes
Round all the passers by?

Can you count them,
Spiralling?
Scattering and scutter,
Blocking all the drains
As they drift into the gutter?

Soon they will be wilting
Drab and dry and drown'd
Squashed and squelched and slippery
Slimy on the ground.

But its a spring time snowfall,
Pandemonium of petals.
A May melee of madness
Swooped, swept high, then settled.

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So what is all the excitement about anyway?

We're told one of the world's biggest sporting events will be wheeling its way through our neighbourhoods next year; we should be scouting for best vantage points and preparing to rent out our spare rooms.

The spectacle, of course, is the Tour de France. The Grand Départ is the bit that Yorkshire will host, specifically the opening two stages of the race that take place over two days in July 2014.

Thanks to a successful bid by Welcome to Yorkshire, the county's tourism champions, the beauty and distinctiveness of Yorkshire will be showcased on a global stage.

Whether you are interested in cycling or not, you will be hearing **A LOT** about it over the next 430 Days (from the time this edition of the Aire Valley Mag is published) and counting.

Why resist the wave of enthusiasm? Go with the flow and join us on a journey of discovery. We'll explore the wonderful and bizarre world of cycling over the months ahead, Keighley and Craven's place in its history, and the characters that populate our local Yorkshire cycling fraternity.

On your bike!

If the recent media attention around the Tour has already whet your appetite, why not enter a local sportive? With a little preparation and training you can get back in the saddle.

A sportive is an event open to any cyclist, you don't have to be a member of a cycling club to enter these events. Sportives range in distance from 60 to 130 mile, organisers usually have shorter route options available on the same day. Sportives are not a race, they are an opportunity for many varied bike riders to ride the same route, often over challenging terrain, whilst following route marker arrows. Most events include feed stops and rider back up facilities, they are timed using timing chip devices too. This enables riders to return to ride the same event each year and track their progression.

Yorkshire is a great backdrop for sportives. The varied and sometimes tough terrain provides a real challenge with an opportunity to develop road riding skills, increase fitness and have fun.

Some of the events below use some of the same roads as the Grand Départ 2014.

Sportive Events in Yorkshire

May

- 4 - Pocklington Pedal
- 19 - Etape Du Dales
- 19 - Cyclothon 2013
- 25 - Richmond Meet 5 Dales Sportive

June

- 1 - Dentdale Beauty and the Beast
- 16 - Round the Beat Cycle Sportive
- 16 - Three Peaks Classic
- 16 - Ryedale Rumble
- 23 - The Moor Tour

July

- 7 - White Rose Classic
- 28 - Bronte Sportive

(source: letour.yorkshire.com)

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Do you have a business? Do you employ people or hire casual workers?

If your answer is 'yes' or 'sometimes' you will have heard about HMRC RTI or Real Time Information relating to paying people who work for you; indeed, you will be amongst the first to implement this new initiative.

If you employ nine or fewer people you can use one of the free payroll software packages or HMRC's free Basic PAYE Tool. Go to www.hmrc.gov.uk/rTI for more information.

You can also use a payroll service provider, such as an accountant or a payroll bureau, or bookkeeper who will do it for you.

If RTI affects your business, tell us how are you finding it. Have you come to grips with it yet? Do you need help? contact: mail@workvalleymag.co.uk We'd like to know how it is working in your business.

COUNTRY COOKING & FORAGING FOR FOOD

For the promotion of Health & Wellbeing by Cath Bromwich



May means sorrel to me. From now on, wherever I walk I will be on the look out for my favourite free kitchen flavour. The earlier you pick sorrel the more tender it is, but you can cut it back for a fresh growth like nettles. It has a very distinctive green oval leaf with two pointy ends at the bottom where the leaf meets the stem. It grows in clumps on the



ground and at this time of year the leaves can be really small, a couple of centimetres long or more.

As the summer progresses they get bigger, darker and tougher.

The French eat sorrel a lot and it has a superb, sharp, lemony flavour that enhances every dish you would like lemon with and many other surprising dishes too. The tomato and sorrel soup recipe here is a very good example of this and the flavour really alters a simple, common meal.

You are best using just a handful of sorrel to add flavour and this is good because, as with other foraging, you usually don't get much more. I love to put a handful of sorrel leaves under the skin of the breast of a chicken I am roasting at this time of year and then serve that with summery sides like new potatoes, salad and homemade mayonnaise.

It is also really good made into a herb butter and then served with trout or on potatoes. You can also scramble it with eggs. Alternatively just wash it well and chuck it in with your salad.

Sorrel does have a chemical in that is not great for people with kidney problems so don't eat at all if that is the case. Do take care of where you pick it. I usually take it from right up on the moor to make it very unlikely that a dog has been near it. It is an open country plant and I have never found it in woods so get out on the land among sheep.

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Sorrel and tomato soup

From *Herbs A complete guide to their cultivation and use* by Ann Bonar

200g fresh finely chopped sorrel leaves (I would just use as much as you can if you don't find this much it works well however much you put in)

100g peeled and chopped tomatoes (plunge whole tomatoes in boiling water for a short while then pierce with a knife and the skins will begin to roll off)

900ml Chicken stock, for the best taste make your own

25g butter

Salt, Pepper and Sugar to taste.

Sauté sorrel in butter briefly until wilted. Add the tomatoes and cook for about 5 minutes until they are soft but not completely disintegrated. Heat the stock, add to the sorrel and tomatoes with salt, pepper and a little sugar to taste. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 5 minutes before serving. Optional: use hand blender for a less chunky soup.



Tip: This is the time of year to add edible leaves to a salad: dandelion, sorrel, hawthorn, daisy leaves, fat hen, and many more. To quote Kipling:

'Anything green that grew out of the mould, was an excellent herb to our fathers of old'.

I do hope you try the soup and check on the internet for the huge variety of herb butter recipes which are well worthwhile making.

Cath Bromwich, a Silsden resident, a cookery teacher and forager with a background in health promotion. Her livelihood includes foraging, general and health-related cookery for different conditions such as diabetes and coeliac disease. For more information, or to pass on your stories and recipes, contact Cath at: cath_bromwich@hotmail.com

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Bluebell facts..

Some estimates suggest the UK has up to half of the world's total bluebell population
71% of native bluebells are found in broadleaved woodland or scrub.

Tennyson speaks of bluebell juice being used to cure snake-bite. The romantic poets of the 19th century, such as Keats and Tennyson, believed that the bluebell symbolised solitude and regret source: woodlandtrust.org.uk

Best local places to walk amongst the Bluebells

St. Ives Estate, A Bradford Met Council wood in Bingley. A wonderful Country Park with woodlands, open moor, a wildflower meadow, and paths throughout. Adventure Playground for the children. Coppice Pond offers both fishing opportunities and a chance to feed the ducks. Lots to explore for all ages.
Hardcastle Crags Pecket Well Clough, National Trust wood. Hebden Bridge. A unique trail through a secluded wooded valley with many miles of footpath, rich in plant, bird and animal life, with hints of the area's industrial past. Huge beech trees were originally planted in the 1870s. You may see numerous species of fungi, growing on the ground, on trees or deadwood.

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Larger dogs age more quickly than smaller breeds, so a 7 year old Jack Russell is like a person in their late 30s, but a Great Dane would be ready to retire and draw their pension.



Like us, dental disease is common in dogs and cats as they grow up, but unlike people, pets don't clean their teeth every day; despite the fact that they eat a far more processed diet than nature intended.

Poor dental care leads to smelly breath, caused by plaque, tartar and gingivitis. This is also a worrying source of infection which can spread through the blood stream affecting kidneys and heart valves particularly.

Your pet could benefit from a range of products designed to help prevent dental disease like: pet toothpaste, mouthwash, chews, dental dog biscuits and special food; all to help improve and maintain your pet's oral hygiene.

Interested in finding out more?

You are welcome to join us at a free event on Tuesday 11th June we'll be discussing preventative health care including dental hygiene to help keep your cat and dog fit, healthy and happy.

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	5	2						1
3			9					
			8		9	3		7
	7			1			4	
5		6	3		7			
				2				9
	2					5	3	
		9		3	4	1		

	5	6			4			1
4			7		5	3	2	
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SILSDEN TOWN BAND

The origins of Silsden Brass Band go back to the 1840's when it is thought that the band changed from a Pipe and Reed Band into a Brass Band.

At the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, nine members of the band joined the Royal Lancashire Militia and were based on Corfu during the conflict. On their return home from the war, to civilian life, the Silsden Brass Bandsmen were allowed to wear the distinctive white military uniforms of the Royal Lancashire Militia, a privilege awarded to them for their services in the Militia Band.

The early years of the band was probably one of the most successful periods of the band's history, when it entered the British Brass Band Open Championships at Belle Vue, Manchester in 1863, when Silsden came third, after Black Dyke Band and Bacup Band.

One of the most notable Silsden bandsmen at that time was Edward Newton, who became very well known in the brass band world as a prolific composer and arranger of brass band music. He composed and arranged 400 pieces including 137 quick marches, many hymns and anthems.

The band continued to function until the Second World War broke out in 1939 but lack of support led to its demise.

After a fifty year gap, the Silsden Town Band was resurrected in 1990, and has gradually grown in strength since then. The friendly band has thirty members of mixed musical ability, ranging from the ages of 11 to 80, under the Musical Directorship of Andrew Dunn, and has a busy engagements diary for the coming year, having played at Bradford Cathedral and in the Hardraw Scar Contest in 2012, and also concerts, charity events, galas and weddings.

The band practises on Tuesday evenings from 7p.m. until 9p.m. in the Community Centre, Gloucester Avenue, Silsden and is always pleased to see new members (or anyone who just wishes to have "a blow"). We currently have vacancies for two front row cornet players and if you are interested, please contact the secretary, Claire on 07884363148 or Andrew on 01535 678711, 07766668920.

<http://silsdentownband.silsden.net/stbnews/>

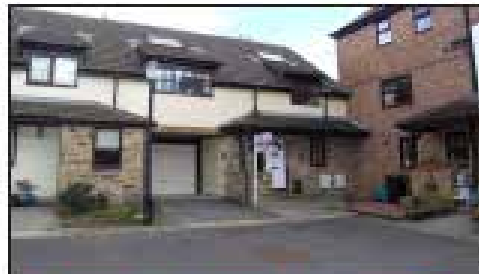
Edgar Clarkson, May, 2013



Grange Hall Cottages, Kildwick

This superbly presented home with many characterful features comprises in the ground floor sitting room, dining room, kitchen, breakfast room and living room. To the first floor there are two bedrooms and a bathroom. Outside there are stone steps leading up to an extensive well laid front garden, which to the rear there is a fenced area ideal for outdoor relaxation, further steps leading to a terraced garden having an attractive view over the town. EPO rating D.

£399,950



Wharfe Court, Silsden

This delightfully presented and well maintained situated three bedroomed property has been upgraded to a very high standard. The property comprises in the ground floor entrance hall, kitchen, living room and large dining room. To the first floor is a landing, lounge with dining area, bedroom and bathroom. To the second floor there is a further bedroom with en-suite shower room. Outside there is an integral garage, paved patio area, with small lawn to the rear with brick wall path area to the side of the property. Viewing essential to appreciate this delightful property. EPO rating D.

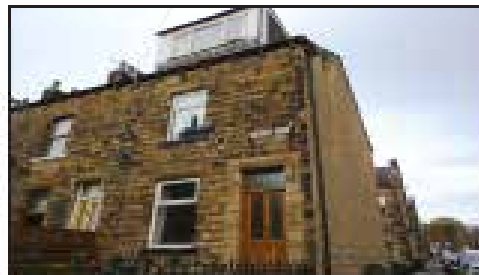
£214,950



Garforth Avenue, Steeton

A well maintained three bedroomed property offering good proportions being sited in the popular village. The accommodation fully comprises in the ground floor entrance hall, sitting room with dining area, contemporary kitchen, with three bedrooms and bathroom to the first floor. Outside there is a grassed area to the front and a paved garden to the side. To the rear there is a patio with pergola and greenhouse. The property also benefits from a detached garage and a driveway providing off road parking. EPO rating D.

£172,500



Marton Grove, Steeton

A well fitted three bedroomed property situated in a convenient location close to local amenities. The property fully comprises in the ground floor, sitting room and dining kitchen with dining area. To the first floor there are two bedrooms and bathroom. To the second floor, an en-suite bedroom and large storage area. Outside there is a small enclosed paved garden to the front and rear and to the rear. Constructed for local market. Ideal for first time buyers. EPO rating C.

£100,000

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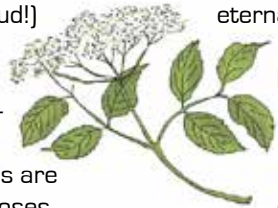
The Silsden Team

WINED & DINED with Claire Smith from No.10 The Coffee House



It seems that at long last spring has arrived, and the collective cheer is almost audible, I have just returned from the stables where

Jimmy, the new love of my life, is rapidly losing his winter coat in preparation for summertime, when he will sport with pride, his glossy and gleaming chestnut garments (although he loves nothing better than a good roll in the mud!) He is also desperate to get at the tufts of verdant spring grass beginning to sprout jewel-like along the emerald edges of the yard. The leaves on the trees are finally beginning to unfurl, primroses, celandines and wood anemone's can be seen dotted amongst the hedgerows, and gardens are slowly coming back to life. May is usually the month which heralds the return of asparagus, new potatoes, nectarines, gooseberries, watercress and the elderflower with all it's attributes and uses, but with weather conditions pushing growth back by approximately a month, country lanes are as yet bereft of elderflower, and though some stores have chosen to offer their customers the opportunity to purchase Jersey Royals, they are likely to have been grown indoors, as floods and frosts in January, the month in which farmers would normally plant new potato crops, have delayed the planting and subsequent harvesting of the new potato. Experts estimate that the cost of our fruit and veg has rocketed by around thirty- four percent in the past five



years, grain prices are also soaring which has had a knock on effect to the cost of meat as a large proportion of these crops are grown for animal feed.

The days however are lengthening, bringing lighter nights, and as I sit writing this the birds outside are still singing – at eight thirty in the evening, a positive sign that better things wait just around the corner. Spring may have taken a little longer to arrive but we have much to look forward to, each season, though sometimes unpredictable, remains

eternally rich with promise, often, when summer gallops in on the back of springtime and everything explodes at once, nature breaks into a carnival of colour, country lanes dressed in clouds of the creamy white flowers of hawthorn, elderflower, and cow parsley, their perfume carried on gentle summer breezes; flashes of pink campion and cornflower blue; wild strawberry flowers, diminutive and star like and the tiny scarlet fruits that follow. Green grocers shops, their interiors lined with wooden crates cradling cultivated British strawberries, delicately blushing peaches, gleaming red cherries and sweet and tender little garden peas. The earth is teaming with life just waiting to burst forth. In our house we are currently preparing the garden for balmy summer evenings and alfresco suppers; Pimms, champagne with a dash of violet syrup - here's looking forward to a lovely summer.



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A H R A K A D A B A D E S I G N

YOUR DIGITAL AFTERLIFE by Michelle Thompson of Cloud FreeIT

Once upon a time people took their prize-possessions to their grave, but building yourself a pyramid or burial mound in which to store all your goods and chattels ready for the afterlife is probably 'a bit ostentatious' these days, and anyway have you tried getting planning permission around here lately?

There's no pocket in a shroud, or indeed very much room in your standard coffin, so most people leave their precious collections of books, DVD & music collections, photo albums and paper documents, to family and friends to keep or dispose of as they see fit; an arduous task for them.

My kids raid my vinyl, CD and cassette collection, from time to time when they're on the hunt for something a bit 'retro' that isn't available on the streaming services that they favour for their music consumption. In the last few years I switched to buying music from download sites, such as iTunes. It's all on my laptop and gets backed up to an external hard drive. A lot of my photo collection is in boxes and cupboards, but everything from the last 10 years is on my laptop. What a mish-mash!

'Hanging onto stuff' clutters up my home and my life, and weighs me down, apparently. Going totally digital would sort that out. I made a start once or twice, honest, but what a long job!

Storing all photos, music and other data 'in the cloud' (and by that I mean on a server in a datacentre somewhere, not in a massive pile of 'UStore' boxes guarded by angels) is becoming the norm. The cloud has to be THE safest place to store your 'digital life' as long as you're careful about security (strong passwords, changed

frequently, not shared with anyone). There's no need to worry about hard drives dying suddenly, or losing the lot in a house fire or burglary, and you can access it from anywhere if you need to.

Our collections and mementoes say a lot about us and could be important to our loved ones, but in digital form they could be a lot harder to pass on safely when we shuffle off this mortal coil.

Most of us store email (and attachments) in the cloud without thinking about it. You may not realise just how much good, useful and very precious data you have got stored all over the place. What would you like to happen to all that data when you no longer have a use for it? Would you want or need your family to share access to it? Probably.

Worry not! Cunning plans are afoot! New concept alert! 'Your Digital Afterlife'!

Google intends to give users of their services the option to have their data deleted after 3, 6, 9 or 12 months of inactivity, or have their data sent on to nominated and authorised contacts in the event of their passing. Facebook now gives you the option to 'memorialise' an account after the user's death, so remember when I mentioned 'Digital Footprints' last month, eh? Keep yours clean and tidy!

This is all sounding rather like the hand-over of control of other assets (e.g. a bank account), so you might want to think about stating your preferences in your will.

You can be sure most online storage providers won't be far behind Google and Facebook. I'll start uploading my millions of photos to the cloud, sooner rather than later. If I start now there'll be fewer piles of 'stuff' for the kids to sort out when I'm gone.



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Ready For Takeoff

This year, the Haworth 1940's weekend over the 18th and 19th of May is themed; as it coincides with the 70th anniversary of the iconic 1943 Dambusters raid. I think everyone who has seen the film still feels a tingle on hearing its stirring music. To celebrate the 70th anniversary, Committee member Andrew Kissack has arranged with artist John Francis and printer Howard Baker to produce 70 limited edition prints, portraying a Lancaster bomber over the dam. Each one of these has been signed by 91 year old George "Johnny" Johnson, the last surviving British crew member, who was bomb aimer of Lancaster T for Tommy on the Dambusters raid.

The limited edition signed prints are available now as a lasting memento at £100 each, with smaller unsigned prints at just £10.00. Profits from the 2013 event will be going to SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors & Airmen's Families Association) who do amazing work helping service personnel and their families.

The 1940's committee has broadened the appeal of the weekend with more venues and

added attractions. The Parsonage car park will be transformed into the Haworth Airbase, featuring a Dambusters Exhibition and live entertainment. On the airbase there will be an 18ft wingspan model of a Lancaster bomber and a full size replica Spitfire - have your picture taken, sitting in the cockpit! Talking of Spitfires, we are proud that weather permitting there will be a flypast by the WW2 memorial flight of a Spitfire and a Hurricane on both days.

Haworth Central Park will be a major entertainment area with a licensed Veterans Marquee, Jive dancing, live music and stalls. And of course, these will be superb parades and a static vehicle display in Main St. Once again, we are producing our "Picture Post" programme for just £2.00. This is going to press, packed with articles about wartime exploits and full information on the programme. Last year they all sold out, so we are printing an extra 1,000 copies and we hope to have them in time for the May Day Bank Holiday, on sale at the Tourist Information Centre, Firth's and the Apothecary on Main St., so get yours early and avoid disappointment.

A Helping Hand

Last year, our Marshals did a sterling job, but for 2013 we are going to need even more, so if you want to be part of this success story raising money to lend a helping hand to our service men & women please call John Taylor on 07768 383153.

Photos: 1 Winston Churchill reenactment
2. Mrs Carroll of the Haworth 1940's Committee presenting The Armed Services Minister, the Rt. Hon. Andrew Robathan MP. with the Dambusters print. 3. Jive Dancing in the streets.



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Sat 4th - Mon 6th May Skipton

Waterway Festival As in previous years there will be various sorts of entertainment through out each of the days to keep you entertained and a wide range of stalls to keep you busy. There will also be various activities for children and their families. There is also a raft race held on Sunday 5th May for anyone (18 and over) to enter at 2pm and also the illuminated boat cruise on Sunday evening where the boats will be arriving back into Skipton canal basin around 9pm.

Sat 4th - Mon 6th May Spring is blooming at **Keighley Worth Valley Railway**, and there's lots going on up and down the line. The fun and fabulous Railway Children an action packed weekend for young and old! Ride in coaches which appeared in the famous film and see the story re-enacted with performers in period costume. Enjoy a guided tour of the sites used in the film, and see displays and photos taken during filming and other exhibits.

Fri 10th May 7pm South Craven

Baptist Church, Sutton. 120th Anniversary of the founding of the Girls Brigade and also the 50th Anniversary of the Sutton Girls Brigade. It is also the end of an era at Sutton as the Captain Judith Bousfield and Sue Lyall will be retiring. This is a celebratory leaving party at the Church for Judith and Sue with a



live band - 'Undercover'. All old girls and friends are invited.. If you know of any ex Girls Brigaders who you think might like to attend please let them know.

Sat 11th May Ballroom Dance,

Skipton Town Hall. Ballroom Dance with Blackpool Tower Ballroom Star Organist John Bowdler. Licenced bar and free supper. 7.30pm-11pm. Tickets are £7.50 advanced or £8.00 on the door and include supper. Skipton Town Hall, High Street, Skipton

Sat 11th & Sun 12th May Bronte

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Sun 12th May Coach Ramble to Robin

Hoods Bay Meet 8.30 a.m. Old Bridge, Ilkley GR: SE 112 480 Choice of two walks. Cost of coach £18 per person. Meal stop at Fleece Hotel, Thirsk (£10 p.p.) on return journey £10 p.p non refundable deposit required to Henry Mason 01756 700248.

Sun 12th May at 10.30am at Sutton

Baptis Church Service of Celebration to commemorate the Girls Brigade 120th Anniversary - all old girls are invited. A lunch will be served afterwards so there



will be opportunity to meet old friends and find out how they've got on.

Sat 18th -Sun 19th Haworth 1940's

Weekend - including period vehicle parade, Churchill address, Bradford Marching Pipe Band, RAF Flypast, dancers & vintage fair. All profits from the event to go to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association (SSAFA. www.haworth1940sweekend.co.uk).

Sat 25 May - Vintage & Retro Fair 10am - 4pm at Penningtons Octagon Live.

Sandbeds. Keighley. Entry £2 under 16's free (with an adult) music from the 30's 40's and 50's. Free dance lessons from Jive 45.

Sat 25th May The Airedale Coin Collection at East Riddlesden Hall

10.30am - 4pm A fascinating collection of coins dating back to 871, featuring coins from every Monarch's reign (bar two) since Alfred the Great. Meet the man behind the collection and learn more about his wonderful assortment of coins. A house trail will also be on offer for our younger visitors to take part in. Free event/activity (normal admission charges apply) More Information: Shelley Hollingdrake, 01535 683806, shelley.hollingdrake@nationaltrust.org.uk

Sat 25th May - Sun 2nd June - 10am-4pm Bolton Abbey Wheres William

Free event, normal estate admission applies. Become a detective and take part in a free

mediaeval mystery trail. Its 1147AD and William Fitz Duncan, the 'Boy of Egremont', and his dog have gone hunting in the woods. Can you use your detective skills to follow their trail and get William home in time for tea? More info call 01756 718000

Sun 26th May Silsden Car Boot Sale

7am - 1 pm at Riverside Field, Silsden, Further details call 01535 654747

Sun 26th May - Craft & Gift Fair at Mercure Hotel (formally Bankfield Hotel) Bingley. FREE ENTRY

Mon 27th May 5 mile Walk in the Woods. Starting from **Silsden car park at 10am.** Further info cal 01274 487270 or email jen.miles@beat.org.uk.

Sat 8th June Skipton Gala The procession starts at 12 noon on Westmoreland Street, makes its way down Sackville Street, up Keighley Road and the High Street, over Mill Bridge and then onto Water Street. This is followed by events and a fun fair in Airedale Park. **Sun 9th June Silsden Car Boot Sale 7am - 1 pm** at Riverside Field, Silsden, Further details call 01535 654747

Tues 18th June 5pm - 7pm Keighley Campus Open Night. Everything we offer in Keighley, in one place, on one night! Come and find out about full time courses starting Sept 2013 including: Access, Business, Computing Technologies, Construction, Electrical, Engineering, ESOL, Foundation Learning, GCSEs, Hair & Beauty, Health & Caring Services, Sport & Public Services and Travel & Tourism.

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Shades of Green

Aire Valley Decorating Centre is a traditional store in Keighley, selling decorating products for trade and DIY. It's the only outlet in West Yorkshire for eco-friendly Earthborn paints.

Co-owner Jason Laycock offers some tips on healthy DIY.

Spring has arrived at last, bringing with it the DIY season.

Decorating makes your home feel fresh and new and can be fun. But if you don't take proper care it can harm your health as well as the environment.

Paints contain chemicals called VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) that cause those horrible fumes – and for some, they can have serious health effects. Not many people realise that breathing in paint fumes can do more damage to your lungs than smoking. For anyone with allergies, asthma or chest complaints – or if you're committed to a 'green' approach there's a simple solution. You can plump for an Eco-friendly paint like Earthborn, which contains no oils or VOCs. This is safer for people with health concerns as it allows the decorator, their family and their home to breathe more easily.

Look for an Eco-label flower to show your paint meets the EU's tough environmental standards. As Eco-paints don't give off greenhouse gas emissions they're licensed by DEFRA



(the UK government's farming and the countryside department). Johnstone's do an ecological range which meets EU Eco standards.

If you don't want to go the whole hog and buy specialist Eco-paints, there are still ways to protect your health and the environment while decorating.

1, Choose a suitable water-based paint – with today's technology, they perform as well as oil-based products but are cleaner and healthier:

- They have fewer VOCs.
 - If you splash paint on your skin, you can clean it off without harmful solvents.
 - You can clean brushes in soap and water, rather than costly white spirit which could harm the environment.
- 2, Open a window when painting indoors and let air circulate. This lessens the effects of fumes and helps paint to dry evenly. Air is more important than heat for forming a surface film.

3, Never pour paint down the drain. It could enter watercourses, causing environmental damage. It can be traced back, then you could be fined. Pour unused paint back into the tin and take it to a household waste site where they will dispose of it for you.

If you need advice on eco-friendly painting or any other decorating matters, don't hesitate to drop in at Aire Valley Decorating Centre or give us a call on 01535 608355.

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Haworth 1940's p22
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Silsden Band p15
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Absolute Locks p11

Logs/Fuel

Anchor Logs p9
Bronte Stoves p9

Maintenance/Repairs

Cobbydale p3
Mick Roofing p.27

Mobility

Fenetic p23

Painting & Decorating

AireValley Decorating p27
Andy Beatie p27
R.P. Decorating p27

Plumbing /Tiling/

Kitchens

Adrian Butterfield p13
Cobbydale p3
GB Plumbing p13

Sean Middleton p13

Photography

Cavendish Cameras p28

You in Frame p1 & p7

Physiotherapy

Sutton Physio p23

Property Related

Dale Eddison p16/17
Dacre Son & Hartley p3
Davies Lettings p19
Hayfield Robinson p19
Whitegates p2
Upwood Park p23

Retail

Bowman Antiques p28
Bronte Stoves p9
Cavendish Cameras p28
Coldspring Mill p29
Lavender Fields p7

Roofing

D Sawyer Roofing p21
Mick's Repairs p21

Slimming

Skipton Wellness p23

Solicitors

O'Neill p2
Walker Foster p32

Tuition/Training

Kip McGrath p5
Stephanie Spence p5
Tutor Doctors p5

Welding & Fabrication

NewFabs p11

Wills & Legal

Goodwills p7

Windows

Bob Beattie p21
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