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Free Subscription

Send an e mail for your free copy of HARPENDIA to

info@harpendia.com

From the Editor Autumn



I'm constantly amazed by the sheer diversity and talent of the local people and businesses I meet during my search for content in each issue.

This Autumn's edition features the work of a Harpenden book publisher celebrating their 25th anniversary. Having seen the demise of our local bookshop (Corbett's Books, aka The Bookstack) earlier this year it's good to know there's a powerful literary force still trading here.

On another positive note, we've seen the return of cinema to Harpenden in the form of the Harpenden Film Society. With three well patronised performances to date, the futures augers well.

With the predicted government budget cuts and increases in VAT due for implementation soon, business in Harpenden can only get tougher. That's why I'm pleased to welcome three new contributors to this edition. They bring marketing expertise that could be invaluable in fighting the expected downturn, ensuring that business continues to prosper in Harpenden.

Finally you may have noticed the new design for the front page of the magazine with an integrated logo and slogan for 'HARPENDIA'.

Not long to Christmas and all the seasonal activities, starting with the Christmas Carnival on Sunday 28th November and then a couple of days later, the Christmas edition of HARPENDIA.

Ron Taylor
Editor
info@harpendia.com

PS. The HARPENDIA web site is updated frequently with up to the minute news and reports. Plus new videos will be live on the YouTube HARPENDIA channel very soon.

Why not check them out?

www.harpendia.com

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Passionate about book publishing.

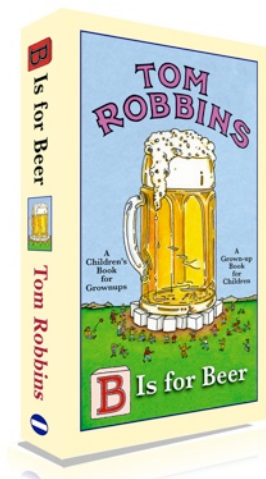
By Steven Mair

A Harpenden publishing house is celebrating its 25th birthday with an exciting line-up of autumn titles.

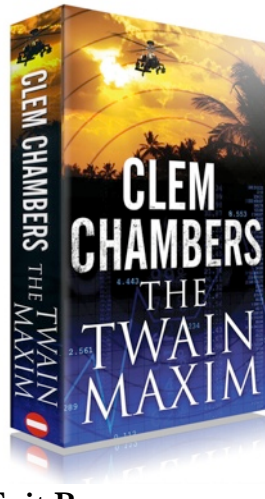


Ion Mills, (above) who has lived in Harpenden since 1962, set up **No Exit Press** after cutting his publishing teeth as a sales manager with Pan Books. His experiences as a salesman, both in the UK and abroad, gave him the necessary grounding to launch his own business.

Ion began publishing books from his Southdown home and quickly developed a sharp line in American crime fiction. Among his early successes were books by celebrated writers such as Lawrence Block, Robert Parker, Eddie Bunker and James Sallis.

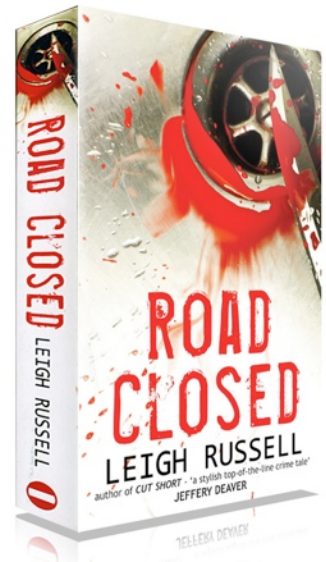


As **No Exit Press** grew, Ion broadened his range into different areas of fiction and non-fiction. He established a reputation as a publisher of books on sport, and on betting, poker and other forms of gambling. In this latter regard, Ion consolidated his reputation with a bookshop in London, opposite Great Ormond Street Hospital. The shop is called **High Stakes** and loyal customers travel for many miles to seek out specialist works on poker, racing and betting.



No Exit Press now occupies separate premises in Coleswood Road and Ion is helped by a team of colleagues.

His upcoming list of new books includes several sure-fire successes; *The Drop* by **Howard Linskey**, set in Newcastle is a contemporary Get Carter, *Big Machine* by **Victor Lavalle**, recipient of many awards in the US and compared to Gabriel Garcia Marquez mixed with Edgar Allen Poe, while long time No Exit author, Mark Timlin, author of the Sharman PI series has written 101 Best TV Crime Series, a particularly personal record of Bad Guys, Spies and Private Eyes who have appeared on British TV.



Ion enjoys a very strong rapport with his authors and many have become personal friends.

Among his recent successes have been Clem Chambers and local author, Leigh Russell. Both exemplify the modern trend as writers who support their books with energetic promotional assistance in bookshops and in the media.

Ion is currently preparing for the annual Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest, where he will look to sell translation and distribution rights in his latest books. As a veteran of the Fair he is well placed to achieve this.

Ion Mills has a grown-up family and is very committed to Harpenden. He looks ahead to another 25 years of happy publishing. A significant portion of his business nowadays is moving towards ebooks but, whatever the format, publishing fuels a passion, an addiction, which he cannot kick.

For more information go to www.noexit.co.uk;
All No Exit titles are available from High Stakes Bookshop, 21 Great Ormond Street, London, WC1N 3JB, 0207 430 1021; or www.londonbookshop.co.uk

Cinema returns to Harpenden

By Sean Gough

Cinema has made a welcome return to Harpenden thanks to the newly formed **Harpenden Film Society**, which kicked off its first full season in September with two screenings at the Public Halls in Southdown Road: political thriller *"The Ghost"* and French comedy *"Welcome to the Sticks"*.



"The idea is to have films in the centre of town providing a new entertainment option that people can get to easily", explains Society founder Sean Gough. "We are not looking to compete with the multiplexes – if you have tried our seats you'll know what I mean – so we are selecting high quality British and international films that don't get much of a look in at the local mainstream cinemas. What we lack in creature comforts, we make up for with a licensed bar, home made cakes and a great atmosphere."

The not-for-profit Society seems to have struck a chord in the town, with nearly 150 members signing up already and sell-out audiences of about 300 for each of the two screenings so far. "We thought we would do well to attract audiences of about 100, so the response so far has been very pleasing", says Gough.



Images: Top. A scene from *"Welcome to the Sticks."*
Above. A packed auditorium. Right. A couple of French students here to enjoy the film.

The Society has started with a programme of two films per month, screening on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings at 8pm (see <http://www.harpendenfilmsociety.co.uk/tickets.html> for details), with tickets at 4.50 for non-members and £3.50 for members. The Founder membership fee has been set at £30 for a year (£50 for dual membership), with the hope to reduce this substantially in future seasons. "The economics of small scale cinema are not great, so it's really important we raise enough money to buy our own professional equipment as quickly as possible, rather than renting it", explains Gough. "With the membership income we have raised so far, plus an amazing response from local sponsors and the possibility of grants from a number of sources, we hope to purchase the kit we need in our first year."



On Wednesday 20 October there is a pre-Halloween vampire fest, with *Let the Right One In* (15, sub-titled) – a Swedish production that ably blends genre chills with genuine feeling. And on Tuesday 2 November it is *The Last Station* (15), which looks at the last year of life of Leo Tolstoy, starring Helen Mirren and Christopher Plummer.

All screenings start at 8pm, with the bar open from approx. 7.15. Tickets are available on line (see link above) or in person from the Public Halls' box office (Mon-Fri, 9am to 1 pm), WH Smiths Harpenden High Street (Sat only, 8.30am to 5.30pm) & the Town Hall (Mon-Fri, 9am to 4pm). www.harpendenfilmsociety.co.uk



Artwork, it's where the smart money goes!

By Olivia O'Sullivan, Gallery Manager, The Lemongrove Gallery, Harpenden

Olivia O'Sullivan (below) explains why investing in Art can make a lot more sense than your average high street bank ISA.



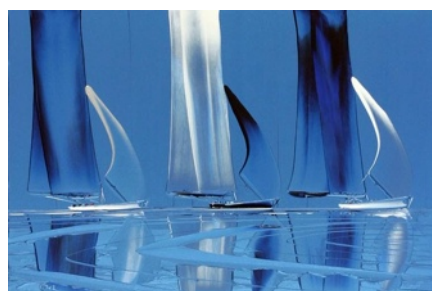
“Investing in the right Art and Artist is essential to the potential return on your investment and future values. People who buy Artwork tend to do so because they are passionate about Art, from the Artwork itself to knowing what inspired the Artist to create a particular piece. Others just love the Artist, celebrity Rolf Harris being a firm favourite.



However in recent years I have seen a change in the type of clients who visit my gallery and the reasons that some of those now buy into Art.

A client of the gallery enjoys Artwork so much that she decorates her rooms according to the Art she buys. However she also enjoys Art because she knows that by purchasing the

right pieces at the right time, the value over a relatively short period will likely increase from as little as three months to three years. She has seen the value of some of her collections increase by two, three or even as much as four times her original purchase price.



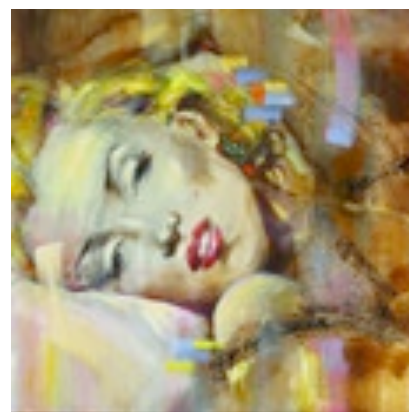
An example of this is a client who invested in a popular, well-known Scottish Artist. The Artist's original work costs into the tens of thousands, some of his pieces fetch hundreds of thousands, however the Artist's limited edition prints were slightly more affordable and therefore my client invested in three pieces at a cost of £495 each. Just over three years on, the client sold his collection for a total of £2,950 an incredible return of 50%.

On my recommendation, another client purchased a modern day contemporary female Artist's work, investing in three pieces, all original oil on canvas, at a total cost of £5,000. Three months on, those pieces were independently valued at £10,000. That's a staggering profit of £5,000 in just three months.

There are of course many other reasons for investing in Art, for example, you do not have to keep renewing your Art annually to ensure the best interest rate, and you are not limited to the amount you can invest tax free, as you are with other type of investments.

Aside the potential financial gains, investing in Art should be exciting, not just for the individual but also for how much it can brighten up a room, adding class and sophistication to any home.

That said, what better way to enjoy your hard earned money, first you get to spend it, then you get to enjoy your purchase on your wall knowing that the right Art will always appreciate in value.”



Images. Far left. Rolf Harris – *Leopard Watch* - 20 x 16 Limited Edition on Paper & Canvas £675 Centre. Duncan MacGregor – *Sailing in Blue* - 36 x 24” Original Oil on Board £1800. Above. Anna Razumovskaya – *Marilyn's Dream* 24 x 24” Limited Edition on Canvas £695.00

**The Lemongrove Gallery,
32 High Street,
Harpenden. AL5 2SX.
01582 462222
www.thelemongrovegallery.co.uk**

“Let me transform your home with an original abstract created with feeling”

By Ron Taylor. Editor

Harpenden born Haydn Dickenson is the first artist to join the increasingly popular Harpenden Loyalty Card Scheme. So any work purchased or commissioned by Harpenden residents with the card will be offered at a special discount.



Haydn works from his own studio in Harpenden for most of the year but in Summer he moves to his studio in the remote mountains of the Languedoc, Southern France

He creates predominantly abstract work, with an emphasis on calm, meditative mood and a spiritual, even cosmic quality – mainly using 'earth'-colours. These reflect the natural world. Sun, sky and light, inspired both by the quintessentially English hues of his native Hertfordshire and by the mountains, the Garrigue and the searing southern sun of his second home in France. *Haydn with his painting below 'Hold it'*



“The energetic mass in the centre of the painting holds a connection of tension between it and the more grounded, simple lines at the base. The title refers to 'holding' that energy, a relationship of opposites as embodied by the idea of Yin and Yang in traditional Chinese Culture”

“An abstract work can convey a lot more emotion than regular landscapes and still lifes, setting the mood for whichever location it's placed.”

Working mainly in oils and mixed media on canvas or wood, he seeks to convey texture, both visual and tactile. A recurrent theme in the marks made on his canvases is one of a 'portal', where the viewer is drawn into the deeper regions of the subconscious, or a dreamlike state.

“I can help you choose the subject matter to suit your room with a short consultation”

Owning a work by Haydn Dickenson puts you in good company as his work has been sold to private collections across the UK, also USA, France, Germany, China, Thailand and the Middle East

“My art also works well in contemporary office locations”



Haydn exhibits widely in the Herts/Beds/Bucks area, most recently in Stevenage, Bedford, St Albans and Aylesbury. An Exhibition at ARTSHED ARTS in Ware is booked for October 26th through to Christmas. www.artshedarts.co.uk This will be followed by a February exhibition in Norwich at Maddermarket Theatre and then at the Priory of St Michel de Grandmont www.prieure-grandmont.fr/ near Lodeve in Southern France at Easter 2011. (*See image above*)

Contact Haydn via the contact form on www.haydndickenson.com or 01582 467911 regarding purchase and commissions.

Harpenden Christmas Carnival

Coming soon. Sunday 28th November 2010

Preparations are well under way for this year's Harpenden Christmas Carnival which will be on Sunday 28th November 2010 from 12 noon to 6pm. The Carnival is once again being generously sponsored by **The Review Newspaper** with a format very similar to last year's very successful event when there were about 10,000 visitors to the town throughout the afternoon.

Here are some of the events planned:



Entertainment on the stage in Church Green by local community groups and schools compered by Heart DJs and special guest appearances by Natalie and Stuart from Heart Breakfast from 4pm.

Farmers market, charity and Young Enterprise stalls open from 12 noon to 6pm

Procession through the High Street at 3pm

Come and have your photo taken with Santa in a spectacular Santa's grotto, not seen in Harpenden before, in the garden of Thompson's Close which will be open from 12.30 pm to 5.30pm.



Lights switch-on at 5pm

Fun fair around the town from 12 noon to 6pm



Free parking in the station car park (Bowers Way East car park will not be open to allow the procession to assemble)

The Carnival is organised by a committee, some of whom are Harpenden Town Councillors and other willing volunteers but they all have a shared wish to provide a fun, safe and memorable family event to launch Christmas in Harpenden. **They are always looking for more people to join the committee, so if you are interested, please contact Ginny.**



All photographs taken at the 2009 Carnival

For further details, contact Ginny Cooper, Harpenden Christmas Carnival Secretary by email:
doublingintonic@ntlworld.com.

Stock up on award winning Griffith Park sparkling wine for Christmas!

By Sarah Hill

GRIFFITH PARK adds the perfect sparkle to any celebration, so Hertfordshire residents don't forget to fill your wine rack with Griffith Park Sparkling Rose and Sparkling Brut this Christmas. It's a quality bubbly at an affordable price.



Islay Kennedy (above) the lady behind the brand, lives in Harpenden and has 25 years experience within the wine industry. A graduate in oenology from the world famous Roseworthy College in Australia, she selects and blends the wines commuting regularly between Australia and Harpenden. Despite being a small family business, Isay is passionate about ensuring she sources the best grapes to produce top quality award winning wines at the best possible prices.

This acute attention to detail has reaped medals galore for the Griffith Park Sparkling Wine range, including a Which? 'Best Buy' and 'Exceptional Value' award for Sparkling Brut and an Effervescent du Monde Gold Medal for two consecutive years for Sparkling Rose, to name just a few. If this isn't convincing confirmation of the quality of this Australian bubbly, the UK media are also huge supporters of Griffith Park. Top wine writers, national newspapers and popular lifestyle magazines are forever singing the praises of the affordable yet quality rival to expensive Champagne:

"It smells like pink Champagne"
Jilly Goolden, Saturday Cooks ITV

"Quaffable, frothy fizz"
Tim Atkin, The Observer

"On a budget Griffith Park Sparkling Rose is for you!" **Anthony Rose, The Independent**

"A great aperitif or party wine"
Delia Smith

"A fizz that's the biz" –
Susy Atkins, Sunday Telegraph

"The perfect celebratory alternative to Champagne" **Wedding Magazine**

"Best festive bubbly"
Manchester Evening News

"It's a corker"
The Sun



A world to escape to

At just £6.99 from Morrisons, Griffith Park Sparkling Wine is a fabulous festive fizz that won't break the bank!

Islay will be holding a wine tasting and talking about her wines for Harpenden this winter – watch out for further announcements.

www.griffithpark.co.uk

Paradise found...Hotel Lantana, Sardinia.

By Sue Taylor

A holiday conjures up many dreams with lots of boxes to tick, and Hotel Lantana (below left & right) ticked all ours. If you wish for a hotel set in a beautiful setting (3 acres of lush grounds) a 400 sq metre swimming pool (1.4m shallow and 1.9m deep end). comfortable well equipped and quiet rooms, excellent choice of Sardinian cuisine, impeccable service - then this is the hotel for you.



Just 30 minutes by taxi from Cagliari airport - you arrive through beautiful wrought iron gates to the entrance, surrounded by lush red and yellow bushes of flowering lantana (hence the name of the hotel). After a friendly welcome we were escorted to our ground floor room - set in the garden area - most of the large rooms face the gardens - so waking in the morning is sheer joy - looking at the hibiscus and oleander shrubs surrounding our private patio area. We decided to explore the vast gardens before breakfast, it was magical - the gentle rustling of the banana and palm trees led us onwards past prickly pear trees, pomegranate trees, lemon and lime trees, olive trees and an amazing large collection of cacti in all forms and shapes. A sweet 9 hole putting course proved great fun, and if you travel with young children they will really enjoy the play area (I know I did - as I tried everything).

If you are in need of feeling more relaxed - you can book a massage in the gazebo within the garden surroundings. The large swimming pool was immaculately clean and the life guard always around. The Lantana prides itself on being eco friendly and therefore only offers half board, therefore lunch can be eaten with choices from the bar snacks. There are many Sardinian specialities and because of the excellent choices we decided to eat every lunch (except for the full day we had in the capital, Cagliari - but more or that later).



Sardinia prides itself on their breads - and one of their infamous is pane carasau (a very thin wafer bread) which is delicious. The candlelit evening meals where waiter served (four courses) - again with delicious bread - the garden beautifully lit, enhancing the various trees and shrubs, and cacti.

The beach at Nora (below) is only one mile from the hotel - but in the heat of Sardinia the shuttle bus is an essential choice - and you are collected at a time you request. There are two bars where drinks and snacks can be purchased. The church of Sant'Eufisio overlooks the white sandy beach. This church dates back to eleventh century - a Roman soldier in the third century who converted to Christianity was credited with stemming an outbreak of the plague in 1656 - hence the name of the church. There is a yearly procession from Cagliari to Nora (3 days mostly on foot) to celebrate this festival and always takes place on May 1st. **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



...continued

Beside the sea on a promontory is the archaeological site of Nora.(below) It was founded by the Carthaginians 3,000 years ago, followed by Phoenician and Roman settlements until pirates came and burned the town.



It lay buried until a cemetery was unearthed near the Church of Sant'Eufisio, thus confirming that life at one time existed. From that time excavations have been carried out and are still to this day. We had a fascinating guided tour around Nora - the deep blue sea surrounds the area. Watching many archaeologists carefully digging or painstakingly "jigsawing" the mosaics of the various rooms they had uncovered was a privilege to see. The next morning we went to Pula town (half mile) again by shuttle bus to the museum which houses the original plans of Nora, as well as many artifacts and models of the lost city.

Close to Nora is a large lagoon you can visit - snorkeling, canoeing and a large aquarium with a fascinating area where wounded turtles are nursed back to health. On our visit there where two with missing fins and one who had been rescued with a large hook through its neck - you will be pleased to hear all are doing well - and when 100% will be released back into the sea.



Now back to our day in Cagliari - we could have taken public transport - which is very good - but decided an hour on the bus was too long, so opted for a local taxi both ways (barely half an hour) - and a lovely journey. Cagliari is a beautiful city and port - steeped in history and culture. We decided to have a one hour bus trip (open top) with headphones (all languages) it proved well worth it - detailing the geographical position of Sardinia's capital and referencing the important buildings and areas - including the hundreds of pink flamingoes. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch and delicious ice cream. The view from Torre San Pancrazio (36m high) was amazing and well worth the steep four floor climb - an almost 360 view. The Bastione (below) had a large exhibition - its cool interior providing a welcome relief from the fierce heat of the city. The cathedral is also a "must" on the list as are the botanical gardens - it is impossible to fit everything in - but we certainly did as much as we could.



After an exhilarating day in Cagliari the taxi dropped us back at the Lantana. A quick swim in their pool revitalised us in time for another superb meal.

If you decide to hire a car you will not be disappointed (said some of the guests) the surrounding areas and interesting places that can only be reached by car are worthy of reaching. **This is a truly beautiful part of Sardinia - clear blue sea, white quiet beaches, friendly people - what more could you ask for!**

The holiday was booked with the help of Just Sardinia and their incredibly helpful staff.

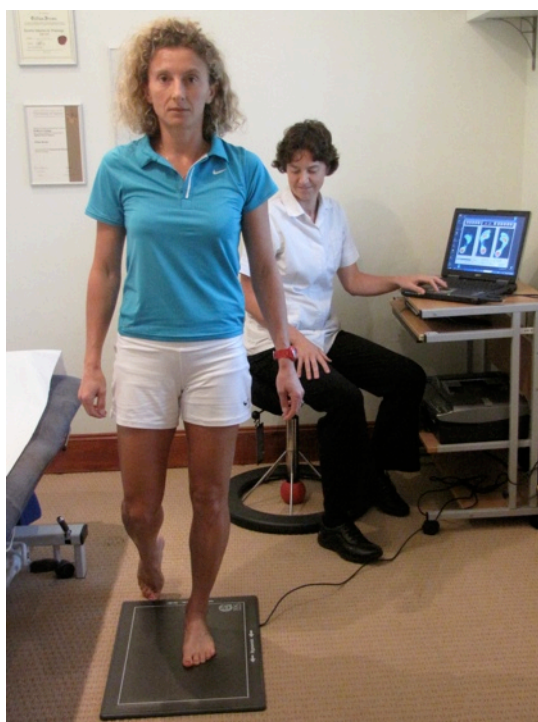
I can highly recommend them. Ron Taylor. Editor.
www.justsardinia.co.uk



Hi tech treatment for local athletes.

Local osteopath solves foot injury problems.

Gillian Brown, local Osteopath & foot care specialist uses her **state-of-the-art Gaitscan** equipment to improve foot function & prevent injuries with local athletes. Gillian's career started as a National level tennis player competing both in top UK competitions & internationally in the American collegiate tennis system. She later worked as a tennis coach. However, with a passion for the human body & injury prevention re-qualified as an Osteopath. Having experienced a debilitating foot injury herself & requiring orthotics (specialised insoles) to rectify the problem she took further training in Gait analyses & prescription orthotics. **Today, she uses her skills on local athletes & the general public to sort out all their foot & gait problems.**



A recent patient, Delphine, was a top club level tennis player & triathlete who was suffering from Achilles tendonitis & shin splints – common injuries of the lower leg of both runners & tennis players. Analysis of Delphine's gait using the **Gaitscan** system revealed that she had an abnormal foot function which was causing her to overuse her lower leg muscles, leading to injuries. The **Gaitscan** system recorded her timing sequences during gait as she walked across the pressure plate - this enabled us to have a really clear picture of Delphine's foot mechanics. From this information we were able to prescribe custom made orthotics to fit all of Delphine's shoes (from dress shoes to sports shoes) thus aiding her injury

recovery at all times. Gillian gets real satisfaction knowing that she can get to the root cause of her patient injuries & enable them to gain long term relief. She knows all too well how frustrating injuries can be so getting people back to being active is the most rewarding career she could have hoped for.



Gillian has successfully treated many types of injuries using orthotics including; foot pain, knee pain, hip pain & back pain. Poor foot function & alignment can lead to any pain in weight bearing joints. Prescription orthotics can help relieve your pain by realigning & stabilising bones in your feet, restoring your natural walking pattern. Orthotics can be beneficial to any age above 7-8 years.



For more information on injury assessments, orthotics and the discount offer, contact Gillian: (01582) 764361. Or 07969 138607

Email: info@gbosteopathy.com
www.gbosteopathy.co.uk

20% discount to all HARPENDIA readers.

Photos: Left. Scans the foot - walking across the pressure plate maps the foot pressure in your foot. **Above top** Determines the need for orthotic (prescription insoles) therapy - the information will be discussed & the full range of orthotics shown to you. **Above.** Maps foot pressure - computer displays 2D & 3D visual representations of your foot to detect abnormal loading of the foot

FREE PRIZE DRAW

Books galore from NO EXIT PUBLISHING



4 Bundles of books worth over £140 to win in the Autumn Free Prize draw.

PRIZE 1. 'STAY ANOTHER DAY' by Mark Timlin, 'ROAD CLOSED' by Leigh Russell, 'B Is for Beer' by Tom Robbins, 'The Pocket Essential ORSON WELLS' by Martin Fitzgerald.

PRIZE 2. 'ROAD CLOSED' by Leigh Russell, 'B Is for Beer' by Tom Robbins, 'FALLING ANGEL' by William Hjortsberg, 'PLAYS... and how to produce them' by David Carter.

PRIZE 3. 'ROAD CLOSED' by Leigh Russell, 'THE TWAIN MAXIM' by Clem Chambers, 'A SHORT HISTORY OF EUROPE' by Gordon Kerr, 'DRIVE' BY James Sallis.

PRIZE 4. 'THE TWAIN MAXIM' by Clem Chambers, 'B Is for Beer' by Tom Robbins, 'MEDIA STUDIES' by Dan Laughy.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply send an email with 'Prize Draw' in the subject line, and your name, full address and contact number to:

info@harpendingia.com

The closing date for entries is November 30th 2010.

Only 1 entry per person.

All entrants must be over 16 years of age and live within 10 miles of Harpenden town centre.

The draw will take place on December 3rd 2010.

Winners will be notified by December 6th 2010.

See www.harpendingia.com for full rules.

Preparing for Winter colours

By Renata Rybczyk-Savage. The Plantsitter

You may have already noticed that garden centres across the nation have filled their shelves with winter bulbs. Too early perhaps?

Not at all, because now's the time to decide which winter flowers and spring bulbs you want. All of which can be planted during October and even early November if the weather stays mild.



Traditionally, winter is seen as the dull season for the garden but it needn't be this way. Winter flowering plants can be both colourful and fragrant. The variety extends beyond the most popular bulbs as there are many shrubs that bloom at this time of year. This means that beds, borders and containers can be filled to satisfy and please.

Bulbs will give you a big choice of colours and sizes, from the sweet smelling hyacinths to dwarf varieties of iris now available. They will also flower at varying times so you can guarantee diversity and the great thing about bulbs is that you can leave most varieties where you planted them and see them bloom for many years.



Images: Top. Renata shows how to plant up a Winter hanging basket. Above. Beautiful cyclamen. Right. Stunning tulips.

Plants such as narcissi, dwarf iris, crocus, snow drops and hyacinths can be forced to flower early in the winter season.

Other bulbs that can be planted now to give you more colour are bluebells, cyclamen, muscari, anemones, and daffodils. Planting different varieties of tulips will give you an extended flowering season from early to late Spring, while alliums will flower in early Summer. The general rules are simple. Check the instructions on your bulb packets to see how deeply to plant them (each bulb is different) but first check to see if your bulbs are firm and healthy. When planting in groups or clusters, make sure that your bulbs are not touching. This also applies to pot grown bulbs such as hyacinths intended for indoors. Close planting is acceptable, just don't let the bulbs be in contact with each other.



Other plants that are great for a little added colour and fragrance at this time of year are shrubs such as witch hazel (*Hamamelis mollis*), sweet box (*Sarcococca humilis*) and winter sweet (*Chimonanthus praecox*), all of which will flower in the winter and produce a lovely scent. The spider flower (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*) starts to produce wonderful, tropical looking flowers from winter and most varieties are hardy enough to withstand our winters.

So there you have it. Start preparing now and you will be rewarded with splendid colours and scents in your garden throughout the Winter and into the Spring.

www.theplantsitter.co.uk

renata@theplantsitter.co.uk

Helping YOU to keep it local.

Doing business in Harpenden really does help.

By Ron Taylor. Editor

If you are a regular reader of HARPENDIA then you'll know how much coverage and support we give to local people and local business in Harpenden, via the magazine, the web site and now the video channel on YouTube

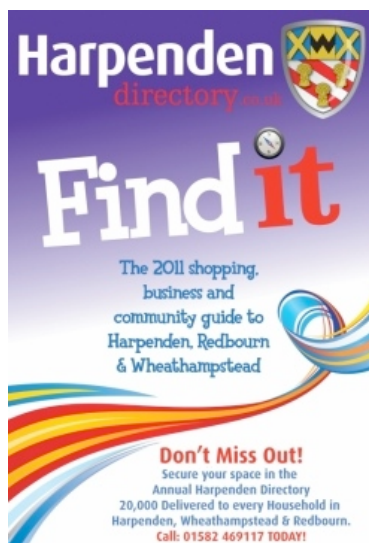


The local Council is working hard too with the introduction in May of the Harpenden Loyalty Card. A number of retailers have introduced the Card as part of their marketing effort, some more successfully than others. I did find one retailer who started featuring offers to holders of the Loyalty Card in August and September and has achieved significant success.

Fabio Grasso the manager at **All Floors** in Station road, Harpenden is a huge fan of the Loyalty Card. You can see his interview on YouTube to find out how his customers and his business benefit.



The Harpenden Directory have also improved their coverage of the Harpenden market by making the Directory available on line with a new site inc. social networking. Live at the end of October. The traditional printed edition for 2011 will be available from December onwards.



Another service provided by the Harpenden Directory is the **What's On** guide, published quarterly with listings and editorials of forthcoming events in the area.

www.harpendendirectory.co.uk



During the summer HARPENDIA expanded it's support for local commerce by featuring special Loyalty Card consumer offers from 10 retailers on it's web site. In this edition HARPENDIA is featuring 3 local businesses who are experts in specific aspects of marketing.

Slurpystudios is a creative web design and animation studio that will guide you through the importance of having a good web site and how they can help local business or individuals develop a site that will help to improve their business.

Read all about them on Page xx

Print-Force.com is a local print company who have invested heavily in digital technology and can now produce high quality, low quantity jobs at a surprisingly reasonable cost.

Read all about them on page xx

Will Cameron is an independent PR and communications professional based in Redbourn. He can show you how well created communications can make an important impact to the success of your business.

Read all about him on page xx

Why your business needs a great web site.

By Katie Steed, Creative Director, Slurpy Studios.

Being on the Internet is not really optional anymore; it has become a necessity in today's marketplace. People expect every legitimate business to have a website, and businesses without an online presence are missing out on a goldmine of potential customers.

HARPENDIA caught up with local web design and animation company **Slurpy Studios**, to discover their inside tips of how to achieve a really great website.

"Great websites are the result of four different elements working together in perfect harmony: Content, Design, Structure and SEO.



Content is king, no doubt about that. In order for you to have a popular website, you've got to offer something to the user: information, interactivity, fun or freebies. Your content must be original, and regularly updated if you want to create a site that people return to time and again. Don't forget that people dislike reading from a screen – keep your copy concise and relevant.

Design is vitally important, because it is the first impression that a visitor has of your business. Within seconds, they will have decided whether to stay or to continue browsing. Make your design distinctive and memorable, yet quick to absorb and suitable for the subject. Consider colour, layout, target audience, navigation, balance, calls to action and readability before you sign off a design.

Structure refers to the foundations of the site, how it's built. Does the site load quickly? Does the code conform to current web standards? Is it accessible to visitors with older computers? How about people with visual disabilities? Is the navigation intuitive? Ticking all of these boxes not

only improves the experience that you're giving to your visitors, it also changes the opinion that Google has of your website.



SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization. Search engines direct over 85% of online traffic, and less than 10% of people look beyond the first 3 results. In short, if your website is not search engine friendly, there's not that much point in having one. Pick 10 keywords that people would use when searching for you, and mention them as often as possible throughout your site, in your domain name, page titles, copy, links, image names, alt tags and code.

Too many websites either look great but don't work, or work well enough but look cluttered, messy and generic. Make sure that your web designer takes time to get to know your business and your goals, and works with you to construct the site that will achieve your vision. Whatever the size of your business, ambition and understanding of the web, following these tips will help you get the most out of being online."



Images: Above left. Aaron Wood MD and Katie Steed CD of Slurpy Studios. Above top and above. Web sites created by Slurpy Studios.

For more information:
www.slurpystudios.com

Hertfordshire's own William Caxton

Digital printing can make the difference for local business

By William Cameron

“If it can be printed we can do it,” that’s the philosophy of Mark McIvor founder and director of Printforce.com.

Started nearly 15 years ago the company now employs over a dozen people at two sites, Redbourn and Bletchley, and boasts around 1800 regular customers.



Mark’s team has helped a huge number of local businesses over the years and has faith in the difference good print work can make. “It’s more than just putting ink on paper. Do it right and it can have a hugely positive impact on your business” comments McIvor.

While not a household name, Printforce’s work is something everyone has probably encountered. For instance, all the address labels used by Amazon for mailing out books, DVDs and other goods are produced by the company – around 1.2 million a month. They also produce product labelling for CostCo.

But the business is not only for massive companies with massive budgets. It has invested heavily in digital technology and can now produce high quality, low quantity jobs at a surprisingly reasonable cost.



According to McIvor the future is going to be digital; high quality work produced very quickly in short run amounts and with a degree of personalisation previously impossible.

“There is no reason that a small business can’t produce something which looks and feels like it has had serious money spent on it,” comments McIvor.

McIvor highlights, “I like to think that we can help anyone understand what can be achieved with print. We add value by taking our customers through the entire process, reducing the stress and ensuring that what is produced at the end will meet all their needs.”



The company is also committed to the local community. Mark has been an active part of the recent Redbourn 900 celebrations and Printforce was responsible for turning scores of local children’s paintings into colourful banners which can be seen around the village. He also has established a local business networking group RN10, designed to help and support local companies.

Operating as a creative hub, Mark and the Printforce team can bring together designers, copywriters and photographers to turn ideas into reality.

To contact Mark and discuss how print can make a difference to your business either call on 01582 793000 or email mark@printforce.com or the website www.print-force.com

Build it and they will come...

How good communications can help your business

By Will Cameron

They used to say that if you built a better mousetrap the world would beat a path to your door. That just isn't true anymore.

There is too much noise being made in newspapers, magazines and websites by big brands and celebrity backed ideas, which makes it harder and harder for a new name to be heard.



Small businesses need to become smarter and more switched on about how to raise their profile and establish a name for themselves. There is no reason why the techniques used by large organisations for their own promotion cannot be adapted and reapplied for the small to medium sized business.

Often it is simple things that can change the perception of your organisation.

To start with, spend some time organising your thoughts about what it is you are actually offering to the market. Be it curtains, cars or cupcakes you need to be able to get your idea across simply and elegantly.

Find out what is different about you; are you the first people in the world to do this or are you doing it better than anyone has ever done it before?.

Make sure your first impression is always your best impression – remember that you are not going to be around to explain that the little typo on your flyer was meant to be funny – people will just think you can't spell. If you can't do that what else can't you do?

With the ubiquity of digital communications your web presence needs to be as good as you can make it. That doesn't mean it must have all the bells and whistles, simplicity and ease of use are critical. It is vital that the site tells your potential customer the key things – who you are, what you do and how they can engage with you.

Businesses in Harpenden are more switched on than most with ideas like the loyalty card and FairTrade status for the town already up and running. But it is important to remember the ongoing impact that good communications can have on the success of your business, and it doesn't have to be something you do on your own.



Call in a professional to advise, guide and help you on your way. By tapping into the experience of someone who has done it before it is possible to get more bang for your buck.

Will Cameron, an independent PR and communications professional based in Redbourn.

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