

NFOP magazine



How beautiful the
leaves grow old.
How full of light and
colour are their
last days

John Burroughs

**A great new insurance
product for NFOP members**

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and how do you claim it?**

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of exhibitions around the
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Editor's Note

As I sit here at my computer writing this, looking out of the window its teeming down with rain, something that seems to have been a

daily occurrence this August so far. Whilst rain in August is no stranger, the sheer amount that we have seen probably is which makes me reflect on our changing seasons.

Are we really seeing a shift in our weather patterns, or are we just having a particularly wet summer this year? Well, I'm no expert on the subject, but I do think that there is clear evidence that our weather is changing. And if you read the press you'll know a lot of this is down to climate change. There is no doubt that this is one of the major challenges that faces our society in years to come – and it is a subject that I will look to cover further in forthcoming issues.

So what has changed since the last issue? Well, not a lot other than we have a new prime minister. Our political stalemate with the EU remains, our future as a country remains uncertain, and it seems like there is little hope of a solution anytime soon. Fasten your seatbelts and prepare for a "no-deal"

Brexit, as I write later in the Magazine that's the path that Boris seems to be taking us down. One thing is certain, I'm fed up with situation as, I suspect, are many of you, and want to get this over and done with. Thankfully at least that much seems likely to happen.

Over the last few weeks I can't help but reflect on the mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio and the senseless loss of life that these entail. These are large scale events with 22 and 10 killings reported respectively whilst a further 24 and 27 people were injured. These large scale, headline shootings though are just the tip of the iceberg, at the time of writing official figures show that there have been 266 so called mass shootings in the US so far this year! Thank goodness we experience nothing like this in our country and let's give thanks for the fact that we live in a relatively safe and stable society.

We have another packed issue of the Magazine for you this month, I do hope you enjoy reading it and as always I would welcome your views, comments and contributions. After all The NFOP is a member organisation and it is your magazine.

Until next time.
Ed.

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Exercise helps with arthritis and joint pain

‘ If you suffer from arthritis or joint pain it’s fair to say that it is probably crucial that you try and exercise more.

Do you suffer from arthritis or joint pain? If you do you will know just how debilitating this can be and no matter how many you take, painkillers don’t really seem to hit the button and alleviate the pain.

One way of helping, it’s completely natural and it will also have benefits for other parts of your body as well as your mental health and well-being is to make the effort and do more exercise. Now for people with arthritis or joint pain, the thought of exercise may well terrify you, but there are many things you can do without suffering pain and that will help you in the medium to long term.

In fact if you suffer from arthritis or joint pain it’s fair to say that it is probably crucial that you try and exercise more if for no other reason than exercise will help increase strength and flexibility in your joints and muscles, it will also help to reduce that joint pain and will also help you to combat fatigue.

So what can I do?

Well, everybody has to start somewhere as they say and what you do depends on your existing level of fitness, your mobility and most of all your motivation. The best advice is to start off small, by that we mean don’t try and be too over ambitious at the outset, and build up from there. The second bit of advice is that for exercise to be effective and for it to have long term benefits it needs to be undertaken on a regular basis.

NHS England issue guidelines on the recommend level of exercise for over 65’s and they recommend that you should do:

- At least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity such as cycling or walking every week and
- Strength exercises on two or more days a week that work all the major muscles in your body.

The exercises

By far and away one of the best exercises you can do is walking. This is low cost, everyone can do it, and you can do as much or as little as you want. In fact, by walking more you are essentially exercising without really knowing that you are doing it! It helps with your aerobic conditioning, is beneficial for your heart, good for joint health and will help improve your mood. Just make sure that you have good quality walking shoes, that you always carry a bottle of water to prevent dehydration and don’t try to do too much too soon!

Another simple to do exercise is that of stretching. Stretching can help to improve your flexibility, it can alleviate stiffness and help increase motion. In essence by stretching you are waking your body up and getting it ready for the challenges that it will face throughout the day. There are many ways you can do this, it depends on what parts of your body are affected, but it is well worth doing as often as you can.

Go swimming. This is a great way to exercise as it is considered low impact but is one of the best exercises you can do as it involves much of the body. Again you don’t have to swim far to start off with, you can build up your distance over time. If swimming is not your thing then why not try water aerobics or some other form of water exercises.

Cycling is another good exercise, not just for your joints but also for your cardiovascular system. Again you don’t have to cycle far to start off with, you can build up your distance over time. The benefits of cycling include improved aerobic capacity and therefore conditioning, improved stiffness in joints and muscles, increased leg strength and building stamina and endurance.

You might not think it, but another great way of exercising is to increase the amount of gardening that you do. Because gardening involves all different types of activity such as bending down, digging, stretching, lifting and carrying it has a myriad of benefits for the body. Being outside in the fresh air will also have the added benefit of lifting your mood and enhancing your mental health and wellbeing.

You could also try aerobics, pilates, tai chi and yoga to name but a few others.

It doesn’t matter how much or how little you do to start off with, what matters is that you actually start. Any exercise will be beneficial for you and as we have said before, you can build up over time. The benefits are many – so what are you waiting for?



September at the movies

Cinema



JOYCE GLASSER

In the academic and commercial world, September is the month to look ahead; but several noteworthy films on release this month look back in time with resonance for older cinema audiences.

Mrs Lowry & Son (now playing) Cert PG, 91 mins.

Mrs Lowry & Son is based on Martyn Hesford's Radio 4 play and neither Hesford, as screenwriter, nor theatre-turned-film director Adrian Noble can shake off the film's provenance. The performances of Vanessa Redgrave 82, as the abusive, but vulnerable social snob Elizabeth Lowry and *Mr Turner* star Timothy Spall as the long-suffering, full-time carer son, "Laurie", working as a rent collector by day and painting late at night, make up for many an awkward turn in the film, not the least of which is Lowry's visit to the Lowry Centre (opened in 2000) in Salford. Through heavy doses of expository writing and characters talking aloud, we learn that this oedipal battle is set in 1934, 25 years after Mrs Lowry was condemned to the working-class purgatory of Pendlebury, Manchester by her husband's failings. She looks back nostalgically to her piano playing days in the upmarket Victoria Park, while Lowry finds beauty in the industrial landscapes of Pendlebury that were his making. The bitter, bedridden diva is suspicious when Lowry's critically maligned painting, *Coming from the Mill* attracts the attention of a London gallery owner. Embarrassed at the criticism of his "squalid" mill scenes and "matchstick" men, she pleads with her devoted son to 'give it up; you're not an artist and never will be'.

Vanessa Redgrave and Timothy Spall in *Mrs Lowry & Son*

Caught somewhere between *Mommy Dearest* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* the sparks fly but never ignite. We gain little insight into Lowry's work or the impact on his art of his lifelong co-dependent relationship with his mother. The filmmakers disregard a cache of erotic canvases expressing sexual anxiety that might have shed light on this missing dimension.

Memory: The Origins Of Alien (now playing) Cert 15, 95 mins.

The 40th anniversary of Ridley Scott's iconic Sci-fi horror film *Alien* provides the launchpad for Alexandre O. Philippe's riveting documentary, *Memory: The Origins of Alien*. The film traces the development of the *Alien* from Dan O'Bannon's script, *Memory*, that was to be directed by Walter Hill, to the little-known director Ridley Scott's masterpiece. *Alien* did not come out of a vacuum and Philippe explores all the films, including *The Terror from Beyond Space* (1858) and Roger Corman's 1966 *Queen of Blood*, that fed into it as well as the writings of HP Lovecraft. But it was the serendipitous confluence of visionary O'Bannon (and Ronald Shusett), Swiss artist H. R. Giger, and Ridley Scott (who would step in as DOP) that made the film so successful. In his 2017 analysis of Hitchcock's *Psycho*, entitled *78/52*, Philippe dissects the pivotal shower scene, and here the seminal "chest buster" scene is scrutinized in fascinating detail. Philippe's exploration of the film's sexual tensions, beginning with the casting of a woman – the unknown Sigourney Weaver – as Warrant Officer Ripley is equally insightful.

The Souvenir (now playing) Cert 15, 119 mins.

A painting in London's Wallace Collection by Jean-Honoré Fragonard lends Joanna Hogg's *The Souvenir*, its title and point of departure as the now 59-year-old filmmaker looks back at her first love, recreating with costumes, production design and uncanny performances from Tom Burke and Honor Swinton Byrne, her life-changing relationship with Anthony (not his real name).

From her swanky Knightsbridge duplex, her conservative parent's pied-à-terre, first year film school student Julie (Swinton Bryne) is writing the script for a film about a Sunderland born-and-bred boy's strong relationship with his dying mother. A disguised National Film School is subject to low key parody throughout the film. At a party Julie meets a confident, bow-tie-wearing, Cambridge-educated man nearly a decade her senior, who is obsessed with Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle*, likes Powell and Pressburger films and enjoys tea in hushed, ornate hotel dining rooms. Although Julie

wants to escape the cocoon of her bourgeois life, Anthony persuades her to make films about her own experience, advice Hogg herself was finally able to act on at age 47 with her first feature *Unrelated* (2008).

But none of Hogg's three films to date are as obsessively autobiographical as *The Souvenir*, with its scale reconstruction of her flat, the actual wooden headboard from their bed and readings from Anthony's purple-penned letters. But while her classmates are making films, Julie is the unknowing victim of her own, making costumes for their trip to Venice; dealing with a suspicious break-in; and lending money to a man who claims he works for the Foreign Office. Anthony soon moves in with Julie and she lies to her mother (Tilda Swinton, Honor's real mother and Hogg's friend from boarding school and star of Hogg's graduation short, *Caprice*) that the money is for film equipment. Anthony's charm, intelligence and sexual appeal, most evident in two humorous bedroom scenes, are as obvious as is Julie's vulnerability. Hogg intentionally sought a non-professional actress for the role and did not show her the script in advance to replicate Hogg's own painful naïveté. You might long for more heightened drama and variation from Hogg's slowly paced, long takes, but this tale of co-dependency as unhealthy as that between Elizabeth Lowry and LS Lowry, is innovative and chilling.

Midnight Cowboy (from the 13th) Cert 18, 113 mins.

The 50th anniversary of John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy*, is celebrated with a new 4K restoration and a re-release that enables younger audiences to see the film on the big screen and older viewers to see this 1969 masterwork through very different eyes. In his breakthrough performance, Jon Voigt plays disillusioned hustler Joe Buck who leaves his bad memories and dishwasher job in Texas only to end up in a condemned Manhattan bedsit caring for Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman), a disabled swindler dying of TB and dreaming of Florida.

Joe's psychological flashbacks are clumsy, but the depiction of 1969 NYC is spot on. Although Hoffman shot to fame two years earlier with *The Graduate*, his performance was so convincing that Schlesinger type-cast him as a student and needed to be convinced the 32-year-old could play Rizzo. Hoffman did so and went on to become one of the greatest character actors of all time. *Midnight Cowboy* won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Director. Scriptwriter Waldo Salt won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay – and both Salt and Voigt won Oscars for their 1978 collaboration, *Coming Home*.

Honeyland (from the 13th) Cert NR, 87 mins.

While *Honeyland*, the ravishing documentary by co-directors Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska is set in our times, 54-year-old single, childless, and all but toothless beekeeper Hatidze lives in a land that time forgot. Hatidze shares a remote hut in the Macedonian valley with her elderly, bed-ridden and half blind mother Nazife, a cat and a dog. And then there are the bees that repay her loving care with the purest honey in the Skopje markets. There is no electricity, phone, running water or transportation and in winter Hatidze treks through the snow to a mountain side where, behind a stone,

Jon Voigt and Dustin Hoffman in *Midnight Cowboy* - courtesy BFI

is the honey that, in the film's gorgeous, heart-wrenching ending, she shares with her dog. There are signs of modernity: Hatidze bargains in Euros (and not denar), colours her hair at home and watches as a truck load of new neighbours move into an abandoned farm next door. At first the generous, kind and trusting Hatidze welcomes the large family with its cattle and seven young children who are put to work, the parents almost comically oblivious to health and safety. But when the father, Hussein, tries his hand at beekeeping, the ancient sin of greed brings destruction. There is humour, too in Nazife's surreal outbursts. When she learns what Hussein has done, she curses, "May god burn their livers," and God appears to listen to this wonderful woman.

Werewolf (from the 20th) Cert 15, 88 mins.

Thankfully, filmmakers are still looking back to Hitler's genocide, lest we forget. Polish writer/director Adrian Panek risks criticism of exploitation in using the death camps as the backdrop for his survival in nature thriller, *Werewolf*, but he largely pulls it off as his fable points out how the trauma of the camps turned people into animals, and animals into bigots.

After the Russian liberation of Gross Rosen camp, a group of children and young adults are placed in a villa under the care of Jadwiga (Danuta Stenka), a member of the Polish aristocracy now condemned to share scraps of potatoes with malnourished Jewish children. But in addition to starvation and Russian marauders, the biggest threat is the former Nazi guard dogs that surround the derelict villa, hungry and trained to attack. A nerdy, deeply disturbed young man who has observed the Nazi's at work has an idea...

If Panek's tale lacks the force, style and cathartic ending of Samuel Fuller's *White Dog*, it is still a haunting and original thriller filled with atmosphere and convincing performances from non-professional actors. You do have to wonder though why the young children were not killed upon arrival at the camps when they could not work.

Although Hoffman shot to fame two years earlier with *The Graduate*, his performance was so convincing that Schlesinger type-cast him as a student and needed to be convinced the 32-year-old could play Rizzo.

A peninsula like no other

ANDREW SILK GETS OUT AND ABOUT IN CORNWALL

A 2.2 magnitude earthquake was recorded in the Helston area of South West Cornwall around the beginning of August, with people likening the event to a “sonic boom” or a “loud bang from underground”. Whatever it sounded like it was certainly strong enough to make the windows shake in houses in the area.

After the event, there was no damage done to property and there were no injuries or any loss of life suffered, which of course, is all to be welcomed. Luckily I missed this, the latest of the approximately 20 earthquakes that occur around the UK each year.

You might be asking why I’m telling you this. Well, as already mentioned, Helston is in South West Cornwall, a part of the country that is packed with spectacular scenery, stunning places to visit, and an area that is well worth making the effort to visit.

But if you head further south from this earthquake hotspot, it’s only a short distance to The Lizard Peninsula, which is one of the least-visited parts of Cornwall, You’d be missing out on a real treat if you bypass this area of the county.

It’s defined by the sea!

The Lizard Peninsula is the most southerly point on the UK mainland. It’s not a place you can drive through; it’s a place that you have to drive to: it’s unlike any other place in the country. The coastline of The Lizard is dotted with pretty little fishing villages, many of which still support active fishing boats – mainly for crab and lobster – and it’s got some fantastic beaches and coves to explore. Battered by the Atlantic Ocean, its sheer power defines everything that you

see, and it’s clear that this area is shaped by the elements. Whilst this is what defines it and what gives it its beauty, it also has its own micro-climate; so much so that it is among the warmest places in the whole country – some people go as far as to say it is probably the warmest in Britain.

So where should I go?

A good place to start is at the small attractive town of Porthleven, dominated by its harbour and still very much a working port. The town’s name is derived from the old Cornish word porth which means harbour and leven which means level or smooth. This is because the harbour was once just flat marshland with a stream that ran though it to the sea – for anyone that’s visited you will know what I mean.

The town has plenty to offer in terms of accommodation and facilities, as well as a variety of eateries to suit every taste. But beware, it can get very busy in the height of the season. Luckily as we are now heading towards Autumn, the crowds will lessen and it should start to quieten down a bit.

It’s a pretty stroll around the harbour itself with its cafes, galleries and shops to tempt you. For the more adventurous amongst you, why not take a stroll out to the Loe Bar, a large natural phenomenon of a shingle beach behind which lies Loe Pool, the largest freshwater lake in the whole of Cornwall. Continue east from Loe Bar towards The Lizard Point and you will pass through what is said to be one of the prettiest coves in the whole of Cornwall: Kynance Cove. It is known for the brilliant turquoise colour of its sea, pristine white sand, stunning rock formations, and the caves that the cove slowly reveals to those of an enquiring disposition when the tide goes out.



Left: Porthleven

Below: Lizard Point and Polpeor Cove

are lush, dense and unspoilt, a feature only enhanced by the abundance of wildlife that lives in and around the river.

Once you have experienced the quiet and solitude you can quite easily imagine what life must have been like around here in days gone by, and you can certainly understand how Daphne Du Maurier, on her honeymoon here, got her inspiration for her novel *Frenchman’s Creek*.

Cross the river using the ferry to the Helford Passage side and you are close to both Trebah and Glendurgan gardens, both of which are home to a number of exotic plants, many of which are sub-tropical, evidencing the warmer climate in this part of the world. Both gardens are worth a visit, and at Glendurgan it’s worth walking down to the beach and the little village of Durgan, which has been preserved for visitors. Take a look at the old schoolhouse that overlooks the river and close your eyes – what an idyllic place this must have been for a young child to grow up and go to school in.

This really is an un-spoilt part of the country, but one that is well worth the effort of visiting. There literally is something for everybody and the variety on offer is simply stunning. I was only there for a few days, but it could and should have been longer. But at least I managed to avoid that earthquake!

For more information and details of places to visit and to stay go to www.visitcornwall.com.

It also boasts the rather intriguingly names Asparagus Island, so named because of the wild asparagus that grows there in the spring. The island also provides a great deal of shelter from the harsh winds of the mighty Atlantic. If you make the effort to go there you will appreciate the sheer beauty of the place and understand why it draws artists to paint all year round.

No visit to the area would be complete without a visit to The Lizard Point itself; go to the end and you will be on the edge of the United Kingdom – next stop France! The Lizard Point is also home to the Marconi Transmission Station from where, in December 1901, Marconi sent the first ever radio communication across the Atlantic which was received in St John’s, Newfoundland. This is now a small museum that you can visit.

Once you have passed the Point you are on the more sheltered eastern side of the peninsula. Here, head for Coverack, a pretty little fishing village that is tucked away in its own sheltered bay. It has a lovely working harbour and a big sandy beach that you can relax on. But don’t be fooled by the quaint nature of Coverack, as just down the coast are the Manacles. Lying about a mile offshore, these are a reef like section of rocks that are said to have wrecked over 150 ships and claimed many, many lives across the years.

If you like walking, then head a little further round the peninsula and you will reach the Helford River, a large estuary that is renowned for its beauty, its nature, and for its peace and quiet. With some 50 kilometres of shoreline, there are plenty of secluded beaches from where you can watch the activity on the river itself, whilst enjoying some of that aforementioned peace and quiet. The river has several creeks that are great fun to explore, especially if you hire a boat. The dramatic rise of the steep sides of the creeks from the waters edge give a feeling of being in another world; they

“No visit to the area would be complete without a visit to The Lizard Point itself; go to the end and you will be on the edge of the United Kingdom.”

Below: Kynance Cove



Book reviews

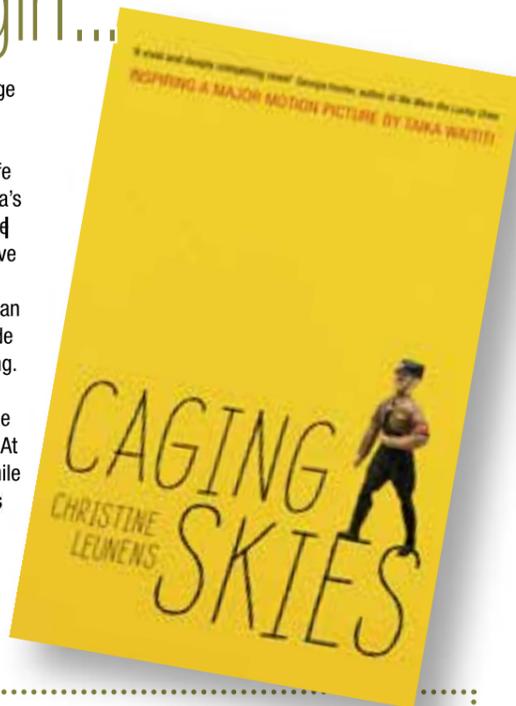
KATE GOODMAN SETTLES DOWN WITH SOME EARLY AUTUMN READING

Once upon a time, an Austrian boy fell in love with an Austrian girl...

If only things were that simple! Set in wartime Vienna, *Caging Skies* tells the story of Johannes Betzler, a young boy brought up in affluence and doted on as an only child, his sister having died in her early teens. His hero is Adolf Hitler and he becomes a fanatical member of the Hitler Youth, much to the disappointment of his far more liberal parents. Johannes' dream of serving his Fuhrer are ended when he is disfigured and maimed in an air raid; as he convalesces, he makes the shocking discovery that his parents are illegally hiding a Jewish girl, Elsa, in their home. Initially horrified, Johannes soon becomes protective of the fragile, frightened fugitive. When his parents disappear, he takes over her care – no easy task with visits from the Gestapo, air-raids razing houses round about, and the growing curiosity of his elderly grandma Pimmichen to contend with. But as the war draws to a close, Johannes is determined to keep Elsa safe from discovery at any cost.

This intensely moving story is a coming-of-age tale with a difference, told in the brutally honest words of Johannes himself. He sees his role as hero and saviour, never doubting that Elsa is safe only with him. But in establishing himself as Elsa's protector, is he hiding her from the world or is he hiding the world from her? The powerful narrative exposes the ugliness of domination, both at national and personal level, and the delusion of an obsessed youth who expects more than gratitude from his protégé. Yet the story is never harrowing. Elsa's spirit and Pimmichen's wisdom add light and even humour to the darkest moments. At the heart of it all is Johannes' painful self-delusion. At one point he exclaims "I am never free!" But while Elsa is caged by circumstance, he has made his own prison. Orphan, hero, petty tyrant – he is all of these, and in the end one can only feel sympathy for him.

***Caging Skies* by Christine Leunens is published by John Murray in hardback, RRP £14.99.**

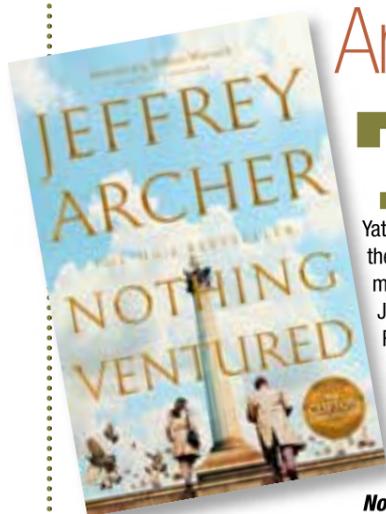


Art for art's sake

Those bemoaning the end of *The Clifton Chronicles* will welcome *Nothing Ventured*, the first in a proposed new series of eight novels by multi-million selling author Lord Jeffrey Archer. A good old-fashioned detective novel set in the 1980s, it introduces the reader to young detective William Warwick who has defied his barrister father Sir Julian to enter the police force as a lowly PC. There he is mentored by Fred Yates, an old-fashioned copper, full of wisdom and witticisms. When Fred meets an untimely end, Warwick moves from the beat to Scotland Yard where he soon becomes embroiled in a case involving art fraud and the tracking down of a missing Rembrandt, suspected stolen by master criminal of the art world, Miles Faulkner. Aided by colleague Jackie, William embarks on a chase that takes him around the UK and over to Italy in his determination to return the Rembrandt to its rightful place in London's Fitzmolean Museum. Belief in the law and love of art spur him on, but so too does his growing attraction to art curator Beth. She's as keen to see the Rembrandt returned as he is – but William senses she is hiding something from him.

As criminals are tracked down and arrests are made, the twin threads of mystery and romance keep this story rolling along in a highly satisfactory way, until the conclusion of twin trials and the realisation that while William Warwick may have got his man, the story is just beginning!

***Nothing Ventured* by Jeffrey Archer is published by MacMillan in hardback, RRP £20**



Is there anybody there...?

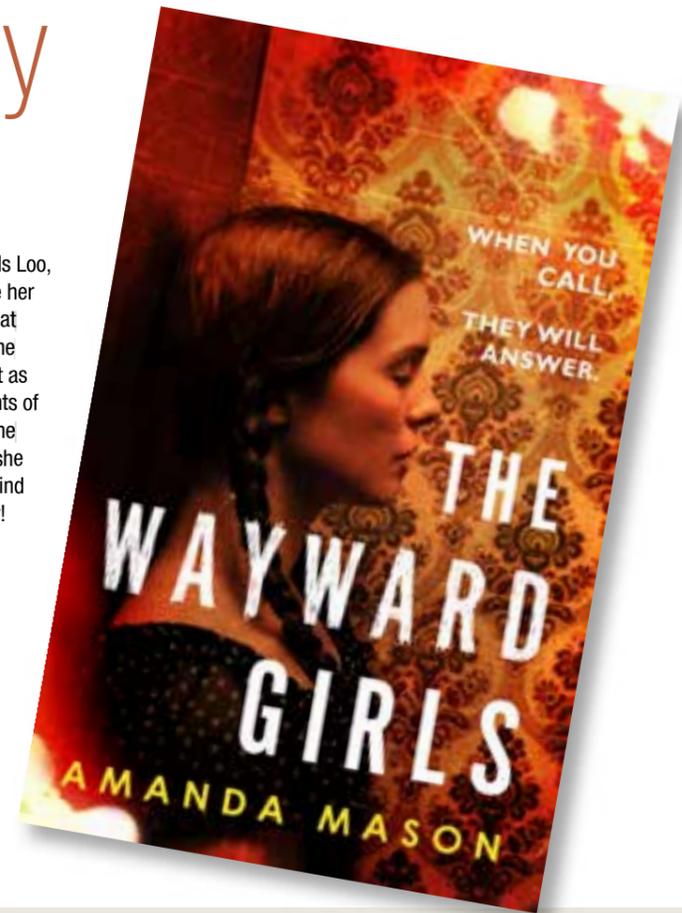
The Wayward Girls opens in 1976, when Loo and her sister Bee live in a rundown old cottage in the middle of nowhere with their Bohemian parents and assorted siblings. Home-schooled and allowed to roam free, their lives should be idyllic – but the family's dream escape to the country fast becomes a nightmare as the sisters begin to experience a series of strange occurrences. There's a loud knocking in the middle of the night. Objects appear and disappear. Glass breaks of its own accord. Nips and weals appear on the sisters' skins. Supernatural forces are suspected and psychic investigators become involved. But the mystery as to whether the house is haunted or two bored girls are playing games is never satisfactorily solved.

Forty years later, a new team of young investigators undertake their own investigation, inviting Loo back to the cottage to record her experiences and try to establish whether Iron Sike farm is indeed

haunted. Mystery still surrounds Loo, not least the question of where her sister Bee has gone. Resistant at first, she is finally drawn into the team's search for the truth. But as she reluctantly relives the events of her youth, she discovers that the haunting is far from over, and she and the hapless investigators find themselves in very real danger!

The chilling, atmospheric narrative peels away the obfuscations and murky half-truths that obscure what really happened that fateful summer of 1976, keeping the reader in satisfactory suspense, right to the very end.

***The Wayward Girls* by Amanda Mason is published by Zaffre in hardback, RRP £12.99**



Where's your mamma gone?

In 2018 middle-aged Tara receives a letter from a solicitor – but it's not the divorce petition she is expecting. Instead it leads to a clue that her mother Violet, who disappeared 40 years ago, might still be alive. The story then takes us back to 1978, when Violet is scraping a living as a club singer, hoping to hit the big-time and give her fatherless daughter a better life. Homeless at one point, they find refuge with old Alf Bickerstaffe, soon forming a happy family unit – until Violet meets flash Larry who promises her the moon, or at least a trip to the continent. Interwoven into the narrative is the story of Leonardo, a Spanish lad contemplating marriage to his childhood sweetheart Gabriela. As

the reader ponders what can possibly link Tara, Violet, Larry and Leonardo, a story of love, loss and tragedy unfolds.

Mysterious and intriguing as this story is, it was the vibrant characters that really hooked me, especially Tara. Spirited and independent she pulls no punches, whether as a wronged wife in constant spat with her love rival Susie or as a lively teenager who's either falling in love or fighting. She's always fiercely loyal and loving, to Violet, to Alf and to Tom, her first love, who reappears later in the story. Humour balances pathos in a well-paced plot that has an ultimately satisfying ending.

***Her Last Promise* by Kathryn Hughes is published by Headline Review in paperback, RRP £7.99**



Shoot!

By Andrew Silk

First published in 1969, the magazine was a must-read for football obsessed youngsters who dreamed about becoming the next George Best.

Yes, it's that time of year again – summer is now officially over and once again the football season has started – that multi-billion pound sport that never seems to be off the back (and sometimes front) pages of our newspapers.

It's hard to believe just how much football has changed in this country over the last twenty years or so, it's almost unrecognisable now from the game that many of us will recall from our younger days, especially those days when we can remember putting on our boots and having a good old kick about in the street, the garden or on the local playing field before you had to go home for your tea.

And it's also hard to believe that one of the magazines that many of us will have grown up with as youngsters (and remember how important magazines were in the 60s and 70s) hits fifty this year. *Shoot!* was first published in 1969, the magazine was a must-read for football obsessed youngsters who dreamed about becoming the next George Best (perhaps without quite so much booze), or of being the new Bobby Moore and again lifting the World Cup trophy as captain of England! Sadly something that we are still waiting to see replicated!

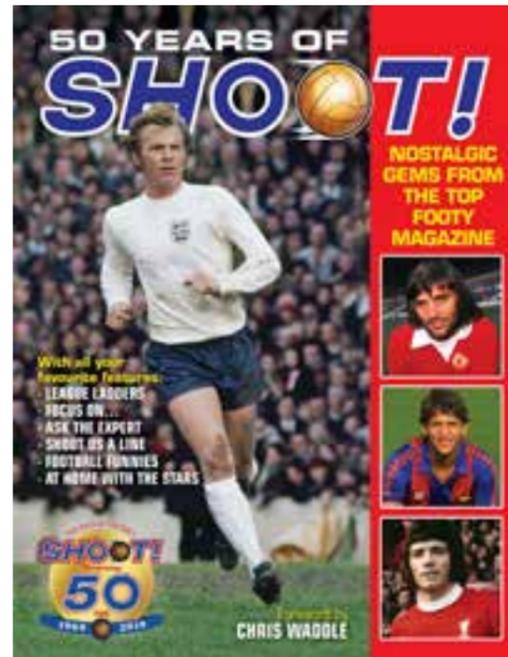
League ladders

What youngster can ever forget the *Shoot!* League Ladders that you used to collect before the start of each new season – a piece of cardboard decorated in all the colours of the rainbow (well at least those that appeared in club football strips of the time). They were accompanied by a set of T-shaped tabs, each with the name of a football club on, and a backboard of the main football leagues in England and Scotland. Many a child, me included, spent hours each weekend moving the tabs of clubs up and down these ladders dependent on the results of the day – their own interactive, real time football league tables.

50th Anniversary book

To mark the anniversary there's a new book published called *50 Years Of Shoot!*. And what a memory jogger it really is! Who can fail to be impressed by those haircuts, those sideburns and indeed those football strips from back in the day?

The book is a treasure trove of articles that have appeared in the magazine across its 50 years. It's a stroll back through memory lane for any fan – in here you'll find a riveting interview with Don Revie when manager of Leeds United. In this interview he claims he would be "happy to pay up to £400,000 for the right player". Consider that Manchester United have just bought Harry Maguire from Leicester City for a cool £80m then this illustrates just how much football has changed over the years!



Who can remember the time when England international and superstar of his time, Kevin Keegan, appeared in the TV series *Superstars* when he was up against a Belgium Heavyweight boxing champion, a Swedish Table Tennis Champion who apparently had a metal plate inserted in the arm that he held the bat in after an accident, an Olympic downhill ski-ing champion and a French basketball star to name but a few. He actually won his heat and in so doing gained a place in the final – now can you imagine today's footballers being allowed to do something like that in the off season?

Then of course there's that absolute genius, or perhaps we would rather refer to him as pantomime villain, that all Englishmen know as Diego Maradona – who will ever forget his so called "Hand of God" in the 1986 World Cup quarter finals – it still hurts to this day! You can read all about it and re-live your own emotions of that time.

Nostalgia – not what it used to be

Football really is a game of emotions, it's also a game with history and heritage but the biggest sense of change that you get from dipping in and out of this book is just how much the game has altered over the years. Going back to Harry Maguire, it's now a completely different ball game from when *Shoot!* was first launched but that's progress.

Whatever your views on progress this is a great book to dip in and out of and I guarantee it will bring back memories – happy days whilst you sit and watch Gary Lineker present the new series of Match of the Day – and yes he's also in the book.

50 Years of Shoot! Is available now from all good bookstores priced at £18.99.

Garden ponds: how to maintain them

Do you have a pond in your garden? Either as an ornamental feature, or if you are lucky enough to have a large garden, as an integral part of your garden landscape?

If you do then autumn, which will soon be here, is the ideal time to do some pond cleaning and maintenance: getting your pond ready for winter and ensuring that it remains a healthy feature into next year and beyond.

Because ponds are full of living organisms – such as plants, fish and other water creatures – it's inevitable that from time to time they need maintenance and a clear up, just like any other part of your garden would. Ponds can often be surrounded by trees and in the autumn the pond's surface can become covered by fallen leaves that eventually add to the silt at the bottom.

So, if you have a pond here are some of the things you should do at this time of year to keep it in a good healthy condition.

Ponds should be given a full clean once every five years and if you are planning to give your pond a full clean this year the first thing you will need is a holding tank. Place this in a shady spot if possible and as near to the existing pond as you can.

The next stage is to drain the pond. You have two choices here, you can either drain it completely or just take out sufficient water to allow you to undertake the cleaning and maintenance work that's needed. Again, this will depend on the size of the pond and the level of maintenance and cleaning that you want to undertake. The quickest and easiest way to drain the pond is to use a pump. You can also do this by hand if you wish but it can be a laborious and tiring job.

As you are draining the pond look out for fish and other water based creatures, carefully net them and place them in the holding tank, ready to return to the pond when you have finished cleaning.

The plants in your pond are likely to be in baskets, pots or free floating. If you are thinning out the pond weed it is best to pile it on the side of the pond for 24 hours or so after lifting. This will allow time for any "water creatures" that may be tangled or hiding in the weed to make their way back to the safety of the pond itself.

As you lift the plants that are in baskets or pots then you need to check and see whether they would benefit from either re-potting or dividing if they have outgrown their existing containers. Water lilies in particular will need dividing every few years as in the right conditions they can be quite vigorous growers.

Once you have drained the pond to a suitable depth and taken out the pond weed and other plants it's time to turn your attention to the silt at the bottom – after all it's really this that needs to be removed on a regular basis because if left it can cause harm to the ponds eco-system and cause the water to become discoloured.

You need to remove about 90% of what is in the pond, leaving around 10% in there as this will help to retain and re-establish many of the tiny organisms that live in the silt and provide food for the fish and other creatures that inhabit the pond. But whatever you do, don't throw this silt away – it is highly nutritious and makes great compost for your garden so use it on your flower beds.

The next job is to clean the liner by scrubbing with a brush, making sure you remove all or as much of the algae as you can. Use water from a bucket and then when finished throw this on your garden – whatever you do, don't put it back in the pond!

When the liner is cleaned then you're just about

done. You just need to turn your attention to any water feature or fountains you may have. Give this a good inspection, make sure that it is in good working order and that no maintenance is needed. Also make sure that the pipes that feed it with water from the pond are not restricted in any way and clean out any debris that may have collected in it.

The final steps then are to return the retained silt to the bottom of the pond. Then place baskets of water lilies and other plants where you want them. A good tip with water lilies is to place them away from the water feature if at all possible because the calmer the water they are planted in the better it is for the plant. You then need to re-fill the pond slowly, preferably with rain water if you have water butts, but if not then from the tap.

Once the pond has been re-filled you should leave it for at least 48 hours before you re-introduce your fish. This will give the water enough time to settle down, and if you have used tap or treated water it will allow time for the chemicals, such as chlorine, that can be harmful to the fish to have evaporated. It also ensures an even temperature throughout the water itself. You can then re-introduce your fish, sit back, admire your handy work and be safe in the knowledge that your pond and fish are set fair for winter!

